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"In The Days of My Youth": Frances Fulton Cunningham Harper

Frances Cunningham Harper

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"In The Days of My Youth": Frances Fulton Cunningham Harper

Abstract
My niece Janet suggests that I write the memories of my youth. It will not be an exciting or adventurous story. The older children of our family could have told more stirring tales, for they lived through the Civil War, and the momentous days of the Battle of Gettysburg.

I came along towards the close of 1864 when hoopskirts had passed their greatest rotundity, and pantalettes were on the wane. I remember seeing my sister Maggie, in embroidered pantalettes, but I never wore them. I did have a hoopskirt. It was bought by my sister Jennie, somewhat against my mother’s will. It was to be worn under a very pretty apricot “wool delaine,” one of the few dresses bought directly for me; for most of my frocks were hand-me-downs from my older sisters. In those days cloth was made to last. One of mother’s wedding dresses was a striped gold and brown changeable taffeta. Doubtless mother wore it for two or three years, then it was remade for Maggie in turn. I had an enduring hate for these made over frocks, and was glad that by the time Maggie was through with the silk dress, it was too far gone to be remade for me. My dislike for my older sister’s clothes was a needless self-torture, for both mother and sister Jennie were exquisite needlewomen; they knew how to fashion very nice garments; and while the material might be long in the public eye, it was always good in quality, and made up according to the mode. [excerpt]

Keywords
Frances Cunningham Harper, women's history, autobiography

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My niece Janet suggests that I write the memories of my youth.¹ It will not be an exciting or adventurous story. The older children of our family could have told more stirring tales, for they lived through the Civil War, and the momentous days of the Battle of Gettysburg.

I came along towards the close of 1864 when hoopskirts had passed their greatest rotundity, and pantalettes were on the wane. I remember seeing my sister Maggie, in embroidered pantalettes, but I never wore them. I did have a hoopskirt. It was bought by my sister Jennie, somewhat against my mother’s will. It was to be worn under a very pretty apricot “wool delaine,” one of the few dresses bought directly for me; for most of my frocks were hand-me-downs from my older sisters. In those days cloth was made to last. One of mother’s wedding dresses was a striped gold and brown changeable taffeta. Doubtless mother wore it for two

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My apricot delaine and my hoopskirt were provided to make me fine for my first photograph. I was—or at least was approaching five years old when making my first pose before a camera.³

Candles were waning along with hoop skirts, the parlor and living room were lighted with kerosene lamps, and the older people talked of the vast improvement in lighting; but lamps were considered unsafe to be carried about the house, so we used candles in the kitchen and went to bed by candle light. There was an admonition often repeated “Always put a cupped hand behind the candle flame in blowing out the light lest sparks escape.”

There was another very smoky and smelly light known as a “lard lamp.” It had a wick in melted lard, and needed a lot of trimming and poking to keep it in going order. The “lard lamp” was never used outside the kitchen.

We had matches in my childhood but father and mother remembered very well when, if the hearth fire went out, someone had to take a covered bucket and run to a neighbor’s for live coals. And,

² 1860 United States Federal Census, Freedom Township, Adams County, Pennsylvania. Jennie (Jane) Cunningham Cobean (1849-1930) was an elder sibling of Frances; Margaret Rebecca Scott Cunningham (1827-1892) was the mother of Frances.

father kept in his desk a block of the first matches he had ever seen.4 It was a block of wood sawed nearly through two ways, leaving a series of small upstanding sticks. These were tipped with Sulphur, and had to be touched to fire to make them light. The matches of my day came in tiny boxes, each box sealed with a revenue stamp. They would strike, but had a breath-taking odor. We were admonished not to waste them.

White counterpanes were another innovation of my early days, the best company beds must be covered in white, so the lovely old patchwork and applique quilts of an earlier day were in no great favor.5 Quilts were still made, but chiefly I think for the purpose of teaching children to sew. I, with much urging from mother, finally achieved two quilts. They were pieced from scraps of our cotton dresses, and had no particular distinctiveness.

Spinning wheels had been relegated to the garrets, but every housewife had her store of carpet rags. Every garment when past personal use was torn into strips, the ends joined by a few strong stitches and the accumulation rolled into big balls. Sewing carpet rags was evening work for the entire family, and mother kept close watch that our joinings were neat and secure. At our house, the carpet rag balls were kept in the now unused cradle on the garret. When the cradle was heaping full it was time to take them to an old man toward the creek who wove not only rag carpets, but soft blankets from wool brought in by neighboring farmers at sheep shearing. Our rags served as wool for the carpet, and these were not flimsy “hit or miss” rag carpets of today. They were so firm and heavy that the strips would lie smoothly on the floor without being sewed together. The carpet was woven in lengthwise stripes, three plain and two rainbow colored, the housewife selected her own colors. Mother always chose brown for the plain strips and though wool chain cost more and did not wear as long as cotton, she always had the rainbow strip woven in wool because it kept its color better.

4 1860 United States Federal Census, Freedom Township, Adams County, Pennsylvania. John Cunningham (1822-1919) was the father of Frances.

5 A counterpane is a bedspread.
The rag carpets were kept for the family living room and the family bedrooms. The parlor was usually carpeted in a brightly colored three-ply ingrain, and when the parlor carpet became somewhat worn, it was moved to the best company bedroom. Mother had a goodly store of home woven bed linen that had served our two grandmothers, and the company beds were always dressed in this linen. For family use, a web of muslin was bought each winter and stretched on the snow to bleach; it was then made up into sheets and underclothing.

No one went to Baltimore or Harrisburg or Philadelphia to shop in my early youth. The merchants brought goodly stores of goods to Gettysburg and we supplied our needs there. There were piles of beautiful double shawls; gay plaids for the younger women, soft grays, or gray and black plaids for the older matrons. I have always regretted that by the time I was old enough to wear one, shawls had largely gone out of fashion. I always wanted, but never had one.

Most mothers had one black silk dress, or possibly a black and white striped one known as a “summer silk.” Most young people had quite gay woolens for winter, and pretty lawns for summer wear. Every garment for the women folk was made at home. Father’s clothes were the work of a Gettysburg tailor, but mother made his shirts, tucking the fine linen bosoms by hand.

Almost every household had a grandfather’s clock, a corner cupboard, and one or two high cases of drawers. These were heritages from a former generation and were but lightly esteemed by their current owners. They were heavy and hard to move during the sacred rites of spring and fall house cleaning. Carpets had to be taken up and beaten, even when the room had been used only once or twice in the past six months. The men had to be called in to do this heavy lifting, and they grumbled over the task, so the beautiful clocks and cupboards were

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often put up at public sale, and went for a mere song. Our clock sold for fifteen dollars, and the cupboard probably brought even less. The finer grandfather’s clocks showed the changes of the moon, and some few told the day of the month. But if the clock owner did not know his rhyme: “Thirty days hath September,” and do some manipulating to the calendar hand, that part of his clock was not very useful, for left alone, it placidly registered thirty-one days to every month.

Every household had the Hagerstown Almanac. The wall calendar did not appear until I was well past bare-foot [barefoot] age. The first ones were I think sent out by the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company. They had no ornamentation and were very ugly, but father prized them as a marvelous convenience; so each year a new one was hung up beside the mirror in the living room. The pictured advertisement did not appear until after the Centennial in 1876. At that great exposition, it was quite the fad to bring home every advertising card that could be picked up, few of these had pictures, but they were treasured for a long time and shown to those who had not been able to visit the great show. I suppose it was fully ten years before our Centennial trove of advertisements went to the trash pile. Illustrated advertisements were still a novelty in 1883. We filled scrapbooks with them.

And now, for my more intimate joys and sorrows. My very first memory is of lying in the old cherry wood cradle in the low ceilinged bedroom where father and mother slept, and where Maggie slept in a trundle bed that was shoved under the big bed in daytime. Something hurt me, and presently father came with a glass and spoon, and I was told to drink. I was a woman grown and had children of my own before I smelled and tasted that particular medicine again, and learned that my

first remembered dose had been paregoric.\textsuperscript{8} Father was always tender and understanding—he had assured me that I could eat the sugar in the bottom of the glass. My next sickness was sometime later and almost brought me a spanking. I had slipped into the summer kitchen, the “out kitchen” we called it; opened a cupboard and discovered a saucer of molasses, ready for Anthony, the colored boy’s morning buckwheat cakes.\textsuperscript{9} I dipped my finger into it and licked off the sweetness. It was very good and I dipped and licked until the saucer was empty. Soon I began to feel queer inside and mother was much alarmed until sister Jennie opened the cupboard and discovered the empty saucer. It was then that I was threatened with a spanking, and I thought that I was indeed in a hard and unsympathetic world.

I was two years old when my grandfather Cunningham died, and I was taken into the parlor with some of my sisters, and with my Uncle Francis’ children, and lifted up to see him as he lay in his coffin.\textsuperscript{10} I do not remember ever seeing him alive, though I am sure that it was he who sang old Scotch and Irish ballads to me. He had great store of these and sang them well. The Londonderry Air is associated with my very early childhood. Father hummed a few hymn tunes, mother could not sing a note, so grandfather must have been my musician.

\begin{enumerate}
\itemsep0em
\item An out-kitchen was a separate structure from the home to protect the residence from fire.; 1870 \textit{United States Federal Census}, Freedom Township, Adams County, Pennsylvania. Antony [Anthony] Jackson (mulatto), born about 1857, resided within the William Bigham household.
\item 1860 \textit{United States Federal Census}, Freedom Township, Adams County, Pennsylvania. James Cunningham (1788-1867) was the paternal grandfather of Frances.; Ibid.; Francis Cunningham (1831-1913) was the son of James Cunningham and the author’s paternal uncle.
\end{enumerate}
This was my first knowledge of death. I was not frightened, but I did not like being in the room, and somehow wished they had not lifted me up to see my grandfather’s still white face. I had some vague feeling that my young cousins were unseemly in that they appeared curious, and were relieved when we all left the room.

My first remembered sensation of grief, beyond that caused by physical discomfort, came with the deaths of my grandmother Scott the next year. Grandmother had played a very small part in my young life, but mother’s black dress and veil depressed me very much; I had never before seen my mother in tears. My scarlet frock appeared an alien thing in that black clad company, and at the open grave I slipped away from mother, who hardly appeared to notice me, and walked around until I could get hold of father’s hand. Father’s hand was always reassuring and I felt immediate relief and comfort.

Sometime about my fourth year father bought our first sewing machine. It made a great stir in the neighborhood. We had many callers to see the new machine and some of them brought great bundles of their own for stitching; some came with lengths of cloth not even ready to sew, and mother would stop her own work and cut and fit their garments, and then sew the seams. Once I heard her say to father that “some people appeared to think that Elias Howe had invented a machine that could cut out and make garments by itself.” Very soon after, Mr. Bigham also bought a machine, so mother had Mrs. Bigham’s help in community stitching.

My own clothes being largely hand-me-downs were but lightly esteemed, but two dresses made for Jennie and Mary stand out in my memory as more beautiful than the colored plates in Godey’s Ladies

11 Ibid. Jane Kerr Scott (1795-1867) was the maternal grandmother of Frances, and was buried at the Lower Marsh Creek Presbyterian Cemetery in Gettysburg.

12 1870 United States Federal Census, Freedom Township, Adams County, Pennsylvania. Presumably, Frances is referring to neighbors William and Margaret Bigham.
[Lady’s] Book. Jennie’s was a material, later called alpaca, in narrow green and white stripes and made with a train. With it was worn a little flat triangle of a bonnet, of bright green silk. The trimming was a tiny bunch of little white flowers nestled in a knot of green lace, and there was a green lace bridle fastened with a like bunch of flowers. Mary’s dress was blue and gray. She had brown hair with a glint of auburn; her skin was very white and her color brilliant, so she was very pretty in bright blue. But the charm of this costume was its buttons. They were blue silk-covered, and shaped like acorns. Moreover, the closing did not go straight down the front, but started coquetishly on the left shoulder. It is strange that I have no memory of the hat that went with this acorn-buttoned dress, but a child’s memory had many blanks.

It was while the sewing machine was still a novelty that P.T. Barnum brought his exhibit of dwarfs to Gettysburg and mother and the three older girls went to see them. There were four of these midgets: General Tom Thumb and his wife, Commodore Nutt, and Minnie Warren. The whole countryside was a-twitter over the exhibition, and I was heartbroken.

13 Godey’s Lady’s Book was an American magazine for women during the 19th century.

over being counted too little to go. But it must have been very soon after this that Forepaw’s [Forepaugh] show came to town.  

