

Later, Dad and Fred both bought Model A's and added platforms to them. Dad used his for transporting water during the drought, carting animals, feed or whatever. On his platform, Fred fastened washing machines and vacuum cleaners that he sold door-to-door.

Dad's pet purchase was the LaSalle; an elegant beauty with 'jump' seats that folded down for extra seating. We kids were proud that our family owned this car; we felt like royalty. On nights of out-of-town basketball games, that car was crammed full. One night we counted seventeen people filing out of the car! Mom and Dad seldom missed a game and we could hear their cheers as we played on the court. Mom was so vocal during games that Dad even threatened to leave her home. We kids felt special wearing those blue satin outfits, playing our best as the whole town cheered for our teams. The ride home was always filled with excitement as we recalled our time on the court. Cars were a definite asset for attending school events. I wonder if the horses were happy to have a quiet evening at home in their stalls.

## UNCLE ARTHUR'S FAMILY VISIT

Excitement swirled around us! Uncle Arthur's family was coming for a visit—all the way from Bangkok, Siam (now Thailand). We kids were in awe because they had spent years living in far away Siam, where Arthur was a Physics Professor at Bangkok University. Uncle Arthur was Aunt Jennette's and Mom's older brother. Mom had spent her final years of high school at a private school that Arthur and his wife Bess had helped establish. Her relationship with them was both as sister and as a student.

Mom seemed intent on impressing Aunt Bess and we were proud to help. Perhaps that was why our spring cleaning was so very thorough. We swept, dusted, polished and placed freshly starched doilies on the gleaming surfaces. Windows were washed and clean curtains hung. We were finally going to meet this family whose letters seemed to come from a magical fairyland. A place where a cook and maid prepared meals, cleaned the home, and where girls had governesses.

We girls worried that our dresses were not fancy and that we would seem 'ordinary' to our cousins. Dad assured us that we were bright kids, as good as anyone living across the ocean. Our clothes were well made by Mom's clever hands or were hand-me-downs from our cousins. Dad reminded us we had nothing to be embarrassed about. We had a loving family, friendly neighbors, a supportive church and a good school with competent teachers. He

helped us understand that there were places in the world where these were lacking, but that wasn't our community.

Finally, on a bright spring day, they arrived at our farm to our warm welcome. We girls were impressed by the puffy hair bows Etheldean, Betty, and Maureen wore. Their shoes were dressy, not sturdy like ours.

We eagerly began to show them around. The baby chicks in the brooder house fascinated Betty, who cuddled one and took it into the house to show her folks. Aunt Bess was more concerned with the "mess" she feared would soil Betty's dress than with the soft chirping chicken, so we put the chick back. Aunt Bess kept three year old Maureen with her. We took Betty and Etheldean to the barn where Smoky had a nest of kittens in the hay mow. Carefully climbing the ladder and scuffling through the hay, we found Smoky guarding her precious family. Under that watchful eye, we gently petted the four balls of purring fluff. The kittens were still too small to leave their mother, so we stroked her silky fur and thanked her for letting us be close.

After gingerly climbing down the ladder, shaking the hay from their dresses, and smoothing their hair, the girls were ready for other adventures. Our dog, Lady, had come to meet us and was ready for a good rumble. Etheldean was wary of getting dirty but Betty just hugged and pet Lady. We passed along the stalls, patting our favorite horse Daisy's muzzle, and on back to the house.

Mom had baked a cake that was ready for frosting. We asked if Betty and Etheldean could help us frost it and were surprised when they said, "We've never frosted a cake, will you show us how?" That was a shocker—they had never frosted a cake? And missed licking the bowl? I guess we'd been luckier than some far away children. After frosting the cake, we all savored the left-overs together.

## **PICKNICKING IN THE SOUTHEAST CORNER**

The Southeast corner of our farm was left as nature intended it. Dad made sure no horse with plow entered it, leaving a special place for our family's enjoyment. A bit wet and swampy, pussy willows flourished alongside many of the wild flowers that were native to our area. Birds nested in the trees and raised their young.

Early each spring Mom packed lunches and we wandered down to that Southeast Corner, skirting the cornfield on our way. Spread out on a flat rock, we enjoyed our simple lunch of homemade buttered bread and deviled eggs. The quiet of our special place was broken only by songbirds.

We searched for the early wild flowers of violet and forget-me-nots, asking