

Chapter 8

THE DECISION TO MOVE

During the time that MH was building his farm to provide for his family he became more and more aware of the changing times. The way of life that his father and grandfather had found so good was no longer adequate to meet the needs of his family. He had observed the rapid development of many new farm machines at the Ohio State Fair each year. He had read about the advantages of farming on flat land.

In March of 1913, the most devastating flood ever to hit Ohio raised the level of many rivers. Four hundred and twenty-eight people died. The locks in canal system were destroyed which ended their use. The water came within an inch of coming into the first floor of the Warner home. MH began to think about moving. MH had to rebuild the damaged barn on the Gilmore farm he rented from his mother-in-law.

In June of 1913 Louisa gave birth to a baby girl. MH told the doctor they were going to name her Nancy Jane. Louisa didn't agree. After they argued for two weeks she was finally given the name of Shirley Ethel. It would be years later when my Aunt Ethel applied for her Social Security number that she would learn Nancy Jane was the name on her birth certificate! Is this another story of a possible indication that there is a potential genetic characteristic for a certain degree of occasional stubbornness?

*MH holding Aunt Ethel
about the time they
were considering a
move from the hills*



Louisa had been pondering the make-up of the youngsters in the community since she had noticed how many of the schoolchildren were related. She had occasionally looked at the souvenir pamphlet for the school year that ended in 1908. That year the Calais school

reported fifty-one students, twenty-one of which were from the several related Carpenter families and twelve of those were girls. When MH mentioned he would like to investigate the possibilities away from the hill country, he found unexpected support from Louisa. A family story indicates their conversation could have been:

MH: Ben Martin talked about farming on flatland at the Grange last night, seems like you get more results for your efforts, I've been thinking....

LB: Maybe you should look into it.

MH: You wouldn't want to move away from here and your folks, would you?

LB: Well, I think about my boys. They are growing up and they are related to most all the girls around here. Maybe we need to look ahead.

MH: The twins have just about finished all the schooling we have here. We're only chartered as a two-year high school and are too deep in debt to renew it. The Board has decided to build a high school but it may take a while to raise enough money.

LB: I know, I promised to help with the fund raising but Rodney and Roger are already in their teens and they do like the girls!

It was with this conversation that life began to move in more than one direction. There was that concern for the current education; and, in addition to immediate needs of the family, time and energy was put into raising money for the school. Louisa was in charge of the committee that raised money for books and MH was making plans for high school classes while serving on the school board. She planned cakewalks and box socials to raise money. MH built and placed a large bookcase in the school to make a statement that there was the place for the high school books. At that time most of the people had only about five years of school and just over twelve percent of them had finished high school.

MH continued in his quest for recognition in horse breeding with entries in the Ohio State fair. During these trips he often made visits with real estate agents concerning the sale of flatland farms. At home he was increasing the value of his farm with a new barn and the first silo in the area.

Louisa and MH made a trip west before they told the boys they had sold the farm and were going to move. MH made arrangements for a railroad car to move their furniture and three of the horses. Thurman insisted they take Ole Bill and MH wanted his best mares.



BEING AROUND AT BUTCHERING TIME by James Hubert Warner

I liked to be around at butchering time. The last time we butchered in the hills, they butchered one hog at near Thanksgiving time, a steer between Christmas and New Years and eight more hogs in early January. The twins started to provide a supply of wood for the big job several days in advance. It required an entire day to get ready for the big day.

The scalding barrel and platform were made ready. A trestle long enough to hold eight hogs was provided. Two iron kettles and two copper kettles were set in place. They placed firewood under the kettles ready to light. Tables, benches and boxes were assembled. Dad sharpened several knives of different shapes and sizes. Tubs, baskets, buckets, and large pans were at hand for ready use. I guess about everything likely to be needed was made ready, even a hatchet, ax, and a saw.

It snowed off and on all day while the preparations were being made. It snowed some more at night. Next day the weather was great. The ground was covered with seven or eight inches of snow, there was no wind and the temperature must have been in the mid-twenties. It was said to be just right for a butchering day.

The plan was to have all the hogs dressed and hanging before daylight or breakfast, including gutting. R.J. got me out of bed; we all dressed in a hurry and went directly outside. I was surprised that several men were around the kettles. The fires were burning real good and the water in the kettles was boiling fast.

One of the men was Granddad (James Wells) Warner. He came down to shoot the hogs.

