

Westheimer Family

Westheimer, Milton

Reminiscences of his early
life in St. Joseph, Mo.

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Biographies File.

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Dear Children:

Your Mother wants me to jot down a concise memo of some of my experiences as a traveling salesman. I don't know just why, because none of them were of general importance, nor of wide interest. But I have often wished that I had asked my parents for details of their early life, how they met; of Father's early experiences, etc.

I was born January 31, 1872 (about seven years after the close of the Civil War) at St. Joseph, Missouri, in a brick house, Sixth and Jule Streets. This was just one year after the first railroad was laid west of the Missouri River, and the year the first bridge was built from Missouri to Kansas. The history of my parents, their forebears and their children, appears in a memo of which each of you has a copy. The house was solidly built, and in front of it ran a "crick" - probably an open sewer. I attended German-English school, and in '86 our family moved to a commodious home which Father had built, "on the hill" at Eighteenth and Francis Streets. So then I transferred to Garfield School; then came high school. I remember two excellent teachers, Professor Thatcher in math, and Professor "Polly" Miller for Latin and Greek. In the fall of 1890 I went to Yale - Class of '94 - for three years - left in '93, so was not graduated; and found no better teachers in their respective lines than these two.

My parents had eight sons to educate, and at the appropriate time, offered each of them a college education, which most of us accepted; so they could not spare a great deal for each. While at Yale I received \$60 a month from Father for all expenses excep

tuition and railroad fare, and an occasional \$2.00 or \$5.00 from my mother; or brothers Morris, or Leo, or Henry.

The costs of living were correspondingly low. I still have a memorandum book of receipts and expenditures for the three years and whenever I look at it, am amazed at costs. My half of rent for the two rooms in the "Old Brick Row" was 75 cents per week. (We bought our own coal.) My board was \$4.00 per week, and the last year \$5.00 per week. A glass of beer was five cents and a week's laundering about fifteen cents. From a laundry bill still in my possession, I infer that I changed shirts twice per week - cuffs and collars, both detachable, twice a week; I must have been comparatively finicky on underwear. My opera tickets were 35 cents and 50 cents - standing room?

While in grammar school I had lagged, and in fact, failed one year in mathematics. But things suddenly changed in high school and I was graduated, the salutatorian, in 1890, being second in class.

College, to me, was a rare opportunity to study and I became a real student, what was called a "greasy grind". I knew nothing of fraternity life, and soon learned that Jews were never tapped for fraternities; except, of course, for Phi Beta Kappa, which is strictly for graduation rank. In those years there were no provisions for exams in the West for Yale applicants, and I took my nineteen exams in two days after arrival in New Haven, passing with "no conditions".

I found no real difficulty in my studies, and though the Dean could not disclose one's exact standing, he told me at the end of the junior year, that I was "of Phi Beta rank", and, strangely enough, was especially proficient in math and its higher

branches, such as calculus. At the end of the third year, my father informed me that I was not going back, and I do not recall any deep feeling of disappointment. Father had hoped I would bend my studies to the law. I had a strong bent to study medicine - and the result was that I went down to the "store" washing and filling bottles, then became compounder; then had a few months' experience at bookkeeping, and in 1896 went "on the road". My first trip was a short one in Missouri, on the old "Horrible and St. Joe R.R.", and the only sale that I recall was to a druggist a ten-gallon keg of Bourbon. After this trip, I was sent on the route previously developed by my brother, Leo; he and brother Morris had moved to Cincinnati to open up a branch of the firm of Ferdinand Westheimer & Sons. I succeeded to a territory well developed by him - where every customer was his friend. But it was a raw territory, in the pioneer stage.

I would make four trips a year, approximately three months each. Would start by taking the Sunday night train for Omaha, and work west along the northern tier of towns. These towns were set like beads along the North Western Railroad. At time I would drive by buggy to towns not on the railroad, then back to the railroad, and ever westward. Until the train approached the mountains, the entire trip was through the glorious wheat country; and at harvest time the train rolled for hours through waving acres of golden wheat. You both have seen this country, I think - and noticed that, as the west got nearer, the crops were thinner and thinner and the sage brush country dominated; wooden houses and towns gave way to log huts, and then to the lowly sod houses.

Well, at Chadron the train for the Black Hills turns directly North, and I made

the mining towns along the route; Oelrichs, Buffalo Gap, Hermosa, Rapid City, Sturgis, etc., etc. - the rough, riotous mining towns, the two-gun, bearded mining towns of the roaring 90's. The apex of these mining towns was Deadwood and Lead City. The look of these smaller towns is excellently reproduced by Television "Westerns" of today - most stores actually one-story, but the front raised to simulate a second story.

