

Dear Alice,

Here goes with some notes I've made -----

I'll start with Grandma Ada and some remembrances of her-- She did everything with same vigor that she used (and had us use) in digging dandelions. She really did like things neat and clean, even a farmhouse yard. I guess she cooked the dandelions too-- perhaps to give us some get up and go.

Grandma taught us how to iron men's shirts and fold them inward "to keep the bosom clean." She would wear 2 aprons so that she could remove the "work" one when the doorbell rang. She'd wear a nice dress over her work dress to look nice on the streetcar as she went to work in Des Moines. Looking nice was important to her. She liked nice things and bought carefully. She would get some lovely things at rummage sales...some of our nicest clothes came from there!

She also prided herself on saving money for her employers in Des Moines by cooking cornmeal mush for her supper. It made her feel good to save someone money.

I recall walking the streets of Des Moines with her and how she had us swing our arms. "Might as well get our exercise while we walk. It's a healthy habit."

I remember one year we called her from Iowa City on her birthday and she talked and talked. We were concerned about the phone bill, but I'm sure it was worth every penny and more. We were glad that we let her talk.

She had a lively rendition of "Oh, Where, Oh Where has my Little Dog Gone" on the organ, which she played with great enjoyment. I also recall sitting on the stairs in the hallway and she was teaching

"Oh Happy Day" and "Brighten the Corner Where You Are" over and over until we knew them by heart. I think she hoped we'd be more musical that I turned out to be. "Brighten the Corner--" was Auntie Pearl's favorite too.

#### FREQUENT SAYINGS

It it's worth doing at all, it's worth doing well.  
A stitch in time, saves nine.  
Don't put off till tomorrow what you can do today.  
You can't do it any earlier-when today's gone, it's gone.  
If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again.  
A penny saved is a penny earned.

Grandpa had some stories that were retold with his way of making them seem fresh: The city boy who hated the empty corn cob back and asked for more beans to be put on it.

"Make yourself at home and I wish you were," was made with a straight face and twinkle in the eye.  
Mom used to laugh when telling this story: One day in the barbershop Grandpa said, "One thing about Mary, she's got those children eating everything on their plates. They always clean their plates." I think we had to at least try any new food, but were allowed our distastes too. Mine were cooked turnips and cabbage.

Grandpa was quite meticulous in his dress, especially when going somewhere. Mustache trimmed neatly and shoes polished. He also favored black shoes for us because they could be shined to a gloss much better than brown ones. I remember the Saturday night ritual of polishing shoes and waiting for his approval.

#### FRIENDSHIP \_ THOUGHTFULNESS

Visitors were always welcome. Whether for conversation or games, everyone enjoyed company. Several games were handy for playing. Diane remembers how Dad would watch the speedometer for good cribbage combinations as he drove.

I don't recall 'religious' talk. The folks lived it rather than preached it. There were many examples of Christ-like living. I thought they were the average kind of parents, but now know they were much above the average.

I remember making and hanging May baskets on Mrs. Ullery and Effie Holland's doors.

Another memory of picking out black walnut meats and packing the nutmeats, sugar etc. with a recipe for divinity to Aunt Mary and Uncle Frank. This was during sugar rationing days. The gifts that were given were not costly, but were thoughtfully chosen.

I felt so special when you (Alice) made a blouse for me in Home-Ec class rather than for yourself. It was maroon cotton with little blue deer on it. Later you made a multi-stripe one that I wore with blue pants at college. How sweet you are.

Mom and Dad may have wished us to have more new clothes but somehow we (anyway this applies to me) didn't mind hand-me-down clothes or made-over ones. Mom seemed to stress that if it was clean, pressed and it fit, that was what mattered. She made us feel we were lucky to wear something made over from Oakland's clothes. New clothes were extra special however, and most were made by Mom until we got proficient enough at sewing.

There's an old Maine saying: "Use it up, wear it out.  
Make it do or do without."  
I guess lots of people followed that motto during the 30's.

A yearly treat was the after-Christmas sales in Des Moines. Mom always amazed Aunt Jannette with the good bargains she came home with.

Dad's love for Mom was quite evident. He liked the opportunity to do things for her. She didn't drive and this gave him the chance to show her that it was important to him that she had the opportunity to be with other people--that she get to Ladies Aide Meetings and the Idle-a-Whyle Club. He'd drive her there and then go home to farm and pick her up later, if she needed a ride.

Mom said Dad could keep a secret well. When Dad discussed a matter with someone that was private, he didn't talk about what was said. There was respect for others.

Seldom did we hear derogatory remarks about others. Once we all went to visit a young couple and their new baby. I don't remember their name, but they were so happy we came. It seems that no one had called on them before. The home was sparsely furnished and somehow I later understood that this was one of those babies that arrived before the parents had been married the nine months usually required. Although they might not have approved of this, it didn't stop the folks from visiting them. Dad made a remark about people who weren't good neighbors.

