33. Marriage and Moving

So I was finished with school in May of 1905, right after I had my Solemn Communion and just before I turned 14. You might wonder what I did until I married five years later, in November of 1910 at age 19. Well, as you know, there were a lot of us in our family, and we had been trained from a very young age to work hard. By 1905 five of my brothers and sisters were already married and had children and were living in their own homes. That left Anton (Tony) 20, Joseph (Joe) 18, Katherine (Kate) 15 and me, ready to turn 14, plus my three younger siblings. Tony and Joe were helping Dad on the farm, along with the hired man, and Kate had already taken a position on another farm as a hired girl because she was anxious to make a little money to buy the clothes and perfumes and fans that she liked. She had to give most of her earned money to our father, as girls did then – in fact, the family who hired her paid him directly, not Kate; but Dad always gave her a small allowance for herself. Often when a girl got married all the money she earned was returned to her in the form of a dowry. I was looking forward to hiring out as well, but first I needed to take my turn helping our mother. There was always so much work to do on the farm that even with the help of the hired girl we were busy from morning to night. In addition to the cleaning and laundry, which were never-ending and very time-consuming without any machines (you have no idea how hard it is to scrub dirt and cow manure out of heavy denim men's overalls by hand!); there was all the cooking, baking, washing dishes, raising food, harvesting, butchering, preserving, etc. At spring cleaning time there were all the mattresses to be taken outside to air and all the heavy rugs to be washed or beaten, all the heavy furniture to be moved and dusted, all the floors to be scrubbed on hands and knees. I loved holidays and holy days, but they always meant more preparation work as well. And there were farm chores. I was in charge of the chicken coop, making sure the chickens were fed and watered every day, cleaning out the coop several times a week, letting the chickens out in the morning to scratch in the yard and then making sure they were penned up again at night. I also had to learn early on not to get attached to the chickens because I was the one who had to chop off their heads and quickly toss them in the grass to bleed out before dunking them into scalding water and then trying to avoid burning my fingers as I pulled out their feathers to prepare them for cooking. I convinced my mother that the hired girl needed to empty the morning bedpans, a job I detested. But if one of the men got sick or had to go into town for the day I had to help with the farm chores as well, milking the cows, feeding and watering the farm animals, shoveling the manure out of the stalls and forking down new straw, climbing up into the haymow to toss the hay down for the cows, herding the cows outside after milking, or back in again for the next milking.

I was given a Hope Chest for my 16th birthday, and after that I was expected to work diligently in my spare time to sew and hem and embroider and crochet my trousseau and all the linens I would need to start homemaking in my own home. I never liked sewing very much, and I used to secretly trade tasks with my sister Katherine, who was quite skilled in all the sewing arts. Sometimes I could convince one of my older sisters to finish off buttonholes for me, and sometimes I even bartered with our hired girl, getting her to secretly finish a difficult piece like a sleeve in exchange for some trinket or treat.

Occasionally I got to go to New Vienna in the buggy or sleigh with Tony and my mother to stock up on food provisions we could not raise or make ourselves, like coffee, sugar, salt, and pepper, and to get supplies the men might need for the farm. These were the days I loved! While Tony and my mother shopped, I was free to visit my favorite shops, and my very favorite was always Rose's

