

"MEMORIES"

A personal tribute  
to Papa

A humble man of noble character.

ELSIE STORA THERIOT  
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d. 4-29-1999

ELSIE STORA THERIOT wrote this poem in memory of her friend, EVA PARCH.  
Eva died in October of 1961.

Elsie penned, "Eva served our Walton Hills Women's Club as secretary (1953-54) and treasurer (1955-56). At the January, 1960 meeting our club recognized the honor bestowed upon Eva when the A. Ladygo Nursery named a beautiful new pink-spoon mum in her honor."

## *"Fallen Petals"*

We're petals of a bloom in life's garden  
Born to spread fragrance by kind deeds;  
Taught to stand erect to show dignity  
To bow our head and ask for our needs  
To be radiant in beauty through happiness  
Freshened each morn by the dew of a tear.  
When weary, to lift our face to sunlight for strength  
Or meditate by night under stars that seem near.  
Some petals will cling 'til the winds blow fierce  
From the raging storms of ills;  
Others depart while yet a new bloom  
According to what our Maker wills.  
But memories live on, and beauty reigns still  
in "Fallen Petals".

Composed By Elsie Gilmore Stora

1961

In loving memory,

By Elsie Gilmore Stora

- The "Baby Daughter"

May 12, 1969.

## A YOUNG TEAMSTER IS BORN

"December 8, 1873," written in a large, brown, much-used family Bible, marks the birthdate of my father, christened Walter Wade. He was the first son born to Miles and Emma (Whisner) Gilmore, sturdy pioneers of Dutch-Irish ancestry. His birthplace was a simple country home, nestled on a hillside facing the Clarion River -- "a mile and a half above the State Road Ripple," he told me. This was in the county of Clarion in the state of Pennsylvania, near a town still known as Helen Furnace (having been named for an iron ore furnace near-by).

Papa, as he wished to be called, had pleasant memories of his home which he shared with seven other children: four brothers, Arnold, Day, Banks and Eliphas; and three sisters, Ella, Mary and Bertha. Father often spoke of the special interests they shared, such as attending singing school together, and he'd leaf through the song books he still had among his prized possessions. He boasted of picking chestnuts from the fine, large trees on their land, and was immensely proud of their livelihood -- their father's saw mill and boat scaffold which the sons helped to operate.

The saw mill was built close to the water (he explained to me) so the paddle wheel which drove the machinery could be turned by the river current. Trees cut from their land were hauled to the mill with their father's team of oxen, and lumber sawed from the logs was used to build boats in their scaffold. The excess lumber was loaded onto these boats and towed down the Clarion and Allegheny Rivers to the city of Pittsburgh. Also in their own mill, lumber was sawed for a new house the father and sons built on their property, several miles to the east and fronting on the Helen Furnace-Scotch Hill Road. Unfortunately, this house was consumed by fire in a later year, 1922.

Young Walter decided that he would like to pursue the logging business, so at the age of sixteen he said his goodbyes and left home, "to go out and make my own way." He readily found work within the state as a teamster in logging camps, moving from one location to another as needed. One of these was Mr. McAfee's camp located near Clintonville; it was operated during the days of the Oil Excitement in that area. Another was near Kenerdell, where he helped the shop blacksmith on days the teamsters couldn't work out in the woods.

During the ensuing ten years, the young man's avid interest in horses was nurtured, and in the year 1900, he surrendered his teamster's life to learn the blacksmith trade and improve his skill in shoeing horses. For this, he located within seven miles of his home town, working as an apprentice for a Mr. Elmer Crouser in the blacksmith shop at Leeper, Pennsylvania.

#### WEDDING BELLS AND BABY SHOES

This handsome young man with the curly black hair and an attractive mustache, who by now measured six feet tall, became interested, of course, in the "fairer sex" of the village. He found many who were happy to be escorted on a Sunday afternoon -- the favorite sport then being to rent a buggy and a fast horse, from the livery stable located by the railroad tracks in Leeper, and dash about the countryside or drive to a near-by town to attend an ice cream social.

