The Odyssey of Paul and Ruth

by Louise Mather Griffith

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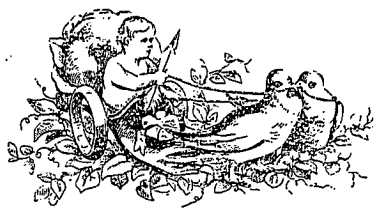
1997

Dedicated to
my sister Ellen
who died September 29, 1997

My thanks to my niece, Donna Ehrhardt Ryherd, for encouraging me to write of my parents, Paul and Ruth. Also to my sister, Patricia Breitsprecher, for editing and typesetting; and my son, Robert Paul Griffith for printing to record my memories of our family.

Marriage ✻ Certificate



Stat of Iowa, *Boone County, ss.*

To all Whom it May Concern:

This Certifies

That on the 26 day of June A. D. 1912

at Madrid, Iowa in said County,

according to law and authority, I duly joined in marriage,

Mr. Paul V. Mathis of West Branch, Iowa and

Miss Ruth Anderson of Madrid, Iowa

Given under my hand this 26 day of June

A. D. 1912

By C. O. Moland.
Lutheran Pastor.

The Odyssey of Paul and Ruth

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It all began on Fairchild Street in Iowa City.

Paul Mather of Springdale was living with his older sister Rachel who was married to Stephen H. Bush, head of the Romance Language department at the University of Iowa. They lived on Fairchild Street across from Roberta and Carl Seashore whose niece, Ruth Anderson of Madrid, was a freshman at the University and helping at the Seashores with their four young sons. Carl Seashore was an uncle of Ruth, a brother of her mother, Emma Seashore Anderson. He headed the Psychology department at the University.

The two families were friends and Paul and Ruth became romantically involved.

The Carl Seashore family

Paul and Ruth at their wedding

Sunnyside

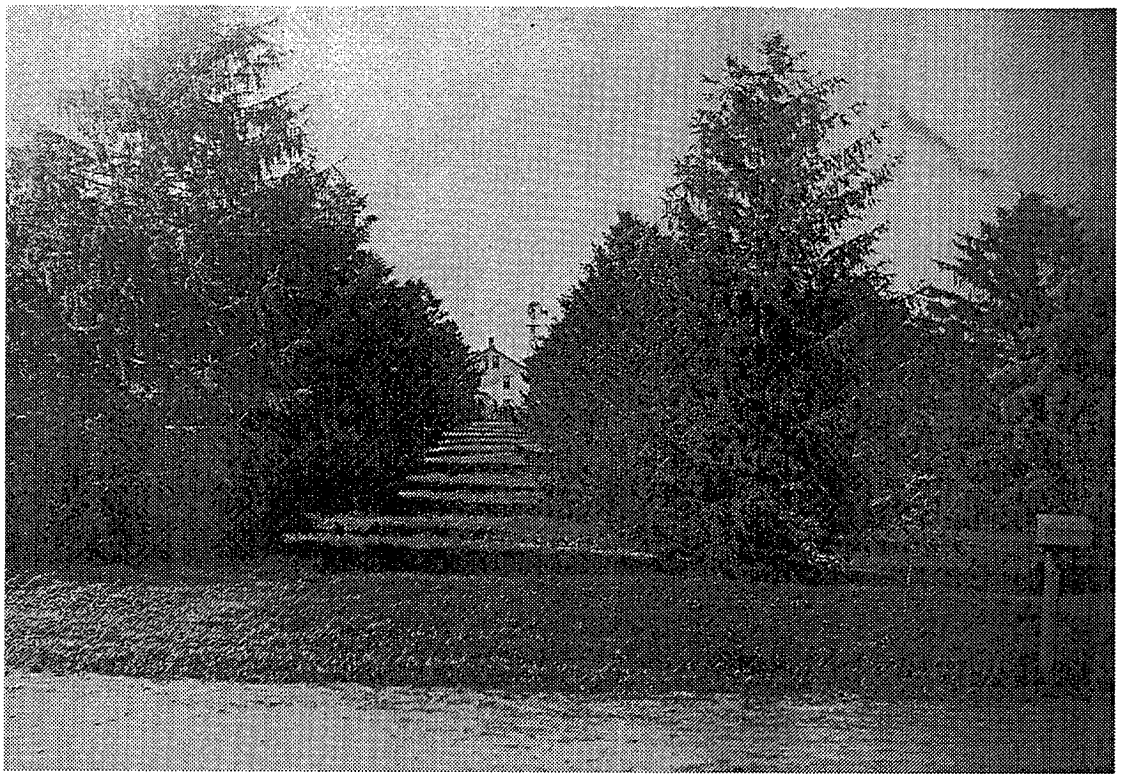
Sunnyside, a small farm just outside Madrid, Iowa, was the scene of the marriage of Paul Vetti Mather and Alma Ruth Emily Anderson on June 26, 1912. In the shade of a large linden tree, Ruth, 21, carrying an arm bouquet of shasta daisies said "I do" and Paul, 23, in his Sunday best said his "I do" and placed the gold wedding ring on his bride's finger.

The wedding party had included the brother of the bridegroom, Anders Mather and the bride's sister, Agnes Anderson. Flower girls were Roberta Anderson and Millicent Bush.

Family members on both the Mather and Anderson sides had come for the occasion. Grandma Anderson had fixed a lovely lunch for the guests to enjoy before they left by train for Iowa City, Des Moines, Springdale, and West Branch.

Paul had planned the honeymoon on a Great Lakes Steamer which they boarded in Duluth and disembarked at Chicago.