Millinery Shop where my best friend worked. She got to go to Dubuque twice a month with her aunt to buy millinery supplies, so she could always tell me about the latest fashion designs she saw in Dubuque. Even more exciting for me, she got to go to the library in Dubuque, where her aunt would check out books for her, which my friend would then share with me. The Carnegie-Stout Public Library in Dubuque was built in 1902 with a grant from Andrew Carnegie for the building on land donated by Frank Stout in memory of his father Henry Stout. I would always be thrilled by the treasures my friend would share with me, books like *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, *Anne of Green Gables*, *The Wind in the Willows*, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, The Call of the Wild, The Jungle Book*. When I was younger, I especially enjoyed *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils, a*bout the boy who climbed on to the back of a goose and flew around Sweden having adventures, learning about geography and landscape. I used to dream of all the places I wanted to visit. During the long winter evenings I would read and re-read that book and the even more enticing one *Five Children and It* about the Sand Fairy who grants a wish a day. I would stare into the fire and watch as the flames leaped and crackled, and I would dream about all the wishes I would ask of that Sand Fairy. Sometimes my friend found a discarded copy of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, my favorite magazine, and brought it back for me because she knew I was an avid fan of the "Ruth Ashmore advice column" written by Isabel Mallon. My friend never brought me books in German, because my parents had a lot of books in German that I could read. I actually preferred reading in German because the language is so rich and complex and descriptive. English came easily to me to speak, but harder to read and write, so my parents encouraged reading in English so that we would become more proficient in reading and writing English. In school our "for fun" books were almost all in English, but our textbooks were often in German or in German and English, like German on one page and English on the other, so you could read or study in either language. Our missals in church were only in German, and our homilies or sermons, were all in German. The Mass and all the church services were in Latin, of course, and I did very much enjoy listening to the cadences of that old language and responding with the appropriate verse or hymn. While I was a child, you almost never heard English in church, even when parishioners gathered on the steps outside the church after services on Sunday, to visit briefly with neighbors before going home. As we have learned, all of this changed very quickly in 1917, with the rise of the anti-German sentiment of World War I.

Because I did well in my schoolwork, my parents sometimes asked me to help my three younger siblings with their homework, which I usually tried to get out of because none of them seemed as interested in learning as I always was. Arthur wanted to learn only what he would need to be a good farmer, Regina was more interested in having fun, and Andrew was independent. He usually did what he wanted about things; and because he was the baby in the family, he got away with doing just that.

One of my favorite activities during this time was singing in the St. Boniface Choir and participating in the production of plays and theater in the parish hall. My father would not allow me to be an actor in the plays, but I could be a prompter and help with memorizing and with stage sets. It was actually at one of these parish hall productions that I met my Johnnie! My brother Joe, four years older than I, had started to date Johnnie's sister Elizabeth, Lizzie, and one night while I was having hot mulled cider and cookies with my friends after the performance, Joe and Lizzie came over to our group and introduced me to the most handsome man I had ever seen – your grandfather

Johnnie! He had a lock of dark hair that kept falling over one eye, and from the very first moment I just wanted to reach up to brush that back! I know that sounds romantic and silly to you, but I truly fell in love with him that night, and I guess he fell in love with me too, because he soon came courting, all dressed up with shining shoes and a jaunty hat and in his own horse and buggy! He proudly told me he had earned the money to buy his own horse and buggy by working on his father's farm in Petersburg. Johnnie was the oldest in his family, and when he took me to meet them all, there was a real houseful of them: Johnnie's grandfather, his parents John and Josephine, and nine younger brothers and sisters, including a new baby! One younger brother had died at age 3. His grandfather died May 28, 1908, at the remarkable age of 92, not too long after I met Johnnie, and I went with Johnnie to Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Petersburg for the funeral mass and then to the Sts. Peter and Paul Cemetery to bury his grandfather next to his grandfather's wife and child who had died 41 years earlier. Johnnie's grandfather had never remarried.

There was always a lot of patriotism in the music and plays performed in the St. Boniface Hall. When the New Vienna Cornet Band played their old German favorites, the crowd would clap their hands and stamp their feet and almost start marching around the hall, just as if they were following our beloved German Marching Band on church occasions. They were such a favorite that they always played more than twice the number of compositions we in the choir were allowed to perform. As we saw in the two playbills from 1915 and 1916, a typical performance included two plays or skits, usually including humor, followed by two songs by the New Vienna Choir and four to seven pieces by the New Vienna Cornet Band. A crowd favorite for our choir to sing was *Moonlight Will Come Again* in English and *Die Wacht Am Rhein* in German. If we look at the Playbills from 1915 and 1916, which were performed on January 29 and February 1 each year, we find that the two plays were performed first. For 1915 they were *Der Nachtu Aechter Von Derendingen* where my favorite character was Peter Pumpernickle, and *Die Beiden Amerikaner* (The Two Americans) – a very funny skit. During my years with the players, I would take my place as a prompter dressed in my choir clothes, then join the choir when it was time to sing. I liked all the harmony in the *Moonlight Will Come Again* song, but it was always the second song that got the whole audience singing along, shouting along, sometimes jumping to their feet in an exuberant display of patriotism. The very walls seemed to shake sometimes. *Die Wacht Am Rhein (The Watch on the Rhine)* is a German patriotic anthem. The song's origins are rooted in the historical French–German enmity, and it was particularly popular in Germany during the Franco-Prussian War and the First World War. The original poem was written by Max Schneckenburger in 1840, and is generally sung to music written by Karl Wilhelm in 1854, seven years after Schneckenburger's death.

