

## **The Life of MARY C. LYONS (nee Donohoe)**

**June 17, 1898-October 10, 1991**

### ***THE SHOW MUST GO ON!***

September 7, 1978

I was born June 17, 1898 at Morse, Iowa. Mother had a hard birth. At the time, she had whooping cough and I had it too -- almost did not make it. Many times, my dad said that I turned blue from coughing. But I recovered and was baptized in the then parish church called "Nolan Settlement Church." By the way, it is still going. My grandparents were double first cousins of my father's and Aunt Kate Beecher, a maiden aunt.



When I was about to be baptized, mother said to dad: "What will we name her?" Dad said I "Never mind; I'll name her." He never told her until they brought me home after baptism. I was named after the beautiful name of "Mary". My godfather was also James Donohoe, the same as my dad's name. He was slight and short. Because dad was over 6 feet tall there had to be a way of distinguishing them when people spoke of them. So they nicknamed them "Little Jim" and "Big Jim".

In the Beecher family were Jim, Pat, Mike, Ellen (Will Burns). Grandfather Beecher, I do not remember -- he died when I was a baby. The Donohoe grandparents I remember as rather austere persons. Originally they were farmers. But what I remember of them, they lived in Iowa City. My dad had 8 sisters and 1 brother - - Uncle John, a favorite of ours. His parents did not approve of his wife, mostly because they thought she was too extravagant. She was not really. But they lived rather frugally -- hung on to their money: She was a wonderful person. Mary Ann, who married John Beecher and Hanna who married Mike Beecher-brothers and sisters, Sister Mary Basilian (she gave us rosaries for wedding presents - I lost mine but still have your dad's - he had Sister Clotilda make me one similar to it) Sister Mary

Tina, I think, Alice - Mrs. John Ryan, Bridget - Mrs. Tom Cusack, Maggie, Mrs. Lynch and Kate - I don't remember.

I think it was 1904 in Iowa when we built a new house - similar to the one we built here in South Dakota, I remember the carpenters coming but I was very shy and afraid of them. One rainy day mother was wondering if the men were coming so she could get food ready. She went out to look up the road. She climbed up on the fence to see better and stepped on a snake. It bit her. It was probably only a garter snake but she was scarred and ran into the house and grabbed a red-hot poker from the stove and burned the bite.

I went to school in Morse about a mile away and walked. I remember the dress - a red tailor dress. The teacher was a Miss Burdish. I don't think she knew much. Her beau sometimes came to see her with a fancy buggy and spirited horses. Once he kissed her - - we were all shocked. As I remember, we left Iowa when I was in the 6th grade in 1909 I think. There was much rivalry among the people. Because my dad was a very prosperous farmer, there was much rivalry among the people, and jealousy. That is really why we left Iowa.

Ella, my sister, went to the Academy in Iowa City. She taught piano in our home. Once she caught the seven year itch from a pupil and because I slept with her, I caught it too. We used sulfur and lard to get rid of it - ugh. In Iowa City, Ella stayed with Grandma Beecher and Aunt Kate. To walk to their house from downtown, we went up dozens of steps.

Going into Iowa City with a team was a big day's job, though it was only 10 miles and a real thrill.

Ann, my sister, went to high school in Des Moines at St. Joseph's where Sister Mary Basilian was.

The boys all went to St. Ambrose in Davenport. The recreation and entertainment for the older ones was home parties, sleigh rides, home talent plays and programs. Ella played the piano and Will the violin. She was organist too. We had a snazzy one horse Cutter.

Ella had a beau, Rob Welsh. For some reason, the folks did not like anyone with red hair so they broke it up.

In the Morse school, there was a little Negro boy named Eddie. I was

teased unmercifully about him. One of the sports of my brothers, it seemed, was teasing me. I vowed that if ever I had any children, I would not stand for much of that and I didn't.

My brother, Francis, taught school a few miles from home. He drove a one horse, two wheeled cart and boarded and roomed during the week.

We had a big farm with lots of corn, small grain, clover, timothy hay and clover. Because of the hard labor, breakfast was a hearty meal with fried pork, potatoes etc. My dad preferred sorghum molasses on his bread. I remember plodding through the fields to take lunch out.