Their dreams were of making their home at Evergreens, the Mather ancestral home near Springdale. The summer months



"Evergreens"

were filled with farm work for Paul and making the new home for Ruth. But there were storm clouds over the young couple.

Paul's sister Beth had married Fred Higbee within weeks of Paul and Ruth's wedding and immediately let it be known that they did not want them at Evergreen's.

It "came to a head" when a new barn was to be built and Paul and Fred did not agree on the type of structure. After heated debates, Paul and Ruth decided they could not tolerate the situation.

They moved to Cedar Rapids in the Kenwood Park area and Paul became an Aetna Life Insurance salesman.

It was here that Paul Junior was born June 29, 1913.

Minneapolis/St. Paul

Paul and Ruth's odyssey took them to Minneapolis, Minn., where Paul became office manager of the Aetna Life Insurance Company.

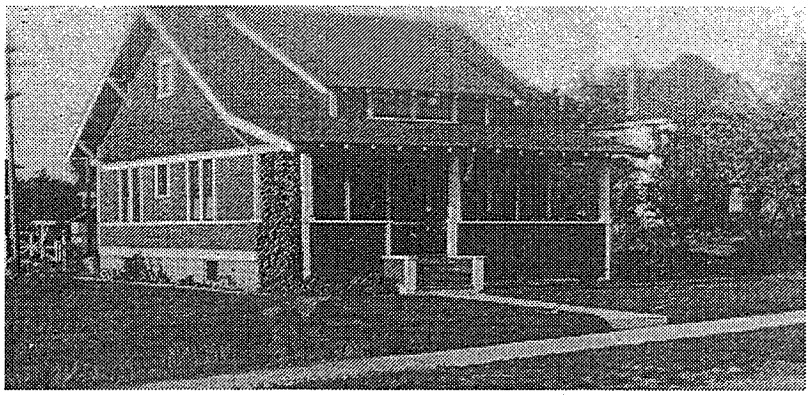
Here Emma Louise was born December 21, 1915.

Ruth's sister Roberta, 14, was a high school student and arrangements were made for her to live in Minneapolis with Paul and Ruth and their two youngsters, Paul and Louise, and attend school. She always said she taught Louise to walk and talk, and was a much loved member of the family.

They moved to St. Paul and Ellen Roberta was born October 15, 1917.

War clouds were on the horizon in Europe and when the U.S. entered the conflict, Paul joined the National Guard, although he would have liked to have gone into the active Army.

There were street car strikes in the Twin Cities during that year and Dad was called to duty. Mother told us that some of the wives of the strikers would use hat pins to stick the Guards.A very bad forest fire erupted in northern Minnesota around Duluth and Dad was called out for duty there to help rescue Indians from the reservations.



Home in St. Paul, Minn.

A vivid memory of the end of World War I was leaning from a window (probably the Aetna Life office) high above the street watching the troops in parade. Dad's National Guard Unit also marched and it was a great day in my young life.

Although I believe Dad had done well in his insurance career, he always felt the pull of the farm and I think Evergreens was always at the back of his mind.

Wellman

I was six years old when we moved to a farm near Wellman, not far from Uncle Carl and Aunt Clementine Anderson, Mother's brother.

Paul went to Pilot Knob country school.

It was there I learned there really is an Easter bunny. Mother had colored eggs and put them in a nest near the hen house and at Christmas time Santa Claus arrived carrying a bag of gifts. I was really a believer for awhile.

Within a year or two, I don't know for sure, we were to move again, this time to a farm near Carlyle in the Des Moines area.

Plans were made for a farm sale with hogs as the main attraction, but on the morning of the sale, the hogs were dying of cholera. The carcasses were hauled away and we moved from the farm.

Paul V. Mather in uniform

Des Moines

It was at this country school near Des Moines that I started my education. Paul and I walked some distance each day, but decided a short-cut through a pasture was a good idea. We did it only once, for unbeknown to us there were goats in the field and a billy took after us. We made it to a fence in time, but never took the short-cut again.

Coal mines were in the area and one day Mother had a burro standing at her window. The burros were used to pull coal carts in the mines and when they were too old to work, they were

Home near Des Moines

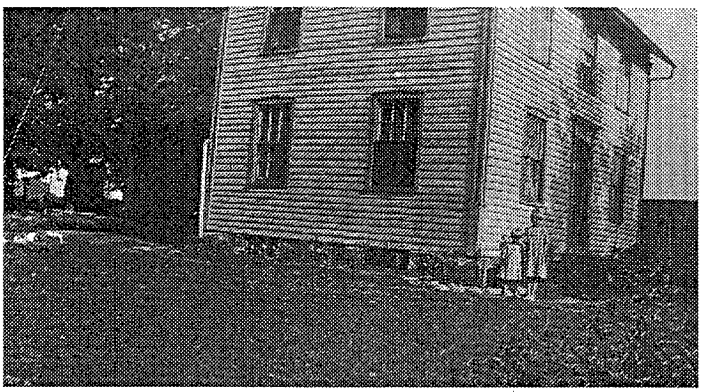
brought to the surface and turned loose. Mother's visitor was one of those.

Finances were very slim and Dad and Mother planted cabbages in the hopes of selling them in Des Moines. In the summer when they were harvested, Dad loaded our Model T and sold them door to door in the city. Some he sold at one of the hospitals.

That summer the Shriners had a big fireworks display on the Capitol grounds. I was terrified and spent the evening in the back seat of our car with a blanket over my head. I never have learned to enjoy fire crackers and fireworks.

Uncle Lloyd was home from the war and working at Pittsburgh Des Moines Steel. He visited us many weekends and became a favorite uncle of mine.

