

REMINISCENCES OF "AULD LANG SYNE"

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Editor of the Enterprise:

A marked copy of your paper, bearing date of Dec. 11 last, came into my hands a few days ago, the marked article headlined "Land Mark Removed"; said landmark being an old two story house on Green Street. It so happens that this same old house was my dear home. The private residence built in Clarks [Nebraska] in its earliest infancy, and the newspaper story of its now inglorious end stirred a clamorous horde of reminiscences of early years, and those reminiscences are so clamoring for expression.

Thinking that a little bit of history might prove of passing interest, I am giving way to an insistent urge to portray to your readers a little something of the ups and downs of frontier life at Clarksville "as was". If I make grievous mistakes, or fail to recall incidents which should be included in my narrative please attribute them to my eighty three years of active life in other lines of endeavor than that of writing ancient history, from memory.

On a bright June day in the year eighteen seventy one, sixty years ago last June, my husband, Fountain H Barnes, my three little children and I, crawled from under the canvas cover of our prairie schooner, and sat down on the grass, to rest. My father, Mr. William Sackett, my sister Mrs. Brayton, and her two boys followed suit, crawling from under the cover of another schooner.

The four horses and cow were soon picketed out on the open prairie, our cook stove and other camping out equipment unloaded, wagon bed set off on the ground, and preparation made for our first meal in our new home, for we had arrived.

We had read prospectuses telling of great and glorious opportunities for home-seekers in Nebraska along the recently completed U.P.R.R and we wanted a home in a less rigorous climate than we had been suffering in Minnesota, so we sold our farm to Norwegians who were rapidly filling up all open spaces in our vicinity, packed our belongings, and turned our faces toward the "wild and wooley west" in search of the makings of a new home, trekked the hundreds of miles from central Minnesota, a hilly wooded country to discover something where nothing had ever been.

Two whole months of living under wagon covers, four adults and five little children, all under six years was no jolly picnic, as I remember it, but now we had at last arrived. We had camped on the south side of the Platte [river] three days, the men prospecting up and down on both sides for a desirable location while we women were trying our best to rid ourselves and our appurtenances, of the dirt and grime of a long journey, and incidently, one of the children had fallen backward into our boiler of none-too-cool suds, it took us both to pull her out, while capering about in their glee at being released from their cramped quarters in the wagon.

On the long trip we had always camped over on Sunday, beside running water if a stream could be found before Saturday night, and if their signs of fish my father saw to it that we had fish for breakfast

on Sunday morning. On one of his Saturday night fishing trips he had caught four or five pound turtle instead of the big fish he had imagined, and as it refused to give up his best hook he had to take it back to camp and chop off its head with a hatchet. As it was then too dark to hope for more fishing we thought we would see what turtle meat would be like. We had heard that turtle soup was quite a delicacy among the rich, so here was a rich man's costly food without costing us a cent, for our Sunday dinner.

He slit its tail and hung it up on a broken limb all night.

Then in the morning he began cutting out the meat, but horrors of horrors, the thing was not dead. At each stroke of the knife it flinched and quivered, but at last he got it cut into small pieces for the kettle. The water was boiling hot, and as I dropped the pieces into it each one squirmed and wriggled, and although the men told me that it was only a naturally muscular contraction I felt that the poor thing was being cooked alive, and I immediately lost my appetite for turtle soup, and so fasted the rest of the day. The rest of the family enjoyed it greatly, saying that some parts of it had the flavor of young pork, other parts were like tender beef and some exactly like chicken. As it was midsummer now, water in the [Platte] river was very low, with many small islands covered with a thick growth of bushes and small trees. We soon discovered a number of deep water holes filled with large fine fish which delighted my father, and of course he must needs go fishing at once. He selected a hole about ten or twelve feet across, so swarming with the big fellows that they could scarcely move without jumping over one another.

He had no hook or line strong enough to manage one of these large ones, so he hunted up a large club and tried to knock one on the head but found that an impossibility, yet determined to get a fish, whether or no, he jumped into the squirming mass, and after being ducked half-a-dozen times or more in scrambling after the slippery critters, he at last climbed out with a twenty pound catfish hugged to his manly bosom, carried it too far away for it to flop itself back into water, and sat down to rest, and viewing the situation; said situation being that from the top of his head to the toes of his shoes he was covered with a thick coating of yellow slime off the fish he had caught..and of many others he had failed to catch. At the first sight of him the rest of us laughed, and screamed in amused astonishment at this our first real, intimate acquaintance with those slippery, slithery, filthy catfish. But what a fish, and what a feast we had, after we had succeeded in restoring father's clothing to a condition of half-way decency. Our men had already decided that the desolate-looking little blotch on the landscape on the north side of the river was to be our future home, so we forded the Platte, said to be a mile wide at that point, and tried to make the best of it.

There was no station house, only a ten-foot square, rough board platform beside the track to throw the few sacks of flour, potatoes, boxes of groceries, etc. and handfull of letters down on, and this was called Clarksville. The postoffice consisted of a small goodsbox, with two or three shelves in it made of the box-covers, and nailed up in a corner of a ten-by-twelve grocery store kept by a Mr. E. E. Peck.

Another grocery somewhat larger was owned by Mr. McIntyre, who with his wife and little daughter Abbie, occupied rooms overhead.

These two buildings, with the railroad section house, comprized the town. It's population consisted of Mr. And Mrs. McIntyre, Abbie, Mr. Peck and the section boss and wife; six people in all, and our arrival added nine more, swelling the grand total to fifteen souls.

(The section crew belonged to the rural population.)

A Mr. Clark, Division Superintendent, I believe, of the U.P.R.R. had become owner of that section of land, laid out a townsite, and offered a small lot free to anyone who would build a business house on the street nearest, and facing the railroad, so we, like the others put up a small store building with upper rooms, and a business-like square front, and lived in it until we could build us a real home farther back. In a few months homesteaders began coming in and settling in the nearby districts, and a few others in tow among these a Mr. Ball and wife, who built a house and started a lumberyard, across the tracks. Mr. Legg built a house and blacksmith shop on the north side, brought on his wife with their son-in-law and daughter and three small children. Then a young couple, Mr. And Mrs. Will Morse, with a young M.D. named Martin..came west to grow up with the country, and Mr. Morse erected quite a pretentious general store, with living apartments overhead.