Our ancestors knew their Germanic history well, how repeated French efforts to annex the Left Bank of the Rhine started with the devastating wars of King Louis XIV when French forces were carrying out massive scorched earth campaigns in the German south-west. These politics were fully implemented during the Napoleonic Wars and the creation of the Confederation of the Rhine in 1806–1813. In the two centuries from the Thirty Years' War to the final defeat of Napoleon, the German inhabitants of lands by the Rhine suffered from repeated French invasions. The demise of Napoleon finally gave the Germans some respite, but during the Rhine Crisis of 1840, French prime minister Adolphe Thiers advanced the claim that the Upper and Middle Rhine River should serve as his country's "natural eastern border". The member states of the German Confederation feared that France was resuming its designs to take German lands. So the poem and then the song *Die Wacht Am Rhein* was a "thunderous call" for all Germans to rush to defend the German Rhine, to ensure that "no enemy sets his foot on the shore of the Rhine." The third verse is Germany's current national anthem; and "Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland?" (What is the German's Fatherland?) by

Ernst Moritz Arndt, called for Germans to unite, to put aside sectionalism and the rivalries of the various German kingdoms and principalities, to establish a unified German state and defend Germany's territorial integrity.

This song seemed noble and right to us at the time and gave us tremendous patriotic joy and pride; but looking back at it all now I can see how the inflammatory language in this song only helped to fuel the anti-German sentiments of World War I, the feeling that German-Americans were supporting, even if only in their hearts, the old motherland. It is very true that the patriotism inspired by this song is not American patriotism; it is German patriotism. Here are all the verses of the song:

The cry resounds like thunder's peal,
Like crashing waves and clang of steel:
The Rhine, the Rhine, our German Rhine,
Who will defend our stream, divine?

Chorus

Dear fatherland, no fear be thine,
Dear fatherland, no fear be thine,
Firm stands the Watch along, along the Rhine!
Firm stands the Watch along, along the Rhine!

They stand, a hundred thousand strong,
Quick to avenge their country's wrong,
With filial love their bosoms swell
They shall guard the sacred landmark well.

He casts his eyes to heaven's blue,
From where past heroes hold the view,
And swears pugnaciously the oath,
You, Rhine and I, stay German, both.

While still remains one breath of life,
While still one fist can draw a knife,
One gun still fired with one hand,
No foe will stand on this Rhine sand.

Should my heart not survive this stand,
You'll never fall in foreign hand,
Much, as your waters with no end,
Have we our heroes' blood to spend.

The oath resounds, on rolls the wave,
The banners fly high, proud, and brave,

The Rhine, the Rhine, the German Rhine
We all shall stand to hold the line!

So lead us with your tried command,
With trust in God, take sword in hand,
Hail Wilhelm! Down with all that brood!
Repay our shame with the foes' blood!

And now we come to the last part of our Story, how I ended up here in Wisconsin when I had been born in Iowa. Well, when Johnnie asked me in 1909 to marry him, I agreed happily, and I also asked him if he thought we could have our own farm. I thought that because he was the oldest in his family, his father might help him, as my father was helping his children. I wasn't sure how far my own father's resources would stretch. He had already helped five of his children get settled on their own farms, and I knew he was preparing to help Anton and Joe and Katherine buy their farms. They were all engaged to be married, which meant that there would already be three weddings in the family in 1910. I was nervous my parents might tell me I had to wait since I was only 17. I thought if Johnnie and I could show that we were to have our own farm, my parents would more readily agree to my marriage. Johnnie promised he would do what he could.