We were soon on the move again. This time to Cedar Valley near West Branch on a farm owned by Dad's cousin, Carl Mather, of Tipton.



Cedar Valley home before improvements

Cedar Valley

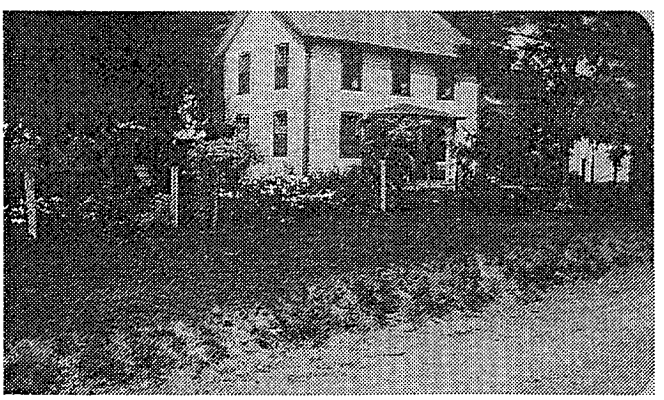
March was the usual time for farmers to move to a new location, so it was winter when we arrived at Cedar Valley.

The house had much to be desired. The north wall of the kitchen had a big hole in it and a heavy blanket was nailed over it until spring came and repairs could be made.

Paul and I walked across the fields to Gower School No. 5. The Thumma family and ours were the only ones not Irish Catholic in the community. I don't remember that Paul had any trouble at school, but I seemed to be unceasingly teased. Finally Dad told me to stand up for myself and then things were better.

We attended Friends Church in Springdale as often as possible, but when the roads were too muddy we went to St. Joseph Catholic Church which was near the school. Mother was included in the Ladies Aid group and Dad contributed to the church each year. This all made for good neighbors, especially the Fitzpatricks.

Several times a year parties were held at one of the homes. Usually there was music



Home after repairs and paint

by a fiddle and accordion and cards were played, followed by a bountiful lunch. When we had it at our house, Mother always worried about the canned food on shelves in the cellar. With the dancing the floor would sway, but Dad supported the shelves specially on these occasions and there was never a crisis.

Mother scrubbed and painted the house and made it into a comfortable, pleasant home. The yard was fenced in and flowers were abundant, many being slips from Aunt Roberta Seashore's garden in Iowa City.

I spent many hours in the tire swing and making roads and parks in the sand pile with small rocks and leafy twigs, even a pool from an old pan sunk in the sand. Paul and I played in the hay mow and in the creek in the cow pasture. We rode Larry, our riding horse, to bring in the cows.

Paul was a Lone Scout and we had many projects. Track meets, wood working, blazing a trail in the woods by the Cedar River, making a totem pole, etc. Lone Scouts was sponsored by Wallace's Farmer for rural boys. He attended Boy Scout Camp with an organized town group at Grey's Ford.

Ellen was suffering with asthma, bronchitis and St. Vitus' Dance so did not enter much into our activities.

But life was not all fun and games, although we never looked upon any of our chores as drudgery.

Early in the morning Paul and I joined Dad and Mother doing chores — milking the cows by hand (I always said it's why I have big knuckles), feeding the hogs, horses and chickens. It was my job to gather the eggs in the evening.

In the winter time, Paul and I brought in wood for the living room heater and the cook stove. This chore we did when we came home from school. Mother would have a lunch for us, we'd lay on the living room floor and read the "funnies" in the Chicago Tribune, then to the barn for milking, etc.

Supper would be ready when we came from the barn. We ran the DeLaval separator and cleaned up to eat. Mother was an excellent cook and always set a bountiful table.

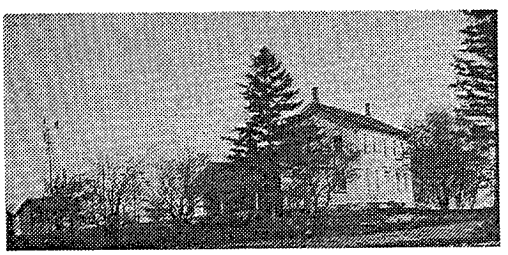
We lived at Cedar Valley for eight years, taking me through elementary school.

Paul had gone to high school in Springdale, riding Larry the six miles, rain or shine.

The year Paul was a junior in high school, he went to Greenfield, Mass., to live with Aunt Evie and Uncle Houghton Page and attended Deerfield Academy.

It was time for me to go to high school and it was decided I would go to Des Moines and live with Aunt Hazel and Uncle Lloyd and attend Warren Harding Jr. High.

Dad and Mother and Ellen were leaving the Cedar Valley farm and moving to Pierceton, Ind., where Dad would be a farm manager for Aetna Life. During the Depression many farms were lost to insurance companies and someone had to operate them.



Rural home near Pierceton, Ind.

Pierceton, Indiana

When school was out in Des Moines, I took the train and headed for Indiana. Mother and Ellen met me at Warsaw and we drove to the farm near Pierceton.

I loved the big old house with walnut wainscoting and a big open stairway. It had been built on to the original cabin with a walk-in fireplace. There were 3 large rooms downstairs and a small room with the same arrangement upstairs. The front door had lovely side lights, but obviously had not been used in years. Mother ordered curtains from Sears Roebuck for the large windows and

repeated the process of scrubbing, painting and making a pleasant home for her family.

My happy memories of the place was Sunday afternoons when we picnicked on one of the many lakes nearby — often in the company of neighbors.

Paul was home from Deerfield and working on a construction crew building a new school house in Larwell, a small town nearby.

