

The Writings Of  
Clinton G. Wright  
1892 - 1983









Clinton was born in Hector Ohio and lived in Paulding County until the turn of the century. His family moved to Lima Ohio and built a home on Catalpa Avenue. There Clinton met and married Florence Leasure.

Clinton built a home a few blocks from his father, and he lived in that house until he died. My mother Loretta, his youngest daughter, cared for Clinton until his death in 1983. I grew up in Grandpa's house and watched him put his photos in books, write letters to the editor, and write these stories.





## A BACKWARD GLANCE

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As I near the sunset of a life filled with many adventures, I marvel at the changes that have taken place in our style of living in the last three quarters of a century. In that time petroleum or "rock oil" had been discovered at a little known place on Oil Creek, as it came to be known, a few miles from Oil City in Pennsylvania. It was the first place in this country that it was sought commercially although the American Indians had used it as a healing agent as long as they could remember. It was near the surface of the ground, so near in fact that it appeared on puddles of water and the first try at using it was by the Indians as a healer of wounds; or so legend has it. Being lighter than water it floated to the surface and they would lay a blanket on it to soak it up then wring it out in a container.

At that time there was no other use for it; illumination for homes being mostly by candle light which was a fire hazard. The discovery of oil made a big change in the living habits of people but first there had to be a practical and safe way of using it and to create a demand. Small refineries sprang up which were primitive affairs compared with today's huge operations where there is practically no waste. The Solar in Lima was one such, which from a modest beginning is now one of the largest and most efficient in the country, if not the world. There had to be invented a lamp that would burn it without starting fires. The higher fractions so much in demand today and highly inflammable, called naphtha was mostly dumped in streams. There was a market for some of it in small pleasure boats called "Naphtha Launches: which used it to generate steam. So the better part had to be gotten rid of.

Oil was first "struck" along the bank of Oil Creek by a Col. Drake a few miles up stream from Oil City where it emptied into the Allegheny River. Once the river was in flood, as was Oil Creek, and at a point a few miles above Oil City and it's confluence with the river, a railroad bridge crossed the creek and as the water rose higher it appeared that it might be swept away. To prevent this, a locomotive had been moved on to it to hold it down. Hot coals from the firebox dropped to the surface and ignited the naphtha which had spilled from

overturned tanks. A number of sightseers who had gathered along the higher ground were trapped between the stream on one side and a high bluff on the other and unable to escape burned to death; as I remember over one hundred. Years later I stood on the same spot, and having heard of the tragedy, could visualize it.

The “rock oil”, first discovered near Oil City was the richest ever found any place on earth and “Penn Grade” is still recognized for its lubricating qualities. Petroleum was next discovered in Lima, Ohio by Benjamin Faurot while drilling a deep well for a plentiful supply of water for a paper mill and Lima was on the map. The site is marked on the north side of east North Street and east side of the Ottawa River. This was in the late 19th Century and some time before I made my appearance on the scene. An individual by the name of John D. Rockefeller began to make his influence felt in the new industry and as Lima became important as an oil center he made frequent trips here to look after his interests and maintained a home on W. Market Street. It is the old style mansion west of the National Bank now used by the YWCA. Natural gas was plentiful and cheap and used for lighting and cooking. In fact much of it was wasted in forcing the petroleum out of the ground. It was said of the area that “housewives didn’t have to chop wood”, this in the area with farms having producing wells. Several claims have been made as to being the first “filling stations in the country for servicing the early “horse less” carriages. The earliest I have heard of making the claim was in 1910 but my father serviced Stanley Steamers as early as 1903 or 1904 from a small building he built in our back yard adjacent to a side street, it being on the corner lot. So I claim for him the distinction of being a “first”. He had developed a one man distributing system but it was a hard life and meant riding in the open and driving an old bay mare (and her name was Maud). When she died of old age he had an idea of attaching a gas engine to take her place. But it didn’t prove to be practical and he gave it up. As it turned out he was away and ahead of his time and he sold out to a competing company, the Paragon Oil, lock, stock and barrel for \$100.00 (not thinking there was any future in oil anyway). But ethics did not play a part in

business in those days; rather it was “dog eat dog” until in 1911 the dominant company had become so powerful that it could freeze out all competition by the simple expedient of the rebate. By this devious device a retailer would pay the going rate for the product and receive a ticket that could be used as cash on the next delivery. The practice became so flagrant that the Federal Government had to step in and in 1911 Judge Kennesaw Mountain Landis stepped into the case and fined the company \$11,000,000.00 and ordered it dissolved and the one company, instead of operating in several states, from Illinois to New York and New Jersey was broken up into separate companies in each state and with the controlling head in New York City. In time, each piece of the “octopus” became bigger than the whole was originally. At that time labor had very little to say about the conditions under which it worked and the twelve hour day was the rule. The father of the girl I married was a stoker in the hand fired boiler room and worked twelve hours out of the twenty-four; month in and month out. He shoveled ten to twelve tons of coal each day and between firing raked out the ash and clinkers and loaded on small dump cars, then pushed them outside no matter what the weather. It was the time of the twelve hour day for most common labor which goes to show how times have changed, but in his case he worked 365 days per year, except in hunting season when he took two or three days off without pay; it was his only diversion. Every month the shift change alternated and then he had to work TWENTY FOUR HOURS to make the change. Some time later when the First World War came on and demand for manpower in industry, life became easier for him. Then labor saving devices were installed, such as automatic stokers and with it removal of ashes and the back breaking labor was over. But he was nearing retirement age and a pension that enabled him to live in comfort. I had worked at the Solar and know whereof I write. It was my first job in Lima that rated “white collar” and the dignity of a desk (in my case a drawing board). My duties ranged all over the place, which gave me an opportunity to see what made a refinery tick and it was how I got acquainted with my future father-in-law. And it was about that time that I, with a younger brother in partnership, acquired a second hand car, an Allen,

built in Fostoria as I remember. It was in it that I took him hunting, and incidentally, became acquainted with his daughter. My advice to a young man with his eye on a girl is to first get on the good side of her dad. But I digress; I must back track and pick up the thread of my story.

It might be argued at what stage of development a human being has an awareness of self as a living organism. I think my earliest recollection of my surroundings was of sitting in a highchair near a window and watching passersby and somehow knowing that I too was a part of what I was seeing and in time would take my rightful place in the passing parade. Or it may have been in a safe warm place between two of the same species who would look after my welfare. I was not more than a year old, for as I was to learn years later, my parents lived in that house only about a year before moving into one in the same block and the next corner. They carried all of their household goods from the old to the new location, which was one of three rooms which my dad had built. And while making the move they left me sitting on the floor of the new home and I thought that I was being deserted among my strange surroundings. And while I was “giving voice” to my displeasure, a stranger tried to comfort me. I was never able in later life to figure out who that was unless it was my grandmother.

We lived in that little house until it began “bursting at the seams” with the growing family and had to be added to until the early years of the 20th Century when we built a ten room “mansion” on the same site, but that is another story. It was while living in that little house that my dad learned telegraphy and had a wire strung from the house to the railroad depot a couple of blocks away. The telegrapher was a friend of his and they used to gossip during slack times at night. I well remember the time dad was trying to convince mother that he needed a new pair of shoes; and her argument that they could not afford them; his being that “suppose grandfather should pass away suddenly”. He had no sooner said it than the instrument started clicking with the news that the old gentleman had died in Ottawa. A



train was due soon and he left without the new shoes. And without the wire we would not have received the word for a day or two. We first heard of the San Francisco earthquake over that wire, and the assassination of President McKinley. At that time the X-ray was only a dream and did not become a practical tool in medicine until later. If they had been able to locate the bullet his life might have been saved and his course of history changed. And with what consequences, whether for seal or woe. We might have obeyed the injunction of George Washington and avoided entangling alliances. It will remain for the historian of the future to assess the judgments of today.