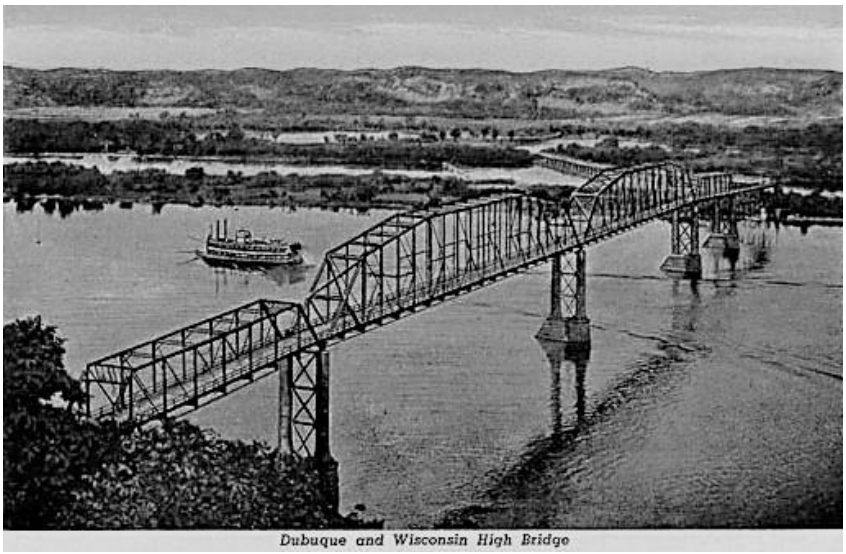
Opportunity came along in the form of a land agent, or real estate agent, from Dyersville. Starting in 1909 Gus H. Hesselmann began telling farmers in Eastern Iowa about cheaper farmland available in Wisconsin. By July of 1910 he had sold enough farms in and near the Bloomington area that the *Bloomington Record* newspaper wrote this article:

> *The Beginnings of the Migration from Iowa to the Bloomington Area*. For the past year, a real estate agent from Iowa has been bringing farmers from his area to the West Grant area. Land is cheaper here at $50 to $75 an acre. The Iowans' only objection is the lack of good shipping (a railroad).

As it turned out, Johnnie and I became part of that migration. In November of 1909 I saw Mr. Hesselmann's small advertisement in our local newspaper and immediately thought of a plan that might get Johnnie and me our own farm. Johnnie's father was known to be very thrifty and careful with his money, but he was also known to be a man who recognized and would act on a good business proposition. I suggested to Johnnie that he should take the ad to his father and convince him to invest in a farm in Bloomington, and then Johnnie and I could run the farm, make the investment profitable, and buy the farm from him. Johnnie's father had come by his land wealth by inheriting his farm from his own father. Johnnie was doubtful of my proposal at first. He knew his father was skeptical of new things that had not been proven. Perhaps even more importantly, Johnnie managed his father's farm in Petersburg and his father counted on him to do so because his younger brother was only 13 and not experienced enough to take responsibility for the farm. I suggested that we make a plan. We would secretly find an experienced hired hand who could replace Johnnie on the Petersburg farm, and we would talk with the land agent and help him plan a strategy to convince Johnnie's father of the soundness of the investment. The agent would need to present hard facts and figures, not just speculation. Gus thought he could do that, so Johnnie talked his father into a meeting with Gus, "just to listen."

Gus met with Johnnie's father and Johnnie in mid-December of 1909 and spread his paperwork on the table, all his facts and figures about how farmers in southwestern Wisconsin were switching to dairy farming and hooking up with operations like the New Glarus dairy to reach eastern markets. It wasn't just about buying land; it was about buying land that would make money for you. Johnnie told me later that he could tell that was the moment when his father got serious. His father of course did not sign anything that day, but he wrote down all the figures Gus laid out and told Gus he would get back to him in January, after the holidays. Then Johnnie's father did his own fact-finding and research. He talked to a few of his close friends to find out what they knew about the southwest Wisconsin situation and dairy farming. One of his friends agreed to take a trip to Bloomington with him to look things over. The two men discussed asking a third friend to join them, the friend who had just bought an automobile; but they figured that horses would be more reliable than one of those new-fangled machines, especially if the winter weather got bad. They decided to take the new Crubel buggy with its team of two matched horses that had been recently shod, Johnnie's team and buggy. They packed small suitcases and a bag of oats for the horses and had their wives prepare a little food for the journey, including a few apples for the horses. The distance from New Vienna to Bloomington by way of the ferry at Gutenberg was only 30 miles, but they decided to take the longer route through Dubuque, a total distance of 76 miles, because of its new bridge. They planned to leave at daybreak, travel light and easy, about 10 miles an hour with rests for the horses, stay overnight in East Dubuque once they got across the river, and then arrive in Bloomington by early evening of the second day. They were a little nervous about passing through Dubuque because they knew the number of automobiles there was growing quickly, but they were very interested in the bridge, considering it a true marvel of construction. To see a bridge that had been built nearly 600 feet high, 70 feet above the water, with various steel truss sections and a 4900-foot causeway on its longest span – well, that would be something to see. They had read about it as it was being constructed and after its opening in 1902, but they had never traveled on it. In particular they were curious to see the sharp curve people talked about.

