

Please Remember, Mama

by NORMA HAMMER ALBURY

For several years now, whenever I have told some tale of the past, friends and relatives have said to me, "Norma, why don't you write your 'memoirs'?"

Well, my "memoirs," as such, wouldn't be much. But there is much about our early Florida days that should not be forgotten and is interesting to my children and their children, if to no one else.

We pioneered, and I do mean pioneered, in the muck lands of South Florida back in the days when these back-country lands were first being drained and opened up for sale. Our land was purchased from the old Everglades Sugar and Land Company and was located west, some eight to ten miles, midway, I'd say, between Dania and Fort Lauderdale. I believe the man who operated the company was Willard W. Waldin. At least that's the man my father seemed to admire inordinately, so much so that my youngest brother, who was born during the time of Dad's dream to move to Florida, was named Waldin. That's "Wally." He was nine months old when we made the migration from Canada to Florida, and Wally was my mother's eleventh living child. The twelfth and final one, Audrey, was born in Florida a few years later.

My mother and dad were both born and raised on farms in Bates County, Missouri, their parents having come to America from Switzerland and Germany. They lived on neighboring farms, and when my father was 21 and Mama 20, they were married and moved in with Dad's people. I've often heard Mama tell how hard she had it there with Grandma Hammer, who was bossy about the babies, those two or three



William Henry and Adeline Hammer, photographed in Butler, Missouri, in 1892, the year they were married.

Norma Albury spent her earliest years in Alberta, Canada, and in Missouri before moving to Davie with her parents and ten brothers and sisters in 1913. Her father, William H. Hammer, was one of a number of farmers from the western plains who were drawn to the rich mucklands of western Broward County after completion of several south Florida drainage canals opened portions of the Everglades to cultivation. Like other Everglades pioneers, the Hammers found the soil productive, the work often backbreaking, and their livelihood constantly threatened by insects, flood, frost, and an unpredictable market. Through it all, Norma maintained a perceptive memory and a keen sense of humor.

It is interesting to compare and contrast

Mrs. Albury's recollections of growing up in Broward in the 1910s with those of Philip Weidling (pages 2-12 in this issue of Broward Legacy). Weidling and Mrs. Albury are contemporaries, but grew up in different geographic and economic environments. Together, their accounts represent the diversity that has characterized Broward County throughout its history.

Mrs. Albury's narrative is followed by "A Partial Hammer Genealogy," which is intended to help readers keep track of the numerous members of this family, and by an article from a 1913 issue of the Fort Lauderdale Sentinel, which tabulates William Hammer's expenses and profits from his first six months of farming at Davie.

who were born before my folks were able to get onto a farm of their own. The work was endless on a farm in those days, but Mama was well used to work. As a girl she had to leave school after a few years to help out at home where her mother lay sick. Grandma Hirni died when Mama was about nine. There were many sisters and brothers, as both my grandpas wore out three wives and had many children, fifteen or nineteen, I forget which.

Mama's stepmother was Lena Hirni, whom we visited once on a trip to Missouri from Canada, and again while on our way to Florida. Both grandmothers died after we moved to Florida. Relatives have often said that I favor my Grandma Hammer, but often when I look in a mirror, I am reminded of my own mother, too.

"The first job I ever had where I earned real money was doing housework on a neighboring farm," my mother would say, "and do you know what my wages were? Seventy-five cents a week." We kids would be shocked, but then Mama would tell us all the work she had to do for that princely wage. She got up at four or five o'clock, lit the fire, and cooked breakfast for a big family and the hired men. From then on, there was work and more work all day long till late in the evening. I can remember feeling tired just listening to her. There was no time for dallying in Mama's schedule. I often wondered how young people then had time and opportunity to get acquainted, to know each other, and to fall in love. Yet, they married, and at that, pretty young, too. One of Dad's half-brothers married Rose, one of Mama's sisters, when Rose was only sixteen.

Rose's husband was Louis. Dad had a full brother named John. My dad was the youngest. There was one other half-brother, Fred, and three half-sisters,

Emma, Louisa, and Caroline, but they don't figure in this story. So, these three, Louis, John, and Will, back on the old Missouri farm, must have gotten restless one spring and heard the call from the far Northwest, where land, good prairie land, was to be had for the settling. Consequently, they gathered their wives and families (there were five children in our family by then, and I suppose nearly a like number in the others) and moved up and out to Alberta, Canada, which was known then simply as the British Northwest Territory. For years, when I was in school, we wrote our address as Alberta, Canada, N.W.T. These Hammer families settled near the small town of Olds, which is still on the map and located about sixty miles north of Calgary. Each brother homesteaded a quarter section or more, and the district came to be known as the Hammer District. The school, with all eight grades in one room, was called the Hammer School, although by the time I came along to attend it, there were many more families there. One of Mama's brothers tried homesteading, too. George Hirni brought his lovely young wife, Lillian, and their two little ones. I always considered my Aunt Lillian quite the most elegant lady I ever saw. I told her this when we visited her in Omak, Washington, about twelve years ago, and I think she was pleased, if a trifle surprised.

My dad built a log house first. I remember it only as a part of the two-story frame house we lived in later. It had to be moved to the later location, as Dad could not find a good well where we first settled. This was prairie country, good for oats, wheat, and raising cattle. Also, we had a garden which had only about three months in which to produce before the frosts came again. But you never saw such large and

beautiful vegetables as grew there. The land was virgin. I cannot remember using fertilizer or bug-killers in Canada. Of course the weather was cold, and we had snows, freezes, and blizzards. Often the water or milk pitchers would freeze and break. I can recall going to school with the thermometer at forty, fifty, or even sixty degrees *below* zero, and snow drifts so high the older children walked ahead, and the snow would be higher than my head on either side. We didn't mind. Kids don't! We were healthy and hardy. Mama even liked Canada, and it must have been hard for her, all those babies and kids to keep in clean clothes, and the constant mopping up when we tracked in mud and snow.

In the summer we were out of doors all day. There were ripe gooseberries to pick, and what an adventure to go all the way to the east coulee to get them. Mary, who was the oldest girl, was always in charge. There were petrified stumps of trees over there, and often we found Indian arrowheads. We had to cross a stream, which was sometimes swollen almost to a river, on a barbed wire fence. Did you ever try that? It isn't easy. Now that I think back on the things we used to do, I wonder how any of us lived to grow up. Surely, there *are* guardian angels who watch over crazy kids. I was only about seven or eight and there were some younger kids than I was that went along, too.

There must have been many privations and discomforts, but as I say, children do not seem to mind. Our house was two-story frame. For heat we had only a range in the kitchen where the cooking was done and a heater that burned coal or wood in the living room. The chimney went up through the upstairs hall. This was all the heat upstairs. On very cold nights we undres-

sed by the downstairs heater and took hot irons wrapped in old cloths to bed with us to warm our feet. As two or more kids slept together, we managed to keep warm enough.

Twelve years of this life went by for my folks. They had moved to Canada at about the turn of the century. Alma, the first Canuck, was born there in April of 1902. I came along in September of 1903. After me were Clifford, Arline, Ralph and Wally. I do not know whether the move was a good one for my dad or not. I do know that one year, when I was about five, we left the farm and moved to town where Dad ran a hardware store. I suppose it was his, and I suppose it was not a success because we were soon back on the farm again.