Again I must go back to the turn of the 20th Century to get a picture of life in those long ago days, as they look now from a vantage point of seven decades later. As seen today and from today's standards, we were an impoverished family but we didn't know it. We always had enough to eat and to spare for those less fortunate; the occasional night-o'er taken tramp who knocked at the back door, or the neighbor woman, perennial borrower from next door who was forever coming over for a cup of sugar, or flour and never paid it back. Her husband was a Civil War veteran who got a drunk every three months when his pension came, then went home and raised hell with his family. I remember one such an occasion when dad had to go over and subdue him. When he was sober there was no better neighbor, but one had better keep his chickens locked up. He had a nice small home, thanks to two daughters who were fine musicians and taught piano. When sober he did odd jobs, such as cutting firewood which was plentiful and cheap from land being cleared. We never spent money for fuel, either for cooking or heating.

My father for a time worked on the railroad section and got all the discarded ties and always had a huge pile in the back yard which would have otherwise been burned on the right-of-way, they warmed us twice, when we later sawed them by hand with a cross cut saw, and when put in the Wilson heater. I well remember of holding on to one end of the saw when I was a very small boy. Once in a while the saw would hit a hidden spike and I would get a respite

and chance to get my breath while the saw was sharpened. Dad never threw anything away and had a knack of acquiring other people's discards and our backyard was always well stocked with articles that sooner or later he found a use for. Result, when we needed more room there was generally enough material on hand to build it and as the family grew, so did the living quarters until the original was expanded to seven rooms; like Topsy, it "just grew". Architecturally it resembled nothing else in the neighborhood, but was comfortable and in bad weather we could go to the stable without leaving cover. This was all on the back end of the lot; the front half having been left for possible future construction.

To go back a few years before this, I well remember the war with Spain in 1898 and seeing the local contingent of volunteers when it entrained for the "Front". Dad wanted to go badly but was tied down with the beginnings of a family, which probably saved his life as a lot of the regiment they were assigned to succumb to yellow fever and "embalmed" beef which was furnished the army by Chicago meat packers and was the "Watergate" scandal of the day. It was about this time that the scion of a wealthy New England family "Came out of the West" and made a name for himself. He had been in poor health as a youth and to build himself up, became an exponent of the vigorous life and went to Wyoming and lived the rough life of the cattle range and in time overcame his handicap. He became well known in his adopted life and when war was declared he raised a cavalry regiment among the first to see action and it was at San Juan Hill that they immortalized themselves by charging the enemy against great odds and driving out the entrenched Spaniards. But not without great cost to themselves. Their leader however, Theodore Roosevelt, at the head of his men, came through unscathed. I am setting this down because after three quarters of a century it is one of the things that I remember vividly. After the sinking of the U.S. Battleship Maine which was in Havana Harbor on a peaceful mission (and the cause of the starting of hostilities), it was followed by the sinking of the Spanish fleet as it tried to escape from the harbor. This was followed soon after by the destruction of the Spanish fleet based at Manila, P.

I. Admiral Dewey who was in command of the Pacific fleet, had taken it under forced draft across the Pacific from the west coast where it was stationed and stripping for action all the way. And being before any fast means of communication, caught the Spaniards there by surprise and sank that fleet. Unlike wars that came later, they didn't mess around with the niceties of diplomacy but fired first and asked questions afterward. The war started in the spring and was over in the fall and we emerged a first rate world power, whereas we had entered 4th or 5th. I set these facts down because I was old enough to understand the implications. The Glorious 4th that year was celebrated with "all stops out" and a sham naval battle was fought on the local stream. It made an indelible impression on my young mind. July 4th meant something in those days and if a fellow survived it with only one eye, "So what?" Freedom was worth it.

Another thing that made an impression on me at that time was a political rally my dad took me to. People took their politics seriously in those days and dad was no exception. It was on a summer evening and the speaker was of dad's political persuasion; his hero. A platform had been built high enough so he could see over the heads of the crowd and during the speech a fight ensued between two dogs under it. He turned the situation to his advantage by pausing long enough to say that he didn't know which one was in the wrong but that "his sympathies were with the underdog". His name, William J. Bryan. He never attained the high post he sought after trying four times but he left his name on the pages of history. He too raised a regiment in /98 but was on the wrong side of the political fence and never got into action. In fact his outfit did not even leave the states. "Sic transit gloria mundi".

It was about that time that I began to have an awareness of love of country and the meaning of patriotism, and that we had thrown off the yoke of the mother country some one hundred years before. And that my ancestry dated back to and beyond the American Revolution and my forebears had taken an active part in it, even such names as Stephen Hopkins; the oldest signer of the Declaration of

Independence. And another of the same name who signed the Mayflower Pact. But enough of “ancestor worship”, which today seems much in disrepute.

Looking a few years later, my father had a friend who bought one of the early motor cars, an Oldsmobile with a one cylinder engine under the seat. It was a right hand drive and the speed all the way to 20 miles per hour was controlled with the right hand. It was steered with a tiller by the left hand. Between the two it did not permit of much extracurricular activities as did Old Dobbin hitched to a buggy, as it very much resembled. In fact the early cars were modeled after horse drawn vehicles. This one had a dash board in front to protect the occupants from being splashed in bad weather and the top was identical with that of a horse drawn buggy. And don't ask me why they were called “buggies”; the origin of that was before my time. A two seater was a “carriage”, usually drawn by a team and could “carry” from four to six people, hence the name.

All early horse less vehicles had one drawback (at least). They could not be driven in cold weather because the motors, being water cooled, would freeze up and sometimes burst so they had to be “put up” for the duration. It was before antifreeze came on the market. I remember it well. Our friend with the Olds was putting up his for the winter and as it was before the day of home garages, or even before the word had come into our language, he had drained the radiator and was pushing it to the local “Automobile Barn” (a converted livery stable) and had me get in to steer it. To put it mildly, it was the proudest moment of my young life and I was the envy of the kids who saw me. It was one of the highlights that has stayed with me through the years. It was about that time when a motor car drew attention that I heard an old codger say “Why, I saw him going down the street at 10 MILES AN HOUR”. Today the British Concord broke the barrier at twice the speed of sound. I wonder what speed will be commonplace one hundred years from now, Or at the way things are going now, if there will be a civilization capable of anything. Since Hiroshima we are told, there have been enough A and H bombs

manufactured and stockpiled to blow us off the map. And to what end? I will not be here to see it but may have descendants who will. "What fools these mortals be" (unquote). It seems that we have opened a Pandora's Box when the riddle of atomic fission was solved. Now even the smallest nation has access to the secret and is even available to an individual who could carry it undetected on his person. I "view with alarm" what could happen if a crackpot should come into possession of this knowledge.

The first camera I have any remembrance of outside of a studio belonged to an uncle; my father's brother. He was our "rich" relative (to my sister and myself). He had a responsible position with a railroad and traveled on a pass. When he came to visit us he brought a camera and "took" our picture. It used glass plates for the negatives and when he used it he had to cover his head with a black cloth to get it focused right. The resulting picture was good and a great improvement over the daguerreotype or tintype which had been invented many years before and used coated metallic plates instead of glass. The advantage of the latter was that any number of prints could be made from it on sensitized paper. In the years that followed improvements were made; motion pictures in the early teens became big business but many matinee idols lost their appeal when sound was added in the thirties as they did not have a speaking voice. Next came color but by that time home television became popular and the motion picture that in its heyday had made many millionaires, began to decline.

But to get back to my uncle, it was he who always sent us big Christmas package in the time when I believed implicitly in Santa Clause and my faith in him would have been badly shattered if it had not been for uncle. If it had not been for him and his generosity, Christmas at our house would have been a slim affair. I did not find out the truth until many years later but for a long time the smell of candles on a limb of an oak tree from the backyard and the perfume of oranges, reminded me of Christmas. The oak limb, by the way, was wrapped with cotton; a wonder we did not set the house on fire.



Back in those days life was simple compared with today and we got along very well without the gadgets that had not yet been invented. Se did not miss what we did not have. Many of the things that were invented through necessity, later in more sophisticated times became collectors items and before I became an “addict” we threw away many articles that I found others paid great prices for. One generation’s junk became the next’s antiques.