These were the days of parades and brass bands in that village, and in his later years, Father enjoyed reminiscing about the July Fourth Celebrations there, and of playing his French horn in the band.

One lady he courted was a Scotch-Irish colleen, with chestnut-brown hair and hazel-blue eyes. She was teaching school and lived with her uncle, George Kuhns, who operated the grocery store and Post Office in Leeper. Walter wasn't long in deciding that this lovely lady was his choice of the fair maidens, and soon Lola May Kuhns had a steady beau. On September 5, 1906, the happy bride and groom repeated their solemn vows, "To Love and to Cherish, until death do us part."

The newly-married couple took up residence in this small town, and became active in church and civic organizations, where-by they acquired many lasting friendships. As devout members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, both taught Sunday School classes and sang in the church choir. Mother was interested in Foreign Missionary work, and Father rendered his services for six years as a Sunday School Superintendent.

Another special interest was the I.O.O.F. (Independent Order of Odd Fellows). Mother was a member of the ladies' lodge, named "Rebekah," while Papa "Rode the Goat" and "Went Through the Chair" -- (I wonder how he did that? He never would tell me; said it was "top secret!").

The home they purchased was two doors from the uncle's store, next to a barbershop. The groom proved to be adept at carpenters' work, also. For Mother, he built a nice big cupboard in the kitchen wall that opened up into the dining room, and, also, replaced the staircase banister with balusters he had turned out in his shop on the lathe. The blacksmith shop -- which by now he had purchased from Mr. Crouser and was operating under his own name -- was conveniently located at the rear of their lot, accessible by the alley-way that entered onto the main street, right beside the house.

The "Stork" made three visits to their home in Leeper: Mabel, who was born in 1907, Alma in 1910, and I, Elsie, came along six years later. We still enjoy looking at the photograph of us three girls taken together when I was just a little "shaver," and we admire how prim we were in our pretty, white, embroidered dresses. Our hair was so neatly combed, my sisters with curls long and beautiful and mine in ringlets, all styled admiringly by our devoted mother. Mabel's hair was a lovely, lustrous auburn, its beauty surpassing any I've ever seen; while Alma's was a rich, shining, dark chestnut-brown. Mine, also, was auburn but lighter in color than my sister's, (thus the cause for a list of nicknames I acquired in school, such as: "Carrot Top," "Rusty," "Fire Engine," or just plain, "Red!"). These three crowns of curly locks were the pride and joy of the devoted couple. I regret, yet today, having distressed my father so greatly that he shed tears, when I had my long, lovely auburn curls cropped short while in my teens.

#### W. W. GILMORE, BLACKSMITH

Precious years of happy family life ensued. While our mother was busy with home duties -- meantime keeping an eye on my sisters' school work -- our father was busy in his shop shoeing horses, making buggy wheels and wagon parts, or engaging in general blacksmith work. A favorite pastime for us girls was visiting the shop and watching the Village Blacksmith, with his "strong and sinewy arms," wield the tools of his trade. Too, we were fascinated to see the fire burn so brightly in the forge, when he pumped the bellows and forced the air into it.

It was a real adventure for us to be permitted to stay while Papa was shoeing a horse. The new shoes, made of steel, had to be shaped to fit each hoof

separately. To do this, they were first softened by heating them in a bed of red-hot coals in the forge. When they were just the right heat, almost white as we remember, he'd shape them. As he pounded and pounded with his hammer, sending sparks flying in all directions about the shop, the anvil echoed the ringing of it far away (we can still hear it). When each shoe was properly shaped, he dunked it into a tub of water to cool and it would sizzle and sizzle! Then, with flawless skill, our father would nail them onto the horse's hoofs, which he had already prepared by trimming and filing. This took place while bending over, seemingly supporting the animal's weight with his own back, as he secured the horse's leg between his knees to mount the shoes. Scars covering the shins of Papa's legs were evidence of the hazards of this particular trade. An unsuspecting "gentle" horse could place a well-aimed kick with lightning speed.