Dad was working hard to improve the farm, but had difficulty with the manager who lived in Columbus City and from there told Dad when to make hay, etc. This in spite of the distance which allowed for weather variations, etc.

Before the summer was over, things "came to a head" and Dad was without a job.

Mother took down the new curtains, packed them up and returned them to Sears.

Defiance, Ohio

We moved into a stucco house on Harrison Street in Defiance, Ohio, and Dad became an insurance agent. The main line of the B&O Railroad was just behind our house and as each train rumbled by the house shook and you couldn't hear anyone talking until it went on down the track.

It was 1930 and the Depression had hit hard in Ohio. Defiance was an industrial city where steel shops made machinery to be sent to Russia. But that too had slowed down and many men were out of work. Dad couldn't sell insurance to unemployed men, so he too stood in line for a job, which never materialized.

Mother took a job in the Dime Store and Paul worked before and after school in a diary. He was a senior in high school and I a sophomore. It was my happiest high school experience.

Dad was very depressed and sat up many nights reading the four volumes of "The Life of Napoleon."

Ellen was having ear trouble and I took her to Ft. Wayne, Ind., on a bus for her treatments, once a month.

Money was very short and I complained to Dad about eating so many potatoes. He told me to fix meals for one day without potatoes and I never complained again. There was little choice other than potatoes and sardines.

Mother began having sciatica and suffered great pain in her leg. She was unable to work at the store and Dad decided to drive back to Iowa and see if he could find work. I was to go with him and help Gaga at Evergreens.

The next few weeks I was out of touch with the family and worried what would happen to us. I spent the days pulling weeds around the yard, cleaning and keeping Gaga company.

One day in late summer, I read in the Des Moines Register which Gaga took, that my Grandmother Anderson had died in a Des Moines hospital. I was really shocked.

Mother had been called to Madrid when her Mother took sick but was gone by the time she arrived by train. She stayed with Grandpa a few days then got on the train to return to Ohio. She got as far as Iowa City, but had to stay there as she was very ill. Uncle Carl and Aunt Roberta took charge and when she was released from the hospital went to the Seashore home.

In the meantime, Dad had gotten a job with Collins Farms of Cedar Rapids and he, with Paul and Ellen, packed up the household things and moved back to Iowa.

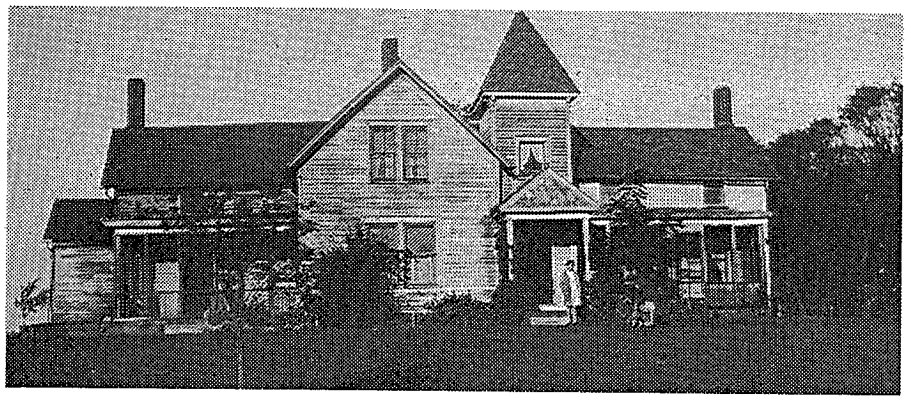
Madrid, Iowa

The job did not include a house where we could live, so Mother, Ellen and I went to Madrid and lived that fall with Grandpa Anderson. Paul enrolled as a freshman at Iowa City and stayed with Aunt Rachel and Uncle Stephen Bush.

Ellen and I enrolled in school at Madrid — I was then a junior in high school.

Dad worked in Hawkeye and visited us when he could in Madrid.

At Christmas time he was transferred to Britt, so Mother, Ellen and I joined him there. We lived in town for there were no living facilities on the farms Dad managed.



Forest City, Iowa

Forest City

After six weeks of school, Dad was transferred to Forest City where we would live in a big rambling farm house. The lane to the buildings was through a large apple orchard which was beautiful that spring.

Paul had his tonsils removed in Iowa City which left him with some difficulty in seeing. He left school and came to Forest City with us. He found work at a Standard Oil station in Forest City.

As usual, Mother went to work on the house, and Dad cleaned up the yards.

Ellen and I rode the school bus to school and that winter the snow was very heavy and deep so we rode in a bob sled drawn by horses. If you got too cold you could run behind the sled, holding on with one hand.

I was a senior in high school and Mother made over a dress of hers for me to wear to the banquet — Forest City had no prom. I had always made friends in the schools I attended so attended the affair with several other girls.

At Christmas time Mother told us she was expecting a baby in February. Paul was 18, I was 16, and Ellen was 13. It was a very difficult winter for her, both physically and emotionally.

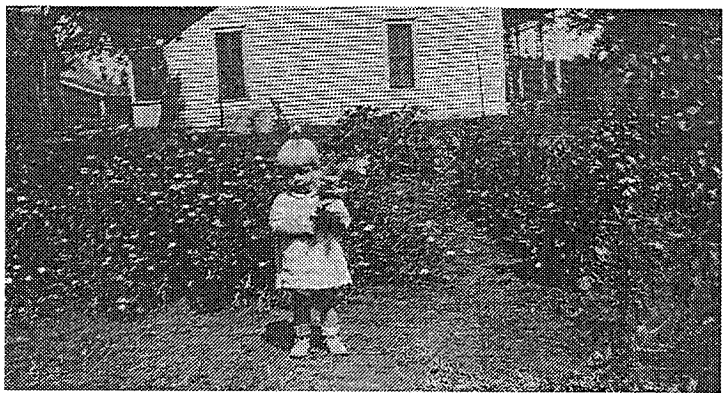
And then it was time to move again! Dad was to work for Equitable Life managing two farms near Kanawha.