Sometime during these years, Uncle John and Uncle George gave up and moved back to Missouri. But Uncle Louis never gave up. Long after we came to Florida we would receive letters from him and we all helped decipher them, because he was never a good penman or speller. We made out enough to learn that he was prospering and feeling good that he had stuck it out and not gone to Florida as Dad would have had him do. His children still live in the general Hammer District. Some of the boys have farmed and raised cattle all these years and have done well. There was always some feeling of rivalry between our families when we were young. Aunt Rose kept pace with Mama in the matter of having babies, for she had eleven, but she and Mama never saw eye-to-eye on a lot of things.

During the months of 1911 and 1912, Dad somehow learned of the fair land of Florida and the crops to be raised there in the muck lands. He made three separate trips to see for himself. It was this, Mama said later, she couldn't forgive him for, but I think she did at last. He came back each time with more glowing accounts and descriptions of the wonders of the place. He brought back coffee cans full of muck, grapefruit (which we children thought were horrible), seashells, a stuffed alligator, maps, pictures, and talk, talk, talk. As I look back at it, I see myself dreaming of Florida and myself sitting in the crotch of a grapevine picking and eating grapes. Dad said bananas grew so plentifully we could have them every day. Oh, joy! to kids who so seldom got bananas way up there in the frozen North. Also, oranges! Why people in Florida scrubbed their floors with orange juice just to make them white! I, for one, was thoroughly sold. I'm always easily led down the garden path. I think my dad was like that. You could call him a dreamer, or gullible. Anyway, we were committed. It was Florida

or bust. As it turned out, it was both.

We held an auction and sold our farm equipment and our furniture, except the piano, which was shipped and did not arrive for the longest time after we did. My dad had introduced Black Angus cattle into the area. These were sold, too, and when we visited Canada about thirty-seven years later, we saw descendants of those same cattle on a cousin's farm. Our farm was also sold. We packed up, and all hands were loaded on a train in Olds and headed for the folks' place in Missouri. Needless to say, the long train ride was a real adventure for us kids. I was barely nine at the time; this was in November of 1912.

Tales we tell in the family about the train ride include one about green cheese. Do you know about green cheese? It comes (or did) in a hard cake and has to be grated. Then it is eaten as a spread on bread and butter. It also has a very strong smell. Whether no meals were served on the trains in those days, or whether because we were so many we could not afford to eat in the dining car, I do not know, but Mama always had boxes and baskets of food. One day, the coach was particularly crowded so that we could not all sit together. It being near meal time, somebody got out the food and began to grate the green cheese. Soon a passenger sitting nearby began to sniff, then gathered up his baggage and moved to another car. Then another decided the air was better somewhere else, then another, till soon we had plenty of room, and some to spare. After that, whenever we were pressed for space, out came the green cheese.

Mama, in order to replenish our larder, would sometimes get off the train when it pulled into a station. Us kids were always afraid she'd get stranded when the train pulled out, and we'd peer anxiously out the dusty windows, searching for her along the platform. We were always sure she hadn't made it, but soon after the train began moving she'd come down the aisle with the lunch basket over her arm.

MISSOURI

We arrived in Missouri and were scattered around, one or two at a house, among our many relatives. Those six weeks we spent there were unhappy ones for me. I was placed all alone for most of the time at Uncle John's, the same Uncle John who had been in Canada. He seemed to me to be kind of a morose person, and I was scared to death of him. When he spoke, my young cousins and I jumped. I sometimes wish today's children could see the sort of respect and obedience they gave their papa. We did the chores and only afterwards could we dare to play.

Then Christmas came and I was lonely for my own family. Late in the day Mama and Dad came and brought me a tiny cast-iron range with little skillets and pots. Although I loved it, the little stove was the only thing I got, and I did want a big beautiful doll so bad. Oh well, I never did get a big beautiful doll until a few years ago, when my youngest child, with tears in her eyes, after hearing me tell about the dolls I never got, said, "Mama, why don't you go buy yourself a pretty doll now?" That made sense, so I did. I still have her and I love her, but I guess no one will ever know how I suffered as a child for a doll.

In Canada, we had at the schoolhouse, on Christmas eve, what they called the "Christmas Tree." There was a big tree on the platform all decorated with candles, tinsel, and toys and dolls of all kinds. There were songs and "pieces" recited by the school children. Then some man, sometimes my dad because he was the Sunday School Superintendent, would go up to the tree as the final treat to take down one toy at a time and read the name attached to it, while the happy kid went up to receive it. I used to sit and stare at the dolls. I'm sure they were the prettiest things I had ever seen. First the big one at the top. It could only be mine! But no, it was called out to some neighbor girl. Then I'd choose the one I liked next-best. No, some friend got it. So it went, and I got more and more disappointed with each one. I never did get a doll. In fact, my parents never carried our toys to the schoolhouse, preferring to give them to us at home. One year I got a doll carriage. I liked it fine, but a carriage and no doll? Mama said, "Well you can push Alma's doll." I ask you, is that any fun? Small wonder I soon completely lost faith in Santa Claus. Ah well, perhaps the disappointments were good for my soul. These days kids, at least the ones I see at Christmas time, have so many things they don't value them at all. The swing of the pendulum. Perhaps, too, this is the reason my two girls have had all the dolls they ever wanted, more maybe, because Zada, especially, never cared much for dolls.

It was while we were in Missouri that Mama's father, Christian Hirni, died. It was my first time to experience death and to attend a funeral. While my grief could not be personal since I scarcely knew my grandfather, it was upsetting to us all to see Mama cry. She never cried! Later, after we were in Florida, it was most distressing to me to see tears running down her cheeks one day at dinner as she drank her tea. Mama crying? Why? What was her grief or burden? I do not know to this day what particular thing it was, but there was

much hard work and hard times to bear, and it was a seven day wonder that she stayed as sane and healthy as she did. Poor Mama, with eleven kids ranging in age from nineteen to nine months, she had moved thousands of miles from anybody and any place she knew to a totally new life, and that not easy or pleasant. I wonder often if I could have done as well as she did. Lord, rest her.

FLORIDA

So we came on by train in January of 1913 as far as Jacksonville, Florida. There we disembarked to change trains, I suppose, and Dad got the great idea, "why not go on to Miami by boat? It will be a nice change from the train," and not one of us had ever been on a boat before.

Consequently, we boarded the *Morgan* bound for Miami. I do not know how large a boat she was. She had a paddle wheel and a dining room where, after the first supper, all the dishes slid off the table every time the colored man set it. It was a rough trip. I don't know how long it took us, we were all so sick it didn't really matter. Of all sicknesses, I think sea sickness is the worst. The baby (Wally) felt all right; that was a blessing. And Edwin, the oldest brother, felt fine and spent his time teasing the rest of us. This is a habit he has not lost in all these fifty years. Ask anyone he takes out fishing.

I remember an elderly gentleman on deck with a rug over his knees who offered me a candy mint, saying it would make me feel better. It didn't. It went the way of the rest and possibly made some fish happy. What a voyage!

