



Country Hearth

The Journal of Indiana's Northwest Valley

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FREE
November of 1993

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Tales of Hoosier Pioneers

The November Song

A legend of Kankakee Land, originally titled *The Piteful Quest*
retold by Kathy Good

After a long, cold journey across muddy valleys and ice-covered hills, young Nathaniel at last arrived in the small village on the upper Kankakee. As the stagecoach creaked to a stop, his weariness was momentarily forgotten. He jumped to the ground, coattails flying. This, at long last, was the place he had dreamed he would spend the rest of his life.

He hired the finest black mare at the livery, the animal's mane sleek as Nathaniel's tousled dark locks. He urged the mare down the worn path to the river.

Though he'd been told of the incredible beauty of Great Island, Nathaniel was nevertheless awed by the majestic view. On this glorious spring day in the year 1852, the towering oaks and elms boasted tender, new leaves. A carpet of soft emerald grass stretched before him, while a crisp breeze carried the memory of an earlier rainshower mingled with the heady scent of thousands of wildflowers. The approaching twilight stained the sky a deep violet-blue, a color so like the eyes of Rebekah, his betrothed. Yes, this was the place.

In his small room above the village tavern, Nathaniel composed a letter to Rebekah in New York. She would be waiting so impatiently for news that he had found the site of their future home. Rebekah would begin the journey at once, as they had planned for so long, and would be his wife by summer's end. Then Nathaniel thought of his father. He gave a sigh filled with regret as he blew out the flickering candle.

With the letter safely posted, Nathaniel began a search for prime land in which to invest. The sleek mare carried him north to the St. Joseph and south through the valley, but no place could match the beauty of Great Island. Several parcels of land were available there. Though Nathaniel was a man of means, he postponed the purchase of a homesite, imagining the joy on Rebekah's face as they chose it together.

The townspeople soon grew fond of this tall, spirited young man who always had a kind word for all. They shared in his excitement as he hurried to meet each stage that rumbled into town. And they looked forward each day to hearing Nathaniel's rich baritone voice when he sang as he walked or rode down the paths to Great Island. For such was life in the village, that those who could sing did so, whether indoors or out, as they went about their day's work.

By summer's end Nathaniel's rich ballads had become as much a part of Great Island as the wind sighing through the trees or the river whispering past the bend. But his melodies were heard less and less as the days grew shorter.

Instead of eagerly meeting the stage, Nathaniel now watched its arrival from his window above the tavern. Where was Rebekah? He had sent three letters after the first, with each being unanswered.

Continued on page 2

Over the Bridge to . . . The Hazelden Mansion of Brook

By Lewis Coe & Diane Adams



PHOTO OF HAZELDEN BY LEWIS COE

Part One: A Walk Through Ade's Life by Lewis Coe

George Ade lived in the small town of Kentland, Indiana during the post Civil War years. His childhood was, in part, the preparation that carried him on to conquer the bright lights of Broadway and become one of the best known Hoosier citizens of his day. He reached the peak of his popularity as a playwright and satirist in 1904.

After graduating from Purdue University in 1887, Ade remained, for a time, in the Lafayette area to work at various jobs. One of these was with the company that manufactured *Cascarets*, a widely advertised laxative of that day. Ade is credited with originating the company slogan "It works while you sleep!"

A Purdue classmate, John T. McCutcheon, later the distinguished cartoonist of *The Chicago Tribune*, was largely responsible for Ade going to Chicago in 1890 to try newspaper work. He became a columnist for the old *Chicago Record* and it was there that he got the idea for *Fables in Slang*. This feature was eventually syndicated in newspapers around the country and later published in book form. *Fables* brought a measure of financial independence to Ade when he was thirty-four. He traveled extensively, including four trips to China and Japan.

When Ade turned to play writing around 1901, his memories of a certain Philippine potentate provided inspiration for his first big hit, *The Sultan of Sulu*. This play, opening on Broadway in 1902, was so popular that it was performed by duplicate casts appearing in adjoining theatres to meet the demand for tickets.

Parts One, Two & Three Are Continued on Page 3

EVERGREEN

By Kathy Good & Diane Adams

Many area tree farm owners had interesting tales to tell of the history of tree farming and their experiences. A part of each northwest Indiana Christmas tree grower is in this story. We believe they will recognize their stories, anecdotes and the lessons they learned along the way. Remember this story is fictional and does not represent any one family.

Where was the evergreen? Edda wondered as she watched her sons march through the field. Her youngest, George, was forced to run so he could keep up with his three older brothers. They crossed the farmyard and disappeared behind the porch, the screen door slamming twice before they stomped into the kitchen.

"We didn't get any Christmas tree!" George hollered. "I don't understand it, Ma," Frederick said angrily. "That old man just came walking up and told us we had to pay twenty cents. We never had to pay before when we got a tree there."

"And we didn't have any money," George rubbed the back of a dirty hand over his tear-streaked face. His round cheeks were a vivid pink from the raw winter wind. "How come we gotta pay that mean old man anyway?"

Edda Konrad pulled him against her and started rubbing salve onto his cheeks. "Mr. Ernst doesn't have to give his trees away. Not when he can take them to town and sell them. We will find another tree in another woods."

