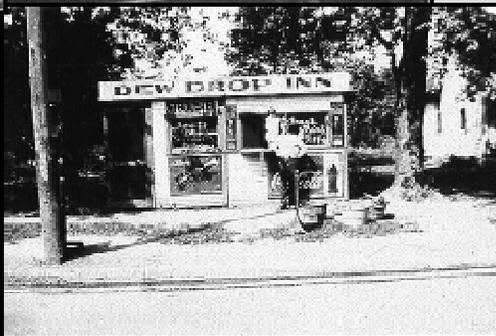


# Memories



## MEMORIES OF PEARL ERVIN WARDALL

My mother always called me “Jenny Pearle,” and Gertrude—“Gertie Trudie”, no one but my mother ever called me Jenny Pearle. Mama was a sweet, loving little woman. She never weighed more than 90 lbs. and had black hair and lovely dark grey eyes. She was devoted to the family, both her own, the Beaches and the Ervin family that she married into and all the in-laws. She always was perfectly neat and loved people and beautiful things and was always seeking knowledge. She had a splendid vocabulary and always used excellent English. Words cannot express the beauty of my Mother’s character.

### Pearle Ervin Wardall’s memories as told to her niece.



Pearle Wardall

Aunt Jenny’s album reposed on the marble top table in the Beach House parlor. Mr. Galaway gave it to her for Christmas and Mama said it was handsome and rich and made of Russian leather and it smelled nice. It had German silver mountings which consisted of the clasp and an inset braid edging also on oval silver plate on the front cover. Pearle and Gertrude thought the nicest thing about it was the clasp which snapped shut with a decided click and did make a nice noise. Aunt Jenny nearly took their heads off when she found them playing with the clasp, so they were very careful not to let her catch them at it. When company came, the girls took turns showing the album and telling the names of the people. The first was a cabinet size  $\frac{3}{4}$  length photo of Laura Moss Dainty. Some way the word just fitted the picture. A young woman in a snugly fitted satin gown, standing side view with hands loosely clasped in front of her. The lace at her neck and in the sleeves was Duchess and the gown was pink satin. Mama said she wore this gown when she played on the stage in “A Mountain Pink”. We girls were entranced when Mama would tell us about Laura Moss

who played in a stock company and was a real honest to goodness actress. You see, Mama had gone to school with her. Mama said Laura was always making up poetry and reciting it and that she just hated to sew and she would pin on her shoe buttons and put ink on her legs to hide the holes in her stockings. Laura said, “It would bow her down with woe to have to sit and meekly sew.”

Laura’s mother was a widow who had married Dr. Craft, a dentist in Tuscola, for her second husband. Her mother was a quiet, mousy little woman, who wore a black fancy cap around the house, but Dr. Craft was a character, rather short in stature, with stubby short white hair and a short beard, red face and booming voice. You liked him very much except when he was going to pull a tooth. He rented an office on the upper floor of papa’s hardware store so we knew him quite well. Laura and her stepfather didn’t care much for each other and besides there were two step brothers by this marriage and the two sets of children didn’t seem to click. When Laura was around 12 years old she went to Chicago to visit some of her own father’s relatives and dropped out of sight of Tuscola people for several years.

One day Papa came home and said that Dr. Craft told him Laura had become an actress and was traveling with a stock company playing one week stands and they seemed to consider that rather a poor life to get into. The next thing that was heard about Laura was she had married a Chicago man by the name of Mr. Dainty, who was the head man at the carpet department at Marshall Fields Store and quite a

big man for Laura Moss to land. In the course of time a little girl was born to them and they named her Louise and soon after Mr. Dainty put up the money for a stock company starring his wife and they made one week stands playing larger towns and one day they came to Tuscola – Laura Dainty’s ole home town! Pearl remembered it well. The Beach House was filled with excitement. Mr. Dainty had engaged rooms for the cast and double rooms for his wife and the baby and the colored nurse, Mam Shep as Mr. Dainty called her. Mam Shep was a colorful figure in her white cap and dress. She also acted as a maid to Mrs. Dainty. These rooms had to have wood fires. All the help was hurrying around filling water pitchers and carrying wood for the wood boxes and lamps, two at least in each room.

When the big day came, they arrived from the north on the Illinois Central Railroad and part of their trunks were taken to the Opera house and part to the hotel by Uncle Henry Capewells two wheel dray. In about two minutes after they arrived, Mrs. Dainty’s room looked like another place. Warm colorful shawls were thrown around, a large red rug on the floor (velvet carpet if you please), toilet articles out, baby in a cradle and all supervised by Mam Shep. An exciting week followed. The whole town came to see her and people from the country, too. The Company played six nights and a Saturday matinee to crowded houses. The Saturday performance was, “The Mountain Pink” and her pictures in character were sold at the door and they ran out. Oh! She had such lovely clothes and such a sweet voice and charming manners that you did not think about her not being beautiful. That red velvet carpet rug that Mr. Dainty had sent down was the first velvet carpet seen around here. The next time Pearle saw Laura Moss Dainty she had a divorce from Mr. Dainty and had married an English gentleman by the name of Pelham Anna Marie McPhearson. She and this new husband came to call on Mama after we had left the Beach House and had come to live in our own home.

