

History of State Center

In 1863, the Chicago Northwestern Railroad had its tracks laid here on its course to the West. With it came the Crow's Nest, a moving restaurant on wheels, kept by Alexander Crow, in which he served meals to track layers or chance homeless travelers. He was a dark, gypsy-like looking man, generous with his tongue and purse and a jolly landlord. The railroad company had bought 80 acres of land from A. C. Babcock, upon which they started a town, calling it Centre Station. William Barnes, now of Chicago, was the first agent and also built a small shanty for a grain storehouse. He paid 80¢ a bushel for wheat. Later, he had the name changed to State Centre, owing to its being located so near the geographic center of the state. According to postal authorities, the original spelling of the post office name was State Centre, but July 5, 1893, upon petition of patrons, this spelling was changed to State Center.

The winter of 1864 was extremely cold. The mercury was 12 degrees below zero and the wind blew a gale. In January of that year, several hundred hogs were driven to State Center for shipment. A dreadful storm came up, and many of them were frozen - 1,300 out of 1,800. Some four weeks after the storm, they were found standing up straight where they had been smothered by the snow and frozen solid. In the spring of this year, the first house made its appearance. It was not built, but moved from Marietta, 16 miles away, by John Anselm. It was used by him as a hotel. The first child born in State Center was a daughter, Emma Anselm.

A "terrible tornado" which struck State Center with terrific and damaging force on June 27, 1865, is described by Mrs. Nettie Sanford in her 1867

history of Marshall County as follows: "There came up a terrible thunderstorm from the west, with flashing lightning and roar of heaven's artillery, while the wind seemed to come like an avalanche, sweeping everything before it. T. M. Carpenter had a store of dry goods and occupied the back part as a home for his family; there was a rush, then came a terrific crash, the crys of the children mingled with groans and sobs from the inmates, and the storm beating down upon their heads. On examination, it was found that the whole structure had blown down, one of the timbers striking a little girl seven years of age, and the stove falling over had inflicted some dreadful burns upon the babe of a few months. All had received more or less injuries, the goods in the building were scattered about the debris and ruin, and bearing their wounded children in their arms, the terror-stricken parents sought shelter at the nearest house as soon as possible. The little girl died the next morning, in spite of medical assistance; she was attended by Dr. Waters of Marshalltown, through whose skill and the careful nursing of the mother, the infant finally recovered.

The strange freaks of the wind -- which in its peaceful moments is so like an infant's breath -- were noticeable. Heavy sticks of timber and long and unmanageable boards were seen flying through the air in every direction; chips of wood and bunches of blow-weed were playing criss-cross fire; while the dust and fragments of brick and stone about the buildings elsewhere filled the atmosphere to such an extent that it seemed as if a heavy garment had been dropped down between heaven and earth. A wagon box was carried a long distance without the wheels; a wash tub was moved away, put on the prairie without mortal hands, and pails, pots and billeys of wood danced a jig outside of the houses to the music of the storm."

When I came to State Center, in the horse and buggy days, it was a thriving town with two railroads, two elevators, two hotels, a good newspaper, which had been published since 1871, a thriving bank and a very complete school system for those days, under the supervision of Miss Lucy Curtis. Most of the business buildings were of wooden structure, the Brimhall-West furniture store and the opera house block being the brick structures in addition to the Eagle Block, which housed S. M. Brimhall's Drug and Furniture Store. The sidewalks were of wood and there were no electric lights or telephones. Many of the homes had iron or picket fences around them.

The one business that I remember best is the creamery, which is the leading industry of the town today. I remember it best because it belonged to my grandfather and was at our back door, so to speak. I remember so well spending part of my morning sitting on the steps which led to the churn room watching Tom Shaunce work and salt the butter before he packed it into wooden tubs ready to be shipped to New York or some other distant point.

The one original wooden business house still being used today is the one on the corner of Seneca and Main, where there is now a Lennox agency and electrical supply store, and where Dr. Berquiest has his office.

