

I, Irving (Bailliff) Pidgeon, was
born ^{on Feb. 14, 1904} in Deming, Indiana, a
small town north of Indiana-
polis. I remember nothing of my
life there, as we moved to
Noblesville, then to Eagletown
when I was very small.

My own childhood memories
start in Eagletown, where I
entered first grade. I remember
the annual parade to the
cemetery on Memorial Day, most
everyone carrying a large
bouquet of peonies, which grew
so well there and must have
been at their best at that time
of year.

One night there was a terrible
electrical storm and it poured.
I vaguely recall talk of Halley's
Comet, which had something to
do with that storm. Many,
many years later, when Halley's
Comet made another appearance
in 1985-86, I was pretty sure that

bad storm occurred in 1910 when I was 6 years old. It all added up, since Halley's Comet appears ^{once} only every 75 years.

Another important event, was the birth of another brother (up to that time my brother, Norman, and I were the only children). However, our new brother was either stillborn or died soon after. More clear in my memory than his birth is a fall my mother had on our back steps or wooden walkway in the back yard. I seem to connect that his death with her fall.

There were no sidewalks in Eagletown - only well-worn foot-paths on each side of the dirt road through town. There was a church, the school, Eske's General Store and the post office, which was probably part of the store. This gives you an idea of the size of Eagletown.

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We lived next door to my mother's two unmarried sisters and Norman and I spent lots of time at their house. Many times we were there at mealtime and ate many of our meals there. I'll never forget one day at lunchtime Aunt Dollie tried to make me eat hot biscuits crumbled up in buttermilk. I sure rebelled at that.

Norman and I sometimes got into trouble and she didn't hesitate to paddle our "britches". In fact, I think she disciplined ^{us} as much, if not more, than our parents did. But we always went back for more.

Our next move was to Cicero, Indiana, north of Indianapolis. My father worked for Indiana Traction Co., an electric railway system which served at least parts of the state. He worked at the big main station in Indianapolis and commuted between there and Cicero every day.

Bicero was somewhat larger than Eagletown, having, as I recall, all the stores and businesses on one thoroughfare through town. Located thereon were at least one, and possibly two, "general merchandise" stores, meat market, drug store, ice cream parlor and last but not least, a "~~nickelodeon~~" the so-called "theater" of those days. I guess the reason the latter stands out in my memory is that we spent many an evening there, watching "westerns" and weekly serials, etc. By "we", I mean my mother, Norman and I. We were often accompanied by our pet dog "Mike", who occupied a seat by us and often barked at a dog which appeared on the screen. No matter how securely we thought we had Mike tied or locked up before we left home, he always managed to get out and follow us.

Saturday night, was special in Cicero. That was the night when the farmers and their families drove into town in horse and buggy or horse and wagon to buy groceries and other supplies for the week. It was also a time for "socializing" between farmers and town-people, who sat on benches in front of the general stores and discussed the gossip and events of the past week.

Eventually, the nickelodeon was replaced by a larger and more modern movie theater, which still ran westerns and weekly serials, which always left the hero or heroine in a death-defying situation. Of course, nothing could keep us from going back the next week to see what happened next.

I think I was still in first grade when we moved to Cicero

and my playmate and best friend, Dorothy, lived next door. We spent many happy hours playing together. One morning she came to school so excited about her brand new baby brother born the night before. I was really jealous of her because she had a baby at her house and we didn't. However, about a month later, lo and behold, I arose and found a brand new baby sister (Louise) had arrived during the night. I was in seventh heaven, I was so tickled. I begged my parents to allow me to stay home from school that day to be with my baby sister, but to no avail. Dorothy and I have kept in touch all these years by exchanging Christmas letters.

I think it was in the fifth grade when we moved to Indianapolis and my father didn't have to commute between

there and lived any longer.

I can still remember the layout of that first house we moved into. There was a front porch, from which we entered a small entrance hall, on the left of which was a good-sized sitting room. (It would be called "living room" today. To the right was the dining room where we spent most of our time, especially in winter, as the coal heater was there. Many cold winter evenings Mom, Norman & I sat close to the stove, each with a flat iron & a hammer, cracking & shelling black walnuts. That was also where we did our homework, sitting at the dining table with a kerosene lamp for light. There was also a gas jet light on the wall in each room.

Off the dining room was the kitchen, which contained a coal cooking range with a "reservoir" next to the firebox, for heating water.

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Opposite the stove was a sink with a water pump at one end - no piped-in water.

Off the entrance hall, directly in front of, or across from, the front door was the stairway leading to three bedrooms upstairs.

There was a large backyard. On one side of a wooden walk the length of the yard was a large area where we had a nice vegetable garden every summer. At the back of the lot, on the opposite side of the walk was the outdoor toilet and the coal shed. Getting in the coal and kindling for the night was Norman's & my daily chore.

There was also a water pump in the yard near the house.

At the very back of the yard was a gate leading into the alley. When Mom sent us to the corner grocery where we traded, we ran out the gate, down the alley to

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Sheldon St. a short distance, then
about a half block to the store.
One summer day Mom sent me
to get a watermelon at the store.
Since I was very fond of water-
melon, I probably picked the biggest
one I could find. At any rate, I got
almost to the alley and that
melon slipped right out of my
arms and broke, but not so bad
that some of it couldn't be salvaged.
I skittered up the alley and home,
grabbed the dishpan and was
back there picking up that
melon, piece by piece, before any-
one knew what was going on.
Somehow or other, I wrestled that
pain home with its goodies.

There was another store on
that same corner, run by some
Americans or other foreigners.
We never traded there, except on
Sundays during the summer
when they sold ice cream cones
at a special price, two for a

nickel. That was a regular Sunday
treat for Norman and me.