When we moved not many years after the turn of the century and at some distance, we were forced to leave behind articles considered just above the junk level, even for us. One item that I remember was the earthenware jar that was a part of my father’s equipment for generating electric current for his amateur telegraph. It consisted of, in addition to the jars, a “crows foot’ of sheet copper and made like a birds foot which sat on the bottom of the jar and with a bar of copper up the side and clamped at the top where there was an attachment for a wire which was the positive side of the current. The negative side could be any metal which was in contact with the ground. The crow’s feet were about an inch high and in the spaces between the “toes”; blue vitriol or “copperas” was added. Then water and in dissolving the copperas a current was generated; possibly eight or ten volts as much later six dry cells did the same work. But I must not lose track of the point of my story. When the wet cell battery had to be renewed, I fell heir to the discards which by that time had become so heavy with copper that they brought a good price as junk a windfall for a ten year old boy whose only income was from scrounging around the neighborhood for junk metal or bones. The bones sometimes came from the carcass of a horse or cow that died in a field and left to be eaten by hogs until the law intervened and then buzzards did a cleanup job. If it was a cow that had departed this life, to find one with horns intact was a prize. To get back to the wet batteries; I might add that when in use the water dissolved the pure copper until the solution was exhausted. Another thing that comes to mind of those long ago days was the surreptitious reading of dime novels (and cost a nickel) out behind the barn, with the delicious feeling that we were getting away with something

forbidden in [ missing text] neighborhood got in a new supply every week and displayed them prominently in a glass showcase. We devoured the gaudy front covers which never failed to show the hero giving the villain his comeuppance. I had acquired quite a stock from trading with other “addicts”. Some of the favorites had more trade value than others and would bring two or three of the less popular. I had a special yen for Old King Brady and Diamond Dick, two fictional detectives a couple of generations ahead of Ironside and Colombo, their counterpart on television. William F. Cody as Buffalo Bill was a legend in his lifetime. In real life he became an Indian fighter and killed his first Indian at age ten when he was left to protect a mother and her child in an attack. He got his nickname for keeping the track laying crews who were building the first transcontinental railroads supplied with buffalo meat. He later became a showman and I have seen his Wild West Show in the ‘teens many years later I saw his burial place in the mountains near Denver. When we left that area I had to entrust my stock to a buddy with the understanding that if ever the opportunity presented itself I could claim them but time passed and I grew older and more mature. And among new friends and scenes I lost interest and forgot them, and gained new ones. And among the new ones, those long legged giggly creatures that I had heretofore ignored, I in time found that they had something interesting going for them. And in the fullness of time found one that would look at even me.

Now where did I get off the “beam”? Back in those days it was said that a boy who had fallen as low as to read such trash was hell bound with no hope of ever entering the Pearly Gates; he was “Beyond the Pale”. But thinking on that subject has changed with the years, even as that the wearing of jewelry is vanity, and some other oddball beliefs that I might mention. Now it is held that such reading has a good influence on young impressionable minds. Then the good guys always won and the bad got their just deserts in the end, which served them right. Certainly it beat the smoking of “pot” a couple of generations later.

It seems incredible now but in my lifetime I have seen motor car developed from the horse less carriage to the comfortable all weather creations of today. And the flying machine of the Wright brothers at Kitty Hawk to today's giants that will whisk 300 passengers across the country at a speed of around twice the speed of sound. Unless it is an emergency I can see no reason for getting there fast. In the last few days there have been crashes of two of those behemoths. Once failing to attain flying speed on takeoff and another trying to land after dark in a rainstorm. Another crashed into a mountain from a great height. There are arguments for and against them of course, the pros argue that in spite of the high mortality rate per passenger mile, it is the lowest of any form of transportation. I sometimes wonder at what speed they will have to fly to arrive at their destination before they start. The weak point in all planes today (as I see it) is the percentage of carrying capacity that will have to be allotted to fuel. Now IF some other method of propulsion could be devised that would greatly reduce the weight of fuel, or better still do away with it altogether, like nullifying gravity.

But I am afraid that is a little too Orwellian for the 20th century. However I understand that other forms of energy are being explored, and none too soon. We are fast running out of fossil fuels but one would not think it at the rate cars are being built and we are being urged to trade in that old worn-out last years model and get a new and far superior and shiny 1976. In the meantime piles of junked cars become an eyesore on the countryside and legislation had to be enacted to compel the building of fences to hide them. What is the ultimate destiny of such piles of junk? As one fellow I heard of put it, a quick supply of essential metals. When the next war comes. The world cannot survive another war. With "Wars and rumors of wars" filling the news I wonder if we are approaching Armageddon. With fighting in the Near East and earthquakes killing 15,000 in Central America and other parts of the world, all signs seem to point that way. And that brings me to the present, this 9th day of Feb. 1976. On a recent stopover in the town where I spent my early boyhood, I

A REMINISCENCE OF PAULDING COUNTY OHIO  
AROUND THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

learned that this year of 1970 is the sesquicentennial of the founding of Paulding Co., named for John Paulding, one of three Revolutionary War patriots who captured the British officer, Major Andre who conspired with General Benedict Arnold (a name that has become synonymous with treason) to surrender West Point on the Hudson to the Redcoats, for a price. If the plan had succeeded, the history of this nation of ours might well have been much different, In the light of what happened to some of Britain's other colonial possessions. I learned of this decisive episode early in life and have always been proud of the fact that I hailed from a part of the country so named.

I was not born in Paulding, but not too far east in Putnam Co., (named for another patriot) in a place called Hector on the Nickel Plate R.R. a short distance east of Continental. I might add here that I had an awful narrow escape; my parents considered naming me for the town. It was a thriving little community, as I learned many years later, but the only industry was a stave and heading mill for making sugar barrels and where my father worked. It was owned by the Hector O. Havenmyer Co. (hence it's name) who were in the sugar business in N.Y. It seems that the elm timber, from which the barrels were made, was about exhausted, coincident with my arrival, so my folks moved to Paulding where there was another mill and a plentiful supply of elm timber, another fact that I didn't learn until much later. This mill was operated by the Weidman Co. who owned a square mile of virgin timber four miles west of town known as Section Eight. There was a small settlement on the SW corner of the section with a few houses for the workmen and small general store. I vaguely remember of being in the store once, because of the candy counter. It was straight west on the road to Ft Wayne, Indiana.

The timber was hauled to the mill on a narrow gauge railroad and the flat cars were drawn by a small steam locomotive known affectionately as "Old Betty". The right of way was parallel to and on the south side of the road. Until just recently, the remains of stone abutments of a bridge crossing a small stream or ditch could be seen. It was pointed out to me by Paul Eichling on whose farm it was. One

of my earliest recollections of those times is of taking a ride on this train with my dad, and of being scared.

There was the drying kiln where the bolts of wood (the proper length for a stave) were cured before being processed, and the pleasant odor emanating there from still lingers in memory. My recollection of the mill itself is not too good, a place of whirling saws and slapping leather belts driving shafts, not too good a place for a small boy to be. One thing I do remember quite distinctly, although I was not an eye witness, is of a workman shoving his head into one of the buzz saws one day (it was a terminal case). His name was Curzy and they said he must have been crazy, which no doubt he was, and why I can remember his name. Then one unforgettable night my parents awakened me to see a red glow in the sky to the south. The mill was on fire and burned to the ground, and dad was out of work. The Weidman Co. also had a flour mill nearby on the same premises and it too burned but I think some time later. It was built largely of masonry construction and for a long time the grounds were littered with brick that took some time for cooling. The Lutheran church was built in part of brick from the grist mill and I earned my first dollar cleaning the mortar off them, at a dollar per thousand. The same brick today would be worth more than new ones, for their decor value.

My dad also got many wagon loads for the hauling and later used them for the bigger house he built on Wayne Street just west of the railroad. We had been living in a small house built on the rear half of the lot, reserving the front half for a larger one when the need came. Later it was sold to P.A. Boy and moved to the rear of his home on S. Williams Street and is now used as a garage. After the fire he worked at several jobs to keep the wolf from the door; one I remember was on the railroad section gang with John Brown as boss; a good neighbor but hard taskmaster. The pay was a dollar for ten hours of grueling labor. Transportation to the work was by handcar, and on their own time, pumped up and down by the men while the boss rode sitting down, as was his "right". When the Great Bank Robbery



was pulled one night, this same handcar was used for the "getaway", and getaway they did, south towards Latty. On Sundays it was used to bring in the newspapers from the south.