Speaking of horse and buggy days, State Center used to have three thriving livery stables. The William Sargent stable was where Bob
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Miller's Chevrolet Agency is now. The Sargent boys or their help used

(* This is the Forrest Baie building. Chevrolet has since moved.)

to sit out in front of their building and with small mirrors reflect the light into high school to the amusement of pupils and annoyance of the teachers. The Frank Kunst stable was about where Forrest Baie's brick house is and the Frank Linn stable used to be where the Streeter locker plant now stands. Mr. L. B. Goodrich, who lived east of town, was very much interested in fine horses and the young men in the community used to vie with each other to see who could drive the most spirited horses hitched to the latest model of buggy or surrey with the fringe on top. The livery men had to keep up with the times also. Main Street was lined with hitching posts and in the rainy season or spring of the year when frost was coming out of the ground, one had to have pretty good overshoes to keep out of the mud.

At the back door of most every house there was a well where one could get a drink of good water. Also, way out in the yard was a toilet.

Down through the years, State Center has had its full share of disastrous fires, and the fire department has proved its efficiency and effectiveness in combating them. The worst and most devastating fire was the one 62 years ago when the west half of the south side of Main Street was wiped out leaving only Bishop's Store on the corner. This fire started at 3 o'clock in the afternoon of a very cold, windy day in the drug store owned by Thede Swift and within two hours, 8 business houses and three residence apartments were burned with a loss estimated at \$100,000. Then, at midnight on August 18, of the same year, a fire started in the Tummel building, now occupied by Gladys's Store. This fire worked east to the Central State Bank corner, or what is now Dr. Biersborn and Sokol's office and apartment, and west to include the Milne and Dobbin Store or what is now Edler's Food Market. It also burned the town hall and jail which were

situated across the alley south of Main Street. Before this, fire had consumed the old school building, which had been converted into a cooper shop where butter tubs and water tanks were manufactured by John Jacobson. This building stood where the Nelt Riemenschneider house now stands. Another fire occurred about 51 years ago, when Sargent's livery barn, located across the street east of the public school grounds, burned on the night of July 4. Horses and nearly all equipment were saved because they were hired out for the holiday. Soon after this, the Linn feed yard at the eastern end of the block was damaged by fire, but without loss of any horses. On May 10, 1911, the municipal light plant was burned to the ground in a fire that started at 5:05 in the morning. On the morning of December 12, 1916, a fire started in a frame building just east of Liston's store and destroyed all buildings in that block including the Enterprise and all of its equipment. This fire destroyed the Eagle Block which was of brick construction. Two other fires took the larger grain elevator of Goodman and Mead June 5, 1913, and the Commercial Hotel, April 3, 1924. A fire starting at noon on February 22, 1939, destroyed the large building on east main street which housed the George M. Buck Trucking Company. None of the equipment was burned as it was out on trips.

Three churches have new homes because of fires destroying their old ones. On February 4, 1887, the Methodist Church burned, followed by fire taking the Presbyterian Church February 15, 1920 and St. Joseph's Catholic Church on October 27, 1930.

Nevertheless, as always happens when the injured refuse to be discouraged, the destruction brought about by these many fires proved not to be a calamity, because out of the ashes of the frame wooden structures that were consumed, substantial brick buildings were built and a greater State Center

was developed.

When I came to State Center, the red brick school building was quite new and Miss Lucy Curtis was the superintendent, not only of book knowledge, but she saw to it that no damage was done to school property. She also supervised the school yard and in wet weather, we were not allowed to walk on the grass. In those days, Arbor Day in late April or May was observed at the school by setting out a tree each year. That is why there are so many trees around the school ground now. Many times, frames were built to protect these young trees and when some of the big boys wanted to tease Miss Curtis, they would lift these frames and carry them out of sight. She could spot the ring-leaders and they usually gave up and brought the frames back. The west half block where the Presbyterian parsonage now stands was used for a ball diamond and the boys were allowed to go over there to practice at recess and noon. None of the pupils was supposed to leave the school ground without permission.

During winter months, literary programs were held each Friday evening in the high school; pupils had to participate in some way or another. Sometimes very heated debates were held. These literaries were open to the public. At Commencement time, each graduate had to compose and deliver an essay or oration. In the early fall, one of the affairs that bothered Miss Curtis was the Rhodes Fair which was held for two or three days. Some of the pupils were sure to skip classes and go to that.

In 1918, Mr. Roseman came as superintendent. He was much interested in consolidation and after a year or two, the four small school houses from the country were moved in and consolidation was in full swing. In 1925, the first class to be graduated from the new system held their exercises in the new gymnasium.

The State Center public school system through the years has been recognized by leading colleges and universities throughout the country as outstanding among schools in Iowa.

