

A  
MAN  
FOR ALL  
SEASONS

Life and letters of  
ELISHA HILLIARD COOPER  
1869 - 1947

Written and edited by  
STANLEY M. COOPER

To Tina  
from Sam

Copy of a Man For all Seasons  
lent to Manchester Historical Society  
and Hilliard Mills owner 2010,

Copied by Susan Barlow - but only the part most-related  
Dear Susan, 1/10/2010 <sup>to the</sup> Hilliards

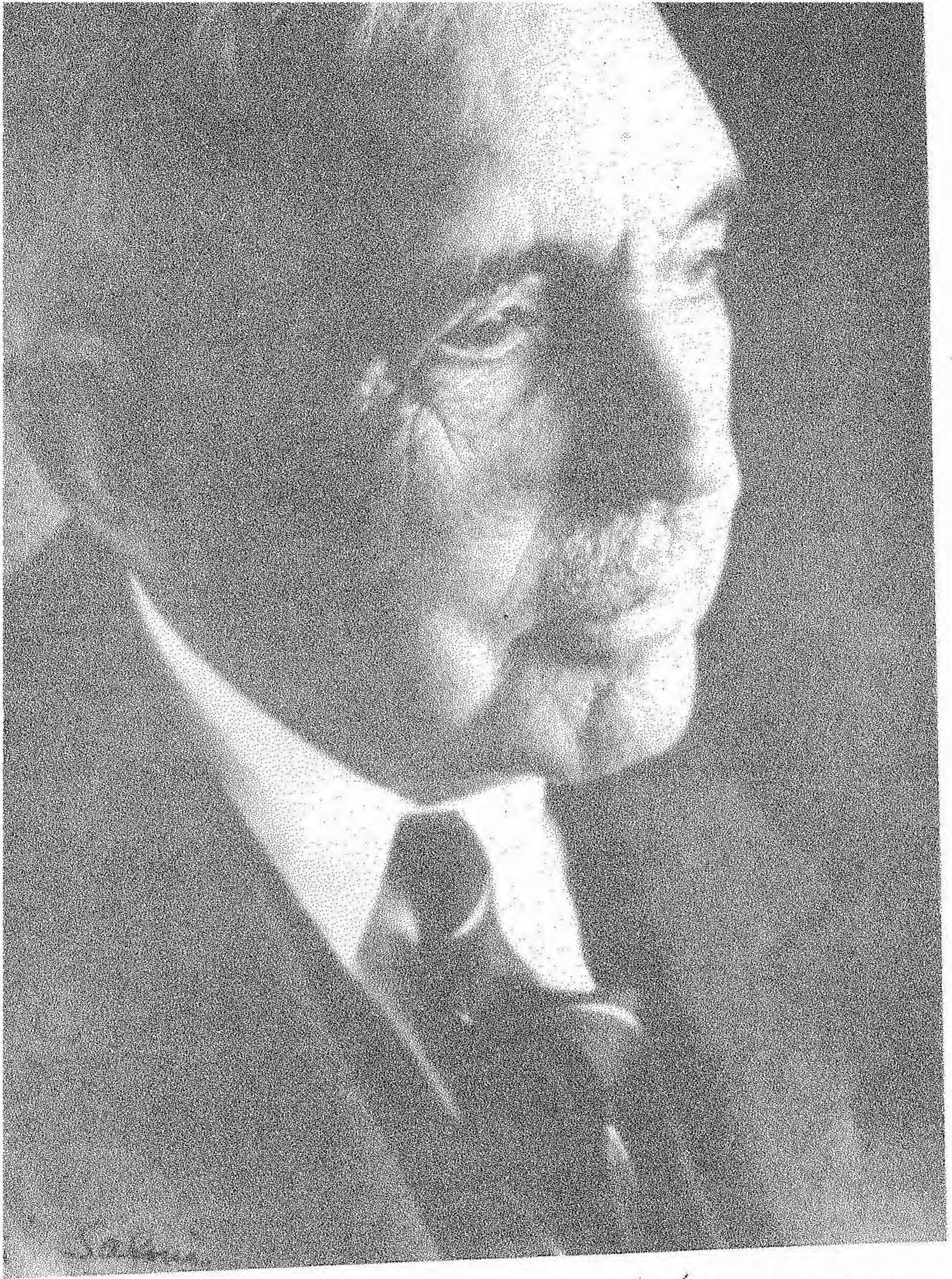
Here is the book. I hope  
very much that you  
enjoy it and that it  
helps the journey of  
discovering and uncovering  
the story of the  
Hilliard Mill. For me  
its actually been  
very therapeutic and  
helped me to connect  
with my roots. And what  
interesting roots they are!

