

MY LUNG AND I

or

ALL ABOUT ME

WRITTEN BY JOHANNA TAPPERT STRACK

(about 1966)

FOR HER CHILDREN

AND

GRANDCHILDREN

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When I was born, the doctor, who was called after the midwife became alarmed, predicted that neither my mother nor I would live. His predictions, like most of those the weathermen give, was somewhat less correct. Both mother and child lived and I have a picture of myself in my mother's arms to prove it. I don't look too perky or happy in the picture, but I am alive.

The first year of my life I received a great deal of attention from my parents and the members of my father's congregation, and I might have grown up to be a spoiled brat. However, my widowed grandmother, with her two youngest children, Tante Alwine, 10 years old, and Uncle Otto, 11 years old, came from Germany to live with us before I was 2 years old. My mother was pregnant again, although the doctor had said she could have no more children.

Under these circumstances, my grandmother took over the responsibility of looking after me. Grandmother had an inimitable talent for telling stories and playing games with small children. We two became fast friends, and together we lived in "Never-Never Land" for a large part of every day. Grimm's and Anderson's fairy tales became a part of my life, as did Hey's beautiful fables in verse, Max and Moritz and many other stories, games and songs in German. To these early years with Grandmother, as well as the years in New York in my teens, I owe my love for the German language and literature and probably also an idealistic attitude toward life. Grandmother Tappert was an idealist, if there ever was one.

My education in those formative years could not be called one-sided. My Uncle Otto, a witty, talented ne'er-do-well teenager, did his best to undo the good influence of my parents and grandmother. Before I was two, he used to take me out for an airing in my baby carriage. Little did my parents suspect what wild rides we two enjoyed until a neighbour caught us one day and snitched.

There was a cemetery adjoining the church property with well-levelled paths or roads. The terrain was slightly hilly and Uncle Otto took me here for my first roller coaster experience. He would push the carriage up the road, turn it around, give it a push, and then run wildly after it. Usually the carriage upset at the bottom of the hill. I must have fallen on my head several times, because how else would you explain my being such a complete nut, in a family of perfectly normal, intelligent persons, excepting Uncle Otto, of course. We were kindred spirits.

Another part of my early training I relived in Father's study. Here I spent many blissful hours while my young uncle and aunt were in school and mother and grandmother busy with household chores.

My favorite perch was Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, which, when lying on the floor, made a perfect throne for me from which I could watch Father, often pacing back and forth, deep in thought. I have been told that when I got tired of sitting on the dictionary, I would join Father, hands behind my back, looking up at him so that I would mimic his every movement. When I was a little older, the dictionary throne was discarded and I lay prone on my stomach with some book or magazine in front of me. I can still remember the fascination that brought me back again and again to a large, profusely illustrated copy of Milton's Paradise Lost. Father was hard put to answer my questions concerning these pictures. When I later studied parts of this great work in literature class, I felt I was renewing an old acquaintance.

In due time my sister Ruth arrived, and two years later, my sister Martha. Sometime in this period, Grandmother, Uncle Otto and Tante Alwine moved to New York to live with my bachelor uncle, but not before Uncle Otto and I had gotten into a few more scrapes. Uncle Otto was very fond of the sweet pickled sickle pears that Mother made. The sickle pear is a very tiny pear that is pickled whole, as one pickles whole, small, green tomatoes. One day while Uncle Otto was doing his lessons at the dining room table and Mother was busy at the sewing machine in the kitchen, Uncle Otto asked me to bring him a pear. I tiptoed into the pantry, climbed up the counter and took a pear out of a glass bowl. When I came out of the pantry, I saw that Mother was watching me, so I held the pear

behind my back, and then, to make doubly sure that my misdeed would not be detected, I turned my back to Mother. (This reasoning must have been the result of one of those falls on my head.) Uncle Otto didn't get his pear and I got a spanking. This was not the first nor the last one I received because of my love and devotion to Uncle Otto.

On another occasion when Uncle Otto found me making mud pies, he told me I would grow up real fast if I ate them. I started to do just that, but Mother caught me and, you guessed it, spanked me.

Then there was the time when Uncle Otto was to recite a German poem at a young people's social evening at church. He practised reciting the poem to me with all sorts of motions and intonations. I didn't understand the poem, of course, but I loved being Uncle Otto's audience. Just for fun, he changed the line "Glaubst Du mein Ross hat Fluegel?" (Do you think my steed has wings?) to "Glaubst Du mein Ross frisst Zwiebein?" (Do you think my steed eats onions?). He would point his finger at me and dramatically ask the question. I would screech with glee. Father told him several times to stop the nonsense, but he and I were having a ball. On the night of the entertainment, he got up on the stage and recited, but he had substituted onions for wings so often, that he automatically used the silly line and the audience just about rolled in the aisles. This time I didn't get a spanking, even though Uncle Otto claimed it was all my fault.

The bay rum episode cannot be blamed on Uncle Otto. I pulled that one off all by myself. Father used bay rum, whether as a hair tonic or after shave lotion, I don't know. At any rate, he left the bottle within my reach one day, and the story goes that I took a good swig of the stuff. Since the Tapperts can make a big production of a small incident, this little story was probably embellished in order to tease and embarrass me whenever it was retold. Now that I am nearly 75 and not yet an alcoholic, I don't mind repeating it. I am supposed to have staggered downstairs with eyes bulging. Mother and Grandmother pounced on me, demanding what I had been doing. "Hic! - nothing - hic!" was my reply. Naturally they could smell the bay rum, probably not so much on my breath as on my clothes, I would imagine, but that possibility was never mentioned when I was teased about my early start on the downward path. Mother was hysterical,

expecting me to die of acute alcoholism, right then and there, but Grandmother rinsed out my mouth, made me drink something, what I don't recall, to dilute whatever had reached my stomach and then gave me a spanking to boot. Grandmother could be very practical in a crisis, having raised 6 boys and 3 girls successfully, except for Uncle Otto, of course.

The foregoing episodes in my life were told to me again and again by Uncle Otto and Tante Alwine as I tried to grow up into a sensible, lady-like girl. Always I was reminded that I was really an imp at heart. Often I resented the teasing, or at least felt embarrassed, but gradually I learned to accept it as part of my life and perhaps even enjoyed it.

When I was going on seven, my oldest brother, Rein, was born (July 11, 1899). I became very fond of him, even though he tried my strength and patience many a time after he learned to walk. He was born with the wanderlust plus a love for the "choo-choo cars" and would wander off, usually while Mother was busy preparing the noon-day meal. Looking back now, over the years, I can see Mother anxiously looking up and down the street as I turned the corner on my way home from school. I would fly toward Hanover Street as fast as my skinny, long legs would carry me. Then down Hanover toward the railway tracks. Sometimes I would catch up to the little toddler before he reached the tracks and on other occasions I would find him sitting close to the tracks, either waiting for a train, or watching one. To find him was one thing, but to take the stubborn, kicking boy away from the "choo-choo" was quite another. Often some kindly adult would assist me, or Father would come to rescue us.

On another occasion, possibly the summer of 1901, when Rein was 2 years old, Mother, Rein and I went to Greenport, Mother's home, for a visit. We took the boat "Skinnecock" from New London, Connecticut. I had to watch little Johnny Overalls, as most people called him, and that was quite a chore. He was fascinated by a sliding door that he could manipulate and spent much time opening the door, calling "Beerport" (meaning Greenport) and then closing it again. Why Mother went to Greenport at that time and where she left Ruth and Martha, I don't know.

During our visit we were invited to Sunday dinner at the parsonage. Mother left me at home with Rein while the rest of the family went to church. I had instructions to dress Rein in his Sunday best and bring him to the parsonage in time for dinner. I don't recall that I had any difficulty dressing him, but I have a very vivid recollection of trying to get Rein to walk to the parsonage with me. He wanted to go to the beach and play in the sand. I would carry the squirming boy until my strength gave out and then I would try to coax him to walk with me, always keeping a firm grip on him or his clothing somewhere, so that he couldn't run away. Finally, a man who had been watching us from his rocking chair on his front porch, came down, asked me what I was trying to do, and when he felt sure that I was trying to carry out Mother's instructions, he laid Rein over his knee, gave him a few resounding whacks and told him to go along with his sister, or else. We arrived at the parsonage in time for dinner, Rein sullen and weeping and I completely exhausted and somewhat dishevelled.