The only argument I recall was late one summer after canning season was nearly over and butchering was being done. A mention of packing a carton of meat, canned goods, molasses, etc. to give to Uncle Fred's was made. Mom was weary from all her work and blew her top. She'd had it! Uncle Fred didn't have Dad's compassion or sense of responsibility and that day Mom had her say. It frightened me because I'd never heard her that upset. I guess it was real righteous indignation.

#### INTEGRITY

The folks stood up for their principles. Dad would not go into a restaurant that served beer or liquor. When prohibition came and the beer shack opened on the Mo. line, he began to lock the doors. Until they were unlocked.

Mom joined the Methodist Church and bought a copy of "The Discipline of the Methodist Church" to be able to know the foundations of the church. She'd been president of the Laid's Aid for a few years and Rev. Warrios suggested it would be nice if she took communion. She tried once, but said her Quaker background was too strong and she felt uncomfortable. He said, "Fine."

Church attendance was a must, even if Dad fell asleep. That's why we sat in a back pew. Mom told me that they began taking me to church in a market basket.

Dad's sense of responsibility to the farm and to Grandpa took precedence over any other occupation he might have wanted. He would have like to learn to fly a plane. Once a brainstorming pilot landed on the east pasture to give rides to anyone who wanted to fly, but there was no money for Dad to use so 'frivolously'. I believe he was disappointed not to have had that ride.

#### TRUSTING US

When I was a freshman as SUI, I came home one weekend and we were fixing a formal to wear to a fraternity dance when the minister came by that evening to visit. He began warning Mom and Dad about the evils of college, and especially 'Frat' dances. Mom said, "If Dorothy can't be trusted by now, it's too late to start teaching her." Those weren't her exact words but something like that. After he left, she said she was furious to think he had the nerve to expect one of us to disgrace them. Somehow they trusted us, and after that visit I was certain to try my best not to disappoint them.

When Richard was driving and the car overturned, Dad had Ricard continue to drive. That must have show Richard that Dad wanted him to have the confidence in himself that Dad had in him.

During summers they were choosy about who would spend the summer on the farm. Criteria were being responsible and good workers they could trust. Those who spent the summers proved they were trustworthy.

I guess what I'm saying is: Without preaching and explaining all the rules and expectations, the folks imparted ideals, standards, and goals that they lived themselves, and trusted that we would live up to their expectations. We knew we were loved, that they were there when we needed them, and when we didn't think we needed them.

### HANDLING DISAPPOINTMENTS

Mom would say "What's done is done, let's get on with today," instead of dwelling on what went wrong.

She kept busy writing letters to many people. It was important to her to keep people in touch. It gave us a sense of families far away, yet close to her.

She would have liked to travel back to Maine when we were growing up, but her plans always fell through. She was deeply disappointed, but didn't keep moaning about the trip failure--just wrote more letters. Mom had a great inner strength. I'm sure there were many disappointments she had that we never knew of. They seldom ever got new things. Furniture was hand-me-down or auction-acquired, yet they were proud of the nice things we had, especially the walnut furniture. They enjoyed it more than they would have the 'modern' stuff they couldn't afford.

### HEALTH and BEAUTY

The folks had a healthy attitude toward health---we were expected to be and to stay healthy. They didn't 'over-baby' us when ill. We were given good care and love but not out of proportion. There were a few Big-Little books kept just for reading when ill, and coupled with Uncle Billy's little pink pills, we recovered. It was more fun being out of bed and with the rest of the family.

Mom loved flowers and birds and recognized them by common and Latin names. Walks with her to the Southeast corner were <sup>an</sup> important gift of hers to us. I wish I'd learned more of the names. She often talked about the beautiful Dogwood trees in Maine and wished they grew in the midwest. I can appreciate her longing to see them--they would make a beautiful addition to a farm scene.

## EDUCATION

Grandpa was against consolidation of the school districts. He felt the little school houses were best.

Dad liked playing games and felt they were a valuable way to learn. Chinese Sheekers, authors, Old Maid, Pick-up-sticks, Tiddly Winks etc. all do have value as well as giving us hours of good fun. (Mostly good fun, although I 'think' we had a few good arguments too)

Mom ordered books from the Travelling Library in Des Moines. It was always an exciting day when the mail held a package of these books. She read to us often. I especially remember Nils the Little Goose Boy by Nils Hogner. (I think that's the author)

Dad liked the basketball games and they attended most of them and usually filled the car when an out-of-town game was on.

In spite of Grandma's musical desires for Dad, he didn't consider music programs on the radio as valuable. "You can't learn anything from them." A favorite of his was The \$64.00 Question.

We were encouraged and expected to do our best in school and they were proud of us when we did something<sup>of</sup> worth. I never thought of not trying to do as well as I could. It was part of being an Adair.

### Miscellaneous--

When ~~Uncle~~ Sam & Aunt Jessie would arrive to visit, Aunt Jessie would knock at the door and ask if we'd welcome a tramp?