We had a big orchard with apples of all kinds, peaches, cherries, gooseberries, raspberries, currants, choke cherries, black berries besides having a huge garden. Also, there were lots of flowers. Mother loved flowers. Before winter, apples were packed in barrels, the cabbage was hung in the cellar and of course everything possible was canned.

All our meat was butchered on the farm and processed. On the day of butchering hogs, the wash boiler was put to boiling on the stove. It was taken out and put in a barrel called "Hog's Head Barrel". The poor hog was clunked ever the head and then dipped up and down. Then there was a tool for scraping the skin off. Bacon was smoked in the smokehouse, sausages were made etc. Mostly we ordered merchandise from Sears & Roebuck. It was a thrill when it came. I remember ordering my first brassiere. Dad did not know what it was. He looked at the order and mumbled "brass - erre." What's that?" Mother wore a camisole. Most clothes were homemade dresses, petticoats, drawers. Dad had fur coats and fur caps.

Uncle John had the first car in that part of the state and dad had the second, a Reo. He and my brother, Will, went 25 miles to Cedar Rapids to get it. We were about a mile on the road to meet them. Only dad drove it. All the first summer we drove with the top down because it scared the horses so badly. When dad met a team, he stopped the car and got out to help the people drive past it. Needless to say, we were not very popular. When he went with the cattle that he shipped to Chicago - generally he was gone 2 or 3 days - he took the spigots which turned the car on with him. But the boys fashioned one and took the car out into the pasture to learn to drive it. Mother knew about it but she

was a good sport and never squealed. Then when dad did decide to teach them to drive he was surprised that they caught on so quickly.

The little Jim family moved to the wilderness of South Dakota in 1909 - - at least, that is what people thought. They settled and stayed at Wakonda where Mrs. John Donohoe still lives. John and Ella were at your dad's funeral and John died of a heart attack the following week.

We moved and lived at Beresford part of a year. The folks didn't like it. Dad and Will traveled over western Iowa and Missouri and finally decided on a farm near Carroll, Iowa. Our address was Adaza. They didn't like that either. Meanwhile, they came to Yankton to look over the 640 acre farm which dad bought. Mother, dad and I came in time for me to start school in the fall. Ella and the boys stayed in Iowa until the corn was picked. Ann was in Des Moines. The farm house was not vacated yet. The people wouldn't get out so we stayed at the Coates Hotel and boarding house for a time. Then they moved the old house off to clear the area for the new house. Dad bought the farm from Tom Reedy. The new house was modeled after the Iowa house and cost about \$5000.

One day I remember it was a cold and snowy winter - - there was a knock at the door. When I opened it, a man almost fell inside. He was driving to the State Hospital and he was so cold that he was partly frozen. Dad took him in a cold room and rubbed snow on him and thawed him out.

In September of that year when I started at Central School in Yankton in the 8th grade, I met Gen Hickey (Kennedy) and we were constant companions from then on.

When the 3 Donohoe boys - my brothers - came, they made quite a splash, vivacious and good looking. The girls almost stampeded to meet them. There were lots of parties, dances, sleighing parties and the like. I was not allowed to go out much in high school unless it was some place where one of my brothers was going. I graduated in 1916. We girls all wore white sailor dresses.

That fall, I went to the College at Mount St. Joseph's in Dubuque (now Clark College) where Jack's Margaret graduated. Dad did not trust a young girl to go alone on the train so he took me to school. Toward the end of the year one of the girls got smallpox, at that time a dread disease. I was unfortunate enough to get it too, though not too badly.

The only good thing about it was we did not have to take the end of the year tests. But we were quarantined for 2 weeks after school was out. The clothes were all taken out and the shoes and everything that we had on when we were taken ill and burned. That included the bedding too. Dad was so mad that he would not let me go back there the next year. I then went to Cedar Falls Teacher's College, planning to teach in 2 years. But I decided to take the 4 years and went to Yankton College then and graduated in 1920.

My first teaching job was in Philip, South Dakota. I taught English and loved it and my kids. My social life was equally as good. Once I went out with 3 fellows in consecutive nights and didn't realize what a gossip session I had stirred up. Bill and Kathryn Walpole lived there; formerly they were from Yankton. We had home talent plays and parties. I taught there for 2 years. The next year, I went to Murdo and enjoyed it equally well. When I came home that summer, Will's Kit and their baby, Mary, were at our house. Kit had Mary down to see a doctor. She got me to go home with her to Wagner where Will was an undertaker. I really did not want to go because I wanted to stay home for a while. But I did go. She and I went to a church supper. The State Fire Tournament and the Church was serving meals. I met Mary Lyons (Robinson). Kit had met her and also Catherine Coughlin was there. I knew her because when I taught in Philip, her sister, Margaret was school nurse.