January 21, 1902, Gustav was born. A few weeks later all of us children, except for myself, came down with scarlet fever. The house was placed under quarantine and if Father wanted to continue serving the congregation, he had to move out. This was a hard decision to make and it had to be made while the doctor waited. Father decided that his congregation probably needed him more than his family, since he didn't feel qualified to help Mother with the nursing. Many families were stricken with the dread disease and many children were dying, so he decided to move out.

Mother and I packed his clothes while he gathered his books, papers, private communion set, etc. together under the watchful eye of the doctor. He moved in with members of the congregation living across the street from the parsonage. They had no children and were willing to take a chance.

After Father was out, Mother carried beds and bedding downstairs, moved the dining room furniture out and converted the room into a hospital ward. When I think of all this today, I am overwhelmed by Mother's ability to cope with such a difficult situation so soon after the baby's birth. The baby, not yet sick, was isolated with me during the day in the sewing-playroom, off the opposite end of the kitchen, and I helped Mother as well

as a 10 year old could. I was probably more of a nuisance than a help, but I definitely remember feeling the weight of Mother's responsibility and worries in those dark days.

It was inevitable, I suppose, despite Mother's meticulous cleanliness and precautions, that the baby should come down with scarlet fever too. He was very sick indeed. One night, especially, Mother held him in her lap and bathed him constantly to cool the fevered body. The doctor had given up all hope of saving him, but Mother's loving vigil and prayers, as well as Father's fervent prayers, brought the child through safely, by the grace of God.

When Mother greeted the doctor at the door the next morning with a weary, but relieved smile, he said "Is the baby really alive?" This moment at the door made a lasting impression on me, for I probably had not realized until then that the angel of death had passed by during the night.

At least on one occasion during this trying time I added to Mother's trials with a sleep-walking episode. As I mentioned before, Mother and the patients were in a make-shift ward in the dining room, while I continued to sleep in my bed upstairs. One night Mother heard noises from above and reached the foot of the stairs in time to see me descending, asleep, with a lighted coal-oil lamp in my hand. Her first reaction was an impulse to rush up and take the lamp before I tripped on my long night-gown, but Father had warned her on other occasions not to startle a sleep-walker, so she held her breath, and with a prayer on her lips, slowly inched up toward me and the lamp. The lamp was a small night lamp of rose-coloured glass and it always stood on the table in the upstairs hall. Had I tripped, or dropped the lamp, it would have shattered and the oil could have caused a disastrous fire.

I have been told that I did quite a bit of sleep walking when I was 10 to 12 years old. Father once found me in the coal bin when he had gone down to bank the furnace for the night. Since Mother was already asleep, he led me back to my bed and tucked me in, black feet and all. Both Father and I heard about that the next morning when Mother saw my feet and the dirty sheets.

I remember Gustav mainly as a pale child, the little fellow who always struck terror in my heart when I was awakened at night by the sound of his epileptic seizures. Mother had been told by the doctor to keep him from being overactive during the day in order to keep the seizures down, but how to keep a Tappert youngster quiet, he didn't say. He did tell Mother, however, that Gustav would probably outgrow the seizures, and that is exactly what happened. Gustav has lived an active life as manager of a chain of food stores in New Rochelle, and has two healthy children and two grandchildren, and is now retired.

Ted was born May 5, 1904. He was a chubby, cuddly baby with very blue eyes. One day Mother sent me to town to buy material for rompers for Ted and I came home with blue chambray. Mother was dismayed because the colour was not dark enough to "hide the dirt", but I countered that the colour just matched Ted's eyes and, therefore, I couldn't resist buying the material, even though I realized it wasn't very practical. Ted, like Rein, was a very stubborn, determined boy. This stubbornness paid off later when he used it to get an education with a minimum of money. Many another boy would have given up. Since he finished his studies at the Mt. Airy Seminary in Philadelphia, he has been on the teaching staff there, first as assistant professor and very soon as full professor of historical theology and church history. He received a doctor's degree from Wagner College at a very early age.

On May 30, 1906 Hans (John) was born. When he was a little toddler we had quite a time trying to teach him to eat grapes properly. There was a grape arbor in our back yard and when the grapes were ripe they were quite an attraction for all of us. Hans watched us pull a grape from a bunch, squeeze the grape into our mouth and throw away the skin. Somehow he couldn't quite get the hang of it and always spit the grape out and swallowed the skin, or he would pick unripe grapes. Hans was perhaps one of the most active of the active Tappert tribe. He could climb like a monkey and it is a wonder to me that all nine of us survived our growing years with all our limbs intact. Hans later made quite a name for himself as a physicist. He worked for the U.S. government on some very secret assignments. His sudden death in June 1959 at the age of 53 was a great shock to us all. He left his widow and seven children to mourn his

loss. I felt his absence from our gathering in 1962 very keenly since this was the first family reunion since his death that I attended. The occasion was in honour of our last surviving aunt of the Tappert side, Tante Alwine, who was celebrating her 80th birthday. Incidentally, I had turned 70 only a little more than a month earlier. Gustav was 65, so three birthdays were celebrated at the same time at Ted's.

The year 1907 was to be a turning point in my life. On Palm Sunday of that year I was confirmed. That in itself made the day memorable, but there were other important events celebrated at the gathering that afternoon. Grandmother, Uncle Gustav, Tante Alwine and her fiance, Edwin Charles Grindrod, the organist in Uncle Gustav's congregation, came from New York directly after the morning service there. Uncle Franz (Frank) Tappert and his wife, Aunt Martha, with their four children were present too. Uncle Franz was one of my sponsors and he had made a cross out of a gold piece for me, and had given me a very pretty chain to go with it. I still have and treasure it.

For me, the confirmation of my faith in my Creator and Redeemer was a very solemn and very important act. The fact that my father had given me the same confirmation verse that he had received at his confirmation made me very happy. The verse is Matthew 11:28, 29 Come unto me and I will give you rest! What comforting words. Many years later I asked Pastor Haave, of Sexsmith, Alberta, to give the same verse to John Peter Leberecht, my "favourite" son, and I hope it will help him, as it has helped me, over the rough spots in life.

The celebration that followed the service turned the spotlight on the guests from New York. Grandmother was celebrating the 50th anniversary and Tante Alwine the 10th anniversary of confirmation on that Palm Sunday and in addition to all that, Tante Alwine's engagement to Edwin Charles Grindrod was announced.

As if that were not enough for one day, Grandmother, Tante Alwine and Uncle Gustav went into a huddle with Father and then announced that I was to go to New York in September to attend high school there and help Grandmother in the parsonage after Tante Alwine's wedding.

The wedding was to be in June but the bank crash of 1907 put an end to those plans. Uncle Edwin worked for the Knickerbocker Trust Company and didn't know from one day to the next whether he would be out of work or not. Both the Knickerbocker Trust Company and Uncle Edwin weathered the storm eventually and the wedding took place one year later, June 1908.

In September 1907, I went to New York, nevertheless, to start my high school education there because Father felt that the New York schools were superior to those in Connecticut.

Before telling of my experiences in New York, I want to tell of a few incidents that happened in Meriden during my childhood. I cannot relate them in chronological order because I haven't the vaguest idea when they happened. "My mind lets go a thousand things, Like dates of wars and deaths of Kings". So said Thomas Bailey Aldrich in "Memory", but the incidents are still vivid in my memory.

Before I tell of the incidents I remember, I must tell of two that happened when I was still too young to remember, but was teased about often enough.