But one sunny morning we pulled into the Miami River and tied up just below the Miami Avenue bridge. Miami today is a far cry from what we saw that morning in January, 1913. Nevertheless, to us it looked beautiful. There was Royal Palm Park with grass and trees, and it didn't roll and heave. No Bay-front Park then, that was all filled in later. There was the big old yellow frame hotel, the Royal Palm, that Flagler built. To us it looked huge and very opulent. And there were tall buildings, at least four to six stories. Quite a town!

Dad went off somewhere and hired two big touring cars to carry all of us the twenty-five miles back to Fort Lauderdale, which was the gateway to our place in the mucklands known then as Zona. Our bicycle, having come on the boat with us, had to be taken, too. It was decided that Paul, the second boy, and about seventeen, should ride it.

At Fort Lauderdale we put up at a small grey stone hotel called the Keystone. Some old timer may remember it. I remember it chiefly because of the water cooler and folded paper cups. Oh, we

were learning fast. We were to stay in Lauderdale until Dad and the older boys got our house built. No, there was no house ready and waiting. We started from scratch. After a few days in the hotel we moved into the yard in a tent house. I never knew if Dad rented it from the hotel man or someone else, because it was cheaper. It was fun and we kids made a game of it. The tent had wooden walls part way up, but the rest was canvas. Mama had her first kerosene stove to cook on, and she always hated them. "Food never tastes the same as when cooked on a wood stove," Mama always said.

There was an outdoor privy and growing around it many guava trees. This fruit was new to us. We carried some in the tent and soon Mama called out, "What's that stink?" When we told her about the guavas and about getting

headed pell-mell, full steam ahead, for the end of the mowed field, and when I hit the rope, I also hit the ground and rolled to the end of the field. There was no doubt I was the winner, and I had the prize of a quarter to prove it. I never let my older sister, Alma, forget I beat her that day.

DAVIE

I think we stayed in our tent house in Fort Lauderdale two weeks or so, and then one day, Dad and the two big boys came back to get us. There were no roads to Zona in those days, none at all. You traveled up the New River and then into the south fork of the canal until you came to Zona. This was then also Dade County. It was not until some years later that Broward County was formed out of the northern portion of Dade. At one time, Dade County



In 1913, several months after their arrival, the Hammers were photographed on their Davie farm.

them out by the privy, she said, "Well, you can sure tell where they've been growing. Get them out of here." It took Mama a long time to get to like guavas.

Most of our entertainment while waiting in Lauderdale consisted of racing around the city blocks. Sidewalks were new to us. We would start at a given point and run in opposite directions to see who could get back to the starting place first. Passersby must have been diverted. Myself, I was no mean runner in those days. I was always stocky, to put it kindly. In fact, my name among the family was always "Fatty." I almost didn't know my real name was Norma until I went to school. Anyway, one time up in Canada we had a race at a fair picnic. The course was down a mowed field, and the officials had stretched a thin rope to mark the finish line. I didn't see any old rope! I was

covered all the southern part of Florida, but that is a matter for the historians. The boat which carried us and our baggage to Zona stopped obligingly at our own dock. We shared this dock with the Hills. There were three Hill families, and their three little neat houses were built side by side near the canal. They were coal miners from Michigan come to Florida to farm.

These people, particularly the Tom Hills and the Jim Hills, figured largely in our lives all the years we lived in Zona, or Davie, as it was later renamed. My brother Edwin married Bessie, the daughter of the Tom Hills, and my very first love was Tommy, their son, who was a year or two older than myself. I don't know if I've ever loved anyone since in quite the same way that I loved him. Call it puppy-love if you will, it was real at the time. He grew up to



The Hammer Family in Davie, c. 1916. Back row, left to right: Henry, Clara, Ed. Middle row: Arline, Mary, William, Ralph, Adeline, Wally, Clifford. Seated on the grass: Alma and Norma.

be a truck driver, and I'm sure he was a good one. He married a girl in Miami years later, after we had all moved there, but long before that, we had each moved on to other times and other loves. I will always remember Tommy with warmth and affection, and I hope he thinks of me the same way.

The muck lands had been drained. Each ten-acre plot had ditches dividing it from its neighbors. Running parallel to the "big" canal and across the rock road, was a collection canal which was much narrower and much more shallow. There were pumping stations with huge pumps that ran night and day when there was too much rain and the land flooded. On the uncleared acres, the saw-grass grew six or seven feet tall. The little town of Zona consisted of a grocery and sort of general store built right on the canal, with a big dock for boats to load and unload. There was a small post office, and across the way, another little store run by a man named Earle. He was married to a Spanish lady who was strange to us, but very beautiful. Later we knew more of her people and much later, my young brother Ralph married one of her great-nieces.

The school, that first year we were there, was held in the "other room" of the big store. It was a two-story building of corrugated tin.

But to get back to our arrival. We got out on the dock. Some of the Hills were there to see the newcomers. There was no real road, just the top of the dike which was thrown up between the ditches. Dad had bought a white mare named Nellie, and somewhere he'd gotten a row boat; maybe he built it. We put our baggage in the flat-bottomed boat and hitched Nellie to a rope that pulled the boat down the ditch to our house, a distance about a half mile. Several trips were made to bring all our stuff.

We kids were excited and thrilled with this new life. What was a half mile? We ran all the way. Dad said, "It's the first place you come to; there aren't any others." We found it.

I often wonder what Mama's first thoughts were as she looked at her new home in Florida. To get to it, you left the dike and crossed the ditch on a plank. The earth was black (this was real Florida muck) and the ditch was full of brownish water. The house was wood frame with siding and the roof of corrugated tin. The windows were covered with screen and had awnings of the same tin which had to be raised or lowered from the outside and propped open with a stick. There was a small roofed entrance porch, then a long living room, and to the side of it, a long screened dining room and kitchen combination. At the back and behind the living and dining rooms were three bedrooms. No bathroom, but then we had had none in Canada either. Outdoor privies were used in Zona in those days. No one had a bathroom. When we bathed, we used wash tubs and carried them into one of the smaller bedrooms. Our floors were unfinished wood, and were scrubbed every week to keep them presentable. Later we had linoleum and at times some sort of carpet.

Mama cooked on a kerosene stove, did her washing on a board, in boil pots and tubs, and ironed with flat irons heated on the oil stove. Our oven was a separate box affair that fitted over two of the burners and sat in a corner when not in use. "Perfection" oil stoves — who remembers them? Tall, thin cylinders that fitted over wicks that you lighted with a match and which smoked like mad if you failed to set the cylinder absolutely straight and sometimes even if you did. Oh, the black-bottomed pots I have washed. I never minded the dishes too much. In fact, we used to fuss

over the privilege of washing over wiping, but I did hate those pots.

We ate at a long table covered with oil cloth. There was a bench down the wall side where four or five kids could sit, and there were four or five more of us on the other side. Mama and Dad sat at the ends. We always said, later in life and after we were old enough to poke fun at our dad, that it was well to choose a place as far from him as possible at the table, for if a child, any child, spilled something or misbehaved, Dad socked the one nearest him. Once one of us dropped a board on his foot, and poor Mary, who was near him to hand him something, took the blow for the guilty one.