15 It was counted a perfectly proper thing to see, because it was “an animal show” and not a circus. Father took the entire family and I saw my first elephants and my first monkeys. There was a roped-off ring, but I think no ringside seats, and when the crowd shut off my view of the trick mule and other performances, a big farmer garbed in the flat felt hat and buttonless coat of the “Church of the Brethren” lifted me up and held me aloft where I topped everyone else. 16 This, my fourth year appears to have been full of good things for it was along in this year that I got into Fairyland.

Our farm buildings had been requisitioned for hospital use by a Confederate officer on the evening of the second day’s fighting of the Gettysburg battle in 1863. 17 The big bank barn was almost empty in July, so the barn was chosen rather than the house. When the stretcher-bearers brought in their Confederate wounded, they also brought wounded Union men from within their lines. One of these Union soldiers, a lad of nineteen-named Frank Clarke [Clark], was terribly wounded in the leg, but refused to allow an amputation, saying he would rather die

15 “Adam Forepaugh and Sells Bros Circus: Robert L. Parkinson Library and Research Center,” Circuses and Sideshow Dot Com, http://www.circusesandsideshows.com/circuses/adamforepaughcircus.html. Forepaugh’s was a popular American circus operating from 1896 through 1911. Adam Forepaugh (1831-1890) owned and operated several circus shows from 1865 until his death in 1890. His major rivals in the industry were P. T. Barnum and the Ringling Brothers.

16 “Mission Statement,” Church of the Brethren, http://www.brethren.org/about/. The Church of the Brethren is a Protestant sect with origins in Germany which practiced simple living and plain dress.

than go through life on crutches; and the surgeon said he would die if he did not submit to the knife.\textsuperscript{18} Mother went to the tent where he lay and coaxed and petted him, promising that if the leg were amputated she would take him into the house and nurse him herself. It was a big promise to make. Mother had a little daughter, Lizzie, sick unto death when she gave that promise; and long before Frank was able to leave his bed, father and mother had followed two little coffins to Old Marsh Creek Cemetery, for Willie had died six weeks after his sister.\textsuperscript{19} Frank Clarke recovered and went to his widowed mother in Michigan, but came back twice to visit us. The first coming was while I was too little to remember, but the second was well within my recollection. Father was rather late in getting home from town that night. It was quite late when we heard the carriage wheels in the lane. And while he was unhitching the horses we could hear him talking with someone. Presently, there was the tap of crutches on the brick walk and everyone rushed out to greet Frank Clarke. He had brought each one of us a gift. Mother’s was a beautiful rosewood workbox; mine a little statuette of a boy on a pony. I think that was the first toy ever bought for me. But of all the gifts, Maggie’s gave me the most delight. It was a little book of fairy tales: The Three Bears; Cinderella; The Sleeping Beauty and Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp. Even my patient father grew weary of reading those tales to me. When he sat down with his newspaper, I would come with that book and he would say, “I’ll be very happy when you learn to read for yourself.”

\[\textsuperscript{18}\] John W. Busey and Travis W. Busey, \textit{Union Casualties at Gettysburg: A Comprehensive Record, Volume 1} (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc.), 249. Corporal Frank Clark was in Company F, 4th Michigan Infantry, which fought in the Wheatfield on July 2, 1863. Clark was captured, and sustained a left leg amputation. He was paroled and discharged due to his wounds in 1864.


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I did learn to read in due time. We were all readers except mother—her hands were always full of sewing or knitting or stocking darning; but she loved the reading as much as any of her children so father read much aloud. And if I curled up on the sofa and kept very still she might forget to send me to bed. We had books. My grandfather had had a good library for his day, and my father’s youngest brother, Leander, was an omnivorous reader, and never came home without bringing each one of us a book. He also brought books and magazines he had bought for his own reading, and I got my first taste of Dickens and Scott from my uncle’s books. Father read Scotch dialect very well, and I knew Tam O’Shanter and a good many other of Burns’ poems by heart long before I could read them for myself.

The year 1868 was one of joyous entertainment, for father had determined to quit farming, and called on the Hoofnangle [Hofnaugel] brothers, carpenters, to draw plans for a house and barn to build over on the eastern border of the farm. I suppose they first made an estimate of what would be required, but the order was not given to a dealer in building material. The carpenter went into the woods and picked the biggest most perfect trees, and these were carried to a sawmill a mile farther up Marsh Creek. The timbers were later brought home, mortised, and tenoned. On rainy days the carpenters made stout oak pins to fasten the framing together. There was always valuable loot to be picked up: short ends of carpenter’s pencils, pieces of red chalk known as keel, all shapes and sizes of blocks, and later on stray lumps of putty. But best of all was the talk that went on in the evenings, stories of fox hunting on Harper’s Hill, of big fish caught in Marsh Creek, of walks through the woods at night when red eyes gleamed, and strange sounds were heard. Sometimes the talk turned to the supernatural, and then I was ordered off to bed.

20 1850 United States Federal Census, Freedom Township, Adams County, Pennsylvania. Leander Cunningham (1835-1901) was a paternal uncle to Frances.

21 1860 United States Federal Census, Adams County, Pennsylvania. The carpenters named were brothers Henry and Peter Hofnaugel, of Cumberland Township.
At last the framework was ready and the men within two or three miles were bidden to the “raising”—the lifting of the heavy framing into place and pinning it together. It was very bad form for a man bidden to a raising not to heed the call. Neighbors would say with a shake of the head, “He may want to build a barn of his own some day!” For the big Pennsylvania barns, as many as a hundred men would be called for the raising of the frame, and these, as well as the boys who came unbidden, were all to be fed. For days before, the big brick oven was kept full of baking bread and pies and cakes. It was used on the day of the dinner for great roasts of beef, pans of chicken, baked hams and the like. Neighbor women came with their aprons on to lend a hand. There were great mounds of vegetables, caldrons of coffee, dishes of stewed fruit, pans of gingerbread. There was no stint of butter and cream the housewife gave her very best to feed these men.

It is hard to believe that the glass fruit jar did not come into use for some years after this. Tin cans were introduced a few years before glass jars, but were not greatly favored. Mother made pickles and preserves and kept them in narrow mouthed stone jars, but fruits were evaporated. For this purpose, we had a dry house—a little house fitted with a small sheet iron stove. Above the stove were sliding racks on which the fruit was placed. The dry house stove took a deal of watching. If the fire was too hot, the fruit cooked and was ruined; and those dry houses had a great propensity for catching on fire. There were side things made by the children and slipped into the dry house. One was “peach leather.” Soft ripe peaches were mashed to a pulp with all the sugar mother would allow. This was spread thinly on buttered plates and the moisture evaporated. Peach leather made wonderful chewing. It was handed out when children came to play with us. Dried sweet cherries were good too. A handful of dried cherries was often the reward for sweeping walks, or for filling the big wood box.

Moving day was another big event, the neighbor men coming with their wagons, and bringing their wives to help with the dinner. We got into the new house just after I passed my fifth birthday, and Mr. Miller Patterson and his wife and four children came to live in the old house
and do the farming. The children were Albert, Kate, Meade and Nettie. These children were glorious playmates; we roamed the farm and explored the creek; we fished, and felt we were doing the community a heroic service by killing snakes-harmless water snakes they were, and they had probably lived countless generations at peace until we declared war. They might all be alive yet for all the harm I was ever able to do them, for I could never throw straight enough to hit a wiggling snake. I was much mortified over my poor aim, and Meade Patterson kindly held a snake by the tail so that I could boast a kill.

I think it was during our first year of living in the new house that sister Jennie was married. There was great slaughter of turkeys and baking of cakes, and colored “Aunt Julie,” came to cook the wedding feast. We were all dressed in our best. I had a bright blue merino frock trimmed in rows and rows of narrow velvet ribbon. I am sure that dress was a hand-me-down for I didn’t like it, and besides, no blue garment was ever bought for me.

I thought it was just a big dinner party, and when everybody stood up and Jennie and Calvin walked into the room arm and arm, and the minister began with “Dearly Beloved,” I felt dreadfully hurt that the thing had been kept from me. But I came later to taking a deep interest in Jennie’s new clothes. She was married in her travelling dress, a brown poplin with brown gloves, and one of those little flat bonnets the size of your hand. I suppose she had a black silk, all brides had, but the gown I liked best was a pearl gray silk poplin made with a train; and with

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22 1870 United States Federal Census, Freedom Township, Adams, Pennsylvania. George Millard Patterson (1826-1910), his wife Louisa Wolford-Patterson (1836-1914), and their children Albert, Catherine, George and Nettie, lived near the Cunningham Farm.

23 Alice Cobean Blakestad, Samuel Cobean and Sons (Gettysburg: ACHS, 1984), 25. Jane “Jennie” Cunningham was a sister of Frances, and married Robert Calvin Cobean (1843-1889) at the Cunningham home in Freedom Township on January 11, 1870.
this dress went a tiny bonnet of white velvet trimmed with little velvet flowers. She wore a hoop skirt, but by now, hoops were grown quite small.

So far, I have said nothing of my brother James, because up to this time, he was a sort of nebulous-hardly more than a name to me. He had been given a clerkship in Shippensburg, and left for his new work shortly before I was born. When he finally returned to Adams County, he had a place in Fahnestock’s store in Gettysburg. I don’t think he came home from Gettysburg every weekend, a four mile journey—but I did come to know him better. He teased me a little and I sometimes went to mother with bitter complaining’s about his treatment, but mother always said “Stay away from him if you don’t like the way he acts.” He was far too interesting for me to do that, so I made up my mind to grin and bear whatever he handed out to me.

Maggie and I hung up our stockings Christmas Eve. We looked for two sorts of candy, sugar apples, pears or peaches, which we kept as things too lovely to be eaten. They were generally set in a row on the living room mantelpiece and sooner or later rolled off, and were broken to bits. The other candy was known as “clear toys.” These little cats and dogs, lions and rocking horses, we tried very hard to keep, one could make such a nice Noah’s Ark with the little animals, but sooner or later our temptation to eat overcame us, and the clear toys went down our throats. There were nuts in the stockings and usually one small toy. It might be nothing more than a whistle or some small lead dishes, or a

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24 1860 United States Federal Census, Freedom Township, Adams County, Pennsylvania. James Cunningham (1847-1928) was an elder brother of Frances.

25 William A. Frassanito, The Gettysburg Bicentennial Album (Hanover: The Sheridan Press, 1987), 9, 47. The Fahnestock Building is located at the northwest corner of Baltimore and West Middle Streets in Gettysburg. The business remained family-owned until 1881.

26 “History of Clear Toy Candy,” Regennas Candy Shop, http://www.clearcandy.com/history.html. The making of “clear candy” animals is believed to have originated in Pennsylvania by German immigrants.
bubble pipe, but I am sure these small things filled us with all the rapture our grandbabies experience over a roomful of costly playthings. But, there was one Christmas when Santa brought us riches beyond our wildest imaginings. I think this was the first Christmas after Sister Jennie was married. She was spending a few days at home, and after Maggie and I were safely in bed Christmas Eve, my brother and brother-in-law arrived, not only with oranges, candy and nuts, but with a gaily illustrated Robinson Crusoe for Maggie, and a doll’s bed and box of ten pins for me.

The house was still heated by stoves, and when Maggie and I woke long before day and slipped downstairs in our bare feet to get our stockings, the room was like an icehouse. Our plan had been to carry the stockings back to bed with us, but on seeing those other treasures we set up such chortles of delight that we woke the entire household, and father good-naturedly got up and built a fire.

Our Uncle Leander must have brought me “Hans Christian Anderson [Andersen]” about this time and I had the “Swiss Family Robinson,” and “The Story of Robin Hood.” It was about this period too that Mary read aloud “The Pilgrim’s Progress.” I did not get the allegory at all, I only got the story of people who had great difficulty and danger as they travelled to a city, and I could not sleep at night for fear I might meet “Giant Despair.”

It was soon after our move to the new house that I made painful contact with scalding hot apple butter. The making of our winter’s supply of apple butter was a task of paramount importance. Ours was always made from “Smokehouse” apples. The day before the actual boiling, father carried a load of apples to my uncle’s cider press and while he was gone, mother scoured the big copper caldron. She never relegated this task to anyone else, for “folks had been poisoned by apple butter made in a kettle not perfectly cleaned.” The kettle reduced to shining brightness, the whole family turned to peeling the apples. When the jugs and

27 “Smokehouse Apples,” Pennsylvaniaapples.org. The smokehouse apple variety was developed in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and used in cooking or baking.
buckets of cider came home from the press, and the apples were peeled and ready, the work of preparation was completed. Next morning a fire was kindled under the kettle and the cider boiled and carefully skimmed; then the apples were added a few at a time and the entire family took turns at stirring.