Father always related this one with great pride to prove that as a preacher he was a real spellbinder. One Sunday morning, when I was still in the crawling stage, I got away from my mother during the sermon and crawled to the chancel and then started to climb up the pulpit steps before one of the council men realized what was happening. When he noticed me, he retrieved me and brought me back to Mother. This incident, when retold, always started an argument, because there was always bound to be someone who refused to accept Father's explanation, saying that the sermon must have put the entire congregation to sleep.

On another occasion, when I was somewhat older, but still not old enough to have inhibitions, I called out quite audibly during the sermon, "Papa sag Amen" (Papa say Amen!). Apparently I had had enough of that sermon.

Now to a few incidents that I remember myself. I liked to wander around in the cemetery that bordered the church property. It was the city cemetery and took up several blocks. I rarely wandered far, but close behind our barn and sheds there was a baby's grave, enclosed by a low fence.

The headstone had a lamb on it, and even though the lamb was carved of stone, I often stroked the lamb and put flowers on the neglected grave. I remember telling Grandmother that I wanted a lamb on my headstone when I died.

Not far from this grave was a hollow old oak tree where I often watched squirrels play. Just before Easter, Grandmother would take me to this oak tree with a letter to the Easter Bunny, asking for purple Easter eggs. For me Easter was purple at that time of my life. Now I colour it green, the color of hope. In the course of the years, that old oak tree had more illegible notes thrown into its hollow trunk than the squirrels could handle, because as I grew older, I took my young brothers to the tree with the same tale that Grandmother had told me.

One other cemetery incident stands out vividly. By this time I was no longer stroking a marble lamb or writing illegible notes to the Easter Bunny.

It happened in the dead of a cold winter's night. The doorbell rang and a burly Irish policeman asked the Reverend Father whether he would please accompany him into the cemetery where a drunk had taken refuge. The doorbell must have awakened me and I heard Father telling Mother that he was going to the cemetery in order to keep the ghosts at bay while the policeman rescued the drunk. I trembled with excitement and had visions of Father as a knight in shining armour, bravely protecting the burly policeman and his drunken burden from a legion of evil spirits. I crept either to the bathroom window or the one in the guest room, I can't remember which. Both overlooked the cemetery. I saw no ghost or evil spirits -- just Father with the stable lantern leading the way, while the burly policeman, probably with quaking knees, followed. He was a superstitious fellow and needed the Reverend Father for protection. For me it was a most disappointing anticlimax after I had conjured up such exciting ghosts in my imagination. I think Mother had some hot cocoa ready for Father when he got back into the house, but probably I was fast asleep before they got back to bed.

And now to New York. I was thrilled at the prospect of being with Grandmother again and frightened at the thought of going to the big high school in the big city of New York. Early in September, a few days before

the opening of school, I arrived in New York. Grandmother and Tante Alwine were still in the Catskill Mountains where Father and his two brothers had bought an old farm in order to have a summer home for Grandmother who suffered from asthma and couldn't stand the summer climate in New York. Those first weeks alone with Uncle Gustav and Uncle Otto in the eight-room parsonage were lonely and at times frightening. One morning Uncle Gustav took me to Morris High School where I was to write entrance exams before being admitted. I was given a sheet of questions covering all the subjects I was supposed to have studied, some paper and then taken to a large empty room and left alone for two hours. You can imagine my dismay when I found questions that were way beyond me. Obviously the New York system was ahead of that of Connecticut and I had visions of returning to Meriden, a failure. Nothing daunted, but with a wildly beating heart, I set to work to do my best with the questions I felt I could answer and after two hours someone came to take my papers and set me free.

Two days later I returned to hear the verdict and, hopefully, to enroll. I was put on six weeks probation and that was the end of that. Four years later I graduated and enrolled at Hunter College. I was never a brilliant student and had to work hard to get decent grades.

My favorite teacher at high school was Mr. Reynolds, the Latin teacher. He was tall and thin with very craggy features, but a wonderful personality and a very good teacher.

The "sounds" of New York, at least the part of the Bronx where I lived, made the greatest impression on me. They were so different from those of the smaller city in which I had grown up. There was no surcease from them, day or night.

The most compelling sound was probably the constant rumble of subway trains on 3rd Avenue when they emerged, not far from the parsonage, to climb to the elevated railroad tracks above the street. Every few minutes a train of cars would come to the surface with a terrible racket. A different sound came through the kitchen window. It was the honky tonk music of the Nickelodian behind the parsonage. These small movie houses were just beginning to proliferate. There for a nickel you could watch

Desperate Desmond pursuing some frail heroine while the hero risked his life to save her. All this in jerky motion pictures without sound track. The person at the piano pounded out music that was supposed to fit the scene. I never entered one of these "dens of iniquity", but later saw pictures shown in documentaries after the movie industry had become respectable.

From the front came the monotonous droning of pupils in the neighbouring synagogue and sometimes the hauntingly beautiful chanting of the psalms during a service.

From below arose the sounds of the street. Italians with push-carts filled with fruits and vegetables sometimes sang arias from operas as they slowly made their way along the street. Or a Jewish rag picker would wend his way along calling, "Old rags, bottles and bones!" Then there was the organ grinder with his monkey, grinding out the same tunes, day after day. Over all this clamor, on foggy days was the steady, low-pitched fog horn, accompanied by the clippety clop of horses' hooves over the cobblestones. Again and again I felt with the poet, "I have a need of silence and of stars. Too much is said too loudly".

Probably the most frightening experience of those first weeks in New York was on a hot and humid night when I was alone in the big house, reading Edgar Allan Poe's Pit and Pendulum. The story fascinated me and gave me goose pimples at the same time, but just as I was getting to the climax of the tale, I was really frightened out of year's growth. I heard a noise at the open window and when I looked up, two big glowing eyes appeared, staring straight at me. If I hadn't been petrified with fear, I would have screamed. As it was, I just sat there and stared at the eyes that stared at me. Finally, it seemed like ages, the terrible spell was broken by a plaintive "Meow!" Did I close the book and hurry to bed? Oh no! I finished the horrible story and waited up for Uncle Gustav and Uncle Otto to come home so I could tell them how foolishly frightened I had been. (I was probably afraid to go upstairs alone.)

There were times when I missed my family keenly, but on the whole I was quite happy that first year and gradually, from year to year, I felt

more and more at home in New York, though I was always glad to get back to green grass, children and the more quiet surroundings of the Meriden parsonage during summer vacations, though the immediate surroundings in the parsonage were anything but quiet.

On June 9, 1908 Tante Alwine and Uncle Edwin were married. I remember very little of the actual ceremony, but I recall vividly going out into the country with friends the day before the wedding and picking huge armsful of daisies to decorate the church. I also remember being bug-eyed over Tante Alwine's report of the wonderful organ recital in Ocean Grove where the couple had honeymooned.

On the same day, my youngest brother Edwin was born, and named after our newest uncle, so I went back to a still larger family when school was over. Edwin is practically a stranger to me and I was back at school again when he was stricken with polio. Fortunately the disease did not cripple him, but left him in more or less delicate health. When he studied at Wagner College later, he majored in Greek and has been teaching in an Anglican Pro Seminary in Salisbury, Connecticut for many years. He is the only one in the family who never married.

My youngest sister, Lenchen (Magdalene), was born September 19, 1909. I remember her as the cryingest baby I had ever known. It must have been during the Christmas holidays that I first saw her and can recall only that my sisters and I took turns either rocking her or pushing the baby carriage back and forth to keep her quiet. I never did find out what caused her excessive grief, but it was probably because Mother couldn't find the formula that agreed with her. However, she is alive and well today, the happy grandmother of two active grandchildren. She herself never had any children, but she adopted a little girl who has since married and brought them much happiness.

I'm afraid this account of the Tappert family has given the impression that the two sisters next to me in age either don't exist, or don't count. That is not the case. When I was urged to write my memoirs, the idea was to write about my own life, but after I got started, my oldest brother somehow slipped into the story, and from then on it seemed a matter of course to continue on down the line, skipping the two sisters whose

birth and babyhood I was too young to remember.

