OF SUCH AS THESE

BY

MINNIE ALICE RHoads
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If you should meet your ancestors
All standing in a row,
Would you be proud of them?
Or don't you really know?
Strange discoveries are sometimes made,
In climbing the family tree.
Occasionally one is found in line
Who shocks his progeny.

If you could see your ancestors
All standing in a row,
Perhaps there might be one or two
You wouldn't care to know.
Now turn the question right about
And take another view,
When you shall meet your ancestors,
Will they be proud of you?

-- George B. Everton, Jr.
PREFACE

The majority of the population of this land called the United States descended from pioneers who sought a better way of life than they knew in the crowded areas of Europe. Beginning in the seventeenth century they came finding freedom of religion and opportunity for home and accumulations. Those objectivities were not always to be found in the Old World.

Few of them have stayed totally the race or people from the Nation they left, but have intermingled with other people until America has become known as the Great Melting Pot of the world. They have become a great people thru the strength of the many Nations drawn together. While we have made much progress we still have never excelled those great minds that established a united nation of the many people by setting up the standard of laws in our great Constitution. Those men were our ancestors and the lives they lived in those far away days are the heritage they left for us to revere.

The direct ancestral line of both of my parents began in this country early in the 1600s. Their history is recorded in the nations from which they came as far back as the 10th and 11th centuries. My Mother's people, the Duryeas, were men of importance in France and my Father's people, the Macombers, came from Scotland to England in the 11th century, then to America with the Boston Colony in 1630. They, too, were men who made history in their lands. The marriage of the two lines with others uniting with them became the composite family. Since I am the last one of the five offspring of these particular lines I felt it my duty to record as much of the history they made as I can.

Only through comparison can we judge progress. If we who know the stories of our ancestry and the early history of our country do not record them they become lost in the younger generations.

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DEDICATION

These pages are dedicated to all of my "Kith and Kin" that they might know the heritage left to them to claim as their own. Especially, I dedicate all I have written to our daughter, Nellie Rhoads Buchanan, who has urged me to record the history and the many stories of our ancestry that I have been told and have told her and her growing family, lest they be forgotten.

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Genealogical charts of each family may be found under the family name in that section of the book.
PART ONE

THE ANCESTRY OF NELLIE ERMINA DURYEA - MY MOTHER

From the middle of the first millennium until the present one the small provinces of Europe were constantly changing, being conquered by one then another war. Those were the years when those who took the lead in building a country to call home established themselves in families. Such were those who came to America and became our ancestors.

The name Duryea originated in the Province of Burgundy, France. They became prominent as judges, men of letters and of State Affairs and Divines. Devious spelling was used for the name, the most remote being "Du Ryer", and the most prominent was "Dyrie". Others were Duree, Dury, Duri, Durier. Through the years some became artists, inventors, historians and nobleman.

Monsieur Simon, the first of record, was a member of the King's Chamber and about the 12th century there was a family of Durie in Scotland. They were as important in State Affairs as those in France and were a branch of the family, deemed so by the ancient records of both countries. The coat-of-arms were almost identical and the motto of the French was "Le Promise of de Future"; that of the Scottish was "Gages: Future", each meant the "Promise of the Future". Also, the two branches were allied through marriage.

Andrus Durie was the Abbot of Melrose and Bishop of Galloway. Lord Alexander Durie was a famous Scottish Judge; Robert Durie's daughter became the wife of Robert Bruce of Clackmore.

During the latter half of the 15th and the first half of the 16th centuries the country of France was literally torn by a succession of religious wars between the French Catholics and Protestants, or Huguenots.

Leaving their titles, wealth and homes many of the protesters fled rather than loose their lives and freedom to the Catholics; many to Mannheim, Germany. George Duryea was among these. Evidently his first wife died before leaving France for she is not recorded in the Dutch Reformed Church as were the rest of the family. George became Joost Duryea in Germany and his second wife was Magdalena LeFevre.

At the end of the six years, Joost and his family migrated to New York, landing on Long Island in 1675. If Simon came he died soon after because his name is not recorded here and Joost became the American head of the family. Monsieur Durie, he was called.

The family lived first at New Utrecht and associated themselves with the Dutch Reformed Church there. After two years
they moved to the Bushwick area. In 1679 a son, Jean, was born to
them. They were so proud of him that they had his name recorded
in the Church in Mannheim for all their friends to see. Later he
was baptized in the Reformed Church in Brooklyn as Jaque.

In 1681 Joost Duryea built a large home in Bushwick, Long
Island. It was occupied by members of the family for 200 years.
According to the January 4th, 1904 issue of the New York Sun the
old house had to be sacrificed for the Manhattan Railroad. The
old open hearth had been replaced by a modern fireplace and much
of the quaint old furniture had been carried away but the house
was good for at least another 100 years.

Children listed to Joost were: Joost Jr., Peter, Charles.
Cornelius and Magdalena, all born in France. Joost Jr., and
Cornelius lived to come to America. In America were born: Jacques
Antonette, Abraham, Jacob, Philip, Charles and Simon. When a
child died, another was often given the same name, hence another
Charles.

Joost married a third time but there were no children. He
passed away in 1727 and it is not known when Magdalena passed
away but her youngest child was born in 1693. His will left
everything equally to each of his children and his third wife.

The heads of Duryea families in the succeeding generations
were Joost, Charles, Joost Jr., Jacob, Joshua and Jacob, Next
was Sylvenus, my Grandfather. They followed the profession of
farming and blacksmithing. All were fond of music and a few
taught music. They were of the Methodist Faith and most of them
were Masons.

THE SCHENCK FAMILY is said to derive its name from Edgar
De Schenck, Chief Aid to the Emperor Charlemagne, who granted a
title of nobility to Edgar, and assigned him a coat-of-arms.

Johannes Schenck, a common ancestor of the Charles Duryea
family, is believed to have been the son of Martin Schenck,
W. L. D. Lieut. Baliff of Wyck Kessel, and Margaritha de Boechhorst
Martin was a judge of the province which office was also held by
his grandfather and great-grandfather. Johannes was born
Sept. 19, 1656, in Kessel. He married Maria Magdalena, born
Oct. 7, 1660 in Middleburg. They were married in Middleburg, of
the Island of Walcheren in Zeeland. She is said to have been a
relative of Roeluf and Jan Martense Schenck who settled in the
Flatlands, Long Island, New York in 1650. Roeluf and Jan, along
with Johannes, are the immigrant ancestors of the Schenck family
in America. Some emigrated to New York in 1684.

Johannes bought a plantation in Bushwick, New York, and
moved there in 1712. Both Johannes and Maria Magdalena died on
April 10, 1729. Their children were Johannes, Susannah, Johannes
Jr., Peter, Margarieta and Cornelia, who married Capt. Charles
Duryea—the parents of Joost Duryea, born 1709, the first of this
line on the chart.
THE WETMORE FAMILY - In the sixth generation of Duryeas in America, Jacob, then living in Northern Pennsylvania, married Thankful Gracia Wetmore, born in Vermont, who came to Pennsylvania with her parents. She was of the sixth generation of Wetmores in America and from the long and distinguished line in England.

The Wetmores were first accounted in England in 800 A.D. near Straffordshire. They built the improvements on a 3000 acre estate during the years 800 and 900 A.D. From that time on the estate has been in the hands of the family heirs -- the longest family succession of heirs of any estate in England. For this reason England now declares the estate a National Shrine to be owned by no other than the family.

During two of the past generations no son was born to become an heir. The place was therefore inherited by the oldest daughter. Hence it is now the Rafe Cavanaugh Mainwaring (Pronounced Manner-ing) property. Their son, Guy Wetmore Cavanaugh and his wife are the future heirs.

The Manor house is most fascinating with it's exquisite furniture: each room heated by two or three huge black marble fireplaces. These still remain but there is a central heating plant now. The walls are lined with 8 by 10 foot paintings of all the Lords and Ladies of the family from the very beginning. They were painted by the best artists of the time and all were handsomely dressed and coiffed except one couple who were of the era of Cromwell's Puritan domination. They were plainly dressed in black and must have found it expedient to comply with his edicts. The earliest of the paintings are done on wood and the later on canvas.

In the cellars beside the wine cellar and the meat storage one there was a large room with a stone floor. In one of the rocks was a heavy iron ring. When the stone was lifted fresh water from a spring bubbled up into the room. The reason for the location of the building was in case of siege there would always be plenty of fresh water.

From the manor house down a walk, lined on either side by lime trees is the Estate Church, called St. Mary's or All Saints. It is half lumber and half stone as is common in Straffordshire. The original stones were cut by the old Saxon Masons with a sunburst design and the familiar Saxon black iron cross hangs above the entrance.

Inside, the five stained glass windows above the door show the coat-of-arms of the family, the first one bestowed on them in the year 1086 and others show honors bestowed on them in succession.

In May 1965 a large stone was removed from the floor in the Church to allow a pipe for central heat to be brought in. The workmen reaching down could find no lower floor. Puting a light
down to see why. They found caskets, beautifully carved and decorated extending the full length of the Church. One had a stone figure of a man wearing a gold tooled armor and by his side lay a long sword such as used in the Crusades.

Beyond the Church was an area of woodland where ancient trees harbored hundreds of song birds and the ground was covered with dainty bluebells. It was untrampled by any but the family and has been a sanctuary for them and the birds for generations.

The first Wetmore in America was John, who had taken his heritage in money and come to the new land in 1635. The coat-of-arms which he brought had four Martlets across the Chief showing that he was the fourth son. With him were his wife and five children, born in England. Thru his son Thomas, 1615, he is the ancestor of our family.

In 1648 John Wetmore, while walking through his timber land looking for his cattle, was attacked and murdered by a Mohegan Indian. Everyone was deeply shocked and his wife wanted revenge but the Indians became so insolent that no punishment was meted out. The matter was dropped and Thomas became the head of the family in America. He established residence at Watertown, Mass., then later with a company of citizens led by Pastor Richard Denton he went to Stanford, Conn. He purchased many acres of land and established the town of Middletown, Conn.

THE CLAUS FAMILY - Jacob Duryea and Thankful Gracia Wetmore had eleven children - eight of whom lived to maturity. They owned a spacious home atop a hill in Pennsylvania that over-looked their land extending for miles around. The sixth one of their children was Sylvenus Duryea who married Celestia Elizabeth Claus, also of Penn. They were my Mother's parents. I never knew my maternal grandparents because they had both passed to their reward before I was born. Now that I have learned more about them I can better understand my Mother and the fine person that she was.

After the marriage of Sylvenus and Celestia in 1856, they started to Nebraska driving a team of oxen. They stopped for a time in Wisconsin near Madison and about a year later a daughter. Nellie Ermina Duryea, My Mother, was born October 20, 1857.