Arrangements were made for me to stay in Forest City and work for my room and board for a young doctor and his wife. I moved into town the first of February and Mother, Dad and Ellen prepared to move to Kanawha.

The winter snows continued and Dad took Mother to the hospital in Forest City a few days early to await the birth of the baby.

It was a beautiful little girl born February 15 and Dad and Mother asked the older three of us to name her. She was so tiny, we all agreed on Patricia Ann and she would be called Patty Ann.

I continued in school and graduated with the class in June.



Patty in garden near farmhouse at Kanawha

Kanawha

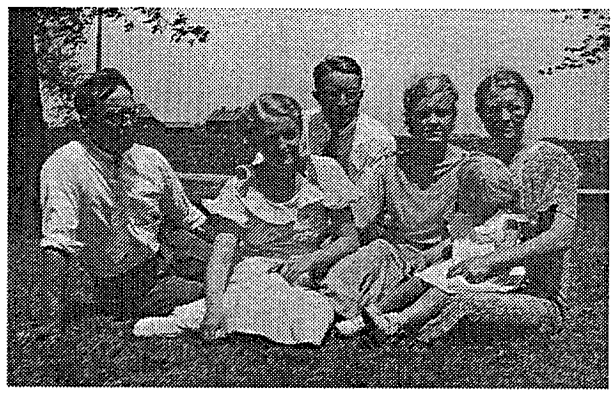
High school was over and I was eager to stay home with the folks and get acquainted with my new baby sister.

I was shocked when I saw the miserable little farm house where they were living. No electricity, running water or indoor bathroom facilities. But this wasn't unusual. None of the farms on which we had lived had these conveniences.

Again, Mother went to work cleaning, painting and fixing the place as comfortable and attractive as she could.

The farm land was very flat, having originally been a lake. A drainage ditch at the back of the land drained off the tiled fields.

Mother had a large vegetable and flower garden and each summer canned for the winter months. Patty was growing up and Ellen attending country school. Paul worked at a gas station in Kanawha.



Paul, Ellen, Paul Jr., Louise, Ruth holding Patty

Dad was becoming involved with community projects, especially the Wright County REA organization, one of the first in Iowa.

I helped when I could both in the house and on the farm, learning to run the tractors and hauling corn during harvest that fall.

There seemed to be no future for me there, although I started dating one of the Norwegian neighbor boys. We would have a date for 7:30 and he'd arrive at 6. Many times I was late getting ready, and it really became a joke in the family.

Then Uncle Carl and Aunt Roberta Seashore came to my rescue. They wrote to Dad and Mother and suggested I go to Wahoo, Nebr., after Christmas to attend Luther Junior College where Uncle August Seashore was president of the small Lutheran academy and junior college.

We spent Christmas with Uncle Lloyd and Aunt Hazel then the folks and Ellen returned to Kanawha with little Patty Ann.

Carl and Helen Seashore lived in Omaha and stopped in Des Moines on their way from Iowa City for Christmas. Plans had been made for me to go to Omaha with them and take the train to Wahoo. They lived in an apartment on the third floor of an old mansion, a beautiful place but the many steps on the outside of the house were "killers."

I boarded the train and arrived in Wahoo to work for my room and board at the Seashore home and attend junior college. I enrolled in the business course, took some required Bible classes and joined the charmanade, women's chorus and the mixed chorus.

I hated shorthand and accounting, but loved my other courses. Everyone was friendly and I only occasionally suffered from home sickness.

Sally Seashore, a few years older than I, was at home waiting for finances to attend Iowa University. She had graduated from the business course at Luther. We were roommates in her home and I felt unwelcome by her.

After the spring semester, I returned home for the summer and helped Mother and Dad on the farm.

In the meantime, Paul had married Maxine Herdman whom he had dated at Kanawha. They were living in Des Moines where Paul worked for Western Auto.

That fall I returned to Wahoo, but this time lived in the dorm where Mildred McCarthy of Cody, Wyoming was my roommate. This year proved much more pleasant for me and I made many good friends.

That spring our Charmanade Chorus went by bus to Lutheran Churches in Nebraska. We would have an evening concert, then go to assigned parishioners' homes for the night. My roommate and I stayed in a sod house one night near the Platte River. It was very comfortable and I marveled at the apparent history of the place.

Uncle August Seashore died that spring and changes were coming to Luther College. Uncle Carl and Aunt Roberta had continued as my mentors.

I had made many good friends, both boys and girls, some whom I kept in touch with for many years.

Iowa City

Dad, Mother, Ellen, and Patty Ann were still in Kanawha and I spent several weeks at home before going to Iowa City to work at the Carl Seashores.

I enrolled at the University that fall, paying $34 tuition since Dad and Mother had both been students there.

My room and board job continued at the Seashores and I had a secretarial job with Dr. Barnes in the Speech Department. I would say I was only a fair secretary, but Dr. Barnes kept me on all year.

The Seashores went to California for the winter and Lillian Pemberton and I found an apartment. We did much of our own cooking and her parents in West Branch furnished a lot of our food.

I applied for a job with the Dean of Pharmacy, and after a week realized my shorthand was very lacking. Carl Seashore, who with his family were living at home that summer, suggested I take a course in Speed Writing at the local business college and work for my room and board for a family whose husband was getting his Masters Degree in Music.