Ruth is two years younger than I am, born September 10, 1894. As a young girl she had dark brown, snappy eyes with a pretty olive complexion. She was very alert and active and always ready to play tricks on us. Martha, four years younger than I, born September 19, 1896, was the most favored of us four girls. She had big, brown, dreamy eyes and a very fair complexion with abundant dark brown hair. She and my brother Edwin looked much like our mother who had been belle of Greenport, Long Island before her marriage. In addition to being the prettiest, she was also the most brilliant of us girls. I was the ugly duckling with freckles, big feet and a big mouth full of big teeth.

That takes care of all nine of us and I can continue with my escapades, trials, tribulations and, as of today at least, a happy ending to a full life.

Ruth, who liked housekeeping and especially baking, if my memory serves me well, ironically married a baker with enough money so that she never needed to do much in that line. The Fricks had no children, so they both worked in the business.

Martha, on the other hand, loathed anything that looked like housework. She was an avid reader, like all the Tapperts, only more so. We used to tease her about her "dishpan diarrhea" because she used to lock herself in the bathroom with a book after meals. She was a brilliant student and most, if not all, of her children did exceptionally well in their studies. She has four girls and two boys, all married. With a family of this size she was forced to do more housework than she could enjoy. C'est la vie!

When classes ended at Hunter College toward the end of May 1912, I had a three month vacation ahead of me. By this time there were no small babies at home and I decided to look for a job that would give me some pocket money, at least. Up to this time Uncle Gustav had been supplying me with enough money to buy my subway tickets for the daily trip to college and back and the very few incidentals that a frugally-raised

parsonage daughter required. I applied for a position as governess and in no time at all received an offer to take charge of four children ranging from nine to two years for \$10.00 a month plus board and room. The high school teacher who interviewed me and made the deal, was the sister of the mother of these children. Aunt Gracia, as she was called, made arrangements for me to meet the children's father at one of the ferries with her and from there we travelled to Pompton Lakes, New Jersey. Mr. Wickstead commuted daily from this charming, sleepy little town.

The family charmed me, right from the beginning. They were not wealthy, but lived in a lovely old-fashioned home with broad winding staircases and huge rooms. The children were active, inquisitive and very mannerly. There was an old-time charm about the entire home and its occupants. Mrs. Wickstead had a two-month-old baby to look after, while I mothered the other children, saw to their manners, their recreation and, at first, the lessons of the older ones.

When school was out at the end of June, we all travelled by train to a summer cottage on Culver's Lake, New Jersey. Here I took the children on short hikes, boat rides, and so on. We spent much time along the shore of the lake in front of the cottage, building sand castles, reading or telling stories or just "horsing around". Mr. Wickstead came out for weekends until the last two weeks of August, when he had his vacation. He then took us all back to Pompton Lakes by train after closing the cottage for the winter.

Back in Pompton Lakes, my troubles began. One after the other of the children came down with measles and it just never occurred to me that I hadn't been hired for 24-hour duty. I nursed the children, getting up umpteen times during the night to bring them a glass of water and/or take them to the bathroom. I just took it for granted that Mrs. Wickstead, who was nursing the baby, should not come in contact with the sick children. By the time all had recovered, I was ready to drop in my tracks and I'll never forget the sound of little Mari's singsong wail during the long nights -- "I want a drink of w-a-a-ter!" The first Sunday after all the children were well again, I fell asleep during the long prayer in the Dutch Reformed Church service. There the congregation conveniently prayed while seated.

My three months were up and I was paid the fantastic sum of \$30.00 all in one lump and my transportation back to New York was paid to boot. On top of the \$30.00, I had made a beautiful and lasting friendship which has continued to this day, even though the parents have both died.

Margaret, the oldest daughter wrote me a very nice letter after her mother died and remembers me with a short note every Christmas.

After his father's death, George, the baby during my stay, found all the letters I had written to his mother, when he was getting ready to sell the house. He, too, wrote me a nice letter telling how often his parents and older sisters and brother had spoken of "Johanna". He wrote that he and his wife would welcome me to their home if ever I should be in California. He, too, sends me heart-warming letters every Christmas.

When we spent the month of January in Pasadena and Desert Hot Springs in 1962, we also spent a day in Los Angeles and Santa Monica as guests of George and Mary Lou Wickstead. We were wined and dined royally and I was brought up-to-date on the whole family. Mary Lou was flabbergasted when she learned that I had lived with the family only three months, all told. She had the impression that "Johanna" was an old friend and frequent visitor, because my name was mentioned so often in connection with the good times we had together, as well as the measles episode that summer.

A very weary student started classes at Hunter in the fall of 1912. I didn't go home that Christmas, just why, I do not know. Possibly because my sister Martha was with me in New York attending Moris High School and the fare for two of us was considered too much. I felt miserable during the holidays but didn't think too much of it. When it was time to return to Hunter for our post-Christmas exams, I could hardly drag myself out of bed. Even then I blamed everything on exam jitters and forced myself to get to class, where I collapsed and was taken home, how I don't know. The next six weeks I hovered between life and death with an extremely high fever. The doctor diagnosed my trouble as double lobar pneumonia and pleurisy. My Aunt Emma, a deaconess at the Lankenau Hospital in Philadelphia, was given compassionate leave and came to New York to nurse me back to health. My doctor claimed I would probably not have lived, had I been sent to a hospital. The loving care given me by Grandmother and Tante Emma

helped pull me through, but the year 1913 was a complete loss as far as my studies were concerned. From January to April I struggled to get my feet under me again, and when the doctor told Uncle Gustav that I had T.B. and should be taken home to die, I was the only one who still had a glimmer of hope for a future of some sort, even though I realized that my education had come to an abrupt end. Of course, I didn't know what the doctor had told my uncle, but I wasn't so dense that I couldn't guess what was on their minds.

While I lay, so ill that I wasn't conscious of what was going on around me, my parents, brother and sisters stopped off in New York on their way to Berlin, Ontario where Father had accepted a call from St. Matthews Church. Pulling up stakes in Meriden, after a pastorate of twenty-three years, wasn't easy for my parents, and being forced to go on to Berlin (Kitchener) and leave their apparently dying first born in New York made the trip all the harder. My parents spent hours at my bedside but I showed no signs of recognition and had no recollection of having sensed their presence after I was well enough to be told.

By April the doctor felt I should be moved to Kitchener, so my Uncle Gustav took me in easy stages on the long trip. Between New York and Buffalo I lay in a lower berth. In Buffalo, Uncle Will Drach met us at the station and took us to his home where Aunt Lydia and Aunt Marie had a bed ready for me. The next day came the most difficult part of the trip. There were no sleeping cars between Buffalo and Hamilton, so I was bedded down on a coach seat. In Hamilton we had to change trains for the last leg of the trip, so that I was exhausted when I finally arrived home. However, Father had fixed up a place for me on an upstairs back porch of the parsonage. He had put up awnings and Mother had set up a cot and a table. Here I was to either die or recuperate. May and June brought little change, but gradually my appetite and strength increased, so that by July I began to negotiate the stairs and eat with the family. Then, all of a sudden, it seemed, I made more rapid progress, so that by September, against everyone's advice, I accepted the position of teacher of German for half the public schools of Kitchener. I had 700 pupils

from kindergarten to high school in two schools. After school hours I went to bed, drained of all the strength I had, but managed to be up and about again the next day. By the 1914-15 school year I was feeling quite chipper and my T.B. seemed to have been arrested. However, my troubles were far from over. August 5, 1914, war was declared. Mercifully Grandmother had died that summer. A way in which her beloved Germany was involved would have made her very unhappy. The tension between the large German population of Berlin, Ontario and the non-Germans was very great and the sinking of the Lusitania opened the flood-gates of hatred. Both Father and I were in very precarious positions. I was teaching German, of all things, and had signed a contract to June 1915 and I was too stubborn to break the contract, for two reasons -- I needed the money, \$450.00 a year, and I wasn't a quitter. The school board was just as stubborn, since most of the members were German, so I continued teaching under the most trying conditions. The children of non-German parents were told to throw stones at me and harass me in other ways. Very few ever did. After all, I was a young and not too unpopular teacher who had had a year to make friends with most of them. A detective was sent to listen in on my classes and Otto Smith (Schmidt), the principal of the school farthest from my home and also organist of our church, always accompanied me home after school to make sure I was safe. It sees, when I walked through downtown Berlin on the way to school in the morning everyone was too busy to molest me, but after school hours there was more time and inclination for mischief.