FARMING

Now the farming started. We were to grow truck and garden crops, all sorts. The sawgrass had to be cut, the land plowed and harrowed and crops planted. We all worked. Many days we were kept from school to work in the fields, although Dad and Mama both were believers in education and anxious that we all have good schooling. I suppose it was a matter of first things first, and at that, not one of us ever failed a grade or had to repeat. Paul, Edwin and Mary quit school when we moved to Florida. Mary must have been above fifteen, so she never really had high school. Henry went to high school at Ft. Lauderdale, but stopped before he graduated. Then Clara came along with ambitions to be a teacher. She finished high school and went on to the University of Florida and took the teacher's exam and got her certificate. She got her college degree after many years of summer work and taught school for 35 years. Alma and I graduated together in 1921. Somewhere along the way I had caught up with her. Then I followed Clara's example and taught school for six years at the Southside School in

Miami which is still there on Southwest 13th Street. I think the others all finished high school, too, and the baby, Audrey, graduated from the University of Miami.

Where was I? The farming. The soil was rich and black and crops grew like mad. But any farmer knows the breaks of the game. If we had a certain crop, the bottom dropped out of the market and by the time our hampers of beans were sent by boat to Lauderdale, and consigned to a middleman who sold for us and took his cut, there was nothing left. Once, after a particularly good shipment of green beans, Dad received a check for three cents. He nailed it on the wall.

The muck soil was extremely heavy and sticky in wet weather. We had muck shoes for our mule, Maude, and for the mare, Nell. These were flat square plates of iron which had to be clamped to the animals' feet to keep them from sinking into the mud. In theory they may have been fine, but in reality they were a darned nuisance. The animals hated them. To see them picking up their feet protestingly with those awkward ungainly things clanking along was reminiscent of the cats we used to tease by sticking squares of paper to their paws. We would double up with laughter to see them pick up their feet and try to shake the heavy shoes off.

In spite of our hardships, there was always humor among us. We were always full of quips and wisecracks and teasing and jokes. What a blessing humor brings to our lives! I remember how much fun we got out of one of Henry's wisecracks. We still laugh about it to this day. It was cabbage planting time and Dad must have been extremely anxious to get his cabbage going, because he came around to our rooms that morning before daylight waking us all up and urging us to get going. I imagine Henry opened one eye, saw it was still mighty early and growled out, "What's the matter? Is the cabbage *wild* that we have to sneak up on it in the dark?"

Once Tib got a young shoat from Future Farmers (or some such organization) to raise for himself. One evening after dark, Dad asked Tib if he'd remembered to feed his pig. Tib had not, so Dad sent him out to feed it. Tib was young and afraid of the dark, and the pen was a good distance, and he was back in the house real soon. It was not till a week or so later we learned where he had put the corn he started out with. It sprouted and came up in the back yard right near the porch, a great patch of it very close together, where he had dug a hole and buried it.

The sudden sharp frosts (which we

did not expect in Florida) got some of our crops. Floods took others, bugs or blights or something, there was always something. It wasn't that things wouldn't grow. We had bananas in abundance, guavas, watermelons, potatoes, cabbage, celery, tomatoes, lettuce, cucumbers, pumpkins, cassava, roselle — name it, we had it. At one time, we had a row of pecan trees. They never bore nuts and finally died of too much water, I suppose. During World War I, Dad planted acres of castor beans. He knew there would be a market for castor oil to be used by the planes in the war. We never sold any castor beans.

Another year it was cabbage. This would be the big money maker. So acres and acres were planted in cabbage. This is a backbreaking job. You took a dibble, a round stick about an inch in diameter, six or seven inches long, and pointed on one end. You made a hole in the row which had already been laid out by one of the boys and stuck in the little cabbage plant and tramped the dirt firmly around it, then moved on to the next plant.

So we had lots of cabbage and it grew and prospered and when it was ready to cut, there was so much cabbage on the market already it wasn't bringing enough money to pay to cut it, crate it and ship it. So it lay in the fields and the sun beat down and the rains came and it finally began to rot. We used all we could and gave away all anyone would take. We made sauerkraut and even canned some, and still there was cabbage. When cabbage rots it smells. We endured it. Finally when it was nearly all gone, the price went up. It went higher. Dad took a look through the fields and ordered all hands out to salvage what we could. Nellie was hitched to the wagon, crates loaded in and kids were sent down all the rows with knives and orders to cut all the good heads that were left and toss them in the wagon. It was quite an experience. Sometimes you stepped in a brown mushy cabbage and it squirted in all directions, sometimes you reached out for what looked like a solid head, and your hand plunged into soft rottenness that smelled to high heaven. But we saved quite a few crates of salable cabbage, as though it seemed to us we could smell it for weeks after the rest was finally plowed under.

Then there was okra. Oh how we kids hated to pick okra. It had little fuzzy stickers on both the pod and the plant and it grew high, at times over the smallest kids' heads. The fuzz got all over you, down into your clothes and in your hands and fingers until you itched from head to toe. The darn stuff had to be cut every day to be sure to get only the tender pods. On the day it was to be

cut, our brother Ed took delight in being the first one up in the morning and coming around to all our beds, shaking us and crying out, "Okra day, come on get up, it's okra day!" We hated him. Finally we hit on the plan to don our bathing suits for the hated job. It didn't make any difference how bare you were, the itch wasn't any better. As soon as the last row was cut, away we ran as fast as we could go, up to the canal and plunged in for a swim. This soon washed away the itchiness and we all loved to go swimming.

I guess most of us learned to swim by the trial and error method. In those days you went in the water and you fooled around and floundered until you learned to paddle enough to stay afloat, then you went on to learn the crawl (which was new in those days) and to swim under water and to do all sorts of tricks. I think a great deal is denied a child in this day of instructors-for-everything, when he is not allowed to discover, suddenly all by himself, that he has taught himself to do something important and vital. The canal, in our early days in Davie, was newly-dug and clean with big sand banks on either side. The water was brown, but clear and it was not all choked with grass and weeds as it is now. It furnished most of our recreation in those days, and we loved it.

Several years later, roads were built to Davie and to Fort Lauderdale. A bridge was put across the canal up by the store. It became the height of daring to dive or even jump from the railing of this bridge. I remember the day I finally got up courage enough to jump. Unknown to me, the skirt of my bathing suit (yes, they had skirts then) was hooked over the end of the rail where it divided for the bridge to be raised for boats, and when I jumped, there was a sudden ripping noise. I had to float and paddle all the way down to our own dock, where I gathered my torn suit about me and ran for home.

SCHOOL

That first year in Zona, the school was held in the side room of the big store building. I believe all eight grades were together. I was in the fourth grade and so was Alma. Clara was one grade ahead of us, the others scattered out above and below. Our teacher was Miss Hicks. I suppose basically she must have been a very nice person, but she was ill-equipped to handle children. Surely, we were no worse than most, but from the start she had no control over the bigger boys, so the girls and younger pupils soon fell in line tormenting her and making her life generally miserable. That first year could not have been too bad, I do not remember any terrible escapades, but oh, the

following years. Why she did not give up and move on elsewhere, I'll never know. She had no family ties there and boarded with one of our families. A new building was built to house the school and by the following year, the population having increased with new people moving in, we had two rooms, one for the primary grades and one for the higher grades. Miss Hicks had the higher grades, and it was this year that I particularly remember all the terrible things we did. It is a world's wonder that we ever learned a thing! Sometimes we took a notion to HUM. One started it, the next took it up, and on it went until the entire room was HUMMING, a pretty loud hum, too. Miss Hicks would go frantically up and down the aisles ordering us to stop it at once. As she leaned over a child, that culprit would be very silent until she moved on to the next. That way she

We drew horrible pictures of her and labelled them. My sister, Clara, was good at likenesses. She drew one of Miss Hicks in her usual dress, a black and white plaid skirt and a rose sprigged blouse, with her hair in a bun as she always wore it, that was so like her that I think Miss Hicks was really pleased with it. We girls accused her of wearing "rats" in her hair. She took it all down one day to prove we were wrong. She wore a gold bracelet (the stretchy kind) on her right arm to hide a scar, and one day, as she was striking one of the boys with a stick or ruler (it was legal in those days) the bracelet flew off and landed by Tommy's desk. He quickly picked it up and tossed it out the open window. It was a long time before she found it again.

