



Young Family, New Home

HOW THE FARM CAME TO BE

In the fall of 1865, John Wesley Adair (J.W.) was born on a farm near Oskaloosa, Iowa. He was the fourth child of David and Margaret Ann Adair. That same fall they packed their belongings in a covered wagon and moved to Hatfield, in Harrison County, Missouri. In following years, David and Margaret had six more children and they all attended the local schools.

In 1888 reports of fertile soil in the rolling hills of southern Iowa caught the attention of J.W. and his brother George. They each purchased land across the border in Iowa near the settlement called Redding, in Ringgold County. George chose a section of promising farmland close to Redding. J.W. settled on acreage bordering the main road and built a two-room cottage on the high rise west of the road. This gave him a wide view of the surrounding prairie and nearby homesteads. Another hilltop on the northwest corner of his farm had once been the stomping ground for buffalo herds.

The soil there was packed so firmly that plows could not loosen it enough to plant crops. It became pastureland for stock animals and an area that J.W.'s boys searched for arrowheads while pretending to be Indian braves.

A large barn was built and The J.W. Adair Pedigreed Stock Farm was established. Friendships were formed as he and George attended town functions and church services. Margaret (Maggie) Miller became his favored square dance partner and they married in 1890, setting up their home in the two-room cottage.

A large farmhouse was built at the turn of the century and the cottage became the farm workshop and coal shed. Four sons were welcomed: Frederick, my dad Earl, and the twins: Sampson and Dewey. To honor Maggie's brother, John, who fought in the Spanish-American War, they chose to name the twins for the Admirals Dewey and Sampson.

The boys were kept busy and happy on the farm and attended the nearby one-room school. (In the early nineteen teens, the one-room schools were drawn together into a Consolidated School, and high school classes were added.)

Gradually the farm boys moved on. Fred married Gladys Spencer. He became a successful salesman in Indianola, Iowa. Sam married Jessie Cain. He was enthralled with automobiles and set up a thriving service station-repair shop in Stratton, Colorado. Dewey enrolled in Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, studying for a career in teaching commercial subjects (today called business school). He married Margaret Galloway and taught Shorthand and Bookkeeping at Proviso High School in Maywood, Illinois for many years. Earl, however, partnered with his dad on the farm.

Earl was attracted to one of the High School teachers in the Redding Consolidated School. He learned her name was Mary Bailey. So one day he bravely knocked on her door, introduced himself, and they went for a walk. She told him that she taught English and Home Economics. Earl was fascinated with her accent and her tales of growing up in Maine.

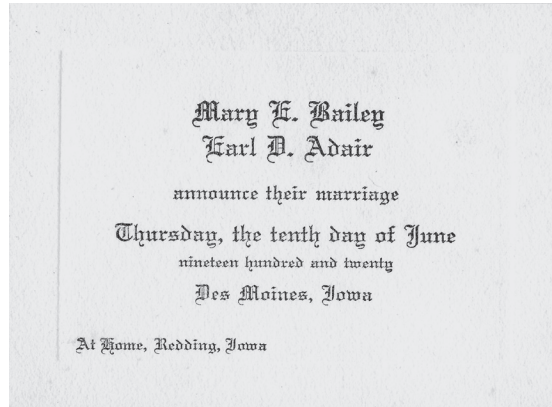
Mary told Earl that she came to Iowa to be with her family and to attend Drake University in Des Moines. When offered a teaching position in Redding, she thought the train connection would make visits home easy, but found the 100-mile rides tiresome and time consuming. This led her to resign at year's end, vowing never to return to Redding.



Meeting at the Des Moines Railroad Station

Nevertheless there were happy times and activities with fellow teachers and the townspeople. As kids, Mom told us of a Valentine party that teachers prepared for their special friends; she had invited Earl. They cut sliced beets into heart shapes for the meal. Poor Earl didn't like beets, but nonetheless he ate the ample amount she served him. At the New Year's Eve celebration, Mary made oyster stew: another dish that Earl couldn't stand. Much to his dismay, Mary favored him with an extra spoonful of those slippery oysters. Yet, he ate them. Each was trying to impress the other. In later years, these stories brought us all laughter.

Earl knew of Mary's vow never to return to Redding, but he had other ideas. For over a year he took frequent 100-mile rides in his Model T Ford to Des Moines, courting Mary to be his bride-and yes, move to his Redding farm.



Newlyweds on the Farm

The wedding took place at her mother's home in Des Moines on June 10th, 1920. Her cousin Marian came from Maine to be her bridesmaid and meet Earl's family. Earl brought his bride to the farm where they lived happily all their life. Mary often remarked with a smile to "Never say never."

So began the stories that fill this book. Six children were born; Margaret, Dorothy, Marjorie, Alice, John, and Francis. Sadly, Marjorie and Francis both lived for only a few weeks, leaving the four of us to bond into a happy, loving family.