Among house furnishings in the early days was carpeting. The flooring in many houses was of wide boards. At house cleaning time, the carpeting had to be taken up, cleaned and then tacked down again. Some people put a layer of fresh straw under the carpet to be used as a pad. Then you tacked the carpet down along one wall. From then on, you used the carpet stretcher, a little instrument with teeth with which you worked the carpet tight to the other wall, and then before it could jump out of place you had to put a tack into that side. There were few, if any, furnaces in homes then but everyone's home was heated with a round oak heater or a hard coal burner. These gave a cheery glow, but caused a good deal of dirt and work, with coal to be brought in and ashes to be taken out. Every house had a pump for drinking water, until the water mains were extended and we had city water. Most everyone had a cistern with a cistern pump in their kitchen. Among all of State Center's advantages none is more important than its water works system which was established in 1875.

Each winter, Chautauqua programs were held in the old opera house, now the Masonic Lodge rooms. There was a plat of the seats at Benson's Store, and each person holding a season ticket would go there and choose his reserved seat for the program. In the summertime, along in June, Chautauqua was held in Allison's Grove for a week or ten days. The first big job was getting up the tent in which the performances were held. One of the performances was a talking horse; another, always popular with the children, was the magician. Since there was an afternoon as well as an evening program, many people brought picnic suppers which they ate in the grove. The P. E. O.'s had a rest tent, where mothers could take their children and care for them.

There were always several good musical programs, quartettes, instrumentalists, chalk talks, and an outstanding lecturer who generally appeared on Sunday. Many familiar radio speakers got their early training in summer Chautauqua. The Redpath-Vawter System furnished the talent. It was generally advertised by a caravan of cars from State Center driving around to neighboring towns with banners and signs.

State Center had many musically-minded people. The Aaron Richards family, Sam Brimhall, flutist; L. B. Goodrich, violinist and orchestra leader; Mrs. A. J. Palmer, music teacher and organist; the Fitch Family, Mrs. Maude Linn, music teacher and violinist; Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Allison; Walter Brimhall and Will Palmer, cornetists, and many others. At one time, the Richards Harp Orchestra was a popular organization. It was composed of Ray Richards, harpist; Charles Robinson, violinist; Will J. Whitehill, clarinetist; and Frank L. Marcy, cornetist. State Center has had many fine band organizations, composed of and led by people right here in our own town.

In the art group, State Center had Miss Harriett Bassett, who gave painting lessons and taught art in the schools. Many people in State Center have pictures on their walls, that were painted under her instruction. Mrs. James Allison, mother of J. P. Allison, was a great student of nature and painted many fine pictures. Madame DeMange, a French lady, taught and did much fine embroidery and bead work. About 1888, she decorated a dress for the trousseau of my aunt with sprays of fine steel bead work. Recently my cousin had a black wool dress made and used a spray of these beads for the shoulder decoration on the dress. Madame DeMange had the whole town going to her for lessons in embroidery and bead work. She also finished pieces and sold them. Much of the work was done on very fine linen. She lived down our street, in the old Bessie Beatty house, now replaced by the

Fred Honeck home.

State Center has been fortunate in that it always had two or three good M. D.'s. One early one, E. B. Moore, lived in what was later Maude Evans' house, west of the Presbyterian Church. I knew him quite well because his daughter, Bess, was a school chum of mine. Dr. H. E. Center, who married my aunt, lived where Amanda Hilleman now lives. Dr. Theo Engle lived in the former Ted Pitman house. Later he made it into the first hospital in State Center, buying the house south of it for a residence. At a later date, Dr. I. D. Kauffman, a young physician, came in with Dr. Center, who later moved to Marshalltown, where he practiced until his death. Dr. Coe was also a well-known doctor, having built the house where Marian West now lives. Drs. Kauffman, Woods and Engle for some time occupied the building now used by Dr. Woods. (Dr. Woods, also a well-known State Center doctor, was living and practicing when this paper was written.) Dr. Kauffman is said to have had the first automobile in State Center.

One of State Center's early milliners was Miss Suzanne Milne, later Mrs. Suzanne Zwilling. Her first millinery shop was in the building now occupied by Dr. W. A. Cowan. She was afterwards associated with Miss Alice Dobbin in a dry goods and ladies clothing store. They had a line of ladies coats and skirts, dresses and other dry goods. The millinery shop was in the back of the store. Miss Minnie Frohwein and her sister, Amelia, worked there. People from miles around came to patronize this store and millinery department. Four or five years later, Miss Milne married Mr. Dan Zwilling, and they moved from State Center.