Business was good, and Father enlarged the shop. The forge with foot-operated bellows was replaced by a mechanical one driven by a gas engine. But, alas, the big letters, "W. W. Gilmore, Blacksmith," were to remain above the door of the busy shop only fourteen years. For by now, along had come the machine age and gasoline automobiles, crowding out the blacksmith business.

By the year 1919, it was inevitable that they should seek a new livelihood, so our parents decided upon a life in the country, as farmers. It was with great enthusiasm that our family purchased the John Emert property near Tylersburg, located about one mile north of Leeper, a farm of one hundred acres in two separate parcels.

Moving day (I remember as if it were yesterday) put into use Mr. Emert's mule-drawn wagon, and Papa's 1913 Ford Touring Sedan, with the brass trimming on the radiator and kerosene taillights. When it started to rain, the folded-back top was hastily put up and the window curtains snapped into place.

The "Red Flivver" was a permanent fixture in the barnyard of the farm many years after it was retired from service. It was ever a joy for us kiddies and our playmates to travel on make-believe excursions to the far corners of the earth, exhausting eardrums and patience with the raspy "eur-ra, eur-ra" of the side-mounted, push-lever horn, or cranking and cranking until the tired old engine groaned and died. So what

if the engine didn't run? We could imitate it with those lip vibrations that every child knows how to make: sounds like fast, slow or sputtering!

And, oh, yes, I mustn't forget the incomparable cut-out mounted on the floor-boards that you whacked with your right foot! I do believe Papa got a "charge" out of kicking it in, when passing a horse-drawn surrey, seeing the animals rear up and frightening to death, almost, the ladies in their out-moded vehicle!

The source of energy that drove this powerful piece of machinery was housed inside little, square wooden boxes, named "magnetos." They really must have been unique, for, in later years, I remember having removed them from the pantry for spring housecleaning, and of carefully replacing them on the shelf for safekeeping.

#### MR. GILMORE, FARMER

Our entire family dearly loved our new home on the farm, with its delightfully-cool spring water, lots of apple trees to climb, a nice big pond to wade in, and green pastures to romp about and explore. We adored the spacious nine-room house with the rambling porch, and were awed by the huge octagon barn with the cupola on top; the cupola was octagon in shape, also.

The good earth was productive and the harvests were bountiful. Wagonloads of hay, wheat, oats and rye were repeated until Papa had the spacious barn-lofts filled 'way to the top, even into the cupola. Then we would climb up, and jump down into a hay mow below. We would get sweaty and would itch from the pricks, but who cared or took time to notice? --  
"Hey, you! It's my turn, next!"

Father expanded our livestock of horses and cows to include pigs and sheep, and even a pet lamb for little Elsie. I fed it milk from a bottle, and how it would tug on the nipple! I could scarcely hold it! Mother enjoyed raising chickens and ducks, and the pond below our spring provided a refreshing haven for the fowl. In our garden there were berries and currants, beans, peas, tomatoes, and corn by the bushel; so canning season was a busy time for everyone. The rich cream that formed at the top of the milk (given from our Jerseys and Guernseys, that grazed on the good pasture) was skimmed each morning, and, when soured, was churned into golden rolls of butter. These, along with fresh

eggs, were traded for staples up town at the Tylersburg General Store.

The fruit orchard on our farm was in the field just above the house. In the fall, when the apple crop was ripe for picking, friends from town were invited to share in the harvest. They would come, bringing along their own knives and kettles, and would spend the day paring tubs-full of the juicy fruit. Early the next day they'd come back, and Papa would have a good fire burning outside in a pit. The big copper kettle was hung on a tripod over the fire and filled to the brim with sliced apples, and apple butter-making was under way. As it boiled, each guest took turns stirring the bubbling mass with a long-handled, wooden paddle; one didn't dare to stop for a minute or it would stick to the bottom of the kettle and burn. (Oh, the sweet aroma when sugar, spices and cider were added!) After what seemed like hours of cooking, it would finally thicken and the delicious, dark brown spread was ready to ladle into crocks and jars, and everyone took home an equal share.