He was supposed to be the best shot in the whole community and liked to do the shooting. They said when he shot, the hogs always dropped in their tracks without any struggling or squealing. Not so with most other people. He was perfect this day. The hog pen was at least sixty yards away, so several of us went along to see the first hog shot. Granddad used a long barreled musket. Nelson Blower who often worked for Dad

let one hog out of the pen, Granddad got in front of it and blazed away. The hog dropped.

He stuck it with a long blade knife. Nelson grabbed a hind leg and started towards the butchering center.

Two of the men picked up the hog and placed it in the scalding barrel which had been filled with hot water. After a few minutes the hog was pulled out and put back in head first. They judged when the hair let loose well enough to end the scalding by pulling the

hair with their fingers. Soon they pulled hog out on the platform and three or four could pull and scrape until the carcass was cleaned. This took awhile because the head and ears and feet and legs required extra attention. They were still cleaning when I was sent to tell Granddad to shoot another hog.

When I returned the hog was hung up on the rack. Dad was gutting it into a tub and some of the men were adding more water to the scalding barrel and others taking red hot plow shares out of the fires and sticking them into the barrel to keep the water hot. They were ready when the second hog arrived.

After Dad finished gutting the hog, he split the hog in half by taking the ax and chopping through the ribs next to the backbone. The work continued in this routine until all eight hogs were hanging. Granddad collected the pig tails and started to roast them. He instructed one of the twins how to finish the roasting, then picked up his gun and started for home on foot.

It was a bit past daylight. The work about all stopped. Some of the men, in fact, nearly all of them, left for home and some different men arrived to help. I guess it was the custom for neighbors to help neighbors. Our family and a couple of men went in for breakfast. After breakfast I had a roasted pigtail. I liked it very much.

By now the carcasses had cooled out enough to be cut up. Dad cut the shoulders, sides and hams. Some other men helped trim them. Other men separated the trim lean and fat for sausage and lard. Others cut the fat into small squares and the lean in small sizes to go through the sausage mill. Some women came in the early morning to help with preparing the casings for sausage stuffing. One man worked on the heads and feet. I was very much aware of what was going on both inside the house and out, but not doing a thing. The place was a-buzz with talk and activity.

I should mention that the liver of the first hog was cut into several chunks and tossed into one of the kettles. By mid-morning it was ready to eat and disappeared fast. Enough head meat and other trim was available to start making a kettle of mixed cornmeal and pork. Dad decided at supper he would cook the meat-mush and render one kettle of lard that night. Mother mixed the ingredients for the meat-mush and looked after the seasoning and left Dad and the twins to do the cooking.

It was off to bed for us younger boys. I really enjoyed all the events of the day. T.G. and

H.H. were up and around all day too. We did help carry some of the meat and stuff around.

T.G. worked some getting the wood under the kettles. The next morning the men were out

at work when I showed up and had been there a long time. I guess they wanted to get everything done by night time.

They continued the sausage making and lard cutting and rendering. At the same time the

feet, ears and trimmed skin was prepared for cooking and pickling. The stuff for swatmaw

was made ready to cook. All the processing was done outside. Two men helped all day.

The weather stayed good all three days. The men worked at whatever needed to be done

next to keep things moving. They had even begun to put things away. Things got pretty

well done by late supper except some cooking and the last kettle of lard. The men worked

till past midnight I learned later, to get it all done. I was sent to bed early.

That day there were cans of lard, fat cut and being cut, sausage to be ground, some ground and piles of stuffed sausage, odd meat and bones and stuff about everywhere. The hams, shoulders, sides, ribs and backbone had all been taken inside. By the next morning nearly everything was back to normal or was made so. How could one ever forget such an experience?

The cracklings from the lard press were stacked away in the smoke house. One by one they were made available to be eaten as a snack bit by bit. It was good eating. They lasted until late spring.

After the hog butchering, Mother began "Frying Down" most of the sausage and certain

of the meat. It was fried like for eating then placed in two or three gallon jars, layer on layer, and then the jars were filled with melted lard. It would last or keep until the next butchering time. The hams, sides and shoulders were salted with a mix of saltpeter and sugar and stuff, and then smoked. The back bones and ribs were usually left hanging until

used. If the weather got warm they were cooked and covered with lard in jars.