Eventually Sylvenus and Celestia arrived in Nebraska with their small daughter, the oxen and wagon, one cow, a few pieces of furniture, a dog and $3.00 in money. When the cow's feet got sore from traveling, Sylvenus cut the top off his boots and made protectors for her feet.

Soon the Civil was broke out and when Sylvenus went to war Celestia took her child, Nellie, to live in Falls City, Nebr., where she boarded and nursed wounded soldiers.

Sylvenus had a sterling character and all who knew him were lavish in their praise of his fine qualities as a citizen, a father and a Christian. He was a very religious man, his preference of churches being the Wesleyan Methodist, but since there was only a Methodist Episcopal Church in that area he happily worked
in that church. Like most of the Duryeas, he loved music and had a fine singing voice. He led the singing in the community and church, giving the congregation the right pitch with his tuning fork.

Not much is known of Celestia’s ancestry. Her father, Benjamin Claus, was a dairyman living in Penn. in the early part of the 18th century. The will dividing his property and money with his eight children indicates he was a man of thrift. The story is that his father came from Germany and fought in the Revolution for the colonies, but there is no proof of this account.

Celestia Claus Duryea was a very pretty woman with curley auburn hair. She was of Pennsylvania Dutch and German descent and inherited her parent’s meticulously clean way of keeping house.

When Sylvenus went north to quell the Indians who were on the war path, he became ill and his companions dispaired of his life. As he lay half conscious he heard them planning where they could bury him, a place where the Indians would not find his body. He could hear them planning but could not answer. He finally recovered and soon was able to enlist for another year. He was made a 1st Sergeant and after the war he returned home but his health was never good again.

When he returned home he built two stone houses near Humbolt in Southwestern Nebraska. One was their home and another for a neighbor. He had been trained as a stone mason in his youth. Both houses had arched doors and windows and held up well. His home, built in 1864, is still lived in. He built many of the bridges in the area which are still being used.

Six children born to Sylvenus and Celestia were, Nellie Ermina, my Mother, Desdamona, Elva, Walter, Grace and Alice. Celestia taught school in her home and it was all the early schooling the children had, but they acquired a well rounded amount of knowledge. Their stories follow.

Life in those times was meager in Nebraska - known as the Great American Desert. Sorghum was their sweetening - twenty-five cents worth of sugar a year was reserved for company. Their fruit was wild plum which they washed, pitted and spread out on a board then pounded into a thin layer which was dried in the sun and rolled like a scroll, wrapped and hung in a cool, dry place. When wanted for a meal they were sliced off a roll, sweetened with sorghum and cooked.

One time Celestia hid behind a door and shed a few tears because she had no soda with which to make biscuits for unexpected company. With all her desire for the nice things, she was never selfish in wanting to the extent of depriving her children. She was a very devoted mother.

Wheat and Corn were ground at a neighbor’s mill for their
flour. Another staple of the family was a hog's head of soft soap. A hog's head is a good sized hollowed out log with a hinged board for a lid. The soft soap was made with fat and lye. The lye was made by catching water which had filtered through wood ashes. The soap was a cleaner, a salve, an antiseptic, shampoo and an all-round household product, and an everyday necessity. Such as the time Celestia came around the granary just in time to hear her son, Walter, say, "What shall I do with this, Elva, throw it away?" He had cut his thumb nearly off in a hand corn sheller. It was only hanging by a tiny bit of skin. Celestia took in the situation at a glance and said quickly, "No, don't do that". Grasping the thumb, she put it back in place and held it until they reached the soft soap supply. She bound it up in a good coating of the soap and the thumb grew on as good as ever.

The family all had lustrous hair, shining with good health and during the next two generations there was never a bald headed one among them. Their hair was regularly shampooed with soft soap. Nellie's hair, like her mother Celestia's, was auburn, heavy and very curly.

PRANKS - The circuit riding ministers of that era always found a welcome at the Sylvenus Duryea home. There, too, the community gathered for meetings. There was one minister who came that didn't find favor with Elva and Walter, the two mischievous sons of Sylvenus and Celestia. When he was getting ready to leave one day, the boys put a handful of cockle burrs, which were plentiful, under the saddle on the minister's horse. They knew that the minute he sat in the saddle there would be some rodeo fun to watch. The horse bucked as was expected, threw the rider over the fence into the yard breaking his leg. The boys were punished for many more days while he was a patient in their home, and they were forced to be nice to him.

As they grew up Celestia worried much about all her children -- Nellie and Desdamona moved out west - Elva and Walter were considering marriage and she was more than a little concerned by the fact that Grace had gone to a neighborhood dance. To her way of thinking, that was a step toward the down grading of morals.

Wife was the charming Amelia Bacon and their

Elva's family numbered seven, a daughter and six sons.

He made his home at Dawson, Nebraska, about 20 miles from Falls City. One son, Chester, lives in Dawson and owns a grocery store. Another, Donald, was a music instructor in Grand Island for many years and one was a 1st Lieutenant in the Air Force.

Elva loved music and bought a grand piano for his children when they were not too plentiful. The little Dawson band marched with Elva as it's leader and he could play any of the instruments. His other hobby was working with machinery and he bought about the first auto in that part of Nebraska. It was a Reo, with a stick to guide it, no windshield or top and one seat.

Walter was married first to Minnie White and they had two daughters - Ethel lives on a farm near Grand Island and Emma Leta died many years ago.
Walter divorced Minnie White and married a fine dependable woman named Lottie Allen. They moved to Seneca, Kansas and had a good life together. They raised eight children to whom he was very devoted. They all loved music and Sundays were song days - the entire afternoon and evening was spent around the piano singing. Walter had an excellent voice and loved best of all the hymns. The entire neighborhood was welcome to come and join for song fests and the house was always lively with many singers. He built a huge screened porch with a good floor for dancing and would hire musicians to come and provide music for everyone to enjoy. He worked very hard and provided well for his family. He passed away at Seneca, Kansas at the age of 72.

The two younger daughters of Sylvenus and Celestia Duryea were Grace and Alice. Alice died of scarlet fever at the age of three. Many children in the west were victims of that dreaded fever in that day.

Grace was a very pretty girl with Auburn hair, soft and curly, big brown eyes and a clear complexion. Celestia sent her to Wellsboro, Penn. to live with Lucretia, Celestia's sister, and her husband, Alanson Johnson. She was to get her High School education there. Many of the Duryea family still lived around Wellsboro.

Grace finished her schooling, taught a while, then went to Sugar Grove Seminary to study music for two years. In 1894 she married W. L. Nuttal of Findlay Lake, New York and they had a daughter but Grace and her baby both died.

Desdamona, second daughter of Sylvenus and Celestia Duryea was a very tiny person, about 4ft. 9in. tall and with a school girl figure although she was the mother of four children; Rilla, Edna, Wanda and Carl. Her husband was six foot tall, Fred Jenkins. Fred was devoted to his family and was an excellent provider. He became prosperous by farming on the arid prairie in northeastern Colorado. If one crop failed he had a substitute ready to grow and somehow it worked out well.

Desdamona was thrifty and quite the general of her home despite her size. All the children helped with the work and when it was completed in the morning, she and the girls freshened up, put on dresses or skirts and blouses and combed their beautiful hair and put ribbons in it. Rilla and Edna had auburn hair and Wanda's was dark. Carl was a blonde. So they all appeared at the noon meal looking very trim.

Once in a while Fred was in a bad mood and then he was a little abusive to Desdamona but she always had an answer or a come back in some way. She was never cowed by him. Once he came home from town - 25 miles away - smoking a big cigar. He also laid several more on the shelf and that evening when some neighbor men came to chat Fred passed the cigars to them. Without a word Desdamona went to the shelf, took a cigar and seating herself in the circle she proceeded to smoke her cigar.
There was a circle of embarrassed men in the room and they soon left. Fred made no comment but he never smoked again.

In spite of all her home duties, Desdamona managed to teach school, sometimes holding it in their home. She served two terms as County Superintendent of Schools in Yuma County, Colorado. She had the first Sunday School in that area in her home and the Presbyterian Church built there was much the product of Desdamona and Fred Jenkins and they were charter members.

When they grew older they spent a winter with friends in San Jose, California, then returned in the summer to farm. The next winter they decided to retire and live on the coast. They went Northwest to the Willamette Valley where they bought a small acreage. The first year they canned 400 quarts of fruit which lasted for years as there was always fresh fruit to eat. The only fruit grown where they lived in Colorado was ground cherries, a tasteless berry which was only palatable with lemon juice and sugar and made into a preserve.

Most of the family worked in some capacity at Corvallis University or the Oregon Agricultural College. Fred was an assistant to the head of the building department and Desdamona worked with foreign students and kept some of them in their home when necessary.

Rilla, the oldest daughter of Desdamona and Fred Jenkins came to Falls City, Nebr., to stay with Wes and Nellie Macomber to get her High School Education, then taught near Wray, Colorado. She married John Alexander of Iowa and lived near Wray for several years.

Desdamona came to Wray to be with her second daughter, Edna, who had married Edward Jones and was expecting her second child. At the same time Rilla went to Oregon to care for the younger members of Desdamona's family. Doing her best, she bought three bushels of gooseberries and by enlisting the help of her younger brother and sisters, she finally got them cared for. They became a family joke for they lasted more than 20 years.

In later years both Rilla and Edna and their families moved to Oregon near Corvallis. Rilla worked for several years for the University Press there.

Wanda, the youngest of the Jenkins children, studied at Corvallis University and became a dietician there. She married and had one son then divorced. She married again but there was no family. She passed away in her forties.

Edna and her husband passed away in 1972 at Corvallis at their home among the beautiful roses.

Iris, daughter of Rilla Jenkins and John Alexander, compiled a very fine genealogy of the Duryea family going back as far as five generations in France. Her husband, William Georgesen, passed away in 1972. Iris has been a true inspiration to me in writing of ancestry. She visited me in 1971 and again in 1973.
HENRIETTA &
Lucretia Claus
Seated:
Desdamona Duryea
& Celestia Claus

JACOB & Thankful Duryea

Nellie Ermina Duryea

SYLVANUS & Celestia & Ch. Nellie & Desdamona
An ancestor in France Named Walter E. Duryea invented the "Duryea", a horseless carriage in 1787, and it was supposed to be the first of its kind ever made. The first "Duryea" made in America was in 1887 and is in the Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C.

It is interesting to note that a "Duryea" was the engineer who laid out the wharf and the first streets of Omaha, Nebraska City and other river towns. This is according to a historical issue of the Omaha Bee.

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THE ANCESTRY OF JOHN WESLEY MACOMBER - MY FATHER

The ancestors of Macomber family in America point to Devonshire, England. Combe in old English means a valley and is a very frequent termination of surnames and names of places in Devonshire. There may have been a Maycombe, just as there was a May Hill and a May Field. Indeed at place called Maycombe, or Macombe, may have given origin to the surname Maycombe, Macombe, Maycomber, Macomber, Macumber and Macumberand may have originated in some place called May Valley.