It took the entire day and the early part of the night properly to boil a cauldron of apple butter, and some of our neighbors made as many as six kettles of butter each fall. We made but one. No sugar was used, but ground cloves and cinnamon were added just before the concoction was pronounced done. The night of the boiling of this particular kettle of butter, I had been put into my nightgown, and because I was afraid to be alone upstairs, I was put into mother’s bed. I heard the commotion of dipping up the hot apple butter, and ran into the kitchen. Sister Jennie was carrying a two-gallon stone jar of the hot mixture, but it burned her hands and she let it fall. It splashed over my small bare foot and leg. Jennie, wild with fright, gathered me up and ran out of the house, entirely forgetting that the front of her dress was covered with the hot butter. She ran around the house and plunged me into a vessel of rainwater. That at least washed off the hot butter, but it also brought out enormous blisters from hip to toe tips. There was great consternation and someone ran across the fields to tell Mrs. Patterson. She came with a big bottle of linseed oil, a basket of eggs, and a bundle of old soft muslin. She made an emulsion of white of egg and linseed oil, dipped the cloth into it and spread them over the burns. Relief came almost immediately and I went to sleep. But I was a long time recovering from this accident.

All the neighbors came bringing good things, which I was too sick to eat. Aggie Bigham sent me her doll with all its wardrobe, and it was a big doll—it must have been all of twelve inches tall—and I had all the precious old keepsakes out of father’s desk—his mother’s patch box and smelling bottle, and a picture book that was his in childhood.28 Mother was fearful

that I might break Aggie’s doll, so father went to town and bought me one of my own. Mine was slightly smaller, but was always designated as the “big doll.”

This accident delayed my starting to school for another year. I didn’t much care for school; it was not at all interesting. I did learn to write with my right instead of my left hand as nature had intended I should, but I learned much more from my father than I ever did in the old school house. The teachers knew so little, the room was dirty and poorly ventilated, and the boys rough and lawless. There was a new teacher each winter, and we were always started at the beginning of the book no matter how often we had been over the first part of the subject. The first half of our books were always soiled, the latter half remained always clean. I got the impression that the teachers couldn’t do arithmetic themselves, which was probably true.

Mother had two grievous illnesses between my sixth and tenth years. The first was pneumonia, and that year we had some candy at Christmas, but no gingersnaps or doughnuts. Her next sickness came when I was nine. She spent an entire winter in bed with sciatica. My brother and Lizzie Blythe were to be married March 17th.29 Mother was able to sit up a little, but could not go to the wedding. Mary was through school by this time. She had been for two or three years at Mrs. Eyster’s Academy for Young Ladies in Gettysburg, a really good school.30 Mrs. Eyster’s school had closed and Maggie was a pupil of Miss Mary McClelland. I think Maggie had been brought home to help care for mother. Both girls were deeply interested in the coming

29 “Married,” Gettysburg Compiler, March 25, 1874. James Cunningham (1847-1928) was an elder brother to Frances. James married Elizabeth Finely Blythe (1852-1931) on March 17, 1874.


From 1856-1871, the Gettysburg Female Institute was headed by Rev. David Eyster, and then by his wife Rebecca. The structure stands at the corner of West High and Washington Street in Gettysburg.
wedding. Mary was making a lovely delicate green cashmere, and I am sure Maggie had a new dress too, but I cannot recall its color or material.

Mary Cunningham Marshall (1854-1932)
Mary was one of Frances’ elder sisters. Mary attended Mrs. Eyster’s Academy on West High and Washington Streets in Gettysburg. Frances was chided by her niece, Janet Kerr Marshall-Jefferys (1891-1975), to pen this work. Janet Kerr was Mary’s daughter.

When I was promised that I too could go to the wedding, I was overjoyed; I had really not expected it. There were two reasons often given me, why I could not do things that I wished; one was that “I was too big,” and the other that “I was too little.” It seemed to me that my family blew hot and cold out of the same mouth. This time, I felt that I had been justly treated; and then I propounded the question of a new dress. I was told that my best dress was very nice and would answer quite well. It was a nice dress, a bright Scotch tartan, but it had been Maggie’s best for at least two years before it came to me, so I stormed and cried that I had rather stay away from the wedding than go in that old dress. And mother said “Alright, you stay at home with me.” Of course, I couldn’t do that. I had new hair ribbon, and new striped [striped] stockings; I
felt slightly better, but far from joyous. It was an early morning wedding followed by a sumptuous breakfast. I do not remember at all what we had to eat, but only the beauty of the table. There were fruit stands of oranges with the peel cut like flower petals. There was a beautifully iced cake at either end of the long table; these were ringed with myrtle and had a white rose on top. The butter had been put through a pastry tube and was too beautiful to eat.

Things appeared to go very quietly for the next two or three years. The Patterson’s, my loved playmates, had moved away to a home of their own, and my brother took over the farming. I was very fond of my cousins, Will and Mary Scott.31

William Lincoln Scott: “Cousin Will” (1865-1949)
Will Scott was a favorite cousin of Frances and a lifelong friend. The two corresponded through letters during their lives.

31 1870 United States Federal Census, Freedom, Adams, Pennsylvania. William (1865-1949) and Mary (1867-1896) were children of George Washington Scott, the author’s maternal uncle. The John Cunningham family, William M. Scott, and G.W. Scott families lived along what is now Scott Road in Freedom Township.
Mary M. Scott (1867-1896)
Mary was cousin Will’s sister, and a childhood playmate of Frances. She died in her childhood home (the G.W. Scott house), and never married.

The George Washington Scott Home on Scott Road. The residence is owned by David Bruss and Scott descendent Janet Scott Jackson Bruss.
Mary was very bright. She was up with me in school though she was two years younger. I was very fond of going to play at my uncle’s. Aunt Jennie let us do pretty much as we liked. We could play where we please, bounce on the beds, eat sugar, get into the cookies. Another wonderful place to play was at Mr. Washington Lott’s.\(^32\) There were five girls and two boys in the Lott household. It was a very old log house, and the door had a latchstring. There were two tiny bedrooms, a big kitchen, and a “lean to” living room on the ground floor. The upstairs was one big room next to the roof. The barn was built of logs and had a thatch roof. It appeared to me that everything good to eat grew on that hill farm: big sweet apples, peaches, cherries, the earliest tender radishes, the most delectable young onions. There was a clear spring branch in which we sailed boats and built dams. There were gourd vines, snowball bushes, and clumps of sweet shrub. Pawpaw, pinkster flower, may apple, and hepatica grew along the banks of the brook. We chewed pennyroyal and ditney, and dig up and ate (without washing,) a little peppery root that we called “little potatoes.”\(^33\)

This tale of my childhood would be very incomplete if it had no mention of the spiritual side of our home. Father and mother had a deep abiding and practical Christianity. They ‘did justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly before their God.” We had no Sunday school, but were carefully taught at home. To father, his religion was not a thing apart, it was his daily living. Our church was a dignified reverent place. The ministers were men of culture; they might preach long, but they preached well. There was no organ when I was little, and I always listened for the hum of the tuning fork when the choir leader “raise” the hymn tune.

\(^{32}\) 1880 United States Federal Census, Highland Township, Adams County, Pennsylvania. Frances is referring to the George Washington Lott family.

\(^{33}\) Jeremy Trombley, “Foods Indigenous to the Western Hemisphere: Hopniss,” American Indian Health and Diet Project (AIHDP), http://www.aihd.ku.edu/foods/hopniss.html. The “little potatoes” described by Frances are most likely the hopniss plant, which grows in wet soils near bodies of water.
In 1870 when I was seven and mother was forty-three, she and I had our first experience of a railroad journey. Father took us to visit our cousin Mary Stewart Pomeroy, who lived in a little place called Academia in Juniata County.\textsuperscript{34} It was only four or five counties west of our own county of Adams, but it took all day and far into the night to get there. We had to stay in Gettysburg the night before our start, because the train left before daylight. We waited hours at Hanover Junction, more hours at York, and had a third long stop in Harrisburg. Possibly, there were more changes of our cars, I do not remember; but somewhere after it began to grow dark; we climbed into a rickety stage and I fell asleep.

Cousin Mary’s manner of living was my first glimpse of real luxury—of French windows curtained in lace, of velvet carpets, upholstered furniture and a piano. That piano, and two roast turkeys on the dinner table, was almost more luxury than my small mind could comprehend.

Along about my tenth year I began to show scathing judgement of the young men who came to see my sisters—young men who had shiny new buggies, and silver mountings to their harness, and who wore long linen dusters when they rode about the countryside. They were nice—or beneath contempt according to the way they treated me. One youth, small of stature and very blond, but ponderous in dignity, I pretended to fear lest he “step on me and never notice the worm he had crushed.” When this young man appeared, and I was bidden to do Mary’s evening tasks along with my own, I boiled to the point of explosion. On the other hand, I would have let Rob Marshall walk all over me had I thought it would have given him pleasure.\textsuperscript{35} He always talked to me as though I were just as grown up as Mary. He sent me things to read and boxes of apples when I went off to school. He handed me a chair and put me in my seat at table; he was just a really truly gentleman.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{34} \textit{1870 United States Federal Census}, Beale Township, Juniata County, Pennsylvania. Mary Stewart Pomeroy was a relative of John Cunningham.

\item \textsuperscript{35} \textit{Marriage and Death Notices in Gettysburg Newspapers 1878-1890}, ACHS. Andrew Marshall, and not Rob, (also of Adams County) wed Mary Cunningham on November 10, 1887.
\end{itemize}

\url{https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/ach/vol23/iss1/3}
It was this same Rob Marshall who took me at the age of twelve to hear my first opera. An amateur troupe came from York and gave Pinafore in old Agricultural Hall in Gettysburg. It was well costumed and well sung. Rob drove up to the school house a little before “Dictionary Class” and asked the teacher if I might be excused for the day; and didn’t I walk out of the school house and climb into the sleigh with my head in the clouds! And when we reached home mother was asked if I might go along to the opera. Mother didn’t think it quite proper, but I was finally allowed to go, and what a heavenly evening!

There is just one other joy to relate, a joy that came every autumn. Adams County had an Agricultural Fair. Father had given a hundred dollars towards its establishment, so the family had a lifetime entrance ticket. The fair lasted three days, and because it cost nothing I was allowed to go two, and often all three days. Mother was usually a judge of the bread and cakes, jellies and jams, so Maggie and I roamed at will. I remember one year when the Fairfield Band furnished the music, that they played their small stock of tunes over and over, and finally, during the horse race, fell back on the Long Meter Doxology.36

In the seventies and eighties, parents provided such things for their children as appeared necessary and fitting without much regard for the child’s taste in the matter. One of my particular aversions was for shoes made by the local shoemaker. Our best shoes, those worn to church and for visiting, were purchased at a shoe store in town. My only objection to these was that they were always selected a size or two larger than the measurement of my foot (only they didn’t measure your foot in those days.) But the everyday shoes were broad and flat and to my thinking, humiliatingly ugly. Once or twice, the shoemaker added the indignity of copper toes. We walked a mile to school over roads often deep in mud,

36 “Our Agricultural Fair,” Gettysburg Compiler, September 8, 1874. This event focused on agricultural advancements. Families were encouraged to attend and share their failures and successes with crops. The women attending discussed baking and food processing methods. “Modern” farm machinery was exhibited as well.
so I can understand why my taste in footwear was not regarded favorably by the ones who had the shoes to buy.

Then there was the matter of jewelry. A good deal of jewelry was worn in my little girl days, not the inexpensive costume jewelry of today, but watches with long gold chains, bracelets, many rings, and what were called “sets” of jewelry. A set consisted of a pair of long earrings with a brooch to match. Hairdressing had grown very elaborate; puffs, curls, and braids were pinned on ad libidum [libitum]. High piled hair and long earrings appeared to me the last word in elegance. I was quite hopeless about every having earrings, for ears had to be pierced in order to wear them, and father and mother thought pierced ears a bit of barbarism. Sister Maggie bribed the washerwoman to pierce her ears and our brother-in-law very kindly bought her the coveted earrings. I was not more conscientious than Maggie, but was more fearful of pain; so my ears remained unpierced.