Mary asked if we were going to Lake Andes to the dance at Rest Haven. Kit said they couldn't go because of the baby, but that she wished I would go. Mary said to me, "maybe we will pick you up when we go." By ten that night, they had not come so I was ready for bed and on my knees saying my prayers. Then they came and Mary insisted that I get dressed and go, so I did. There were a couple of fellows with them and they were all pretty peppy. One of them had put his hat on top of the car and was surprised it still wasn't there when we got to the dance. It was intermission and I was introduced to Bill Lyons. We danced and he took me home. We went to a dance every night that week. I thought he was nice, but there was a fellow in Murdo that I liked too. I went home. A few days later, a letter came postmarked "Delmont". I thought I don't know anyone in Delmont. When I opened it and it was signed "Bill", I still did not realize for a minute who "Bill" was. The postmark fooled me as I thought his would be "Wagner."

I soon forgot the other fellow. It was a slow romance. In 1924, the bridge going over to Nebraska from Yankton was opened and there

was a big celebration. Mary and Bill came down. They, Jack Donohoe and I went to a dance over at Aiken. That was the first time I ever saw a really drunken woman. Bill and I wrote to each other spasmodically he came down to Yankton - I went to Wagner occasionally.

We went to the Corn Palace and danced. To this day, when I hear "Let me call you sweetheart" or "I love you truly" or "White Christmas", I can hardly stand it. He couldn't carry a tune, but he loved music. I wonder how many dances we attended both before and after we were married.

I taught school for 1 and ½ years in Vermillion. New Year's, 1926, he proposed to me. We were married February 20, 1928 at a small wedding because of the hard times. Ann Donohoe and Tom Lyons were attendants. Francis Donohoe played "O Sole Mio" on the violin.



Rose Adams was the organist. Dinner for small group was at home. We drove to Sioux City. Jerry Lyons went with us. We left and took the train to Kansas City. We spent a week there and stayed at the Hotel Muelbach for a week. We stopped off for a couple of days with Jerry and Rose. Rosemary was in her high chair.

We lived in Wagner. I had gone to sales before hand to buy furniture and refinished it. I got a rocker which Jack now has -- you were all rocked it in and bedroom furniture and so on. I bought an unfinished table and chairs and painted them. Our new furniture was a cook stove, kitchen cabinet, and ice-box. We drove to Dante once a week to buy 50 lbs, of ice which was brought home on the bumper of the car. Our one big extravagance was a walnut dining room table, chairs and buffet which cost \$200. Will was in the furniture business so we got it at cost. The table now is in the basement. Some of the chairs are at Pat's.

I had made the curtains before I was married out of Pongee. Bill had measured the windows for me. We stayed at Bill's folks for a few days until the house was in order. It had been painted.

A chivaree was next in order. There was a wash boiler for wieners and the like with hordes of people all wanting to get a good look at the "woman" Bill Lyons chose.

In spite of no plumbing or electric lights, we were happy. Soon I found out that we were to be three. We had a hired man, Joe Quinn and at times extras including our not so good landlord and his no good son, Wilbur. I think he came to get a good meal.

At threshing time, there was always a big crew. I hired a neighbor lady to help. One could not prepare food ahead of time. She was almost worthless so I fired her. Jerry happened to be home on vacation so he helped me and it was much better.

Of course Mary and Vince were not married then. We had good times with picnics and the like. Once when we met at Bill's folks to go on a picnic, as we were loading up some one said; "Where's Mary (Robinson) Lyons?" No one could find her. Finally, Vince's sister thought "My gosh! We went to the little house together. I'll bet I locked her in." Sure enough, there she was, hollering her head off, and was she mad.

Before Pat was born, I made all of his clothes. Two weeks before he was due; I had planned to go to Yankton to my folks in order to be near to the hospital. The day before he was born, I voted for Al Smith for president. The next night at midnight, I realized something was happening, so Bill called his mother. Tom went to Avon for the doctor. Pat was an instrument baby, but all went well. The next day, I had a nurse come to stay and my mother also came. My brother, Francis, was not too happy about that as it was corn picking time and he had to do the cooking. When it was all over as things went well, Bill said; "I'm glad you did not go to the hospital."