Others insist that the name is of Scotch origin and that some migration carried the name into Devonshire. I am informed that Harry Alfred Long's Personal and Family Names, published by John Menzie & Co., Edinburgh, 1883, derives the names MaComb, McComb, McComber, and McComber from the Gaelic "Omish" (Thomas) and that other forms of the same name are Omish, McTavish and McTance. A member of the Families of McCombe and Thomas, originally McIntosh and McThomas, by William McCombie Smith, Edinburgh, 1890, says that McThomie, McOmie, McOmish, McOmy, McComie, McCombie and Thos, McThomas, McThomas, and McIntosh are all names used to designate member of the same clan. Antiquarians seem to agree that the McIntosh clan were a branch of the clan Mcintosh, taking its rise in the latter half of the fourteenth century. It is claimed that the founder of the clan McIntosh was Shaw McDuFF, second son of the Fifth Earl of Fife, who distinguished himself in quelling a rebellion among the Moray tribes against Malcolm IV., about the year 1161-63.

In 1904, Dove, Lockhart and Smart, lawyers of Edinburgh, wrote to Charles Summer Macomber, lawyer of Ida Grove, Iowa, as follows and the same is excepted by the Rev. Everett S. Stackpole. "Judging from your name we should say you were undoubtedly a Scot by origin. The name "Macomber", in its various forms is well known here. As you are no doubt aware it is claimed (and the claim we believe is generally admitted) that the Macombers are a branch of the clan McIntosh - also sometimes called the Shaws.
The branch was formed by Shaw McDuff second son of the Fifth Earl of Fife. As you are also aware the clan McIntosh was one of the clans which took part in the memorable duel on the North Inch of Perth, videe, Scott's "Fair Maid of Perth", where they are designated the "Clan Chattan". You will also see in Scott's "Waverly" that a scion of the clan, "Evan Dhu Macombish", is one of the leading personages.

Current tradition is that the name of Macomber is of Scotch origin. First comers to America knew how to spell the name. Pronunciation in early Mass. of Mac'omber suggests Scotch Origin."

End Quote.

A family Bible published in 1903 and now in the hands of Grant Macomber, Madison, Kansas - son of George Burton Macomber, is the beginning of our family record. It was the rule that the oldest son who had a son should be the keeper of the Bible.

The first one listed is Hugh Macomber, born 1770, in Maine, the son of a Captain Macomber of Maine. The Captain is said to have drowned at sea after the Revolutionary War in which he served.

Through material received from the Old Historical Society of Taunton, Mass. and the Augusta, Maine Historical Records and the help of Mrs. Frances Pauling, County Clerk of Brunswick Co., Maine, the genealogy following is believed to be true.

Hugh came to Mentor, Ohio, from Maine in 1800 and that year married Sally Sears, a Mentor girl. They moved to Utica, N. Y. where their five children were born: Serena, Surrannus and Polly lived; Lyman and Sally and the mother died there. Hugh lived four more years - until 1813. Richard Sears was made administrator of the property and brought Surrannus to Mentor with him. The census reports of Ohio and New York prove these dates.

Surrannus grew to manhood in Mentor and when 25 he married Catherine Parker, a daughter of Captain Clark Parker of the War of 1812. Catherine and Surrannus raised eight of the eleven children born to them. They were George, Serena, Margaret and Mayette (twins), Samuel Parker, Hugh II, Clark and Sally.

Margaret married Captain Eleazer Burrage who wrote a large volume of the genealogy of the Burrage family, leaving space for Margaret to write of her family. The following is a certified copy of the story of Hugh.

"Captain Macomber of Scotch Parentage, a Native of Maine, was a sailor, Captain and owner of a vessel sailing in trade with the West Indies. He was a man of means and influence; a staunch patriot and aiding the colonies at all times.

He was a member of the Boston Tea Party. His wife was one of the PATRIOTIC women who dashed her tea cup against the Boston Flag Pole and joined hands and danced around it singing, "Hurrah for the Liberty Pole".
"When the war was over the Captain resumed sailing and was drowned at sea, his son Hugh of Utica, N. Y. came to Mentor, Ohio about 1830. A cousin named Hugh McDougal came to Mentor with him. Hugh’s son Surrannus was drowned in the Cuyahoga River near Cleveland, Ohio."

This excerpt is a true and exact copy from Page 415 A of the "Hawley Record", by Elias Hawley.

Printed - Buffalo, N. Y. 1890
Signed Rita McMullen
Notary Public, Lake Co. Ohio.

The date 1830, is corrected to read 1800. It is proven so by the census reports of New York and Ohio. There was no census in Maine.

An article from Maine is very similar to this except that it states both Captain Elijah and his wife, Sarah Pitts Macomber were drowned. This is questionable because in the Taunton Cemetery there is a stone inscribed, "To the Memory of Captain Elijah Macomber who died on Feb. 2, 1802, age 83 years and Mrs. Sarah Macomber who died May 29, 1810, age 81 years.

Hugh gave to his son, Surrannus, a painting of himself inscribed Hugh Macomber, born 1770. It is now in the home of Margaret Macomber Burridge’s daughter, Mrs. Charles Howley, Plainview, Ohio.

When Captain Elijah and Sarah went to Boston for the Boston Tea Party in 1773, Hugh would have been age three. A record from Maine states that Hugh spent some time around Utica, N. Y. before he came to Mentor, Ohio, and that he married first, Reliance Hatch from Marshfield, Mass. in 1789. Evidently she died within the following ten years because Hugh went to Mentor and married Sally Sears in 1800. No record of Reliance’s death has been found.

After Surrannus Macomber’s death the oldest child, George, took over the family affairs in a most masterful manner. He decided to go to Columbus, Ohio, to make his way. He took with him the twin, Mayette, and Sally. The twin remaining, Margaret, never forgave him for taking her twin sister away from her.

George seemed to have an unusual power of persuasion because over the years he would write for others of the family to join him and they would always do so. But not Margaret. She stayed in Mentor and married Captain Burridge. They were the parents of six children. One daughter, Emma, married Dr. Charles Hawley. The Burridge Book containing much of the Macomber history is in their care. Also, the painting Hugh with the inscription ‘Hugh Macomber, born 1770’ is in their care.

The Hawley grandsons, Edwin and Charles, are owners of a huge greenhouse at Mentor, Ohio. One son took college courses in Horticulture and one in Business Administration. Together they have achieved as fine a greenhouse as is to be found and they operate nine stores where their products are sold. I have corresponded with Margaret’s daughter, Dr. Hawley’s wife, many times.
THE BURTON'S of Delaware, forebearers of my father's mother obtained one of the first homesteads in the State of Delaware. This homestead was by William Burton in 1677. The seal from the patent of the land is still on display in the Hall of Records of Dover, Delaware. The land is south of Lewes, Delaware.

William Burton was no doubt the grandfather of the William Burton, born 1750, and listed in our family Bible—who owned a plantation south of Lewes, and also an island in the mouth of the Indian River, called Burton's Island.

The family came to our shores from England, most of them stopping first in Virginia. Many of them are still in Sussex County, Del. They were loyal to Great Britain, these Burtons, remaining Tories all through the Revolution.

Their chief crop was probably tobacco for Del. was the principal tobacco producing area in early New England, and the plantation was worked by slaves.

William Burton and his wife, Mary Smith, of our knowledge lived on a plantation south of Lewes, Del. and Mary Smith Burton (called Mary Burton) was their youngest child. She was my father's mother's mother. Her brothers were John, William, Albert and Cornelius; her two sisters were Eliza and Ann. The older children all married except Cornelius.

Mary Burton was born March 13, 1805, and was the petted baby of them all and the worshipped little "Missy" of the slaves. She was bright and self-reliant, no doubt a little spoiled. She possessed a loving, happy disposition and was a great joy to her mother, who was ill a considerable amount of the time.

Mary Burton was schooled by private tutors and took pleasure in teaching the young negroes on the plantation. When her father learned of what she was doing, he protested loudly saying, that teaching the negroes was contrary to the law. At that time there was a law to that effect. He told her that if she didn't stop he would send her away to school. She declared there was nothing wrong with teaching the negroes but he was as good as his word and she finished her schooling in Philadelphia and in Baltimore. She was very sad to leave her happy days at home, but liking to learn she adjusted to school. She was 18 years old when she came home after finishing school. She had as much schooling as was available for women in those days.

She returned to the plantation a beautiful young woman with an unusual amount of dark red, curly hair and a very clear complexion, but one of her eyes was badly crossed. She entered into the fun on the plantation, thoroughly enjoying the clam bakes and oyster feeds the negroes prepared for all the young people of the community.
Mary Burton found her mother more frail as the years passed. Her maid, Linda, had cared for her mother during Mary Burton's absence. Mary Smith and Linda often blessed Mary Burton because, unknown to her father, Mary Burton had taught the negro slave, Linda, to read and write. Thus Linda could read to the invalid Mary Smith and write for her.

William Burton and his household, as well as most of their community still clung to the Anglican Church of England, called the Episcopal in America. They didn't sanction a break with England through the Revolution and remained Tories as did many of the older, more sedate colonists. As is often true, it was the younger hot heads who were ready to do battle.

At this stage we feel sure the hot heads chose the right way. Weresented the teaching of the histories used in our schools when we were young; that the Tories were thoroughly unpatriotic people willing to sacrifice our colonies to the enemy. We know now that this is not true; that many Tories were patriotic but thought there was some way we could compromise which was better than war. So think many people today, and many are the hot-heads. Perhaps they may come with a better way.

Not long after Mary came home, Peter Cartwright, the noted Methodist Minister, was holding camp meetings in the Methodist Missions - in the New England States. It was during the early 1820s that the young people of Mary Burton's neighborhood decided to take a day's outing and drive 20 miles to attend one of the meetings. Many were their jokes about getting religion at the hands of the Methodists.

Mary Burton and her friends reached the campground in high spirits. When lunch time came they were inclined to be very quiet during their meal. By the close of the afternoon sermon, almost all of the crowd had gone forward to accept the Methodist Faith. By the time the evening service was over all had joined the ranks, and indeed it was a serious group who returned home that night.

Mary Burton's father learned of the incident a couple of days later, and his anger knew no bounds. He stormed into the house with eyes blazing. "Mary", he said, "Did you join that Methodist group?"

She said that she had. "Well, you'll renounce them at once, and you will go to our Church as usual." He thundered, but she stood her ground. "I'll go to your Church if you wish, but I'll never renounce being a Methodist." She answered.

"Then you'll leave me house", he stormed, "and never enter my doors again." Mary Burton and mother pleaded that he withdraw his words. Mary Smith pleaded that in her weakened condition she must have Mary Burton to care for her, but he held fast to his threat so Mary Burton left her beloved home.
She went to the home of her brother, William, four miles away. He told her that she was welcome, but that he stood with his father in the matter of religion. So she left there, and found a place as governess to a family of children 12 miles away and stayed there several years.

