

The following was copied on January 20, 2015 from http://donwhilgendorf.net/memories_forestville.html. It gives a little glimpse into life in the village and in the parsonage at Forestville in the early 20th Century. – Rev. Christopher Jackson

Memories of Forestville

By Paula Marie Berger Hilgendorf

(Parenthetical Remarks by Don Hilgendorf)

When Jane, Judy, and I visited Aunt Clara and Uncle Harvey in 2004 when Clara was in the nursing home, we thought it would be fun to take along this list and go over it with Clara. We got a big laugh when we came to some items that Clara couldn't remember, saying, "That should ring a bell, but the bell isn't ringing!"

My Mother, Paula Marie Berger Hilgendorf included this list of memories of Berger Family life and growing up in Forestville in one of the Berger Family chain letters.

- The many times we went picking mayflowers in Ross's woods
- Dressing up in old-fashioned clothes found in Mother's big wooden chest
- Fishing out pennies that fell in the cracks of the old wooden sidewalks
- The old tin bath tub and the bath ordeal on Saturdays
- Watching for the train to come around the bend while mother finished writing a letter and the mad dash to the depot to mail the letter
- Ernie's Indian Runner ducks and the morning he discovered that a weasel had killed his little ducklings
- Our delight over the arrival of a new calf
- Marge's screams when stung by a bee
- The flu epidemic (1918 or so) with eight of us in bed at the same time
- The fuss I made over a loose tooth
- Sliding down the ironing board
- Cheese factory odors
- Shoe scrapers
- Round black boxes of pink pills
- Mrs. Hoffmann darning our stockings
- "Eingeweichtes"
- John Weber letting his hair grow long in hopes of getting rich
- Gathering around to hear the gurgling sound when Dad filled his study lamps
- Big, ripe, red strawberries

- Our green wagon
- The apple peeler
- Making apple butter outdoors in the big copper kettle
- Otto's little red felt hat
- Dad smoking cigars on Sunday afternoons
- Substitutes during World War I
- The hanging lamps
- Home-made liver sausage and syrup
- The Christmas cactus in full bloom
- Laurence Poh's "serenades" at night (after an evening spent drinking in the saloons)
- Hilda Geske and Dorothy trying to carry Gert and me into the circus (because babes in arms were admitted free – Paula and Gert were about five to six years old)
- The electric bells installed for the purpose of waking Jerry
- The old surrey with the fringe around the top
- Topsy (a family horse)
- The bone-grinder
- Our doves, and the time they were locked in the church steeple for a week
- The storm shed, and the thrill of having it taken off in the spring
- The awful mixture of foods we ate at the annual mission festival
- Mrs. Fogg's argument over her milk bill every time a month had 31 days
- Filling the cistern with snow when there was a shortage of rain water
- Saturday afternoon rehearsals for the Christmas program
- Fall butchering
- The rock candy Mrs. Leege used to give us (the street at the west side of the parsonage in Forestville is named "Leege Avenue," the Leeges lived in a house behind the parsonage)
- The cherry pitter
- The first little chicks in spring
- The sand cellar
- Clara holding her ears shut while crossing the rattly bridge on the way to Rankin (Ted Hinck was vicar or pastor in Rankin and that is how he met Dorothy)
- Our trips through Door County in Guth's (?) truck
- The death of our colt
- Walking over the plank at the mill pond
- The iron "Huehner (?) Kessel" under the sink
- Our frequent spats with the Schmitz kids

- The time I didn't eat for eight days after licking the cold pump handle (she tore the skin of her tongue off after it stuck to the frozen handle and didn't want to tell anybody what happened)
- Jaw breakers and their many different colors
- Ernie's little moving picture machine
- Free lemonade at the public school picnics
- Upset toilets on Halloween
- Big, juicy Wealthies
- Counting cars on Sunday afternoons in summer
- The stuffed lynx in Henquenet's window
- Pans full of fresh bread
- Sour milk with brown sugar
- The red barley drum in the attic
- Old man Buschmann
- Leege's red car
- The junk pit back of Moore's
- Our little night lamp
- Mrs. Weber taking the mail bags to and from the depot
- Blizzards and the high snowdrifts after
- "Christen Lehre" (?)
- The ugly pattern of the wall paper in the downstairs bedroom
- The coming of the new teacher each Fall
- The mill race
- Being weighed at Poh's mill
- Taking turns at carrying milk
- Undressing behind the living room stove and nearly baking ourselves before dashing upstairs into the cold
- The Easter parade to the shanty, and later woodshed
- Gathering moss and cedar for our nests
- Watching for Geskes
- The hill on the way to Rankin where most of us had to get out and walk
- Picking clover for the rabbits
- The thrill of the spring thaw
- The annual wood sawing
- The little mission Negro in the church vestibule
- "Klingel Beutel"
- The squeaking of the weather vane
- The butter churn
- Tacking down rag carpets after housecleaning
- The big cookie jar on the cellar steps
- The old crab apple tree next to the shanty