After we left the Beach House and moved up to our own home at 508 North Parke St., our life changed completely. In the first place we had so much more room and so many children in the neighborhood to learn to know and to play with. Papa had George Young to help with the heavy work around the house and Mama had Minnie Cumming to do the cooking, washing and ironing and general cleaning. There was a chicken house, a big garden, a big barn with a barn loft full of hay, a corn crib, three cows in the cow barn, a pair of mules for farm work and Topsy to pull the surrey. Of course I well remembered the evenings at Grandfather’s farm and our walks down the road to the bridge across the ditch and Mr. Howell telling us about the craters on the moon. One night when we came in, Aunt Gert went into the parlor and sat down at the piano and sang to us. “The man in the moon is looking, love is looking, love, is looking, love and each little star can tell where you are, for the Man in the Moon is looking.” I always remembered those lovely moon light nights at the farm and how sweet Auntie and Aunt Gert looked in their nighties and how I would go to sleep on my knees saying my prayers and waking up in the morning in bed. When I was a big girl of 14 or so, we used to play out in the yard in the evening. One night we were sitting on the front porch with some of the neighbor children and Papa was there sitting on the wooden settee. It was a beautiful night. The moon light was very bright and the moon just sailing thru the heavens. We children brought some comforters out from the house (old ones that we used when we played house) out in the yard. We spread them out under the pear tree and flopped down on our backs to watch the moon. It looked like we could almost see around it, like a ball; the stars were brilliant; the heavens looked immense. After looking for awhile, I felt queer and got up and went and sat by Papa on the settee. Finally, I snuggled up to him and he put his arm around me and said, “What’s the matter?” I said, “I don’t know. Its scary some way and so big.” He replied, “The Bible says, ‘The Heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork.’” We kept very still and Papa hugged me tight and we felt His nearness. I have never forgotten Papa’s love and understanding.

Under the sea has come true, missiles around the earth have come true, so a trip to the moon may come true. The people on this earth are of many colors: Indians, black, white, and yellow. Perhaps the moon

and other planets have still another people that may not be as fantastic as it sounds at present. Look above.

When we went into our home at the Beach House, we were almost as private as if we were in a detached house for we lived on the west side of the hotel, downstairs. The set up was as follows: a long hall with a window at the west end, and rooms on both sides of this hall. On the front just west of the big double door that was the entrance to the Hotel was the parlor and it had three windows facing the front porch. This porch was very long. Next, came our room with a window, a door and another window all facing the front porch. Then three sample rooms each with window and door opening as ours did on to the front porch that was the end of the house on the west side of the double front doors. There on the west side, wooden steps led down into a west side yard where Gertrude and I played. It had a wooden walk and lovely maple trees. It was under this walk that led down to the men's toilet.

Now let's go inside and take a look down this west hall with the window at the end. First at the east was the lamp room, where all the coal oil lamps were filled and cleaned each morning. It was rather small with shelves for the lamps and a sink and drain board. The water had to be carried in and out in pails. So, you see, light was a big job. Next to the lamp room on the north side of the hall was Grandma Beach's room. Its door opened into the hall almost across from our hall door. Grandma's room had two windows on the north which faced on an open court between the main house and the girl's house. Between the two houses Gertrude and I had a hammock that my father had made out of barrel staves and wire. It was very large. Going west down the hall was Aunt Jenny's room with two windows on the north looking out on the open court and a door into the hall. Her room was a lovely one and larger than Grandmother's and her room also had a door between Aunt Jen's room and Grandmother's. Finally, next to Aunt Jenny's room going west was the Store Room, a most wonderful place containing all kinds of good things: cracker barrels, flour barrels, sugar barrels, and dried fruit of all kinds, tea boxes, coffee, raisins, and nuts in a barrel. Everything to cook with except meats. This was a long way from the kitchen and dining room and made lots of trotting back and forth. Builders did not think much of the big work involved in the old days. The parlor, front and back, was a delightful room and there were folding doors on the west end of the back parlor that opened into our room. This parlor was used as a gathering place for both men and women in the evenings.



This picture was taken by a man from Mattoon, IL. Pearle was about thirty-eight years old at that time. Gertrude gave her the dress which was white net. Pearle's Uncle Rice Ervin and Uncle John Ervin's elevator and the Illinois Central Railroad are in the far right of the picture. The barn on the left burned down in later years. The old picket fence in the rear kept the two horses, Queen and Duke, out of the garden plot. This was a large patch of corn flowers in many brilliant colors.



Mary's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday

**MARY TEETERS** - My story of Tuscola starts in 1933, that is the year I graduated from Tuscola High School. It was the building on the corner of Sale St. and Niles Ave. that later became North Ward Grade School. In 1933 kids walked to school. They didn't own their own cars like today. There were two elementary schools at the time - the old North Ward on N. Court St. and the South Ward on South Niles Ave. The old North Ward was torn down in the 50's and the South Ward was torn down to make way for condominiums in the 90's.

The same year, I married Albert Teeters. We rented our first home for \$10.00 a month, which amounted to a full week's pay! Fortunately, everything was much cheaper then. In 1939, we bought a double lot at 206 E. Barker for \$300.00.

There was a large building on the lot that we tore down. Much of the lumber was used to build the home where I still live today. In those days, on Saturdays, you could buy 3 pounds of ground beef for 25 cents and veal chops or veal steaks were 19 cents a pound. For a nickel you could get a loaf of day old bread at Fullerton's Bakery.

There were a lot of grocery stores to pick from in down town Tuscola. Howard and Weaver, Hackleman's, A&P, and the Grab-It-Here are four that I remember. On south Main St. where First Federal is now, Bruce Williams had a "Dew Drop Inn" grocery. Some of these stores even had delivery service at no extra charge! Among the other businesses in downtown, there were at least two hardware stores: H. Ray Warren's and Tudor's. In addition, there were Gates, Buehrig and Sturgell's Jewelry stores.

In the early years, I remember one of the things to do on Saturday was to take your car downtown and park it, walk home and then walk back up town in the evening. By doing that you were assured of a good parking place. You could sit in your car, walk around the block as many times as you wanted, go to different stores and visit with people. Back then, you knew just about everyone you would see on the street or in the stores. J. R. North's Furniture store was a popular place to go, because he had television sets which were the newest and greatest thing. He always tried to sell one to you! Or you could check out the new cars at Frank Warren and Dewey Parker's Chevrolet dealership located where Kelsey's Furniture store is now. I also remember a restaurant called Baldwin's and of course, Gus's Kandy Kitchen where we usually ended up before heading home for the night.