Frederick shook his head. "There aren't that many pine trees in the woods around here. That's why most folks went to that one. We were betting that he took trees away from everybody he caught in the woods this week. That's how mean he is."

"He took the tree away from you boys?" Edda asked. "Do you mean that you had already cut the evergreen?"

"Yes, ma'am," Clovis answered as the others nodded their heads. "He took it right away and drug it back through the woods. And we came straight home."

"Then we will have to set this matter straight," she said deliberately. "We shall pay Mr. Ernst immediately."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4





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Country Hearth Editorial

This month Country Hearth invites you to pull out the ottoman and truly relax with our Christmas story, some folklore, and a biography of a much appreciated Indiana writer.

I have a special thank you for Jim Butler, owner of Trailhead Outfitters in Chesterton. When Jim called to place his ad, I mentioned the historical on George Ade. Jim told me that his Grandfather McCurtain once owned a grocery store in Parr and he had a log cabin on the island in the pond. McCurtain often hunted with George Ade and another author, Bill Batts, whose real name was John Alders. After that phone call, I somehow knew I had the right feature for our November issue.

Shopkeepers, if your customers will travel across two counties to reach your shop, then consider that Country Hearth is distributed in more than forty towns. This issue and December's will also be available for the thousands of tourists who come to northwest Indiana and purchase their holiday tree.

Readers, remember to visit the shops of northwest Indiana during Christmas season. Talented hands have lovingly prepared gifts. Also, we will be pleased if you send notes of your memories of a sled or sleigh ride, the Christmas tree you best remember, or a favorite gift you gave to another. We will be able to use them in the December issue.

Diane

P.S.

The illustration with Rural Recipes on the back page reminded me of the day I "baked" brownies for friends. We couldn't cutthem with steak knives. I can make soup though.

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Tales of Hoosier Pioneers is continued from the front page

The November Song

A legend of Kankakee Land, originally titled "The Pitiful Quest" adapted by Kathy Good

The wildflowers of Great Island were blanketed by crackly jewel-colored leaves which rained from the trees with each gust of autumn wind. Nathaniel stopped in the clearing and gazed at the ash-grey sky, imagining the violet-blue of that first day. He heard his name called, then a young boy rushed from the forest path with an envelope clutched in his hand. Nathaniel's hands shook when he broke the seal. As he began to read, a bleak despair invaded his very soul.



The next day, Nathaniel instructed the landlord to load his baggage onto the stage, which was due to arrive two or three hours hence. He would walk one last time through his beloved island, and then meet the stage along its route. After stopping at the livery to give the mare a final pat, Nathaniel set off down the well-worn path.

As instructed, the stage driver stopped several times in the first hours of travel, sounding his signal and calling out Nathaniel's name. The only answer was the rustling of leaves. A woman passenger was certain that she heard a sort of moaning call, but the others convinced her that it was only the cry of a turtle dove.

At the next scheduled stop, the driver unloaded young Nathaniel's baggage. It lay unclaimed. His friends in the village and residents of the area searched the river and forest, ravine and tangled copse, but discovered no clue to his disappearance. Upon opening his baggage, authorities found no documents or money, and were certain that if Nathaniel had carried large sums upon his person, then he had surely been a victim of foul play. Though many unsavory characters lived along the river, evidence was never found to prove this theory.

Townpeople watched the distinguished gentleman alight from the stage. They saw the resemblance at once. Though the physical aspects of the missing Nathaniel and his father were similar, the man and son were very different in personality. At first the villagers attributed the brusque demeanor to grief over a missing only son. Not long into the father's stay, they learned to avoid the man or risk being the object of his continuous scowl.

Nathaniel's father stayed in the little room above the tavern. Each night he ran his rough hands over the smooth surface of the desk upon which his son had composed those letters filled with longing and plans for the future. The man's shoulders sagged from sorrow and shame. The anger displayed to the villagers was anger at himself. For he, who had only wanted the best for his son, was the sole cause of the boy's disappearance. Intercepting the letters that were meant for the daughter of his housekeeper had, at the time, seemed to be the decision which was best. After all, it was inconceivable that his only son be married to someone so beneath his station in life. To live in this wilderness instead of in the mansion where he had been born, well, it was unthinkable!

He had made certain Nathaniel's letters were unanswered. Once he had made arrangements for the relocation of the housekeeper and her daughter, and they were safely on their way to relatives in England, he was certain that the boy would come to his senses and return to New York.

After a futile search for clues to Nathaniel's disappearance, the father left the village without a farewell.

Several years later, the townspeople were astounded to see Nathaniel's father alight from the stage. He had aged beyond belief. The people were more disquieted when they witnessed the inner change in the man, as he now always shared a kind word and was filled with gentleness and good humor. His eyes seemed stangely bright, as if with expectation. He explored every inch of Great Island, as Nathaniel had done. Many thought that his mental state was in decline for he proclaimed to all, "We will soon know the truth."