I was sure father would buy me a brooch when I was older, and if I learned enough to teach school he would buy me a watch; but the thing my childish soul longed for was a ring. There were no ten cent stores with trays of glittering jewels in my childhood, but almost every little girl had a “button ring.” This was a circle carved from a bone button; and sometimes boys made rings out of pennies. A penny ring could be kept very bright by vigorous rubbing on one’s flannel petticoat, but it always made the finger black. Very fortunate little girls had garnet rings. Garnet rings appeared to be carved out of something like soapstone; indeed they resembled mottled red soap. I did not own a gold ring until I was fifteen. It was given to me by our cousin, Dr. Alexander Stewart, and was worn and prized until a diamond engagement ring took its place.37

37 James Cunningham, James Cunningham Family Letters, 1821-1851, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan. Alexander Stewart (1809-1894) was an uncle of John Cunningham, and a great-uncle of Frances. Stewart received his medical degree in 1831 from the Washington Medical College in Baltimore, Maryland. He resided and practiced medicine in Shippensburg, PA until his death.

https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/ach/vol23/iss1/3
While I was a schoolgirl at Shippensburg “bangle” bracelets became the range. You bought the silver bracelet from the jeweler and asked your boy acquaintances to provide the bangles-ten cent pieces smoothed on one side and engraved with the donor’s monogram. I liked the jingle of these baubles well enough, but asking for the engraved dime pendants was too crass a method of obtaining them, so I never went in for bangles. I had a few unsolicited engraved dimes, but never jingled them on my arm, for even when one did not ask outright for a bangle, the incomplete circlet was a bid for donations.

The beautifully boxed candy of today had not appeared in my girlhood. The young men frequently brought an offering of candy, but it was not put up in fancy boxes and tied with ribbon-the gift came in a brown paper bag and was made up of chocolate creams and variously flavored caramels. This candy had often been over long in the storekeeper’s showcase but we ate it without thought of criticism. If candy has improved with the years, ice cream has deteriorated. It was not purveyed in drug stores, the “soda jerker” had not been created; but every town had one or two “ice cream parlors.” These were in almost all cases rooms in a private house and the lady of the house made her own ice cream and flavored with real vanilla. The ice cream makers used the actual vanilla bean in their product. There was always homemade cake to be had with ice cream for an extra five cents. But now and then the parlors served pretzels with the ice cream and made no extra charge.

I am grieved that the drug store has replaced its odor of herbs and compounds for that of pimento cheese and toasting bread. There was something foreign and a little mysterious about the old pharmacy. There were no boys in white coats, no mirrors and shining faucets. The pharmacist was wise looking and middle aged. He was usually intent over his pestle and mortar, or mixing powders on a marble slab. The drug store had no printed sign declaring what was sold within; you recognized its purpose by the two great ornate bottles in the front window-the bottom ones holding a gallon of green liquid. These big bottles had for their stoppers smaller bottles filled with something red. And the whole was topped with bottles of blue. These drug store bottles were most entrancing to

Harper and DiVanna: In The Days of my Youth
young eyes. I always walked on the north side of Chambersburg Street
that I might note their resplendence in the Buehler Drug Store window.38
There were two other trade signs that were intriguing to my young eyes—a
wooden Indian decorated a tobacco store, and a little white horse that
indicated that white haired Mr. McCreary within was a maker of harness.

Fly Screens

Flies were the bane of my mother’s existence. She waged war
against them from early spring until late autumn, and always it was a
losing fight. Pennsylvania farm people built their summer kitchens not
so much to keep heat out of the main house, as to rid themselves in
some measure of this torturing insect pest. As soon as warming weather
brought the fly out of hiding, the kitchen stove was moved to the out
kitchen and set up in the huge fireplace, and no more fires were lighted
in the big house unless there changed to be a little baby in the family who
needed artificial warmth. The blinds were closed and the shades drawn
in the dining room, but the moment food was carried in from the kitchen
flies crept in too; so someone had to mind the “fly brush” until the meal
was over. The “company” fly brush was a beautiful thing of long shafted
peafowl feathers set in a polished handle. But peafowl feathers broke
easily so for everyday use we made fly brushes from strips of crinkled
paper. Swinging a fly brush was weary work for no one could eat and
effectively brush flies at the same time. Some people had a framework
on the ceiling over the dining table and the brush of crinkled paper strips
was fastened to this and swung back and forth by means of spool pulleys
and a complication of strings. Mother would have none of this because
the brush was “a dust catcher and a fly roost.”

38 Anna Jane Moyer, “I Heard it at Buehler’s Drug Store,” in The Cupola
(Gettysburg: Friends of Musselman Library, Gettysburg College, 2006), 3-5,
http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1075&context=books.
Buehler’s Drug Store at 9 Chambersburg Street was a local meeting place
where citizens discussed and debated issues as they waited for their mail at the
post office. The family closed the business in 1913.

https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/ach/vol23/iss1/3
The druggist sold a kind of coarse paper known as “fly poison.” It was put into shallow receptacles and moistened with water. The flies sipped and died; they did not die instantly—they died on the windowsills, the chairs, among the utensils on the dresser. Mother had a homemade trap that was better than the druggist’s poisons. It was a bottomless earthen crock slipped to its rim inside a long cotton bag. The inside of the crock was spread with something flies liked—usually apple butter. When a quantity of flies gathered inside the crock, some on clapped a cloth over the top and gave the crock a vigorous shake. The flies fell into the bag and a quick twist of the cloth kept them prisoners. The trouble was that this trap to be effective must have constant attention. Whenever I tried to play, someone would call, “Shake down [shakedown] the flies.” And scalding the pint or more of flies caught in the bag, and getting them emptied out was a task that often made me sick. After a day of trapping and poisoning mother would say mournfully, “I believe ten living flies come to every dead fly’s funeral.” And very likely her words were true. No one knew where flies came from, and while mother was at her kill in the house, millions of new flies were being born in our own barnyard.

I must have been eight or ten years old when the cotton mesh known as mosquito netting came into use. It was bought to cover food, to protect the baby’s cradle, to shroud the hanging lamp in fly time, and to protect picture frames. Father made frames to fit into the windows and covered them with this mosquito netting. It worked quite well in windows, but was too easily torn for screen doors. Still we counted it a wonderful invention. I think I must have been eighteen before wire screen cloth came into use. At first only dining rooms were screened, but in a few years flies were pretty well banished from our homes.39

It was somewhat of a shock therefore, on coming to North Carolina in 1889 to find that wire screens were still a novelty in this state, and were

not looked upon with any great favor. The Negro servants would not bother with them, they propped the doors open with a chair or a brick. The White people did not look very favorably on fly screens either, “Flies were nature’s scavengers, to banish them would be to invite sickness.” A cultured lady summering at Blowing Rock complained of being on a visit to friends living in New York State, and “feeling absolutely smothered” in a screened house. She would much prefer flies.

**Company**

Father and mother dispensed an unfailing hospitality. Their guests were not only their personal friends, but friends of their friends were made equally welcome; and the passing stranger and even the worthless tramp had a place at the table and a seat by the fireside.

Town acquaintances came in summer. They reveled [revelled] in the home cured juicy ham, the thick cream, the ripe fruits and fresh vegetables. Country friends did not visit in the summer, their hands were too full of work; but a heavy snowfall saw them on the road muffled in buffalo robes and comforted with hot bricks. Even the horses seemed exhilarated by the snow. They trotted untiringly to the music of their strings of sleigh bells. Members of the Church of the Brethren looked upon sleigh bells as a manifestation of sinful pride and people of all faiths took off the bells while in a funeral procession. But, the jingling sleigh bells in the lane meant the advent of visitors.

The guests came unannounced save by this sleigh bell music; and while mother was divesting them of their swathing of shawls, she was planning the dinner. If the visitors came early enough, old Nep the family dog was called out and shown a particular chicken, and Nep caught it and held it deftly until someone carried the luckless fowl to the woodshed and chopped off its head. Mother would have a sponge cake in the oven before you could think. The dessert, whatever it chanced to be, was always served in the sprigged china that had been a part of mother’s wedding outfit.
Often the visitors stayed to both dinner and supper and sat and talked until early bedtime, about eight o’clock; but these late hours were only kept in times of moonlight. If the visitor embraced supper, we were likely to have suet pudding, white puddin’ [pudding] we called it, a most delicious concoction for a cold winter’s evening.40 And with the white puddin’ were sure to have mother’s baking powder biscuit and comb honey. This was long before Royal Baking Powder came on the market. Mother made her own baking powder—a careful blend of soda and cream of tartar. Mother’s biscuits were famous the country over.

A Seminary for Young Ladies in the Sixties

After my sister Jennie’s death in 1930, I found among a few keepsakes a catalog of Sunny Side Seminary, Newburg, PA.41 The catalog was a record of the school from Sept. 1, 1862 to June 25, 1863. Sister had been sent to Sunny Side in Sept. 1861 before she was quite thirteen years old.

The scholastic year consisted of two consecutive sessions of five months each, with one week’s holiday at Christmas. There were four classes: Primary, Junior, Middle, and Senior.

The Primary studied about what you would expect with the exception of “Mary Swift’s Philosophy.” I do not know what this was, but it sounds rather formidable for such very young ladies.

Juniors had the three R’s also: Brown’s Grammar, Familiar Science, Goodrich’s Universe, History, Math on the Mind, and Quackenbos’ Composition.

40 Colman Andrews and Christopher Hirsheimer, *The Country Cooking of Ireland* (San Francisco, California: Chronicle, 2009), 201. Suet or white pudding is an Irish dish consisting of seasoned meat, pork fat, and oatmeal.

The Middlers studied Analysis, Parker’s Natural Philosophy, Smelties’ Philosophy of Natural History, Cutter’s Physiology, Johnson and Turner’s Chemistry, Mrs. Lincoln’s Botany, Burritt’s’ Geography of the Heavens, Davies’ algebra, Davies’ Legendre, and Newman’s Rhetoric.

Senior had Hitchcock’s Geology, Cleveland’s English Literature, Haines’ Elements of Criticism, Alexander’s Evidences of Christianity, Upharies’ Mental Philosophy, Wayland’s Moral Science, Hedge’s Logic, Butter’s Analogy and Paley’s Natural Theology.

The terms were interesting in light of present day school costs. They were: Primary Department per session $6.00, Junior $8.00, Senior and Middle $10.00.

Modern languages, Latin, Drawing, vocal music in classes, Music on piano, and use of instrument were extra. Board was $40.00 per session of 5 months.

Jennie was a middler in 1862-63. I think she remained at home the next year (possibly, because I had come into the world.) But she returned and graduated in 1865. She evidently acquitted herself with credit, for she was awarded a gold medal. With this old catalog was a letter the schoolgirl Jennie had written to her family at Gettysburg in 1863. All the border counties in Pennsylvania were threatened with invasion by Confederate troops, and Rev. Mr. Williams was anxious for the safety of the girls under his care at Sunny Side [Sunnyside]. In case such an invasion did come, he had engaged wagons to carry his charges across the Susquehanna. One of the school girls had been to her home over the weekend and had seen some Confederate prisoners at the station in Chambersburg. The fact that these prisoners were barefoot appeared to have somewhat allayed the fears of the girls. Sister told me in her later years that when the invasion actually came, the girls were still at school. Sunny Side was ordered to provide breakfast for a certain contingent of the troops, and the girls went to the tables in fear and trembling.

42 “The Alter Married,” Valley Star, Newville, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, September 29, 1859. Rev. Daniel Williams of Schellsburg was the husband Mrs. Caroline L. Williams, principal of the Seminary.
However, the enemy attended strictly to its service of buckwheat cakes, and the girls returned unharmed to their school tasks.

**The Battle of Gettysburg**

The farming folk along the southern border of Pennsylvania shared the school girls’ uneasiness concerning a Confederate invasion of the North. Their wealth was largely in their livestock, in their fields of growing grain, in the cured meat in their smoke houses, and in barrels of flour stored in their supply rooms. At that time the farmers’ wheat crop was taken to the mill and ground into flour; flour being sold on the market rather than unground wheat. Rumors came from time to time of a raid sweeping up through Maryland, and the landowners would hastily gather their horses and hurry across the Susquehanna. Many heads of families were in the Army, so boys of twelve and fifteen would have to go with the horses. The free Negroes living in Southern Pennsylvania took up their belongings and departed. My grandfather Scott was not then living, and grandmother’s two sons were in the Army. 43

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Abraham O. Scott was the brother of Margaret Scott Cunningham, and Frances’ uncle. Mr. Scott was a physician and served in Company E, 2nd Pennsylvania Infantry during the Civil War. He lived in nearby Fairfield.