Tuscola was noted for its Homecomings. There were held every summer in the north end of Ervin Park. In addition to a carnival, the main entertainment was one of the Big Bands. Some of the notable names to appear were Eddie Howard, Lawrence Welk, Tommy and Jimmie Dorsey, Tiny Hill and Harry James! A very large wooden dance floor was laid out in sections under a huge tent. We would dance the night away! There were also band concerts at other times during the summer in the band stand which is the second floor of the brick restroom building. At the north end of the park was a concrete amphitheater where many different types of performances were held. As late as the early 60's some 4-H events were held there.

Besides all the good times, there were some really bad times, too. In particular, there were some really big fires, which, for some reason always seemed to happen on holidays. Among these were the George Moore building which was in the area where the Community Building is now, the Strand Theater in downtown Tuscola near where the Journal Office is, the Elks Club on South Central and the Douglas Hotel where Festival Plaza is. Siebold's Florist and Greenhouse was located on South Main where Casey's is. On the night it burned, the Mason's were meeting. Dean Zeigler, a Mason and a volunteer fireman came to the fire and fought it in his tuxedo. Another bad fire that had a real effect on me was the one at the end of Sale St. that is now a parking lot next to the Senior Citizen's Building. It happened in 1963 on a Sunday at about 5:00 A.M. And, it was -5 degrees! My husband, Albert, was on

the nozzle. Water and below zero temperatures are a bad combination! He fell on the ice and broke his leg in two places. The fire, along with Albert's accident made the Chicago paper! He continued to be a volunteer fireman and didn't retire until he had been a member for more than forty years. As they are now, the Tuscola firefighters were a very dedicated lot.



**Mary, Jim, Carol and Albert  
Christmas 1952**



**Carol Teeters – 1966  
Tuscola Warrior Mascot**



**Albert and Mary's 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary – 1983**  
Albert, Mary, Carol Teeters Humphries and Jim Teeters  
Forty Martyrs Church Hall

## DON WALKER'S MEMORIES



Don Jr., Don and Cloe Walker



Reta and Joe Headrick

Donald graduated from Tuscola Community High School in 1947 and retired from USI after 35 years of service. Cloe ran a day care center for 35 years and retired in 1989. Donald Jr. has been in business at Suntana (Rt. 36 and Main St.), Ollies Lounge – 1988 and Rumors.

Don's memories are:

A gas station and bulk plant at the corner of Rt. 45 and North Line Road. Also, at the corner, Les Fry operated a restaurant and gas station.

Going south on Rt. 45, Duane Otto had a Conoco gas station and grocery store.

Between the overhead bridge on Rt. 45 and the Underpass of Rt. 36, Gene Snuffin ran a station and in later years, Gene and wife, Letha, had a restaurant on Rt. 36 where Ida's Flower Shop was at one time in the 50's.

Cooper's Airport was on the corner of Rt. 36 and Rt. 45 where the trailer court is now. That is where I took my first plane ride.

Paul Hendrickson had a welding and an implement shop right beside Cooper Airport south on Rt. 45.

On the corner of Rt. 36 and Main St. was a Sinclair Station.

Across the street going east was a Texaco Gas Station.

East of the station on Rt. 36 was the Tastee Freeze operated by the Thompson's.

East of the Tastee Freeze was the Poplar Motel with several small cabins.

Across the street south on Rt. 36 was a huge brick building – a Mickey McDonald Club.

I remember Tom VanVoorhis was the bookkeeper for Rayburns when their roof collapsed.

I am happy to have had the opportunity to see our son, Don Jr. have businesses in the same town that I grew up in. Also, to have seen my brother-in-law, Joe Headrick, to have been in business at the Shell Oil and now his wife, Reta, with J & R Fresh Air. I am also grateful for the happy days that I spent with all the great fellows that I worked for, but sad to see so many businesses up in smoke like the G. E. Moore building, Strand Theater and the Hotel.

## **WILLIAM McCARTY**

I was born January 10, 1931 to William and Frae Thompson McCarty and because the county hospital was closed during the Depression of the 1930's, Dr. Lollar delivered me at our home at 604 E. Sale St. Behind my grandmother's home at 600 E. Sale St., a large white barn was built in the late 1800's. The logs that were used to build it were hauled from Oakland by a mule by my dad and his brother who were in their early teens. I have fond memories of the barn because it always housed a milk cow and my horses.



**604 E. Sale St.**



**600 E. Sale St.**



**Behind 600 E. Sale St.**

Growing up in the '30s and '40s, the farm economy was the life blood of Tuscola. My dad was a farmer who lived in town and also served as a county supervisor for almost 40 years. In my younger years, a lot of time was spent at the farm riding horses, fishing and hunting. I also enjoyed going to the Court House with Dad when he was taking care of county business.

As I grew older, a lot of my time was spent playing football, basketball and baseball in the fields and backyards in the neighborhood until organized school sports began in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. My grandparents had moved the family to Tuscola from rural Filson because Tuscola had an outstanding school system, and my parents always taught me to be proud of our schools and the education offered to me. In my parent's day, there was a large population of well respected Negroes who lived in Tuscola, but later it had dwindled to just a few families. Two of the most notable younger people who attended Tuscola schools went on to achieve acclaim in the music profession, and we were all so proud of them. Bruce Hayden played the violin and Pete Bridgewater played jazz.

It is hard to imagine now, but during the Depression and World War II eras the east-west railroads seemed to divide Tuscola. As a 4<sup>th</sup> grader at the former North Ward School on Ensey and Court Streets, my buddies and I decided to challenge the South Ward boys to a basketball game up there. We charged 5 cents admission to everyone. The dust up there was awful, but North Ward won the game. With the proceeds we received from our athletic venture, we bought a book and gave it to the Library. Later in high school, we were all close friends and played on the same team for Tuscola.