But Pat had colic so my nights were unpredictable. But after bad nights Bill got breakfast - pancakes or French toast.

We did not have a washing machine, but I did not wash on the board. A neighbor lady "took in washing" and did it for a nominal sum.

There was a cistern pump in a built-in porch and the cream separator was also there. In the winter, we had a cheery base burner in the living room. That, along with the cook stove, kept us plenty warm. Pat thrived and we were a happy family.

We did not like our skinflint landlord, Andy McKenna, so we moved to Utica the next spring and rented from Mike Ryle. I forgot to mention that Bill's dad gave us 2 horses, Pat and Pete. Also, my dad gave to me a Dodge coupe which belonged to Francis, but he bought a new one. My teacher savings salary went to buy machinery.

We had good crops in Utica. The stork had been around again.

I developed some bad itching welts on my body. I went to the doctor and he said that it was from eating strawberries and gave me some medicine. The more I took, the worse I was. One evening after Pat was in bed, I was lying on the davenport and Bill was reading the paper. He happened to glance over at me and said: "I know what is the matter with you; there are fleas jumping all over your leg." They did not bother him, but the hired man and I spent a miserable summer. I did not dare put Pat down on the floor.

In December of that year, Ben Schlaefli died and the farm was up for sale. My dad and your dad went and bought it. My dad gave me \$5000 to apply on it rather than waiting until he was gone. We did not intend to move until March, but Mrs. Schlaefli did not want to stay there alone, so she moved out. Rather than leave the house vacant, Bill, Pat and I moved in. That winter Tom was working for us, so he stayed a little longer at Utica to wind up things. We left the cook stove and provisions there. It had an oil stove and of course the house had a furnace.

Bill left early in the morning to get the livestock with the trucker, Brewer. It snowed and was -28 degrees. Fortunately my brother, Francis came down that night to wait with me. At midnight, they drove. Because of the snow, the truck could not drive up to the barn. So they had to leave them out in the yard and drive them in. I fed a very hungry husband and trucker. Then we moved everything over.

We had a Delco light plant for the lights, washing machine and iron. And that was the extent of our electricity.

Before Francis was born, I had hired a girl, Maxine, so she would be there when I was in the hospital. In fact, I spent 12 nights in the hospital before he showed up - a 10 lb. bouncing boy - on the doctor's orders. They did not charge me for that. He let me sleep nights.

Everything went fine for us, but the stork just wouldn't go far away. In 13 months, a curly golden haired boy - Gene - joined us. Then for 3 years, the stork took a leave of absence.

I raised 500 chickens every year. With eggs, milk, cream, canned beef, smoked perk and the like, we had plenty to eat. But of course we didn't have much money. I had a hired girl for \$4 a week.

As you remember, we had a very social neighborhood with card parties, dances, PTA and the like.

Ruth Donohoe was teaching in Yankton and stayed with Marie Rossman's mother. Hohn's were not married then, but the 3 couples came to the farm real often for parties. They brought half gallons of beer, rye bread, cheese and things. The year that Jack was born was dry and unbelievably hot. In May, they came one Saturday night. While they were there, I began to feel terrible. They stayed until 2 a.m. After they left, I went to bed but couldn't stay there. My thought was that maybe Jack decided to join us early; but I was okay in the morning. Aunt Ellie Burns was visiting at my folks. I went to the Doctor the next day and he said it was just my condition.

We had planned a home birth. I had made the bedroom upstairs into a hospital room. That night I did decide it was for real. The doctor did not answer, the fellow who was to go get the nurse did not answer. Dad said he would go get a neighbor lady. I said: "You will not!" I was climbing the wall. Finally, he called my brother, Jack. He went to the doctor's house. There was no answer. He was out of town. He woke up the fellow to get the nurse and then called another doctor. His wife said she hated to call him because he wasn't feeling very well. I knew him very well. Jack said a "Hell. Get him out of bed and out to Mary's. She is having a baby." Anyhow, Jack waited for no one. Dad helped me upstairs and that was it. I think that I was in better shape than dad was.