Zeke Moore, one day, killed a snake near the ditch that bordered the school yard, and while Miss Hicks was gone

But I think the meanest thing I was ever directly involved in, and something of which I am ashamed to this day, was the time we gave her the platter. Three or four of us girls were on our way home from school one hot day and had taken off shoes and stockings and were wading in the clear, sandy collection canal. Near the big tomato packing house, one of us suddenly picked up a platter that was right there in the canal. It was a pretty thing, all decorated with violets. We all admired it and hardly gave a thought as to whose it was or how it came to be there, but someone suggested we give it to Miss Hicks as a joke. Consequently, we carried it into the packing house, dried it off with tomato wrappers, wrapped it up in the same tomato wrappers and wrote a note to enclose. "To our dear teacher, Miss Hicks, with love from the following girls," and we all signed it. The next morning we presented it and I'll never forget the look of happiness on that poor soul's face. She probably thought we had repented, had a change of heart, and everything would be roses from there on out. She heaped coals of fire on our heads by showing it to the entire school body and telling who gave it to her, etc., etc. If it had ended there, all would have been well and good. But kids talk and one Mrs. Lowe heard the tale from her son and said, "Well, that's where my platter is." She had taken it with some food to a community supper held at the packing house and somehow the platter had been thrown out with the trash or garbage. Since it was a favorite of Mrs. Lowe's, she was not about to keep quiet about it and let Miss Hicks have her platter, so she turned up at school and claimed it and Miss Hicks was forced to give it up. What else she gave up that day I do not know, but I'm sure she gave up any hope she might have had of us. The fun was gone from the joke as far as I was concerned, too.



The author, in a bathing costume of the day, at the Davie Canal, 1918.

could never definitely say WHO was HUMMING. We kept it up till we tired of it, and she was entirely helpless while it lasted.

We had no electric bells to summon us in for school, but a hand bell which the teacher kept in her desk drawer. At times, someone would run in while Miss Hicks was outside during recess or the noon hour and take the bell and hide it. When time came for classes, poor Miss Hicks, who could not find the bell, would run around the playground calling us by name to come on in. We ignored her or called out, "We don't hear the bell." When we got ready, we came in. Very often she called some of the school trustees in to talk to us. They were usually some of our own fathers, and, for a while, we behaved better. But there's always a challenge among kids to be daring and to go one step further.

on an errand, he laid it in the top drawer of her desk. We all knew it was there and you can imagine how we waited with gleeful anticipation for Miss Hicks to open her drawer. She did not disappoint us. Zeke was expelled for a few days, but that didn't matter much to Zeke.

Harry Shaw was another ringleader. One day, Miss Hicks got annoyed with him on the playground and tried to catch him to punish him. Harry ran and crawled under the schoolhouse, which was built upon pilings about two or three feet off the ground. Down went Miss Hicks on all fours to go after him, but she was rather stout and couldn't make it too well. While she was bent over there, one of the other boys passed by, and with a stick he belted her across the rear and then ran and joined the other boys, so that she never knew who it was.

There was no end to the ugly things we did to that poor woman, and I guess at last she despaired of us all and gave up, for the following year the trustees saw to it that we had a man teacher who would control us. He did. In spite of it, or perhaps because of it, we liked him. He was a very young teacher who was still completing his own education and went on to become a very high official in education circles. It seems to me the only punishment he ever gave out (perhaps this was only for the girls, as I do remember several violent run-ins with the boys before he got them in line) was to write verses of Poe's "Annabelle Lee" 50 times or so. I memorized a good bit of "Annabelle Lee" that year. I also learned to study and apply myself, so that I usually stood at the top

of my class.

While Alma and I were in seventh grade, our family moved down onto a dairy farm about midway between Lauderdale and Dania. It was owned by a huge fat man named Marshall and the farm was called "Fair Acres." Paul was left on the home place to look after things and to "bach" it. He would come to the dairy to see us on weekends often, riding a bicycle. Alma and I went to Lauderdale school, riding on a milk truck one or both ways, but we often walked, too, and it must have been five or six miles. We children had a wonderful time that year, although of course we worked, too. Work we were always used to. We drove the cows to pasture, and at night we helped milk them. Often I milked four or five cows at evening, but Dad did not make us get up in the mornings to milk. Only from Clara on up did that, it was so early. Then the milk had to be processed, put in sterilized bottles, and delivered. I'm sure Henry, Mary and the older ones worked very hard. This move was not a success either, because after a year or so, we moved back to Davie again. We were happy to be back among our friends, although we had made new friends in Lauderdale and had a taste of town-school life.

GROWING UP

In 1916 we had a flood. It rained and rained until the pumps and ditches were unable to get rid of all the water. It rose higher and higher until our land was covered. The pigs, cow, horse, mule and even the chickens had to be moved onto the dike. Pens were made for the pigs and chickens; the others were tied

up or left to wander. There was nowhere they could go. Our house was not built on stilts as many in Davie were, so very soon the water covered the floor. We put the piano, the beds, tables and all the furniture we could up on blocks. Planks were laid across on blocks and we could walk on them. I don't know how long the water stayed, but it was a dismal time. Food must have been low. I can remember eating lots of dasheens. They grew on the dike and were a plant very much like our ornamental elephant ears. The root is a tuber and when cooked is lavender in color, mealy and starchy, sort of like a potato. They weren't delicious, but they were filling. Then we had lots of that sauerkraut left. Sometimes we had mullet the boys caught in the canal or ditches. We got by. I remember sitting at the table in the living room, four or five of us cutting out paper dolls and playing with them. Scraps fell into the water and we left them there. My poor mother, how did she stand it? At night we got to our beds and dried our feet with towels we kept hung across the bedstead. Sooner or later, the water receded and the land dried out again.