On the morning after the sinking of the Lusitania, one of the very English teachers attacked me with her hands, as though I had ordered the sinking. She believed a nephew of hers was on the ship. Otto Smith pulled her away before she could scratch my eyes out. That was the only time I was in real danger. The woman was hysterical.

When soldiers were quartered in a camp on the outskirts of Berline, things really got out of hand, but by that time my contract had expired and I had accepted a position as teacher at St. John's Orphan Farm School in Buffalo, New York, salary \$350.00 a year plus room board and laundry.

Father's position in Berlin was becoming untenable too. He had been corresponding with the Kropp Seminary, his alma mater, in Germany and some Post Office employee had reported that he was corresponding with the Krupp Works, manufacturers of the Big Bertha and other munitions. On top of that, we were American citizens, "damn Yankees", who were not helping England against the Germans at that time, therefore, parasites. On March 1916, Father felt forced by circumstances to leave a wonderful congregation and many friends and return to the U.S.A. During his short pastorate the congregation had bought some property on Benton Street and built a beautiful cut-stone edifice. St. Matthews was at that time the largest Lutheran congregation in Canada.

Once more I was separated from home and family. I spent almost five interesting, exciting but exhausting, years at the orphanage in Buffalo, teaching and trying to continue my education by correspondence with the University of Chicago.

My work in Buffalo may have been interesting and exciting, but it certainly wasn't easy. With four teachers teaching from kindergarten through high school, there was more than enough to do. Our classes varied in size and grade from year to year and sometimes from month to month. Out of the 100 children aged two to eighteen, some stayed only a short time, but we did have quite a number who stayed at the school until they were able to fend for themselves. These were the real orphans who had neither mother nor father. The others were from broken homes, or were sent to us by the county while one or both parents were in jail. These latter were often the most difficult cases and in the end, the least rewarding. They didn't stay long enough to benefit from the wholesome Christian atmosphere of the home and were apt to cause us the most trouble.

But all was not sweetness and light with the real orphans either. For instance, I arrived at the Home at about the same time as the new elementary teacher, a few days before school opening.

Can you imagine what it feels like to walk the length of a dining hall that seats 100 plus people, with 100 plus pairs of eyes staring intently at you? The children were all standing behind their

chairs when the "housefather" entered with the two new teachers. As we passed the big boys' table we heard someone whisper, "I hope we get the little one." Mr. Ehlers, the housefather, looked at us to see whether we had heard. My hearing was somewhat keener when I was 23 than it is today and I had heard but I had not seen the speaker.

After dinner, or supper, I don't remember which was our first meal, Mr. Ehlers took us out to the boys' playground where the boys stood in groups, apparently discussing the new teachers. After we had passed the group of biggest boys Mr. Ehlers told me that Charles Gould, the biggest of the lot, had thrown the last teacher down the stairs and broken her leg. That wasn't exactly reassuring and I confess I didn't sleep much that first night.

The next day I was busy looking over the text books, lists of pupils and their grades and preparing a timetable. I believe I had one more day to prepare lesson plans before the beginning of school after Labour Day. During my sleepless nights I had figured out a strategy for winning over Charles Gould before he could throw me down the stairs. I weighed less than 100 pounds at the time and Charles was the big brute who hoped he'd get "the little one".

On the first day of school, after a short introductory speech, I was ready to hand out the text books. I had been quite capable of handling them alone when I had arranged them according to grades and classes, but now I looked at them helplessly and then looked at the class as though I were looking for a strong boy and couldn't make up my mind which to choose. Then I gave Charles a sweet smile and asked him whether he would please help me. Charles' innate chivalry came to the surface immediately and he helped me lift any and everything except the piece of chalk I used to write on the blackboard. Some of the other big boys were asked to help occasionally too, but I really leaned on Charles. We became very good friends and, though he had a very quick and violent temper, it was never used against me. He was the son of a physician and had some very endearing traits as long as he wasn't crossed.

On weekends I went to stay with Uncle Will Drach, who was Pastor of Concordia Lutheran Church, Northampton Street, Buffalo. To get there I had to walk about half an hour along a country road to the streetcar. I carried an overnight case and the boys clamored for the privilege of walking as far as the streetcar with me and carrying my little suitcase. Little Arthur Pfohl was given the privilege for the very first weekend. He was small for his age and had snappy brown eyes. He would also be very stubborn, but was one of my best pupils. Near the end of my five years in Buffalo, he graduated and was sent to Wagner College, then to Mr. Airy Seminary. When my brother Ted told him in 1925 that I was getting ready to go to Saskatoon College, he immediately came to my parents' home to say goodbye. When he came in he said, "Topsy, how can you do this to me? I wanted you here next May when I graduate. After all, you are all the family I have, you know."

The orphanage was a German institution and my name, Tappert, was pronounced "Toppert", which is the correct German pronunciation. My pupils made Topsy out of it, secretly, while I was their teacher and openly when we met later. Arthur received a Ph.D later and is Pastor Emeritus at this writing.

Charles Gould joined the army during my stay in Buffalo and was killed in action. The orphanage had a number of Gold Stars on its banner, but Charles was the only casualty among my pupils.

I must mention one episode that stands out in my memory. Mr. and Mrs. Ehlers had gone to a convention for a few days leaving the institution in the hands of the teachers. One afternoon, three of the older boys ran away. We phoned the police and they promised to be on the lookout for them. The next morning there was still no word of them, but late that afternoon the police notified us the boys were at the station in precinct number so and so. We were to come and get them. What to do? Since they were older boys, Grace and I were responsible for them, so we got one of the "farm boys", a school drop-out who worked on the orphanage farm, to hitch up the democrat and take us to the precinct station. When we arrived and explained our mission, the captain was

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horrified. No, he couldn't release the boys to us. We finally persuaded him that there was no one else willing and able to take the responsibility and had the boys brought in. They were a sorry looking sight -- had walked miles across country without food and had slept in haystacks. The captain kept saying, "Those boys are desperados", but we could see that they were tired, dirty and hungry and would probably welcome a bath, a meal and a clean bed. Finally, after giving the boys a stern lecture and promising them dire punishment if they didn't behave, he let us sign some papers and released them. He also phoned the precinct on Seneca Street, which we would have to pass, to be on the lookout for us. So the six of us, the driver, Grace and I, and the three boys, crowded into the democrat and clippety-clopped over and cobblestones back to the orphanage. When we came to the precinct on Seneca Street, the entire staff had lined up along the curb to watch the two "young gals" escorting three tough boys back to the orphanage. Some waved to us, and others saluted. Grace and I thought it very funny but the boys kept their eyes down. As we had expected, we had no more trouble with them after we got them safely "home".