Cyclones were not uncommon in the plains, especially in western Nebraska, and parts of Kansas. On one trip I was trying to sell to a prospect in the small town of O'Neill, Nebraska, but could not land him, so took a horse and buggy (\$2.00 for the round trip) to Atkinson, where I learned that O'Neill had been wiped out by a cyclone. I had the driver turn the buggy around and take me back to O'Neill. The town was flat - absolutely flat. The railroad telegrapher was sitting on an empty beer box in the open, but had connected his key to the telegraph wires above. He was busy, probably with news to the Associated Press, but I got the saloon man to rake me out a couple of bottles of soda pop, which were sufficient bribe for the telegrapher to transmit a rush order to St. Joe. Thus an ill wind got me a good - and permanent customer.

Before going on the road, I had practised slight-of-hand - was quite proficient at coin tricks and card tricks, and often in a saloon (there are no more saloons today - they have all become either a tavern or a "21", or a cocktail lounge) I would find an opportunity, in little towns especially, of exhibiting. The proprietors like it, as it kept the customers entertained.

Northern Nebraska was heavily populated by Scandinavians and they looked with

some suspicion on these tricks. Once, when I called them all up to have a drink on me, as was customary, one fellow held back with "I don't drink mit no devils". From Nebraska I would turn north to the Black Hills in South Dakota; then back again by a parallel route, to Piedmont or Edgemont and up to northeastern Wyoming. On the longer trips I would ride in the caboose at the end of the freight train, sleeping on the oil cloth seats with my sample case as a pillow - usually arriving at my first town early in the morning. The brakeman would supply steaming coffee, heated on the old iron stove. There is no sleep more satisfying than on those lengthwise, oil-cloth seats in the caboose - and no coffee more satisfying.

My first town in Wyoming would be Sheridan. Here I had two customers, and in one of the saloons I met Buffalo Bill and was "permitted" by him to buy the drinks. You had to sleep in a hotel to be in line to sell its saloon; so where a town, like Sheridan, had two hotels with saloons, I would register at each, muss the bed, pour water in basin, and sleep at the other.

From Sheridan I would take the four-horse team stage coach to Buffalo, Wyoming, about an eight-hour night drive. Occasionally the driver would let me drive his four-horse team, but not for long - the horses would jack-knife on me. These stage coaches had no springs, were slung on leather straps. On one very cold trip, the driver forced each passenger in turn to get out and run alongside so as to keep his circulation going. If very cold, the custom was to light a lantern and keep it under the blanket - which was all right for the feet and legs, but not much good for the nose and ears. We would usually hit the half-way house near mi

night, where we rested for a half-hour and were refreshed with fat pork and coffee. The Wyoming plains were 4000 to 5000 feet above sea level - the air exhilarating.

Buffalo was a sheep town. It had a population of about 400 on week days, but on Saturday nights, as high as 2000. I recall only two saloons. The Antlers hotel was built partly over a rapid stream and the purling water lulled me most pleasantly to sleep.

In this western country every saloon had gambling tables - the lay-outs of roulette, chuck-a-luck, craps, Faro, bird-cage and poker tables. The big money went to poker, Faro and roulette. I fancied the latter. On one of my trips I gambled away my personal money, probably \$15 or \$20, then the expense money of the firm, then the payment which the customer made me in payment of his purchase of the trip before, and then, believe it or not, I tried to get him to pay me in advance for the order which he had just given me, but he pulled me up short. He told me he was not going to let Leo's brother "embezzle" the firm's money. He loaned me enough to carry me until I could get funds from home. I wish I could insert here that this was a good lesson to me, but, although I never thereafter used the firm's money for speculating, still it did not stop me from dropping a dollar or two when "round and round the little ball goes, and where it'll stop nobody knows".

From Sheridan I would travel northwest, and from one town on the railroad would make a number of small outlying towns --- one-customer towns, on horseback. I found riding these western ponies very agreeable. They had a sort of rocking-chair gait - I think it was called "single-foot", or pacing. Part of the

supplies and bar supplies, ice boxes, glass-ware, etc. I was to introduce him around, which I was glad to do, but at the Green Front he took too many dances with one particular girl, and her boy friend was about to attack him with the poker from the stove. I ran up and dropped my hand in my pocket as if I had a gun there, and told him, 'Drop that poker, you so and so, or I'll fill you full of lead'. He dropped the poker and we made our get-away pronto. I told this to Billy Carter. His only comment was, "Lucky for you he didn't have a gun".