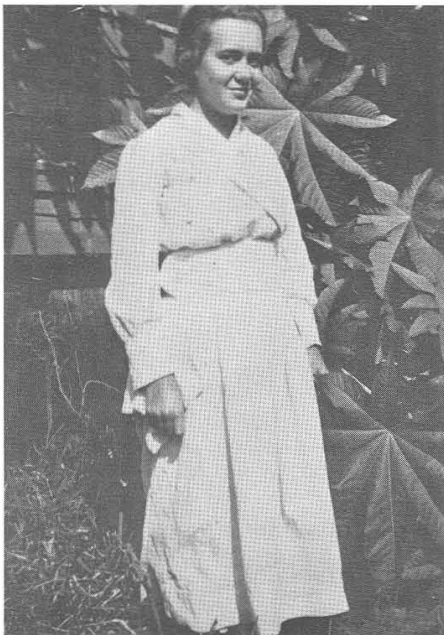
There were many snakes in Davie when we moved there. The only poisonous ones were the water moccasins. Further away, where there was sandy soil, there were rattlers, but not on our damp muck. My father killed a huge rattlesnake, about seven feet long, one Sunday afternoon while he was at a baseball game north of Davie. He brought it home for us all to see, and somehow afforded to have it skinned and tanned. It was always brought out and unrolled to display to any visitors

we had, especially any from the North. One of the children still has it, I'm sure. Dad killed it with a hoe or a rake, I'm not sure which. We all killed snakes. You saw a snake, did you holler and run and scream? Don't be silly. You looked for a stick or a hoe or whatever was handy and you beat it on the head till it died. To this day, I am not terrified of snakes as many people are. I killed too many of them as a child. Now a cockroach! That's something else again, especially when they fly.

And then the mosquitoes. They were murder during those first years. We made smudge fires but if you brought one in the house, the smoke burned eyes and throats until you'd almost rather have the mosquitoes. Our house was screened, but still they got in. We had mosquito nets over our beds. On hot nights you burned up under a net. The theory is that air comes in through the net. Have you tried it? No breeze, unless it's a gale, comes through a net. If you went outside at night (and you had to since we had no indoor bathrooms) the mosquitoes attacked you in clouds, at times almost cutting off your breath, so that you had to fan your face constantly. As the years passed and the land dried out, there were fewer mosquitoes, but as long as we lived in Davie, we always had them. It was just a part of our life.

FAMILY MATTERS

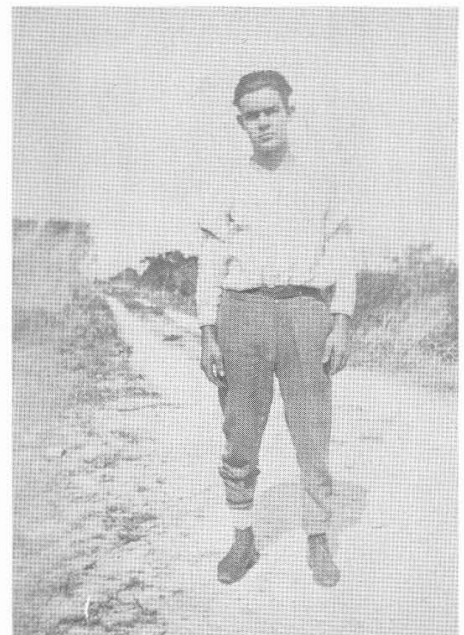
I was thirteen when my youngest sister was born. It was a sunny day in January, a Saturday, I believe, and we were planting celery. At noon we went to the house for dinner. A strange man sat in the living room and Clara, who



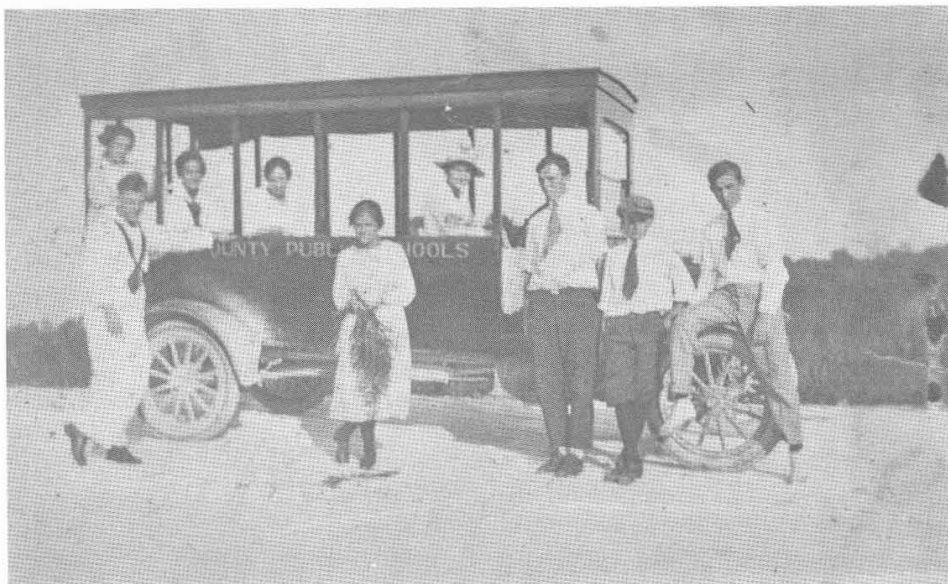
Alma Hammer, 1920.



Fort Lauderdale High School, 1920.



Clifford "Tib" Hammer, 1921.



"P.D.Q." School bus which transported students from Davie to Fort Lauderdale High School, 1919.

cooked and served the dinner that day, said it was the doctor from Dania. "Who's sick?" we asked. We NEVER had a doctor. "Mama is," Clara said, and we all wanted to know what was the matter. Mama was never sick. We were not told. That afternoon, late, when we finished for the day and came in, the doctor was gone, and we had a new baby sister. How dumb we were in those days, weren't we? A girl of 13, and I didn't even know my mother was expecting. True, she was always a little stout. I later learned our neighbor lady, who used to visit Mama nearly every day, didn't know either. I felt better. Anyway, it was wonderful to have a new baby girl to mother and to take care of and to play with. She was spoiled by all of us, but she grew up to become one of the kindest, most generous persons in the world. My mother was 45 years old when Audrey was born, the twelfth and last. There were six boys and six girls, all of us healthy and well, in spite of hardships and no luxuries to speak of.

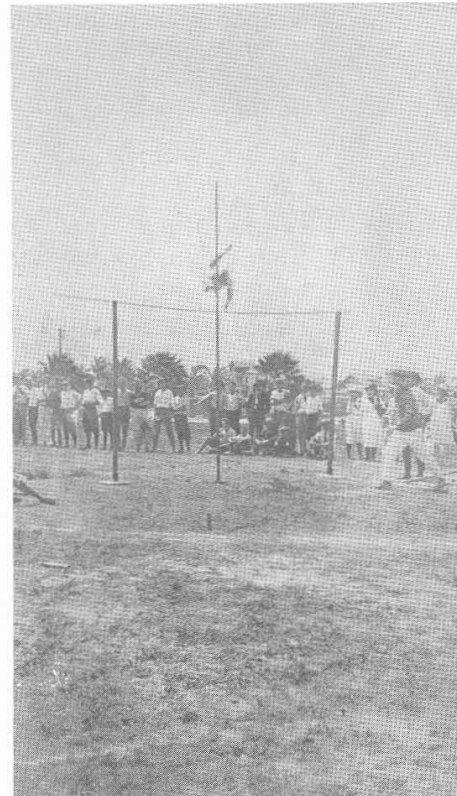
Before Audrey's birth, my sister Mary had quietly gone off to Dania and married a Davie man by the name of Owen Lloyd. She was only 17. It upset Mama considerably. Mary kept her marriage a secret for a while and continued to stay on at home, but soon a baby was coming, and it had to be told, so she moved off with Owen up to his house near the canal. Her first baby, Billy, is older than Audrey by a couple of years.