The Eagle Point Bridge is on the north side of Dubuque, Iowa, connecting Dubuque with the southwestern corner of Wisconsin. This bridge was also known as the Dubuque and Wisconsin Bridge and operated as a toll bridge. The locals called it the Toll Bridge. The bridge itself was somewhat unique in that it had a sharp curve where the trestle on the east connected to the first major span. That can be seen in the postcard scan below. There was another rather sharp turn where the bridge exited on the Iowa side, which is hidden by the bluffs in the postcard. The bridge also had a deck truss section, where the structure of the truss was under the roadway. Locals called this the upside-down section.



Dubuque and Wisconsin High Bridge

The bridge itself was one of the first 5 vehicle bridges built across the Mississippi River to Iowa, and it was the last of the original 5 to be removed. The bridge actually evolved over time. The first construction was in 1901-1902, when the two large through-truss spans were built over the main channel, with Pratt truss sections at either end. The east side of the bridge featured a 1900-foot-long wooden trestle. In 1906 and 1907, a deck truss section was added to the east end, taking the elevated section of the bridge completely across the river main channel. In 1922, the wood trestle was removed, and a steel trestle was built along a new alignment. In 1935 and 1936, the US Army Corps of Engineers replaced the trestle with three truss sections and a plate girder section. This work was performed as part of the Lock & Dam #11 construction. The final major work was performed in 1946-1947 when the wooden deck was replaced with a steel grid deck.

Once completed, the Eagle Point Bridge had a history of problems with flooding on the Wisconsin side of the crossing. Any high water would swamp the trestle. In fact, shortly after opening, high water washed out a section of trestle, and moved over 300 feet of trestle out of alignment. Each of the construction projects from 1902 to 1937 was to address the flooding issues.

Johnnie's father and his friend got their horses through Dubuque safely by taking side streets where there were less cars, and they were duly impressed by the huge bridge across the Mississippi River. They did reach Bloomington the second evening and lodged in the Bloomington Hotel, where they were curious about its advertised "first-class livery" and looking forward to a hot meal and warm bed.


OFFICE

BLOOMINGTON HOTEL,

J. M. DONNELLY, PROP.

SAMPLE ROOMS AND FIRST-CLASS LIVERY IN CONNECTION,

Bloomington, Wis. July 15 1893.

After the proprietor Mr. Donnelly arranged for their horses and buggy to be taken to the new livery stable and for their bags to be delivered to their rooms, he served them a cup of coffee and pointed out, with a discreet wink, a bottle of "syrup" sitting on the table that they might use to "flavor" their coffee. He also discreetly turned their attention to a sign on the wall that informed everyone that Bloomington had voted on April 8 of that year to go dry. Johnnie's father was not much of a beer drinker, so he actually approved of this decision, but his friend was a little chagrined and wished they had brought some of that good German Lager from New Vienna to relax with at the end of a long day. Soon, however, Mr. Donnelly was regaling them with stories about his famous trotter Earl King. Donnelly and W. B. Dyer of Lancaster had bought

the horse and now stabled it in Bloomington at the new state-of-the art livery that Donnelly completed in October of 1897. Mr. Donnelly offered to take the travelers there in the morning to see it and the famous racehorse, informing them that horse racing had been a popular form of entertainment in the area for many years.