I had another experience at the Green Front. A stranger whom I met at the bar said he was a drummer from Chicago. We got drinking and when I woke up about noon the next day, I was on my bed at the Bullock Hotel, my pockets inside out and my watch and chain, and cuff links missing. My principal money was intact. I carried it in a secret long pocket which I had had made at the back of all my vests. The watch was my 21st birthday watch. Our parents had given each of their sons a big gold pocket watch on his 21st birthday, with a proper inscription inside. I was the first of the sons to get a watch without a hunting case and my parents assured me that this was not an economy move, but that open-faced watches were coming into general use. Although I advertised a reward for its return, it never showed up; but near my 23rd birthday, when I was home, I found at my breakfast plate an exact duplicate watch - the inscription dated back to January 31, 1893. The Bullock Hotel at Deadwood was named for Seth Bullock, who organized Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders, in the Spanish-American War.

Spearfish, S. D. was up in the mountains, and next to Sylvan Lake, on which I will comment later, the most beautiful spot in the Hills. Sometimes I would walk there

from the next nearest town, maybe three or four miles, and although I had but one customer there, the magnificence of the scenery well repaid the climb. Each of you has probably seen a sunset in the mountains. It is misted, of red and gold - vaporized red gold - not the color of wedding rings, but rather with some crimson and some coral colors. There is a background of bluish purple and the solid blue and black mountains bring up the rear. I guess it is no wonder that the savages - and the Greeks gave their gods a mountain home. At other time the sunset is a misted lemon gold.

My territory was northern and eastern Nebraska, western Wyoming and the Black Hills of South Dakota. Only the north and east Nebraska towns were farming. The rest was divided between sheep country, cattle country and the mining territory. There was great bitterness between sheep men and the cattle men, but that deadly feud isn't part of my story. In the mining territory, many a business man and many a banker would grub stake some whiskered prospector, furnishing him with food, clothing, explosives and utensils for prospecting from early spring to late into the fall; year after year.

I had an interesting experience in Douglas, Wyoming. As the Jewish holidays approached, my Father would notify me about a week in advance, and Rosh Hoshana came while there. I told this to Mr. White, a saloon-keeper, and asked him if he knew any Jew in Douglas. He said he knew of a fellow who worked down at the coal sheds whom people called "Sheeny Ike", so I wandered down there and kept yelling 'Sheeny Ike' a few times until a lanky, coal-dusty workman came down. I asked him if he were a Jew, and he said he thought his mother was, so I invited him up to the Antlers (many towns in the plains had an Antlers Hotel) to take New Year's dinner with me that night. He arrived brilliantly clean, as only a man who has washed the coal

dust off his face could shine. I recall the startled look on the waitress' face (all the waiters at these western hotels were girls) when Ike and I pledged "Happy New Year" in a glass of Rhine wine. The only Hebrew he knew was the sh'ma.

Hot Springs, S. D., had a good hotel and therapeutic baths and was a resort for rheumatics. We drummers liked to strike it on a Saturday evening and stay until Monday. It could be reached either from the Burlington Railroad, or the Northwestern from the other side.

On one of my trips I had a most interesting episode beginning there. I met a portly, middle-aged woman - there for her rheumatism; very heavy, and her dainty daughter, Evelyn, of say twenty or thereabouts. We had dinner at the hotel Saturday evening and Sunday noon, and supper Sunday evening. I had told them of my trips through the Black Hills. Then the mother made a rather startling suggestion to me, which she had evidently discussed with her daughter. Evelyn, she said, would like to take the trip with me through the Black Hills and rejoin her again at the Springs. How about it, and how long would it take? I told her I could be back in two weeks.

In Lead City (pronounced 'Leed') I introduced Evelyn to a saloon man who was also a part owner in a mine. A great many of the saloon men had part ownership in one or more mines. This fellow, always grinning, was one of my regular customers. He took us down into the mine, and Evelyn admired a good nugget about the size of one joint of my thumb, which hung from his ponderous watch chain. It came from his mine, and after fingering it a moment or two, he detached it and handed it to her with his usual kindly smile - a gift of at least \$100.

I don't remember all the incidents of this trip, but they must have been thrilling to this college girl, and I do remember that we reached Spearfish at about eleven o'clock one night, very tired and very, very hungry, and the only place of refreshment still open was a dim Chinese restaurant. The Chink was cooperative. He went in the back yard, wrung the head off a chicken, prepared it and cooked it for us then and there. This, and a good hot cup of chicory, filled the cavity.

On the way back to the Springs, we stopped at Keystone, or Custer, South Dakota, where I had a customer; but the particular drawing point was Sylvan Lake at the top of a precipitous, twenty-mile, up-hill drive. On the side of the mountain there was a white streak, which looked about ten yards wide, and was supposed to be mica. I understand it had been developed and had been the source of a very prosperous business. As the buggy debauched at the top, you came, without warning to the gleaming Lake, set in the rocky peaks like a gem in an old-fashioned ring setting. The bottom had never been plumbed. The white-painted pine Inn was clean and well kept, and one could go boating on the Lake - we did. I have seen the Alps, and except for size, I think Sylvan Lake and surrounding mountains would compare favorably - it furnished a landscape of dramatic beauty.