The other season of the year that a wood fire and the big kettle were used -- this time the heavy iron one -- was butchering time, which was not at all a pleasant experience for us youngsters. This created a reverse of nostalgia, from the first squeal of the pig to the horrid smell of fat rendering in the oven, so I refuse to elaborate upon this particular event!

But, oh, how we did enjoy the delicious home-canned pork that was flavored from its own juices. And I never will forget the taste of those smoke-cured hams -- their special flavor acquired by hanging many days in a little shed, obliterated from view, "inhaling" endless puffs of black carbon that wafted out from a kettle of burning hickory wood (then exited lavishly through cracks under the roof) ! 'Twas a delicacy to City Folk and a favorite of our dear Aunt Mary, who'd exclaim, "Ham! Ham! How I love this good ole country-smoked ham!"

#### NATURE IS A "MANY-SPLENORED THING" -- IN THE COUNTRY

Wintertime was a season happily accepted by young and old, alike, on the farm. For the adults it meant spare time to relax a bit from pressing obligations, and to catch up on the back issues of magazines, or to sew some stitches on the quilt that was rolled up on a frame by a window in the parlor. We youngsters were in our glory from the first snowfall on -- wading in

drifts waist high coming home from school; hustling to button on our warm woolen leggings (we managed to fasten about half of them with the aid of a button-hook); then scampering off to the hills, or to the ice pond, until dusk overcame the brightness of the brief winter's day.

Our farm land had year-'round pleasure spots and this season, especially, as the rolling hillside by our house afforded a runway for "belly slammers" on a little sled Papa had made, and which was handed down to each of us. I rode it 'til my long, gangly legs extended far beyond its limited dimensions!

Here, in the serenity of country living, Mother Nature provided scenery more beautiful than a landscape artist could ever hope to portray. As the bright winter sun shone upon the heavy blanket of spotless snow, millions of multi-colored diamonds were set into motion in an ecstatic dance before our eyes. In the grove beyond the barn, tall pine trees stood stately, resembling snow-covered mountain peaks pointing heavenward into the clear, blue sky -- their rustling hushed under the massive covering of crystalized flakes.

While we were snug in our beds under heaps of warm quilts and haps, Jack Frost was busily engaged in designing beautiful patterns on all the window panes. In the mornings we delighted in making the rounds, scratching funny faces and names on as many windows as we had time, before dashing off to school.

After winter snows melted away, a new season was welcomed by bright yellow Easter lillies that peeped out of the ground along the bank by the spring run. It wasn't as frosty in the mornings, and ice in the ruts of the road got thinner and thinner, until scarcely any could be found to step upon and crackle. Finally, the time had come when we could shed the long underwear (which had been rolled up above the knees, anyhow) and give it a good shove to the back of the chiffonier drawer.

#### VACATION TIME WAS FUN TIME, DOWN ON THE FARM

When the school bell had sounded its farewell gong, we ushered in summer vacation with: "No more lessons, No more books, No more teachers' dirty looks!" Then we skipped home to toss our shoes and don play clothes -- an old dress converted into a pants-suit by securing

the skirt between our legs with a huge safety pin (like-as-not, one of Papa's horse blanket pins). Whoopee!! We were all set for a summer of fun and frolic!

Many of these precious hours were spent under a huge, spreading willow tree growing close to the roadway, below the farmhouse. Its many separate trunks, that forked boldly out from a sturdy base, provided a ready-made playhouse for us kiddies to crawl on and around. (My husband tells me that it measured twenty-one feet around the base.) By this time, it has lost many of its limbs to the ravages of storms, but the bulk of it still stands -- a guarding sentinel over the old homestead, providing shade from the afternoon sun, and keeping cool the fresh spring water.

Enclosed in large gray stones, the spring was then, and still is, a famous landmark, affording refreshing drink to thirsty travelers -- the clear, pure water usually consumed from an ever-present dipper that hangs on a nail inside. Its constant flow has been a reliable source of supply for local people whose wells have run dry during a drought. It, too, is a fun spot, a great attraction for the youngsters who delight in reserving a large portion of their drinks to squirt upon each other; of course this culminates in real water battles fought with dippers or small buckets!