In the meantime Mr. Clark had decided that we were in need of a depot and telegraph office so they made their appearance pronto, and Mr. And Mrs. Bross occupied rooms under the same roof, with their small daughter, Jennie and tended to business matters pertaining thereto. Now a schoolhouse was needed and a small one was put up on the south side of the track, a short distance west of the depot, and Mrs. Martin, the pretty new wife of the doctor, installed as our first teacher.

In the summer of 1872 we were ready to begin our home, two lots bought, house plans made, garden plot laid out and stables built, but Mr. Ball had only framing timber on hand just then, so with his promise that the rest of the lumber would be brought on as rapidly as needed, we started the work, but his wholesalers refused to fill our unusually large order except for cash, so Mr. Barnes advanced him \$650.00 to secure the lumber to finish the house before winter.

After waiting patiently for some weeks we received word from Mr. Ball that the lumber Co. had siezed our \$650.00 and applied on Mr. Ball's back bills. The frame was up, sheathing on, and not another dollar within reach to go on with, and that was that. Mr. Ball had absolutely nothing to make good his obligation to us with but an old cow worth \$20.00 and that was that again. He had set up in business on a shoestring, and busted the string!

During that winter the heavy storms almost wrecked the frame of our house, but in the early spring Mr. Barnes went back to Minnesota and succeeded in raising sufficient funds to finish it up. It was an eight room house, plastered, with hard finish, throughout, and a large, cement walled, frost-proof cellar below. The house was boarded up outside with shiplap, later called rustic, a much better and more durable stuff than the thin, flimsy weather-boarding that is used so generally now. Mrs. Granville Smith's father was the plasterer, and his work was perfection itself. This, the old landmark, so lately removed was our home until the fall of eighteen eightyfive, when I had to come to California because of failing health, nearly two years after my husband's death, when it became the property of the widow Kern.

In a very short time after coming to Clarksville we had discovered that we were facing a most serious problem, and we faced it with dread of its outcome. The country was literally swarming with Indians, partially civillized, of course, but still Indians. I had passed through the terrible experience of the Dakota massacre in my early girlhood, and I had never been able to forget its horrors. Now, here was the Pawnee reservation but nine miles to the west of us, the Omahas some miles farther to the east, and the sioux, mortal enemies of both white and red men, somewhere out west. All were naturally resentful of the white men's invasion of their gaming rights, recklessly and wantonly killing off the buffalo, deer, and other game, that was almost the only dependence of the Indians for food. Then the terribly noisy railroad trains frightened away permanently, all the small game, both feathered and furred, and they were in straits for means of subsistance.

They often came among us to trade their blankets for food, or if they had nothing to trade they begged, and we dared not refuse them, so we lived in dread all those early years, fearing an uprising.

Many times in the late evenings when my husband had not yet returned with the load of wood he was hauling from the North Fork I would feel a creepy sensation coming over me, and on looking up would discover one or two dark, forbidding faces fattened against the windowglass.

Parallized with fear, I could only clasp my arms more closely round my little, helpless children and wait---or what I could not know.

Sometimes they came in and begged for something to eat, sometimes went away to other houses, but they never harmed us, and we learned later not to fear them so much for they seemed never to forget a real kindness. Sometimes they got caught out in a severe storm and could not get home, then we would have to keep them in our house until the storm was over. They would wrap themselves in blankets and buffalo robes and lie all over the floor at night, with some of us in our bed in our corner of the room, and the rest upstairs.

If we had refused them food or shelter they could so easily have torn up the railroad tracks, cut the telegraph wires, and swept us all out existence in an hour. Once they went a long way about west on a hunting trip and made camp in a secluded valley, leaving the old braves and squaws to care for the pappooses and the hunters and young squaws went on the chase. When they had finished the kill and the squaws had cured the meat and dressed the hides they returned to camp and found that the Sioux had sneaked in behind them and killed and scalped all of the tribe they had left there. Those bloodthirsty Sioux could have found their way to the white settlements too if they had wished to.

In the middle seventies we adopted a better way of supplying our tables with fresh fish than spearing them with pitchforks or with the crude homemade fish-spears that some were using, in holes in low water.

We wanted them in spring too, so we made seines, knotting them ourselves, my husband and I. The first one not proving very satisfactory we made another, with a wing-spread of eighty feet, and one hundred and twentyfive feet long, requiring six men to carry the brails and one the tail. With this we scraped out fish in tubs and barrel fulls of the smaller varieties and most excellent eating..but none of the big catfish, they apparently keeping to the deeper water in the current.

There was quite a variety of fish in those days both large and small and as there were so few amusements of any kind the people made a sort of picnic of fishing days and gathered to help or look on and get a laugh when somebody, waist deep in water, lost his footing and got ducked. One time when we were a little short of man help Mr. Wetherell dared me to wade in and carry the tail. I accepted the dare and went as I was, good clothes and all, not expecting to get in above my knees, but he, as he intended, maneuvered the seine around and dragged me in up to my neck. It so happened that my watch did not leak a drop but my clothes suffered. The fish were always divided among the helpers, and if the catch was large the picnic-ers got some too.

The first child born in Clarksville was our own little baby boy, Jesse Everett, weighing eight lbs, born March 5th, eighteen hundred and seventytwo. This being the first white baby the Indians had ever seen it was a great curiosity, and many came to see it, especially the squaws who would gather round, chattering and laughing, gently touching the tiny hands and feet, and wondering what made it white.

About this time we began to have religious services in the little school house, held by Ministers of various denominations who came from other places and stayed with us overnight. A little later a Miss Somers, from an eastern state, donated funds to build a church west of our new home, which was named Somers Chapel, a resident Minister Rev. Mr. Marsh, installed, the family living in rooms in the rear.

By now our little hamlet decided that it had outgrown its tadpole days, and after the manner of that queer little varmint, unceremoniously discarded its tail, and must henceforth be known by the more dignified name of Clarks.