After Jack's birth, I still had these "spells" which turned out to be gall bladder trouble. I struggled along for 12 years with diets and pills before I had it out.

So now then, we were 6. I had a wonderful hired girl, Leona, I think that I paid her \$5. Everyone thrived. There were the usual baby illnesses, bumps and scratches and the like.

The stork just could not get us out of his mind. Tom's birth also was at home. Angela, who was training in Omaha, came and was there when he was born. That year, Vince and Mary were married in Yankton. Actually, we did not know all of the people were coming to the house after the wedding, which was fairly small. I put a roast in the oven and I can't remember what else. I also know that we had some oranges which because of the depression were a special treat. Marian was pregnant with Charles at the time.

I am not a very good editor. I am going back a few years. When our Francis was a baby, I met Ruth for the first time. I went to Hani's to the Extension Club in the P.M. and Francis and Ruth were coming for supper. The other neighbors stayed, at Hani's and their husbands were to come for supper. When Francis and Ruth went out to go home, there was a bad snow storm. Bill got out the horses to get them started, but when they get out on the road, they came back and stayed all night. The bunch at Hani's stayed all night too.

Another event took place, I think in 1931. All of the Lyons', Robinsons and some others decided to come to our place in January to celebrate Bill's birthday. Lillian Tice was one of them. When she came and I saw your dad kiss her, I thought "who in the heck is she?" She and her first husband had farmed near the Lyonses. They did bring liquor and food. We rolled up the rugs and danced to a scratchy record player, but did we have fun till the wee hours. I remember I sat on the front steps giving the baby his snack. They all stayed all night. I squeezed in all I could and some went with Rossman's. The next morning when I went to mass, no one was up, but I left things lined up for breakfast. They got up from the table and left for mass.

I got things in order, took care of the kids. After mass, dad called me very apologetically (although it was not his idea) and said: "Guess what! They are all coming back for dinner -- even Rossman's, Francis and Ruth." I had roasted a big roast the day before and also made a big desert. Somehow, I scared up enough for them to eat. I remember I had homemade bread and made lots of gravy.

They filled 2 tables, but I can still see Joe Hohn sopping up bread and gravy. To go back again, Jack and Helen were married in St. Paul the same year we were. Helen became a Catholic, but I can't remember how long she went to church.

Getting back to 1937, darned if the stork didn't turn up again. I still had

Leona. The night the twins were born, your poor dad did not get any supper. As a matter of fact, neither did I. Bob Schlaefli was helping to pick corn by hand. I told Leona about 5 p.m., to look out and see if they were in from the field, but not to say anything. She said: "Yes." About half an hour later, I told her to call dad in and fry him an egg or something. He started to clean up, but I told him to hurry so he just washed his face and hastily slipped into some clothes. On the way in, I told him to go faster. I was rushed in to O.B., but nothing happened until about 11 p.m. I had nothing but the comfort of Dad holding my hand. When the girl was born, Dr. Trierweler said, "Well, you have your girl." But after about a minute, he said. "Wait a minute, I think there is another one." Dad and I looked at each other and thought he was kidding; but I soon found out he was not.

My first thoughts after the shock were, how are we going to be able to take care of them as Pat was only 8 then. But with my wonderful husband and Leona, we did it. I made the dining room and living rooms into a nursery. We slept on a day bed and then we heard the dreaded "Ma - Waa' s" during the night, our feet hit the floor and we did what we had to do. When Dad came home from the hospital that night, he called Leona. She came flying down the stairs and thought something was wrong. When he told her, she did not believe him at first either.

After the twins were home from the hospital for 3 weeks, my brother Francis came down one morning when I was boiling scads of bottles and fixing formulas. I had tried nursing, but had to quit that. I guess I looked pretty exhausted. He went home and said to my parents and Jack: "We are going to have to do something for Mary. She is so thin and played out." So they talked it over and asked if we would consent to take the twins back to the hospital so I could recuperate. We considered and said "Yes". While they were there, Bob's formula did not agree with him, so he was put on a different one. They were there 3 weeks and I went to see them every day.

Dad had been wanting to go out to Dennis' to buy some cattle. So he went then but told me not to bring the twins home while he was gone, even if they were okay. One day, when I went up, dear Sister Cleopha told me that I could bring them home the next day. When I came home and told Leona, she said. "Let's go up and get them. I will get up with you at night." As it happened, Dad came home that night. I got him a lunch and when he asked about the twins, I said. "Come and see for yourself." But instead of fixing 1 formula, I had to fix 2.