After weeks of haunting the paths and trails his son once walked, the old man became more frail until, at last, he took to his bed. The children of the village, remembering his kindness, brought him gifts of wildflowers and small bunches of the luscious grapes which grew wild on the island. On a crisp, sunny day in early November, his health improved. He embarked on a walk along the stage route. When he hadn't returned by dusk, the alarmed townspeople sent out a search party.

They found Nathaniel's father seated on a bluff overlooking the river, his hands pressed tightly to his temples. He explained that he had grown weary on his way back to the village. He had stopped to rest when he heard a song. The father began to describe the song, then became very still. Members of the search party heard the peculiar melody echoing through the moonlit trees. None could determine from where the sound came, and none could confirm or deny that it was a human voice. Some thought they heard the notes from a flute, while others compared it to the soft pealing of a bell. And some thought that a note here and there resembled the rich baritone of Nathaniel's voice. The melody came only once, but all who were there walked home with the feeling that they had listened to a message from the hereafter.

Nathaniel's father did not wander along the paths again. With each passing day, he grew more and more frail until he passed gently away. With his final breath, and with hope shining in his eyes, he exclaimed, "I shall soon know the truth."

On a bracing, moonlit night in November, some years hence, a peculiar melody resonated through the trees along the old stage route. The melody startled a local doctor and his traveling companion. They had heard the tale of Nathaniel and of his father's quest for the truth of the boy's disappearance. Surely this was the hauntingly beautiful sound heard on a November night much like this one so many years ago. What a sound it was! The joyous song seemed to belong to a choir of angels accompanied by flutes twirling and bells that pealed with gladness. It was understandable that Nathaniel's grieving father and friends should feel as if they had heard a message from an ethereal world.

The doctor explained to his companion that the song was that of a hermit thrush, which was the last migrant bird to leave the region. An Indian legend claimed that the bird did not sound a note after leaving for its winter home in a southern marsh. Its concert along the riverbanks was the farewell song to summer.

The legend of Nathaniel would be passed down through future generations of residents on the upper Kankakee. And on moonlit November nights, as the hermit thrush sings its glorious song of farewell, some say that a note here and there sounds much like the soft strains of a young man's baritone voice. (CSH)

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Over the Bridge: Part One continued from front page

Hazelden Mansion of Brook

By Lewis Coe

In 1904 Ade's plays, *The Sho-Gun*, *The College Widow* and *The County Chairman* appeared simultaneously in New York. He became the toast of Broadway and, in the process, a very wealthy man. Royalties from *The College Widow* alone amounted to \$5000 a week. He wisely invested a large part of his earnings in Indiana farmland that was estimated to be worth at least \$1 million at the time of his death in 1944.

Ade commissioned a Chicago architect, William D. Mann, to build a "little cottage" near the town of Brook, Indiana in 1904. The little cottage kept growing and finally ended up as Hazelden, a Tudorian mansion complete with swimming pool, stables and a caretaker's cottage. Hazelden became the focus of social life in Newton County, Indiana. Affairs ranging from summer parties for local children to the lavish entertainment of visiting celebrities established Ade's reputation as a skillful host who derived great pleasure from seeing others have a good time.

Clearly the most impressive event ever staged at Hazelden was the entertainment for William Howard Taft in 1908, launching his campaign for the presidency. Newton County old timers still talk about this one. The logistics of the affair were staggering, with 25,000 visitors descending upon the little town of Brook, population 800. All the more remarkable was the completion of the arrangements in only twelve days, including food, bands, fireworks and the schedule of special trains on four different railroads.

Although Ade had traveled extensively, he remained fiercely loyal to the Hoosier state. He once wrote, "I understand there is a man in South Bend who went to Luxor to see the Temple of Karnak, but he has not been to Indianapolis to see the Soldier's Monument. Our own majestic work of art lays it over the clumsy relics of Egypt. It is in a better state of preservation and has more late model cars parked around it."

Ade had collected many fine pieces of Orientalia while on his far eastern travels. During his lifetime many of these items were on display at Purdue University. The entire collection is now housed at Hazelden and the other furnishings have been left just as they were in 1944. Although the house has never been open to the public on a regular basis, it is occasionally opened by special arrangement. Interested persons should contact the George Ade Memorial Association, Inc., P O Box 103, Kentland IN 47951.

Hazelden has been a National Historic Landmark since 1976. The complex includes a hospital, clinic and country club. When the location of the hospital was discussed, Ade said with characteristic humor, "Put it near the golf course. That's where the doctors are!"

George Ade had faded from public view by the time of his death in 1944, yet he is remembered with affection by his Indiana neighbors, many of whom knew him personally.

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Part 2: The Ironic Making of a Hoosier Humorist

by Diane Adams

John Ade, the father of George, had been brought from Lewes, England when he was a boy. His parents made their new home near Chevoit, Ohio, which is near Cincinnati. In 1853, John Ade and his young wife, Adaline, moved to the frontier of northwest Indiana's Grand Marsh.

Adaline was a solemn woman, a realist working beside her husband in the hinterlands of a tiny settlement called Morocco. Her husband managed a store and later became a blacksmith. When Indiana's last county of Newton was formed in 1860, John Ade was assigned to be the first recorder. He moved his family to Kent, which was later renamed Kentland to avoid confusion with the existing Indiana town of Kent. The sludgy Newton county seat of the late 1800s then had a population of six hundred. The Ade family lived in the second house that had been built in the town.

