

Mom to tell us about any flowers that we didn't recognize. We thought she knew everything and she seldom disappointed us. The Jack-in-the-Pulpit caused us to giggle as we wondered what it could be preaching to the flowers. Beneath the May Apple's two large leaves, a single drooping apple grew that was not edible.

Solomon's seal had a wand of bell-shaped blossoms. The tufted blossom of its look-alike was called false Solomon's seal. We marveled at the bloodroot's pure white flower growing from a root that oozed a blood colored fluid when cut. There were the lovely trilliums that surprised us with their stinky smell and the Dutchman's breeches that led us to wonder if tiny elves might wear them. Mom warned us not to pick these fragile flowers, but to leave them to bloom in following years. Then she helped us pick bouquets of violets before wending our way home. Violets are a favorite of mine to this day.

Later in the summertime, we gathered goldenrod, Queen Anne's lace, chicory, and asters in big bouquets for all to enjoy. Butterflies delighted us, crickets and grasshoppers jumped around our feet.

When the gooseberries ripened, we braved the thorny bushes and gathered pails of tart green berries for jams and pies. It was fun rolling those berries over a wire screen to remove the stem and blossom ends while anticipating one of Mom's gooseberry pies.

Each season from spring to fall held its own special attraction, but the first foray in the spring was our favorite time for picnicking in the Southeast Corner of our farm.

FOR PHYLLIS

Dear Cynthia and Barbara,

I trust you will enjoy reading these recollections of our younger days with your mother.

I treasure many happy memories of visiting Phyllis and her brothers, Richard and Kenneth in Des Moines, Iowa. Their mother, Aunt Jennette, often welcomed us with a plate of her homemade hermits—ready for us to enjoy. We kids each took a couple of those cookies and headed outdoors for play-time fun. Croquet was the game we usually played. Striking the ball through the wickets took skill and we cheered each other on. Uncle Chris had hung a car tire from a nearby tree branch that was a delight to swing from. We took turns pushing each other higher and higher.

The back part of the lawn was planted as a garden of vegetables. It became

the responsibility of the kids to keep it weed-free. Once, Phyllis leaned over and broke off a sprig of nasturtiums, then surprised us by making sandwiches with it. We snacked on it and enjoyed the spicy flavor.

Later that morning, Aunt Jennette asked us to go to the neighborhood grocery to buy some dried beef. My sisters and I were awed that kids could be allowed to walk to a store and purchase something without an adult along. Fascinated, we watched the butcher slice paper-thin strips of dried beef. The lunch of creamed dried beef on toast became a favorite of mine.

My aunt and uncle owned and lived in this apartment building that was just a short walk from the Iowa State Capitol grounds. Phyllis and her brothers often played there, especially in the water fountain that surrounded a big statue. She would loan us wool bathing suits to wear and we excitedly joined in. The shallow pool was soon a riot of splashes with all of us kids frolicking in it. All too soon, Aunt Jennette held up towels, signaling it was time to climb out and head for home.

One morning we were excited to go inside that magnificent capitol building and look up at its high beautiful dome; then see the sculptures and paintings that adorned the big area. Leaving the capitol we were cautioned to hold hands and look both ways as we crossed the busy street to the State Historical building. We were overwhelmed at the many things stored there. Objects, clothing, furniture, tools, stuff of all kinds; we had to keep being warned "Don't touch!" That was a full day of seeing wonderful things of bygone times. There was a hat decorated with a spray of flowers made of the hair that some lady saved from her daily brushing.

Tree climbing seemed a favorite activity of Phyllis'. One morning we took a small basket to the Capitol grounds, where Phyllis knew there were mulberry trees. She deftly climbed to the low branches and began shaking them. Soon the ground was carpeted with juicy mulberries. We ate quite a few and then filled the basket with those plump, purple berries for her mother. Our fingers were stained and so were our clothes. The clothing got a good washing, but after much scrubbing my white leather sandals still kept a mottled lavender look. We girls made mulberry cobbler for dessert and it was scrumptious.

On another day, we all brushed our hair and washed our faces, because we were going on a walk to the "Ice Cream Shoppe!" Cautioned to hold hands and watch our steps, we happily walked a couple of blocks until we saw the big ice cream cone sign. We each decided on a special flavor, then handed over our nickel before clutching our cone. I chose Peppermint Stick. Even today, when I order that flavor, I see that Ice Cream Shoppe and relive being with our cousins.

All too soon, our week with the Dreschers was over. Dad and Mom drove

up from the farm to spend the day and take us back home.

They made plans for Phyllis, Richard and Kenneth to visit us on the farm. Two weeks later, Uncle Chris and Aunt Jennette drove down with their kids and suitcases. We were happy about that. We had fun showing each cousin where they would sleep, and then took them all on a tour of the farm.

All three wanted to ride the horses that day. Dad promised they could ride Daisy while they were on the farm. Phyllis wanted to pet the baby lambs and piglets. She was excited when Dad told her that she could feed the baby piglet later. We all went to the henhouse where they gathered the eggs. One old hen squawked and pecked Kenneth when he took her egg.

After good-bye hugs to all of us, Uncle Chris and Aunt Jennette left for the city. Our cousins were eager to be “farmers” and we all trooped to the pasture to bring in the cows. Our dog Spot helped herd the cows into the barn. Milking lessons would soon begin. Kenneth became quite a good milker. A wonderful week followed.

Every summer we enjoyed Phyllis and her brothers visiting. On the farm, Phyllis found an apple tree that had a crotch just right for her to sit comfortably and read on hot summer days. Her tree climbing skills were further sharpened when the apples ripened. She was ready to try any farm duty, and kept trying until she mastered it. This trait was evident all her life. She was no quitter. I hope you will cherish these memories of your Mother, as I have for so many years. She will be sorely missed.

Affectionately, Dorothy Gonick

NO TV IN THE 1930’S - WHAT TO DO!

WAYS TO ENTERTAIN YOURSELF!

Memories of Alice Adair Johnson

1. Take the brace and bit and bore holes in the ground.
2. Pound nails into the ground or boards.
3. Peddle the corn sheller or the blade sharpener.
4. Ride a shovel down a hill on the snow.
5. Make and try to fly a kite.
6. Braid white clover stems into flower leis.