Grandfather Cunningham was quite feeble, and both Francis and Leander were soldiers. Father was fortunately beyond draft age, so there was one well man left at home in our immediate connection.

I must pause here to introduce “Cassie.” When sister Jennie was born, mother employed a girl of fourteen named Catherine Haldeman.\(^{44}\) She was the daughter of Isaac Haldeman and was one of fourteen children. No home was ever more blessed in a helper than was ours in Cassie. Devoted, quick to learn, loyal and kind, she soon passed the status of a hired servant, and became a loved member of the family. When a new baby came, Cassie took over the little one just pushed from the cradle as her especial care, and the children loved her quite as ardently, perhaps more ardently, than they did mother.

\(^{44}\) 1870 United States Federal Census, Freedom Township, Adams County, Pennsylvania. Catha [Cassie] Haldeman was born in 1837 and was listed as a domestic servant in the home of William Bigham on the 1870 Census of Freedom Township.
In the summer of 1863, my sister Lizzie was desperately ill with a heart infection, the result of inflammatory rheumatism. When the Battle of Gettysburg opened that first day of July, the sick child became very much frightened, and father hurriedly bundled mother with Lizzie in her arms, Cassie and all the other children into the carriage, and had them drive to Grandfather Cunningham’s. Before they reached their haven, Lizzie had become alarmingly ill. Father was not alone very long. Stragglers began to drift in demanding food. He handed out all the milk, and everything edible he could find on the shelves, quite forgetting to save back anything for himself. Night came on. I have often wondered if father slept.

The second day the cannonading appeared to be closer, and toward evening a Confederate officer rode to the door and told father he would require the farm buildings for hospital purposes. By nightfall, the stretcher-bearers began to arrive with their mangled burdens. It rained all through the night. The wounded men had been borne on stretchers from the Wheatfield more than two miles away. Father went out at dawn, many had died. The dead had all their pockets turned inside out; and there was no way to learn their names. Indeed, it was often impossible to tell on which side they fought. The Confederacy was scarce of cloth, and Confederate soldiers were often dressed, wholly or in part, in the blue of Federal troops. Father hastened to take the names of the men he found alive. After bringing in their own wounded, the confederates brought in the Union soldiers found wounded within their lines. Father at once wrote the families of these Union men, and would have done the same for the Confederates had it been possible to get letters through the lines. Father asked that the dead be buried in the orchard. Father himself marked the graves of those who died later. So when after a lapse of years the Confederate dead were taken to Richmond, father was able to give the names and home addresses of all who died after that first night.

45 Ibid. James Cunningham (1788-1867) was the paternal grandfather of Frances, and lived near the intersection of present-day Pumping Station and Cunningham Roads in Freedom Township.
The John Cunningham Farm along Scott Road. This was the first childhood home of the author, and served as a Confederate hospital for the brigade of General William T. Wofford during the Gettysburg Campaign in 1863.

Down at grandfather’s, mother was nursing her sick child and wondering anxiously how father fared. A troop of Confederate soldiers rode up and declared that they must search the house. Grandfather begged them to do it quietly, since he had a very sick granddaughter. When the Confederate officer in charge came to Lizzie’s room, instead of searching it he took a chair by her bed and talked to her for some little time. This group, or another (I think they kept coming and going all the day) seeing the long line of beehives by the garden fence demanded honey. Grandfather assured them there was none in the house. Evidently, they doubted the truthfulness of his words and declared they would take it from the bees. This was before the milder Italian bee was introduced among bee growers. Grandfather’s bees were little brown creatures which struck first and asked questions later. The soldiers looked at them and concluded they did not want honey.

Grandfather’s horses had been taken to some place of safety. So the horse mother had driven was the only one in the big barn. The troopers took this horse and grandfather begged for it without effect. Then mother went out and pleaded that her child was sick and this horse of hers was the only one in the neighborhood. One young fellow said, “Madam I would give you the horse if I had authority.” Then the
leader, possibly a lieutenant, ordered, “Pull off that bridle, I can’t stand a woman’s tears.” So the bridle was pulled off and the troopers rode away. I think it was the next year that the famous Jeb Stuart swept up into southern Pennsylvania for the purpose of gathering horses for the Confederacy. Again, the farmers had warning, and again grandfather’s horses were taken to safety, all but our high-strung nervous young mare with her first colt. In that big barn at Grandfather’s one stable was fitted with a row of ten or a dozen box stalls. Grandfather put the mare and her colt in the last stall, closed all the stalls and barn doors, and left her to her fate. In the night, there was a great trampling of horses and rattle of accoutrements about the barn, and when morning came, grandfather looked out to see every barn door open; and he sighed over the loss of his filly. But, strange to say she was safe in her stall. The troopers had opened every box stall save the last one; and mercifully, the little mare had not whinnied.

At home, the barn was a gruesome place. Pennsylvania barns were built with two great doors at the back of the second floor. A ramp led up to these doors, and through them the loads of hay and grain were driven. In one of the great doors, there was a small door for daily use. This little door had been taken off its hinges and placed on trestles for an operating table. On the evening of July 3, word came to use no more chloroform on Union soldiers. Father surmised that General Lee had started to retreat, and this proved to be the case. Next morning a troop of Confederates were seen crossing a prominent knoll beyond the creek, they disappeared in the hollow, and presently bayonets glistened above the blue clad men on the same little hill. Our orchard was full of tents in plain sight of these Federal troops. Someone came running to the house to ask father for something red to serve as a hospital flag; the place might be shelled. Father hastily pulled open a drawer and handed out the first thing his hand touched. It was white, not red, but haste was paramount. In less time than it takes to tell, the white thing was fluttering in the breeze from the lightning rod on the barn.
Mother gathered up her brood of children and she and Cassie hastened home as soon as the cannonading ceased. She was not a little shocked to find her “scanties” fluttering from the barn top.

All wounded Confederates able to walk were ordered away with the troops. After they had gone, father found a youth, a mere stripling, with his head bowed on the top bar of the meadow gate, his shoulders shaken by sobs. Father had the gift of gaining the trust and confidence of youth. He never laughed or made a joke of their troubles. He listened to the end of a sobbed out story, and he always knew the way to heal the hurt. The boy told father that their troops had gone, that the Yankees would get him, and that he would be shot. Father assured him that he would suffer no bodily harm, that Yankees did not kill their prisoners, that the thing to do was to cheer up, get his wound healed, and he probably would be exchanged. All of this came true. The boy got well and was exchanged very shortly, and had quite faded from mind when one day, months later, father had a letter from him saying that what father had said about Yankees was true. In fact, he had slipped back through sentry lines, and was enlisted in the Union army.

As to the retreating and pursing troops, when the Confederates reached the shelter of Herr’s woods, a little way beyond Grandmother Scott’s house, they stopped under cover of the trees to prepare breakfast. They lighted fires and killed and dressed a sheep; but before the meal was ready, their camp was discovered and shells began to drop about them, so they fled without gathering up their equipment. When the turmoil had passed out of sight, two farmers living nearby came to the scene of the deserted breakfast. They found much useful loot, especially to be desired was a large sack of salt, salt having become very scarce and hard to obtain, the two men agreed to ho home for their teams. In the
meantime, a Mrs. Beard living near the scene heard of the salt. Her husband was away with the army, but she picked up a boy somewhere and sent him out with a wheelbarrow to fetch her the salt. When the farmers came back, the salt had disappeared. Each one thought the other had double-crossed him, and it was years before they discovered where the coveted sack had really gone.

When mother and Cassie reached home the morning of July 4, they found a house empty of food. Before Cassie took off her bonnet she “set yeast” and every day for six weeks she baked the big brick oven full of bread. It was like manna from the skies to the hot bread loving men from the South. They stood around enjoying the fragrance, and would snatch the hot loaves from the oven before Cassie had time to touch them. There was no lack of flour, the wheat crop of 1862 had been ground at the mill and was stored in the barn room. But, these six weeks when Cassie was baking bread were heart-breaking times. Train service was pitifully inadequate. Mothers, wives, and sisters of wounded men arrived too late. I will tell one of the many stories.

Among those wounded was young Howard, the son of a widow in Meriden, N.H. When father’s letter reached this far off home, the daughter Ellen started at once for Gettysburg. Somewhere along the way, Ellen Howard shared a seat with a gentleman who drew out her

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46 1870 United States Federal Census, Highland Township, Adams County, Pennsylvania. Frances refers to neighbors Barbara Kelly-Beard (1824-1882) and Daniel W. Beard (1823-1899); Osceola Lewis, History of the One Hundred and Thirty-Eight Regiment (Norristown: Wells, Iredell & Jenkins, 1866), 26-27, 174; Marriage and Death 1878-1890, ACHS; National Archives and Records Administration, General Index to Pension Files 1861-1934 (Ancestry.com). Daniel Beard served as a Sergeant in Company E of the 138th Pennsylvania Infantry. On July 1, 1863, the unit evacuated Harper’s Ferry to transport military stores to Washington via the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal. After the death of his wife Barbara, Daniel married the Cunninghams’ servant Catherine (Cassie) Haldeman in 1886.
He asked her if in case she found her brother not living, would she have sufficient money to take his body home. She said she would not, she had left in haste, with just the money her mother had in the house. The stranger took out his purse and handed her forty dollars. The boy was dead, and that gift enabled her to carry him back to the home plot in New Hampshire. Some years ago, an album of these old soldiers’ photographs came into my possession. I tried to locate Ellen Howard through a Meridan Congregational minister. He wrote that she and all her line had passed away.

I do not know how father and mother came into such close touch with a Lt. Purman who lost a leg in the battle. I do not think he was brought to our hospital. His wound was bleeding profusely, he was in no great pain, but was tortured by thirst. He called to a Confederate soldier lying on the ground to escape bullets that he had forty dollars in his pocket that he would give for a cup of water. The Confederate crawled back with a brimming canteen. Then he contrived a tourniquet using his bayonet to hold it firmly. This stopped the bleeding but caused intense suffering. Lt. Perman said, “I have a gold watch. You can have it if you will get me to some shade. The well man got the wounded one on his back and crawled towards a tree. Twice Lt. Perman fainted and fell off. His savior lay down beside him until consciousness returned and again took him on his back and the blessed shade was reached. Lt. Perman later fell into the hands of lovely Miss Mary Witherow, who nursed him back to health, and in due


https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/ach/vol23/iss1/3
time they were married.⁴⁸

Among the soldiers that father found grievously wounded on that
morning of July 3, was a young man named Hugh Wier of Washington
County, PA. Father’s letter brought his brother, Adam Wier, but young
Hugh had died. Mother recognized the name as that of kindred, and she
and Adam Wier discovered that they were both descended from Hugh
Scott and his wife Janet Agnew.⁴⁹

These were indeed troubled times. Mother was nursing the soldier
Frank Clarke, as she had promised she would if he would submit to the
amputation of his shattered leg. Lizzie grew worse and died. Then little
Willie fell ill with a strange malady which proved to be blood poisoning,
and died six weeks after Lizzie. Every family thereabouts had one or more
member’s ill. The doctors were worn out and ill themselves, and would
not come to the country homes. It was in such times of trouble and stress
that men and women, weary from their own labors and cares would
come night after night to sit by the bedside of the sick. Mother would go
wearily to her evening tasks and find brimming buckets of milk set to cool.
Some neighbors had milked the cows and slipped away without making

⁴⁸ Charles Hanna, Gettysburg Medal of Honor Recipients (Springville,
Utah: Bonneville Books, 2010), 114; “James Jackson Purman,” Arlington
assisting a friend to safety during the Battle of Gettysburg, Lieutenant James
J. Purman (1841-1915) of Company A, 140th Pennsylvania Infantry, received a
wound resulting in the amputation of his left leg. He survived his wound, and
later married his nurse, Ms. Mary Witherow (1840-1909) of Adams County. The
Purmans are buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

⁴⁹ “Records of the Department of Military and Veteran’s Affairs: Registers
years’ service, July 1862-March 1865),” Pennsylvania Historical and Museum
wounded at Gettysburg during the fighting on July 2, and died on August 6, 1863.

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their presence known. Mother often said that this neighborly kindness, coupled with work that had to be done, save her from despair.