George was born there on February 9, 1866. He was the second to youngest of six. Biographies of George Ade have disclosed that he grew up with untroubled circumstances in a town that, unbeknownst to the inhabitants, gave George the beginning of his insight to be an accurate philosopher of the absurd reactions humans have to life. With this small town background, he was provided with a well-founded definition of the most important convictions of life. He learned to readily draw the moral line. He proved to be always heedful of the practicality of those teachings, though, early on, his traits had earned him the mark of a castle-builder, and one who would never take caution to the practical ways of life.

It is said that the young George had a tendency to avoid work. He had indeed inherited his mother's practicality, yet his reputation caused townspeople and family to caution his father about sending him to a university. The opinion was that the furtherance of George's education might be a waste of money. In 1901, when the financial success of George Ade was at the point that he had an extra \$500 to \$1000 each week, he sent the unneeded checks to the bank in Kentland where his astonished father was cashier.

The years that he had spent at Purdue University, a ten year old school of two hundred students in 1882-1887, were followed by a time when he attempted an interest in law. Before long, he happily included himself in the work of Lafayette newspapers. These years were a furtherance of George's education in the motives of people. His insights were further developed in Chicago where he was a study of the ethnic and cultures, the political and financial, the dramatic, the lazy, the humble, and the gloriously adept at excusing themselves from life's idiosyncrasies.

Doc' Horne was a series that Ade wrote. His character was a liar, an old man who can be quoted, "If they had built the Mississippi levees as I told them to, long before the war, they wouldn't be washed away every year." Typical Ade honesty with the twirl of a quill.

Ade was the philosopher who, with Hoosier insight, wrote the famed *Fables in Slang*. Laughter was gently directed at the characters, the readers and himself as he portrayed the homefolk that everyone encountered from day to day. George Ade took a liberty. Everyone was delighted with a look at themselves and a cause to smile at the ridiculousness of their very human nature.

Part 3: The Making of A Humorist's "Cottage"

by Diane Adams

"You may acquire peace of mind by listening to the breeze in the trees", Ade once said, "but you will not get any man-size experiences out of botany. If you wish to keep tabs on the human race you must go, once in a while, to where the interesting specimens are assembled."

The days that George Ade was not with the throngs of humanity in the city, he welcomed increasing numbers of visitors to Hazelden Mansion. The mansion, he admitted, was "about the size of a girls' school". It had started with his unpretentious plan for a place to relax. He envisioned a "cottage" in the grove of oaks on land he purchased in 1902. Within two years, more than four hundred acres of farmland near Brook, Indiana was home for the hospitable retreat that Ade bestowed with a family name, *Hazelden*. His acreage soon held an Elizabethan manor house complete with roses and arbors of grapes. The landscaped grounds held a greenhouse, a swimming pool with dressing rooms and a shower, the softball diamond, a forty foot water tower, an ice house, a fifty foot dance pavillion, and several outbuildings, which included a large garage, storage house, and a cow stable. At this point, one cannot neglect the mention of a much needed caretaker's cottage.

Yet, an understanding of the man does not design an ideal of Hazelden as a pretentious home for an assuming writer. Not only with the entertainment that he provided through his writing, but with his home, he was a host. Above all, George Ade was a host. He took his pleasure from the festivities he provided for the community, the fraternity of his university days, the political and state conventions. George Ade offered neighbors an open door hospitality.

After several years in state probate, while trustees of George Ade's estate developed plans for the use of Hazelden, which included the ten acres he had left to Newton County, the mansion and acreage once again serve for events such as receptions, parties, cultural events, and as a museum for his furnishings, books, and possessions.

On May 16, 1944, after months of illness and several heart attacks, George Ade died at Brook, Indiana. He had not married.

Lewis Coe resides in Crown Point, Indiana. He is the author of several articles on the telegraph and two books. Ad with info for ordering is in Shopkeepers. Diane Adams enjoys organic gardening, the creative episodes of writing novels, and "the hunt for treasure" at any unlikely place, such as flea markets or auctions.



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EVERGREEN: A CHRISTMAS STORY WRITTEN BY KATHY GOOD AND DIANE ADAMS
CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