In the fall I got a job with Don Mallett, Assistant Dean of Men, with offices in the basement of the Old Capitol. I was able to handle this job and worked mostly with SRE students (Student Relief Emergency) which found jobs and helped students financially.

I had been dating Jimmy Mudge for some time, but his roommate, Harold Griffith, began calling for a date. We had met at Scrobby Club in the Congregational Church and we saw each other often that spring. He graduated with the class of 1936 with a Liberal Arts Degree and a Certificate in Journalism.

My studies were finally going well after finishing with Sciences and French classes. My major was developing into Special Remedial Education for Elementary grades, a new field opening up in education.

That fall I had moved to Clinton Place, a privately owned rooming house where I worked for my room and board. Harold and I had become engaged in the spring before he graduated and was busy as Advertising Manager of the Clayton County Register in Elkader.

My one extra curricular activity I had continued at S.U.I. was membership in the Mixed Chorus. We practiced each week and gave several concerts a year.

At Christmas time we sang the "Messiah" and on Dec. 14, 1936, our concert was scheduled. I was dressed in my formal ready to go to Memorial Union when Dad called saying Mother was in the Mason City hospital with pneumonia.

I took the interurban to Cedar Rapids and the train to Clarion arriving the next morning. Mother's condition was diagnosed as an embolism in her lung and there was little hope for her.

Ellen was in California with Uncle Anders and Aunt Alleda and Patty went to Aunt Hazel and Uncle Lloyd when Mother became ill. Patty was four years old and would be five in February.

December 21, Mother died and we were all devastated. It was my 21st birthday.

Harold came to Kanawha when I phoned him. He became the "rock" of my existence those next six months.

I could see that Dad couldn't cope with keeping house, caring for Patty and continuing with his farm business. There was no question but that I was needed there, so dropped out of college and did what I could to keep some semblance of a home for Patty and Dad.

It was a very difficult winter for the three of us. 1937 was cold and the snow piled up so you couldn't see cars driving on the road. Harold was busy with his job at The Register and it was weeks before he could drive out to see me. The only thing that kept me going was planning for our wedding which would be June 26, on the lawn as Mother and I had planned.

Ellen came home from California that spring and finished high school there in Kanawha as valedictorian.

Invitations were sent out for my wedding to be held on Saturday, June 26 at 11 o'clock followed by a buffet dinner. Berta came out a few days early with Emily to help with preparations.

The big day arrived and the weather was cold and rainy.

Harold and Dave, his twin brother who was to be his best man, spent Friday night at the hotel in Clarion. Mildred McCarthy, my Luther College roommate, came from Cody, Wyoming to be bridesmaid. Patty Ann was to be flower girl. Harold's brother Homer and Gene Mather, my cousin, were ushers.

Harold had gotten the marriage license in Clarion as the farm was in Wright County, but with the weather so miserable it was decided to go to the Methodist Church in Kanawha — in Hancock County — consequently Harold rushed to Garner to get a new license.

In the meantime, the guests were arriving at the farm and sent on into town to the church to await the ceremony which went as planned, except the minister wasn't feeling well and perspired profusely.

Several of Mother's neighbor friends had prepared the dinner which was served in the church basement.

Among the guests was Gaga (Grandmother Mather), Uncle Carl and Aunt Clementine from Wellman with their daughter Helen. Others were family and friends, but I was especially pleased that Gaga came. Harold's parents, Abbie and Harry Griffith and his sister Helen and brother Homer were also there with Uncle Bert, Aunt Rose and Mildred Grannis of Oelwein. Paul, Maxine and Richard came from Des Moines.

Later in the afternoon Harold and I left for Minneapolis where we spent the night at the Curtis Hotel. Our wedding trip included Duluth, Grand Marais and Ft. Francis, Canada, now known as Thunder Bay country.

Back at Kanawha Ellen had taken my place of making a home for Patty and Dad, but it was important that she too get on with her life. She had been awarded a full scholarship at Luther College in Decorah.

Dad took a trip East and he and Millicent Bush were married. She was the sister of Dad's brother-in-law, Stephen Bush in Iowa City. They had known each other when Dad had attended Exeter and had continued the friendship through the years. She was a registered nurse and had worked in the homes of wealthy people in Boston.

Dad and Millicent moved to a nice home in Kanawha where Patty started kindergarten that fall — she was now five years old, and visited often with Harold and me.

Elkader

At Thanksgiving time Grammy invited Uncle Lloyd and Aunt Hazel to come visit. They left on Thursday evening and on Friday Dad Griffith and Druyor from Prairie du Chien were to drive to Des Moines to attend a Press Association meeting. As they drove through Oelwein, Dad slumped over and Dru rushed him to the hospital where they declared him dead of a heart attack.

Harold had worked as advertising manager since graduating from SUI, but Dad had never let him really get involved with the business. So with his death, Harold was plunged into managing The Register. Dad's desk was a foot deep with papers which we went through layer by layer — the subscription list was in bad shape following the Depression where people payed with a chicken, etc. It took several years before everything was being run as a going business.

Dave, Harold's twin brother, was married in January 1938 and he and Ruby came to Elkader where he was to be advertising manager. David Jr. was born that September.

That spring, Dad Mather became very ill with an undiagnosed ailment. Millicent had me come home to help care for him — I was there five weeks. Dad was given blood transfusions at home with donors from the community. Besides nursing Dad, cooking, cleaning, etc., I drove to Mason City Mercy Hospital several times a week to have blood samples typed and equipment autoclaved. It was a very difficult time being away from Harold and dealing with events in Kanawha.