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We put in two extremely difficult winters while I was at the orphanage. Whether they were successive or not I cannot recall. The one was an unusually cold winter when the natural gas supply from Buffalo suddenly petered out. In one way we were very fortunate because the building was heated with coal and only the lighting system was serviced by gas. At least we were warm while using stable lanterns for light. Even those were in short supply and couldn't be bought for love or money, so we were up against quite a disciplinary problem for weeks. It seemed like months or years before we could get electricians to convert the old gas fixtures to electric lights. It must be remembered that the entire city of Buffalo was frantically calling for tradesmen and materials. The people who could afford it moved to hotels, while the others shivered in the dark at home. Our big boys took advantage of the dark to visit the older girls but were soon found out. Whether someone snitched or one of the staff stumbled into a rendezvous, I don't recall. I do recall that the staff was called together to work out some sort of solution to the problem. The fire laws did not permit us to lock the doors leading from the boys' wing to the girls' wing, nor were we permitted to lock the

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doors or windows to the fire escapes. We ended up in strategically-placed sleeping quarters where we could be more easily alerted by any unnecessary movements during the night. We patrolled the corridors and/or windows most likely to be used before bed-time. Sometimes this was done simply by sitting in a doorway or under a window when we had heard via the grapevine that a rendezvous was planned. We counted heads often and put the night watchman on double duty and changed his hours from night to night. Instead of punching the clock at the different stations once an hour, he, or a relief, punched every half hour, changing the route so that the boys and girls could never be sure when he would be along. That trying time passed without any serious incidents though there were plenty of humorous ones. We would have probably enjoyed the humour of the entire situation more had we not been so weary and worried.

The winter of 1918-19 was my undoing. Fifty-three children came down with the terrible flu that ravaged the whole country after the war. The epidemic started during the worst snow storm I experienced in Buffalo. The snow was piled to the second-storey windows on the windward side of houses and people living on one side of a street could leave and enter their homes only through the front entrance, while across the street only the back entrance could be shovelled free. Under the circumstances, we were isolated for days, since we were on a country road between Buffalo and Gardenville. The doctor diagnosed and prescribed by telephone. Inside a few days we had 53 very sick patients. Classes were discontinued and the teachers turned nurses. We took temperatures, counted pulses, carried bed pans, of which there were not enough, bathed feverish bodies, carried water and so, until we were ready to drop. Mercifully we didn't lose a single patient. After the road was cleared, at least partially, one of our farm boys was sent to the Seneca Street corner with horse and sleigh to pick up the mail and meet a nurse who was to relieve us. The nurse got into the sleigh, but while the sleigh was trying to turn around for the trip back, it upset and the nurse was injured. She was taken to the hospital, how or by whom, I don't know, and we were left to carry on alone. When a wealthy brewer, member of one of the Buffalo Lutheran churches, heard of our dilemma and was told that we couldn't carry on much longer, especially since the patients were getting to the stage

where they needed food, solid food, he came out to help us himself.

He was a fat, jolly man and did much to lift our morale. He carried trays from the kitchen to the dormitories, up a long flight of steps and miles of walking. He was kept busy all day long carrying endless trays of food up and fetching dishes down, fetching water, helping the cook, cheering the patients, and so on.

The doctor had said the patients could have a full meal after their temperatures had been normal one full day. Some of the older boys and girls tried to fool us by putting their thermometers into their water glasses as soon as we turned to the next bed. I still remember the horrified looks on their faces when I called out, "Johnny won't need any more meals, ever. He's dead. His temperature is down to 90 degrees." That stopped the monkey business with their thermometers, especially since we no longer turned our backs on a patient with a thermometer in his mouth.

I pretty nearly became the only casualty of the epidemic. I simply dropped in my tracks one day and don't remember much of what happened until I was on the way to recovery. Perhaps if I had had a conscientious doctor at that time my lung condition would not have gotten out of hand. On the other hand, perhaps the damage had already been done. At any rate, as soon as I could get around, I started classes again, but grew weaker and weaker from day to day. Finally in May, I went to a lung specialist because the medicine the Gardenville doctor was giving me for "bronchitis" wasn't doing me any good. Why I hadn't gone there two or three years before when I had first started going downhill with my health, I'll never know. Low I.Q., the many falls on my noggin when I was a child? I don't recall ever really being worried about my health or lack of it. I accepted my tiredness the way I accepted the sun, rain, heat and cold -- something that was part of my life and at times rather a nuisance. I never had more than average intelligence, but in most cases I was gifted with a good bit of common sense. In the area of my health, my common sense seemed to have deserted

me or I would have quit the orphanage and the Buffalo area years before it was almost too late.

The specialist, a nasty beast of a man, listened to my chest and then questioned me. "What was I doing? Where did I live? Did I have brothers and sisters, etc.?" When he had the picture he lit into me. Told me my lungs were shot; I was a menace to all with whom I came in contact; I was not to return to the orphanage even to get my belongings; I was not to go home, etc. etc. Not one kind, helpful word did that man utter. I told him I couldn't leave my classes. My pupils were preparing for Regents' exams in June. At that he bellowed at me he would send the police to the orphanage if I set foot in the place and he was going to report the Gardenville doctor for malpractice. His final insult was to ask me for \$20.00 as his fee for being so nasty. My salary was \$35.00 a month, but fortunately, I had \$20.00 with me and since he had said I wouldn't even live until June to get my pupils ready for their exams, I suppose it didn't matter that he was taking practically all I had in my purse.

I remember taking a nickel out of my purse after paying the doctor and, with that clutched in my hot hand for car fare to Uncle Will's, I found myself out on the street. I was dazed. I was angry at the doctor. I was concerned about my pupils and I forgot all about the nickel and the streetcar. I just walked in a sort of trance until another doctor, a nose, ear, throat specialist, saw me and stopped to ask how I was. He was a Lutheran who did all the tonsillectomies free at the orphanage and knew me quite well. I came out of my trance and talked. I told him all my troubles and worries in a few minutes. My guardian angel must have sent him along, for he took my arm and led me to his car. Nickel still clutched in my hand, I arrived at Uncle Will's. The good doctor, I've forgotten his name, told Uncle Will and Aunt Lydia I was to be put to bed and kept there until they heard from him. He would make arrangements to have me sent to Perrysburg, a sanitorium south of the Iroquois Indian Reserve in New York State. He was on the board of directors there and used his influence to get me in. Whether he got me in free or persuaded organizations of the Lutheran Churches

in Buffalo to pay for me, I never found out. In order to give me peace of mind, Aunt Lydia said she would take over my classes for the rest of the term, about three weeks. Aunt Lydia had been a high school teacher in Syracuse before she married. Uncle Will was quite willing to take her out and bring her back every day. With these arrangements completed, I was sent to bed and the good doctor went about the business that I had interrupted with my tale of woe. I gratefully sank into my pillows and let the rest of the world go on without me. I slept and ate and slept some more without a single care. When I think back now. I marvel and feel that I cannot be grateful enough that I was born into a family that was so ready and willing to help me whenever I was in real trouble. I had nothing to do with this. It all happened before I fell on my head.

In New York in early 1913 when the door to my education and possibly to my whole future was slammed shut so suddenly by an attack of double lobar pneumonia and pleurisy, Grandmother and Tante Emma took such wonderful care of me that I survived against the expectations of my doctor. Now again, an aunt and an uncle, this time from the Drach side, unquestioningly took over and helped me when once again a door was closed. The coveted degree I had been working for had disappeared into the mists of tomorrow and I had only the letters T.B. to show for my efforts.

In due time I was taken to Perrysburg, where I underwent a very strenuous "cure". My bed was rolled into my room only for my daily baths, meals and back rubs, then out onto an open porch again. During the first warm months this was pleasant enough, but during the winter when the wind blew the snow down my neck, it was somewhat less than pleasant. We were bundled into layers and layers of clothes, given a warm "pig" to keep stocking-enclosed feet warm, covered with heavy blankets and then rolled out onto the open porch, neither glass nor screen enclosed, to suffer through the nights. The cold itself wasn't so bad, but the snow! If I moved my head or my shoulders just a tiny bit, the cold, white, wet stuff would, willy-nilly, trickle down my neck.

If you are wondering about the "pig", I'll just copy something out of my diary.

Ode to My Pig

Let others sing of birds and flowers
Of lover's tryst in leafy bowers!
I'll pen my ode - yea, dance a jig
In honor of my dear stone pig.
His body is of hardest clay.
I'll grant the truth of what you say,
But haste to add, lest you forget
His heart's the warmest I have met.