"Pay him?" the boys yelled.
"Yes," Edda said. "Karl Konrad, you bundle up your sister, Clovis, take the bread pudding out of that oven. We will eat our lunch later. Frederick, go to the porch for my boots. George, go out to the barn and get the sled."
Four flabbergasted boys stood still for a split second, then hustled in different directions. Edda went into the long pantry. She set aside jarred fruit on the shelf to make a path, then pulled a cracked crock from the back wall. The pottery scraped heavily over the board. Her fingertips sorted the coins in the wide bottom of the crock and counted twenty cents.
Clovis stuck his head into the dim pantry. "Ma! That bread pudding smells so good, we just have to eat it now! Can't we wait just that long?"
"No, Clovis. We can't wait another minute," Edda grinned at the seven-year-old. "I'm sure you'll live to get married."
"Why we gotta pay, Ma?"
"Because the tree isn't the same as it was. Once you boys took an ax to it, then you bought it."
"When Pa cut the tree last year, I was with him," Clovis said. "Old Mr. Ernst didn't ask Pa for any twenty cents."
"A man has a right to change his mind, Clovis. I hope that when you're a man you will be allowed to change your mind about things more than once in your life."
"Did Pa ever change his mind before he died?"
"Not very often, son," Edda said. "But your pa usually didn't want to change his mind."
She found her boots by the kitchen table. She dressed for the mile-long walk to the neighbor's and scooped two-year-old Marlina from the step stool where Karl had left her. Edda led her sons across the wide, frozen, furrows of the soy bean field that her husband had planted last spring.
George ran fast to keep up with her, breathless and bright-eyed from excitement. "Ma... we... could plant our own tree for Christmas," he yelled. "Then we wouldn't have to pay old Mr. Ernst twenty cents anymore."
Clovis ran at her other side. "Right! We could. We could grow our own trees and then Mr. Ernst won't be able to ask anyone to pay twenty cents. They could come to our place. We'd give them all trees for nothing!"
Their oldest brother hooted a laugh. "That will never happen."
"I don't know about that, Karl Konrad," Edda said. "I read a newspaper not too long ago that had a story about Christmas tree farms in Ohio and Michigan. I believe there were two or three farms in Indiana, too. The work is very hard, and there are years to wait before the farmers have a harvest of trees to sell. Most of those poor people haven't even made money yet from the evergreens they planted."
Karl waved his long arm toward his youngest brothers. "Clovis thinks they should work that hard and give the trees away when they're done. Worse, he thinks we should work that hard to grow trees and give our trees away."
"We couldn't give them away," Frederick said.
"No, Frederick," she said. "We couldn't afford to."
"But, we could sell them for less than twenty cents," Frederick said.
"Well," Edda answered thoughtfully, "I think that by the first harvest in about ten years, then twenty cents would be just about right."
"But, Ma," George yelled breathlessly, "Could we just give some of the trees away to people who are as poor as us?"
Edda strode determinedly ahead. "I think, boys, that nowadays just about everybody is as poor as us."

That evening at supper Edda instructed Clovis and Frederick to set up the tree. "Karl Konrad and Marlina are in charge of decorating this year," she said with pride in her voice. "You boys pay attention to him and our Christmas evergreen will be the prettiest we've had."
Karl stopped drinking his buttermilk and looked from her to his little sister. "Ma, I have the milking to do. By the time I'm done with that then Marlina will be asleep."
"I'll do your milking," Eda said quietly. "There's something in the barn I want to find tonight."
"What's that you're looking for?" Clovis asked.
"That newspaper I read a few weeks back I wanted to read the tree farm story again."
Karl's chair scraped the floor as he stood. "I'll find the paper and bring it in for you. Then I'll do the milking. It's a man's job to do the milking at night in the winter."

Shopkeepers

Country Health
November of 1993 Page 4

Edda stood to face him. "A man's job is more than hard labor, Karl Konrad. It's important that you teach these younger ones what you remember of your pa."

Frederick dragged the tree to the middle of the great room of their old farm house. "If we grew these trees and sold them for twenty cents each would we be rich?"

"No, not rich," Edda answered. "But after a few harvests, we could pay for the university education of you two younger boys. Most of it, anyway."

"How much money is that?" Clovis asked.

"Yeah, Ma," George said. "How much? Won't you sell enough trees to send Karl and Frederick to the university? I want them to go before I have to go."

"You let me take care of the university money, boys." Edda wrapped her cloak around her and took the red lantern off the back porch. Her footsteps squeaked on the frozen snow as she hurried across the dark yard to the barn.

Clovis waited with his mother while Karl guided their horse across the steaming, sandy field. "Stein sure is taking his sweet time hauling that wagon," Clovis complained. He raised a heavy field rake over his head and tried to balance the end of the handle on his palm.

"Stop that, Clovis, before you drop that thing and clunk someone in the head," Edda tried to scrape some dirt off her nails but the heat had baked it on. "Stein is older than I am," she explained. "Before your Grandfather Konrad passed on, he said Stein didn't have much work left in him. We're fortunate to have him out here to haul even a few loads of water."

The seedlings that they'd planted during every daylight minute of the last two weeks now drooped in the scorching April sun. She had never known a spring to be as hot or for the rain showers to be as scarce. They had hauled buckets of water from well to field for the last five days. It took that long just to water the sandy field once, and now they had to start again. They desperately needed a good, soaking rain. *Please, Lord, maybe tonight,* she thought.

But the night didn't bring rain. She sat at the kitchen table for hours, humming thoughtfully as she studied the graphs she had prepared at Christmas the year before.

After the accident took her husband, she had been prepared to sell the whole farm. Now she looked ahead with hope. After selling half of the farm, she had enough money to invest in the seedlings, to pay the taxes, and to send her eldest boys to the university at Purdue when the time came. She was grateful that by the time Clovis and George would be old enough to attend, the evergreens would be a good source of income.

Edda sighed. Her husband had always taken care of the money. But it seemed that money was all she thought of now. That and how much she missed him. It was easier to think about money.