**Trained Nurses**

The trained nurse was a person unknown in my childhood. I suppose city hospitals had some sort of school for their nurses, but in smaller places, families nursed their own sick. However, by 1880 young women with no aptitude for teaching might turn to Philadelphia or Baltimore for training as nurses. People soon recognized the ability of these trained women and employed them whenever financially able. Here in the South I found a sentimental prejudice against the employment of a trained nurse. “It was a family’s business to care for their own sick, relegating their care to alien hands, no matter how competent, was heartless, and a lowering of family standards.” It took considerable urging on the part of doctors to break down this sentiment.

**The Big Hail Storm**

It must have been the summer of 1870 when we had a devastating storm of hail. Father had gone just across the hill to Mr. Bigham’s to help out in the plowing of the fields. Mother was sewing by her bedroom window when there came a flash of lightning so blinding we could not see for a moment. Mother was on her feet before the deafening thunder had died away, and was rushing from room to room closing the outside blinds. She had hardly finished when the storm broke. One window shutter was torn open and the glass in that window smashed to bits by the hail. The storm broke without warning. The hailstones were so heavy that the fowls were beaten down before they could reach shelter. Mother was terribly alarmed for father. She felt that a horse struck by such stones would be crazed by fear, and would certainly run away, possibly with father entangled in the plow lines. But this, like most hail storms had been confined to a narrow belt; it had not touched the Bigham farm, nor the farms to the north of us, but our crop was beaten to the earth. When father came home and looked over his devastated fields he said, “There
will be very little wheat flour for the next winter. We will have to eat a lot of buckwheat cakes.” When mother went to take stock of her poultry, she found her chickens lying where they had fallen, many had drowned after being stunned by the hailstones. The bedraggled survivors were gathered up, and warmed and dried in the kitchen.

Music

The one great cultural lack in our house, in our church, and in the whole community was the lack of music. My great Grandfather, Robert Cunningham, must have had some musical knowledge, for he made and played a violin. My grandfather was said to have great store of Scotch and Irish ballads, and to have sung them with spirit. My uncle Francis played a little on Great grandfather’s violin; but father knew no music, and mother could not sing a simple hymn tune. Sister Jennie had a rather sweet voice and sang such tunes as “How Can I Leave Thee,” “Nelly Gray,” “Listen to the Mocking Bird, [Mockingbird]” etc.; but she had been taught no music, though she did have drawing and painting. There were but two pianos in our church circle of friends. One of these was in the McGinley home in Fairfield. The other belonged to our cousins, the daughters of Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Kerr. The Kerr sisters played the “Rochester Schottische” or “The Strawberry Polka,” but music was looked upon as a showy accomplishment, but without real educational value. It is strange that people who read and loved poetry, who knew Shakespeare, and who had the Psalms by heart should not have recognized the cultural value of music.

50 1860 United States Federal Census, Hamiltonban Township, Adams County, Pennsylvania. Frances is referring to the John McGinley family of Fairfield.

51 1870 United States Federal Census, Highland Township, Adams County, Pennsylvania. Frances is referring to the John J. Kerr family in nearby Highland Township. The four daughters referenced are Priscilla, Eliza, Margaret and Ann.
Lights

I don’t know when gas came into use in Gettysburg. I have no memory of first seeing it in use, but I do remember the lamplighter coming down the street with his small ladder; of his trimming the lamps somewhat sketchily; and of how an uneven wick would smoke the chimney before he had reached the next lamppost. These kerosene streetlights were never lighted on moonlit nights, even though clouds hung too deeply for the moon to give even a blink. The lamplighter made his rounds strictly by the Almanac, and paid no attention to what the moon itself was doing. Streets were still lit by the lamplighter when I came to Lenoir, though electricity had extinguished both kerosene and gas in larger places. I can still see Mother Harper, clad in black silk, and with a tiny bunch of pink roses in her bonnet, wending her way to evening service and carrying a lantern to guide her homeward steps.52

The Centennial

I believe the highest spot in my uneventful childhood was going to Philadelphia to the Centennial when I was twelve years old. This was one of the times I had been told that I was “too little” and the older sisters said teasingly that I would be old enough at the end of another hundred years. Mother declared that she did not want to go, which I am sure was not quite true, mother being fearful if she went, some other member of the family might have to miss the great exhibition. So, mother and I watched various joyous groups drive off to catch the train for Philadelphia. I at least with a feeling that fate was most bitterly unkind. Father had gone and returned to find a summons as a juror to United States Court. He went back to the city, and as blessed luck would have it, was not called on a single case for the entire two weeks of court. He went to the Centennial grounds every morning after the court roll was called; and he came home with enough money saved from his pay as juror to take mother and me back before the exhibit ended.

52 1870 United States Federal Census, Lenoir, Caldwell County, North Carolina. Frances is referring to her mother-in-law, Ella Rankin Harper (1836-1909) of Lenoir, NC.
Characteristics

I have a very clear mental picture of the dominating characteristics of my ancestors, and of the other men and women who formed the communities of the Marsh Creek and Hill churches, but it is a picture hard to put into words. They were people of self-respecting dignity, upright, moral-clannish, somewhat severe in their judgement of one another when things were going well, they were quick to render efficient help in time of need. Boasting, or an unwarranted display, was treated with laughing scorn. But these were not a humble people, save in their religion. They had a proper pride in their possessions and accomplishments, and they were proud of their ancestry, but this satisfaction must not be expressed outwardly by so much as the flutter of an eyelid.

The housewife rejoiced in her thin china, her solid silver, her store of linen, the exquisitely small stitches in her sewing, but no word of her satisfaction passed her lips. Praise was sparingly bestowed. If we did a bit of work especially well, our father’s “That is no so bad” was ample assurance that he was pleased and proud our accomplishment.

Our flat silver had very largely, come down from the two grandmothers. Mother could remember the time, while she was still very small, when her father and mother had taken a bag of silver dollars to a skilled workman in Emmitsburg in order to have the money molded into spoons. The journey was on horseback, grandmother carrying little Margaret in front of her, and my uncle, later Dr. A. O. Scott, riding behind his father. The silversmith was paid for each spoon that exact amount of money that the spoon contained. The thin teaspoons were usually made from one silver dollar, so a dozen teaspoons cost twenty four dollars. But a tablespoon took two dollars in the making and cost another two for workmanship, so each tablespoon cost its owner four dollars. I do not know how many spoons were made at this time, but it must have been quite a heavy bag of dollars that grandfather provided.

53 Directory of Deceased American Physicians, 1804-1929, (Ancestry.com) Dr. Abraham O. Scott lived in Fairfield, Pennsylvania, and was a maternal uncle of Frances.
Transportation

For more than forty years of my life, means of transportation changed rarely at all. Railroads were largely independent lines. Schedules of one were made without regard to connections with another. When I entered Shippensburg Normal School in the autumn of 1880, father took me back and forth by carriage, or possibly by sleigh.54 We could make the journey of thirty miles in six hours by carriage, and if the snow was well-packed at holiday time, we could fly over the road in five hours. But now and then father could not come for me at the close of a term. There were two railroad routes to choose from. The first was by way of Harrisburg, York, and Gettysburg. This way did not admit of my getting home the day I started. The way I did take was to board a train that left Shippensburg via the Western Maryland railroad very early in the morning, and get off at a little station known as Rocky Ridge. There was a tiny “jerkwater” trains standing on another track that came down from Emmitsburg that morning and would wait there to connect with a train from Baltimore about six in the evening.55 I remember on one of these journeys, after hours of waiting, the Baltimore train finally arrived but the Emmitsburg train did not start. The engineer had forgotten to replenish his fire, and we had to wait until he kindled a fresh one and got up a little steam. It started to rain, the track grew slippery, and the train never got over a little rise outside of Emmitsburg. Fortunately, my kindred in Emmitsburg were expecting me, and Mr. Annan came out to the stranded train with a

54 “History of Shippensburg University,” Shippensburg University, https://www.ship.edu/about/brief_history_of_shippensburg_university/. Shippensburg University began as the Cumberland Valley State Normal School in 1871, receiving recognition by the Commonwealth in 1873, and designated as Shippensburg State College in 1983.

55 Merriam-Webster, s.v. “Jerkwater,” https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/jerkwater. The first use of the term ‘jerkwater’ was 1888. A jerkwater was a steam engine train that stopped for water along rural routes. It was dubbed ‘jerkwater’ due to the jerking action of buckets as they supplied water to train engines.
carriage.\textsuperscript{56} I spent the night with these cousins, and father came for me next day. All this to get thirty miles!

**The Rockaway**

The first family carriage of which I was conscious was a vehicle known as a “Rockaway.” The Rockaway was built something on the plan of the “Basket Phaeton,” but the phaeton was designed for two people, while the Rockaway had a narrow shelf of a jump seat making it possible to accommodate four passengers.\textsuperscript{57} The little backless jump seat was usually folded over against the dashboard and country people filled this folded seat with little children who were thus forced to ride with their backs to the horses, and with the lines scraping their ears, and knocking their little flat hots down over their noses. Here and there, a humane father fastened a strap high up between the front carriage posts, and drove with the lives over this strap. It looked very awkward to see the reins lifted so high from the horses back, and father would have none of it. He always turned up the jump seat and sat on it himself, and I was never subjected to the ignominy of riding backwards.


\textsuperscript{57} “Basket Phaeton,” Carriage Association of America, https://www.carriageassociationofamerica.com/carriage-tour/basket-phaeton/. This type of carriage was openair, and designed for use by chaperoned women during fair weather; “Rockaway,” KV Carriage, http://www.kvcarriage.com/carrages.html. The Rockaway was a four-wheeled carriage with an enclosed section for occupants. The driver’s seat was built in the body, with an overlapping ledge to protect against the elements. This type of carriage was introduced during the 1830s.
This could not have been our first Rockaway, for the story was handed down that back in the days when brother Willie was a baby, in 1857 to be exact, great aunt Mariah had come from McConnellsburg to visit grandmother Scott, and father and mother were to take her home when the visit was ended. Jennie, then eight years old had a new silk coat for this visit, and because McConnellsburg was at the world’s end in those days, father did not drive the carriage horses, but selected two strong young mules to pull the rockaway. Jennie rode beside father on the little front seat. When the carriage had topped the last mountain and turned down the long hill, the mules made a sudden spring that threw father out of the carriage, and Jennie started to spring out after him. Mother seized her by the back of the new silk coat, and in the struggle, it was torn from neck to hem. Father held onto the reins and was dragged over the road until his shoulder caught on a projecting fence stake and lines were torn from his hands. The mules were gaining in speed and the reins were dragging on the ground. Jennie was sitting quiet now and mother handed her baby to Aunt Mariah. Then she stepped over the front seat, climbed over the dashboard, and steadying herself, with a hand on each mules back, walked the carriage tongue until she could grasp the crossed straps from the bits. She pulled on these with all the strength of desperation, and finally brought the animals to a stand. Then she ran back to see about father. He was scratched, and a trifle stunned, but not badly hurt. Mother said her only sensation was indignation with the mules. But that night, the baby became very ill. A selfish neighbor had sold Aunt Mariah’s milk from a cow ill from eating too much green corn. It was this illness of the baby’s that started mother’s nerves to quivering, and from that day until the end of her life she feared horses, and never rode with comfort and enjoyment.

Clothes in the Late Eighties

I am asked how we dressed in the autumn of 1889, and how I came to travel so far from home that year. I had been teaching in Dickinson
Seminary of Williamsport, Pa.\textsuperscript{58} when that disastrous flood came on May 31. The same series of torrential rains that caused the destruction of Johnstown, Pa. spread ruin throughout the length of the Susquehanna basin. Williamsport was inundated. When I went home in June, our family doctor insisted that typhoid was sure to break out in that region, and it would be unwise to go back in September. At this juncture, came a letter from an old Shippensburg schoolmate saying he had found an opening in Lenoir, N.C. would I come and be a member of his teaching staff? It looked a long way off to father, but I was eager for new experiences, so began to prepare for the journey.