**Top:** G. Hill, B. Fleming, B. McCarty, P. Van Winkle, L. Hanners, M. Sanderson, J. Harbaugh, J. Hackett, J. Hendrickson, B. Jones, B. Norvell, J. McNeely, J. Finley,  
**3<sup>rd</sup> row:** Mr. Doolittle, G. Taylor, E. Reeder, B. Stufflebam, L. Blaase, W. Meyer, C. Waters, J. Bowles, R. Helm, P. Shields, H. Foster, Mr. Johnson  
**2<sup>nd</sup> row:** E. Kleiss, E. Lucas, D. Harting, D. Dietrich, G. Brady, G. Freche, J. Donnals, D. Hill, D. Ware, R. Schrader  
**1<sup>st</sup> row:** N. Wingler, W. Timm, G. Leonard, B. Matthews, L. Conner, J. Williamson, J. Scott, D. Rutan, M. Suddith

The Depression years brought many interesting people to our small town. When it would start to get dark, we loved to go out to the east end of town along the railroad tracks and sneak up on the hobos. We would watch them as they sat around their fires fixing some food, drinking their whiskey to keep warm and talking in hushed tones. It was always an exciting escapade for the young boys of Tuscola.

Another group that visited us was the Gypsies who came wandering into town looking for work and food. They often overstayed their visits by breaking into people's homes and stealing whatever was in sight, so they promptly had to be escorted back out of town. Although I never saw it, I was told stories of the Ku Klux Klan's activities of burning crosses on the lawns of people with whom they found disfavor. One incident ended in the death of the poor soul they attempted to tar and feather, and after that, the Klan disbanded.

With no TV or computers, most of our youth activities were outside. We loved the outdoors and how free we were to roam the town. I remember one Sunday in particular when I returned home following an afternoon shooting rats at the local dump. My parents were having their anniversary party with the men sitting around listening to the Chicago Bears on the radio when suddenly the game was interrupted. As I entered I sensed something was really serious. It was December 7, 1941. That night I slept with my BB gun and the next day all Boy Scouts were stationed on both sides of the Route 45 overpass to watch for Japanese airplanes. We really believed that we could be attacked. It was a long war, and when it ended the celebrations downtown lasted all night. It was a great feeling. The whole town was one family and so happy to have the war over.

It was always an exciting event when the circus came to Tuscola. Most often it came by train and unloaded early in the morning. We all got up at 5 AM to see the sights and watch the elephants work setting up the circus at the end of the park. We also had wonderful Homecoming celebrations each summer when the best dance bands and free acts in America came to Tuscola to entertain us in the amphitheater in the park. This structure had been built during the Depression by men who were paid by the U. S. government (WPA). These same men put in our brick streets and first sewer system as well.

When I left Tuscola for college and then the army, I had no thoughts of settling down here for the rest of my life. I met Carol Carlson a coed from Chicago, and while I was in service we were married in Stuttgart, Germany. My mother had written to us about the chemical complex coming to Tuscola and how the community was growing. We returned in 1956; I started working at the Tuscola National Bank and began a family of four children.

As a boy growing up in Tuscola, I was always pleased that neighbors were like family and Sunday church was not an option. Later in life, as I was away at college and the army, I learned that some people didn't like small towns because they are so "tight knit." When my dad passed away suddenly, I was 16 years old and within the hour friends and neighbors appeared at our door with food and comfort. So, I love a small town for being "tight knit" and the feeling of family that has always given me a sense of security.

Tuscola is still a great rural community. All the developments that have taken place over these many years have most often enhanced our lifestyle and reflected our values. The logic of living here is simple: "These are good people here. Most of all, they have a minute for you, even if it takes an hour."



**Bill and Carol McCarty Family – 2005**

Top row: Rob Judson, Thomas Wilson, Bill and Carol McCarty, Matt McCarty, Bill McCarty III

3<sup>rd</sup> row: Kim Judson, Ryan and Kris Wilson, Heather and Dylan McCarty, Jennifer McCarty

2<sup>nd</sup> row: Karin, Kristin and Matthew Judson

1<sup>st</sup> row: James and Will McCarty, Caitlin McCarty, Lucas Wilson

## Memories of R. R. Smith, D.V.M.

Tuscola, IL, you can call it a village, town, 61953, city, hamlet, 217-253-XXXX, or a wide spot in the road, but we call it home. To be sure it is a community in every sense of the word. There is much to talk about after being a citizen here for 50 or more years, but the important thing we want to say is thanks for being here at all.

When we first moved here, Rt. #36 was half brick and half oil (dirt covered with oil.) The brick so farmers could bring their crops to the elevators and oil to go home because they didn't need such a good road without their load. Upon first looking at the city map, one street stood out "Embarras," now that seems funny to an outsider until, I learned how it is pronounced.

We were told that Tuscola was a cold place to get acquainted; however, that didn't turn out to be the case for us. We found our church and soon were accepted by all. Since, we have been able to raise our four daughters to adulthood namely Diane Wimam, Paula Thomas, Holly Smith, and Laurie Laley. Living in Tuscola was never a problem as far as security was concerned; in fact when our cousins, nieces, and nephews came to visit they were always happy to be able to walk to the park to swim. They found it hard to believe - that didn't an adult protector have to go with them? I think about that sometimes as I walk downtown to my coffee group; we are protected by an excellent police department. It takes a long time to walk that mile to the coffee shop and back, for there are many friendly people to talk and wave to. You know we are a small enough settlement that everyone knows your face and license plate number. Speaking of numbers, we use to have operators on the telephones and no dial just tell them 282 or 356 red, simple and quick. If we expected a call, we would tell the operator where we could be reached and they would plug us through. I think being a Veterinarian, on call might have helped in that regard.