The time since Christmas had passed quickly. She had sent for literature from the state and had contacted successful tree farm owners in Pennsylvania, New York and Germany. Always, she remembered her husband's words: *The best lessons are learned not from the success of others, but from their mistakes.* And so Edda researched the history of tree farms, always looking for the mistakes and trials of earlier growers.

As a result, the Konrads purchased no red pine, which grew too quickly to keep its shape, or jack pine with all its cones and unattractive branches at maturity. Edda chose only the best seedlings, such as Balsam fir and white pine, purchasing most from a Pennsylvania nursery.

She now envisioned the day when a great, white sign would be anchored to stakes in their front yard. KONRAD HOMESTEAD AND EVERGREEN FARM sounded like a wonderful name. People would travel up the long highway from Lafayette, out of the Chicago city, and west from South Bend to take home a country-grown evergreen for Christmas Day.

Their own Christmas that year of 1940 was poorer than she had ever known. The evergreen seedlings and insect spray had cost more than she anticipated. She had promised herself that she would not spend the money saved from the sale of the farm - that was for the university. So, there was not a penny to spare. For the first time, they were not going to have a tree to decorate for their home.

Once the children were asleep on Christmas Eve, Edda carefully crossed the ice-covered yard to the shed where she found the tools she would need. Her memory of the children's disappointed faces urged her toward the field. She would see that they had a Christmas evergreen after all.

She found a tiny Balsam fir. After scraping away the snow with their only shovel, she chipped away at the ice with a chisel. Edda's hands soon ached with the cold and her knees became numb from the frozen ground. She leaned back and turned her face to the dark sky.

"It would be so much easier, Lord, if I just cut this tree. But we worked so hard to plant it! I guess I need help."

She turned toward the sound of footsteps crunching through the darkness.

"Ma, what are you doing out here?" Karl asked. He took her arm and helped Edda to her feet.

"I couldn't bear the thought of you children not having a tree this year. If we can dig this one from the ice, we can keep it in the house for a few days and then replant it."

Karl looked at the tree and then at his mother. "But Ma, it's just a little branch. How are we going to decorate it?"

"We'll manage just fine," she replied.

Karl picked up the chisel and began to chip away at layer after layer of ice.

The next morning, little Marlena clapped her hands with glee when she saw the scrawny seedling with miniature foil stars dangling from its needles. Despite joking about the size of that 1940 Christmas evergreen, the boys looked mighty pleased all day.

Edda sat with her children until very late that evening, telling stories of the days when she and their father had been children at Christmas. She tucked them into their beds and went to stand on the porch, looking across the farmyard to the moonlit evergreen field.

No matter how poor we are this year, she thought, and no matter how many years we will need to bring a seedling into our home for a Christmas evergreen, my family will survive. And all because of that moment when my boys dreamed of a farm where they could give away evergreens to make people happy.


CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

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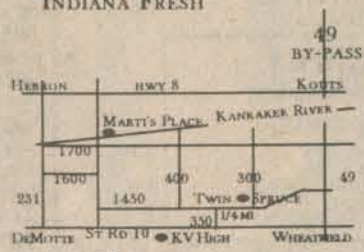
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Entertainment of the Seasons in the Northwest Valley & Surrounding Areas

Away from the Hearth

While out wandering Indiana I had the opportunity to stop for some of Indiana's greatest gifts at the apple orchards. Sweet aroma of apples scented the late autumn. Jolly Saint Nick happened to be at Gutwein Orchard in Monon when I made a delivery of the Country Hearth during my day wandering the northwest valley.

Star Plaza in Merrillville will have alot of Christmas entertainment. December holds the Nutcracker on Ice, The Johnny Cash Christmas Show, David Copperfield and The Oak Ridge Boys. The Wagon Wheel in Warsaw has some great plays coming up, such as Cinderella and A Street Car Named Desire. Also there is Angel Street and The Gin Game. *Editor's note: Mention Country Hearth, when you call them.*

Businesses and towns are preparing for the busiest time of year with local parades and Santa's arrival. Crown Point merchants will hold an open house with refreshments, carolers and carriage rides on November 21. The Christmas Stroll through Vincennes and their early parade is November 19-21. Chesterton features the World's Largest Bake Sale at their Christmas Walk on November 27 and 28. Indianapolis hosts Christmas at the Morris Butler House which is decorated in Victorian Splendor. The Peppermint Parade will be hosted by Knox on November 27. There is a tree lighting ceremony and a children's show is provided. In Kouts the annual Christmas Walk is held the first weekend of December. The Festivals of Trees, which is a favorite of mine, takes place November 24 through December 5. At Embassy Theatre in Fort Wayne over sixty trees and eight storefront windows are decorated. Hear the sounds of the Grande Page Pipe Organ, one of the last of its kind. Group discounts are given and Monday through Friday offers senior discounts.

Wishing all the wonderful joy of the Holiday season . . . God Bless.