Anyway, I do hope  
you like it and find it  
helpful. Please pass it  
on to Peter as well.

Sincerely,  
Britt Cooper Phillips ☺

Rev. James Wesley Cooper (1842-1916)  
married Ellen Hilliard <sup>of</sup> Buckles  
Aug. 13, 1868

daughter of  
E.E. Hilliard &  
Charlotte Day Spenser  
1846-1924



James  
E. H.

MAN  
FOR ALL  
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published by his sons  
STANLEY MILLER COOPER  
FORD HILLIARD COOPER  
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## INTRODUCTION

### A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

The title comes from a passage about Sir Thomas More by a compatriot, Robert Whittington, around 1500, the phrase closing a recitation in praise of his "wit, learning and affability." I have enlarged its meaning to include all of Father's talents, intellectual and social. In the first category were his well-known business, administrative and financial abilities, his mechanical and inventive interests, and his gift of clear writing in prose and poetry. The second — sociability in its best sense — was perhaps his greatest gift, expressed in a unique aptitude for friendships, both personal and business, so great that to those who knew and loved him another title would suggest itself — "The Good Companion."

We are fortunate that the proof of these characteristics is available for biographical purposes in Father's files, scrapbooks, writings and letters from business and personal friends, and in addition numerous letters from him saved by his family.

The first part of the story — through 1926 when Father relinquished the day-to-day operating management of Fafnir and became Chairman of the Board — I have largely written myself because the diversity of the period and the gaps in the correspondence required such continuity. Of course, I have quoted freely from letters when they were available and appropriate.

The second part — his retirement — seemed to be best handled through the medium of his correspondence, with only enough interpolations by me to tie them together or to explain references in a letter. This method is appropriate not only because of the volume of the correspondence and its relative continuity but particularly because of the uniformly high quality of the writing. Furthermore, because of his frequent long absences, his letters were the story of his activities at the time, and of his relationships with his friends, his sons and his business. Through them, too, because they were so natural and spontaneous, is best shown his personality.

For the letters from Father to his family I owe thanks to the letter-saving propensities of my grandmother, Ellen Hilliard Cooper, my mother and my brothers, my own contributions to this area being minimal. For their choice and editing, however, I take full responsibility — and some credit.



I am particularly grateful to my cousin, James Cooper, for the care with which he reviewed the first drafts and the additional letters and information which he was able to give me from his own files on his father and our grandfather.

The conception of a biography and its general format have the approval of my brothers and they have reviewed at least the first drafts. I take full responsibility, however, for any errors or omissions in the material and, of course, for the quality of my own writing.

My wife has been a patient and helpful listener to my travails in the preparation of the book.

To my former secretary at Fafnir, Josephine Johnson, go my thanks for deciphering and typing my first draft, and to her and my daughter-in-law, Ann, for the final drafts.

Stanley M. Cooper

April 2, 1980

New Britain, Connecticut

## Chapter One

### YOUTH

Father was born on October 2, 1869, at Rockport, Massachusetts, a fishing town on Cape Ann near Gloucester. His father, the Reverend James Wesley Cooper, had moved there only a little over a year before with his new bride, the former Ellen Hilliard of Buckland (part of Manchester), Connecticut, having accepted the call of the First Congregational Church as his first ministry since graduating from Yale and the Andover Theological Seminary. There is a picture of the small but attractive white house where he was born, the parsonage that went with the \$1200 salary that the church paid my Grandfather.

There is little material about his babyhood in Rockport except that at least once he was very ill, as evidenced by an entry in Grandpa's diary in 1870: "Ellie worse. Hope about gone." That was a close thing for us all — his descendants!

Apparently the cold, damp climate of Rockport, which may have contributed to this crisis, was also not conducive to my Grandparents' health, and this, plus the limited intellectual stimulus in the position, led to Grandpa's resignation on January 1, 1871. Although his stay in the Rockport ministry was short, Grandpa left a reputation and affection which was still alive when in 1926 Father and his brother, Earnest, participated in a ceremony in Rockport at which a bronze memorial tablet erected by them was dedicated in his church.

For the next five months while Grandpa looked hopefully for another church, the young family lived in Buckland at my Grandmother's old home, the "Dell," short for "Hawthorne Dell," a fortunate and necessary refuge.