So now, we were 9. Sometimes, times were a bit hectic, but we were a happy family and all had to help with part of the work. On Pat's 9th birthday, I took a birthday cake over to Willowdale. Around Christmas, Leona left us to get married. But I had Josephine, who was equally good. Later on, she left also to get married. Then I had Margaret Hunhoff, Sister Julia's sister. While she was there, Dad had an appendectomy which was pending for a long time. After he was in the hospital for a few days, one day when I went to see him, I felt terrible. But of course I did not tell him. When I went out to the car, I had a chill. I made it home and almost collapsed. Some of the family had had the measles. For some reason after everyone was in bed, I took a good look at my face and there were red spots on it. Then I knew that I had the measles. I thought the hired girl could not take care of us. Bob and Francis had them too, so I called Josephine and asked her if she could come back, and she did. She was not married yet. So I had 2 hired girls for a few days.

The stork left for good. I guess he thought he better let well enough alone.

Then there were 4-H clubs, boys and girls. Kids and parents were all very enthusiastic. There were home parties, swimming, skating, formals and the usual things.

I guess the next traumatic experience was when Francis was attacked by their pet cow, which they rode. A very cold and windy spring day, she had a calf in the alley way of the barn. That p.m. was the hired girl's p.m., off, so my folks came down. My dad took the hired girl to town and my mother stayed for the afternoon. When Pat came from school, he was to baby sit while I took my mother home and picked up the hired girl. On the way home, I had car trouble and was stopping. A car came toward me and stopped. I really thought it was someone to help as I did not take a good look. Instead, it was your dad and my brother, Francis and "little" Francis although at first I did not see him. Dad started pulling me out of the car and said: "Get in. Francis had an accident." He could hardly talk. He took the girl home and my brother couldn't talk. He did say it was a cow that attacked him and knocked him down. Gene was with him. He said: "I didn't know what to do, so I ran out and screamed." Dad had 4 horses hitched to the manure spreader and was headed for the field.

Fortunately, he heard Gene, threw the lines down and ran to the barn. The cow knocked him down too, but he was not hurt. There was a stick

in the barn and he used that to roll Francis out from under the cow.

When we get to the doctor's office, it looked terrible; the print of the cow's hoof cut clear through the cheek. The doctor said: "Mary, I'll do what I can." I stayed with him for 3 nights. I came home once a day to take a bath and change my clothes. We did not think he'd make it, but his guardian angel stood by. His face swelled so that he could only get a straw through his teeth. This was in 1938.

What follows is a hodgepodge of illnesses, operations and other significant events:

Dad - piles, Omaha, 1930 appendicitis 1937 kidney 1959 hernia 1945  
 Me - repairs 1945 gall bladder 1951 hysterectomy 1958  
 Pat - appendicitis, Korea 1948 scarlet fever 1936 mumps  
 Francis - appendicitis 1968 scarlet fever 1936 mumps whooping cough  
 Gene - gall bladder Jack - hernia 1952  
 Tom - appendicitis 1946 car accident 1953  
 Bob and Susan appendicitis 1947 a week apart  
 Bob knee surgery Mayo Clinic 1951, Ella there  
 Measles - lots of times whole family - diphtheria 1948

### Selective Service

Pat 1947 Korea  
 Francis 1953  
 Gene 1950  
 Jack 1954 Germany

### Deaths

Lyons - William, Sr. 1943,  
 Catherine 1949, Marian 1952, Jerry 1960 Ann 1962, Eva 1961,  
 Dennis 1974, Jim 1975, Bessie 1976 Dad 1960

Donohoe's James 1946, Will 1947, Francis 1948, Ella 1956, Mary J. 1956 Jack 1963, Kit 1973, (Kathleen Darcy - almost family-1973)

Pat, Francis and Gene graduated from Willowale. When Pat could drive the other 4 started at Sacred Heart.

Jack, the twins, Tom and neighbor girls had a 4-H band, the Willowdale Ramblers. Once when I was in the hospital, Jack bought a set of drums, so I really had fanfare when I came home. Practice was generally at our house. Tom and the twins were in Sacred Heart band.