On rainy days of our vacation, my little friends and I set up housekeeping in the corn crib above the barn, taking with us our dolls, a little iron stove and some mud pies. In there we could peer out between the slats and watch for the rain to stop. And if the sun started to shine while it was still raining, we could see the rainbow when it appeared in the east.

When the weather cleared, we would run down to the dirt road below the house to wade in puddles in our bare feet. How we loved to feel the cool, sloppy "mess" oozing between our toes! Then, on down to the creek in the pasture we would go, to rustle out some frogs along the bank, and tickle them with a straw to make them hop into the water -- "kersplash!"; or we would fill a jar with tiny little poliwogs we had snatched from their hiding place among the weeds.

We'd have no thought of time -- lost in the wonders of nature, after a refreshing summer rain in the country -- until a familiar voice (calling, "Sook, Boss! Sook, Boss!") awakened us to reality that it was chore

time and our job was to hustle the cows to the barn for milking. Of course that took a little time, as there were many detours along the way, hunting for a handful of huckleberries or mountain-tea berries that hid behind the big rocks.

On the days we girls were out berry picking, these big rocks -- that were all about in our pasture -- served as a table upon which to spread out our picnic lunch. When time permitted, we loved to linger awhile and rest in the cool shade of the sheltering pine trees near-by. We'd just lie there, gazing up into the clear, blue sky, and daydream, with the thick layer of pine needles serving as a soft pillow. (Did you ever take time to listen to the pines whispering, oh, so softly, on a still, calm day?)

#### FATHER MUST NOW BE A MOTHER TO HIS DAUGHTERS

Our home was filled with joy and happiness on the farm, so it came as a great shock to all of us, when, in the mere infancy of this contented country living, sorrow intervened. On a Monday morning, our dear mother became suddenly ill, and in less than a week was called to her heavenly home (May 12, 1922). It was with a very heavy heart, but unfaltering courage, that our noble and efficient father accepted the burdensome responsibilities of running the farm and managing our home. The two eldest daughters, now twelve and fifteen years of age, willingly assisted with the farm duties and assumed the entire housework, plus taking care of their little sister. I was just completing the first grade in school.

For our father, the years ahead were crowded with long working days of planting and reaping, attending to the farm animals, and repairing the aging machinery. But, our uncomplaining Papa always found time to share his days with us. On cold winter evenings, he treated us with popcorn and apples to eat, while we toasted our shins by the fire in the grate; and he entertained us with lively tunes played on his mouth organ. The songs we liked best, were: "Turkey in the Straw," "Listen to the Mocking Bird," and "The Irish Washer Woman."

Sunday afternoons, we could invite others to our house to make chocolate fudge, or to come for a taffy-pull. Papa could make a good batch of taffy and knew when it had cooled just enough for pulling. We'd each

take our own "gob" and try to keep up with him, stretching it back and forth and twisting it into a stick or a cane, before it hardened like a rock!

Nearly every Saturday, and always on holidays, Papa dug out a block of ice and chopped it, and then he turned the freezer to make some "yummy" home-made ice cream for us. It was my job to sit on top of the freezer to keep it from jumping around, with only a folded burlap bag for insulation from the cold! The ice had been cut from our pond, and stored between layers of sawdust in the ice house. (Yes, we jumped in the sawdust, too; seems as if we were forever jumping into something!)

Even with his numerous obligations, our father always wanted to accommodate the young folk of our village. When church groups requested that he drive them somewhere, usually to an ice cream social, he willingly obliged. If the snows were deep enough, a team of horses was hitched to his big sled, and the youngsters were taken for a swift, smooth ride -- which he, too, enjoyed. Often, on a cold stormy day, Papa would be waiting for school to be dismissed, and treat us to a ride home on the sled. The girls and fellows would pile on, until there wasn't room enough for even one more. Sometimes the horses could barely pull the load, when the runners met with a bare spot on the road. (This was in the days prior to scraping of roads for motorists.)