The first World War came and went. Edwin served in the Coast Guard and was stationed at Hobe Sound, Fla., patrolling the beach on a motorcycle. Paul was sent overseas to France. We

used to get the nicest, most interesting letters from him. Paul was the quiet one. He seldom said much at home, so I suppose his letters impressed me. He played a horn of some kind in the army band. He came through the war untouched and was soon home again. My memories of that war are mainly of foods, or the lack of them. We often had no sugar and had to use syrup for sweetening tea and coffee. Butter was scarce, and the margarine was white and looked like lard. It had to be colored by mixing in a little pellet of yellow coloring. Very often that part was neglected and I always hated that white margarine.

There being no high schools in Davie, we had to go by bus to Fort Lauderdale. For four years we did this. Many were the good times we had going to and from school together. One of the boys always drove the bus. If you were his girl, you shared the front seat with him. If not, you sat in the back with the others. If everyone agreed, we would stop on our way home at an orange grove and eat all the oranges we wanted. If huckleberries were in season, we stopped and picked them over across the canal in the sandy lands. Sometimes we just stopped to explore an abandoned Seminole Indian camp or anything else we came upon. The bus was fun. We were all friends, and we had good times together.

During these years, my father and my older brothers had decided that truck farming in the Glades was not for them. My brothers Henry and Paul had some knowledge of mechanics so they got jobs in Miami in garages. Dad had always known carpentering and he got work in Miami also. Edwin had mar-



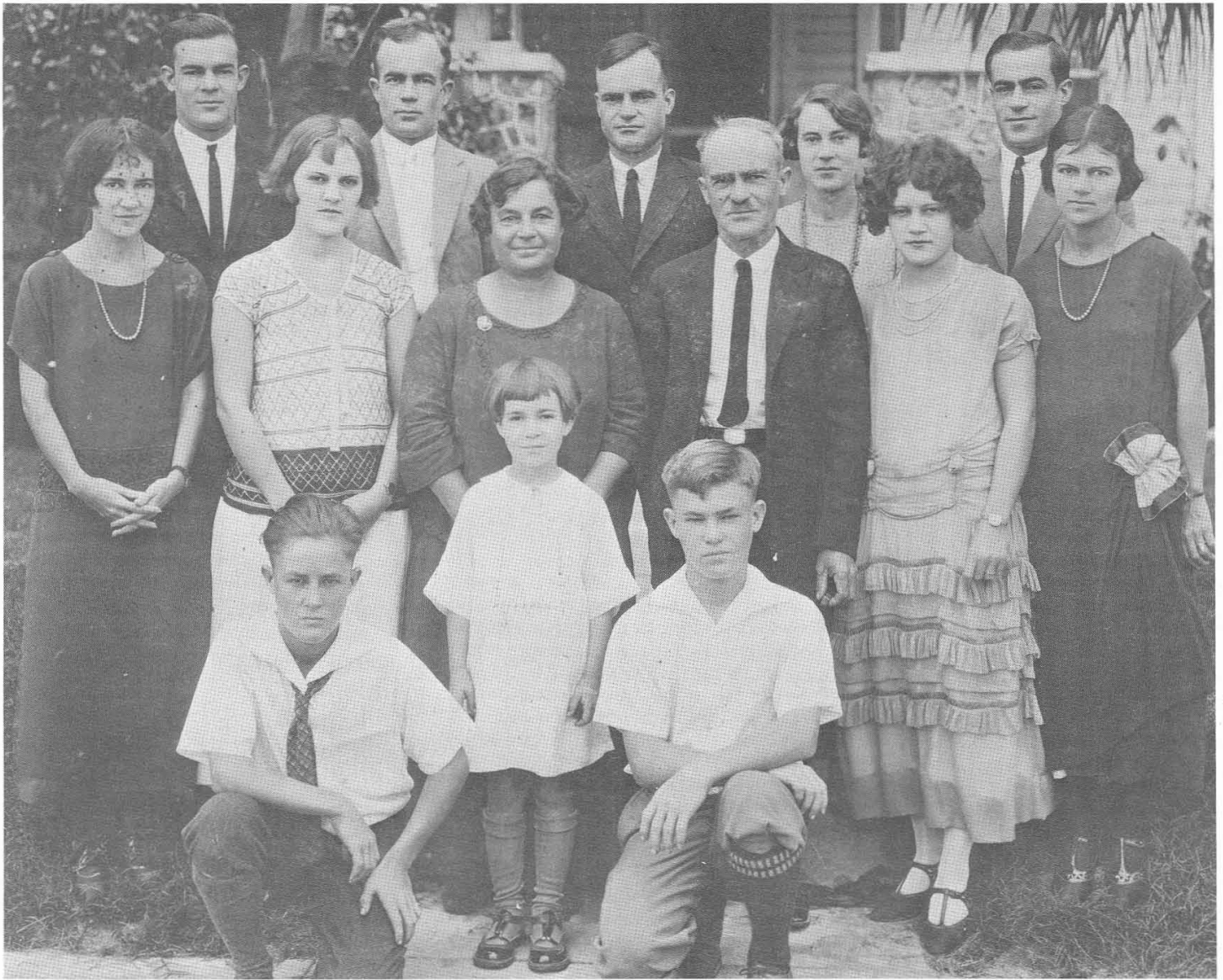
Fort Lauderdale High School track meet, 1921.

ried Bessie Hill along about 1918 or 1919 and moved to Miami, too, where her folks had moved some years before. Many people gave up in Davie and one by one they moved away. Not many of the original settlers were left.

It was decided that Mama should stay on in Davie until Alma and I finished high school. We therefore left our old farm house down on the ditch and rented a frame house nearer the town part of Davie. It was on a good rock road, more roomy and comfortable, too. We were very happy in the "Madden" house. It seemed like a palace compared to our house. It had an upstairs even, one large unfinished room that we girls all shared, except Audrey who slept in Mama's room downstairs. We all loved that room.

Clara had finished school in 1920 and taught school in Davie that next year. Then she married, very suddenly, a man who came through Davie working on a dredge in the canal — Seth "Mack" Cormack. He was considerably older than Clara and had been married before. Again, Mama was very much upset. Both Mary's and Clara's marriages turned out well. Mama was just always upset when one of us wanted to marry. Her advice always was, "I believe I'd wait a while." We always say that if Mama had had her way none of us would ever have married.

So Clara was gone, and we missed



The Hammer Family in Miami, 1923. Back row, left to right: Clifford, Paul, Ed, Mary, Henry. Middle row: Alma,

Norma, Adeline, William, Arline, Clara. Front row: Wally, Audrey, Ralph.

her. She was a wonderful older sister. Quiet and kind and helpful. She was the one who sewed for Alma and me, and when she began to earn her own money, she bought materials and made us clothes. She made our white graduation dresses and the dresses we needed for the Junior-Senior banquet. Mama could sew, too, and did. She made most of our clothes, but Clara being as young as we were, knew what we needed and liked and she did her best to supply it. Bless her. It's tough to be young and love pretty clothes and pretty things and not be able to have them. I know. I had so few even decent clothes when I was a girl. I guess Mama did the best she could, but looking back at it all, there was a lack of good management there somewhere. I do not say this to criticize. It is simply an observation and my

sisters agree with me.