In April of seventy three, I think it was, we were visited by a most terrible three days blizzard from the north, driving sheep and cattle before it into the Platte and other rivers, drowning them, and freezing a few people to death who had been caught in it away from home, and covering everything deep with snow. Men had to tie one end of a long rope to the doorknob and the other to their wrist or waist to be able to find the way back again when they went to the barn to look after their stock. There was great suffering among both people and stock, as at this time of year no one could be prepared comfortably for midwinter weather, but it soon passed and all was serene again.

We had kept three or four Indians through it all and now were glad to have the tiny, crowded up house to ourselves again.

To be continued

A family by the name of Douglass came and built a hotel fronting the depot, the kokjer brothers started in business handling hardware and farming implements, if I remember correctly, any there is one thing I am sure of, and that is the headline of their advertisement in the "Messenger", for we were now the proud possessors of a newspaper. The headline read, "Too utterly utter, and yet too true", then followed the description of their wares, which I have long ago forgotten.

In the summer of seventy four we were visited with a devastating grasshopper plague. For three days we could not see the sun. The entire sky was darkened with a sort of haze. In the vicinity of where we thought the sun ought to be it was just a little lighter than the rest of the sky, but we could not imagine what it all meant until we gazed intently toward the light spot, and then we could make out the movement of millions of hoppers. Hoping that they would all keep on going we anxiously watched and waited.

Suddenly the wind changed and down they came, millions upon millions of them, covering fields, gardens, houses, vegetables, horses, cattle, everything on top of the earth. The earliest fields were almost ready to ripen but the greater part of the wheat was only in the dough and milk stage, and the hoppers ate it to the ground.

Corn was in silk and tassel and it went like the wheat.

Garden stuff was eaten to the ends of the roots, even my beautiful patch of fine big onions, was taken, hollowed out, leaving the thin outer skin. The wild hay, all but the coarsest and toughest, was

gone and what was left was so befouled and poisoned that it made the stock sick when they ate it. Men and women too, labored day and night to save their crops, their only means of subsistence for their families until another crop could be raised,--and no seed to plant.

Such desolation and heartbreak.

The hoppers lit on the carrails, and stopped the trains dead still by the engine wheels running over some of them and greasing the track.

The engineers tried backing up several car-lengths and putting all steam starting up again., but more hoppers lit on the rails and it was greasier than before, the wheels flew round like a plane propeller, while the train took a rest. Some way had to be arranged to pour a stream of sand to on the rails in front of the engines to run at all.

The hoppers were in our houses, in our food, in our beds, in our clothes, too, and we had to stop and hunt them out, even in church, for they bit us sharply. They cut holes in the window shades, in the table cloths, they fell into the chimneys and smoked us out until we took down the stovepipes and scooped them out with fire shovels.

The ground was so covered with them that each step of one's feet raised a cloud of them to creep inside of our clothes, and they covered the horse's legs and undersides of their bodies until the poor animals but kick them off continually. Farmers tried hitching a horse to each end of a long pole with ropes, a man to drive each horse, dragging the pole back and forth across the wheat fields, day and night, but the hoppers merely rose up over the poles, dropped down behind them and resumed their feeding.

At last there came another change of wind and the hoppers began to rise and leave us in our desolation and despair; they also left thousands of their eggs behind them that hatched out the next spring and took a part of the crops again. That winter saw great destitution and suffering among the people. Som esupplies were sent in from eastern points but not nearly enough to carry them over to the next year's shortened crop harvest. We had expected our cow to come fresh in September intending to kill the calf at once so as to have the milk for the children, to satisfy their pitiful hunger, but one morning when Mr. Barnes went out to feed her he found her dead. We had divided our meal and shorts with her but it was not enough to save her.

We also had five young shoats that we were raising for the pork barrel later on, but now as we found it impossible to keep them longer we had to butcher them to save them, and us, from starvation. The meat too poor and lean to fry itself in the skillet, utterly unfit for human consumption, however, it was now just "Hobson's Choice" that or nothing.

From the earliest years of Clarksville we had been much annoyed by hoboos, the same ones tramping back and forth along the railroad, beggin gfrom farmers and townspeople, sometimes threatening if they refused to feed them aas often as they asked, usually pretending that a good job was awaiting them on ahead and they must hurry on to secure it.

Later there came to be groups of them camping along the river, and boldly demanding food and clothing. One day two of them called at the Hartwell home near the river, evidently knowing no one was at home but the eighteen or nineteen year old daughter, Rose Hartwell, demanded food, "not just a handout. We want a square meal and we'er going to have it". Rose quietly reached behind the door and instantly brought a rifle to her shoulder, with her finger on the set trigger. At a single glance

at the business-like movement of her trigger finger the hobos turned and disappeared, without even a handout. This nuisance continued until Mr. John McLean, one of our newest merchants gathered up a small company of men and routed the hobo camp, warning them never to show their faces in vicinity again. All this time our town was growing, the Wetherills, McLintocks, Steadmans, Turpins, Starrets, Robinsons, and Carters, had settled in town, also a new doctor, by the name of Mitchell, and a family of Richardsons from a southern state, with a colored houseboy. This colored man, being the only negro in all the neighborhood was so lonely and homesick for companionship of his own people that I was sorry for him and invited him to our home, and chatted with him about life in the south, and the poor fellow was so grateful that he found many little ways of showing his appreciation of the kindness.

We laughed and joked with him until he was greatly cheered up, but when the Richardsons moved to their new home out of town they sent him back to his people in the south. I had asked him one day how the colored people could tell when their hands and faces were clean, and he laughingly answered that it was mostly guesswork, but the house servants had to keep on washing until they knew they were clean.

In the late summers of those years we found the wild fruits growing on the larger islands of the Platte were a very welcome addition to our table fare, as we were able to gather bushels of plums, and all the grapes we cared for, and put them up for winter use, after eating our fill of them while fresh, and they were of a very fine flavor too.

One of our amusements there was bathing in the Platte in the summer, and as ours was the only team of horses I had the hayrack put on the big wagon and a thick layer of hay spread on top, then gathered up an overflowing load of women and children for a hayride, and a bath.