Sunday morning Evelyn and I set out to walk to Harney's Peak, which dominated the scene for miles around. At that time it was said that none except Indians had ever scaled it. On the road there we found a donkey in a field, and I hoisted Evelyn on top and used his rope halter as a lead strap for a few miles, but we turned back before reaching the Peak. I remember the Inn served cream almost as thick as ice cream.

From Sylvan Lake we traveled back to Hot Springs, where I delivered Evelyn "as was" to her complacent mother, just two weeks later. Imagine my surprise when I met the father there. Their home was Omaha, Nebraska, where he had a grain elevator and a wholesale hardware business. He was a tall, slender fellow, dressed immaculately. He was not at all surprised, at least apparently, at the unconventional trip of his daughter. I have wondered at times if she ever wrote in her diary, or otherwise, of the fortnight trip with a young whiskey drummer, through the raucous Black Hills, as they were at the turn of the century.

As far as I can remember of those days, we fellows did not know, or should I say didn't acknowledge, the amateur profession. We followed a rather strict code, not only of action, but also of speech. I am inclined to think this was largely induced by the literature of that day. The backbone of the library in our home, and in most others, probably, was standard books, especially English authors, which came in sets. They emphasized chivalry. I know that our foundations were Sir Walter Scott, Bulwer Lytton, Charles Dickens and Shakespeare; and Fennimore Cooper. We were supposed to read the sets from volume I to volume ?. Of course, only the best known of the Shakespeare plays; and "Webster's Unabridged," on its swivel stand. In the schools we were brought up on the McGuffey Readers (which I note are coming back into the schools again in a form only slightly modified) and our reference book for deportment was "Hill's Manual".

The Backslider. There was a small mining town about eight miles from Deadwood, the road twisting around the hills, always up, and still higher up. This town had two saloons, I had heard. I have forgotten the name of the town but never that of the landlady of the hotel, Mrs. Mulholland. Many times I had met

an old traveling friend of Leo, a fellow by the name of Clarence Saunders, but known in the territory as "Razzle Dazzle". He was selling cigars for an eastern firm. He asked me to join him on a sleigh trip to this mountain town, and naturally I agreed. We would split the cost of the round trip, which was \$5.00 plus meals for the driver. Saunders had promised his wife that he would quit gambling and had saved part of \$27.00 which was the cost of a dress contracted for. Just before leaving Deadwood, he threw a quarter on the roulette table "just to make back the cost of the trip". Of course, he lost, and before we left, had again become an inveterate gambler. I don't know whether he ever paid for that dress.

The mountain sleighs have affixed to each runner an eagle beak on a swivel, so that when the horses stopped, this would dig into the ice and take up the weight of the sleigh. When we got to the hotel, I noticed a brace of red-head ducks hanging outside, and told Mrs. Mulholland if she would prepare one for us, I would pay double for the hotel bill. She turned down the offer scornfully, but when I came to breakfast next morning, there was my duck for breakfast.

After supper I went to see the two saloon men, and learned that my room would be shared by the barber, who was supposed to be slightly insane. I got to my room about midnight. The tonsorial artist was in bed, his lamp burning and two stacks of books beside his bed, one of which was a full set of Dickens. He loaned me a volume, but I was too uneasy to read much. Of course, there were no electric lights, but the way to read was to turn the wash basin upside down on a chair next to the bed, and in the ring of the basin set the coal oil lamp. (This excellent

arrangement always confers another benefit - before going to sleep, the lamp is turned low but not extinguished - and this keeps those pesky bed bugs in their hiding places.)

Mrs. Mulholland had an ingenious way of waking her boarders for breakfast. The hotel, narrow, three-story frame, was built on the edge of a cliff, possibly with an eye to the economical disposal of waste. The stove pipe ran up from the kitchen through the rooms above, and she could pound with a spoon on the stove pipe as her "Breakfast ready, Gentlemen".

Our customers throughout the entire west were almost entirely men with small capital, men with an M-4 rating in Dun or Bradstreet's. We had more losses from the higher rated small wholesaler. Our experience showed that men who ran a gambling layout were good credit and we took very few losses from these. To a gambler they were debts of honor.

Of course, I didn't take to the road to seek - or even to expect - adventure. I went to sell goods, to take over Leo's territory, his customers, and to show my partners that I could make good. I found before long that I hated the job, the constantly recurring pressure and tension of getting a profitable order; this was so different from my college work; that I even would have welcomed an accident or illness as an excuse for a vacation; but it was four trips a year, of three months each, with a hiatus of three or four days between getting home - and getting off again, except ten days at the year end. Seven years of this. The very aversion to the job spurred me on to get relief in success.