Preparations for a railroad journey usually began with a travelling dress. A travelling dress was always of woolen goods, no matter what the time of year. It must be subdued in color, but made in the latest fashion. Mine was a gray and blue plaid of fine serge. Overskirts had passed out. Skirts were box pleated, side pleated, accordion pleated, as the case might be; but at this juncture they were pleated in some form. There might be one or two velvet panels, and if I remember correctly, my dress had a blue velvet panel on one side. The waist was a basque, buttoned to the neck and topped with a high velvet collar shaped to points under my ears. The sleeves were puffed to the elbow, the lower part of the sleeve being of the velvet. The waist was lined with heavy drilling. We always selected this lining with care; it had to be of good quality so that it would not stretch, for dress waists had to be skintight and to ensure absolute smoothness in fit, every seam had a whalebone. Black hat, gloves and shoes completed the ensemble. It was a very proper costume, but hot, fearfully hot for a ride into the South. Trains were not air-conditioned, and there were no dry cleaners to freshen that woolen dress at the journey’s end. We did not have so much as the comfort of low shoes. I had some pretty suede pumps but they were evening shoes. It would have been

\textsuperscript{58} “Historic Documents Collection,” \textit{Lycoming College}, http://www.lycoming.edu/library/archives/historicDocuments.aspx. Dickinson Seminary dates back to 1812, and is one of the predecessors of present-day Lycoming College.
counted quite indecent to go train riding with any suggestion of exposed ankles. Skirts must just touch the middle instep; and the constant friction of the woolen goods, usually protected by a mohair binding, soon made the shoes shabby. I had a black lace dress for evening, this was not new but I could not afford another. For dress up afternoon calling, I had a salmon rose Henrietta trimmed in black velvet. The hat for this dress was really very pretty. It was black lace trimmed with a wreath of autumn leaves. We were elegant, but never flaunting.

**On coming to Lenoir**

There were, I think four car changes, but no really long waits on that first hot ride to Lenoir. We changed in Baltimore and again in Washington. Sometime after daylight next morning, I got into my very hot clothes and was called to leave the train for a twenty-minute breakfast at Danville, Va. The food was served, not in individual, but in family-sized sauce dishes. Each person reached across the table and served himself, and I was not a little shocked to see what I thought were beans served for breakfast. I learned later that my supposed beans were known as cowpeas, and was a much-prized southern dish. We changed again in Salisbury, and sometime in the mid-afternoon changed for the last time at Hickory, to a little narrow gauge railroad that interested me greatly. There were seats for two people on one side of the coach, and single seats on the other side, but the aisle crooked in the center of the car and the order of seating was reversed. It was almost a continuous ride through woods, great oaks, poplars, maples, and towering white and yellow pines. Alas, I hate to see the lumberman’s ruthless destruction of Western North Carolina’s great forests.

Midway to Lenoir the train stopped at a long woodpile to replenish the fuel. A little farther on, the small engine sent forth agonizing shrieks, then slowed to a stop, and all hands climbed out to drive cows from the track. Not for the world would I have changed anything, save my hot velvet collar, on this last twenty miles of my journey. I liked the soft southern drawl that passed up and down the little coach. But during the
first year in Lenoir some things the people said puzzled me. For example, 
Mrs. Nelson’s apology for her tardiness in calling. She explained that she 
had waited for Mr. Nelson to carry her up the hill. Mr. Nelson was tall, 
but thin, and his wife, plump, and by no means light in weight. How 
could he manage the carry that took my breath away when I climbed it 
empty handed? I got no enlightenment until Jimmie, the colored boy, 
came to ask if he should “carry the cow to pasture.” Then I knew that 
“carry” in North Carolina had more definitions than the word could boast 
in Pennsylvania.

This was not long after the Charleston earthquake.\textsuperscript{59} It still furnished 
a good “get started” topic of conversation; but I was not prepared for 
the answer concerning his experiences given me by a young man of that 
section. He had awakened at the first shock under the impression that 
“one of the cows was under the house.” I, who had grown up when the 
space of one brick from a foundation was counted ample ventilation under 
a floor, was given ample food for pondering. A cat sometimes squeezed 
through this opening, but a cow! This puzzlement gave food for thought 
until I visited Eastern South Carolina and noted that not only the cow, but 
the elephant, and giraffe might gambol under the house without great 
danger of bumped heads.

\textbf{My Grandparents and their Homes}

I can say very little concerning my grandparents from personal 
memories for the last of the four, my grandmother Scott, died when I 
was but three years. Never the less I was near enough to them in time, 
and to people who talked much of them, to form very definite mental

\textsuperscript{59} Kate S. Zalzal, “Benchmarks: August 31, 1886: Magnitude-7 earthquake 
rocks Charleston, South Carolina,” \textit{American Geoscience Institute}, https://
experienced an earthquake on August 31, 1896 at 9:51 PM, the strongest 
earthquake recorded in the southeastern United States.
pictures. The two homes were less than three miles apart, both had been inherited from a former generation. Grandfather Cunningham’s house was a square structure built of hewn logs, the biggest, straightest logs I ever saw in a wall. A huge stone chimney went up in the middle of the house, with four great fireplaces opening into the four rooms in the ground floor. My grandfather had added a stone kitchen. There were four rooms on the second floor, and a big garret. There was a high fireplace in the kitchen where all the cooking had been done in earlier days, but grandfather was the first person in all that countryside to invest in a cook stove. The neighbors looked upon this purchase as an impious tempting of Providence: “Sooner or later the thing was sure to explode and kill the family.”

My grandfather, Robert Cunningham, was very capable with his hands, and the farm was almost entirely self-contained. There was a blacksmith shop, a cooper shop and a carpenter shop. The large bank barn was built by my grandfather, and still stands four-square to all the world. But I think grandfather would not be a little astonished to see the cows being milked by electricity. This grandfather was a man of influence in his community. He was a member of the first commission appointed to select a sight for the new county town of Gettysburg. He served as county commissioner many times, and was always a Justice of the Peace.

60 Cunningham Family File, ACHS. An early Cunningham farmstead (Owned by Robert Cunningham), is located near the intersection of Pumping Station Road and Cunningham Road in Freedom Township.
Farmstead of Robert Cunningham, located near the crossroads of Pumping Station and Cunningham Roads. During the Battle of Gettysburg, Margaret Scott transported her mortally ill children to the home of her father-in-law, James Cunningham, to distance them from the battle.

He wrote his neighbor’s wills, was executor of their estates, and guardian of their orphaned children. (Grandmother was tall, blonde and had red hair [sic]. Brought up in Maryland with family slaves, I do not think that this grandmother worked with her own hands. She had seven sons who grew to manhood, waited upon her with the finest courtesy. I have seen two of the dresses from this grandmother’s trousseau, the white wedding gown, made empire style, low round neck, full bodice with very high waistline, and narrow ankle length skirt. The skirt had had an eighteen-inch band of hand embroidery above the hem. I can’t think there were many petticoats, the skirt was too narrow. The slippers were white kid, heelless, and with square toes. The stockings white silk. The other gown was pearl gray silk, cut empire like the white one. This was a bookish home. Grandfather had a good library, and all the family were readers.

When my father was almost ninety years old, he told us of his first smoke, while he was still quite a young boy. His cousin Shealer Stewart came over from Maryland on a visit. Shealer was a prime favorite, enough older than father to be imitated and adored. His overcoat was left in the hall, and father slipped out and went through its pockets.

61 1850 United States Federal Census, Freedom Township, Adams County, Pennsylvania. Frances is referring to her paternal grandmother, Elizabeth Stewart Cunningham.
had heard of the little roll of tobacco called a cigar, and he found one in Shealer’s pocket. Temptation gripped him—he pilfered a coal from the kitchen hearth, went behind the cooper shop and began to smoke. The tobacco was fragrant, and the experience exciting, but suddenly things about him began to sway, the sky grew black, and the earth rose up and smote the culprit on the head. Someone discovered a very pale, very sick little boy, and his sin was bared.

Grandfather and grandmother were very lovely to mother when she came there, an eighteen-year-old bride. There was a big “Infair [Infare]”\textsuperscript{62} and mother was a little shocked that they danced. I do not know what the figure was, possibly the minuet or it may have been the Virginia reel. Whatever it was, grandfather laid aside his cane and he and grandmother led the dance. Mother and father lived there for a year or two, and my brother, James was born in that home.

The Scott House

Grandfather Scott’s house was of native red stone, and must have been built at different times, for there were two kitchens, narrow, unlooked for passages with steps up and steps down in unexpected places, and three stairways climbed to the second floor, each leading to one or two rooms that had no doorways to other chambers. The arrangement must have made for privacy, but not to facility in bed making. Grandfather’s was a big plantation, but I have the impression that he conducted his affairs very quietly. All the spanking of the children was left to grandmother. If the youngster grew too exasperating for grandmother, and she appealed to her husband, he would say “tut tut” and there the matter ended so far as his discipline went. But grandfather must have been a man upright and respected. He was an elder in Marsh Creek Church, and elders were not chosen lightly in those days. This grandfather had married his mother’s cousin, Jane Kerr, a tiny wisp of a woman, but deft, capable, energetic, and courageous. She had grown up in a school that had awakened self-reliance. Her father had removed from the Marsh Creek settlement to

\textsuperscript{62} Infare is a Scottish term describing a reception for newlyweds.

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the vicinity of a fort marking the sight of the town of McConnellsburg. Indians still were plentiful, and not very friendly. It was not safe for the settlers to sleep in their own cabins, when the days toil were over, they repaired to the fort for the night. Grandmother never forgot her terror on those night rides through the woods to the fort. Grandmother may have had more comforts in her new house, but she certainly had more cares and responsibilities. The aged grandparents lived in one part of the house. Great Aunt Polly, grandfather’s only sister, had her home there. There were both white and colored servants; and periods when the itinerant weaver, cobbler, harness maker, and tailor dwelt under the roof. Grandmother plied both spinning wheel and loom herself, made much of the family clothing, tended the sick, made soap, presided over the fall and winter butchering’s [butchering], boiled apple butter, tended her poultry, looked after her garden, made candles, and each winter brought the quilting frame from the garret and did intricate quilting on Irish Chain, Star of Bethlehem, and Rose of Sharon quilts. But grandmother had her respite. There were silk gowns, quilted silk Petticoats, fine lace collars and caps, and paisley shawls in her presses and chests; and when she and grandfather went visiting, they rode in a gig. She had her own saddle horse never used in the farm work. It is recorded that when my mother was three weeks old, grandmother and grandfather rode horseback from Gettysburg to McConnellsburg, grandmother carrying her baby in her arms.

63 1850 United States Federal Census, Gettysburg, Adams County, Pennsylvania. The household of William McClean Scott (1793-1852) included his wife, Jane Kerr Scott (1794-1867), and sister Maryann “Polly” Scott (1795-1875).
If grandmother had a busy life, great aunt Polly was like Solomon’s “lily of the field,” she did not knit or sew or spin. Her one self-imposed household task was to fill the water glasses and cut the pie. Aunt Polly also had her riding horse, which was brought to the “uppin block”64 at her command. She would ride to McConnellsburg, and twice she rode horseback to Canonsburg, near Pittsburgh and planted her willow-riding switch at the western end of her journey. This great aunt was very partial to the boys of the family, and this preference for the males extended into the third generation. Her room was a veritable treasure chest, but the door was always closed to me unless I could slip inside with my cousin, Will.65 Will could lift lids and pull open drawers, and even bounce on the

64  Roy Wilder, You All Spoken Here (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1998), 35. An uppin block was a step used by women to mount horses side saddle.

65 “Cousin Will,” William Lincoln Scott (1865-1949), was a lifelong friend to Frances, and a son of George. Washington Scott. He was born in June 9, 1865, 2 months after the Lincoln assassination.

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big four-post bed while I sat with one hand clasping the other for fear I might be accused of touching some forbidden possession. I did so long to open the doors of the big press, for Aunt Polly had her silks and laces, and I adored fine raiment.

Mary Anne “Polly” Scott (1795-1875)
“Aunt Polly” was a great-aunt of Frances and never married. She lived with her brother William McClean Scott in the house built of native red stone along Scott Road. She possessed fineries that awed her young niece, and rode long distances unattended on her privately-owned riding horse. Frances recalled Polly ordering the house servants to bring her ‘uppin block’ to facilitate mounting side-saddle.

Great grandfather Scott, who lived in part of the big stone house in mother’s childhood, had married for his third wife Miss Margaret McMullen.66 Margaret had contracted tuberculosis. When she became very ill, great grandfather requested a consultation of physicians. They came and decided that bleeding would be proper treatment, and as a result, poor Margaret speedily passed into her long last sleep.