Of course none of us owned a bathing suit, but just took along anything handy, a calico dress, a mother hubbard, or even a nightgown, and the children wore their underwear. I had made a tent of one of the wagoncovers to dress in, and we forded over to our favorite island, set up the tent, and turned ourselves and the children loose for an afternoons jollity. In the winters the young folks did some skating on the ice in the river, but the ice was said to be too rough to be easy for any but really good skaters, so skating was not overly popular with amateurs, because of too many bump-ity-bumps, don't-you-know.

While speaking of amusements I must mention that Mr. Will Morse, of Morse & George, General Merchandise, was very fond of playing practical jokes. His house carried quite a variety of staple necessities for the newly settled countryside, among them a few boxes of pills, bottles of camphor, arnica, ammonia, cough syrups, and what not, and the Indians had found that some of them were good for Indians as well as for white people, one of the most used being camphor. One day an Indian came in and called for camphor but Mr. Morse pretended not to understand, and taking him to the medicine corner of the store uncorked one bottle after another for him to take a big sniff of but the Indian shook his head after each one, and suddenly Mr. Morse uncorked and quickly stuck an ammonia bottle under the fellow's nose, and the big sniff took his breath away and keeled him over. He at last recovered his breath and departed for his home, a sadder and wiser red man.

The Indians were great admirers of the white men's guns, especially of a bright new one that Mr. Morse kept standing in a corner of the store.

One of them had begged to try it at a mark, but was not permitted, until one day Mr. Morse decided to play a joke and at the same time cure him of the urge to shoot the white man's pet gun. It was a

muzzle-loading shotgun and he loaded it with a double charge of powder and shot and put it back in the corner and waited. In a few days the same young brave came in and a crowd of white men gathered around to see the fun.

The red man as usual picked up the gun, admired it, sighted it at several objects outside the door, and Mr. Morse asked him if he thought he could kill one of the little birds sitting on the telegraph wired across the street. Anxious to prove his boasted marksmanship he very dignifiedly strode out to a designated spot, dropped on one knee and fired.

The gun went one way and he another, rolled over, and doubled up in a knot. Without a word he gathered himself up, handed the gun to Mr. Morse and left, never to return, so far as I remember. Such a humiliation was more than his dignity could endure in the sight of others.

Some of us expected reprisals of some kind but so far as I know none ever came on him.

We had been told that the road that followed the river on our side was the old original wagon-trail of the forty niners, on the way to California in the gold rush, but whether true or not it was now used for driving the thousands of fat cattle from the far western ranges to convenient shipping points for eastern markets.

At one time there was a very large herd stopped on the bottom just opposite Clarksville for rest and feeding up. There were several drovers and the boss came to our house every day to get milk for a little faun that he was feeding on a bottle. Its mother had been unintentionally killed and he was now raising it as a pet. It had become very tame and followed him around like a kitten.

One day he came to us in great distress of mind, saying that he had lost his wallet containing a large sum of money; several hundred dollars in fact, and offering ten dollars to anyone who would find it for him.

He felt sure he had searched every foot of ground he had ridden over in herding the cattle to fresh grazing spots and now feared that was lost forever. Mr. Barnes told him that he had always been quite lucky in finding lost articles and would take up the search for the wallet.

They went down and the boss showed him the extent of the ground he had been riding over, and after about an hour's it was found, and Mr. Barnes came home with the ten dollars in his pocket.

Back in the middle seventies we had experienced a big electric storm which affected both town and country, some stock being killed in barb wire fenced pastures, and several houses being damaged. My husband was away for a load of wood and arrived home about half-past seven in the evening. Rain had been threatening all afternoon and he had hurried to get in before it should overtake him. It began showering while he was putting away the team, supper was waiting, and while we were still at the table rain began pouring down in torrents accompanied by heavy peals of thunder and almost incessant sheets of lightning.

We rose from the table just as the clock struck eight and went to the door to watch the downpour from the groined roof.

Mr. Barnes and I stood, one on either side of the doorway, the two older children, Martha aged nine and Eddie seven, stood a few inches back and between us, when instantly the house was struck by

lightning, and we all fell to the full length, backward.

None of us knew anything more until over an hour later when I partially awoke. It was still storming and Mr. Barnes and the children were lying as they fell, apparently dead. I was unable to get to my feet but crept up from one to another, on hands and knees, examining them for signs of life, but finding not the faintest pulsebeat or heart flutter for some time. After some minutes Mr. Barnes moved his lips slightly and seemed to be faintly gasping for breath. I tried to raise him up and lean his shoulders against the wall but he fell back again, then I with great difficulty dragged him into the corner and raised him up again, rubbing, shaking, trying my best to bring life back to his stricken body, but his lips were still as before, and I was certain that there was no hope and went back to the others and found that Martha was moving one of her feet slightly but only for a moment and she was gone too.

Just then Eddie sprang to his feet and excitedly asked what was the matter. I told him that the lightning had struck us and he must run to Mr. Morse's store and tell him to come quick, and send for Dr. Mitchell. The child dashed out into the storm, dark as midnight, except for lurid lightning, and it seemed but a few seconds til Mr. Morse and two other men came dashing into the house, picked up my husband and carried him into the living room, and placed him in a reclining chair.

By this time the doctor arrived and all worked faithfully in efforts to restore him to consciousness. It took them more than an hour to revive him sufficiently to gasp out a few words but not he was able to breathe easier. Martha had been laid away on a lounge and left for dead. I was not yet able to move about the house except by pushing a chair before me to lean my weight on and the house was so chokingly filled with brimstone fumes that no one could breathe indoors for several days without all windows and doors being kept wide open, day and night.

I believe it was about two hours after the doctor came that Martha awoke from the coma and attempted to get up, but rolled off the lounge to the floor instead, and that thump on the floor was the first indication we had that she was still alive.

The lightning had burned an open sore on Mr. Barnes' back to the bare shoulder blade that could not be healed for more than a year.

It scorched and blistered its way over the right shoulder, across his chest and jumped over to my chest, and ran, searing its way down my left leg to the toe, and my big toe is still numb from the shock.

It also touched Martha on the left side and her big toe is still partly numb after all these years. The lightning had also burned the lightning rod in two on top of the house, burned holes in my clean milk pans that were on a shelf under the kitchen porch. At the same instant that we were struck down a ball of fire the size of a man's head jumped off the telegraph keys in the depot, Mr. Bross reported, and floated around the room and flashed out, and others reported that they were at supper at the same instant when they felt the shock in their hands and dropped the knives, forks, and spoons clattering on their plates and could not pick them up for awhile.