But I had many jolly days, too, and the scenery, after leaving the flat plains of Nebraska, was exciting - the air exhilar-

ating. The Black Hills are about five thousand feet above sea level, and the vast plains of Wyoming almost four thousand feet the air very, very clear, so that mountains far away seem invitingly near. When you leave the Hills for the Plains, you exchanged the balmy smell of the pines for the spicy smell of sage brush. The people were not taciturn but not talkative either - except in their story-telling, which was on the exaggerative side, something like Mark Twain. There was Carl Schuman, who had a truck farm of a few acres near Spearfish. He filled a freight car with gold ore - took it to Denver with two gunmen on the roof, and had it smelted into \$80,000 of gold. The way he told it, his frau broke the heel off her shoe going to the out-house one night. Next day he hunted for the heel, and found it and an out-cropping, or "lead". "I hired the two men and the four of us dug two days and two nights and dug up from the grass roots a carload of rich ore - and this was the beginning of the "Broken Heel Mine". Experiences like this, whether true or not, tempt the prospectors; it is said that for every dollar produced, a hundred dollars are spent in prospecting.

The types of men were, roughly, that of the prospector and the cowboy or cow puncher. The prospector from the Hills was often heavily whiskered, husky, roughly clad and usually wore knee boots or thigh boots. The cowpuncher was on the slender side, with flat hips, wore high heeled boots (for the stirrups) was always clean shaven, except for an occasional mustache. If you lived with either of these groups for any length of time, you know what "he-man" means.

Another Wyoming run was out to Casper. Sue and Jerry were there in 1952. In my day, Casper was "end of rail". I made it on my regular trips four times a year. The trains were one-a-day each way, and were

entirely of freight cars, with the exception of the last car, which, instead of being the usual caboose or way-car, was a combination, half Express and Mail, and half Passenger - I think about twenty seats. At each town on the road the train would stop for an hour or two for water and coal, and loading or unloading freight. I would rush up town and see my customer - if there were only one or two, I could usually handle the business by the time the engineer blew his steam signal "Come a-hopping".

Casper was a great sheep town; English wool buyers had their roving agents there during the shearing season. During the last year electric clippers were introduced and a few were used, but the majority was the old style clipper. The shearer would grab a sheep, hold her between his knees and shear off the wool mostly in one sheet. There would be one drove of a few thousand in the pens being clipped, and then run through the sheep dip; and then behind them, coming down from the hills, another drove of, say, 5000; and away off in the hills apparently only a cloud of dust, was another bunch of, say, 5000.

Casper was another one of those few western towns where, even in the '90s, Scotch whiskey was popular, probably introduced by the aforesaid English wool buyers. The name of the hotel was, I think, the "Antlers", as was the name of many of those western hostleries. Waiters were girls, of course, and they would stand at the table, their eyes toward the horizon, and repeat the routine, "The roast beef with the brown gravy, the pork with the apple 'sass' and the string beans, the tea, the coffee and the iced tea". This was almost a ritual. (I have never heard used the phrase which some people claim was usual - "Ham, lamb, ram, sheep or mutton").

In this semi-frontier country, there

were very few women, compared with the number of men, and in a number of instances, business men would marry girls from "Houses", and I understand they made very good wives, devoted, dignified. No man ever recognized another's wife as a former acquaintance. The Code expected - and got - perfect amnesia, and I think, perfect respect. I don't remember ever hearing of a divorce coming from any of these marriages. I have eaten meals in their homes, of dignity and self-respect.

At Casper, I once met a saloon man from Jackson's Hole who purchased a half-barrel of Bourbon from me. I never made the trip to Jackson's as it was at the far end of the State; was said to be the hang-out for the bandits who quite often held up the Union Pacific trains. This fellow told me that two men with shot guns stationed at the head of the defile could hold off a regiment. After the first sale, he wrote in regularly for a repeat order, paying always in advance. The package was carted from Casper to Jackson's.

Today Jackson's has become a famous and very fashionable socialite Resort. I presume it has a swimming pool, etc. Your children, when grown up, might likely spend a summer there, at some dude ranch, at \$15.00 per day, E.P. In the 90's Western hotel rates were \$2.00 per day, A.P.

I met in Casper a fellow by the name of Solomon, who seemed to have no means of support, but was whispered to be a "Remittance man" and a scout for Standard of New Jersey. You see, oil in small quantities was being discovered in Wyoming. There was very little refining in those days, but the oil was used as a lubricant for railroad cars. (I used to carry a pint of it with me and rub it on my head, under the superstition that it would increase growth of hair. It certainly did increase laundry bills.) The oil was

brought to the railroad stations in barrels with some sixteen to twenty-four mule or horse teams, such as you see on the borax boxes today.

