

## Chapter 5

### MORDECAI AND LOUISA BELLE BEGIN IN A LOG CABIN



He was twenty-one and Louisa Bell was eighteen when they started their life together on the last day of August 1891. Relatives and members of both of their families had helped to clean, furnish, and repair the old log cabin. They also built a new outhouse just up the hill a short distance from the cabin. The cabin was located in the southeast corner of Guernsey County near the village of Spencer Station.

As a child Louisa had heard stories of her older relatives building and living in log cabins. She was excited about living in this cabin as her new home. The front door opened into the main living area. On the right was room for several chairs in front of the fireplace. There was a cupboard for dishes and a small eating table. Nearly all food preparation was done on this table. There was a dry sink in the back corner. A porcelain bucket was used to carry water from a hillside spring. As water was used in the sink it drained into another bucket underneath which was later carried out and tossed or used to water her garden.

*The Newlyweds*  
door.

the door. A new walnut bed, made by Mordecai's uncle, had been placed here as a wedding present from some of the relatives. There was a matching washstand with three drawers and small door for a commode. On the washstand was another present, a new washbowl and pitcher set. The pitcher contained enough water for bathing, done while standing on a towel and using the bowl as a sink.

The bedroom was just left of the front

There were several hanging pegs behind

Washing clothing was an outside activity. A handwritten note was passed around in Monroe County titled a *Grandma's Receipt for Doing the Family Wash!* This is an

authentic washday "receipt" in its original spelling as it was written for a bride several generations ago.

1. bild a fire in back yard to heet kettle of rain water
2. set tubs so smoke won't blow in eyes if wind is pert
3. shave one hole cake lie soap in bilin water
4. sort things, make three piles. 1 pile white, 1 pile cullord,  
1 pile work britches and rags
5. stur flour,in cold water to smooth, then thin down with bilin water
6. rub dirty spots on board, scrub hard, then bile. Rub cullords,  
but don't bile just rench AND starch.
7. take white things out of kettle with broom stick handle, then  
rench, blew and starch
8. spread tee towels on " grass
9. hang old rags on fence
10. pore rench water on flower beds
11. scrub porch with hot soapy water
12. turn tubs upside down
13. go put on clean dress smooth hair with side-combs - brew a cup  
of tea - set and rest and rock a spell and count blessins!

The young couple's firstborn was a daughter, born May 23, 1895. She was a bright redhead and they named her Mildred Elvira (16). We know there was a move to Spencer Station,



located in the southeast corner of Guernsey County. It would be here two years later on September 16, 1897, Louisa Belle gave birth to the twin boys pictured here in their baptismal garb.

After much discussion about appropriate twin names, they chose Rodney and Roger. For Rodney's middle name she chose her mother's maiden name of Johnson. For Roger, Mordecai chose Burton, the middle name of a favorite uncle, Thomas Warner, who owned a grocery and meat market in nearby Barnesville.

The beginning relationships were being established. Mildred was becoming mother's helper, and being oldest she was the leader of the threesome.

*Roger and Rodney 1897*

The three red-headed children spent much time soaring into the world of make believe. The twins were developing that special relationship that would last as long as they both were living. Both parents believed, "spare the rod spoil the child." Rules were to be obeyed. I personally experienced this parental attitude toward discipline during my own younger years.



*Mildred Elvira, Rodney, Roger*

walked five miles to the school where he  
*Warner*

About 1899

taught for fifteen dollars a week. In the winter he often entered the cold building and looked in the heating stove for a glowing ember. If none was found he would strike a piece of flint with an iron bar and nurse the sparks into a small flame. Then he built a wood fire in the stove to warm the room for his students and removed the ashes from yesterday's fire. We know that he was saving as much as he could to build a house on the good bottom land the Gilmore's had offered to the young couple.

#### Warners as Builders

Several generations of Warners were capable of erecting buildings to meet the many demands. The first Mordecai's father, Aseph (11) had married Ruth Ellicott in 1781. The Ellicotts had been engaged in the building of many of the flour and sawmills in eastern Pennsylvania and Maryland in that time around the Revolution. As a young man Mordecai (12) had learned the trade while working with them. For several years, Mordecai (12) had moved his family to Girard Street in Philadelphia, where he was connected with the construction of the college on that street (1828-1832). His son John (13) had learned from the older Mordecai. James (14) had learned from his father as a young teenager and now MH (13) wanted to build his own house.

#### Wedding Church

The Methodist Episcopal Church on the east section of Main Street in Calais (Seneca Township). This is probably the church where Louisa Belle and the Gilmore family attended worship services. If so it would be the church where Louisa and MH were married. This church has since been replaced with a new building. (Picture courtesy of Betty Morris descendant of Sina Carpenter Morris Warner.)



*The Methodist Church Calais, Ohio*