In February of 1951, I had surgery. At the time, Pat was dating someone (a nurse) by the name of Darlene. She was one of my nurses. The day I was to leave, a different nurse came in. When she saw my name was Lyons, she said she knew a Lyons family which turned out to be the D.B. family. They had farms near each other. When I came home I told Dad and Pat, and said to Pat that I met such a nice nurse. Not long after, Darlene told Pat there was a dance coming up, but she would have to ask a boy from her home in Nebraska, but would get him a date. So she arranged a blind date first. When Pat got up the next morning he said: "Who do you suppose my blind date was; that Pearl Larson you've been talking about." However, I didn't hear any more of that kind of talk, and Darlene faded into the background. It looks like I made a good recommendation.

I barely remember Grandma and Grandpa Donohue (at that time that is the way the name was spelled.) I remember the big house they lived in, in Iowa City after they left the farm, but I can't remember their deaths or funerals. Grandpa Beecher died before I was born. Grandma lived in a little house in Iowa City. We went up a lot of steps in the street before we got to it. When Ella went to the Academy she took the train in and stayed with her.

When we decided to leave Iowa and come till Dakota, she was most unhappy. At that time she lived in the hospital. I guess now it would be called a nursing home. As I recall, she was okay only she did not want to live alone anymore.

When Grandma died, word came on a Sunday. I suppose it was a wire. It was customary for women to wear black at relative's funerals and for men to wear black armbands on their sleeves. As the folks would go by train on Monday and mother did not have the proper clothes, she called a Mr. Jacobson who had the ladies ready-to-wear at Fantles and asked him to come to the store, which he did. She bought a black dress and coat and that is all I remember.

Grandma Beecher had some money left so mother and Aunt Ellie Burns and the others I suppose got some. With her share, she bought the gold

rimmed dishes, the silver with "D" on it, glassware with Stars, the rug in my living room and chairs.

When the twins were about 2, we as a family decided we could get along without a hired girl. That meant that everyone had to help and each had his job. Not much grass grew under my feet, but again it was nice to just have the family around.

Then there were the 4-H clubs, both boys and girls. Both parents and kids were very enthusiastic, and many ribbons of all kinds were won. Dad and I had our 500 Club, lots of neighborhood affairs and dances which we both dearly loved. We had family dinners as of now, although the first Christmas after the twins were born I decided we were not going anyplace and I was not going to have a family dinner. So we had it and enjoyed all by ourselves.

Life was not all work as people seemed to think and said "Poor Mary". With a wonderful husband, lively children and good family relationships, there was fun and satisfaction too. Oh, there were "THOSE DAYS", but who doesn't have them. They blew over. Your Dad at times was embarrassedly verbally proud of his family. But aren't you glad you had him?

Again, I am going back in time. I think it was 1926. Mother, Ann and I made jelly all day, on a Friday. We had just finished and were cleaning up the sticky mess. Mother said to me to go and get cleaned up and I could get supper while she and Ann did the rest. Ann took her bath next, then Mother. She was in the bedroom dressing, when I heard her say, "My God!" I looked out the door and an 8 passenger Cadillac had driven in. People started coming out, and it was Uncle John Beecher and wife, Mary Ann and son, Mike from Dougherty with John Ryan and wife Alice and 3 young girls. I had cooked a whole bunch of little potatoes with the skins on and was going to brown them. All else I could do was fry dozens of eggs, being it was Friday. We always had homemade bread, lots of jelly and I think a crate of peaches.

After supper, we told Mother to take them into the living room and talk to them while Ann and I figured out how to sleep them. Somehow we did it. During the night, Uncle John fell out of bed. As he was a big man he shook the house. Next day, Ann and I dressed a bunch of chickens and I don't remember what else. At that time, you did not run to the grocery store. I presume we had garden vegetables, tomatoes and the like also.

They left on Monday. That day, I was to go to Wagner on the train to rehearse for Bessie's sister Emma's wedding. I sang a couple of solos. Your future Dad was the best man. I was pretty tired.

I barely remember Grandma and Grandpa Donohue; I remember his beard. Also, the house in Iowa City where they lived, but do not remember their deaths or funerals.

Some of the rest of this is sort of a repeat. I wrote the first 3 pages a few years ago. When I was in Boston last summer (1978) Bob urged me to finish it. You must remember this all is from memory, some of it as far back as probably 5 years of age. As I said before, I am not an editor -- that is why it is not in order. I am putting it down as I think back.