In July of 1871 Grandpa's search had been rewarded with the offer of two churches, the first in Lockport, New York, and the second in Stonington, Connecticut. He would have preferred the latter, but felt that, having in May accepted an offer from the Lockport church, he must go there even though the salary of \$1800 *without* a parsonage was less in total than the Stonington church was offering. The family therefore moved in July to Lockport, a town on the New York Barge Canal about 15 miles east of Niagra Falls. It was here

in 1873 that the second son and last child (my UNCLE EARNEST) was born. Whether my Father's later love for salt water and my Uncle's for fresh was a result of the birth of one by the ocean and the other near lakes and streams is an interesting speculation.

Again, the Lockport parish, although successful, failed to fulfill my Grandfather's hopes and needs, and in February, 1878, he accepted a call from the South Congregational Church in New Britain, Connecticut, after refusing a unanimous call from another church in upstate New York. The decision was not hard to make, the South Church being one of the largest Congregational churches in the country and, in addition, near to the Hilliard home in Buckland. That the choice was happy is evidenced by the fact that Grandpa stayed in this position for twenty-five years, his last active ministry.

At the time of this move my Father was almost ten years old — and his conscious history really begins. For his earliest years in New Britain, I am again indebted to my Uncle Earnest's charming biography of my Grandfather, from which the short history above was drawn.

The family had three successive residences in New Britain: the first, boarding for a short time with Deacon Peck on Pearl Street; the second, the first South Church parsonage on the west side of Franklin Square; and third and last, in 1886, the magnificent new parsonage on Washington Street, where the W.L. Hatch building now stands. This mansion, probably the finest in the City, was a bequest to the church by Mr. Cornelius Erwin, the founder of Russell & Erwin, who as a member of his church had become an adviser and friend of my Grandfather.

Father appears briefly in my Uncle's biography during the Franklin Square residency. I quote: "Elisha's job was to take care of the horse, which occasionally stepped on the brotherly foot," and later, "Elisha at the mature age of ten went to school" — apparently the Camp School because my uncle says later that Camp School was *his* first scholastic experience. It is during this period that we have a record of Father's first attempt at self-expression. This is in the form of five letters written from Buckland between May 13 and July 23, 1883, to his parents and Aunt Minnie who were traveling in Europe while he was staying with his other Hilliard aunt and grandmother at the family homestead in Buckland. For a boy of fourteen ("Ellie" to his Family), these are amazing letters, the handwriting Spencerian and the expressions graphic. The flavor is best tasted by reproducing the first one in full:

May 13, 1883

Dear Everybody:

I want to thank you for getting me the stamps in New York and the picture of the steamer and ask whether you were seasick, but I won't try to tell you the things that have happened here in their order.

In New Britain the other of Mix's little deer-hound has been poisoned and Co. E's parlor in the armory has been opened and two hundred dollars worth of property destroyed including the carpet split from end to end with a knife and the leather cushioned chairs slit across. The persons that did it have not been found out yet.

The water has been so low that the people have been forbidden to water their yards or the streets or make any unnecessary waste of the water.

In Buckland I have got a terrible cough.

Aunt Addie has got a sick headache.

Earnest has got a sore throat.

Grandma has got on to her crutches and goes around without any help. She also goes upstairs every night.

The boat isn't painted yet and when it is it is going to be put onto this pond instead of the other one.

Uncle Clint has started one set of looms in the mill and I help him in the office.

Last week Frank Ball's oldest baby about the size of little Earnest died and Mat and I and two other fellows were bearers. It died of croup.

Earnest brushes his teeth twice a day and everything is all right.

Your Son and Nephew  
E. H. Cooper

P.S. Were you seasick?

N.B. Earnest's throat is all right. EHC

Grandma sends love and says everything is going on well. E. H. Cooper

Dear Mama: I want to send my love to you. I want to ask you if you told me that I could get a pair of boots. Please tell me."

Attesting to his growing maturity is this quotation from his next letter, May 23, to:

"Papa and Mama —

I am able to drive Ted alone now and I take Aunt Addie up to the depot and back again when she goes to Hartford and I take grandma out riding sometimes. I drove Ted over to the blacksmith to get shod." And later in the same letter — "Aunt Minnie left £1 (sic) apiece for us to spend."

The final letter in this group, July 23, has a modern touch in it:

“There is a great telegraph strike going on here and the operators will not send any messages except for the railroads all over the Union.”

The next writing is a series of six enthusiastic letters to his brother and parents from Mt. Vernon, Maine, in the summer of 1884 where he was on a fishing trip, apparently with friends of his family. The handwriting has deteriorated from the Spencerian, but the writing has the same youthful vitality. Amidst knowledgeable descriptions of fishing and his catches (“Mr. T. did not get a bite while Elisha Hilliard Cooper caught 2 perch and one pike that weighed nearly a pound.”) there are a couple of gems: “The people here say that you will not know me I am getting so *brown* and *fat*. Simon (the guide) says that he is afraid that you will disown me and that I will fall back on him for support.”