So then, in June of 1921, Alma and I graduated from Lauderdale High School, a happy day, if there ever was one. I had a new white organdy dress and new shoes, and friends in Davie brought flowers to the ceremony. Our parents gave both of us a wrist watch (oh, joy!) and the climax of it all came when I was presented with a prize of a \$20 gold piece, as a reward for the highest average in our Senior Class. High school was a wonderful time for me. I shall never forget the teachers I had and loved the friends I made there. Some are already dead and gone. Some I have never laid eyes on since graduation night, but I remember them each one clearly and fondly and always shall.

We moved to Miami immediately after

graduation, renting an apartment in the southwest section. It was near the Southside School where I began to teach that same fall.

In all, we lived in Davie only eight years. As I look back, it seems much longer, such a large part of my life. I have never desired to go back there to live, although Mary and Ralph and Edwin live there now and love it, and Mama and Dad moved back there in their last years, too. It was a wonderful life as a child, but after I grew up and tried other places, I never wanted to go back. It is very much changed nowadays. It is not the same place it was 50 years ago. There are new roads, new buildings, new everything. The land isn't even the same. Now it is full of groves or sod-fields and nurseries. People do not farm as they used to. In

the early days, there was open country between the little towns of Zona, Dania, Hallandale, Ojus, Fort Lauderdale and Miami. It was a real trip to Miami, and one we seldom made. Now the towns all run together, and there are houses and buildings all over the place. I'm getting old, I realize, when I say I liked it better the way it was then. Life was harder perhaps, but simpler too, and when I observe the life of children today, including my own grandchildren, I feel sorry for them because they are missing so much of what makes life worthwhile.

This story may as well end here. It is not really a biography of my life, the purpose is mainly to tell of our pioneer days in Florida. We lived in Miami many years. It was there I met and married Bill (William) Albury in 1925. In 1929 our first daughter, Zada, was born. We went through the Great Depression years. That is a story in itself. In the midst of it, 1934, our son David was born. Soon after that, Bill went into the excursion-fishing boat business and began to make some money. We built a nice home, where we lived for 20 years, and where our last child, Roxanna, was born in 1943. This was, of course, during World War II. In 1958, Bill having retired from the boat business, we moved up the coast some 175 miles from Miami, to Indialantic where Zada had moved shortly after her marriage, and presently (1964) we are still in Indialantic and love it. Life is good at 60. The children are all married and gone to lives of their own, but we are not lonely. We have our house and another one in North Carolina for the summer. We have our church, which fills a very large part of our lives; we have friends who are dear to us, and our children and grandchildren. What more can one ask? "His mercies are new each morning." Surely, God's hand has been in it all.

Norma still lives in her home in Indialantic just a few blocks from Zada and her husband, Richard. Bill died in June 1985. David died in October 1983 after living for 15 years with a kidney transplant. Roxie and her three boys live in South Carolina. Alma, Tib and his wife Hester, and Sally, Wally's widow, live in nearby Cocoa Beach. Toodles, who lives near Atlanta, Ga., and Ralph and his wife Annie, who live in Davie, visit often. Mary still lives in Davie, also. Norma has nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren with another one on the way. She is in good health and spirits and keeps busy with china painting and church activities as well as her family. Life is still very good.

— Zada Albury Hunter, 1986

Partial Hammer Genealogy

Anton Hammer, b. 14 Jan. 1837, Ostringen, Baden, Germany; m. (1) 31 Dec. 1857, Highland, Ill., Columbina Grob; m. (2) 13 Jan. 1861, Highland, Ill., Mary Emmerita Branger Gaffner; m. (3) 30 Oct. 1867, Highland, Ill., Mary Grob (sister of first wife); d. 10 Sept. 1908, Rockville, Mo.

Children:

- (1) Frederick, b. 28 Dec. 1858, Highland, Ill.; m. 1887, Bates Co., Mo., Mary Hegnauer; d. 17 July 1942, Bates Co., Mo.
- (2) Emma b. 16 Oct. 1861, Highland, Ill.; m. 1879, Rockville, Mo., Abraham Hirschi; d. 2 Dec. 1937, Mo.
 Louise, b. 23 Dec. 1862, Highland, Ill.; m. 1890, Bates Co., Mo., Freidrick Drawe.
 Louis Leroy, b. 2 Sept. 1864, Highland, Ill.; m. 1891, Bates Co., Mo., Rose Hirni; d. 20 Sept. 1939, Olds, Alberta, Canada.
 Caroline, b. 8 March 1866, Highland Ill.; m. 1884, butler, Mo., George Gench; d. 2 March 1942, Appleton City, Mo.
- (3) John Anton, b. 17 Sept. 1868, Highland, Ill.; m. 1891, Rockville, Mo., Ida Wirtz; d. July 1943, Rockville, Mo.
 William Henry, b. 9 Oct. 1871, Bates Co., Mo.; m. 1892, Bates Co., Mo., Adeline Hirni; d. 7 Sept. 1950, Davie, Fla.

Children of William and Adeline Hammer:

William Edwin, b. 13 Dec. 1893, Bates Co., Mo.; m. 19 April 1920, Miami, Fla., Bessie Hill; d. 12 Dec. 1975, Davie, Fla.
 Paul Jacob, b. 22 Feb. 1896, Bates Co., Mo.; m. 26 March 1930, Heflin, Ala., Mavis Bean; d. 23 Oct. 1937, Davie, Fla.
 Mary Louise, b. 23 Sept. 1897, Bates Co., Mo.; m. 14 Feb. 1914, Dania, Fla., Owen Lloyd.
 Henry Hirni, b. 9 July 1899, Bates Co., Mo.; m. 16 July 1932, Miami Fla., Pauline Green; d. March 1971, Miami, Fla.
 Clara Catherine, b. 27 Sept. 1900, Bates Co., Mo.; m. 7 May 1920, Seth Cormack; d. 1 Aug. 1981, Lake Park, Fla.
 Alma Olivia, b. 24 April 1902, Olds, Alberta, Canada; m. 5 June 1927, Miami, Fla. William Fleming.
 Norma Loretta, b. 12 Sept. 1903, Olds, Alberta, Canada; m. 13 June 1925, Miami, Fla., William Albury.
 Clifford Harold, b. 25 May 1905, Olds, Alberta, Canada; m. 5 March 1934, West Palm Beach Fla., Hester Braithwaite.
 Arline Adeline, b. 2 Feb. 1907, Olds, Alberta, Canada; m. 3 May 1929, Miami, Fla., Maurice Barber.
 Ralph Rolland, b. 4 Dec. 1910, Olds, Alberta, Canada; m. 4 Nov. 1934, Davie, Fla., Anna Griffin.
 Waldin Willard, b. 6 April 1912, Olds, Alberta, Canada; m. 21 June 1932, Miami, Fla., Salatha Westberry; d. 10 Oct. 1983, Cocoa Beach, Fla.
 Wilma Audrey, b. 27 Jan. 1917, Davie, Fla.; m. 25 March 1937, Miami, Fla., Jerry Romine; d. 26 Dec. 1964, Atlanta, Ga.