A little later, I worked for Alice Dobbin in her store and it was there that I was first exposed to the German language, which was spoken by nearly all of the customers who came in. Most of the early settlers came direct from

Germany. State Center at this time had two thriving dry goods stores - this one, and Gilbert and Benson. At that time, the stores were kept open at night each night until nine o'clock although sometimes, we didn't sell anything more than a spool of thread, if we sold that.

The two hotels in State Center were the Stipp Hotel and the St. James Hotel. The Stipp Hotel stood on the corner directly across west from Bishop's store and was so called because it was owned by Mr. Stipp. The St. James Hotel stood across the railroad track opposite the back of Bachman's Hardware store. The second railroad besides the Northwestern was the Grinnell and Montezuma branch of the Iowa Central, more familiarly nicknamed the Get-Much. The station and grain elevator were in the vicinity of Schilling Field and the track ran down the road east of the George Townsend house. There was one train a day which turned around at the station and went back down to Grinnell. When Dorothy started for Grinnell College, she insisted that her trunk be put on the old G. M. and she climbed on, accompanied as far as Robinson's farm, or thereabouts, by Frances Kauffman and Helen, who then got off and walked back home. The G. M. track was a favorite Sunday walking spot as there was no fear of any trains coming on Sunday. There was a trestle crossing a stream down the track, which offered a chance for the daring youngsters to show their skill.

The first picture show was up over what is now West's Furniture store. Mr. Harding, manager of the electric light plant, was instrumental in getting it here. There was a religious picture, but what else I do not remember. At one time there was a movie where Sade German's building now stands; later it was moved over to where Ayr's Food store is. Serials were popular as they kept people coming from one Saturday night to the next.

There were many characters in State Center, one of them being a little old Irish lady by the name of Biddie Noonan who lived across the railroad track south of the Brimhall West Funeral Home. She earned her living by doing washings. When she got tired from too many washings, she would take a nip or two from her bottle and then a few more and soon her worries were forgotten. There was also Uncle Billy Snyder who for many years ran an ice cream store and restaurant. Uncle Billy lived where the Sieverdts now live and did truck gardening. One day, when he felt that he had done something wrong, he literally followed the Bible admonition - "If thy right hand offend thee, cast it from thee." and chopped off one hand at the wrist. From that time on, he, of course, had only a stump ending at the wrist. They lived just across the corner from the Sibley house where I lived, and one of my jobs was to carry milk there. I always hated to go there as he generally was out on the porch, I suppose to carry in the milk, and unless I was very wily and planned my actions ahead of time, I was likely to get encircled by that stump of an arm.

Around 1900, a telephone system first started in State Center. Dr. Coe, George Schilling and Earl Van Pelt were the owners. They set up a switchboard in the back of what is now Brimhall's drug store. At a cost of 90¢ a month, you could have a telephone in your house. Three girls, Eva Sparks, Susie Dakin and Rose Dowd acted as telephone girls on different shifts. Rose, Dowd, now Mrs. Mulcahy, is the only one of these now living in State Center. She says that she went to work in the telephone office the year after she was graduated from high school here and worked at it for ~~ten~~ years. The early day telephone girl can never be equaled by the dial system. It was part of her job not only to plug in the number asked for, but to chase down the person wanted - the doctor for Mrs. Smith, tell Mrs. Jones that Katie Brown was over at Lucy's for the afternoon or help out in any other way by passing on information of use.

These are some of my memories of early State Center, my home for almost
70 years.

Etta M. Whitehill
Etta M. Whitehill

*First reading Nov. 9, 1927.
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SOME THINGS ABOUT STATE CENTER

1912 THRU 1930

We have heard a good deal about the passing of the small town and are aware of the social and economic changes about us. There was a good measure of the past which wasn't so bad and there are a lot of things in the present that are certainly not so good and gathered together here are some things about State Center of fifty to sixty years ago.