One thing we wanted to change after being here a few years, was to see about getting some paved streets, curbs, and sidewalks. Through some strange quirk, I was asked to be on the city council. Thus, we decided we could help out by doing our part. That began 24 years of invigorating experiences. I was asked more than a few times, by the citizenry, "don't you lose business by being in city government?" I always answered "yes, but for everyone that went out the door because of it, one came in for the same reason." That is one quality in Tuscola that is outstanding. They are a forgiving people and don't stay upset for long and heal over quickly. There are several good service groups in town and people that accept the responsibilities required.

Now, that I look back on it, we made a good choice coming to this place. Now instead of a one-lane road coming into town, we have a four-lane paved U. S. Route 36 through and still another U. S. Route 45 plus Interstate 57. Also, don't forget the sometime bothersome railroads, three to be exact. You know those things that block the way when you think you are in a hurry. Should you go down a block or two to see if it is blocked or sit there and count the cars on the track in front of you?

Of course, I can't complain because we picked Tuscola; it didn't pick us. When we got out of school and were looking for a place to start practice, we listed churches, schools, and friendly town to raise a family, as our needs. On Easter Sunday in 1949, I came to look over the town and Mary (my wife) being expectant stayed in Michigan. I was staying at the Douglas Hotel and a gentleman came to meet me, Dr. Gillespie by name. When he greeted me he said, "I understand you are coming here to practice Veterinary medicine." I replied affirmatively to which he said, "there is not much livestock here anymore, you might starve." I told him, "I don't eat much; I don't know about you." You see he was a short, portly man compared to a young 26-year-old, of string bean stature. He stood up, extended his hand and said, "we will get along just fine young man," and we did for ten or more years till his death. That Easter afternoon I went to Ervin Park. While I was there, I watched as kids were screaming all

over, trying to find the most hidden Easter eggs. That night I called home to Mary in Michigan and said, “this is the place - a family town, good churches, good school system and above all, good people.” Thus we have been blessed to be a part of this area.

**R. R. Smith D.V.M. and Mary, Diane, Paula, Holly and Laurie**

Mary’s note: The Smiths have been very active in the community. Mary in the Jarman Hospital Auxiliary, M. O. P. S. (Mothers of preschool children) after school reading classes, SAM Pantry (Social Assistance Ministry), Peace Meals and numerous other committees at Tuscola United Methodist Church. Mary has also been on the Tuscola City Library Board for the last 15 years. Bob in the mean time was busy serving on the board of the Chamber of Commerce, 50 year member of Masonic bodies, board of Methodist Church, Board of Trustees Methodist Church, Douglas County Animal Control Administrator (35 years), alderman ward #3 (24 years) and practicing Veterinary Medicine (39 years). We raised our daughters: Diane Wiman (deceased age 44), Paula Thomas, Holly and Laura Laley because we knew Tuscola would be a great place and it rewarded us well and we are thankful.



**Bob and Mary**



**Paula, Laura, Diane and Holly  
Mary and Bob**



**Dennis and Jeanine (Huber) Dietrich**

**Dennis was the first recipient of the  
Tuscolian of the Year - 1966**

Dennis was born in rural Tuscola and Jeanine was born at Jarman Hospital. Both attended Tuscola High School and graduated in 1950. Dennis joined the Navy in 1951 and served on an air craft carrier during the Korean War. Dennis and Jeanine were married in 1953. They raised five children: Doug and Donna of Tuscola, Denise of Mansfield, Dirk in Minnesota and David-deceased. They have eight grand daughters and 1 step grandson.

Denny was the Douglas County coroner from 1980-1994. He was Fire Chief from 1961-1994 and Director of the Douglas County Emergency Services and Disaster Agency. He was also the cemetery sexton from 1986-1994. Dennis served as President of the Douglas County Fireman Association and was a member of the Douglas County 911 Commission along with starting the first rescue squad in central Illinois. Both are members of Forty Martyrs Catholic Church.

In 1937 after Helen Vickroy returned to Tuscola after attending Champaign Commercial College, she made \$1.00 a day plus meals waiting tables at Baldwin's Café on Sale St. In 1938 Helen and Dean Ziegler were married. They had three daughters, Ruth Ann, Joan and Deanna. While the girls were young, Helen became acquainted with Bruce and Blanche Weatherford and started picking 1,000 chickens a day along side Blanche. They would start at 6:30 or 7:00 A.M. and work until 5:00 or 6:00 P.M. After they got a picking machine, they could easily pick 100 to 150 chickens a day. Dean worked for C. A. Vest at the Case Implement store and later Everett Kerns in his welding shop during the war. Dean later opened his own place with a Maytag franchise. After twenty years or so, Dean sold out the Maytag business and went to work for Frank Michener at Jones Lumber. Helen retired from the poultry business and went to work steaming hams at Bill Byers; locker for about ten years. After Dean's death, Helen was elected Douglas County Treasurer where she served for many years.



**Helen Ziegler**

**FROM: MARY ILES CARMACK**

**PERSONS RELECTING THE TOWN WE LOVE**

Mrs. D. H. Wamsley nee Partridge who was an accomplished pianist from Chicago, married a Douglas County judge, D. H. Wamsley. She adapted to the small town and gave very generously of her time and talent. She was the Methodist Church organist for years. This involved many hours of practice with choirs and special music. She created an Evening Department of the Woman's Club for younger women who worked or were at home caring for children. She organized the young children in her neighborhood into "music clubs." Her original poem, "An Evening Walk", was honored by the General Federation of Woman's Clubs. There was a Music Department of the Woman's Club and she planned excellent programs and encouraged all to participate in a chorus that sang for civic occasions.

Mrs. Harley Helm –Doris Lowe – came to Tuscola from Kewanee to teach English in the high school. She married Judge Harley Helm. Her husband was killed in an auto accident and she was hurt with physical problems that lasted the rest of her life. She accepted what happened and was a teacher at heart for the rest of her life. She was a Bible student and shared this with the Woman's Club and Methodist Church classes. She wrote the script for a verse speaking choir that gave programs for the community.