Another job he had was delivering groceries for one of the stores, at \$5.00 per week and on Saturday nights the proprietor generously allowed him to take home over ripe fruit, oranges and bananas for HALF price, which would not have survived the weekend anyhow. We knew we were poor and accepted our lot, BUT it never occurred to us that we were UNDERPRIVILEGED, and asked nothing of anyone except the right to earn a living. We raised some of our food and canned it, and consumed quantities of corn meal mush; with milk for supper and fried the next morning, eaten with homemade molasses. Beans seasoned with fat pork was also one of our mainstays, especially on wash days. A special treat was beefsteak we had on rare occasions; all we could eat for 15 cents per pound. Eggs were 3 doz. for 25 cents and crackers 10c a pound scooped out of an open barrel. Packaging of food as we know it today was unknown. Grocery stores were the only place where kerosene (coal oil) was sold for lamps and they didn't like to handle it because it sometimes contaminates food articles. To obviate this small potato was placed on the spout of the can. Today that potato would represent the profit on the deal.

It was likewise true of gasoline which some used in cook stoves, also torches for outside lighting, especially at county fairs. SO, there was not too much hard feelings generated when dad decided to go into the retail oil business in competition with grocers, circa 1902-03, and we began to live a little higher on the hog. He put tanks on a spring wagon, bought an old plug horse and was in business. He made the town three times a week and country routes on alternate days, winter and summer with no protection from the weather, sitting up in front and in the open. On extreme cold days he would walk or run beside the wagon.

With a horse stabled on the back of the lot, to say nothing of the "Chicsalean Bungalow" nearby, and which everyone had and took for

granted, we had the ubiquitous house fly, "That flitted to and from the house, where ma was making pies" (unquote, and apologies to James Whitcomb Riley). We had screen doors which helped some to keep them out of the house, but none for the windows. Instead we used "mosquito bar", a coarse mesh cloth material tacked on to the outside but didn't help much as it was easily punctured. It's a wonder we survived, but seven out of nine did and six of us reached retirement age besides dad, who lived to age 94. Up to now this account has been mostly personal, but a background for what follows; what life was like back in the "good old days".

It seems that when I get my built in data processing equipment / to percolating it dredges up old long forgotten memories, some not too pleasant. There were several disastrous fires in Paulding in addition to the one that destroyed the mill. One that comes to mind was on the east side of the square and south of the alley. I believe it was of frame construction and was leveled to the ground. Leonard's saloon was on the corner and a lot of "giggle water" was "liberated" before the walls fell in. One well known "lush" couldn't wait to get the cork out of the bottle and knocked the neck off. After the ashes cooled we kids had fun sifting through the ashes for coins where the cash drawers had been. Another was the F.M. Bashore hardware store west of the old bank building, and I think the Geo. Lynn jewelry store was involved. There was a hotel that burned on the NE corner of the square on the site now occupied by a gas station. It was before my time and all I remember of it was a hole in the ground where the basement had been. The theater burned after we left, the Grand wasn't it? see that old High School, the one I became a "dropout" from is still standing. The original frame "Dixie" school where I started has been moved across the street from its original site and is now a church. Whatever happened to its successor, the NEW Dixie that has been an eyesore for years?

Many Pauldinities left the old town years ago and found fame and fortune in faraway places. Others stayed at home and found it in their backyard, so to speak. I saw Stewart Green in California ten

years ago; he seemed to be living quietly and comfortably in retirement. I stopped at the home of Ray Creviston but he was "not in residence".

There are not many of my generation left; at least the ones I went to school with. Bud Ross, Ray Klinger, Donald Snook, Reed Essex, Eddie Finan, and Otto Kinkle who has been a neighbor of mine in Lima for many years. One girl, Eileen Russell living in Georgia the last I heard. Paulding produced some "characters" that I doubt their like could be found in but few places, and I'll place my dad at the head of the list. Sam Bowers, one of his friends, a homespun philosopher with ideas years ahead of his time on economics. I once heard him say that "We are building a national debt that our children's children will have to pay". I wonder what he would have to say today. Sam Kinkle, father of Otto and Amos Ross, father of Bud, both worked with dad in the mill, as did Emmett Studer who moved to a mill town in New York. Rance McGaw, a Civil War veteran who was a near neighbor of ours. Jim Russell the blacksmith whose vocation was shoeing horses, his avocation the raising of gladiolas and of which he produced some new varieties. Another blacksmith, Jake Knoedler who always kept his bible on the work bench and could be found reading it when work was slack. The Cutter brothers, bachelors who ran a laundry if I am not mistaken. Trines harness shop where there was a full sized "artificial" horse, fully harnessed for display purposes. Ben Moore's clothing store which I see is still doing business at the same old stand, but by the second generation. It used to be Burgners. The Harper Brothers store just east of it, ran by Nell and the brother whose name I have forgotten. Crain's hardware in the same place on the east side of the square, with the name "J.P. Crain" on the window that has been there longer than I care to remember, 65 years at least. Ed Buck the newsman who had a stand in the front of and on the north side of the old Post Office north of the Crain Hardware. He sold DIME novels that cost a nickel that we boys read surreptitiously behind the barn. Today they would be collector's items. I left a stack of them behind when we moved. Andy Shearer, a bachelor and ax handler maker who had a shop north of the square. And that reminds me that

I must not forget a certain lady and her girls who ran an exclusive establishment for men only south of town. It could only be reached by walking south on the CN track and was south of the trestle. ALL I know about the place was what I heard the older boys say. Her clientele was known by all the housewives who lived near the railroad.

Paulding had its tragedies. One I remember was of a family named Good in the country. They had two children, a boy and girl who disappeared in the wood after several days search parties were organized. One party was lead by a degenerate who led them straight to a brush pile where he had murdered them and tried to burn the bodies. The Emmett Studers liked to fish and often went to the Maumee River. They had a boy about my age whom they took along and left to his own devices. Sitting on the bank they saw his cap float past. It was several days before the body was recovered. Jake Knoedler fashioned the grappling hooks that found him.

For the present generation who do not know the why or wherefore of a "Stave and Heading mill" I can provide a little elucidation. In the days before packaging as we know it today, cardboard cartons and such, most everything that had to be shipped in containers, was put in barrels or wooden boxes, the latter "dovetailed" together at the corners, and the few in existence today are grabbed up by antique collectors. The barrel staves were about a half inch thick but varied in width. To get the "bulge" in the barrel, the staves were trimmed at each corner, running out to nothing near the middle. This waste material was known as "listings" and made excellent kindling for starting fires in wood burning stoves. The company allowed the men to carry bundles of them home and we always had a good supply. The "headings" were of about the same thickness and were tongued and grooved together in a square slightly larger than the finished head. This left waste material at each corner with the inner edge the segment of a circle and these were called "coonrods" but don't ask me why. They too made good kindling in a time when nearly everybody had to start a fresh fire every morning.

Most walks in town were wooden, made of one inch rough native lumber nailed to stringers. Street crossings in the residential areas were made of planks laid lengthwise. The only streetlights were kerosene lamps on poles at each intersection and had to be lighted every evening and "put out" the next morning. They were enclosed and protected from the weather and provided jobs for several "lamplighters" who also at regular intervals went around in the daytime replenishing the "coal oil" and polishing the glass chimneys which tended to become coated with lampblack or soot, and cut down on the illumination. When electric lighting was installed and hung out over the street, I as a small boy couldn't figure out how the man was going to get up there to light it. I have a picture that I took some time in the 'teens of the Court House and the old bandstand on the SW corner. It is "dated" by the hitching racks for horses, where are now meters for cars.

I am amazed at times at the multiplicity of products on the market today and considered necessities that we got along very well without. Deodorants for one example. Away back then the only deodorant any "body" needed was soap and water, which was "degradable" and caused none of the water pollution that threatens the "environment" today. On my recent visit, Mr. Otto Ludwig and I took a run over to Junction, where the two canals used to cross; still do in fact, what is left of them. Once when they were still in operation, my father took me there via horse and buggy. I still have a mental picture of a wooden structure carrying water over another body of water, which I have always since thought was the Wabash canal. On this trip I found that it was the Flat Rock Creek instead. In its heyday I am told, Junction was a thriving community, but wild rowdy and wicked. Now a couple of churches, a few houses and piles of junk cars.