On Thanksgiving morning, one could find our family in that horse-drawn sled, bundled up under warm blankets and nestled in a bed of hay, riding to Grandmother Gilmore's house for dinner. I recall the sleigh bells jingling merrily, while keeping time to the graceful rhythm of the horses' trotting, and our songs as we glided along: "Over the meadow and through the woods, To Grandmother's house we go! The horse knows the way, To carry the sleigh, As over the hills we go!" And we'd get, oh, so hungry as we anticipated the sweet, spicy aroma of ginger cookies and hot pumpkin pies, and that delightful odour of a stuffed turkey roasting in the oven.

On that little trip to Grandma's, a story book world came into being, as a dazzling winter wonderland greeted us all along the way! In the wooded area, snow-laden evergreens bordered either side of the country road; with branches bending low, they seemed to beckon us to reach out and touch them. On the rolling farm lands, billowy, white snow drifts

crowded against rows of zig-zagging fences -- so engulfed that only the tips of posts were visible to dot this panoramic view!

These are memories that a child never forgets.

#### KIND RELATIVES KEPT IN TOUCH

We all were elated when vacation time brought visits from out-of-town or out-of-state relatives. From Sharon, Pennsylvania, were Mother's cousin, Clara (Kuhns) Shotts and her family (husband, Guy, and daughters, Bernice, Dorothy and Gladys) who afforded us much pleasure with their many trips and much kindness -- city-store treats with oranges and walnuts at Christmas, and on the Fourth of July, fun with firecrackers, torpedoes and cap pistols. "Uncle" Guy saw to it that this summer holiday started off with a "Bang!" for everyone, by rousing us out of bed at six a.m. with a blast from a huge firecracker, planted beneath a wash tub, right under the bedroom windows!

Uncle Bert, Mother's brother, and Aunt Ida and their family of Burgettstown, Pennsylvania, also came to visit us. The girls, LaVerne, Stella and Arvilla, enjoyed hiking in the woods and berry picking, with us. The boys, Bill, Joe and Bert, took us for long rides in their big touring car, and to Greenwood to visit our relatives. One summer, Grandpa Kuhns drove his Ford all the way from the state of Utah, where he had been working in the copper mines, and pitched his tent on our yard so he could sleep in the fresh, country air. (Even though I was then just a little girl, he seemed to delight in teasing me and getting my red-headed temper riled up!)

When Papa's sister and family of Tulsa, Oklahoma, came to Helen Furnace to visit relatives, the brother in Kingwood, West Virginia, and his family would also come. On one evening of their visit, the local relatives joined them and they'd all come over to our house. We sure had a happy time as everyone gathered around our piano for a song fest. Papa held the kerosene lamp close-by for one of us to see to play, and the farmhouse rang with merriment.

When we had finished singing all the songs we knew in the old school books, including, "The Bull Dog on the Bank (and the Bull Frog in the Pool)," we then would sing, "Three Blind Mice," "Row, Row Your Boat" and other

rounds, but we always ended on a prayerful note with favorite hymns. These were memorized so well by all, that many eyes closed in meditation as each sang his respective part in lovely harmony; it was like an entire singing class within our own family.

Our Gilmore Family Reunion was a special event we looked forward to attending every summer. Besides a day of fun and games with our many cousins, we enjoyed the big meal that lasted all day for us "small fry!"

Here, I want to name the Gilmore Families of first cousins, and I hope that I don't omit anyone, for all were very close and dear to us. They were, Aunt Ella and Uncle Shorty Avery, cousins: Harold, Russell, Lester, Carrie, Genevieve and Emma, of Helen Furnace; Aunt Mary and Uncle Sam Porter and cousin Helen, of Tulsa; Uncle Arnold and Aunt Mary, cousins: David, Donald, Vaughn, Elva, Mildred, Tessie, Emma and Betty, of Knox; Uncle Day and Aunt Mae, cousins: Howard, Orin, Leonard, David, Pauline, Arthelia and Jean, of Kingwood; Uncle Banks and Aunt Edna and cousin Ethel, of Helen Furnace; Uncle Eliphas and Aunt Ann and cousin Dale, of Tulsa; cousin Stanley and wife Sarah, daughters, Vivian and Dorothy, also of Tulsa. (Aunt Bertha had passed away, while yet in her teens.)