Dad butchered the steer at the end of the barn. There was a rope and pulley arranged to

use a horse to pull hay up into the mow. This was a handy way to lift the cattle. Only a

horse could do it. Dad shot the steer, fastened the steer to the hay fork and raised it up so he could skin it and later take the entrails out. He could tie the rope to hold the cattle at any desired level. After finishing the dressing job he raised the carcass high up from the ground so no dog or person could bother it. He left it there several days. The weather was very cold. ... James Hubert Warner



Pictured here is Roger or Rodney Warner on the first motorcycle in Noble County. The 1914 Harley Davidson, known as the *Silent Grey Fellow*, which was owned by Erwin Howiler, the son of Louisa Bell Warner's half sister, Ella. Ella married John Howiler (not related to Joanna's husband Benjamin Howiler).

Benjamin's father had come from Germany as a young man and purchased a few thousand acres in the area. He had sold the land to the Gilmores which included the land where the MH Warner family located their new house. The Gilmores had given some of their land for the location of a church.

RJ or RB?

Uncle Hubert wrote about the day that Eck and Wib Steen stopped by to see if MH wanted to go with them to a farm sale. The timing was right for MH to tell them he found a flatland farm that he liked and was ready to sell.

THE SORGHUM STORY by James Hubert Warner

I liked being around at sorghum molasses making time. They always planted a patch of cane. Cane grew a lot like corn except it had a head of seed on the top like corn tassels but cane had no ears. The cane was ready in early fall. The twins did the necessary stripping. They used flails made from about a three foot length board two and a half inches wide, beveled on one edge in the fashion of a regular corn cutting knife or sword.

I got to watch some of the stripping. They used the flails to strip off all the leaves from top to bottom. The next step was to cut off the tops. This was all done the same day.

The next day they cut the stalks close to the ground placed them on a wagon to bring to an area near the house. It made quite a large pile. That evening Pod Stephens arrived with his portable press and molasses pan and made ready to begin work. The pan was about four feet wide and several feet long and maybe a foot or more deep. It was made of heavy copper. They set the pan on stones about a foot above the ground, just right for a good fire underneath.

The next morning was wet and looked rainy but the process started anyway. First the cane was fed through a cutter several stalks at a time and the cut pieces moved on into a large press until full. Then the juice was pressed out into large buckets which were then dumped into the vat or pan. Soon the juice was boiling. It rained lightly off and on all day. At times I took refuge in the wagon shed nearby. By mid-day the cane was all processed. The pan was full and boiling pretty good.

Pod and Dad took turns with the fire and stirring. They used two stirrers at times. The idea was to evaporate the water out of the juice down to a molasses. The more water driven off-- the thicker the remaining syrup. The know-how part came in controlling the fire and stirring so that there was no burning or scorching of the molasses; yet to keep the cooking down going until the right consistency was reached. I noticed that the pan contained foamy stuff and particles of cane that they skimmed off from time to time.

Finally Dad decided it was done and pulled the fire out from under the pan. Several times before this they sampled the molasses to see when they were done. Then came the best part. They filled a lot of glass jars of different sizes and scraped out all they could with big wooden spoons. After that we boys got to scrape the pan some more. T.G. went to the house for a loaf of bread that was soon all gone. I remember this day best because it rained and it was our last summer in the hills and last sorghum making.... JH Warner

There was a final harvest, a huge auction, arrangements with relatives to take care of the younger children and some of the horses. Hubert, Hildred and Ethel stayed with Grandma Gilmore in Barnesville. Cousin Mary Groves was their daytime babysitter and took the

two boys to see their first movie at the Nickelodeon and their first trip to see the trains at the railroad station. On the way they had their first ice cream sundae. Uncle Hubert recorded that this was the first time he saw a person of color. The horses were left at Aunt Joanna's. This move would be during a time when human energy was becoming harnessed to the mass production factories in a changing America.

RJ would later describe the area the family was leaving. "This community, in the hill country, had not yet been penetrated by telephone, mail routes, electric lines or hard surface roads. Horseless carriages were discussed but no one anticipated their appearance on our un-graded dirt roads." They had seen the new inventions like the motorcycle, Edison's cylinder phonograph, and Eastman Kodak's \$1.00 box camera.

It was snowing on moving day. Roger and Rodney put extra straw and blankets in the sled. They all bundled up for the ride to the station.



The only winter transportation was in a horse drawn sled similar to the one pictured here. They were on the way to the first train ride for most of them. They were glued to the windows except when Louisa opened the box of food she had prepared.