**FROM: ROSEMARY OVERTURF NUSSEL COX**

**MY TUSCOLA HIGH SCHOOL CONNECTION**

I suppose you'd have to say that Tuscola High School is my closest connection to Tuscola. I've never lived at such an address. For 52 years I've been in the original old brick house at Patterson Springs with a Camargo address and before that, when I was growing up, I lived south of Camargo, with a Camargo rural address.

Not only did I attend Tuscola High School but all of my parents' siblings, but one, a total of 6 in the Martin Rice family: Mac, Ray, Percy, David, Mary (my mother) and Paul and all in the William Overturf family, my Dad, Tracy, his sisters: Gertrude, Nettie, Doris and Janet attended Tuscola High School, many of them driving a horse and buggy and/or riding the train from Camargo to Tuscola. Being a non-high school district, my brother, William Overturf, and I, Rosemary Overturf (Nussel/Cox) were driven in daily (later, drove ourselves) from our farm south of Camargo. Part of the time, as was true of some of my Rice uncles and my mother, I stayed with my great-aunt, Josie Rice Goff, a pioneer in women's rights. She was a confidante of many of the men running the affairs of the city of Tuscola and served on the original Jarman Hospital Board.

My experience in high school couldn't have been happier or more rewarding. To begin my freshman year I only knew three of my schoolmates, "Spud" Parker, a son of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Parker (he of the wonderful baritone voice and she, the image of a perfect lady), Jane Neal, a fellow piano student of Mrs. Zay Wamsley (her husband was Judge Wamsley of Douglas Co.), and Mary Iles (Carmack) whom I met when she performed one of her contest pieces at our Camargo Methodist Church. Her beautiful voice, as well as her special presentation, made me remember her with fondness and to this day the admiration continues. She is a very special person, as so many Tuscola residents can attest, because of her many acts of kindness..... Mary and I have remained close friends throughout the years, rooming together when we attended school in Champaign, during our dating years, through married life, and now, as widows. Our friendship knows no bounds and has existed for over 70 years.

Before I matriculated at Tuscola High School I had been watching local newspapers to discover that one of the outstanding students, (so far as grades were concerned), was Karl Erhardt, and he would be in my class. (Karl later became an anesthesiologist and lived in Whittier, CA.) It was my goal to make the same or better grades than he and we remained friends and competitors throughout those four years. Debating was my forte and I will ever be grateful to Mrs. Bertha Flack, for her leadership and encouragement. (She gave her debate students a love, or at least a professed love, for green olives. They were served on every special occasion.) My first year English teacher, Miss Inez Weed, let me know that discipline was important and the subject even more so. She gave each of her students a "D" on the second day of class because she had casually mentioned on the first day that there would be a test the following day and no one believed her or studied for it. Miss Grace Moore inspired me to compete in speech contests and perform in school plays and I'll forever be appreciative of Miss Louise Frantz, the Home Ec teacher who, not only showed me how to make an apron (mine wasn't very well constructed) but let me know about the great painters and artists of the world. Miss Alberta Magnuson taught me the basics of typing, a skill I've used throughout my life, and Miss Harriet Sluss gave me the grade of 100, on my first Latin test, which definitely boosted my ego, (and perhaps, my status) as an unknown student in freshman Latin. Miss Miriam Beall was my PE teacher, (she later married Palmer S. Cox, who was the Ag teacher at the time.) Because teachers couldn't continue teaching if they got married, Miriam had to resign from her position, but later went back, when rules were relaxed, and taught the same subject several years later. Miss Dorothy Deer, the biologist, made looking at trees, flowers, insects and weeds, more than a "walk in the park." All of these teachers and so many others, outstanding and dedicated, were on the staff of Tuscola High School during my years, 1931-1935. Mr. Guy Collins, Superintendent, and Mr. Ray Wulliman, Principal, did their best to keep all the students under control (a difficult job even then) and they were able to do so mostly because we respected their authority and positions.

All of these experiences and the many friends I made during my high school years, as well as the years since, have made a major part of both my heart and soul connected to the City of Tuscola.



**Ursula Nell Smith, nee Jones, nee VanVoorhis** was born at 300 E. Sale St. in Tuscola on January 5, 1892. She was the youngest daughter of Charles J. and Ursula G. Ervin Jones. Her father was the son of Owen J. and Catherine Stadden Jones. Owen Jones owned 940 acres of land, having acquired the holdings after moving to Douglas County from Licking County, OH in 1854. The son, Charles, owned substantial amounts of land in Douglas County also. Charles had brothers: Carroll, Harry and Sherwood. Two other children in the Owen Jones family died while young.

Ursula G. Ervin Jones, mother of Mrs. Smith, was one of nine children born to Mr. and Mrs. William B. Ervin. This family, originally from Hillsboro, Oh., came to Tuscola in 1865 the day Abraham Lincoln died. The family located on what was the farm of Fred Bass and eventually acquired extensive land holdings.

Children in the William Ervin family included Sally, who married Thomas McIlvaine, a postmaster in Tuscola; Anna, who remained with her parents; Ursula, who married Charles D. Jones; Nathaniel (Grat) Ervin, who died in the flu epidemic of 1916; Rice and John Ervin, who established an elevator which was the forerunner of the Tuscola Co-operative Grain Company; James Ervin, a successful farmer; and Brown and Sam Ervin, who were in an early hardware business in Tuscola. Pearle Wardall, who died September 25, 1971, was a daughter of Samuel Ervin. Her mother, Elizabeth Beach was a

member of the family of Henry Beach. Elizabeth's parents were owners of the famous and grand "Beach House" hostelry which was in Tuscola and which burned October 8, 1917. Mrs. Wardall was a cousin of Mrs. Smith and was the only close relative in this area.

Nell Jones attended Tuscola high school and graduated in 1911. She went to Washington, D. C. where she attended and graduated from the National Park Seminary, a four-year finishing school.