What was State Center like fifty to sixty years ago? Well, to begin with, there were a lot of barns scattered about town and in those barns there were horses and cows and chickens and about the first thing one heard when he awoke in the morning was the crowing of some damned rooster. No one went to the grocery store for milk. Milk was obtained from a neighbor who kept a cow or two and who enjoyed the freedom to sell you unpasteurized milk from cows never tested for TB or Bang's disease or anything else. There were no paved streets, there were no graveled streets. They were all dirt streets which had brick cross-walks at the intersections which were shoveled clean of the mud after every rain. When the ground dried the streets were dragged by a town employee perched on a drag drawn by an old horse. During the summertime the town used a horse drawn sprinkler on the streets to keep down the dust. At that time there was a small contingent of business men who advocated paving Main Street. They were met with opposition. The senior Billie Watson, one of our early merchants, led the movement to pave Main Street. You would see him every morning, dressed in his rubber boots, sweeping the walk and street in front of his store, scooping up the litter and sprinkling the walk and street with a

hand sprinkler. When you see Ralph and Florence Watson cleaning and sweeping the street,- they come by that honestly, for that is a tradition of the Watson store.

Along about 1923 a county wide bond election was held for the purpose of paving the Lincoln Highway across Marshall County. There was a lot of opposition to that proposition which was spearheaded by one of the county's leading lawyers, whose firm, from that day to this, has opposed every new project in the hopper. However, the election carried and that is how we got Main Street paved in State Center, for the old Lincoln Highway went right down Main Street.

Herb Meads who ran the Standard Oil Service Station on East Main Street was paid a salary of \$50 a month and his hours were from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. 7 days a week with no time off even for meals. He received a small commission on the gasoline and oil sold and during the peak months of the summer he probably made \$75 to \$80 a month. He had Amos Ball, District Manager of the Standard Oil Company at Des Moines, breathing down his neck to sell Mica and Polarine. The son of this Amos Ball is George Ball, who has been Under Secretary of State and Ambassador to the United Nations. One day around that station was observed a woman smoking a cigarette. A car from Kentucky parked near the station and two women emerged and after taking a couple of puffs on their cigarettes they flicked them away and came to the station to avail themselves of the facilities of the rest room. They were looked upon as a couple of tough cookies.

What else did we have in State Center? We had Barbers and lots of them. They opened their shops at 7 a.m. At that time no safety razors were in use and the business men came down town each morning to be shaved. Each customer had his own private mug at the Barber Shop with his name engraved thereon. The mugs were kept in glassed-in cases at the barber shop, the customers removed

their ties and their detachable collars and got shaved for ten cents. There were no electric clippers, only hand clippers and a hand paralysis was not an uncommon occupational disease of barbers.

At that time State Center had two livery barns, one located at the site of the State Center Locker Plant and the other where George Speers had his Hatchery business. These barns had accommodations for twenty or twenty-five horses in each establishment. Garages were on the way. New cars came equipped with chains and side-curtains as standard equipment. There were no heaters, no windshield wipers, the cars were jacked up to break them in and the motors were turned on and they spun hind wheels for a couple of days before they were turned over to the new owners.

This was before the era of the so called balloon tires and the tires were pumped up to eighty pounds of pressure.

State Center had two movie houses, one at the site of the Eckhardt insurance office and the other, the Princess Theater, was located in an old wooden building located at the site of the new Central State Bank. The houses played the old silent movies. A Victrola was located at the back of the show room and spewed forth one record after another with no connection between the music and the mood of the picture and as likely as not during some tragic scene would be playing the currently popular fox trot. This, of course, was before the advent of the radio and long before TV and the only competition of the movie houses was the Christian Endeavor and Epworth League societies.

Now, as to train service, that we really had. There was an eastbound morning local at 8:55 which carried all the shoppers bound for Marshalltown, along with F. B. Gilbert, the young lawyer who lived in State Center and commuted each day to his Marshalltown office and returned home each evening on the west bound 6 P.M. train. The Enterprise was at that time criticized

for filling its columns with items relating to who spent this day or that shopping in Marshalltown, for the Editor's wife canvassed the depot each morning to spot the travelers. Today, our merchants look upon the automobile and the good roads as a threat to retaining their local trade but fifty to sixty years ago they shopped in Marshalltown with three trains a day each way. In addition to the local trains there were 6 to 8 night time through passenger trains and numerous freights which blew their whistles wide open all the way through town much to the distress of overnight guests.