Occasionally there was a day when her father left early to go to the city on business. Then the negro slaves sent a boy post haste, with her horse and saddle to bring her home for a few hours. What a gay time they would have, Mary Burton and her mother, spending a few hours together.

After four years there came a day when her father himself came for her, telling that her mother had worsened and called for her constantly. Would she please come. Of course, she went and cared for her mother until she passed away.

She was gathering her things to leave when her father begged her to forgive him and to stay with him now, but she said she was soon to go to a home of her own as she was to marry Issac Holland. So her father persuaded her to stay until the wedding. He gave her many gifts, her own horse, and a hog to take to their farm. The hog refused to stay away from the plantation 12 miles away. After three or four trials of returning him to Mary Burton's home, they gave up and William Burton went to the market and bought her a hog that wasn't so dedicated to home.

THE HOLLAND FAMILY, came to America in an early day from England. There were Howlands on the Mayflower but whether Issac Holland was of that family with a change of spelling is not known.

Issac Holland was a bit older than Mary and had been married before. His wife had died and their daughter lived with her mother's people.

Issac and Mary worked hard and prospered. Of the first three children born, only John lived, then in August 1835, Eliza Ann was born. She was my father's mother. She was fragile but full of energy and a little old for her years. Probably her advanced thinking was for the best, for being the oldest girl much responsibility was to fall on her shoulders. Next was Miles Hansen, named for Issac's best friend. He was sturdy and very full of fun and ideas. Eliza Ann was forever having to help him out of some predicament or take the blame for it herself. Two more girls completed the family, Mary Hannah and Emma Burton. During this time the family moved from Delaware to near Columbus, Ohio, then a village. It was a long, hard journey in a covered wagon, crossing several rivers, the mountains and numerous swamps and forests.

Mary Burton had some Shanghi chickens which she thought were very fine. In order to keep the strain of them and have a start in her new home, she lined a basket with wool, packing a setting of eggs carefully in the wool, covered and tied the basket to the highpoint on an overhead bow on the covered wagon where it could swing freely. She brought the eggs to Ohio, set them and raised
8 or 10 nice chickens. Her family had laughed at her for bringing them, saying they would never hatch.

Isaac Holland was a most versatile worker. The family found a cabin in which to live, and immediately went to farming. He soon had a crop growing and reaped a fair harvest. That fall they built another house on some better land and moved into it.

The Mother, Mary Burton, was busy with spinning and weaving and often was gone to doctor some sick neighbor. Isaac and John, busy with the fields or in the woods. This left Eliza Ann and Miles with the two little girls to care for. Eliza Ann did much of the cooking, though she was only nine years old. Once when they were alone they decided to go to the woods to gather oak balls which their mother used in making dye for the homespun linens. Miles took his 'tomahawk', (an old hatchet he had sharpened). It was a mean weapon. After they gathered all the Oak balls they could reach there was yet a tempting lot on a branch too high to reach. Miles thought he would throw the tomahawk into the tree and knock the branch off. He missed the branch and the weapon fell on baby Emma's head, cutting quite a gash. Freighted, they started home, taking turns carrying the child while Mary Hannah trudged behind carrying the basket of oak balls. Soon Eliza Ann and Miles were covered with blood. They finally came to a slough which they had to cross and there was a lot of mud in the path which gave Miles an idea. "Let's plaster the cut on Emma's head with mud. It might make it stop bleeding." They plastered the gash with several fresh coats of mud and at last were successful in stopping the bleeding, then proceeded home. Emma recovered, and there were no serious consequences from the cut or the mud plaster.

While they lived near Columbus, Ohio, Mary Burton had a Methodist Church to attend. It meant a great deal to her. One time a Methodist Minister who was something of a Doctor wanted to operate on her crossed eye and she let him, but it was not successful. Mary's brother, Cornelius, the sailor, who was visiting them complained to her that she would let a Methodist Minister cut off her head if he asked to. But nevertheless he gave her one of his precious gold pieces to help pay for the useless operation.

Again, tales of a fairer land than Ohio had begun to circulate - a land where the grass grew tall and the fields were free of rocks that impeded plowing. This land was in Eastern Iowa. Again, the family moved, with a basket of Shanghi eggs and their small belongings to live in Iowa, not far from Davenport.

Cornelius was much help in moving and helping care for the children who liked his stories of the Seas. Not long after the move he began to get homesick for the sea and went back to Delaware. He never sailed again, but would walk on the beach listening to and loving the sounds and the smell
of the sea. He only lived a few months after going back to his old home. His parrot, which he always took with him died two weeks after Cornelius, apparently of loneliness.

Isaac Holland and his friend, Miles Hansen, found temporary homes in Iowa and soon had crops growing. They took pre-emption homesteads and built homes later.

They had a neighbor where they lived at first, a Mr. Mahoney, who was a kind man, but who would not keep his livestock at home. One old sow in particular was forever in Isaac's corn field, and son Miles had to try to keep her out. One morning when the children were alone, Miles came in and asked Eliza Ann for the gun. He said he intended to shoot that old sow, that he had chased her out of the corn field at least 100 times and that was enough. Eliza Ann tried to talk him out of his idea but she was busy with the two little girls and did not notice that he had taken the gun. Soon he was back and asked her to help him put the gun up. While they were doing so, he whispered to her to get the little girls something to play with so they wouldn't come outside because she would have to help him bury the old sow. Eliza Ann was horrified, but as usual she had to help him out of his difficulty.

She gave the little girls the coveted button box to play with, then went out where Miles waited. They took a spade and a hoe and went out where the sow was lying by the straw pile. There, Miles explained that she had stopped to root for wheat, and he just put the gun to her ear and pulled the trigger. "Then she fell right over," he said. "I thought she would get up again, but she didn't." So they dug furiously, finally getting a hole deep enough to hold the sow. With all their strength they pulled and pulled until they rolled her into the hole, covered her and scattered straw and chaff all around. They had just returned to the house and put away their hoe and spade when Mr. Mahoney came asking if they had seen his old sow. "She was here this morning," said Miles, "I chased her out of the corn field. You see! She has eaten a whole acre of corn." "Yes sir," answered Mr. Mahoney. "That old sow is a real tornado in a corn field. I wonder where she is now. I'll go look farther back in the field." He never looked toward the straw stack. When he came back he stopped by the house and related that he hadn't found her. "Just can't imagine where she is. It just seems like the ground must have opened up and swallowed her." And indeed it had. Anyway, who would suspect two youngsters, 9 and 11 years old. And the two youngsters didn't reveal the deed until years later. The family moved soon and didn't discover it.

TROUBLE FOR ISAAC AND ELIZA ANN - After the harvesting John, their oldest boy, who had grown to be 16 years old, went to help a neighbor for a few days. Suddenly he became ill and died.

Trouble never comes singly it seems. Soon after John's death Isaac Holland developed erysipelas, starting in his feet. He had to take to his chair, but as long as possible he was busy
with his hands, making small craft that would sell and keep up a bit of income. At one time while he worked in his chair, son Miles got a bit unruly. Isaac gave him a spanking and sent him under the bed until he could behave. Soon the father saw little Emma making motions to him. Asking what was going on, Emma told her father that Miles was drinking from the "Demi-john" under the bed. Isaac called to him to come out, just what he wanted to do. He was scolded for drinking that liquor. "It's only for medicine", he said. Miles vowed he didn't drink a drop -- was only pretending so someone would get him out. His father told him to "Never drink that stuff" because it would only lead to his destruction. And as far as anyone knew he never drank, at his work, in the army -- anywhere.

Isaac Holland succumbed to his illness, Oct. 10, 1846 and Mary Burton with her family of four was left alone. Eliza Ann and Miles were 14 and 12. Both children worked hard -- doing nearly adults' work. That fall all the children had measles in a very severe form. Eliza Ann lost her voice, and didn't regain it for a year. Her mother had dispaired of her ever being able to speak again.

In the spring the neighbors came to help Miles put in the crops for another harvest. One of the first neighbors to come to help was Mr. Mahoney. "Thought to pay back a little of that which the old sow et", he explained. "Never could guess just where she went. "Looked like the ground just opened up and swallowed her". Miles had no answer for him.

That spring -- 1847 -- a young fellow from Ohio came looking for work. Mary Burton Holland hired him to do the farm work. He was diligent, well educated, and a good hand on the farm. His name was George Macomber. Mary Burton didn't know that he was an opportunist, and in grasping an opportunity he never knew when to stop. He took from everyone he could, and somehow never got around to paying back because he always had another venture in his mind that needed money. He had no intention of being dishonest but somehow it often worked out that way.

He hadn't been at Mary Burton Holland's long until it became evident that he would like to marry the Widow Holland. She was a good cook and housekeeper, had better than average education, a good farm and a fine team of horses. She evidently sized him up as a good farmer, educated, likeable and this would solve the hired man problem. So Mary Burton Holland became Mrs. George Macomber. The fact that he was 27 and she was 40 seemed to make little difference because it was a marriage of convenience.

George always called her Mother and thus he treated her. Some of the relatives who were unhappy about the marriage said that it was probably Mary's good team of horses that he thought the most of. Soon after the wedding they were to go to a barn raising on a neighbor's farm. At these affairs the men of the community worked hard to put up a barn in one day. The wives went along to cook a feast for the men, to visit, and perhaps do a bit of quilting. So the George Macomers went, walking the
distance. when they came home they found one of the horses almost dead with colic. In it's struggles of agony it had kicked the other horse and broken it's leg. Both had to be put to death. There was genuine chaos in the household, and George had to buy a team of oxen to finish putting in his crops. Oxen were much cheaper then horses and much less usable.

George was always good to the children and sent them to school if there chanced to be one near enough. He would help them with their school work at night and taught them to sing. When not in school, each had work to do for George.

Mary Burton Holland Macomber was away from home much of the time with her doctoring. When she had time at home she was busy at the loom. This she loved to do, but it had begun to give her a severe pain in her chest. She was beginning to wear out with all the years of work.

Eliza Ann got six months of schooling - her first and only. Besides school she did the cooking and housekeeping for the family, walked two miles to school carrying little Emma. Having little chance for school, made the opportunity worth working hard for, and she did work hard. Eliza Ann was an excellent student.

Talk began to circulate in the community of the rich land in southwestern Iowa. George immediately got the fever to move again. It took him two years to persuade Mary Burton to sell her property and let him use the money to buy a new location. Probably she knew she would be bidding farewell to the money and property Isaac Holland had left her because once George had it she was afraid she would never see it again and she didn't. But finally she gave in and they moved to a small village called Hawleyville, twenty miles from Clarinda, Iowa again taking the basket of Shanghi eggs in the top of the wagon.