Our house was greatly damaged, yards and yards of plaster being torn off and thrown across the rooms, only two of the eight rooms being left unmarred. A year or two later Clarks experienced the excitement of a cyclone coming its way, a great, greenish-brown, funnel-shaped cloud, rising, lowering, turning and twisting, but all the time coming our way, nearer and nearer, only four or five miles away, abruptly turned west crossed a small creek, sucking up so much water that it broke its

force but enough was left to jump across the Platte river into the next county and vanished from our sight. Everybody was frightened, some had hitched up their teams and loaded children and valuables into wagons, ready to bolt to whichever side seemed to be safest. Our family stood and watched, intending to run as far as possible and throw ourselves flat on the ground and cling to grass, weeds, or whatever might be within reach, but what a relief to see the terrifying object collapse and disappear. It had picked up and demolished, first a schoolhouse, of which nothing was ever found but the top part of the big cast iron coal stove which landed in a wheat field about a half mile away.

Next it took a farmhouse where a mother and three small children saved themselves by dropping to the ground and throwing their arms around some cottonwood trees planted on the north side of the house for a windbreak. The mother felt one of the children being sucked away as the twister passed them and caught the child's clothing in her teeth and saved it. Her home and everything else inside and out disappeared. Another farmhouse was in its path, the mother snatched up her year-old baby and ran to a nearby creek and jumped down and hid under the high, projecting bank, and saved herself and baby.

This woman had an old fashioned quilting bee at her house the day before, and under a piece of one of the pretty blocks of her log-cabin quilt was all that was ever found of her household possessions.

The next day scores of people went out to see the wreckage.

The big wind had arrived on Saturday, they men had gone to town for their usual weekly supplies, it was also vacation time so there were no school children in jeopardy, but barnyard fowls and stock suffered.

I saw grown hens picked to the bare skin, every feather gone, wandering around bewildered at the strange look of things. I saw three cows lying dead, their hides pierced in many places by the splintered timbers of the houses and seemingly every bone in their bodies crushed by the terrific crash to the ground. A mare with her young colt was fastened in a roofless barn, the colt was lifted out through the top of the barn and carried more than a quarter of a mile away, and let down to the ground without serious injury, but so covered with mud that no one could have guessed its original color. Parts of the split up framing timbers from the buildings were driven so deeply into the ground it was impossible for three men to pull them out. The piece of the log-cabin quilt block had been found caught in the top of a cottonwood tree, more than a half mile away. One could follow the curving, twisting track of the cyclone and measure its width correctly because the open land was left bare of grass and weeds, and a small field of newplowed sod had been scraped clean too, all the sod being deposited along the edge of the plowed ground. An uncovered corncrib, built of fence rails and full to the very top with husked corn had not been touched, not an ear dislodged, although standing only about ten feet from the barn that the colt had been lifted out by the twister. A new schoolhouse that had been built to replace the one destroyed in the big wind was carried away in the same manner about a year later.

During the passing years Clarks had been settling up rapidly, both in and out of town, my father had taken up a homestead north of town, and my sister had resumed her journey to the new home that her husband had made in California. The Indians had all been removed to faraway reservations, but while the Pawnees were still with us and always hungry, a stray dog had taken up residence at our house, without invitation or welcome, and often when I had occasion to go to a store or some other errand the dog would refuse to let me come back.

He became so savage that I was compelled to call someone to beat him off. I tried to poison him but

he seemed to fatten on it and called for more. Mr. Barnes tried to lose him when he could be persuaded to follow to some distant place but that scheme failed too.

Positively, something had to be done. Mr. Barnes could not bear to shoot the dog so at last he asked an Indian if he didn't want him.

The dog wouldn't allow an Indian to come near him but the Indian said to bring him to the river and he would take him. So Mr. Barnes at last got a rope and tied him behind the wagon and took him down.

Other red men there wanted Mr. Barnes to shoot him as they wanted to eat him, but he told them the dog was not good to eat, trying to make them understand that he was poisoned, but they paid no attention to it and so they asked him to tie the dog to a tree. He did so and drove away but before he had got very far he heard a shot and a yelp.

We never heard of any sick or dead Indians so we supposed that they must understand Indians and dogs better than we did.

After Mr. Bross came a new station agent, Mr. Honey who with his wife occupied the rooms in the depot. A drugstore had been opened in which a new doctor, by the name of Robinson, occupied one corner and pulled teeth. The place was too healthy to support even one doctor, and he a single man, so as a side line he taught our winter school.

A switch was built on the south of the depot, and a grain elevator put up there. Soon the young swains were delighted with the possibility of getting their faces "shot", and also those of their sweethearts, young Frank Steadman being the shooter.

Buggies soon made their appearance on the streets, and horseback riding became one of our common amusements. This necessitated a local harness shop so Mr. Barnes set a harness and saddlery shop, where both work and buggy harness were turned out, and as business was growing I was drafted into the shop to manufacture waxed threads by the hundreds, for him and his partner, also I spent many hours stitching on fancy browbands for riding bridles which the young folks demanded.

I too made collar pads by the scores for work teams, and sometimes web bridle reins and buggy lines. Before this I had been obliged to make a hand as a teamster in haying and harvesting time for my husband, as help at such times could not be found. It was every farmer for himself, and no boys to spare.

Our biggest and most spectacular fire was the grain elevator which took fire one night, supposedly from spontaneous combustion and it and its contents consumed. Quite a loss for the George's, father and son, both named Fred, by the way, also there was a Fred in the third generation.

REMINISCENCES OF "AULD LANG SYNE"

***By Mrs. Mary L. Barnes
Santa Barbara, Calif.***

Part II

I do not recall the name of the first publisher of the Messenger, our first newspaper, but I remember that Mr. Arthur T. Brown, son-in-law of Mr. Wetherill, the undertaker, was its editor in the early eighties, and Mr. James W. Steever took it over later sometime. Then its name was changed to the Clarks Chronicle, and in still later years it became the Clarks Enterprise with Mr. G. L. Jordan, its present publisher, occupying the old swivel chair in the "sanctum sanctorium".