Ellen came home from Luther College that Spring and helped while I came home — at last! Dad was still weak but became stronger and able to work on the farm again.

Patty had been staying in Des Moines with Uncle Lloyd and Aunt Hazel, but came to Kanawha when Dad was better.

I believe Ellen went to Chicago and worked for a Jewish couple, cooking, etc. It was not an easy job. She taught school there in Wright County that fall, but it didn't work out for her, so she went to Des Moines.

I had gone to work at The Register immediately after we were married, but while I was with Dad in Kanawha, Lona Vullgraf of Farmersburg, whom I had displaced, came back to work.

In the fall I had a persistent case of "flu", and after several trips to see Dr. Withell, Chiropractor, he advised me to see Dr. Hommel. He was right — I was pregnant. Late April was the date for the baby's arrival.

Harold was interested in buying a Ludlow for the office and had located one in Nebraska. The salesman made arrangements for him and Harold to drive out to close the deal the last week of April

— with Dr. Hommel assuring Harold the baby would not arrive for several days. They left early Saturday morning — and that evening I developed a severe backache.

Grammy called Miss Liers the family nurse and Dr. Hommel, and John Mather was born Sunday morning, April 30. Harold arrived home that evening, met by Miss Liers holding baby John.

John was a happy baby. I quit work at the office and we were thinking seriously of building a new home for ourselves.

After purchasing a lot from the Mary Jane Williams estate, we bought an adjourning one owned by Frances and Roy Ehrhardt.

At that time we moved downstairs in the Patterson House since it was more convenient with the baby. But we also continued plans for building and applied for finances through FHA. Our loan was to be for $4500 to be paid in 25 years. It was the first FHA loan to be granted in Elkader and the bank hesitated to get involved, but Clarence Murphy, local attorney, helped us and we finally got the go ahead.

Henry Benschneider, 75, contracted to build the house and finally our dream came true.

One time when I visited Elkader before we were married, Harold took me on a canoe ride up the Turkey. He pointed out the area with the oak grove and said he hoped some day to build his home there. They are the lots we bought and have lived there 57 years (1997).

In the meantime Pat was having difficulties living with Dad and Millicent so came to live with Harold, John and I — she was seven years old.

Harold worked night and day at the shop. Dave and Ruby with David sold out to us and moved to Marcus where they bought the newspaper. Homer graduated from high school and junior college and Helen came home to work as linotype operator. Grammy was lonely in her big house and she came down to the office each day to be with people. Being of a mechanical mind, she learned the linotype and worked at that until she was nearly 80 years old. She would keep Harold company many nights when he was working. Eventually, she sold her house and moved into the Patterson House next to the office. She remained there until her death at 84 years.

After graduation, Homer worked at the shop for a while then got a job with the telephone company setting poles in Minnesota. He tired of that and returned to Elkader to work again at The Register.

I was working at the office again, taking John with me. He napped on a cot on the balcony and Pat was in school. Many times we hired a baby sitter so I could work.

November 1939 I was invited to join Chapter BZ, P.E.O. I was delighted as my mother had been a member of Chapter E in Iowa City. Also Grammy (Abbie Griffith), Aunt Roberta Seashore, Roberta Anderson, Margaret Anderson and Mary Anderson. I know Mother would have been pleased. Even more so when my daughter Nancy, daughter-in-law Jane, granddaughter Katherine, and my sister Pat Breitsprecher, also became members of Chapter BZ.

When John was six years old and in kindergarten, Robert Paul was born at the Lenth Hospital. September 13, 1945 was a press day, but Harold came for the birth of our second son. The press stopped as no one else was able to run it. Bob too was a happy baby and a joy to all of us. A beautiful daughter, Nancy Ruth, was born June 8, 1947 to complete our family.

Dad and Millicent had many problems between themselves and had divorced — she returning to Boston and Dad to live with us. We had a full house with John, Pat and Dad and a new baby.

Several years before the divorce Dad and Millicent moved to southern Iowa near Leon where they were buying a farm. Pat was with us, John was a toddler and with our neighbor girl, Audrey Meyer (Pat's friend), we took the bus down to visit Dad. It was World War II time so we had no gas

to drive down. We stayed several days — I rode the horses, painted walls in the house and tried to be useful, but all the time I knew things were no good between Dad and Millicent.

Millicent asked me to go for a walk with her and we ended up out in the big cattle barn. She insisted I must make Dad turn over his life insurance to her, but I refused saying I would not try to influence him. I knew she was angry with me.

We had an early dinner and I noted some white powder on my food, but thought nothing of it — taking it for salt. Our bus was to leave late afternoon for Des Moines and we got on at Leon. Since it was wartime, the bus was packed, and we had to stand up all the way with me holding John. Uncle Lloyd met us and we were to spend the night, then go on home to Elkader by bus the next day.

Before going to bed, Uncle Lloyd served Aunt Hazel and I some wine. When I started to go upstairs I had a queer feeling, but thought I was over tired. The next morning I was violently ill. About a week later Harold was able to get a special allotment of gas and drove down to Des Moines to get us. I was still so weak we had to stop in Marshalltown for me to lie down in the park. Dad too had become ill at the farm.

Not long after that, Dad and Millicent were divorced and Dad came to Elkader to live with us. For a short time he was farm editor for The Clayton County Register.

It was still war time and we used war stamps to buy meat, sugar, etc. It was very difficult for Dad to live without big juicy steaks. He became more and more dissatisfied and decided to go to California and live with Ellen.