George bought a small piece of land for a mill site on a stream and a store building. He put his wife, Mary Burton, in the store to do the selling and she did very well. He began to write to his younger brother, Sam, to come from Ohio to find work in Iowa which he said was plentiful. George wanted more from Sam than he pretended. He also persuaded Miles, another brother, who had become a brick and stone worker, to come. Miles did the Masonry for the mill.

Sam Macomber, who was a very honest and thrifty young man and knew his brother's short comings, came to Iowa and fell in love with Eliza Ann Holland who was about his age. When they were eighteen they were married, January 22, 1854, and moved to Davenport, Iowa, where Sam worked in a mill. A daughter, Mary Catherine, was born in 1855. They lived there until they had enough to bring them to southwestern Iowa and buy property. They came as far as Iowa City on the train and there Sam put Eliza Ann and the baby, Mary Catherine, on a stage and he walked to save money. In Iowa City he went to the land office, and found that George had only bought enough land for a mill site and store instead of land
for each of the children as Mary Burton had planned. Sam noticed 40 acres next to the mill site, filed on it, paid his money, received his deed or patent as it was called, and went to Howleyville, Iowa. Quite soon after he arrived George asked to borrow some money to buy a piece of land. Sam assured him he had none. "But you were saving your money to buy a piece of land, weren't you?" asked George.

"Yes", answered Sam, "And I bought it."

"But where?" from George.

"Right here joining your mill." Sam answered. George gave that laugh which they all learned to recognize as half frustration and half ridicule. "Well, how foolish", he said. "If you had waited you could have bought a whole section in a few years."

"But I'm glad to know that I have 40 acres of my own," answered Sam. George never asked him for money again.

Samuel Parker and Eliza Ann (Holland) Macomber kept their 40 acres of land, having it as a heritage to my father, John Wesley Macomber.

Sam went to work running the mill there while Miles had more than he could keep up with his masonry work in the community. The mill did a thriving business, and as the money came in from all the enterprises George had established, he absorbed it all to continue to expand. Unbelievably he kept all of the family working for him with little pay, but a good living. With pay or not, to the last one, they did his bidding and came through liking him.

In 1858, a son was born to Sam and Eliza Ann in Howleyville, Iowa. Eliza Ann was as staunch a Methodist as her mother, Mary Burton, and hoped that her son would be a Methodist Minister so she named him John Wesley and he was called Wes. He was the only son, premature and very fragile through his childhood and later was an asthmatic. John Wesley Macomber was my father.

THE CIVIL WAR - President Lincoln issued a call for volunteers in 1860. Many relatives enlisted, among them, Sam Churchill, Serena Macomber's husband; Sam Glasgow, husband of Emma Holland and Sam Macomber, who wanted so much to go but was refused at first because of his short stature. He was persistent altho Eliza Ann begged him not to go. He had not been very strong and she knew he could not stand the heat of the south.

In the second enlistment he was accepted and took his training near Davenport in the spring and was sent to southern Louisiana for skirmishes in the extreme heat of summer. Several of his friends, already in the south, knew he was coming and went to his ship to see him. Sam Glasgow and Miles Hansen found him ill.
Once Sam Glasgow found him lying with a picture of Eliza Ann and the two children on his breast and his New Testament which his little girl, Mary Catherine, had given him. "I'm going to have to leave them, Sam. I'm going home now." Then he said, "God has promised to care for the widows and orphans, but he will need you and George to help. Take care of them for me." The doctors did all they could, but they said he had brain fever caused by the heat. He passed away Aug. 13, 1864 aboard ship and was buried in Morganzo Bay, Samuel Parker Macomber.

Serena, one of his sisters, kept a picture of him in her bedroom. He was her favorite brother. The morning he passed away she called her husband, Sam Churchill, to come to where the picture was. "Something is wrong with Sam this morning. He is trying to tell me something. See how different the picture looks." "Oh, that's just your imagination," said her practical husband.

That same morning, Samuel Parker Macomber's wife, Eliza Ann, was attending a camp meeting in Hawleyville and fainted. They carried her into the tent, and tried to revive her, but she remained in a faint for three hours. When she finally came to herself she said, "Why did I ever wake up?" My Sam is gone. I saw him with a flag draped over him." Everyone tried to comfort her but she just insisted that she knew, and when a week later, the official notice of his death and a letter from Miles Hansen came, she showed no surprise at all. Was this ESP? Evidently, Sam's wish to be with them again was so strong that his thought waves came through to them.

After the long lonely months the war ended, and those who were left came home - among them Sam Glasgow and Miles Holland, although Miles did not come until August, and in the meantime caused some alarm because he had been kept to help demolish the barracks and camp site at Jefferson City, Mo. and had neglected to write home. But he wasted little time for soon he married an English girl, Hannah Bently, whom he had liked before he went to war and had never forgotten. The grandchildren of Miles Holland and Hannah Bentley still own the land that they purchased after the war.

Mary Burton and her daughter, Eliza Ann, put in a big garden that spring, and planted many flowers in the yard. Since Samuel Macomber's death, Eliza Ann had been working hard in the store for George. She had worried about the money George owed her, so she asked him if he would repay her or at least give her a note with good security for the amount. She told him she wanted to invest it for her two children. He would not give her money or note. She reminded him that he had borrowed all of her husband's back pay and the pension money until he owed her over $300, besides her land which he had sold. She told him she was tired of living like she had been and that if he would pay her, she and the two small children could live on the money and the pension she would get.

Finally he told her that she really didn't need her money now because he had and would continue to keep them all, and that
Painting of Hugh, b 1770

Hugh, Sally, Clark & Serena Ch. of Surannus

Eliza Ann, Ch. Wes & Mary C. carried by Samuel Parker Macomber in the Civil War

Samuel Parker Macomber Civil War Casualty

John Wesley ab. 1878 Samuel P. Macomber
in lieu of the money he would build her a house and furnish it. She knew this was not enough to pay her, but she also realized that it was, no doubt, all she would ever get so she agreed. He started the house but seemed in no hurry to finish it. He would stop for this and that. When he knew that she was to be married the second time he really went to work and finished the house.

After Mary Smith Burton Holland Macomber's death, George eventually married again. They had all supposed he would marry a younger woman, and probably have a family to share his fortune. Instead he married an older woman who had an adopted daughter and there were no children.

I believe George must have been pleasant and thoughtful in every way except in paying back what he borrowed, for they all came through liking him for many things and naming their boys for him. The idea - from his standpoint - seemed to be that with the money and help from all of them he could make a fortune and they could all share it together.

George Macomber did amass a fortune in land and enterprises. But with a new wife and step-daughter the Macomber and Holland helpers saw none of it. None of what he owed them of their own money. He died in 1890.

ELZA MARTIN - I remember Grandfather, Elza Martin, as a tall and well built man with not an ounce of surplus weight. His eyes were blue and deep set, and he wore a short cropped iron grey beard. His hair, too, was iron grey with a soft curl. He looked for all the world like Abraham Lincoln although it made him furious to be told so. He greatly admired Lincoln. He told me that at one time he voted for a Democrat - the first time he voted - because he didn't know any better. His father-in-law had advised him thus. But the next election he voted for Lincoln and had voted Republican every time the rest of his life. He was 81 at that time.

His father, Isaac Martin, was a Circuit Rider starting in New York and with his family worked his way West as he carried the gospel to the frontiers on his way. The Isaac Martin family had reached eastern Illinois when Elza was eight years old, and had had about six weeks of schooling. One fall morning, Isaac took leave on his trusty pony, telling Elza that he was a man now and must look after the family. His mother, thinking that six weeks of school was ample time to give a boy to learn to read, said to Elza, "Elza, you are a man of the house now so you must read the scripture each morning for family worship." Elza tried valiantly, but his schooling hadn't prepared him to read the Bible. His mother was horrified that he hadn't learned it. She, herself, never having had an opportunity to attend school didn't realize the time such reading should require. She knew her Bible quite well but all from memory. She worried all day about Elza's failure to read the Bible. That night she built an extra bright fire
in the fireplace and placed her chair near with a keen little switch nearby in case of rebellion. Then she handed Elza a Bible (their only book), stood him by the fireplace and stating, 'This winter you are going to learn to read.'

With only a memory to help her the lessons started and Elza did learn to read the Bible that winter. However she put the knowledge across, she never dulled his reverence for the Bible. I have heard many people read the Bible but never one who could read it with the love and understanding that Elza put into it.

I saw Elza's Mother once when I was about ten. She was very tiny with snowy hair that served to intensify the beauty and sparkle of her brown eyes. She must have been ninety years old, but was alert, interesting and interested in everyone. It took courage and stamina to be a wife and mother in the home of a circuit rider in those pioneer days. Elza's mother possessed all of the qualities needed. She had a small homemade rocker which she said was the one she rocked her babies in. That was during the 1830's. I am fortunate enough to have that worn little rocker now well over 100 years old, but still in use. One time a little neighborhood girl seeing the aged look of the chair said to me, "Mrs. Rhoads, my Daddy would be very happy to haul that chair to the dump for you sometime."

Elza Martin's first wife, Mary Stone of Iowa, only lived six months after they were married, dying from an aborted pregnancy. He then married another Iowa girl named Sarah Morris. From her home in Fremont County, Iowa, they crossed the Missouri River at the Omaha crossing. Omaha was then the territorial capital of Nebraska Territory. The young couple was married, the first white couple married in the capital.

From Omaha the young couple went down the river to near Nebraska City where they procured a small holding of land. A log cabin, some homemade furniture, a fireplace for warmth, light and cooking were the essentials of housekeeping on a pioneer's homestead. A few years passed and the house was enlivened by four children - Hannibal, Milton, John and Emma.

Elza helped establish what he believed was the 1st Sunday School in Nebraska. With his trusty team of oxen and wagon, they attended the meetings until they froze out in the winter for there was no heat in the school house - an old log structure, where they met. Elza told of Elder Good, one of the early stalwarts of the Methodist Church, and how he accepted Elza's hospitality and spent a day with him in his humble cabin. Elza said he was one of the best men he had ever known. On their way from the meeting to the Martin home, Elder Good remarked that, "Oxen are like Christians. When the going is hard they fall to their knees".

CALIFORNIA - While the family was still small, Elza and his wife, Sarah, decided to move to California where Sarah had relatives. They traveled in a wagon train as most everyone did.
At one time the wagon train had stopped to camp for the night when they noticed Indians were lurking around. Realizing that they must move on to avoid an attack when night came, everyone was called together to prepare to move on. Milton and Emma, Elza's small children, could not be found. They called and searched frantically and in vain, but dark was almost upon them and it was imperative that they go. Then, just at that moment, Milton and Emma were sighted, trudging hand in hand across the plains. Milton, writing of it later, said he couldn't understand at that time why everyone hugged and kissed little Emma and he only got a spanking.