About this time the family had outgrown the small house where seven had been born, and larger living quarters indicated. With thousands of used brick from the mill piled around the lot, it was decided to start the house that had been planned for some years. But



before it got well under way, a new building material appeared on the market and a "cement block plant" was built to the south of us. Dad got the idea he could make his own blocks so procured one and had a mold made. I still have it in my possession, a souvenir of those long ago days.

With the building of the new house occupying most of his attention, he neglected the business and it began slipping away, so after the house was well under way, he sold out, "lock stock and barrel" along with the "good will" for \$100.00, not thinking there was any future in it. But I am getting ahead of my story. After embarking in the oil business, it soon became apparent that it would be handy to have a stock of oils, gasoline, Mica axle grease, etc. on hand that couldn't be carried on a wagon. So he put up a small building next to the side street to house them and to service the first few autos that began to appear on the road. There was a Realty firm in Ft Wayne that dealt mostly in farmland who traveled around the country in Stanley Steamers and got in the habit of stopping at our place for fuel which in their case was kerosene. I have a vivid mental picture of one that got stuck in the mud, that Paulding Co. jack wax, on the street east of the house and got clear down to the axle but managed to pull itself out under its own power. Imagine a modern car of any make doing that.

A friend of my father's, Mont DeWitt, was the first man in the county to buy one of the newfangled contraptions, an Olds runabout one cylinder motor and steered by a tiller. I heard him say that "he was the first damn man in the county that had the nerve to buy one". He was one of our first customers a brick mason by trade and the one who built our house. The machine attracted quite a lot of attention in town and once when a crowd was discussing it, I heard Chub Crawford say that he saw it going down the street "at 20 miles an hour". It was the first car I rode in and once when it had to be pushed down the street, I was allowed to get in and steer it. The thrill can only be compared to piloting a jet the first time. It took some time for dray horses to get used to it and one of the diversions of the time

was a runaway horse. What? You don't know what a dray is / or was? It was the forerunner of the delivery truck, a heavy flat bed wagon used to move loads and for hire. Before I get away from the subject, I remember the time a farm hay wagon passed our house from the west with two knocked down "machines" on it. The buyer had to assemble them or hire it done. I think it consisted mostly in the attaching wheels. The bodies were of wood with piano finish. I think they were Studebakers from South Bend, or they may have been Auburns.

Back in those "dear old days beyond recall", the only touch Paulding had with the outside world, besides the newspapers that came in from Toledo and Cincinnati, was the telegraph office in the railroad depot. On it we got the first news of the San Francisco earthquake and the assassination of President McKinley. There was one other source of information, the "drummers" or traveling salesmen who made periodic visits and had all the latest jokes and scandals. There was one other, who didn't make the town quite as often but was more spectacular; the Immortal J.N. Free. He traveled gratis everywhere and stayed at the best hotels "on the house", for the diversion he created. The railroads granted him passes and he, like "Johnny Appleseed" who passed through this part of the country many years earlier, was considered a little "off in the head." But if so, he was "crazy like a fox" because he anticipated Social Security years ahead of its time. I saw him once and he either was expected or the usual crowd of loafers was at the station to see that the noon train from the south got in on time. He was given a rousing welcome and escorted to the Barnes hotel where he held what has since become known as a "Press Conference". As I remember him, he wore a long frock coat and silk top hat.

I remember the sinking of the Battleship Maine and the patriotic fervor it engendered, much as Pearl Harbor did some forty years later. I was at the station when the Paulding contingent of the Boys in Blue entrained for the "Front". I also remember when they returned a few months later, those that didn't succumb to yellow fever. As I remember, they didn't get any farther away than camp Chickamauga.

In those days it was NOT considered corny to express a love of country or devotion to the Flag. Today the hairy, be-whiskered so-and-so's desecrate Old Glory and get away with it. In 1898 we didn't mess around; pulled no punches and got the job over and done with. But THAT war was officially declared. The word "welfare" was in the dictionary then but in more recent years has taken on a different connotation. People took care of their own then and only extreme cases "went over the hill to the poor house." And nobody thought that the world owed them a living, with the possible exception for the Immortal J.N.

My boyhood days in Paulding were not of the happiest. I was born with two strikes against me. Like St. Paul, I had a "thorn in the flesh", in my case an impediment in speech that made life miserable for me. I was the butt of jokes of my school mates, not all of them, but some could be as cruel as the grave. For that reason I was not sorry to get away and among strangers who did not know of my affliction. In time I outgrew it. My one regret in leaving Paulding was a certain raven haired beauty, the prettiest girl in town, just sweet sixteen but if she had ever been kissed I wouldn't know. I will call her Elsie, which was not her name, but a key to it. She will never know what a profound effect she had on my life, as after getting settled in our new home, I began looking around for another who had her general specifications. There was one in the neighborhood who came close to meeting my standards but had an entirely different personality, and I soon found that I was too "slow" for her anyhow. However, in getting acquainted with her family I discovered that she had two cute younger sisters, almost twins. After a courtship of eight years I married the older one. The reason for the long wait was that she was a senior in high school and after graduating, attended Bowling Green Normal School and became a teacher. In those days only single girls were allowed to teach in the Public Schools. Now they are not so particular, when they are hard to come by. Just goes to show how the ball bounces. We had forty-one good years together when I lost her; she was laid to rest on our anniversary. But with three children she gave me, two with college degrees and one a seminary graduate and now an

ordained minister of the Gospel, AND twelve grand children, I do not feel that my life has been in vain, even though I haven't personally set any rivers on fire.

Our main reason for leaving Paulding was a lack of opportunities for a large family of boys. However, others who stayed and grew up with the town have made out all right. Soon after we made the decision to leave, and had burned our bridges behind us, we heard rumors of a beet sugar factory locating here, but it was too late. The die had been cast and the Rubicon crossed. The next year (1910), after the plant was in operation, I came back and worked in the first "campaign" until the crop was worked up. I was there for about two months on the night shift, from six to six, twelve hours on and twelve hours off, seven days a week and for the munificent wage of 16 ½ cents an hour. I still have the pay envelopes among my souvenirs. While there I not only paid board and room but sent money home and had some left when I returned. How does that grab you, some of you guys today who make as much in a few days as I did in my whole tour there, and striking for more, and more, and still more. With the benefit of hind sight, I view with alarm the trend events are taking in this country, MY country. I am not a seventh son of a seventh son, and so far as I know was not born with a "veil" over my face, AND my crystal ball is busted, BUT I predict that UNLESS we awake to the peril facing us, we will soon, and sooner than we think, will be ripe for a takeover by an odious, alien political "philosophy" which is not necessary to mention, and without firing a shot. I sincerely hope I am wrong.

Even as I write this, a disturbance of major proportions has occurred in Lima, and the city is under martial law. It was triggered by a woman interfering with an officer in the performance of his duty. She fired on him and in self-defense the fire was returned and she was killed. I dislike very much to end this on a sour note, but it is a subject on which I have strong convictions. Hope I haven't bored you ere you have gotten this far. The "good old days", who needs them? They are good to look back at but I wouldn't want to live them over again.



### **I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER, THE HOUSE WHERE I WAS BORN**

I was not born here but it is the first home that I was aware of when I was about one year old. It was the one behind the family group on the wagon (taken some years later). Dad is to the left with the push cart he used to peddle Standard Oil products when the mare he used to pull his oil wagon died. It attracted quite a bit of attention in the neighborhood to have a photographer. Notice the group of "rubber necks" in the distance beyond dad and cart. when my parents moved to this location, I was about one year old. Dad had bought the lot for a few dollars and with the idea of building more permanently later. There were three large elm trees that were cut down and a ten room house built. Then the "old" house was sold for \$50.00 and moved to a new location.

(Typed on the back of the photo by Clinton.)

Emma is in front of the cart with what appears to be 5 young Wrights. This picture is believed to have been taken just after the turn of the century (1900).

**Clinton & Florence**  
**Correspondence July 22, 1920 to December 13, 1920**  
**From a small bundled package of hand-written notes**

Ft. Wayne Ind. 7/22/1920

Sweetheart Flo: -

I suppose you received the card which I mailed last night. I called Uncle Kelly on the phone and he came over about 8:30 and I had a very pleasant visit with him. It was the first I had seen him since he was at Camp Willis three years ago. I am going out to lunch with him this noon. I was glad to learn that not only he, but uncle Manfred also wears the square and compass. That makes them brothers of mine as well as uncles.