I had written an occasional California letter to the paper, under each of its several names, after coming to California, but not since removing to Santa Barbara over twenty years ago, nor had I seen a copy of the paper in a this time so the sight of it now brought back so many remembrances of old friends and neighbors, of incidents and happenings..both sad and sorrowful, gay and joyful, that I could not keep them to myself any longer.

This is the only excuse I have to offer for my long-drawn-out tale of early days; and I haven't quite finished yet, however tired of it you may have become by this time.

By this time many more people had gathered in to make new homes for themselves, both in and out of town. I can recall quite a list of names though I am afraid not all, for I can dimly see several faces whose names escape me; There were the Robinsons, Fosters, Vanduzers, Kimberlys, Considines, Stearnes, Higgins', Thomas', Fishers & then among the bachelors, Messieurs Graves, Skeets, Sinnots, and Mr. Kirk Whited, one of our later school teachers, and Misses Ella Clark, and Durrhea [Durk? (hard to read)], also a teacher. The out-of-towners I recall include the W.H.Austins, Castles, Kellogs, Philbrooks, Lanes, Roses, Nobles, Stevens, Allens, Bairds, Battys, Teagues, Beardslays, and Lambs.

The two Lamb brothers, Tom, I believe was the name of one, the other I know was Paddy, worked on the railroad, and sometimes held differences of opinion about their work as well as of just things in general.

One day Tom became so exasperated with Paddy's faultfinding that he drew back and aimed a mighty kick at his pesky brother, but when the Tom's foot reached its aim---Paddy wasn't there; so the wasted force of the kick threw Tom heavily across the rails, breaking his leg.

A sled was soon procured and he was taken to the doctor.

In those days there was no such thing as plaster casts for broken bones, only the old style wooden splints, and during his confinement in bed he was so enraged at the waste of time and anger at his brother that he could not lie still, consequently, in his turning and twisting about the bandages became loosened and the bone-setting disturbed, so that when he was able to sit up his leg was found to be so crooked that he could not walk, and it had to be broken over again and reset anew.

Up to this time there ha been but few deaths, the first one being our own dear baby, Jesse Everett. The first one born in Clarks, and the first to die. Later there followed the first child of the Morse's, little Willie, Mrs. Carter, Mrs. George Sr., Mr. Kimberly, Mr. Bross, Fanny Kimberly, Mrs. Martin, Mr. Noble, Mr. Legg, and little Harlan Walkie.

There had also been a few marriages during the years, Mr. Carter's second marriage to Miss Rose Hartwell, Dr. Martin's second to Miss George, Mr. Graves to a Central City girl, One of the McClintock boys to an out-of-town girl, Mr. Hans Kokjer to Miss Lisa [Lina?] Hartwell, Miss May Wetherill, daughter of the undertaker, to Arthur T. Brown, Mr. Frank Ramsburg to a young lady whose name I cannot call to mind, Davis Richardson to Miss Anie George, and Miss Durkee to the new druggist.

In the middle seventies a union Church had built on the west side of town to accommodate the different demoninations in worshipping together, since there were not enough members of any one of them to maintain a church of its own. It was a one room building with a bell, and lighted by coal oil bracket lamps fastened to the walls, and it was my duty as a voluntary janitor, to sweep and dust, ring the bell, and light up for evening services. I also "officiated" in the same capacity for our few club and society meetings.

About this time there came a young stranger to town and opened up a licenced saloon, before any number of us were aware of any such thing being contemplated, and it met with our indignant disapproval.

People gathered together in small groups and discussed the pro and con, of getting rid of the unwelcome innovation. At last it was agreed that a committee should be appointed to wait upon the saloon-keeper and propose to him, in a friendly way, to buy out his licence, if he would promise to close it out at once and forever as far as our clean and pretty little town was concerned. The committee called on him and quietly and kindly told him of the people's objections, and of their offer to buy him out. He seemed greatly surprised at their opposition, saying that he was brought up in a saloon, and supposed from his observation and experiences, that everybody wanted them, and he had understood that no town could do business and prosper without a saloon, but after a little reasoning at last agreed to accept their proposition.

He sold out his interests and went away for awhile but returned later and lived among us, an upright and respected citizen.

Then an oldtime temperance society, called Sons of Temperance was organized and the greater part of our population signed the pledge, and the society flourished, holding their bi-monthly meetings in the union Church. One day when Mr. Wetherill was driving home from a burial service with his wife, daughter May, my two little girls and I in his democrat wagon, we noticed a hen turkey with some little turks following her hop up on the railroad track from the other side, and the little ones kept coming, more and more, so we began counting the big flock, and went on counting after we had passed them, turning our heads backward so as to see the last one. We had counted up to seventeen, when, without a moments warning we found ourselves, and the wagon, upside down in the deep, but happily, dry railroad ditch, among weeds, grass, sandburs, and rubbish. The horses bolted, breaking the doubletrees at the first jump and dragged Mr. Wetherill for some distance before he could get them under control. There were no bones broken among us, nor serious injuries but Mr. Wetherill had to walk back a distance to the nearest farmhouse to get a piece of timber and a rope to repair damages so as to continue our way homeward. We were ever afterward slyly cautioning each other not to count turkeys while driving alongside a railroad ditch.

Our town had her jolly little gatherings occasionally, with music, charades, recitations, guessing games, and so on, by of entertainment.

In one of these parties I was chosen to act the charade "Music hath charm to soothe the savage breast" my straight black hair suiting the role of Indian better than others, so they took down my hair, tangling it up beautifully, tied a red bandanna hankerchief around my forehead, stuck a turkey wing in it, wrapped a real Indian blanket round me with an ugly-looking hatchet tucked into my folded arms, and told me to "play Injun". In the other room Mrs. Robinson began playing softly on the organ and I stalked in among the crowd with all the savage dignity that I was capable of achieving. Soon the strange, sweet sounds attracted my attention and I cautiously looked about to discover where they came from. The nearer I approached the farthest corner of the room the sweeter it seemed, so with a

satisfied "ugh" I sank to the floor crosslegged, and listened to the end. With one voice the assembled company shouted out the answer, but Mrs. Robinson was trembling, my foolish "Injun" was too much for her; she had almost "actually" felt my improvised tommyhawk crashing through her skull as I stood behind her.