The winters on the plains could be rugged. Once on a return trip from Casper, our train got stuck in a cut between Casper and Glen Rock. The cut was about twenty feet, at the deepest, as I recall. We were stuck there from two days and two nights, with almost no food. As I said before, these trains consisted entirely of freight cars, with the express and in the other part had passenger seats. This trip every seat was taken - all men except one girl of about twenty-five, a school teacher, who was going East for the Christmas holidays. One passenger was a salesman, and apportioned his candy samples in small pieces every few hours. The expressman had a part loaf of bread and some jelly or jam. He made about twenty-five slices with a little jelly on each. We men drew lots to see who was to hand her portion to the touch-me-not school teacher. It fell to me, and I brought it to her on a tin cooking lid. I remember yet her disdainful "No, thank you", but I left it on the seat beside her and withdrew. About midnight the conductor came to me and said, "She's come to her fodder". She had parked herself on the seat next to the stove, and kept the window partly open. The bitter cold kept blowing in, and persuasion could not induce her to close the window; said she belonged to an "Open Window Club"; wore a large button with the initials "O.W.C." After a few hours, one of the older men went up and slammed the window down with authority. It stayed down.

In relays we passengers and the railroad men would shovel trenches across the track. You see the snow had warmed up around

midday and then froze solid toward nightfall. The trenches were two feet wide and crossed the tracks about four to six feet apart. Then the uncoupled locomotive would hit these on the run, and try to dig us out, but with very little success.

Also on the express train was a crate of spoiling apples which had been refused in Casper by the consignee. The expressman strung them, two or three at a time, on wire and roasted them in the stove, and they helped out as food.

Early the second day the brakeman and one sheepherder muffled up heavily and walked twelve miles to the nearest station, which was only a coal and water station with a telegraph operator. From there wires were sent to Cheyenne, from which a snow plow was sent down and dug us out toward morning of the third day, hardly any the worse for the experience, but plenty hungry.

I wish that, with words, I could transfer to this flat sheet some of the beauty and dignity and majesty, even inspiration of the mountain country in the west. I know that the inspiration was there at the time. In the setting of this natural stage was acted a life of strong men, rough-clothed, bushy-bearded, sometimes brawling, but entirely what we now call "extrovert". They were mostly two-gun men; a gun, in its holster, at each hip. I think that, at that time, I had never heard of a shoulder holster. The bankers, professional gamblers and the better merchants in the large towns wore almost a uniform of black clothes, black hat and black bow tie; but you could distinguish the gambler from the others - he was somehow skinnier. Those three and the drummers from the east wore "biled shirts" - that is, stiff bosomed. Meals were large and heavy. Board and lodging, in most of the towns was \$2.00 per day, which included three meals, believe it or not.

In all of these words I have not been able to convey the feeling of expansiveness, the exuberant frontier spirit; the very intensity of vibrant energy.

When the Territory of Oklahoma was being opened up to white settlement, my brother, Morris, went in on the first big run for land. It was called the "Cherokee Strip Run". He had no interest in the land, but went as a sort of an adventure, riding on a locomotive. In this run everyone started from scratch at the shot of a pistol, at a definite time, on foot, horseback, buggy, wagon, bicycle - of course, there were no automobiles then. Shortly thereafter, in 1901, at the opening of Lawton to white settlement, I went in with my sample case and a big Red-Top Rye poster, to pick up some opening orders. A fellow by the name of "Berg", who was interested in opening a notion store in the new town, went with me by train to Anadarko, Oklahoma, which was "end of rail". There we picked up a wagon with a driver, bought a lot of eating supplies and a wall tent. We then drove to Lawton. It was a very hot day and a very tough trip, with no tree for a bit of shade for the entire distance of about sixty miles, arriving three days before the opening. No one was allowed to enter the town before the opening, so everyone encamped around the border, estimated at 75,000 people. Carpenters were ready to start building for the lucky bidders.

The town site was a flat quadrangle, one-half mile by one mile, with not a solitary building on it except at one corner a frame one with a bank on the first floor and government offices on the second. The lots were to be auctioned off on a Monday morning, and Berg actually bought a lot and by nightfall had set up a shack of sorts, with neckties and other notions for sale. To get his check cashed, he needed wire identification, which came with age, weight, etc. and "he is double-jointed and a Jew". They cashed his check.

Surrounding the town site were thousands of tents of all sizes and shapes, conical, wall tents, pup-shaped, and what-have-you. When you look at a large number of buildings at night, you see many windows lighted; but in a tent town, all you see is the tents lighted from within; and this is especially noticeable where they were set around a large area with none in between - an unusual and memorable sight of a glowing tent town. A one-sheet newspaper was printed on the very first day; I regret that my copy has been lost. I recollect it reported two murders.