I expect to go to Uncle Charlies for supper tonight. He is not in town but the rest of the family is here, including great aunt Maria. Uncle Manfred and his family have been figuring on a week's vacation at one of the lakes north of here, beginning tomorrow. They can get a couple tents and expect to rough it. I guess I'll drive them up and stay until about Sunday and then return here for a few days more. Uncle Manfred is quite an enthusiastic disciple of Ike Walton, of piscatorial fame. (If you don't "get" this, ask me about it the next time I see you) Anyhow, he likes to book the elusive members of the Finney tribe when they are biting good. Then there will be bathing and mosquitoes to fight, also boiling. So I guess I can keep busy, even with nothing to read.

I am sending you two tickets to an ice cream social to be held on the Washington school grounds Wed. evening, July 23. The proceeds are for the benefit of the Owl Patrol of the Girl Scouts. I bought them off the captain of the patrol. You can buy some ice cream with them and think of me while you are eating it. You can let Gladys or one of the other girls have one of the tickets. I intended to buy some of Gladys also but she left for the picture show before I had a chance to.

I want you to take good care of yourself when you go camping.

Remember and don't go in the water too soon after eating, and don't go in too deep, and never alone. And last but not least, don't let any guy get fresh. I'll close for this time and try and write tomorrow

With Love Clinton

P.S. Aunt Orpha inquired about the "nice little girl" who was here last summer. Uncle Kelly was very amused and surprised to hear that she was the same one he met at Camp Willis.

Lima, Ohio  
Oct. 18, 1920

Dear Clinton,

Well, I suppose I should wait until I receive an answer to my other letter before I write to you again, but, well, I am just going to write a line. I just got through writing a letter to Uncle Floyd.

Hope you are well, and having a good time? I am well, but can't say that I am enjoying myself much. I went to Sunday School & Church yesterday morning, stayed home & read in the afternoon, I went to Epworth League Church at night. I didn't have any place to go to night, so, of course, stayed home. I am going to Church tomorrow night. They are starting a Mission Study Class & I am joining it. Wednesday night, the S.S. Class that I am supposed to be in will have a Class Meeting at Verna Hoover's house & I am going. Friday night I am going to club. I suppose I will go to the show Thursday night & Saturday night I am going to work. So you know what I am going to do all week, although I don't suppose it interests you much.

Neva was vaccinated a week ago last Friday night & her arm is pretty sore. She was sick Sat. & Sun., but is better now. I didn't have to be vaccinated & surely was glad. Well, I must close as I can't think of much else to say. Please Write, Love Florence

Lima, Ohio  
Oct. 24, 1920

Dear Clinton

I was at Sunday school this morning when I got your letter. It just happened that Gladys wasn't ready when I left, so she came on the next car. He brought it right after I left & she brought it to me. I was certainly very glad to get it after waiting so long to hear from you. I was very much surprised & also worried (tho you might not believe it), because it was a Special Delivery. I am glad though that you sent it that way, because I got it sooner.

I just got through writing a letter to Uncle Floyd. I think I shall go and spend next Friday, Saturday & Sunday with them, if nothing happens. We are supposed to go to Toledo to the Teacher's Institute, but I don't want to go.

You surely must be tired at night. Clinton, if you can't spare a few minutes to write to me. I have wanted to write often, but can't because you never write to me.

Have you ever heard the song about "Tired of Me?" It is awfully pretty. We just got it yesterday. Maybe that's what you mean when you said you were too tired to write. I can't help but think about the time when you went to Texas. You wrote to me often then. You even wrote on the train. But of course, it's different now, isn't it?

As for going to Church. I have to have something to do. When I go to bed at night, I lay awake thinking and wondering if you really cared for me, how you could treat me so. I never thought you could be so cruel. Sometimes, it seems as if I can't stand it. Do you and Glenn room together? I bet if he wanted to write a letter and wanted to go some place, he'd write his letter anyhow, wouldn't he?



Mother just told me that other day, that if I intended to get married next summer, I had better start making some things, linens, etc. I did intend to, but I can't it seems. When I think I will go and buy something like that, I always change my mind. What's the use, anyhow? Why should I think of such a thing?

I am saving some money. I suppose I will have to go away to school, and it takes lots of money. I wish I could go away from everybody, and not bother anyone any more. Mamma said today, that she guessed I would have to get another fellow. I said, yes, who would it be? Then she said, "Why, isn't there anyone else but Clinton" & I said "No"! You know how I feel about it. If I can't have you, I don't want anyone.

I was very glad to get the picture & think it very good I showed it to Bee & Marion. They sat with me in Church & they both thought it was a very good picture of you. You said when you went away, that you were not going just for spite. I can't help but think that that is the only reason why you went. Now, wasn't it really? You also told me that you had only one month's leave of absence. I don't know how many other things you might have told me that were not true, & that I thought was true. I am glad that you are feeling better, but hope you won't forget me.

Please, please write, if it is only a word. Wish you were here to go to the Epworth League Halloween Party Wednesday night at Tissots. I'm not certain whether I will go or not, but suppose I will.

Well, I must close, as I don't want to make you too tired reading this.

Love Flo

P.S. Here is the Chorus to that song  
"Tired of Me,

Tired of me, tired of me,  
Sorry is all you say  
Just like a toy,  
Children enjoyed,  
Played with and then thrown away.  
Somebody new, looks good to you  
Happy I hope you'll be  
I love you still,  
I always wil  
Though you grew tired of me."

What do you think of it?  
True isn't it?  
Flo

Lima, Ohio  
Nov. 1, 1920

Dear Clinton:

I arrived home from Hicksville Ohio, last night about 11 O'clock and found your "very kind" letter when I reached home. I was glad to hear from you of course, but please don't say such mean things.

When I got home they were all very much worried about me. Can you imagine it? They looked for me about 7 O'clock. But I came home through Ft. Wayne so didn't get in Lima until 10:45 P.M.

I shan't write much, as everything I seem to say and do you find fault with. So I'd better just keep still altogether I guess.

I did not mean to say that you were a liar, because I do not think you are. But, there were several people who told me that when you went you did not intend to come back for 2 or 3 months. I told them you were only going to stay one month.

Your mother called up yesterday. I wasn't home, but mama told me what she said. She told mamma that they didn't think you were going to stay very long.

I have a dreadful headache so please excuse this scribbling.

I wish, Clinton, that you would please stop talking about Mama the way you do. If you can't think of anything nice to say about her please don't say anything. You must certainly know by this time that I think lots of her and do not care to hear anything against her.

Some girl out to the Locomotive Works asked Anna if you and I had stopped going together. She said she heard that we had. Anna told her she didn't know. She said that you were gone away and that you wrote to me once in a great while, but she didn't think we had quit going together.

Well, do you expect to stay out there all winter, or don't you know. I'd like to know since so many people ask me about you, though I don't see why they should. I hardly know what to tell them. Well, must close. I'm very sleepy. It sure is one bad day. It is raining out & looks as if it would keep it up for all day

Must close, but would like to know if we can't make up and be friends again. I'll try to do and say what you want me to, although I suppose I won't please you then. Write soon, if you have time. If you haven't time to write much, write a few lines anyhow.

With Love

Florence

Lima, Ohio  
Nov. 3, 1920  
Dear Clinton:

I received your letter this noon and thought I would answer it right away. My room is just out. I should be making out Report Cards as we have to give them out tomorrow so I shall make this short.

I am going up town and buy me a new coat if I can find one that I like (that is, if it doesn't cost too much). I received a card from Lottie yesterday and must answer it soon. I am going to Queen Esther meeting tonight. It is at Alta Flynn's house.

Gladys and I went to the Picture Show last night. I was over to Lila's house for supper. Helene has not been a bit well. She looks awfully bad. I am very much worried about her.

Well, I voted yesterday. It looks very much as if Harding would win, doesn't it. I suppose you didn't get to vote did you?

Lila and Gladys said they were going to get me some Pillowslips for Christmas. They said they heard I was going to be married soon. I told them they didn't need to worry about it.

I haven't seen any of your folks lately. I haven't been over to your house since you went away. I guess you know why don't you?

Well, this is longer than your letter was, so guess I had better close

Hoping to hear from you soon again.