During all these years out town water supply was from family pumps, drive wells they were called, a section of iron pipe with a perforated point being driven into the ground with a wooden maul, just anywhere for convenience, another length of pipe screwed on and driven down to the ground; this operation repeated until water was reached, a hand pump screwed on and a full supply assured. Many times the pumps froze up solid and had to be thawed out with boiling water, so we had to always keep a supply in the house over night to thaw out the pump with.

Often our house supply would fail to loosen it and we had to build a fire in the hole in the ground round the pipe, kept for that purpose.

Usually there were barley sacks wrapped round the pipe and filled in with straw all winter to protect it from freezing, but when the thermometer went down to thirty or thirtyfive below zero, and the ground froze from three to three and a half feet deep our water pipes suffered, and our night supply, even when placed in the living room with a redhot coal stove it would be frozen solid and bulged up in the morning.

Our full pans of milk would freeze solid too and we would scrape off the cream for our morning coffee and cornmeal mush. The milk was melted and fed to the cal and pigs. The regular winter fuel was soft coal with discarded railroad ties and building waste for kindling, but throughout the famine years there was no money for coal, so we discovered that field corn was a splendid substitute.

Our fresh virgin soil raised bumper crops of big solid ears, but the price was only twenty cents and no takers, so we burned it by the ton.

It was cheaper than coal and made more heat but burned out the stoves badly unless watched and tempered down to moderate heat.

REMINISCENCES OF "AULD LANG SYNE"

By Mrs. Mary L. Barnes
Santa Barbara, Calif.

Part III

My mother and the three younger children had now come on from their eastern home and were nicely settled on the homestead, and Mr. Frank Ramsburg and a sister, relatives of the Richardsons from the South were here. A few of our residents were doing their manifest duty in replenishing our little spot of earth with new babies, including Mr. And Mrs. Robinson, Mr. And Mrs. Morse, Mr. And Mrs. Bross, Mr. And Mrs. John Cole, Mr. And Mrs. Richardson, Mr. And Mrs. John Lane, Mr. And Mrs. Skeels, Mr. And Mrs. Henry Rose, Mr. And Mrs. Richmond, and many others too numerous to mention. Others were marrying and being given in marriage, and a few too, were passing on.

There was now getting to be so much traffic across the Platte, and the dangerous suction of the treacherous quicksand so great that the officials of the two opposite counties felt compelled to decide upon some feasible plan for building a bridge across it, so at last a plan was adopted to build short stretches from island to island, as being the cheapest and most practicable. We ourselves had at one time in the earlier years nearly lost our team, and possibly our own lives in being almost swallowed up in the shifting, miry sand, so we were indeed glad to see the new bridge made ready for safe ssing in all seasons of the year. Among other things, both good and bad, that were new to us of the Northern state were tarweed, tumbleweed, and sandburs.

The tarweed annoyed us, principally by its disgusting habit of stiffening the bottoms of our long skirts and the men's pants with the black, mal-odorous coating that covered all its leaves and branches.

It grew knee high all over the prairies and required either coal oil or turpentine to get rid of the tarry stickiness.

The tumbleweed was not only a pest, because it was only by eternal vigilance that we could keep it out of our crops, but it was a menace.

It had no gumminess nor thorns to stick to us, in fact it stuck to nothing, not even to the ground, but as soon as it fully matured it "died on its feet", and in the first heavy wind it let go and drifted before it in thousands, rolling over and over, looking for all the world like "waves of the sea" until it lodged against the highest obstruction in its way, and was banked up to the tops of fences, rooftops of barns or houses.

It then had to be gathered up and burned for safety's sake for if at any time there happened to be any unextinguished remains of a bonfire, a spark from a pipe or cigar a tumbleweed would be sure to pick it up and carry it away, causing a destructive prairie fire, covering miles upon miles of territory and destroying everything in its path.

The sandburs were the smallest of the pests but the most numerous and most vexatious; only about the size of a large pea, but in and around and on, everything; so it was impossible to escape them or walk the length of a blk without the clothing around the ankles being matted together with them. I have seen mains and tails of horses in pasture so matted with them that it was almost impossible to clear them out.

My friend, Mrs. Legg, had a pet dog which went with her everywhere, and she taught him to pick the burs out of her skirts with his teeth one by one and lay them in a pile at her side, whenever she sat down.

That occurred at my house several times, but the poor dog had to draw away his lips while doing it, though he never refused her when she showed them to him. My mother and the three younger children had come on from their eastern home and got nicely settled on the homestead with my father. Mr. Frank Ramsburg and sister, relatives of the Richardsons of the southern state, had arrived.

A few of our earlier residents were replenishing our little spot of earth with new babies, among them Mr. and Mrs. Morse, Mr. And Mrs. John Cole, Mr. And Mrs. Robinson, Mr. And Mrs. John Lane, Mr. And Mrs. Richardson, Mr. And Mrs. Henry Rose, Mr. And Mrs. Bross, and others.

As always in progressive communities, the younger members of society were marrying and being

given tin marriage, and a few were passing on, among them Mr. Noble, Mrs. Stoven, and my eighteen-year-old brother, Reuben. The winters seemed to be growing colder, year by year, the ground freezing from two-and-a-half feet deep to three feet, and ice on the river sometimes over two feet thick. Mr. Barnes sawed out blocks of ice in the clearest, solidest places, sixteen inches thick and packed them away in a sawdust-lined hut for summer use.

The town children sometimes arrived at the schoolhouse with noses and ears frosted white, and the teachers had to thaw them out at once to save them, many mornings, after walking or running only two or three blocks. Then our people decided that we must have an organ for the Community Church. Various plans were worked out to raise money for that purpose. Among these plans my friend, Mrs. Rowena Austin proposed to put on a play, or exhibition rather, of Mrs. Jarley's wax works.

There were sixteen people in the cast, Mrs. Austin being the stage manager, and two supers to do the winding, oiling and carrying on and off.