All through the winter months so drear
He keeps me warm - no frost I fear
And when the weather milder grows,
I put him by until it snows.

Let others sing of birds and flower,
Of lover's tryst in leafy bower!
I'll pen my ode - yea, dance a jig
In honor of my dear stone pig.

Pig in the Bed

You have heard of the "Pig in the Parlour"
And of pigs that are kept in a sty
But the very thought of a pig in the bed
Makes the average person feel shy.

But this pig is a little companion
Whose presence all seem to enjoy
We girls caress him with rapture
And the boys to his worth testify.

Sometime after Christmas I was allowed to get up for short periods which were increased gradually until I was permitted to go to the dining room for meals. The terrible 12-6 ordeal had been suspended as soon as I had begun to gain weight. This diet consisted of 12 glasses of milk and 6 eggs a day -- besides the three regular trays at meal times. The eggs were most often served in the milk as egg nog. If I remember correctly, the soft boiled breakfast egg was counted too. This terrible diet was imposed on me when I failed to gain weight on the regular diet. Terrible as it was, it brought results and gradually my weight edged towards 90 and

then toward 100 pounds. Never in my 27 years had I managed to tip the scales at 100 pounds. On several occasions I had come close, but in the last years had slipped dangerously below that mark.

In June 1921 I was discharged from the San but was told my T.B. was not yet fully arrested and I would have to stay away from children and young people especially. Simply let loose to spread the disease! It is hard to grasp the rapid changes that have been made in health care since then. I went back to Buffalo while Father tried to find a San that would take me at a fee that he could afford, or more correctly, could ill afford. The Missouri Church San in Wheatridge, Denver, wanted more per month than his entire monthly salary. With a heavy heart Father wrote me to come home, which at the time was in New Rochelle, New York. How I got there I don't recall. It was June 15, 1921.

Uncle Gustav had made arrangements that I spend the summer in West Hurley. What would I have done without my aunts and uncles! The problem was that I couldn't look after myself since I was still too weak, so Mother, with the younger children, moved into the lodge below Uncle Gustav's big house.

This should have been a pleasant summer, but I was at "wit's-end corner". All doors seemed to be closed against me. I was worried about transmitting my germs to my brothers and sister and felt restless and trapped. Finally, just before it was time to leave West Hurley at the end of August, I found an ad in one of my San magazines that brought a glimmer of hope.

A Dr. Turner in Eagleville, Pa., was looking for a T.B. patient who would be able to discipline 30 T.B. children in return for board, room, laundry, medical care and pocket money.

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast." I applied and in due time was asked to come to Eagleville for an interview. That posed a problem. We had returned to New Rochelle and the trip had tired me dreadfully. However, I was determined. Father accompanied me to the train for Philadelphia. Tante Emma met me there and took me to the Mary J. Drexel Hom, The Lutheran Deaconess' Home, where she lived. Here I was

sent to bed and a tray of food was brought to me. The next morning I slept late, had breakfast in bed and finally started out for Norristown, where I had to change to a "Toonerville Trolley" which would take me to Eagleville. "Eagleville" was a general store on the turnpike, but when I got off the trolley-car, Dr. Turner was waiting with his car.

He showed me the children's pavilion and told me his troubles with nurses who were unable to keep children in line. I told him how I thought I would go about the job, but that I would have to do most of the work sitting down, since I still required considerable rest to prevent a flare-up. After the interview, I was given some food and permitted to rest before Dr. Turner took me back to the trolley for my return to Philadelphia. Here I stayed overnight again with Tante Emma. Then I returned to New Rochelle to await Dr. Turner's decision. Those were anxious days! Finally word came that I was to report for work on October 1st. An open door at last!

The first months were extremely difficult. I tired too quickly, but was determined to make a go of it. Gradually the excellent food and the fairly easy work strengthened me and by the next September I was able to teach two hours a day in the open classroom.

While the work was not exactly what I had dreamed of when I was young and foolish, I was happy to be alive and useful. I had neither the time, the strength nor the inclination for regrets or self pity. I became involved -- with the children and their needs, with the parents and their anxieties, and last, but not least, with the experiments and tests the doctors were making on the children.

The first year I had a double status at the San. I was a member of the staff, but I was also a patient with all the restrictions of the other patients. When I was not on duty I was required to rest and could not leave the place without special permission from the head doctor.

Once again my relatives came to my rescue. Tante Emma persuaded my cousin Fritz, who was studying law at the University of Pennsylvania, to visit me every Saturday afternoon. She packed a

marvelous lunch for the two of us so that we could have a picnic, indoors when the weather turned cold, but a picnic for two, nevertheless.

We both enjoyed these pleasant interludes very much and Fritz was a faithful visitor until he graduated and returned to Johnstown, Pa. to practice. When Pastor Evers heard of Fritz's weekly jaunts to Eagleville by train, trolley and finally on foot, he offered the use of his car. He later jokingly claimed that the car could find its way to the San without his steering it.

In 1925 my parents moved to Philadelphia because Father had been named editor of The Lutherische Herold.

By this time I was becoming a bit restive. My health had improved and I was getting a fair salary, but my subconscious yearned for something more challenging, so when I received a letter from Pastor Harms, principal of Saskatoon College and Seminary, asking me to come as teacher and Dean of Women, I became quite excited. However, my doctor told me it would be suicide to go into such a cold and forbidding climate. I wrote Pastor Harms that my health would not permit me to accept the position he offered. That was that, I thought, but along came another plea from Pastor Harms telling me that he and his friend, Pastor Evers, considered me eminently suited for the work he had in mind. (They must have heard that I had fallen on my head too often as a child.) Once more I wrote Pastor Harms telling him that my doctors advised against trying to live in Saskatchewan. Not daunted, Pastor Harms sent me an urgent telegram. This time I put letters and telegram into my bag and took the trolley, train, subway and, I believe finally a street-car, to my parents' home in Philadelphia.

After I had shown Father the correspondence, I told him I didn't know what more I could do to persuade Pastor Harms to leave me alone. Father thought for a while and then looked at me with a twinkle in his eye and said something to the effect that it might be an interesting change and no one expected me to marry the institution. I could always come back. That was all I needed. I wired that I would come. I gave notice in Eagleville and on November 30th, I left the San with mixed

feelings. The doctors who gave me a send-off, predicted I would be back in a boxcar in six months, but wished me well, nevertheless.

The month of December I spent brushing up on English history and literature and acquiring warm clothes for the northern climate. Christmas week I set off into the unknown.

Actually this was the first time in my life that I had been able to make my own decision concerning my life. I had had a secure position in Eagleville and only an urge for adventure, or was it Pastor Harms' appeal to my missionary spirit, had prompted my surrender to his pleas. It must have been a mixture of both, because the one or the other alone could not have had force enough to propel me into a situation that was far from ideal.

As Dean of Women and teacher of the humanities in all four years of the high school curriculum, I was now earning \$1,400.00 a year and living in slum conditions.

I had been prepared to cope with primitive conditions but had never equated "primitive" with "unsanitary". For six years I had been living in T.B. sanitarium under aseptic conditions, so I was appalled at the lack of water and the unsanitary condition of the water barrels. Though I felt I could cope with, and even enjoy, the challenge for what was to me an entirely new and different culture from the one in which I had grown up, I found it difficult to accept what seemed to me contaminated water and, worse yet, by the weekend, no water at all. The water was brought in a large tank drawn by two horses and emptied into water barrels in the basement of the men's dorm by means of a long hose. In 1926 the girls occupied one room at the east end of the dorm, while I had a small bedroom and small, very small, living room next to them. We had a flush toilet in what must originally have been a clothes closet, but it had to be flushed with a pail. To get water out of the barrels we had enamel pitchers, as did the boys, who dipped into the same barrels. Some pitchers were kept clean while others were encrusted with several years' accumulation of dirt. I shuddered every time I dipped into the barrel for my meagre share of the precious but not hygienically clean

water. I solved part of my problem by boiling the water in my electric coffee percolator for brushing my teeth. After all, we "girls" were better off than the boys. They didn't have an indoor toilet. Whether it was forty below zero or not, they had to use an outdoor biffy. The real crunch always came on Sundays or Monday mornings. By the time everyone had done his or her laundry, washed floors, taken sponge baths, etc., the barrels were empty. By Monday mornings the entire population in the college was apt to appear unwashed at breakfast. I always managed to squirrel away enough water to brush my teeth, but seldom was there enough to flush the toilet until the "water man" arrived.

