

# Early Life on the Farm

by Sarah Belcher - 1995

My earliest recollection of any happenings was Esther and Louis's wedding at the Presbyterian Church on Dundee Avenue in Wheeling on December 31, 1921. Dory was the baby and was in the crib in Mom and Pop's bedroom. The house was clean and the floors shown. All the chimneys on the kerosene lamps really sparkled. I was three years and one month old that day.

The boys made several freezers of ice cream and a friend came in to stay with Dory and me. I recall the hustle and bustle of everyone getting off to the church and after that there is no recollection as I suppose I was put down to take a nap when all returned for the reception.

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Sunday, being the Lord's day, was set aside to worship God by attending Sunday school and church in Wheeling and later in Half Day. I didn't receive any great spiritual help in Wheeling because I always had to sit next to a plump girl who pinched my bottom.

The family didn't keep the usual routine of work but rested and entertained relatives and friends who came in the afternoon and frequently stayed for supper. We were not allowed to go swimming on Sunday as this was part of setting aside the day to reverence of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Strawberries grew on the south side of the house. I ate so many I had a strawberry rash on my stomach. To my embarrassment Mom showed the rash to someone who drove in the yard and stopped to chat with her.

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One year it rained and rained until Wolf Creek overran its banks. We put on our swimming suits and floated around on planks for a couple days. Then later we hunted and caught crayfish in the creek one mile west of the house.

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The first day of school was a big day. I wore a pink pinafore and walked down a long, long lane and crossed Milwaukee Avenue and entered Tripp School. Miss Schulstra was the teacher for 24 of us. Shirley Ward and Gladys Farner were in first grade with me. Jim, Mary, Lyle, Ray, Shirley and Dory all were attending Tripp School when we moved to Crystal Lake in February 1927. I was in third grade on that date.

We either went home for lunch or Dory and I would walk home and get a market basket packed with hot baking powder biscuits and honey. In the winter we sometimes roasted our sandwiches in the furnace with Ray and Lyle's help. Those families attending Tripp School at that time were the Wards, Farners, and Barretts.

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Dory and I played house and, to avoid getting any jobs to do, we used the outhouse. Yes, the Sears Roebuck catalog was there, but no corncobs. When summer came Dory and I played in the yard and yelled at airplanes from the Palwaukee Airport these words "come down and give us a ride!"

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You've heard the expression "cheaper by the dozen", well the only commodity that fits into that category in 1918 was cornflakes. Mom bought cornflakes by the carton, 12 boxes therein or was it 24 boxes?

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Mom said I was born in Libertyville. I was a war baby, born just a few weeks after the armistice was signed at the Palace of Versailles in France on November 11, 1918. The last day of November I arrived at Smith's house. Mom stayed at Smith's for recovery. According to my birth certificate I was delivered by Dr. J.L. Taylor in Libertyville.

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I had the spelling of my name changed from 'Sara' to 'Sarah' in 1977. There was a charge of five dollars to the state of Illinois.

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