Mr. Donnelly told them the history of the hotel, how it was built in 1864 and had become over the years the social center of the community and a village landmark. He said his business had actually increased since the phobition law was passed because men who used to pass the time of day visiting in the saloon over a stein of beer now often chatted and gossiped or caught up with the latest farm prices on his front deck or in his dining room and lounge.

Old Bloomington Hotel

In the morning after a filling breakfast of fresh eggs, smoked ham and fresh pork sausage with gravy, hot biscuits and strong coffee, the travelers sat outside on the hotel steps while waiting for Mr. Donnelly. They talked with some of the men dallying there in the brief warmth of the winter sun and learned more about the village while watching the farmers and their wives coming into town for shopping or business. They were especially keen to note and count the numbers of milk cans in the milk carts, wagons and occasionally small trucks going by on their way to the creamery. They heard a lot of talk about automobiles, just as they did in New Vienna, the pros and cons, what it would mean to business, how safe they were or were not, how horses and cars could coexist, what car was the best on the market or the most affordable. They even saw one car drive down the street slowly and park by the bank.

When Mr. Donnelly joined them, he had ordered their buggy brought from the stable, and the three climbed in and drove slowly through the village as Mr. Donnelly told them about the merchants and mercantile opportunities in the village. He told them a little about the history of the village, how the grist flour mill that they passed was the foundation of the village; how the village had seemed to stutter and start before that with settlers who came and went away again, starting with Page Blake in 1831; how the village had endured four name changes over time, from Blake's Prairie to Landon to Tafton and finally to Bloomington; how D. W. Taft in 1852 built the famous grist mill that finally got the village on sound growth footing and how he erected a rough board house nearby to be used as a boarding house for the men working on the mill; how a blacksmith shop was soon opened by Ira Stockwell who also built a house nearby; how a store was opened by Benham and Glines in 1854; and how in 1855 a post office was established, supplied by a three-times-a-week mail stage from Lancaster to West Union, Iowa. The post office was opposed by the nearby villages of Beetown and Patch Grove, who both feared the growth of the new village and publicly called it

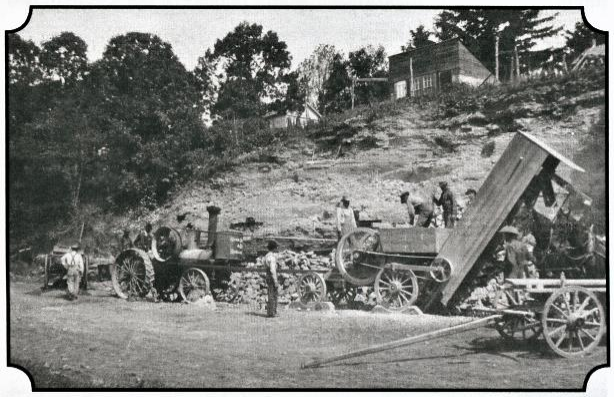
Plugtown, and how they predicted it would have no more mail, ever, “than would fit in a hat.” Nevertheless Tafton, as the townspeople had named it, continued to grow, and the growth of the village soon inspired Samuel and the Rev. Ira Tracy to build a Congregational church up on the hill and establish their own town, which they called Waveland. But a church proved to be not so good a foundation for a village as a mill. Tafton grew, Waveland did not; and the church leaders went west. In 1856 Dr. R. C. Brooks arrived; two years later Orrin Willson arrived and opened a store, followed soon by a dentist. In 1859, William H. Brown moved his store from Patch Grove to the newly-fledged rival, and about this same time, Mr. Cole moved his store from Beetown to the village, both of which moves must have been a little galling to their respective villages. But the thing that made Bloomington sit up with pride was the establishment in 1857 of the Tafton Collegiate Seminary which had originally been opened by Prof. Allen in 1851 as the Blake’s Prairie Institute. The village grew quickly and not even the Civil War slowed down its growth.