On August 7 his letter in which he had expressed a fervent hope that his family could join him ended: “Do come up here if it is possible. Satisfaction guaranteed. THIS IS THE PLACE.” That the atmosphere was also proper for a minister’s son is attested by the following: “Today, there being three ministers here, we are going to have a service in the woods.”

At this age of fifteen he was self-reliant, as is shown by the following in his last letter to his father on August 17: “Shall I go right to New Britain or to Grandma’s? Don’t let me interrupt your plans at all for I can get out from Boston just as well as not.”

Of the rest of his life in New Britain little is recorded except his formal progress. We can assume, of course, that as a minister’s son he went to church regularly, if only because of later references to singing in the choir. A first-hand account of one episode of his boyhood is available in a diary kept at the time by his lifelong friend, Harry Boardman, and passed on to Father in 1942 by his son, Ronald Boardman. Some excerpts follow:

January 7, 1886

“Made out my application for membership in the Y.M.C.A. Elisha Cooper signed it for me.”

January 8, 1886

“After school, I went into the Y.M.C.A. with Ellie Cooper. We left our overcoats and hats on the rack in the hall. Ellie put his sealskin hat into

his overcoat pocket. At half past five, we went out and the coats were both gone.

October 2, 1886

“Went as a delegate of the Y.M.C.A. to Stamford. Left on the 6:50 A.M. train with Ellie Cooper...Ellie and I were assigned at a doctor's house, Mrs. E.G. Phillips, on Summer Street. We went there at noon and waited there an hour in her office which smelled rather doctorish and no one came so we cleared out, Ellie telling the girl that we called on business.... We all had to speak at the boy's meeting on Sunday. We all attended the Baptist Church in the morning. Mr. Sumner Dudley of New York preached. In the evening we went to the Presbyterian Church. After meetings in the several churches were over, we all went to the Methodist Church for a final meeting. We had considerable fun there and went to bed at 11:30, but it was after twelve before we went to sleep.”

October 4, 1886

“We got up and took the 6:13 train but without breakfast. We had a jolly time on the train to New Haven where we had a cup of coffee and a sandwich. Before we left the cars, Lyman Booth put a card in the band of Ellie's hat which said on it “Dead Beat Pass.” He wore this through the depot and we had a good time over it. We arrived on the 9:10 and attended school.”

December 28, 1886

“We went to the Catholic Church with John Carleton and Ellie Cooper in the afternoon. Also went to the Y.M.C.A. meeting. A drunk man made considerable disturbance. We went to the Hartford toboggan slide with Carleton F. Bassett and Cooper. Had a fine time. The slide was in very good condition and took twenty-five seconds.”

Early evidence of Father's versatility — combining religion with having some fun!

From the Camp School he went on to high school, from which he graduated on March 27, 1888, at the age of nineteen; the date is fixed by a Class Day “Program of Exercises by the Graduating Class” on March 27,

1888, in which Elisha H. Cooper is listed as giving the Oration entitled, "The Border Land." I have a copy of this work, bound in one of his Father's paper sermon covers, the author here self-described as "E. Hilliard Cooper."

The Oration is a very mature piece of work, the subject being in praise of progress, particularly scientific, with specific references to "air transit" and "the transmission of sight by wire" (this in 1888!), and closing with the following stirring peroration:

'The place for educated man is on the frontier — the border land of advancing thought. Here is life and action and here must always be the place for truly progressive minds. Knowledge already gained shall be but the incentive to enter wider fields, to gain greater acquirements, ever moving toward that end which, though destined to be unattainable, must always be persistently and tirelessly sought.'

The last example of Father's early literary efforts is also the first poem. It is entitled: "An Ode to My Brother's Morning Hours." Written in a surprisingly sloppy longhand (the poetic influence?) it starts:

When in the morn  
the eight o'clock sun  
shall find earnest sleeping  
his lessons undone  
and when the red beams  
his closed eyelids unfurl  
just as he's dreaming  
of that pretty girl  
whose pretty eyes kept him  
away from his home  
to which he well knew  
that he *then* ought to *come*

and ends

And when he takes then  
of his Caesarine dose  
he'll not want a "pony"  
but his darling veloce.

These youthful writings, while they give an understanding of Father's lifetime ability in writing, should not lead to the conclusion that he was a

bookish recluse. On the contrary — it was during these years in New Britain that his greatest talent was nourished — the natural aptitude for friendships. Of the names of his companions at that time there is no written record, but the friendships that brought him back to New Britain even after he was living in Buckland and Hartford are undoubtedly those of his boyhood years: Howard, Max, and Ed Hart, William P. (Cap) Felt, Bert Moore, and Harry Boardman being particular cronies.