Love,

Florence

Lima, Ohio  
Nov. 10, 1920

Dear Clinton:

I received your letter yesterday and intended to answer it immediately but did not have time. I went to Church last night to a Board Meeting. They had an oyster supper, but that was a surprise. We did not know there was to be a supper. I would not have going, but I promised Mr. Wetherill Sunday that I would go. I am going to quit going to Epworth League and Church Sunday nights because I always have to go alone, and I don't like to go anyplace alone.

You wrote as if you didn't care much about making up. Do you?

So you are going to stay all winter, are you? Well I hope you will enjoy it. It is very nice for you. You get to see so many new sights and people, that you will forget all about the folks back home.

I am so tired of seeing the same things day after day. I wish I were any place else but in Lima.

Please excuse this writing but my pen is not good at all. I am in school, but my pupils have gone home. We get out tomorrow afternoon at 2 O'clock because there is a parade.

Well I have started buying Christmas presents. I have bought a few. What do you want, or don't you want me to get you anything?

I bought a new coat last week. I like it real well, but it surely cost enough. \$79.50 but I don't suppose I'll need another one for several years.

Well, guess I'll quit this pen writes terrible and you won't be able to read this, I am afraid. I sent Lottie a card, but never said a word

about Clem on it. Wonder what he will think? But I don't care.  
Please write often, if you intend to stay out there. Let me know what  
you want for Christmas. Must close now and go home.

Love  
Florence

Lima, Ohio  
Nov. 15, 1920

Dear Clinton:

I hope you will excuse the pencil, but I am in school and this ink here  
is awful. I just got back from dinner. Got to ride with Arnold and  
Veloice. I received your letter Saturday. That surely was some letter.  
I also rec'd a card from Lottie today. She said she would love to have  
me visit her. I can't imagine it, can you? She said I had better resign  
at Christmas time and go out there.

Uncle Floyd came to our house last Friday noon and went home this  
morning. We had a very nice time while he was here and hated for  
him to go back. Papa went rabbit hunting this morning. He will be  
off 2 nights. I hope he catches some rabbits, as I am hungry for  
some. All of Lila's and Cecil's were at our house for dinner yesterday.  
We played cards in the afternoon and also last night. I am not going  
any place tonight, and I am glad too. I want to stay home and make  
some Xmas presents.

Tomorrow night I have to go to Mission Study Class, Wednesday  
night I have to go to Sunday School Class Meeting. Thursday night  
our S.S. Class & your S.S. class are going to decorate the Church.  
Don't think I shall go, though. Friday night there is to be a Reception  
for the preacher. I'm not going to their, but I am going to Club Fri.  
night. Saturday night I have to work until 9 O'clock. Bonita is going  
to have a shower on a girl who just got married at her house Sat.  
night. She wants me to go after work. I don't know yet whether I

shall go or not. This evening after school I am going to visit a little girl and 2 little boys from my room who are sick.

There goes the bell. I'll finish after school, though I haven't much more to write. Well, school is out now, and I guess I can finish my letter. I hope you are feeling better. But I certainly wish you would come home. I was talking to your mother uptown Thursday. She said Glenn was thinking of coming home, but she thought you intended to stay a while.

Just think! Next week is Thanksgiving. And Christmas is only six weeks off. I wish you would come home for Xmas. It will be some Christmas if you are not here. But, I suppose you won't come. Especially if you think I want you to. Will you? Well, I must close and go and visit those Kids. I don't know what is the matter with them; but I don't care if I do catch something. I might just as well I guess. It wouldn't make much difference to some people. Well, I haven't heard yet what you want for Xmas, and I certainly don't know what to get you. Let me know, won't you? Please write soon.

Love  
Florence

Lima, Ohio  
Nov. 18, 1920

Dear Clinton:

I received your letter this A.M. Was surely glad to hear from you, even if you did scold a lot! I am used to that by this time. We are having some winter weather now. It snowed all night Tuesday night. The snow was so deep yesterday morning when I came to school that I got my stockings wet clear to my knees. I had to wade because there were not paths. I was over to Edna's house last night to a class meeting. Irene W. and I went home on the same car. I was telling her about what Lottie said and she said I should tell you that you had

better resign and come home. What do you think about it? I am going to stay home tonight and do some fancywork at least, I think I shall. If you were home, I promise you I would go to Epworth League & Church on Sunday nights. And if you didn't want to take me to a picture show, of course you wouldn't have to. I don't think you ever forget anything, do you? You are always reminding me of something I did or said. I'm sure I'm not always telling you about things you said & did. But then, I suppose you never said or did anything that you shouldn't, did you?

I'm sure you don't have to have a lot of money. Clinton, if you want to get married. But don't you think it is nice when people can go to housekeeping right away after they are married? I surely think it is. Bonita had everything fixed so that after they came back from the honeymoon they went right to housekeeping. I am going over to her house tomorrow night to Club. I have never been there since she was married. Papa came back yesterday from hunting. He caught 12 rabbits. He went out again this morning with some fellows in a machine. Oh dear! I've got the stomachache so bad. Too much rabbit, I guess.

You said you bet I looked cute in my new coat. I don't know about that, but I certainly like it. Might as well spend my money for clothes & try to look nice anyhow. I don't suppose you will get to see me wear it, will you? Not this winter anyhow. Unless, of course, you change your mind and come home. Won't you please?

Well, kiddo, guess I'd better close and go home. I am at school now, but school is out. Please excuse my scribbling. Hope you are well and having a good time. Also hope you decide to come home soon.

Lots of love

Florence

p.s. Please answer soon.



Lima, Ohio  
Nov. 21, 1920

Dear Clinton:

I have been so lonesome all day today and all day yesterday for you! Why don't you come home? I'm just crazy to see you. Honest I am. I suppose you won't believe it, but it's true just the same. Gladys and I went to the Lyric this afternoon. I didn't go to Epworth League or Church this evening because I didn't have any one to go with.

Yesterday afternoon at work I guess Mr. Cline noticed that something was the matter with me because he asked me why I was crying. I wasn't crying but almost. I wanted to see you so bad. And I suppose you were not even thinking about me, were you? Mamma's cousin from Indiana (one of them) is here. She came yesterday and is going home tomorrow. I guess she and Mother are over to Lila's. They went to the Picture Show this afternoon and then over to Lila's for supper. I suppose they will be coming home after while.

What are you going to do Thanksgiving Day? I am going to wash my head, and make some Christmas presents. I am going to the Majestic also, if I can get someone to go with me. They are going to have "Sherry". I read the book and it is real good. I went to Club last Friday night. It was at Bonita's house. That is the first time I have been to her house since she was married. She has things fixed very nice. I won the prize. It was a silk handkerchief. I won the prize 2 weeks ago at Club too. That was a dish.

Have you decided to come home Christmas? I hope you have. That is the best Christmas present I could get. I will try to be awfully good and, not do anything you don't want me to, if you'll only come home. Please do. I'm certainly homesick for you. I suppose you are homesick to see me (nil) aren't you? Gladys is getting ready to go over to Lila's house. Carl was laid off yesterday. He gets to work until Thanksgiving Day. Did you quit your job for good there?

I guess there is no danger of me losing my job. Mr. Cline said they wanted me to work every Saturday until the "Mill End Sale" which is in July. I am glad too. When I am real busy, I am more contented. I just can't stand to not do anything anymore. Well, kiddo, I guess I'd better close. I can't think of much else to day. I suppose after I get this sealed up I'll think of something I wanted to say.

Write me soon, dear. I look every day to see if there is any mail. Of course I don't expect to get mail every day like I used to, because, as you said, it is different now than it was when you were in Texas. But write whenever you can. And please say you are coming home Xmas. Lots of love.

Flo

p.s. Mrs. Harper wanted me to go to the show with her tonight, but I didn't go.

Lima, Ohio  
Nov. 29, 1920

Dearest Clinton:

I received your letter this noon and was surprised. I did not look for any mail from you today. I'll forgive you for writing such a short letter since you didn't feel very good. I am sorry to hear that you have a cold. Hope you are feeling better by this time. I am feeling pretty good. I hated to come back to school today. It seems that whenever we have a vacation I can hardly come back to school. It is recess time and I can't finish this I don't think, but maybe I can.