The fire department consisted of a bell tower and a hose cart building across the street from the present post office. The bell was rung by anyone discovering a fire and the equipment consisted of hand drawn hose carts that the firemen pulled to the scene of the blaze. One cold night in December of 1917 the water pressure had been permitted to go down and about 5 a.m. a small blaze was discovered in the Enterprise office by the night watchman. The fire burned out a solid row of business houses from the Bower residence to Liston's store (now the NAPA Bldg.) and with the present equipment the fire would have been put under control in about 15 minutes.

We once had a thriving cleaning and pressing business in State Center during the 1920's. The proprietor solicited business on routes far and wide. He was a soft spoken gentleman who went to church and who did all of the things expected of an upright citizen, only it turned out that his cleaning business was merely a front for one of the smoothest bootlegging operations in central Iowa.

In pre-World War I days, at house cleaning times, everyone took their rugs out on the lawn and old Blind Billy Miller came, and with a carpet beater in each hand pounded the dirt from your rugs. The advent of the electric vacuum cleaner put him out of business.

We had a harness shop, we had blacksmiths who shoed horses all of which disappeared with the development of mechanized farming.

World Series scores, before the days of radio were received inning by inning via telegraph at the Northwestern depot and two small boys served as dispatch runners from the depot to Bert Merrill's confectionery where the scores were posted in the window and at the end of the afternoon the two boys were each paid one ice cream cone for their work.

It took a first class local fight to put through a bond issue for the establishment of a Sanitary Sewer System in State Center, for the conservatives of the pre-World War I era were not about to forego their back-houses and their stinking privies, and, for many years thereafter there was a sufficient number of people who preferred to defecate amid surroundings familiar to their forefathers which assured the younger generation tailor made targets at Halloween.

Business hours in those days were a bit different. The post office was open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. with the last distribution of mail from the 7:50 p.m. east bound train. The banks were open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. six days a week. Usually there were at least 3 doctors and sometimes 4 in town, with two doctors in Melbourne, 1 in Rhodes, 2 in Colo and 1 in Clemons and they were in their offices six days a week and much of the time seven, and every evening besides. With that kind of competition none could afford to lose a call or fail to see a patient in need.

We had no Funeral Homes or Undertaking Parlors,- when you died you got embalmed in the back room of the Furniture Store. You were carried to Hillside in a morbid looking horse-drawn conveyance with spear-like decorations protruding from the four corners of the hearse- there was no tent shielding your grave, no artificial grass to hide the raw clay, there was just an open hole in the ground and the mourners stood around while you were lowered into your

grave and peered over the edge to see that you successfully negotiated your final journey.

We had restaurants in State Center with distinctive features and customs. One of our long time proprietors always had a chronic, hacking cough and when you asked for a cup of coffee, he'd as likely as not hack, spit behind the counter, blow the dirt from the cup and then pour the coffee.

W. N. Gilbert, President of the Central State Bank, and Fred Dobbin, President of the First National Bank, along with all the other business men, walked to work in the morning and walked home at noon for lunch and returned after lunch in the same fashion. Proper maintenance of sidewalks in those days was an important function of the property owner.

These were the days before the electric refrigerator and Claude Anderson operated a Coal and Ice Business. The ice man went on his rounds every morning filling everyone's ice box, and when you wanted cold drinks you just took an ice pick and chipped off some of the ice. It was frozen Iowa River water that you then consumed and everyone's general immunity seemed to forestall any epidemics of typhoid or like diseases.

We've even had a few homicide cases and here are a couple of them. Back in the 1930's, one evening about 10 o'clock a fire was discovered in the wooden corner building, next to the Enterprise Office. The first persons on the scene observed a fiery torch half way back in the building (then a Grocery Store) which within a minute or two burned itself out. In the basement of the building was a Chiropractor's Office from where soon a great deal of smoke appeared. The smoke was so dense firemen had difficulty for some little time in gaining entrance to the Chiropractor's office. Finally, the Chiropractor was found in the far corner of a coal room in the back of his office, lying on his back, his body the most burned thing in the room, and directly above him was

a hole burned in the floor of the grocery store where a rack of brooms had been destroyed in the torch like blaze that first appeared. The damage to the coal room was not extensive, an empty kerosene can was found nearby. Immediately, close relatives and advisors of the deceased man proclaimed the matter accidental, apparently fearing that suicide might be considered, for then suicide was regarded as a mortal sin. The law enforcement authorities cooperated beautifully, for there was no inquest, no investigation. Neither was it ever explained how such an accident took place. Apparently it never occurred to them that the poor fellow might have been murdered.