#### TIME MARCHES ON

Father saw to it that none of us neglected our civic or religious duties. We all remained interested and active in the Tylersburg Methodist Church, where he was a trustee for many years, a constant choir member, and served as Sunday School Superintendent for seven years. He participated in County Sunday School Organizational work and attended the county conventions. Each Monday evening was reserved for his I.O.O.F. meetings, being a member of its marching drill team and the Men's Double Quartet, both popular groups often invited for personal appearances.

Though now a busy farmer, Papa retained his interest in blacksmithing. He still enjoyed heating up the old forge and pounding out some work on his anvil, in the little shop he had built below the house. And on rainy days, some farmers would bring their horses to be shod.

Ever a horseman, Papa had his mares bred, and

raised the colts until they grew up and were ready for work, and then broke them into harness before selling them. Those were exciting moments, when a young filly would rear up on its hind legs and strike out its front ones toward the master. But, with understanding patience, Papa would keep talking, and tugging on the bit, until the wild one tired out and relented to being harnessed.

Our father's working days commenced early and ended late. I often joined him, while he sat on a stool on the upper barn floor, husking corn for his animals by the light and warmth of a lantern. As the cold, winter night settled upon us, we were kept company by the ever-present Collie and the familiar barn sounds: cows chewing and re-chewing their cuds, and horses rustling their bountiful ration of hay from the mangers. I would wait for Papa to finish his chores; and then, as we walked the pathway to the house, he'd clasp his hand over mine to keep it warm, and we'd listen to the crunch-crunch of the frosty snow, underfoot, or see who could blow the biggest breath into the night air.

Through the living room window, we could see the reflection of the flickering fire in the coal stove, as it danced upon the wall of the darkened room. (I recall, we girls read many a story book by the light of that sparkling glow. We'd have to pause, sometimes, when a tarry streak in the coal formed a black bubble and darkened the flame. But, as the fire smoked and hissed, the bubble grew bigger and bigger until finally it went "Pop!" Soon the flame would burst forth brighter and merrier than before, and then we'd go on with the story.)

#### AND NOW, "GRANDPA GILMORE"

As time passed by, we daughters matured, and we, too, went out to make "our own way" in life. Each of us experienced feelings of sadness, in leaving our home with its cherished memories, and our wonderful Papa who had been both a father and a mother to us, throughout the years since Mother's death. We know, now, that our father felt grief, as he became more and more alone. But, as each of us found our life's mate and were married, our visits brought him much joy, especially when the grandchildren were taken back to the farm to see their grandpa.

Mabel was the first to marry; on June 17, 1930, she became Mrs. Wayne Wagner. Alma was next, to John (Jack) Sandrock, on September 14, 1931. And I said

my vows to Emanuel ("Whitey") Stora, on Thanksgiving Day, November 25, 1943.

Mabel was blessed with a son, Eugene, and a daughter, Lola May, (named for our mother). Alma was blessed with a son, Harold, and four daughters, Delores, Hazel, Shirley and Denice. Denice was born just a few days too late for her grandpa to see her. He loved all his grandchildren dearly, and always had a big bag of candy tucked away in the cupboard for treats when they came. He was proud to be, also, a "Great Grandpa" to the son born to Alma's eldest daughter, Delores, and her husband, Robert ("Bob") Johnson, in 1953.

Our son, Thomas, didn't get to know his grandpa, either, as he came to our home right after Father's death. We always felt that God had waited until then to give us our boy, so it would help fill the void that was left by the one He took away. And so, we asked Tommy to take the name of "Walter" for his First Communion Name, as a namesake to his Grandpa Gilmore.