Another incident of their journey occurred when the wagon train grew short of meat. Elza was made the hunter of the troop because his aim was true. As his train moved along he skirted the area for game. Not having a saddle horse of his own, he borrowed a mule from one of the fellow travelers. In his hunting he fell back a few miles. At last he had a chance to kill a fine antelope. He dressed it out while the mule grazed nearby. Ready to go, he picked up the meat and approached the mule to load it and start toward the rest of the travelers. As he lifted the meat to load it onto the mule, that wily beast moved out of his reach and began grazing again. A second time he lifted the meat and approached the mule, only to have a repeat performance. He kept trying, but always without avail until he was weary. Then he threw the load across his own shoulders and headed for the caravan. He had to walk several miles to catch the wagon train. The mule never lost sight of him, but kept trudging after him. He was angry at the beast that he said had it been his mule he would have shot it. His temper was unwavering, but in later years he could laugh at the incident.

Once they were waylaid by Indians and felt that their time had come. Elza's wife, Sarah, had spent a year in Oklahoma with her parents when she was a child and had learned several Indian phrases. When the situation looked bad for the party, she stepped out and repeated as many of the words as she could remember. The Indians were so surprised and pleased that she could speak words they could understand that they wished the travelers well and sent them on their way.

They reached California safely but only stayed about ten years. Sarah developed consumption and wanted to go back to Iowa and her people before she died. After her death Elza took the children to his former home in Fremont Co., Iowa and he again took up Circuit Riding.

THE CIRCUIT RIDER usually started out in the fall after he had harvested his little store of food and had chopped enough wood to provide the family with fuel and light. The homes they found as they moved so frequently were usually one room log cabins and if possible located where the children could go to school.
The Rider would set forth some fall morning with saddled pony and his clothes, a packet of the medications kept in any pioneer home and available at the little neighborhood grocery. His Bible was always carried under his arm and his other necessities were made into a pack and tied behind his saddle. He had to depend on the goodness of the people along his route for food and lodging. Usually both were given willingly but were often of questionable value. The only bed a needy family might have to offer would be place in a hay loft with an old comforter or two for cover. Bugs, mice and sometimes rats were common bed fellows. A sturdy soul - the Circuit Rider - and he had to accept any hospitality where he could find a place to hold meetings and settle down to lectures for all who would come. He was usually gone from home about three months at one time.

In Elza Martin's Circuit riding after the Civil War he met Eliza Ann, my Grandmother, widowed when Grandfather Samuel Parker Macomber died in the war. Eliza said in all his travels he had never found anyone, man or woman, with as keen an intellect as was hers. He said she had a better conception of the many issues besetting the country after the war than most. Besides, she was a most ardent Methodist, so they were married in 1867. My father, John Wesley Macomber, was ten years old and sister, Mary Catherine, was 12 at that time.

One day a Clarinda, Iowa, minister, Brother Wallace, whom Eliza Ann knew, stopped at her home on his way home from Conference. She asked him if he knew the new minister the Conference was sending to them. Brother Wallace said he couldn't tell them much but it was a man named Martin, but there were two by that name there, both very fine ministers.

He came - Elza Martin. He did have two brothers, John and Joe, both ministers in the Methodist Church. He boarded with the Thomsons, who were near the church. Before long Mrs. Thompson became ill, and the minister had to find a different place to stay. He came to Eliza Ann's, but before many days he became ill and Eliza Ann had to care for him.

Mary began to worry because she said that though she was a child, she could begin to see that the Rev. Martin and mother were becoming very friendly. She told her Grandmother, Mary Burton, of her worries, but the older woman insisted that she was wrong. Soon there were two weddings to be performed some distance away. Eliza Ann went with the minister so Mary said to her Grandmother, "You see! What did I tell you?" But all Mary Burton said was, "Well, he is a nice man." Mary Catherine cried.

The next summer - on July 19, 1867, the grasshoppers came to that area - so numerous they darkened the sun like a cloud. When they came down to the ground they struck like wind blown hail and
immediately began to eat. Mary Burton Holland Macomber said she would watch the flowers and Mary could attend the garden, but they accomplished nothing because when they shoed them off one place twice the number came to take their place.

Mary Burton hired a man to haul straw and put it over the garden and that was wonderful for the grasshoppers. They could be under the straw and in the shade to eat. She cut the cabbage and although it was early she made good kraut of it. Many neighbors came and bought it in the winter. One small corner of the flowers the grasshoppers left.

That fall Eliza Ann and the minister, Elza Martin were married. The wedding was at Mary Burton and George Macomber's home on September 5, 1867. The relatives, and there were many in that section of Iowa made the wedding a big and gala affair. After the ceremony Mary Catherine kissed her mother and shook hands with the preacher and called him "Pa", then went out back of the house and cried. She cried so hard she didn't notice for a little while that Elza's oldest brother, John, was there and he was crying.

"What are you crying for little girl?" John asked.
"What are you crying for?" Mary answered.
"I'm so worried", said John. "Elza has had such bad luck with his women. His first wife, Mary Stone, only lived for a few months. She was an angel and I, too, loved her although I was only 15 years old". Mary was aghast. So? The preacher had already been married! But John continued, "Then his second wife Sarah Morris, died about three years ago. I'm afraid things will go that way again".
"Well, maybe not", said Mary. "This is the third time and maybe it's a charm." So they both dried their tears and went inside again.

They were ready for the big wedding dinner. A famous negro cook, Lucy, had been hired to prepare the food. The next day Mary watched her chance to ask her mother,
"Did you know that the Preacher had been married before—twice?" Eliza Ann laughed and said, "Yes, I know all about that". So Mary was a little more at ease.

Later she admitted that "that preacher" was a very fine father. With Eliza Ann's two, Mary and John Wesley, and Elza's four, John, Hannibal, Milton and Emma, all living in the house at one time there was sure to be arguments and misunderstandings. Elza patiently heard both sides of every argument, then reasoned with them until they reached a settlement. He never struck one of them and they got along reasonably well.

One thing Elza demanded of all of them was obedience. He would give orders to clean up to go with him to Sunday School. At a small creek they crossed on the way he always stopped and inspected the hands for cleanliness. If they were found a bit
grubby they got a good scrubbing in the cold creek water with a corn cob and sand for soap and Elza to do the scrubbing. One lesson was enough.

Elza and Eliza Ann went to Fremont County, Iowa after the wedding to get his four children, and were gone two weeks. When they came home Elza had to start immediately on a revival meeting in another part of the County. Mary had been ailing all the last month of the summer. She didn't want to play with the other children but hulled the last of the hazelnuts they had picked and finished her quilt blocks. Then she took very ill with typhoid fever. She had a great deal of fever for six long weeks. Elza came from the revival meeting to help Eliza Ann care for her. She was very weak for a long time and unable to walk until after Christmas.

They had never moved into the house that George had built for them. When the doctor said Mary could be moved, she was carried on a couch by George and Elza to the new home she had so much wanted to live in. The doctor thought it safe to bring the other children home so they could start to school for the spring term, but Milton took the fever. He was only ill two weeks and was up and around while Mary was learning to walk. Mary lost all of her hair and Eliza Ann gave her a net cap to wear so she could go to school as soon as she was able. Mary made her grandmother, Mary Buton an apron for her 64th birthday in March and was able to spend the day with her.

That spring the grasshoppers were still there. Mary Burton didn't put in a garden, but did try to save some of the flowers by digging a trench around the beds and pouring it full of lime. Then with her chair under a tree and a long twig to brush with, she saved a few nice blossoms.

In June the grasshoppers mysteriously left and crops could planted. The season was good and most things did well so there was a fair harvest.

Elza's father wrote that he had purchased an 80 acre place for each of his three sons, Elza, John and Joe, south of Falls City, Nebr., on the edge of the Sac and Fox Indian Reservation which was up for sale by the government. He wanted Elza to come to see it, and see if he thought he could make a home there. Elza took his boys back to Fremont County, Iowa to his people to have them out of town during the summer, then he and Eliza Ann and their two daughters went to Nebraska to see the land. Wesley stayed with George and his grandmother, Mary Burton.

They were gone two weeks, and when they came home Mary Burton was ill. "You just help me now and we'll save our flowers," she said, but she soon had a sinking spell and only lived nine days more. The neighbors said that she had just "overdriv'" herself trying to save her flowers. They gathered the flowers and Mary Burton's sister-in-law Mary Hannah, made a wreath and a floral spray to put on the casket.
Those were sad times for Mary Burton had been a person who made her influence felt with all who knew her. Whether or not her marriage to George Macomber was right, he did miss her very much. He was completely lost and refused to go back to their home again. He had his things moved to a room in his store-carpen ter shop. Mary Hannah and her husband, Willie Arrison, who was a painter, lived in the upstairs rooms also. They had three children but Mary Hannah died at the age of 32 with that number one killer of that day, consumption. Only child mortality came near equalling it.

It was the beginning of a new life for Eliza Ann and her children, Mary and Wes. They rented the little house that George built for them and at last she wasn't working for George with a good living but little pay. Eliza moved the family to Nebraska and after putting in his crops they settled on a rented farm.

Soon after that Eliza's team of high spirited horses ran away as he and Eliza Ann were coming home from a Sunday night meeting. Both were thrown out of the buggy and Eliza Ann's leg was badly hurt. She didn't walk for a number of weeks. She was very fragile and that summer she gave birth to twins, Ann and Ashbury. Ashbury was a husky baby and grew satisfactorily but Ann was a long time getting started.

Emma, Eliza's daughter, 12 years old and Mary Catherine, Eliza Ann's daughter, 14, did the housework with Mary Burton's advice. After the twins came they had a "Hired girl" for three weeks.

There was a school where all of the children went except Mary Catherine who stayed with her mother. The boys said they did learn but "Lickin" went with learning.

Elza never lost his determination. It was his custom to announce to Eliza Ann after breakfast that he planned to make a trip to town with the team and buggy and that if she wanted to go to be ready at a certain time. When that time came he would drive up to the gate, wait as much as five minutes and if Eliza Ann hadn't shown up he drove on with not a look back.

It was not only with his own family that he was so unyielding. Years later when George Martin moved his family to Kearney, Nebraska, his daughter Katheryn had a kitten she loved very much. Elza kept it for her and promised to bring it to her at her new home. Elza boarded the train with the kitten safely in a small crate which he held on his lap. The conductor objected saying they didn't allow pets in the passenger coach. Elza was adamant and answered, "But I promised my granddaughter I would deliver this kitten safely and this is the way I propose to do it." No amount of coaxing could make him budge or let go of the kitten's crate. Finally his smile won and the conductor let him alone and there the kitten rode throughout the long day.
In his plan to move to Nebraska, Elza figured three full days for the horses and cattle to travel the 75 miles. He wanted to reach his parent's home by Saturday night so he planned to start on Thursday. Mary was much relieved that they didn't start on Friday because of a superstition that anything started on Friday was doomed to disaster.