Sometime in the period 1910-15, between State Center and Melbourne, there lived a certain farm couple. One morning, this farmer, so said he, arose, and did not find his wife about the house. He went to the basement to fix his fire and there beheld his wife dead- with her head in the furnace. He called the law enforcement officers and a determination was made that his wife had committed suicide by sticking her head in the furnace. There was no inquest, no investigation, no indictment, no trial, no nothing. By way of observation, it can be said that a person bent on self destruction can put a rope around his neck and jump off a chair, or shoot himself in the head with a gun, but, is it within the realm of human endurance that a person could stick his head in a hot furnace door and keep it there until he had accomplished his mission?

At the turn of the century and for 25 years thereafter, we had a large German speaking group in State Center, many of whom would, each morning, be conversing in their native tongue in and about the stores and business places. Members of St. John's Church, living in town, had their Sunday services in the afternoon in the Methodist Church building, usually conducted in German. Methodist ministers were noted for their William Jennings Bryan type of oratory, their sermons often could not be concluded in less than an hour, and, on summer days, when the windows of the church were open, you could hear for a block or

two around the voice of the pastor warning his people of the consequences of evil and wrong doing.

The day books of physicians practicing in State Center in 1912 show a \$10 fee for obstetrical cases. At that time women seldom sought the services of a doctor during pregnancy and the babies were born in the home. Dr. Theodore Engle, who practiced medicine in State Center from 1880 until his death in 1923 was one of the first surgeons in this area to perform appendectomies. People were reluctant to submit to surgery, they procrastinated and delayed while the doctor pleaded the urgency of the situation. Many of those patients died from peritonitis and those who were operated on usually waited so long that the appendix ruptured. There was no sulpha, no penicillin- drains were installed in the belly and everyone hoped for the best. No layman of that period ever heard of coronary thrombosis. Acute indigestion was the cause of sudden death and only an advanced contingent of the medical profession recognized coronary heart disease. The common accident cases resulted from runaway teams of horses, railroad grade crossing disasters, farmers kicked by horses and broken arms from cranking model-T Fords.

One cold, raw day in March of 1913 a man from Rhodes rode up to State Center on his horse, presented himself at a local doctor's office and announced he wanted his tonsils out. The doctor obliged, took him to the laboratory where the patient on a high stool was injected with a local anesthetic, the tonsils removed, whereupon the patient jumped on his horse, spit blood all the way on his journey home, and made a satisfactory recovery. The doctor never worried about being sued for malpractice.

Pollution we had. In the winter months there poured forth from every business establishment and every home smoke from all the coal burning furnaces plus large emissions from the tall smoke stacks at the school and the electric

plant. The year round we took the soot and smoke from the steam engines of from 50 to 70 trains a day.

Discipline in the schools, rather the lack of it, was a major problem in 1920 when the Board hired as Superintendent a young man of 26, who stood 6 feet 3 inches and weighed 220 pounds, W. F. Roseman. His size and bearing and philosophical acceptance of the importance of discipline were the determining factors for he had only two years of college training and a couple of years of teaching experience. As to how Mr. Roseman operated, two examples: One day during his second year he observed on the playground a group of boys needlessly harassing a retarded student who was quite incapable of properly defending himself. A few minutes after the recess period he briskly entered the 7th grade classroom and from a list held in his hand, he called off the names of the culprits and ordered them to proceed at once to his office, where they were lined up and one by one entered and received the punishment. The local banker's son, relating the matter to his mother that evening said, "My, but Mr. Roseman is a strong man." Later, during Mr. Roseman's tenure he was expounding to Florence Gulick his objections to school dances and said to her, "Miss Gulick, if you knew of all of the diabolical things that go through the male mind while dancing....." To which Miss Gulick replied, "But, Mr. Roseman, if innocence is bliss, it's folly to be wise." Mr. Roseman held his position for 17 years.

To conclude this narrative we must look at the younger generation today with their long hair, their beards, their generally sloppy and unkempt appearance, their propensities for motorcycles, booze and high speed automobiles all of which gives concern to their elders. But, let us not forget that the men today in their 60's and 70's were those in the 1920's who wore the laced-up bell bottom pants, wore the long side-burns, danced the Charleston and drank moonshine whiskey. That was the generation that was really going to hell!