Thomas was seven when he became our child, and, of course, felt lonely until he became acquainted with the other children of our village. During one of those moments, he looked up to me and said, "I bet Grandpa would play checkers with me, if he were here." (Yes, my dear, he would have. He was a good checker player, and he enjoyed playing that game. Probably, he could have won most of the time, but I bet he would have let you win many of the games, too.)

#### AUTUMN

Father continued to do a little farming, alone, as long as he could, and even spent some winters doing logging work, again, with his team. But eventually, about 1945, due to a chronic heart ailment, he sold his horses and machinery and retired from farming. Still, he continued to keep busy, as he never wished to be idle.

Papa was happiest when he was able to redecorate or repair the farmhouse, so it pleased him that my husband and I had purchased his property when he retired, and he could continue to enjoy living in his home. When failing health no longer permitted any strenuous work, he braided and hooked rugs for us girls, and was still engaged in this hobby on his eightieth birthday (1953).

That same winter, while Father was visiting us in our home here in Walton Hills, Ohio, he became very ill. A Guiding Hand directed us to call for an ambulance to drive him to the hospital in Oil City, Pennsylvania, to which he responded, by joyfully exclaiming, "Oh, I'm going back home!" He was happy being there, as he had visits from his sister and brother, many friends, and, of course, all of his own family. Within a short time, Mother extended her hand for Papa to join her in Heaven, closing the curtain on his many years of widowed loneliness, longing for her love.

Three days later, on March 29, 1954, we laid him to rest beside her, in our lot that overlooked the farm land and the house they had chosen for their earthly home, together, but which had been so short-lived.

We daughters do not recall ever having heard our dear father lament of his hardships or responsibilities. His devout faith surely helped him surmount the high hurdles. He began his day with a prayer and ended it the same, always on bended knee at his bedside. He appreciated every little courtesy shown him, and was happy if he could return a kindness.

Surely, it was about such a person as Papa, that Thomas Gray composed his poetic monument to man -- the humble man, and these four verses of the poem were read at the Church Services for our departed father:

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard (in part)

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,  
The Plowman homeward plods his weary way,  
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Oft' did the harvest to their sickle yield,  
Their furrow oft' the stubborn glebe had broke:  
How jocund did they drive their team afield!  
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,  
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;  
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile  
The short and simple annals of the poor.

Large was his bounty and his soul sincere,  
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:  
He gave to Misery (all he had) a tear,  
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.

(Thomas Gray, 1750.)

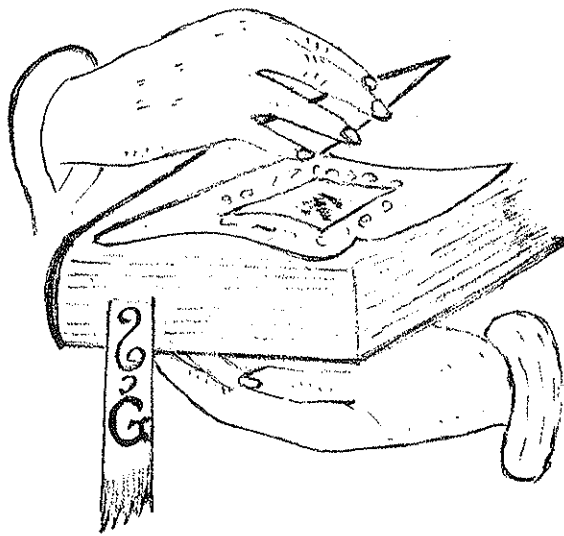
\* \* \* \* \*

Walter Wade Gilmore, December 8, 1873 - March 26, 1954. Teamster, Blacksmith, Farmer, Husband, Father, Grandfather, and Great Grandfather. Kind, Reverent, Trustworthy, Loyal, Neighborly, Diligent, and Sincere.

\* \* \* \* \*

I feel greatly rewarded having had such a wonderful man for a father, and am equally proud of the one he chose for his wife, our dear, departed mother.

May their souls rest in Peace, forever.



And,

a story

in pictures





Walter Wade Gilmore -- A Young Teamster.



At the age of sixteen, a teamster in a logging camp.