One evening, when I went down to fill my pitcher, I found the electric bulb in the basement either missing or broken, but decided to fill the pitcher in the dark before going for a new bulb. When I reached the bottom of the stairs, I was embraced by someone who had apparently had a rendezvous with one of my girls. The culprit fled before I could identify him and while I studied my girls' expressions for a while after getting back upstairs, I never did find out for certain who had embraced me so ardently.

During the winter of 1926-27, Pastor Harms negotiated with the city for the purchase of the property directly east of the college. It had originally been a farm but was being used as an orphanage. The city was building a new orphanage and Pastor Harms wanted the property, especially the old farmhouse, for a girls' dorm. The property was acquired and we were told the orphans would move out in August.

By the end of the school term I wasn't sure that I could take any more "adventure". I was extremely weary. The unaccustomed cold, dry air and higher altitude had been too stimulating. My nerves were taut but my lungs felt better. Pastor Harms begged me to come back in fall and promised that I would have a free hand in the new?? girls' dorm. He promised everything except money for new furniture and re-decorating. The College Board had none. While I had never been inside the building, I had been told that it had running water, a septic tank, a toilet and bathtub. I couldn't resist the challenge and his pleas.

In June my cousin Fritz arrived from Johnstown, Pa., and we had ourselves a marvelous rest and holiday. I slept, ate, bathed and went sightseeing. We stayed at the Lodge at Jasper for a few days, and then travelled by C.N. along the Skeena River to Prince Rupert. From there a boat trip took us to Vancouver. There we switched to C.P. in order to travel through the famous tunnels to Banff and Lake Louise before returning to Calgary and then via C.N. again to Saskatoon. Here we had only a 20 minute stop-over, but the staff and friends were at the station to see us. From there on to Port Arthur where we boarded a steamer which took us through the locks at Sault St. Marie to Buffalo. A brief stay at Niagara Falls before returning to Philadelphia brought an interesting and restful experience to an end.

By the time I had reached Philadelphia I had a definite plan in mind. I talked to Sunday Schools, Luther Leagues, friends and relatives in and around Philadelphia, about Saskatoon. Even the editor of The Lutheran wrote an article in that magazine. From there I went to Meriden, Connecticut, where my cousin, Wilfred Tappert, was pastor of my father's former congregation. Then to Greenport, Long Island, where my brother, Reinhold, was a pillar of the church in which my parents had been married. By that time I was beginning to tire again. Everyone seemed to be infected with my enthusiasm, and although my relatives were against my returning to Saskatoon, they all chipped in financially to make my work a bit more pleasant there, when they realized I was determined to return.

A final trip to Philadelphia to say "Good-bye" and I was off toward Saskatoon again with \$1,600.00 in cash plus a promise of a piano and a sewing machine and also with several gallons of paint donated by the Du Pont Chemical Co. of New Jersey. A short stop in Buffalo yielded the promise of furniture for my own apartment from Uncle Will, who was also against my returning to Saskatoon.

Naturally we were all eager to move into the new quarters, but the new orphanage was not ready, so the girls were temporarily quartered in the auditorium of the main college building because the space in the boys' dorm was needed for the large number of men and boys enrolled for the 1927-28 school year. This arrangement caused some disciplinary

problems. I recall only that I spent some sleepless nights due to unscheduled nocturnal visits by the boys. Nothing serious -- just the normal hanky-panky encountered in most co-ed schools, that had to be nipped in the bud.

When the house on the hill was finally evacuated, everyone rushed up to inspect it. The shock of encountering a very strong odour of mice and bedbugs was almost more than I could take. One of the boys took one look, held his nose and said, "The girls can have it."

Once again the challenge soon broke the impact of the shock and the girls and I attacked the problems with vim and vigour. I have never heard of another teacher and/or Dean of Women who wielded an insecticide gun every afternoon after classes, but that was the task I took on. I waged war against bedbugs with a vengeance. The girls manned the scrub buckets while Mr. Ortlieb, the janitor, tore down the walls and shelves of a cupboard on the third floor and attacked an inch thick layer of mouse droppings with a shovel. With every thrust of the shovel he muttered "Englischer Mist" (English dung).

On Saturday I went shopping. Beds, mattresses, study tables and chairs, curtains, linoleum for the floors, etc. The furniture came first and the linoleum was laid later since we had to get the girls out of the auditorium. Some of the boys were hired to paint the walls and woodwork. A tired but happy family of girls moved into their new quarters.

When Uncle Earnest came to the next Synod meeting in June or July 1927, he came up to watch the girls pump water from the large cistern in the basement to the tank on the third floor. The pump was at the kitchen sink and the girls took turns every evening before bedtime to fill the tank. I insisted on that in order to have at least some water in case of fire. It wasn't easy work but the girls all performed willingly, for we had the only honest-to-goodness bathroom on the campus. That was worth working for, even though I had marked a water line on the tub and they were allowed only two baths a week. The water still had to be hauled from the city to fill the basement cistern. Water was

scarce and expensive. Uncle Ernest went back to New York, where he was now the secretary of the Board of American Missions, and before long I received a cheque for the purchase of a pressure pump. The old hand pump as well as the big tank on the third floor were removed with great rejoicing.

1927-28 and 1928-29 were banner years. We had trouble squeezing the students into the available space but the following years brought a sad change. The depression and drought were taking their toll. Some students couldn't afford to come back and there were fewer new students.

When one parent after the other wrote me they couldn't afford to send their daughters back to college, the wheels in my head began to spin, and the upshot was that I wrote back saying I would accept food in lieu of money. We had been eating with the boys in the so-called "boarding club", but I decided to set up housekeeping at the girls' dorm with the girls doing the cooking, baking, dishwashing, etc. The first year we tried this there were enough parents still paying cash so that the water bills, the tea, coffee, sugar, etc. could be bought. As the depression and drought worsened, there were more paying in kind and less in cash until in 1932-33 I had only one girl whose parents paid cash. We had frozen meat; mostly pork, canned meat (that is, home canned), vegetables, gallons of milk from the nearest farmer (Hartz), cream, cottage cheese, etc. One farmer (Prechtl) used the description on a box of Red River Cereal to concoct a mixture for breakfast food. His wife roasted barley which we used as a coffee substitute (ugh!) We received flour, eggs, poultry, etc. One girl who liked baking spent every Saturday morning baking a week's supply of bread and pies. These were frozen, not in a freezer, but on the second floor porch to the north, and defrosted as needed. When I made out the class schedules in September, I also made out the work schedules according to the "spares".

In the fall of 1932 I ran into the cook who had worked at a summer resort at Manitou Lake while I was there. She was desperate; had just cashed her life insurance policy and wondered how long she could live on the money. There was no work available. I told her she could

have three meals and a roof over her head if she were willing to cook for us without pay. Of course she was only too happy and moved in the next day. That relieved the girls of much work and me of the responsibility of planning meals.

In 1932-33 I was paying the water bills and many other bills out of my salary, but I knew it wouldn't be much longer. I had been told in the fall of 1932 that the High School Department would be eliminated at the end of June.

Instead of getting money for the dorm the last two years, I had been getting large shipments of used clothing from the east, which I sent to the congregations most in need.

June 1933 saw the end of a brave venture and also the end of my career as a teacher. I had married in March and Dad had moved in as "house-father". On Labour Day 1933 we moved out of the dorm to a rented house in Saskatoon. Dad was earning \$18.00 a week and working from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM, five days a week and half a day on Saturday. Still we were happy.

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