- The tolling of the church bell when someone died
 - The stick candy Mrs. Matzke used to give us
 - Clara Renard
 - Getting the cows and taking them back to the pasture and their bad habit of crossing the road in front of cars
 - The thrill of the first Ford
 - Home-made soap
 - Our pet crow
 - The day Ernie tried to get rid of him (the crow) by taking him to the swamp and he was back home before Ernie was
 - The wire hook for catching chickens
 - The play house
 - The delicious flavor of fried down (?) meat
 - Old man Gordon
 - The times Mother fixed a basketful of food for him and we took it over
 - Our trip to Oshkosh to visit Aunt Anna
 - Dad's long pipe
 - The ice cream freezer and that delicious home-made ice cream
 - Cutting the frosting off our cake and saving it till the last
 - The post office in Awe's house
 - Carrying in wood
 - The purple and green striped candy bags from Haegele's store
 - Penny ribbon
 - The thrill of going to Algoma before Christmas
 - Gerhard as the telephone operator
 - Clarence Stach drinking ink
 - The jelly in the attic closet
 - Dad's fur coat
 - Setting out our dolls for "Christkind"
 - The anxiety while the tree was being trimmed
 - The dog farm and the nightly barking
 - Coasting
 - Chicken thieves
 - Our trip to Fairchild
 - Tramps
 - The old hand-made walker
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- Calling the Lange agent "gum man"
 - The coffee man
 - Our fear of gypsies
 - Sleeping on the attic floor when we had a lot of out-of-town company

- Lulu (a doll?) with her wig made of Dorothy's hair
- Our other dolls – Mabel, Ruth, Harold
- Otto's little red bench
- The bread mixer
- Sweeping the school
- Ernie's dandelion wine
- Mr. Wuth calling "watch out" when they did the blasting on the hill
- Filling the reservoir
- Playing train on the lawn swing
- The old school and the day it was moved
- Catching a ride on a bob sleigh
- Our cutter
- The Christmas we had scarlet fever
- Church sheds and hitching posts
- The brick yard
- The electric thriller
- Waldemar's high chair
- Fire in church one Christmas Eve
- "Chatauqua"
- Dad eating crackers and milk at night
- The stone boat
- Katie "Gurgewich" (?)
- Erna Vogt (a music teacher who lived with the Bergers)
- A barrel of sugar in the pantry
- A gallon of syrup
- A lighted candle on a fancy plate at breakfast on your birthday
- Helping (?) Mother with Springerle and Pfefferneuss (?)
- The old blue rain cape we girls each took a turn at owning
- Wild cucumber vines by the "privy"
- Eating wild gooseberries that grew by the pasture gate
- The nests of barn swallows in the woodshed
- Eating raw rhubarb right out of the patch
- Mrs. Moore' glasses perched up on her forehead
- Burning cat-tails soaked in kerosene
- Mrs. Rankin chewing gum
- Our fear of Perry's bull
- Playing "Run, my good sheep, run" on summer evenings with the sloping cellar door as goal
- The spring in Wehr's woods
- Duke and Maude
- The red "milch schrank" with screen doors

- Crocks of sour milk on the back of the cook stove for cottage cheese
- The roller towel by the kitchen sink
- The "little room" and the black box
- Grinding "Gerste" and coffee
- Mother's coffee cake
- Long underwear
- Dividing (marking off) the cake pan and each licking a third or fourth
- The green table
- Our fear of passing the saloons
- John coming home from college for Christmas

I jotted down these things years ago. Anyone care to add anything?

Paula