Miss Jones and Willis E. VanVoorhis were married at the Presbyterian Church in Tuscola by Dr. E. L. Lord on September 29, 1915. N. B. Ervin, her uncle, gave her hand in marriage. Mr. Ervin died the next year and his will provided 24 acres be given to the city of Tuscola for a park, the present Ervin Park.

Willis VanVoorhis was on the staff of Bragg, Helm and Company (later Tuscola National Bank) for a great many years. He retired to oversee his farm interests but served as bank director for many years. He died of a heart attack while in the yard at his home on October 12, 1964.

Mrs. VanVoorhis later married Richard Rice Smith on July 21, 1965 in Blue Island. Mr. and Mrs. Smith formed the Dicknell Corporation and developed several enterprises. Mr. Smith died June of 1971, two days after suffering a stroke.

Ursula Nell Jones VanVoorhis Smith, 80, 501 East Sale St., Tuscola died at Jarman Memorial Hospital at 5:45 P.M. Saturday evening, September 30, 1972. Funeral services were held October 2<sup>nd</sup> at Waddington Funeral Home. Wallace Wadland of Youngstown, OH and Warren Furnish of Tuscola officiated. Ruth Slaughter was at the organ.

The ball bearers were David Rice Jr., William Huber, William McCarty, Harrison McCown, Earl Van Steenhuyse, Paul Flesor, George Hillard, and John King.

The honorary ball bearers were Kenneth Ring, James Greathouse, Maurice Little, Charles Albin and Ralph Kleinmeyer.

## Reminiscences of Tuscola during the 1860's

Written by Mrs. W. R. Johnson

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of March, 1861, we arrived in Tuscola. While coming from Mattoon a severe wind storm came in contact with the train, the forces of the storm so great, the Engineer was compelled to stop running the cars for fear of an accident, until the fury of the elements had subsided. Finally, the conductor called out "Tuscola"; we had reached our destiny. We stepped down from the train on a narrow board and I saw the train speeding on its way taking my trunks along, as the baggage man had neglected to put them off. The surrounding view suggested a boat, but instead there was in waiting an old fashioned stage coach with four horses hitched to it. Coach horses and all were half buried in water and mud. The driver was mounted on his seat high and dry, while we were obliged to get down (I hardly know how) off a platform of a small board depot. Ready! Started, the water and mud came rushing in until we were forced to put our feet on the seats. The mud looked so much like tar that I was sure that my traveling outfit would be entirely ruined. After a hard pull for the horses we reached the hotel now called "Cook House," then kept by Mr. Elkins. We met a very damp reception on account of two of three families who were moving and were out at the time of the storm, therefore brought a large portion of the effects into the hotel.

Still raining, beginning to count the days that rain had already been falling profusely, there seemed to come a thought the Lord had proclaimed a flood as of old, and who would be the Noah to build the ARK?

In the regular course of time Sunday came and it had stopped raining for a short time. As our usual custom we prepared to attend the Divine Services. I noticed the people smile and say it was awfully muddy, but by the aid of a cob walk and a few boards, we arrived safely at the one story one room building, now remodeled for a dwelling, first house east of Baptist Church.

At the services that day we met a bride and groom, Dr. and Mrs. Reat. Also, there was another bride and groom, Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Madison. Anyone can easily tell that we were brides for we were "dressed up" beside others who were there. Not that day, but the next Sabbath, we returned to the same place to a union or missionary Sunday. Dr. Reat was superintendent, William Reed (Mrs. Joe Cannon's brother) held some office, I would say general assistant. The next Sabbath we attended services at the Court House. We had to go a long way around to get there for we were compelled to follow the cob walk.

Early in the summer of 1861 the first Douglas County Sunday School convention was held in Camargo in the company of Rev. G. D. Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Daggy, and Mrs. Vanderen. We went over in a lumber wagon. The convention was a success we thought.

In June or July of 1861 a teacher's institute was held in Tuscola in the old court house. Mr. Frank Lamb County Superintendent of Public Schools attended and about 8 or 10 other persons. W. P. Cannon was appointed critic. While taking notes, he sat with his feet on a table as was probably his usual position, especially while performing the duty of critic. The first examination for certificates for teachers was held in the Hotel parlor.

When the spring days began to exert their influence over land and sea and the prairie flowers pink and white and later blue violets and purple sweet Williams were in bloom, all nature seemed beautiful. Early in the morning prairie chickens could be heard for miles croaking in their sonorous tones, the quails, snipes, and meadow larks and perhaps many other species of birds joined in the chorus. There were also wild ducks and wild geese and were still a few deer left for the hunters to chase and foxes and prairie wolves in abundance. It seemed after all that this might be the paradise of the West. There was scarcely a shrub or tree between Tuscola and the timber each way.

In the early days of Tuscola, or beginning of the town, we had saloons. There were two or we might say three classes, one kept by an Irishman and patronized by the “baddies on the railroad” and others who not for reputation, another was established for the sole purpose of selling the goods pertaining to a saloon. “No loafing or gambling allowed” Everything looked clean and attractive, and if you could get a glimpse inside for the screen you would see pictures on the walls and a genteel looking man behind the counter. The third had furnishings necessary for card playing and other modes of gambling. The first mentioned we literally erased by man force, by throwing eggs at the front while in the rear, the door was broken in and every drop of liquor poured out. He never opened up for business here again. Other saloons were finally closed by vote of citizens. To show that we were not afraid to speak our sentiments on Temperance, I will tell you this little story. Mrs. Vanderen was passing one of the saloons, near the door, a drunk man lay across the walk. She called to the saloon-keeper that his sign had fallen down. Surprised, he came out to look for his sign. She pointed to the drunk man!