Mrs. Austin wore an enormous poke bonnet, removed her upper teeth, and dressed herself otherwise to fit the part, so that her best friend would not have recognized her; the others representing wax figures with clockwork inside to act out their characters, when wound up and set running, like mechanical toys. The Old Curiosity Shop story does not represent to be anything more than set statues, but we were going them one better.

The wax figures were ranged in a row against the wall along one side of the schoolhouse, faces covered with white napkin, ostensibly to keep off dust but in reality to hide our amused chuckles and compulsory winking. There was Alexander the Great, who wept because there were no more worlds to conquer, Jack the giant killer, The Siamese twins, Jacky Spratt and his wife, The Babes in the wood, Signorina Squallina, the great Italian Opera singer, The crazy woman who poisoned fourteen families with pickled walnuts, and Mrs. Winslow's soothing syrup demonstration.

When Mrs. Jaley called for a certain figure the supers, one on either side, bent the elbows up with a jerk and carried it, stiff as a stick, with hands under elbows, to the low platform and jounced it down with a thump fit to loosen one's teeth. Mrs. Jarley would then make her speech giving the name and character of the figure and the story of his or her greatness, then turn to the super with orders to oil and wind it up. The oiling was done with a big oil can belonging to grain harvester, being stuck into each ear, down our necks, into our elbows, or wherever else a joint ought to be (the can being empty of course), and the winding up done with the crank and squeaking, rattling innards of an old coffeemill jammed into the middle of our backs, and cranked up, and told to do our stuff. When Alexander the Great was brought out and Mrs. Jarley had told of his greatness she turned proudly to the super with the order to "Wind him up John and let him weep", which poor Alexander proceeded to do, rubbing eyes and nose like a great bawling booby.

Jacky Spratt and wife licked their platter clean. The Babes in the wood stuffed big fat doughnuts into each other's mouths, Mrs. Mitchell demonstrated the wonders of Mrs. Winslow's soothing syrup by dipping a large cooking apron into a five-gallon stone churn of supposed "syrup" and jamming it into the mouth, or nose, of a life-sized rag doll lying on her lap. Then the crazy poisoner, being myself, did her stuff, pulling her hair, and doing whatever else seemed suited to the occasion, which is most likely the reason that I have completely forgotten what the rest of the figures did to prove their genuineness according to Mrs. Jarley's representations of their prowess. Oh, yes, there is one more that comes to my mind, (what there is left of it), and that is the great Italian Opera Singer, Signorina Squallina, my sister Flora. She was wound up like all the rest, but the oiling was apparently forgotten, for after starting her wonderful song the machinery ran down with a terrific ear-splitting squawk for

which dereliction super John was summarily called on the carpet and made to repair the damage, and the Signorina finished her song triumphantly. Each of the wax figures was carried back and jounced into place immediately after doing his or her stuff, their faces covered and left in peace.

Our plan for raising money for the Church organ had been quite successful and in a short time the instrument purchased. I can't recall that we had very many varieties of wild flowers in the region around Clarks but there was one wild plant which grew thickly over the prairie its peculiarity being its long, slender, fern-like stems and tiny leaves which instantly closed up when touched, and it positively would not be domesticated nor handled in its wild state. And our especial nuisance was wild onions, or leeks, as some called them. They were so thick among the grass that the cows could not feed without eating them and spoiling the milk and butter for some people. I remember when Mr. Peck boarded with us in the early days, he was very fond of milk but if he could taste or smell the onion odor in his milk he would leave the table in a huff.

I remember too how poor young Jimmy Douglass accidentally shot himself under the arm, cutting the big artery and almost bleeding to death before they could get him to a doctor to stop it.

Another serious accident happened to little Alice Brank, in which she got her leg broken, the sharp jagged bones being driven through the flesh and causing her a long sickness.

One summer there were rumors whispered about that a strange, monster-like sea serpent had been glimpsed a few miles out west of town, in a swamp one evening, but little attention was given to it at first, the older people thinking it just a spook story of some irresponsible, or flighty young folks. But later the story became more insistent as several different persons claimed to have seen the head of a terrible looking snake raised above the thick swamp growth of eight or ten feet in height and it surely moved about from place to place as it was seen in different spots on other evenings. At last quite a little excitement was aroused and caught the attention of the Professor of the high school. He had at first scouted the whole story, saying that stories were all a myth, and there was no such thing in reality. But when they told him that it was really seen to raise and dip its head down by several persons he began to look into the matter himself. The monster was described as having a fierce looking head three or four feet long, which it turned from side to side, as if watching out for dangerous enemies or looking for some live thing to prey upon, and a kind of creepy sensation began to be felt by others than mere spooky-inclined young folks. What if the frightful creature should find his feeding ground too small for his great size, and ravenous appetite, and decide some evening to move his quarters to the Platte river, casually satisfying his hunger on the way.

So it was urged that a few brave souls should arm themselves and drive out and annihilate the awful thing before he could make that menace a reality. As Prof. Morris had until lately expressed such skeptical opinions of the existence of any real sea-monster he was chosen as the leader of this adventure, and to have the honor of being the first man known to have exterminated a real sea monster. So preparations were made, guns and ammunition made ready, the evening selected. As the chosen few neared the right spot all became quiet and watchful, at last one spied it, and another, and stepped back to give the Professor an unobstructed view. Yes, he saw it now, quickly raised his gun and fired.

It dropped down out of sight for a moment, then slowly rose again a few feet away, he fired again and again and at last it rose no more and was declared dead, but while they still watched there was a wild commotion in the high weeds and two or three young fellows came out bringing the terrible sea-serpent with them. A huge snake's head made of gunny sacks fastened to the top of a long pole. Those irrepressible young blades had perpetrated an ingenious hoax upon the learned and dignified

Professor, which he was not permitted to forget for many a long time to come.

The Professor's cartridges had all been drawn and blank ones substituted for their own safety, and no one was allowed to shoot.

The next day the sea-serpent was on exhibition on the streets of Clarks for I saw it myself.

ADIOS and FINI

From the pen of my 2G-Grandmother, Mary Louisa Sackett Barnes,
born 18 Jan 1848 in Oquawka, Illinois and died in 1941 in Santa Barbara, California.
Submitted by [John Wolfe <computerwolf@yahoo.com>](mailto:computerwolf@yahoo.com)

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