They were to take two teams and wagons, Elza and Eliza Ann doing the driving. The cattle were driven by the four boys who took turns riding and walking. Eliza Ann's wagon was a covered one and a bed was made for the twins in the back. A dozen of her best Shanghi chickens were in a crate on the back of Elza's wagon.

By the end of the first day they had reached the home of a friend thru the Methodist Church, Brother Michaels and his wife. The home was small so Eliza Ann, the twins, Mary Catherine and Emma slept in the house and Elza and the boys slept under the wagons.

The next day everything went smoothly and they arrived at the home of Elza's Aunt Lucinda and her husband Mose Vanness. The Vannesses lived a little more than a mile from the old Brownville Crossing on the Missouri River. They had a fine night's rest with the Vanness' - hot baths, good beds and excellent food and a comfortable Christian atmosphere. The twins were bathed and "greased" to prevent muscle soreness. What they used for grease is not known - surely none of the rose scented baby oils of today but probably just as efficent.

Breakfast over the next morning they started for the ferry boat crossing of the Missouri River. Even though they started on Thursday and not Friday a bit of disaster awaited them. The long, flat boat had ropes and cables to guide it, and was propelled by a rudder or a revolving paddle under the the boat. The paddle was started by a rope wound around a big wheel on deck. The ferry man gave the rope a quick jerk which started the paddle.

Elza and the boys got everything on board, teams, wagons, cattle and family. The ferry man pulled the rope and the boat began to shake as the paddle started. It was all too much for the placid cows. They stampeded into the river and back to the Iowa shore where there was heavy timber.

After much chasing they were again on board and started. Elza and the boys were grateful for the effortless ride across the river. From there on they had to urge the cattle every step of the way for they were weary and getting foot sore. When they were about five miles from their destination they let the cattle lie down and rest, going back after them the next morning.

It was about 10:00 P. M. when Elza's family arrived at the home of his parent's, Isaac and Mary Martin, one and one-half miles north of Falls City, Nebraska.
After a few days rest they went to their own place some ten miles west of Falls City where Elza had rented an improved farm joining his own land where they lived while he built a house.

Eliza Ann had brought roots, seedlings and seed of many kinds. Soon she had a good orchard started on their place as well as on the rented one which was appreciated by the owner when he married and moved there two years later.

There was a school nearby and all five of the children went. Mary was easily the head of the class and after a couple of years her teacher told her he was sure she could pass the examinations for teaching. She was delighted and so were Elza and Eliza Ann. She taught a term in the home school.

A term in those days was a two or three month session at some time in the year when the older boys were not needed on the farm. Wages ranged from $15.00 to $25.00 a month. Each student went at his own speed. If above average in learning and fortunate enough to have a teacher who was qualified, one could get help in learning Algebra, Latin and advanced History classes beyond the 8th grade level.

The first two years in Nebraska were good years and Elza's crops did well but in 1871 there was sadness. Elza's oldest son, John, had scarlet fever lightly and was soon well. They tried to keep the twins away from him but he had always played with little Ashbury and the little fellow would slip into John's room when he could. Of course, he became ill with the fever and a doctor was called but from the beginning he said there was no help for the child. After three days husky, happy, little Ashbury succumbed, and was buried in Falls Center Springfield Cemetery, not far from the old Falls School.

In 1872 Elza and Eliza Ann Martin had another son named George Ellsworth. He was healthy and grew well from the start. That year was rather dry and 1873 was worse. By mid-summer the grasshoppers came - clouds of them - big and hungry and hitting the ground like hail. Elza managed to get some hay stacked and about 10 acres of corn was good enough to put away for cattle feed. Then he and his boys, John, Hannibal and Milton went to Iowa to find work for there was none in stricken Nebraska, and Wes stayed to help his mother. The grasshoppers stayed until 1876 and then left about mid summer as mysteriously as they had come. During these years there was little to eat except meat and turnips which grew quickly.

Elza and the boys came home bringing seed of many kinds, anything that would have a chance to mature they planted and managed a little feed for winter. The Government also, sent out seed to the farmers of the area which was deeply appreciated. The next year, 1877, nature really showed what she was capable of doing, barring drought and grasshoppers.
Soon the family was growing up and each seeking a niche in life. Elza's daughter, Emma, married Ben Foster, a good man and a practical joker. He wore a full, black beard and had black hair. Sometimes he embarrassed Emma for she was a serious minded person but she laughed at his jokes. They had three children, Effie, a pretty hot tempered red head, who died many years ago. Ross, another red head, was tall and good natured, but he too passed away when rather young. Claire, the youngest, had dark hair like his father, Ben. He was a teacher and passed away in Falls City in 1970. All three had families.

Elza's sons all drifted back to California where John and Hannibal became Methodist Ministers and Milton was a writer.

Ann and George, Eliza Ann's and Elza's two children, both started teaching at the age of 16. Ann finished her school days serving as principal of the Nebraska City Schools. She never married and took care of Elza through his late years. She was a good instructor and the student's name for her was "Old Ironsides", and she was as dependable and uncompromising in principle as was that old battleship. She was tall and very sparse, what was often called a raw-boned person.

Mary Catherine Macomber, Eliza Ann' and Sam Macomber's daughter, married Jackson Crook, a member of one of the old families of Virginia. They lived on a farm for many years then moved to Falls City where he was postmaster. They had five children, Anna, John, Elva, Asa and Miles.

Mary Catherine was a great hand to read and could relate what she read like a master. She was the best conversationalist and cook but the poorest housekeeper. If one could forget that perhaps the dishes were carelessly washed, the meal was enjoyable, and they were usually forgotten.

She would sit in the kitchen churning with a book in one hand while she occasionally lifted the dash in the old stoneware churn. If she got butter by noon it was quite all right -- the book came first.

She finished her days in the old Weaver Mansion with her daughter, Anna. She almost lost her eyesight but lived to her 80's. She and her brother, Wes, were both victims of asthma for many years. In spite of continually failing eyesight, Mary Catherine Macomber Crook compiled a manuscript telling of the life of the Hollands and much of the story of the Burtons as she remembered the stories told her by her grandmother, Mary Smith Burton Holland Macomber. Some of that information is included in this story.

Her husband, Jackson Crook, was a likeable fellow but he met with a tragic death. One morning, as was his habit, he came down stairs early to start the breakfast. It was before
the days of electricity so he opened the kitchen door and struck a match to light the lamp just inside the door. Evidently the gas stove had been left with the burner slightly open and the room exploded killing him. It was thought a small grandson visiting there might have been playing unnoticed with the burner.

Anna, daughter of Mary Catherine and Jackson Crook, was a beautiful young woman - walked like a queen and knew so many lovely big words to use and used them easily. She taught school a few years then married Paul Weaver. The Weavers were an influential family of lawyers and Paul's brother, Arthur, became Governor of Nebraska.

The Weaver house held a large library with shelves of leather bound, legal volumes, a huge mahogany desk and many tall files. It was furnished with the finest of furniture and windows were arched and high. Anna said they took mine foot lengths of lace curtains and she bought new ones when she went there to live of the finest Irish lace ordered directly from Ireland. There were huge fireplaces, ancient grand piano and rich Perisan rugs.

Anna and Paul had eight children. After the parents were gone the State wanted to keep the old home as a museum but one heir disagreed so it was finally sold and there is now a modern car lot to replace the beautiful old brick mansion and the huge trees that guarded it for so many years.

Mary Catherine and Jackson Crook's oldest boy, John, was tall and seldom in a hurry or excited. Once he was in a hurry: he was sauntering around in our bee colony and the bees were offended for some reason and started buzzing around him. He started to run, blindly, and ran into a clothesline. It struck him in the throat and threw him back with a pretty hard jolt, and he never wandered near the bee colony again.

There was a time, too, when he almost had to hurry as a tornado came down the valley directly at their farm. The family ran to the cave and kept calling John to hurry and join them, but he sauntered along. Finally, just as he got to the cave door, he looked back and a fair sized chickenhouse was rolling across the yard right after him. He started to shut the door over his head when the building struck and finished banging the door shut, giving him a sharp rap on his head and sending him sprawling down the steps. The building decided to stop there on the door, pinning the family in the cave for several hours while they worked with pry's found in the cave to move it until it rolled a bit and they were able to get out.

John never learned to hurry and married a woman who was his exact opposite - a bundle of energy and they had one son. In their later years they moved to Texas and were divorced just because of their different personalities.
THE EARLY MARRIED LIFE OF WES AND NELLIE MACOMBER

One of the first schools Jackson Crock taught was the Middleburg School. Middleburg, Nebraska was a very small village consisting of a grocery store, post office and blacksmith shop. In later years it boasted a garage where Elva Duryea did car repair work. It had a good sized school as most schools were in that time. Near Middleburg was where my mother, Nellie Ermina Duryea lived. My father, John Wesley Macomber, worked with his parents, Eliza Ann and Eliza Martin, was often sent to help Jackson Crock with extra work in the school. While in that neighborhood he met my mother and soon a romance started.

Wes and Nellie were married in 1878 at the home of her parents, Sylvennus and Celestia (Claus) Duryea. Wes' land joined the Duryea land and Sylvennus helped Wes build a house, but Sylvennus died just a short time before they were married. Wes and Nellie lived on the farm until 1884. During that time Ariel Mabel, Samuel Everett and George Burton were born to them.

In 1884, Wes decided he would like to try living in Western Kansas, so he sold his farm, loaded their belongings and their three small children into a covered wagon and left. They secured a homestead near Bird City and built a sod house. Desdamona, Nellie's sister, lived about 50 miles west, near Wray, Colorado.

The adventure of a sod house and a new country was quite a challenge to Wes and Nellie after leaving their good farm and nice home. The windows were covered with heavy waxed paper, which let in the light and the heat of the sun, and the deep window sills were a wonderful place for house plants. There were no floors, but Nellie put a home woven carpet on the earthen floor. The walls were covered with cloth that was white washed, making the rooms clean and light. It was a cool summer home and a warm winter one - the children went barefoot in the house the year round.

The years 1885 and 1886 were fairly good years and things went well for the family. In 1886 the fourth child was born. Miles Sylvene, brown-eyed, red haired and as full of ideas as Eliza Ann's brother Miles for whom he was named.

The year 1888 is known as the year of the "Big Blizzard". On January 12th of that year one of the most vicious of winter storms raged throughout the middle west. It was a storm never to be forgotten for the ruthlessness with which it swept over the open prairies of the Dakotas, Nebraska and Kansas. Where there was nothing to break the force of the wind as in western Kansas it was at it's worst.