Today is payday. At least it is supposed to be. I think we will get it. I am going up town after school and spend most of mine. Wish I could put it all in the bank. But Christmas time is too near. Do you really mean to say that you don't think you will come home for Christmas?

You say that you haven't got yet what you wanted for Xmas. Neither have I. Maybe we can both have what we want for next Xmas. That is, If you are still in the notion. The folks are kidding me. I don't know what makes them think it, but somehow they think I am going to get married next summer. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if Frank and Anna would get married next summer. Frank says he misses you and I think the other kids do too. I don't have to speak for myself as they know I do.

I went to two Picture Shows yesterday. Wasn't that terrible, since it was Sunday I went to the Regent in the afternoon and saw Katherine McDonald in "Curtain." At night I went to the Lyric and saw Wm. Farnum in "If I were King." Well, I got my check. I thought we would get paid today. I got a card from Lottie today. Lottie surely will lose her man if she don't watch out. You know what I mean don't you? I mean if he is a streetcar motorman. Well, kiddo. It looks good to see a picture of you again. Of course I see your picture every day, but I mean a late picture of you. Frank said he bet if you did come home that you wouldn't go back alone.

Well, school is out now. I must finish as soon as possible as I have to go up town. Queen Esther meets this week at Ada Paulding's house. Wish you were here to go with me. Zelda was in the store Sat. I talked to her for quite a while. She invited me over. She said Glenn was so glad to get home he nearly cried.

Well, I must close now. This is about 3 times as long as the letter you wrote isn't it? Be careful and don't get sick, because I don't imagine it is very pleasant to be sick away from home.

Write to me often

With love,  
Florence

Lima, Ohio  
Dec. 3, 1920

Dear Clinton:

I started writing you a letter last night before I went home from school, but tore it up. School has not taken up yet, so I thought I would start another letter.

I went to the Picture Show last night with Neva. It was "The 13<sup>th</sup> Chair." You remember, don't you, about seeing the play? I had intended staying home, but Neva wanted to go, so I went with her. Wednesday night I went to Queen Esther Meeting. Tonight I am going to Club. It is at Carmen's house.

I have been up town every evening this week after school but last night. I am going again tonight too. You see, I had a "pay day" Monday. I have spent nearly all of it, though. I have nearly all of my Xmas presents bought. I haven't bought yours yet. I am leaving the best until last.

Hope you will be home for Xmas. Won't you?

I haven't seen Glenn since he came back. Zelda told me he was surely glad to get home. Just think! There is only 22 more days until Christmas.

Well, I must quit. I am going to write a couple more letters yet, so will have to hurry. Please write soon. I would like to know if you are coming home Xmas or not, so I will know whether to send your present or to keep it here. If I send it, I want to send it so you will get it by Xmas. You had better come home

With love,  
Florence

Lima, Ohio Dec. 13, 1920

Dear Clinton:

Guess you don't care if I write with a pencil, do you? I am in a hurry and I can write faster with a pencil.

I am sending your Xmas present today. Hope you will like it. I do. But remember, you are not to open it until Christmas. It isn't very long until Xmas now. Wish you were home. Hoover & Roush are having a big auction sale. Its lots of fun to go. Marian and Beatrice having been buying some furniture. Wish we could. They sure are selling things cheap. One young couple that just got married have furnished their whole house with a little over \$500.

The sale closes Saturday though. The Lima Home Furniture Co. are also having an Auction Sale. They are selling out. I never liked their store very well though. I think it always looks so dirty. You asked me if I really thought that you went down to Paulding to see some girl. Why shouldn't I think it? There certainly must have some attraction down there for you, or I can't see why you should want to go so often. I'm not going to answer the other part of the question. Well, I must close. I have to go up town and send your package.

Please write soon

With lots of love  
Flo

p.s. I almost forgot to tell you that I was in Celina all day yesterday. Went down on the first car in the morning and came home on the last in the evening. I went to a Convention for the Epworth League. Had a nice time, but I sure am tired. Went to bed Sat. night at 12:15 & got up Sun. A.M. at 4:15. I never got to bed last night until 12 O'clock. Guess I'll have to go to bed really early tonight.

December 1964

On this otherwise joyous season of the year, it becomes my sad task to inform you of the death of my wife and companion of over forty years. About this time two years ago, Florence became aware of a small spongy lump above the right breast and mentioned it to me. This was about the middle of November 1962 and later in December she told me there was a slight soreness at times and thought that after the holidays she would consult a doctor. I took her to our family physician on January 2<sup>nd</sup> and on his advice she was admitted to Memorial Hospital the same day. After a thorough diagnosis by another doctor, it was decided to operate, after a biopsy proved the growth to be malignant, and this was done on January 5<sup>th</sup> – removing the entire breast and arm gland. The surgeon who did the work assured me that the “tumor” had been discovered in time to insure a successful removal. Her case was complicated somewhat by hypertension and diabetes but during her 18 day stay in the hospital both were brought under control. She made a good recovery and enjoyed a fair state of health for the next year – going about and taking part in her usual activities. Then late last winter or early spring she had an attack of shingles that was quite painful, but yielded to treatment after many visits to the doctor’s office. Early last summer she began having back pains that were thought to be caused by arthritis and for which she was treated.

Late in July I flew to California to arrange for the funeral of my brother, Glenn who had died suddenly of a heart attack and while there became involved in the settling of his estate and my return was delayed. When I got back some weeks later, I could see that Florence’s health had worsened during my absence and that she had lost ground. On October 9<sup>th</sup> I took her to the surgeon’s office for a routine check and when she told him about the back pains, had me take her to the hospital for X-rays in certain areas of the spine. As a result of what the pictures showed, she was again admitted as a patient on October 14<sup>th</sup> to receive deep X-ray therapy, which I later

found out was solely “to kill the pain” and it was effective. Her stay this time was for 21 days, being released on November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

For the next two weeks she was able to be downstairs most of the daytime hours, but her activities were limited to watching her favorite TV programs. She seldom left the living room and I prepared what meals she ate and served them to her there. ; About the 20<sup>th</sup> of November she was feeling so badly that she remained upstairs in bed all the time, and I had added to my chores of housekeep, that of full time nurse. She had no appetite and became so weak that I had to feed her what little nourishment she was able to take. About this time, also, the least exertion would cause her to gasp for breath, even to sitting on the edge of the bed to take her meals. Her doctor made his second house call on the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> and prescribed a tonic, which I obtained for her the same day and on his opinion that she had several months to live, bought a portable TV set to help her pass the time.

He ordered a visiting nurse to see her and she came out the next morning, the 25<sup>th</sup>, and arranged to come again on Friday the 27<sup>th</sup>. At the time of her visit, he told Florence that the tumor had spread to her back and that the liver was “involved.” That afternoon,; both of our daughters were in to see her, with five of the grand-children, to watch a TV show in which Barbara’s son, Mike, appeared with a group of “Indian Guides” at the local studio, and later her husband Ray came with Mike to pick up the rest of the family. The two families were all here except Loretta’s husband, Charles, who was at work. They bade her goodbye and that was the last time she saw them. Later that evening she seemed to be more than usually uncomfortable, asking for a drink once and complained of being too warm, although her flesh was cold to the touch. Then she said she couldn’t get to sleep, which was unusual as most of the time she was drowsy, and asked for an aspirin tablet. About 8:30 she called me and said that she could hardly get her breath and I could see she was in distress. She wanted me to call the doctor, but it being on the eve

of a holiday, he had left town for the rest of the week and I had difficulty contacting the substitutes he had given me to call. I finally did get one who advised calling an ambulance to take her to the emergency ward of the hospital, but it got her too late.

In retrospect, I now realize that since she could not get well, her passing so suddenly and unexpectedly was a blessing and for the best; she is beyond all earthly pain and sorrow and one thing I was thankful for on Thanksgiving Day 1964. We were married the evening before Thanksgiving 1923, which that year was on the 28th. She was laid to rest on our anniversary.







GRANDPA & GRANDMA & ME  
IN THE BACKYARD ON CATALPA AVENUE



Clinton & Florence Wright  
at bus station in Lima

ORIGINAL CAPTION BY CLINTON  
THIS PICTURE FROM ONE OF HIS ALBUMS