My Dad had 8 sisters and 1 brother. 3 Donohues married 3 Beechers.

1. James A. Donohue married Mary Josephine Beecher. Children, Ellen, Will, John, Francis, Anna, Mary. Before my mother was married, she kept house for 2 brothers, Pat and Mike.
2. Mary Ann Donohue married John Beecher and lived at Dougherty. Children, Hanna, unmarried, very beautiful and popular, Mike, unmarried. Both died fairly young. Ella, a widow had 10 children. Mary, widow; don't know the number of children. Both she and Ella live in the Mason City area. Will, attorney, unmarried, a very handsome man in Waterloo. John, Elma, Iowa, auctioneer. Wife Luella, children, Jim, Creston, Iowa. These 3 brothers died in 1977. Dad and I visited John and Luella when we took Francis car to him in Beloit when Francis was in the army. We came home on the train from Chicago. We went to Milwaukee too and stayed at Olbert's apartment. They left on vacation. Gen unmarried, still manages the family farm.
3. Bridget Donohue married Tom Cusack. Once when mother and I were at Burnses, we visited them. Bridget was an untidy housekeeper and Tom didn't set the world on fire. I can't remember the names of their children. I think there was a nun. They lived near the Burnses.
4. Hanna Donohue married Mike Beecher who farmed near Iowa City. Children-Mae, a nun who did not stay in the convent. At that time, a disgrace. She was very pretty and later married. I don't know about a family. A boy Raymond was my age or maybe a little older. Once when I was visiting there, he took me for a ride in a one horse 2 wheeled cart. He looked at my hands and said "Gosh! Mary, you have big hands." Later on he became a priest,

but died young of TB. Ella, a fairly recent widow lives in Iowa City. Genevieve, I can't remember much about her except I think she had reddish hair and was quite pretty. Francis, unmarried, was a clerk in a hotel in Iowa City - retired now. I remember when Uncle Mike died. He had what they called creeping paralysis. Now I think that is MS. He was completely paralyzed and could only make a sort of sound when he wanted something. The family would have to guess what he wanted. One day he really baffled them. His daughter, Mae, played the piano. Somehow one of them guessed he wanted her to play the piano. When the priest came to administer the last rites, he hesitated about, giving to him the host as he could not swallow. Finally he did and he swallowed.

5. Sister Mary Basilian, BVM in Des Moines. She gave us rosaries for wedding presents.
6. Another nun. I don't remember her name.
7. Maggie Donohue who married a Cusack. I vaguely remember them but I think they lived in western South Dakota once and had children.
8. Alice Donohue who married John Ryan, attorney in Monmouth, Illinois. Daughters Ina and Margaret live in Monmouth.

John married Mary Welsh, both favorites of us. Undertaker in Iowa City. I stayed with them one time and saw my first picture show – it was called a "Nickelodeon". Had 3 girls- one son. I think all gone.

Kate Beecher never married. She had surgery and came to our farm to recuperate. I remember adults talking about the operation. They said the Doctors and nurses were arguing about the count of the sponges. She did not live long., Maybe they left one inside her. Ellie Beecher married Will Burns, a black Angus cattle raiser. The children, Marie and Gen live in Iowa City not far from Bob Crane (Margaret's brother) - they have met. James died rather mysteriously a few years ago after they moved to Iowa City. They did not tell us until later. Bernice and husband live in Iowa City. Helen and Esther live in Ames. Alicia, widow, in California. When Ann and I went to Hawaii, on our way back, we visited them. I have a recollection of a young girl who had some problem dying young.

There are scads or relatives I do not know. Not too many are left that I do know.

It has been a good life for me in spite of a few disappointments and of course the day my world fell apart. We have to expect and accept these things, though it is not easy. We keep asking ourselves "Why?" There is not an answer. Trying to keep busy and not feeling sorry for one's self is the best remedy, but I must admit it does not always work out that way.

May God continue to smile on you all. There will be some rough spots ahead as I so well know. But after a time, they tend to smooth out a little. Sometimes I wish I could turn back the clock for even a few minutes. But why wish for the impossible. I guess life is what we make of it, though not the way we would wish many times. God bless you all.

Like they say in Show Business - **THE SHOW MUST GO ON!**

-MOTHER

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