66 Marriage and Death Notices in Gettysburg 1826-1839, ACHS. Margaret McMullen (1783-1833) was the third wife of Abraham Scott (1757-1834). The couple married in 1828.
Cousin Sally

Great grandfather Alexander Stewart had a very small family, as families went in pioneer days. There was but one son and two daughters. Grandmother was the youngest. Her older sister, Mary Anne married John White. The Whites had four children. But one of these married, and she left no descendants. Sara Alice was the other sister. I think this “cousin Sally” must have been a spinster entirely from choice for she was quite pretty even when old and must have been a beauty in young womanhood. Cousin Sally, outlived her two brothers, and her sister, and was left with a good deal of worldly goods. Her business was managed by George Dean, a distant cousin. George Dean had married Laura Gunso, an orphan girl that Cousin Sally had brought up. There were but few legal heirs to any property Cousin Sally might leave at her death: My father and his two brothers, Dr. Alexander Stewart, his sister, cousin Lizzie Grabill, and a son and daughter of Shealer Stewart, deceased. All of these expected her to will the major portion of her estate to the Dean family, with very generous gifts to the Mission Boards and Presbyterian Church. But the willed, almost in its entirety to Rev. Dr. I.P. McCurdy, former pastor of the Frederick City Presbyterian Church. This crafty gentleman had flattered Miss Sally with unfailing assiduity, had called one child Sara, another Alice, and a third White. It is supposed that she gave him a memorandum of the bequests; she wished made, had instructed the drawing of the will to his care, and had signed without reading it. Every heir was given a small bequest, from one to two hundred dollars, with two exceptions: my Uncle Francis was willed one thousand dollars, and my father was made Residuary Legatee. We learned later that the minister had gone with his notes to a reputable lawyer to have the will drawn up. This gentleman declared that he was sure Miss Sara White would make no will giving such stingy sums to her beloved church, and he refused to put the will as Mr. McCurdy had it, into legal form. Then the minister went to a very “shady” man of law, and had the instrument drawn. Why my father was remembered as he was, can only be guessed at. Cousin Sally was very fond of father. The Rev. gentleman may have surmised that in the remote chance of Cousin Sara’s reading the text of
the will, she would possibly not know the meaning of “residuary legatee” and would pass it by as a mere legal term; but that she would notice the very small sum given to my father. It is hard to break a will in the state of Maryland, and this one was drawn with legal exactitude.

Rev. Mr. McCurdy was small, had a rather receding chin, and a shifty eye. He retired from the ministry after getting the money, and Frederick becoming a rather hot place for him to live, he moved to the West. He boasted of some fifteen colleges having honored him with the degree of Doctor of Divinity.67 I found on coming to North Carolina, that of these DD’s had been conferred by Rutherford College.

**Aunty Fulton and Cousin Hugh**

Aunty Fulton dates two or three years beyond the reach of my memory, but she had made a very strong imprint on the family mind.

She was “Aunty” by courtesy, her relationship to father being that of second or third cousin. She must have arrived at our home shortly after I was born and before the matter of my name was definitely settled, for this strong-willed old lady demanded I be called for her. Mother did not care for “Martha” as a name for her baby, but to refuse entirely was quite out of the question, so I was named Frances Fulton. This old lady never having had any children of her own, felt entirely competent to direct the bringing up of other peoples. Had my brother not been a quiet, thoughtful boy, he might have become insufferable, for Aunt Fulton insisted that his sisters wait upon him hand and foot. Her rule for little girls was “To be seen and not heard.” This demand became so insistent and burdensome to Mary, a child often that she was sent to grandfather’s for the remainder of aunty’s visit. But, aunty’s Sunday regime was the most trying. She would sit, Bible in hand, keeping a sharp lookout over

67 Alden March, “Well-Known Sons of Lafayette,” The American University Magazine, 1896, 120. Reverend Dr. I.P. McCurdy was reported to have the greatest number of collegiate degrees in the world during the turn of the 19th century.
her spectacles that no childish eye was lifted from the study of Bible
verses or catechism questions. I do not so much wonder that father and
mother endured in silence for respect to guests was to them a divine
injunction. But Cassie, the children’s champion, must have boiled almost
to the bursting point.

Cousin Hugh was a distant kinsman of mothers. Just where he
belonged on the family tree I could never determine for every family
in every generation of Scotts, had a son named Hugh. He was tall and
dignified, and must have been a fine upstanding man in earlier days, but
misfortune had laid heavy hands upon him. His young wife died, leaving
him with a son who also died before reaching manhood. In the very
prime of life Cousin Hugh suffered a sunstroke and was left totally blind,
and almost without memory. He boarded somewhere in Gettysburg, but
was lonely and longed to be brought to our house. He never appeared
to forget who my father was, and would plead so pitifully to be brought
home with him, that father’s tender heart would melt, and the poor old
man would be helped into the carriage. He was a great care at the farm.
Father helped him to bed at night, dressed him in the morning, cut up his
food at table and answered his never-ending flow of questions. This last
service was the most wearisome. “John, who did you marry? I married
your cousin Margaret Scott. Whose daughter was she? She was William
Scott’s daughter. William Scott, whose son was he?” Over and over these
questions would be asked and patiently answered. And the old man wept,
when told he must go back to town and so he would stay for months.

Lower Marsh Creek Presbyterian Church

It is impossible to write a complete history of Lower Marsh Creek
Presbyterian Church, because the records were burned when the
Confederates burned Chambersburg. Rev. John Warner, the beloved
pastor at that time was living in Chambersburg. When Gen. Lee threatened to invade Pa., Mr. Warner felt that the records would not be safe in the church, so he carried them to his home. The Warner house and all of its contents was destroyed, and Mr. Warner and his frail wife walked that night to Shippensburg for shelter.

Fortunately, Rev. Alfred Nevin of Shippensburg had published in 1852, a history of the early Presbyterian churches of the Cumberland Valley, and to this he added a brief sketch of the Churches of Adams and Fulton counties. It is to Rev. Mr. Nevins book, and to the records of Presbytery, that we must turn for the story of Lower Marsh Creek.

Between the years 1730 and 1739, a group of Scotch Irish settled on wild lands in the extreme western part of what then was Lancaster County. Lancaster County had been created from the western part of Chester County in 1727. When first formed, Lancaster County included a very large area, its western limits being undefined. These settlers, so far as is known, were not newly come from Ireland. They were largely the second generation in America. They selected their homesteads in parts of what is now Freedom, Cumberland, Highland, and Hamiltonban


townships. But scarcely had they established themselves when William Penn determined to lay out a reservation for himself in their region, to be called “The Manor of Maske.” Surveyors were sent to turn out this tract, the survey bearing the date 1741. There was alarm and opposition to this survey on the part of the Scotch Irish, the settlers in some cases driving the surveyors from the land and refusing to comply with the demand to file claims and take out warrants. But a compromise was finally affected through the agency of James Agnew and Robert McPherson. The boundaries of the Manor were thereupon marked in 1766 and included 43,500 acres. These settlers brought with them characteristics of their Scotch ancestors. They were moral, industrious, and intelligent; and they were universally men of undaunted courage and high patriotic feeling. When the alarm of the Revolution rang through the land, it called no truer or more willing hearts than those of the Scotch Irish Presbyterians.

Long before the controversy over the land was settled, this group had built a church. This first house of worship was a log building, located at the graveyard. A stone in the yard bears date 1749, but there were doubtless earlier graves that were not marked. The first stones were imported from Scotland, and were of course costly. Rude benches were used instead of pews in the church, and in this log church, and for many years after the erection of the present structure no provision for fire in winter. It is doubtful if any records were kept during the first forty years of the organization. From the Presbyterian Record we gather that in 1740 Mr. Sankey was appointed to preach at Great Conewago and Marsh Creek the second Sabbath of August, and Mr. Samuel Thompson the fourth Sabbath. From the same source, we gather that a committee was appointed to fix the site of a meetinghouse at Marsh Creek, and a sight was selected at a certain spring near Robert McPherson’s. Sometime after this, the Rev. Andrew Bay was called to take charge of the congregation of Marsh Creek and this Mr. Bay was in all probability its first minister. Mr.


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Bay was succeeded by Rev. Mr. McMordie, whose pastoral relation was dissolved in 1761.71

In 1766 a paper was brought in from Marsh Creek, Thom’s and Piney Creek, asking that the bounds between said congregations be fixed. Signers to this request to Presbytery were: John Alexander, Samuel McFarren, William Shields, Andrew Hart, William Cochran, John McKinley, James McGinley, William Porter. The names of but few of the first elders of Lower Marsh Creek are now known. Among them were Mr. Cotton, James Ferguson, James McGaughy, Benjamin Reed, William Hill, William McClean, Captain David Wilson, Samuel Witherow, Samuel McCullough, John Maginley, Abram Scott. In later times John Kerr, John Stewart, Hugh McGaughy, Amos Maginley, William McGaughy, William McClean Scott. The Rev. John Stemmons was ordained and installed pastor in church until the day of his death, a period of thirty years. He performed the marriage services for two generations; he comforted the dying and said the final prayers over their coffins.72 Later elders were Wm. Bigham, Paxton Bigham, John Paxton, John Cunningham, and later Upton Neely and James Cunningham.

71 Nevin, 24.
72 Ibid., 282, 285-286.
Among the first settlers in the Manor of Maske were George Kerr and his son John. These two Kerr’s were among the promoters and builders of the first Lower Marsh Creek Church. John Kerr had two sons who became elders, George II, and James Kerr. James moved to Ohio, and was an elder at Bell Fontaine. George Kerr had a son, also an elder. Joseph Kerr was the last of the male line, but George Kerr II had twin daughters, Jean and Martha. Jean married Abram Scott, an elder; Martha married Samuel McCullough, also an elder. Abram Scott’s son, William McClean Scott was later an elder. William McClean Scott’s daughter married John Cunningham who was chosen to the eldership, and James Cunningham, his son, served as an elder until his death.

Decoration Day

Perhaps the greatest day in the year for Adams County folk was May 30th, Decoration Day. Mother grieved that her roses never were in bloom, but there were clove pinks, red, white and pink peonies, the
sweet smelling mock orange, and when other flowers failed, the red and yellow ballet skirts of wild columbine could always be gotten from the rock bluff above the creek. The flowers were taken to town and left at the Grand Army Post rooms. All morning excursion trains rolled in from Washington, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Harrisburg. A special brought the speaker and his party. The speaker was always a nationally known celebrity. The presidents from Lincoln to Wilson came at some time during their administrations.

The day was a great meeting time for friends. The crowd was cheerful but not hilarious, for we had gathered for a patriotic service to honor those who Lincoln said “Had not died in vain.” The procession formed on Chambersburg St. and Mr. James Hersh was always chief marshal. He wore a silk hat, and regalia of crimson silk, and I marveled greatly as a child as to whether he had some way of telling his beautifully groomed horse to dance and stop sideways, and yet keep at exactly the same distance before the marching pageantry behind him.

Gettysburg had a band, and often a fife and drum corps as well. And, some other towns in the county had bands and troops of militia. Sometimes the President had a military escort of army cavalry. In the years after the war, Gettysburg had military organizations. For a while it was a company of Zouaves. They made a glamorous splash of color in their baggy scarlet trousers, white leggings, and blue bolero glittering with gold braid. My brother belonged to the Zouaves. The Grand Army came next in their blue suits with the small bronze button in the lapel. Father knew almost every one of them. Father’s two brothers and both of mother’s could march in this blue clad group. They marched with military precision as I first remember. Later, there were fewer, they marched stiffly.

74 “Memorial Day,” Gettysburg Compiler, May 24, 1892; “Death of Cpt. James Hersh,” Gettysburg Times, August 5, 1912. The Gettysburg Compiler published an itinerary for the Memorial Day Celebration on May 24, 1892, with Capt. James Hersh as Marshall. James Hersh (1833-1912) was a Union veteran of Company F, 87th Pennsylvania. He achieved the rank of lieutenant, and was a prisoner of war at Libby Prison for 9 months.
with somewhat crooked lines. Later still, they rode in open carriages, wrinkled, feeble looking old men. Now I think there is just a gap where these men marched and rode.

When the stretcher-bearers went out to gather the dead and wounded after one day of the battle, they came upon a soldier dead, and clasping in his lifeless hand the Daguerreotype of three pretty children. That picture was reproduced and sold far and wide, and the proceeds used to establish an orphan asylum for children whose fathers were killed at Gettysburg. As long as this institution existed these orphan boys and girls strewed the flowers.

The procession swept through the eagle-crowned cemetery entrance and marched to the rostrum, some minister offered a prayer, and the orator of the day made his address. Then the band played a dirge, and the orphans (later the schoolchildren) marched across the semicircle of graves scattering their blossoms.

In this day, I believe the young people go picnicking on Decoration Day, and it is a pity they miss the patriotism inspired by this ceremony of honoring the dead.
Harper and DiVanna: In The Days of my Youth

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