Returning, there were only the driver and myself in the wagon. I have forgotten our destination, but we had to cross the Arkansas River, and arrived on the banks at twilight. There was but one sign of habitation nearby, a sod house. Its inside was papered with old newspapers. The owner knew where the ford was situated, but advised that it was dangerous to cross at dusk, and offered to put us up for the night. Here was exhibited an act of religion that I have never forgotten. His sod house had two rooms. One was the kitchen and the other long room divided by a curtain, in one end of which he and his wife slept, and in the other his two young children and a daughter of about twenty by a former wife. With true pioneer courtesy, the kitchen was for the driver and I with a shake-down of straw and a blanket.

But before that, we all sat down to supper. I turned my plate over and the youngsters looked up at me with astonishment at my boorishness. The whiskered rancher bowed his head and said grace, and it was then they all, in a flash, turned their plates. Supper was 'sow belly, salt risin' bread, and sorghum molasses - but the Lord was thanked for it as sincerely as if it had been a banquet. Then I bed, for which we prepared ourselves, the driver

and I, by removing our boots and rolling our coats for pillows. Next morning, bright and early, we forded the river in our wagon and continued onward.

Well, I think I have told enough of my experiences in the west during the roaring '90s. At the end of about seven years, in April, 1903, I received a telegram to come home at once. I arrived on Friday, and after supper the dining room table was cleared and the men folks discussed an option we had for purchasing a business in Baltimore. The next night Eugene and I took the train for Baltimore, arriving there April 18th, lodged at the Stafford Hotel (the Belvedere was a-building) and after breakfast walked down town, asking the proprietors of various businesses for the name of a good corporation lawyer. We decided on Mr. Moses R. Walter, and were never to regret this choice. He proved not only an excellent attorney, but a staunch friend.

We purchased the stock of Cahn, Belt & Company for about \$425,000 (which was probably as much as the entire family was worth), paying \$150,000 in cash and giving notes for the balance, which was paid off by January, 1905, through the united efforts of the family in St. Joseph, Cincinnati and Baltimore. Early in the fall of that same year Eugene and his family returned to St. Joseph, and in November my brother, Henry, joined me to handle the new business. A few years later our brother, Sidney, joined us.

When I got to Baltimore, although our business there was the same nature as that in St. Joseph, the territory offered an entirely different kind of customer. Gone were the rough and rowdy crew of prospectors, gamblers, mixed in the bar rooms and dance halls with Chinese and colored; also the relations between the

saloon proprietor and the salesman took on a different tone. Of course, human nature did not change, but the surface certainly did.

I had one interesting experience in 1906. Twice a year I would go to New Orleans to join John E. Kelly, the firm's Louisiana salesman. On one trip he asked me to "make the circle" with him, that is, around the Baton Rouge-Vicksburg territory (about eight cities), so that there, too, his customers would "meet the boss". When we reached Vicksburg, I told him I would take a day off from visiting customers. I had in mind to find out whether it was really as hard to get a job as was generally supposed, at that time. So I did not shave that morning, nor change my line and stuck my watch chain, ring and stick pin out of sight, then wandered from store to store asking for a job - any old job. I remember on a jewelry store, a harness and saddlery store and a department store, but I tried about three others, up town, at none of which was I offered a job nor any encouragement - nor even the price of a meal. About ten o'clock I found myself down in the slummy section near the river. The first place I struck was a sort of general store with a narrow front. As soon as I applied to the boss, he asked me where I came from. I told him St. Joseph, Missouri. He immediately said, with a very broad accent, "You have run away from home, I guess. Now, the thing to do is to telegraph your family that you are sorry and want to go back - to send you the money. I will pay for the telegram". This I denied, and plead for a job, to which he assented. He first had me write two letters to merchants from whom he had bought merchandise. By this time I had sized him up for a Russian or Polish Jew although the subject of religion never arose. He admired the letters and again plead with me to let him wire my folks back home. Then a "mammy" came in to buy a pair of shoes for her

husband. The boss failed to sell her, but I stopped her at the door and succeeded in selling her two pairs. The boss then took me in the rear of the store into a lean-to, where he spoke to this effect: "Look here, I can see you ought not to have this kind of a job. If you don't want to ask your folks for money, I will lend you enough to get to St. Joe and you can send it back to me whenever you get it." This, too, I declined, but accepted 75 cents for my half-day's wages; went back to the hotel, got a shave and hair trim, put on my "jewelry", ate dinner, and was standing on the street smoking a cigar when a bulky man crossed the street and asked me what my "racket" was. On my suggestion that it was none of his affair, he bent back his coat lapel -- he was the sheriff. "I found out you were trying to get a job in the good stores up town and finally landed one by the river. Then, with 75 cents pay, you get a store shave, a big meal, tip the waiter, buy yourself a Corona; and to me this just don't add up." So I bought him a drink and Corona and, in my room, told him my story and showed him my credentials, including my 21st birthday watch, my Dun and Bradstreet letters, etc.