Here too, Dad had his problems, finally buying a small farm near Hardy, Arkansas. When he became ill with diabetes, we got him from a hospital in Jonesboro, Ark., and took him to the hospital in McGregor. He lived there and in Marquette several years then went to the Masonic Homé in Bettendorf where he died December 12, 1950.

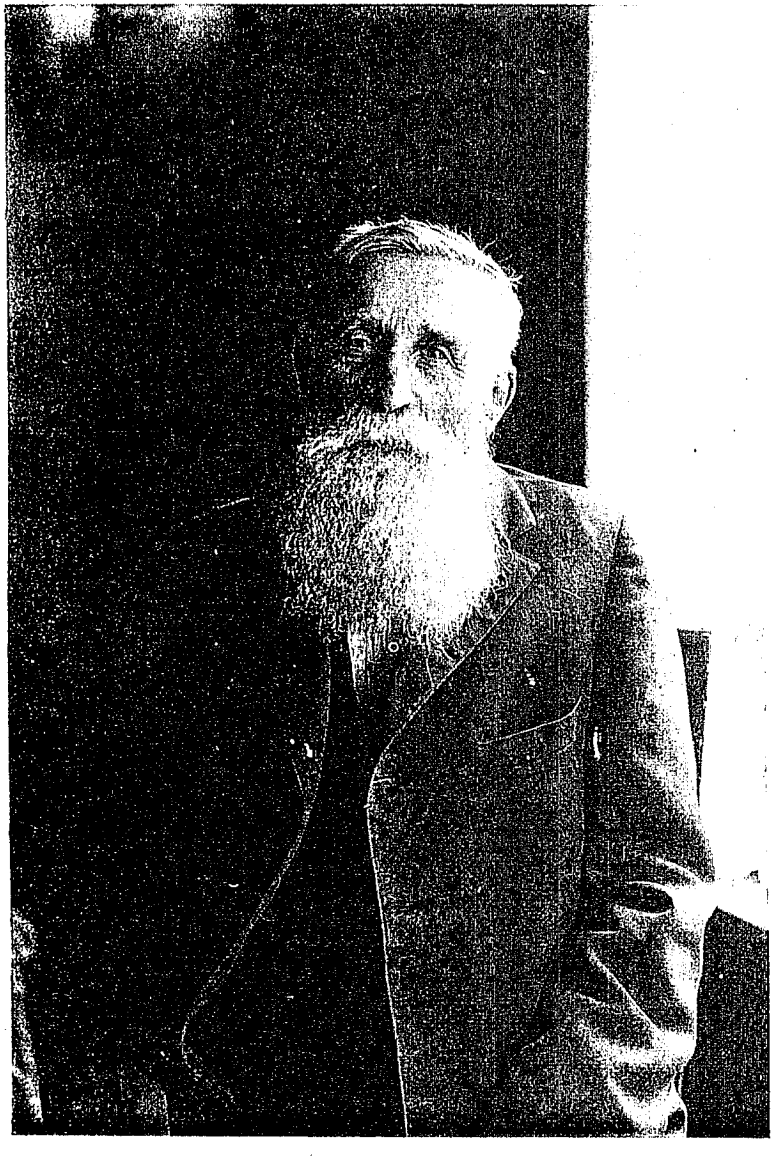
I am sure Paul and Ruth loved each other very much. That love was tested many times through the 24 years they made a home for themselves and their children.

Dad was an impulsive person, generous to a fault. Ahead of his time in his farming practice, he never looked back, but always had big dreams for the future. The tragedy was that often those dreams did not materialize.

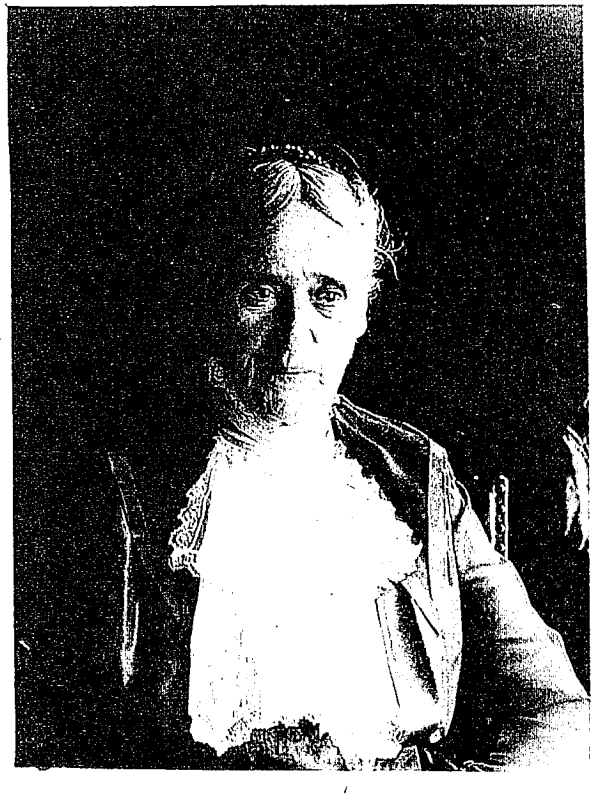
Mother was patient and a very loving person. She worked with Dad, milking cows, raising chickens, cleaning up old farm houses, and being there for all of us. Her "Daddy knows best" is typical of her philosophy in raising us children.

Paul and Ruth had a unique life leaving me with standards to live up to in community service as well as responsibility to family. Their odyssey brought me strengths and appreciations I would otherwise not have had.

B.F. Anderson and Emma Seashore Anderson
father and mother of Ruth



Samuel Mather
father of Paul



Ellen Knudson Mather
mother of Paul

Anders Knudson

Anna Martha Aursland Knudson

father and mother of Ellen Knudson Mather