Linda Warren

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DINING WITHOUT DISHES

BY SAM

With few exceptions, rural Northwest Indiana keeps its treasures well hidden. The large summer festivals may have great local exposure, but news doesn't extend outside the area. Besides these festival events, the news of places to go are largely spread by word of mouth. Newcomers to the area usually learn about the best local restaurants and leisure spots quite by accident from long term residents or papers like this one. Despite the efforts of local newspapers to be affordable to small advertisers, many of the small local businesses simply do not have the budget to afford the high visibility advertising in a large geographical area. The result is that these area jewels are discovered only by happenstance.

This month, I was fortunate once again to dine in a great local restaurant I did not previously know about. I have been lucky so far during writing this column to have visited only good restaurants. I hope my luck continues.

WHEN YOU ARE TOO <i>crude one</i>	TO COOK.
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LAZY	UNHAPPY
RICH	HUNGRY
POOR	HOT
TIRED	COLD
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OWNER: HAROLD L. SMALL

Ernie's is an unpretentious steak and seafood restaurant where flannel and blue jeans are as at home as suits and dresses. The decor, service and food preparation are simple, meticulous and straight forward.

Steaks are prepared with care to allow the meat to rest at room temperature. Even the baked potato, an easy item to overlook, was perfectly done. The warmed bread loaf was a nice divergence from the normal fare at local eateries.

Dinners also come with a soup and salad bar that is simple but incredibly fresh. A variety of salad dressings to suit every taste is provided. The soups are obviously homemade and tailored to cold midwest winter appetites.

For dessert I chose the hot fudge parfait. It is almost too much for one prson to eat after a meal so consider sharing with a friend.

Ernie's accepts all major credit cards as well as cash. They do not accept reservations but you should be able to be seated most times.

RATING ON A SCALE OF 0 - 10

9 MEAL	8 SERVICE & ATMOSPHERE	10 VALUE
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Editor's note: Sam is our anonymous critic. We do assure the readers & establishments that the critic is not myself, my relation, or in my employ. Sam is a freelancer and enjoys the writing of Dining Without Dishes immensely. Send name of your favorite restaurant to: Adams Hearsh, P.O. Box 550, Kouts IN 46347

Evergreen: The Conclusion

As Frederick, Jr. slowed the car, Edda leaned forward, eager to catch that first glimpse of the homestead. She squeezed her great-granddaughter's hand as they drove past the great, white sign. "KONRAD HOMESTEAD AND EVERGREEN FARM." How the words conjured up memories of those earlier years. This was Karl's home now. Her other children lived, farmed, and worked nearby. They had their careers, yet still worked the family land - just as she had envisioned their future all those years ago. She was so eager to see them all together for the Christmas holidays.

Frederick, Jr. helped Edda up the farmhouse steps. All of her family greeted her at the door. Frederick, Clovis, George and Marlena. All of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The parlor glowed with candlelight on polished wood. Pine boughs and holly, white lace and red satin bows adorned the room. A twelve-foot evergreen twinkled with tiny white lights, its branches exquisitely decorated with delicate ornaments and garlands of golden ribbon.

"Where is Karl Konrad?" she asked.
 "Welcome home, Ma," Karl said from across the room. She walked toward the staircase to greet him. He hugged her and said, "Merry Christmas, Ma. What do you think of our tree?"

"It certainly is beautiful," Edda said.
 "We have something for you that is more than beautiful," Karl said. He led his mother toward the tree and gestured to a small, round table beside the magnificent Christmas evergreen.

Edda's hand fluttered to her chest.
 On the table stood a scrawny, potted sapling. A younger Karl would have called it just a little branch. Handmade, glittering foil stars dangled from its needles.

Edda looked around the room at her family, then smiled up at her oldest son. "You're right, Karl Konrad. It is more than beautiful."
 (CSJ)

Remember that Evergreen is a work of fiction, its inspiration brought from tales of the Christmas tree farm owners and operators of Northwest Indiana. We thank them for sharing with us their knowledge and trials, their families and homes.

Diane & Kathy

Country Hearth will be read far and wide during the Holidays. Your advertisement could be, too.

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The Farm Wife

by Ilah Miller

Neither one of us had ever dressed a goose . . . did we even have a surprise!



Thanksgiving time for 1993 has come so quickly! It seems like only yesterday the first violets and spring butterflies came. Mom always said, "You blink your eyes and a year goes by." I'm beginning to believe it!

As we celebrate the Thanksgiving season let's be truly thankful for many things - our homes, employment, schools, places to worship, lovable little rascals, rabbit tracks in the first snowfall. Let's meditate on harvested grain, family gatherings and time to share good food.

When us kids (of the Sandberg family) were young we always went to Grandma Klemz's house on the farm for Thanksgiving dinner. She was a really good cook. We would fill up our plates with roast chicken, potatoes (both mashed and sweet), homemade bread and scrumptious apple cake. But more fun than the meal was sharing time with other cousins.

The family was too large to all sit at the dining room table so us kids took our plates and sat on the staircase leading to the huge upstairs hallway. Lining the staircase would be the oldest cousins at the top and leading down to us younger ones on the lower steps. I could hardly wait until it was my turn to get at least on the third or fourth step!

And after dinner was exciting, too. We were allowed to play "upset the fruit basket" in the front porch parlor. This was a room we didn't get to go into very often.