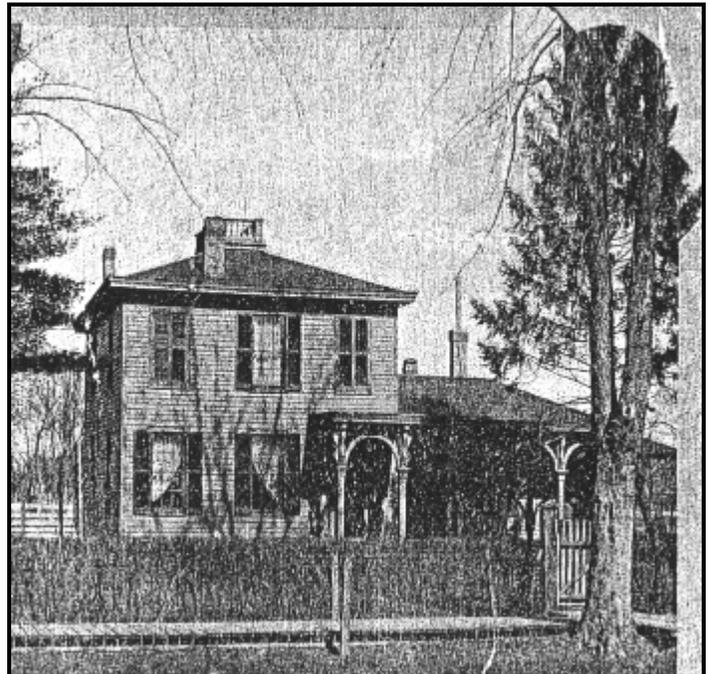
At the hotel, soon after our arrival, there was a reception given principally that the brides and grooms could get socially acquainted with each other and that others who had previously resided here, some whom had withstood the wind, water and mud for one and two years. Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Maris and Mr. and Mrs. Albert Woody were of the class of brides and grooms, besides those already mentioned. The grooms had evidently taken the advice of Greely and come west to grow up with the country, but some of the brides thought they would be more likely to sink in the mud. Among the young people whom I remember were Mrs. James E. Calloway afterwards Captain Calloway, Joe Cannon, O. S. Boggs, Mr. Ford, Mr. Houston, and Ladies - Miss Mollie Reed, Miss Jennie Elkin, Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Daggy. There were guests invited from Camargo and Newman, in the afternoon of the day of the party. I remember seeing a wagon driver in front of the Hotel with six mules hitched to it and five or six and perhaps more persons seated in the wagon bed. (I assume on straw) The ladies were Miss Molly McCallister from north of Newman from what is now known as the Culbertson Farm, Mrs. Dr. McKinney and Mrs. W. H. Lamb and their husbands and two or three other gentlemen.

We also had festivals, a means to collect money for different purposes and also to promote sociability. There was one given at Camargo and as many as could get a way to go, went over. We went in company with Mr. Wallace and family. The Tuscola Brass band went. The leader of the band was H. C. Niles, members James Davis, W. T. French, J. T. Maris, Albert Woody, W. R. Johnson and one or two more. At the festival I met Miss Sue Reat. She was a very interesting and charming young lady. Her costume was quite stylish – dress cut low at the neck, finished with three rows of black velvet ribbon, and black silk fichu with edge trimmed to match. Mrs. W. H. Lamb was also present dressed in a grey suit, hair dressed in long curls, she wore a white apron with long broad ties and seemed to have something to do with the management of the festival (Camargo being her home.) Besides these two we met nearly all the Camargo people and began to feel pretty well acquainted. In Tuscola we soon followed their example and in a short period of time, we had a festival with the understanding that the Denomination which should begin to erect the first church building should have the proceeds. The Presbyterians captured the prize.

I think that April 15, 1861 was the “Fall of Sumpter.” Soon after the President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, called for 75,000 volunteer troops and Douglas County responded royally. Company D. of the 21<sup>st</sup> regiment of Illinois was mostly from Tuscola and vicinity. I think Mr Vanderen was the leader drumming up the company. James E. Calloway was elected captain. After the company had spent a week or two drilling and preparing for service, was about ready to start. On the evening previous to the day they were to go, a meeting was called of the citizens to witness the presentation of a beautiful flag to the company by ladies. The hour arrived; the old court house was filled until there was

no more (even standing) room. Captain Calloway came through the crowd leading his sister Mollie (12 or 13) with red opera cloak, long black curls hanging over her shoulders. In the center of the large room they came to a table with a large wooden dry goods box on it, both decorated with flags and festooned with red, white and blue. With a little assistance she sprang to the top of the table, then to the box, and a distinct and sweet voice, in behalf of the ladies of Tuscola presented to Co. D. of the 21<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Illinois Volunteers with a very appropriate oration. Passing the flag to her brother, who was captain, he responding with an eloquent and patriotic speech. The flag is now in Memorial Hall in Springfield, showing many marks of service by the bullet holes, and will scarcely hold together. The boys gave 3 cheers to the ladies, 3 cheers to Miss Calloway and 3 cheers to their captain.

We had a newspaper published here in 1861 called *Douglas County Shield* and in 1866 the proprietor and editor sold to others and the name was changed to *Journal*. It changed proprietors two or three more times, and is now owned by Mrssrs. Reat and Carraway and called *The Saturday Journal*. I know of nothing that will show the progress of Tuscola from 1860-1898 or from 1859-1899 than our Saturday Journal and their plant, of which there is none better in the country, perhaps not in the cities. We have just reasons to be proud of our press work in our city.



W. R. Johnson residence on the northeast corner of Niles and Sale Streets where the “old high school” was located.

W. R. Johnson was one of the leading merchants of Tuscola from 1860-1880. In 1880, he identified himself with the Union Central Life Insurance Co. of Cincinnati, OH as their agent in Tuscola. He was extremely successful and eventually purchased the old established fire agency of W. J. Ammen which began its career in 1865. His business was very large and was well known among insurance men. His office was on the second floor of the First National Bank building.