The day began clear, with a light balmy breeze and was so inviting that Nellie did the washing. Wes and two neighbor men took advantage of such a nice day to take wagons to the Arickaree River, eight miles away and bring home loads of wood for fuel.
The nearest such commodity to be found was along the river for
the prairie was practically treeless.

All went well until about four in the afternoon. Nellie
was gathering in the clothes when she noticed a dark haze along
the western horizon. She decided to hurry and do other little
out-of-door tasks for it might grow dark early. Within half an
hour the air was full of snow. The wind was strong and the tem-
perature began to plunge downward. It was soon 20° below zero and
night did come fast. She managed to care for the chickens and a
few calves near by the barn and to carry a bit of wood and a
basket full of prairie coal or cow chips which everyone used as
fuel. The three older children were home from school.

The storm gained momentum as night came on. If range cattle
had not been driven to shelter of farm buildings there was no
shelter, and few had been because of the speed with which the
storm struck, so they drifted with the storm. Their eye lashes
soon filled with the snow and froze together blinding them. Their
nostrils filled and froze. Thousands of them were lost.

Many people perished or at least lost hands and feet. One
woman who lived at the edge of Bird City was alone with two
children - a boy 6 and an infant. She left them alone while she
trudged to a store half a mile away to buy a small sack of coal
to keep them warm. She managed to get back to her own door step,
but there she fell, too exhausted and cold to call or to rise
and was found dead after the storm. The small boy had been re-
sourceful enough to take the infant into bed with him and they
managed to keep from freezing.

Wes and his companions with their loads of wood were on
their way home when the storm struck. When they could travel no
further with their loads they unhitched from the wagons, each man
walking between his horses, holding on to their bridles and
proceeded letting the horses "Have their heads" as it is express-
ed. That wonderful creature, if unguided, will unerringly find
his way home.

Nellie kept a fire and with hot flat irons, tried to keep
enough ice off the window so that Wes could see a glimmer of
light. But he could not see it for the heavy snow fall. The
horses bumped into the corner of the house, not able to see but
straight on their path home. The two neighbors had reached
their homes first - half a mile away. They were both badly
exhausted and each had his feet so badly frozen that they had to
be amputated. Wes was more fortunate or as he said, "Too ornery
to freeze". He came thru fine.

The storm abated about noon the next day. The sun came out
brightly and as usual, people began to dig out and assess their
losses. Many tales of heroism of isolated places were told.
The scope and ferocity of the storm added to the staggering loss
of life, human and livestock, giving it the name of the worst storm of the century.

In November of that year of the Blizzard I was born - in that soddy near Bird City, Kansas - out where the prairie was wide and treeless and fenceless, where the storm struck hard. Whether the storm or I influenced the other I'll never know, but each of us had an abundance of vim and vigor, and wore everyone out with our tireless energy.

Wes Macomber and his sister Mary were very, very different. She disliked keeping house or doing much of anything but reading and Wes was as fastidious as any one could be. One of his mottos was 'a place for everything and everything in its place.' He was so concerned about details that he didn't have time for the necessities. He liked to study and read and as a teacher he was a natural, for he could always put his thoughts across to others.

Wes was honest almost to a fault if that is possible. He taught his children that it was as bad to loaf at work as to steal money. As a farmer he was all wrong - "A square peg in a round hole" as the old saying goes. He would spend a good working day getting weeds out of a fence corner instead of getting them out of the field. What he really wanted to be was a pharmacist. He studied books on the subject as long as he lived.

Having grown up in a strict Methodist home, Wes had never been introduced to the ways of the world, especially to those of the wild west. When the drought began in 1889 and there were no crops to harvest, and having a good team and wagon, he along with others, decided to do overland freighting from Bird City, Kansas to Benkelman, Nebraska and return hauling commodities.

Wes learned that most of the haulers upon their arrival at the end of their trips made a speedy dash for the saloon and a long drink, after which they felt refreshed and ready for some excitement. He decided he should try the trick and it went pretty well for a while and he became a regular with the good fellows. Next came a hand at gambling. He was naturally alert and soon decided he was proof against reverses so he bet his trusty team of horses and his means of making a living against his chance to lose.

Wes lost. He didn't take it too seriously though he wanted to get home for he knew Nellie was out on the prairie with the children doing her best. He thought all those buddies who drank with him so happily would come to his rescue and he would soon be home again. But he learned that the friends made at the bar are only friends of the drink and if he had a bit of bad luck he just had to fight it out for himself. Not a soul offered him a dollar of help nor did they offer to take him home - not even a drink for solace. He stayed in Benkelman for three weeks while he worked out his betting debt and got his team back. He went
home an enlightened man, found Nellie seriously doing her work and not overjoyed at seeing him - to his utter amazement. Nellie's scorn of a human being who claimed to be a man and acted a weakling was unmistakable. Wes proceeded to fight another battle, unaided.

He never drank another drop of liquor and bent his scorn on anyone who did drink, sell of favor alcohol. Gradually he won Nellie back and some work while friends among the neighbors who abstained. His hatred for drinking was strongly impressed on all of his family at every opportunity. It became almost an obsession.

In the year 1890, crops in Western Kansas and in many other areas of the country were almost nil for the great drought swept the land, and as if that were not sufficient to lay all farmers low, the whole United States went into a severe depression. Prices for produce were very low, often no market at all and livestock feed was so scant that young stock had to be killed or starve.

Nellie churned butter to sell, if at all, for 10¢ a pound and having been raised in Wisconsin on a dairy farm, she made good butter.

A third plague visited the west - the flea. They seemed to thrive on hot weather, and when there was nothing else to eat they began on people. They seemed to inflict the worst of their punishment on Mabel, the oldest of the family. She was 11 years old then, Samuel 10, George 8, Miles 4 and I, Minnie Alice was 2.

Wes decided to go back to Eastern Nebraska where Mabel, almost ready for high school, would have a chance to go and he said he couldn't have her grow up for ever scratching fleas. Their belongings were loaded into two covered wagons. Nellie took charge of one team and wagon with Mabel, Miles and Minnie. Wes and the two older boys, Samuel and George, took the other wagon. Nellie cooked the meals along the way, and she loved to travel and to camp out so that part of their 400 mile journey was a pleasure to her.

The trip was uneventful except when Nellie's wagon upset going down into a steep little canyon. With all hands to help it was soon righted with little damage. Miles was pinned under something for a few minutes, but escaped with only minor bruises. At last the caravan arrived at the home of Wes' mother, Eliza Ann and step father, Elza Martin, a mile and a half north of Falls City, Nebraska. John Wesley Macomber and family had gone far west and returned.

Wes and Nellie found a place to live and work 20 miles from Fall City called Aspinwall. It was near the Missouri River, some 20 miles south of the Old Brownville Crossing, Aspinwall
was located in the bluffs and was scenic and rich with vegetation. In the fall the trees and bluffs became a dream land of color. Hickory nut, hazel nut, walnut and oak trees - in beautiful bronze and red colors that were lovely.

Wes managed a store for Dr. Gandy and Nellie operated the Post Office from their home. The house was an old style square, white one, three stories high. The third floor was one big room with a nice floor and windows that let in much sunshine. Supplies for about 200 colonies of bees were kept there.

Once a stranger drove into the yard with a fancy buggy and a high stepping horse. He drove down by the bee colony where Wes and two or three other men were working. For some reason the bees were irritated at the horse and several of them sallied forth to do battle. One must have stung him. He took off, made a turn and ran right straight through the length of the bee colony. Hives were upset and scattered everywhere. By that time the bees were everywhere, too, stinging as fast as they could. The horse was running wild - out through the gate to the road and out of sight but he cut the corner too short and left the buggy and the driver hung up on the gate post. All the men were running and fighting bees.

When Miles was about five he became ill with typhoid fever. Two other boys of the neighborhood became ill, too. Searching for the source of trouble it was found that all three boys had been playing cowboy and lying on a flat rock by a stream below town and drinking the water.

Wes and Nellie lived in Aspinwall about three years. One night the store Wes managed burned and was not to be rebuilt so he decided to move where there were better schools. They moved to Nemaha City, Nebraska, a town near the Nemaha River that drains into the Missouri River and were there only about six months. Wes transported the mail from Nemaha to Barada, Nebraska another small town in the bluffs along the river.

While in Nemaha, Nellie became acquainted with a very good doctor and his wife, a diminutive woman who lived near. The good doctor would not leave the cup alone. His wife knew if he would stop drinking he had a chance to be a good doctor for many years, and if he didn't, his usefulness was doomed. She decided to take things into her own hands. One warm night she made a bed with only a sheet on it. He came home late and very drunk. She persuaded him to lie down on the bed and rest. He did, going sound asleep at once. As soon as he was asleep she carefully pulled the sheet around him rather tightly and tied it securely. Then taking a buggy whip she gave him the soundest thrashing a man ever had. He writhed and yelled, but was unable to get loose. When she thought he had had enough and had sobered up, she gave him a good lecture on what he was doing to himself and his practice and assured him he would get more punishment if he ever got drunk again. As far as anyone knows, he never did. The doctor's wife confided it all to Nellie.
Wes and Nellie moved from Nemaha City before school began, and settled in Fall City. Wes's job with the mail was transferred to one carrying mail from Falls City to Barada, but soon he was elected Deputy Sheriff.

Falls City at that time, about 1895, had a population of 3000. It was located in the southeastern corner of Nebraska about three miles from the Nemaha River. A natural fall about five feet high on the Nemaha gave the town its name.

There was a very small settlement at the time of the Civil War, and it was where Nellie had lived with her mother, Celestia Claus Duryea, while Sylvannus Duryea was at war. There were about five houses in Falls City at that time.

The Nemaha flowed the length of Richardson County, past Falls City to where it flowed into the Missouri River near the Rulo Bridge - 12 miles east of Falls City. This bridge was a sturdy one, built to carry the trains as well as the wagons crossing to Rockport, Missouri. It was 80 feet above the water to allow the steamboats clearance and make room for the flood waters carrying debris. There have been many serious floods along the Missouri River - six miles wide, boiling, muddy water, full of trees, boards, soil from the rich farm lands - all being carried to the Mississippi on it's way to the ocean. Riff-raffing, channeling and a net work of strategically placed dams have halted most of the flooding on the main river. Running slower because of the many dams holding back water, it has filled with sand bars in so many places that the steamboats can no longer come as far north as Nebraska.

It is still a treacherous old stream and has a tendency to undermine huge blocks of low land along it's course and carry them into the stream and deposit them either on the Iowa or the Missouri shore. There have been many law suits between the states as to the ownership of the maverick land.

There is a cave near the little village of Barada called the Indian Cave because it was a station of the underground railway for run-away slaves. The cave is formed by two outcropping layers of rock half way up the slope of one of the bluffs. It is quite a tourist attraction. In July, 1972, six young people visiting the cave drown when a false river bottom broke letting them all drown.