As Grandma got older it was too much for her to have all of us at one time. The older cousins were getting married and making their own homes, so times changed the way we celebrated Thanksgiving, but it didn't break the family ties.

One year, right after Junior and I were married, I wanted to have my family for Thanksgiving Day but, as a family tradition, it would be held at Mom and Dad's. I had already bought a live goose and told Mom we would furnish the meat if she would help me get it ready. Neither one of us had ever dressed a goose. Did we have a surprise!

We had an old 1937 Chevy at that time so Junior helped get the goose into a gunny sack for the trip to town in the car trunk. Evidently we didn't tie the sack good enough and when the trunk was opened out flew the goose!

Mom and I chased the goose around the yard and caught him. We had no idea that a single goose was so much stronger than chickens. And when we attempted to begin the dressing process . . . well, as I said, neither of us had ever killed a goose. But we finally tied him hung upside down from the clothesline pole to pick and clean him. The meal was well worth the struggle.

Another Thanksgiving at home Mom roasted ducks. My dad was an avid hunter and got quite a few during Thanksgiving week. She roasted a duck for each of us kids, all stuffed with our favorite dressing. Some were with sage, some with onion, some with oysters - but each one of us was treated special.


One year, when our girls, Katy and Wilma were about ten and twelve, I asked them what they wanted for Thanksgiving dinner. You'd never guess what we ate. Pancakes and sausage. It was the easiest holiday meal I ever prepared and was probably the most enjoyed.

In our busy world let's pause and be thankful for the things we have, the memories we love and cherish, and for some of the things we didn't get, like the flu, a broken leg or arm, and even that we're not turkeys. Happy Thanksgiving Day!

Ilah Sandberg Miller and her husband Junior reside southeast of Kouts, near the Kankakee. Ilah's articles are often published in The Kouts Journal and other publications. Farming has been a way of life for them during the past fifty years.




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Rural Recipes

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ITALIAN VENISON

FROM BOB & CINDY BRITTON

- venison roast
- 2 cans beef broth
- 1 T oregano
- 1 T sesame seed
- 1 T anise seed
- 1 T fennel seed
- hot peppers - optional
- onion, sliced - optional



Bake roast in 350 oven until done. While roast is baking heat beef broth in crock pot (slow cooker) along with ingredients. Slice roast and add to mixture. Cook in crock pot for 6 hours. Serve as you would Italian beef.

OATMEAL PIE

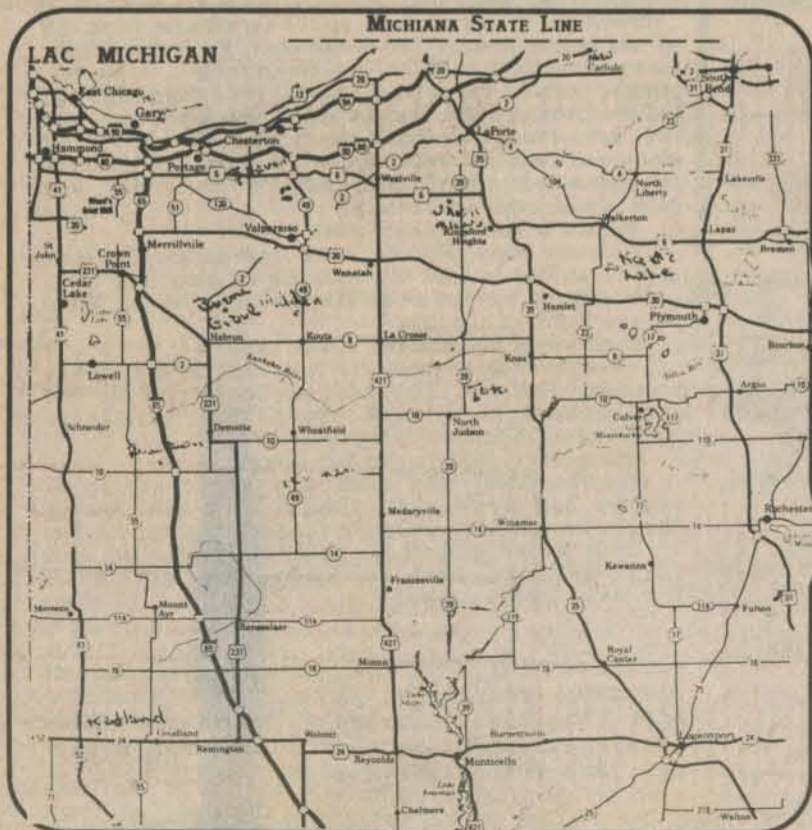
FROM MRS. ARVESTA BAUMAN

- 1/2 c light brown sugar
- 1/2 c white sugar
- 1/2 c butter
- 2 eggs
- 3/4 c corn syrup
- 3/4 c quick oatmeal
- 1 c flake coconut
- 1 c milk



Put brown & white sugar, butter and eggs in a bowl. Mix well. Add syrup, oatmeal, coconut, milk. Put in unbaked pie shell and bake for one hour at 350 degrees. Serve at your Thanksgiving meal and enjoy. Much like pecan pie.

INDIANA'S NORTHWEST



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