As Mr. Donnelly waxed eloquent on the prosperity of the village and the area, and the potential for growth and commerce, he guided them up the hill to see what the locals called “the Ballantine Castle.” The James Ballantine Home was completed as a brick residence in 1877. James and his brother David ran stock farms specializing in Durham cattle and Cotswald sheep. They also ran a private bank from the home. Arriving in 1846, the Ballantine Brothers were prominent “capitalists and self-made men” of Bloomington according to an 1881 history of the village. This building is listed today on the State and National Registers of Historic places. The David Ballantine Home, bottom left, became St. Mary’s Convent following the death of his widow Nancy in the 1920s. The Grant Ballantine Home bottom right was built by Grant and Lottie Ballantine in 1916. Grant was the youngest son of James and Abigail and built his home just east of his parents.

Ballantine Family circa 1880's

Then Mr. Donnelly gave the travelers a notecard on which was printed the following effusive summary by a local historian of the time: "As regards this steady progress, with hardly a perceptible drawback, the history of Bloomington is somewhat peculiar. Probably no town in the southwestern portion of the State can show so spontaneous a growth. This is due in great measure to the fertile country that surrounds it on every side, possessed of a soil which will rank in productiveness with that of any portion of the State. Bloomington is in the center of a gold mine, but the precious metal lies on the top of the ground, and not underneath. Bloomington at present contains four general merchandise stores, one co-operative store, formerly a grange store, one drugstore, two hardware stores, two butcher-shops, three shoemakers, two saddler-shops, three blacksmith-shops, one wagon-shop, one confectionery store, six milliners' shops, four saloons, one bank, one paper, the *Bloomington Record*, one machine-shop." Mr. Donnelly closed the tour with a visit to the brickyard and rock quarry and the promised visit to the new livery and famous Earl King, both duly admired by all.

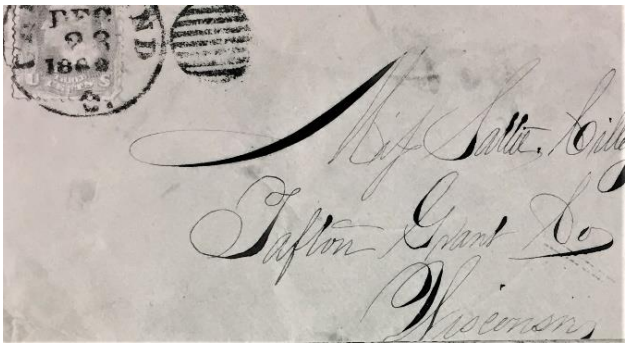
Brickyard at Work



Rock quarry south of town in the early 1900's

In the lower photo we see a steam engine at work in the quarry.

On the way back to the hotel, Mr. Donnelly finished his mill story, how Mr. Taft fell on hard times financially and lost his mill, how he then fell out of favor with the townspeople and they tried to change the name of the village from Tafton to Bloomington, igniting a village squabble that ended only when a special referendum decided the name would henceforth be Bloomington.



Nevertheless, there were diehard Tafton supporters who fondly held on to their Tafton mementos like this envelope addressed with fountain pen in flowery script to Tafton Grant County, Wisconsin.

The two travelers then spent the rest of the day driving their buggy around the countryside looking at the state of the farms, picking up samples of soil to sift through their fingers, scrutinizing the height of the windmills, the size of the barns, the condition of the cows they saw in the barnyards or pastures. They visited the creamery and talked to the buttermaker and to the farmers bringing their milk in. Johnnie's father liked the speed ordinance in the village limiting automobile speed to 6 miles per hour for the safety of the horses. Surprisingly, he liked the ubiquity of the telephone and the good service provided; and he was impressed by the advancements in electrical power generation in the village, seeing how electricity could allow more profitable dairy farming. He was already strategizing in his mind how he could bargain with Mr. Hesselmann to get the best price on a farm on the fairgrounds trunk road, where electricity was available.

Altogether he and his friend were pleased, so that by the time they arrived back in Petersburg three days later, Johnnie did not have to say much to encourage his father to see the advantage in buying the Wisconsin farm, the wisdom in sending Johnnie over to manage it, and the benefit in hiring a good man to run the Petersburg farm. It seemed certain that the profit he would make from the farm in Wisconsin would more than pay for a good hired man to manage the Petersburg farm. In January of 1910 Johnnie's father was ready to buy a Wisconsin farm, and they set an appointment with Mr. Hesselmann.