Our Distillery wholesale whiskey business in Baltimore proved to be an increasingly successful business, but during the second decade of this century a cloud no bigger than a quart of Maryland Club appeared in the skies. This was the Anti-Saloon League. I will make the story brief, although it was, for us, in the nature of slow strangulation.

In the South, where the bulk of our trade was located, first came "local option" of counties and then states, and then one state after the other went "dry". After various family discussions, we decided to withdraw from the business.

Your Uncle Irvin's father-in-law had a brokerage office in Cincinnati, which he sold

to the family in 1916. The next year your Uncle Henry went to New York and effected an excellent arrangement with Bache & Company to buy out their brokerage branch here in Baltimore, which he opened in April, 1917 for the family, with an agreement with your Uncle Sidney and me that we would join him when we could practically close out the whiskey business. I joined him in about six months, and Sidney later, having closed out the whiskey interests here.

The Eighteenth Amendment (total prohibition for the United States) was ratified by the States in January 1919, and became effective in January 1920. The Government made no provision for reimbursing distillers or wholesalers for their preemptory losses, and our family faced extremely bitter losses; but during the interim from 1917 to the effective date, 1920, the demand for liquor became so great and the prices so high, that we recouped an appreciable part of our prospective losses. A large part of our savings was due to the foresight of your Uncle Morris. The family had now divested themselves entirely of their distilleries at terrific losses and merchandise holdings at reasonable prices, and was well embarked in the brokerage business under holdings of seats on the New York Stock Exchange and other important exchanges. The Eighteenth Amendment was repealed in December, 1933, but we never re-embarked.

Our brokerage business grew from a small beginning to a quite profitable organization, but the financial crash of 1929 changed the outlook, and as we three brothers in Baltimore were all around seventy years of age, we decided to call it a day, and closed out the Baltimore Branch on September 1st, 1940.

"And how did you meet Mother?"

In late 1905 I went to an amateur show at the Academy - "My wife's bonnet", and saw on the stage a young girl who took the part of the maid. She attracted me immediately, and after theatre I went to the Phoenix Club, determined to meet her. I don't know what specific point aroused me at the show - whether it was her acting or her classy ankles - she wore a dress reaching to the knees - a near scandal in those days - or because she said "damn" - quite, oh quite, unconventional; but I pursued her relentlessly, and Helen Gutman and I became engaged on April 8th. It was on a rainy day, I took her to the Suburban Club in a buggy, drawn by "The Little Brown Jug", as the gentle nag was called. To my proposal, delivered on the return, while the rain pounded on the "Surry with the fringe on top" your future Mother said, "Are you serious?" I was. So back to 1714 Eutaw Place, where she pulled off my sweater, smoothed my hair, brought down her parents - still fully dressed, and a ready bottle of champagne soon produced from the ice box. The only question her father asked me - "You will stay in Baltimore, won't you?" So after a short and jolly courtship, we were married on June 20, 1906 - just fifty years ago, this glorious Golden Wedding day.

So as not to close this too abruptly, I add the following items, though unimportant.

Our wedding trip was to New York, west to Chicago, then St. Joseph, where we spent a few days at the old homestead, 18th and Francis Street, (my parents were summering at Mackinac) then west through Denver, Pocatello and the Yellowstone National Park. The Yellowstone was by stage coach, as motors were not then permitted. Back east on a northern route, through Sault Ste Marie, took one of the big late steamers through the Lakes and spent

a few days at Mackinac, then on to Buffalo and back to Baltimore - a six weeks' trip.

Mr. and Mrs. Gutman gave your mother a house at 1807 Eutaw Place as a wedding gift, first putting it in first-class condition. They had electric wiring installed (in place of the gas) and we lived there for a number of years - I have forgotten how long. Some summers we would spend in Charlevoix, Michigan and for others we would rent homes in what was then Baltimore County, and apparently too far for ease - for a business man was expected to be at his office by 8:30 at the latest. Of course, we had no automobile for many years. After renting the Ford's Lane house, I purchased it for \$12,000, and sold 1807 Eutaw Place.

In April, 1923, we moved to 5 Slade Avenue, having built the house while living at Ford's Lane. Meanwhile the city limits had moved as far as Park Heights and Slade Avenues just about 600 feet from our new location, which was and still is in Baltimore County.

In 1927 we took a trip abroad. Your mother had been abroad with her parents, but this was my first overseas trip, at the age of 55, and it was thrilling from beginning to end. Since then we have taken only three more European trips - twice with you, Julius, and once with Julius and you, Sara - in addition, some West Indies trips.

I have added nothing of the many rewarding years during which you were growing up to be such a comfort to your parents. The devout wish of your mother and myself, is that your children may give you as much cause for pride as have ours.