Altogether it was a happy and well-rounded boyhood, a fine preparation for the future and a significant preview of the young man and adult to follow.



## YALE

Father went from the New Britain High School to Yale College (as differentiated from the Sheffield Scientific School) after what must have been a long summer vacation because his first letter from New Haven is dated September 20, 1888, the day he had come down from New Britain to take entrance examinations. Coming from a small high school, he found the exams very difficult, as related to his father in this letter:

“Received the announcement of my conditions and hope that you will not feel so totally discouraged as I do with myself. I intend now to bone right in and get them off as soon as possible. You will notice that they are all in studies which I had in the second middle year in High School and also in my favorite branches, Greek Composition, Latin Composition, Greek Grammar, Anabasis, and last of all Caesar!”

The second letter to his father on September 23 sounds the starting gun:

“I have now begun life at Yale.”

His class was, of course, 1892, which he described in the following way in a letter to “FRIENDS AT HOME” on October 21, 1888:

“I have the questionable honor of belonging to the ‘freshest’ class that ever entered college. For some reason the whole University is against us and even the Juniors have ceased to support us, while the Sophs are getting in some pretty tall work.”

At the end of his sophomore year he received a second prize in English composition — much to his surprise, he says; and later became a member of Gamma Nu Literary Society. In his senior year a short notice appeared in the Hartford Times to the effect that “Mr. Elias (sic) Cooper...has been elected a member of the Phi Beta Kappa of Yale College,” an event he referred to in his last letter home as “the smoothest horse...perpetrated in New Britain...” That this phrase referred to a hoax — by Father or his friends is uncertain — is confirmed by an inquiry to the Alumni Records office which reveal that

On the less literary level he announced to his father on March 13, 1890 that: "It gives me pleasure to state that I have received a pledge to Zeta Psi. Congratulations are in order." In his senior year he became a member of the Senior Society, the Elihu Club. And, finally, a diploma issued by the United States Military Department at the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale University declared that he graduated with honor from the special course in drill tactics and is eligible to become "a Commissioned Officer in the Regular Army of the United States!"

So much for the formal rewards of his college career. The informal and unheralded events of his daily life are of the most interest and significance. Unheralded but not, fortunately, unrecorded. In a series of letters to his family starting with that first letter and continuing almost once a week for the four years at Yale, with the exception of the first term of Junior year, he recounts in a beautifully clear hand and a lighthearted way the events of those years. As a picture of both the writer and Yale in the last century these letters are unique.

I at first assumed that the missing letters of 1890 had in some way been lost, but a letter which my cousin, Jim, found in Grandpa's correspondence and which he had assumed referred to *his* father, solved the mystery. It was written to my grandfather on October 4, 1890, by the Yale Dean, Henry P. Wright, and referred to his "anxiety" about Grandpa's "son" when he first heard of his "serious illness" and assuring Grandpa that "when he is able to return we will try to make his work as light as possible." That this "son" was *my* father is confirmed by Father's letter of January 6, 1891, the first one of the second term of that Junior year, in which he says that he has just seen "Baldy Wright and he tells me that I can take it easy at first."

This illness must have been serious to keep him out of college for an entire term, and because the time was apparently spent at home there is no correspondence during the period to indicate what was wrong; to my knowledge, Father never mentioned the episode. That it was probably malaria is indicated by a reference to that illness and being "full of quinine" in an earlier letter in Sophomore year and the fact that while he was working in Buckland later he had a bout of malaria. But it must have been an unusually bad case to keep him out for a whole term and leads to conjectures as to what else might have been involved.

and his brother Earnest were not neglected, the latter frequently being addressed as "Kid" and occasionally "Booby," with frequent brotherly advice and offers of assistance in various small matters. And because he had a number of other relatives who wanted to hear from him he occasionally resorted to a plural salutation, such as "Dear Friends." One letter names those whom he particularly wanted to reach, the salutation being as follows:

Dear                      Father  
                                 Mother  
                                 Earnest  
                                 Peggy  
                                 Henry  
                                 (Teddie) ?  
                                 Etta

Signatures varied from E.H.C. to E.H. Cooper with occasional ventures into informality, such as "Coop," apparently a nickname which, as he said, "had come to be" in his Sophomore year. There was even a flourish in one with the pseudonym E. Hyliarde Coopaire.

It is evident both from the regularity of his correspondence and from sentiments expressed in them that he was not only a dutiful but a devoted son and brother. He made it clear in one letter, however, shortly after he arrived in New Haven that fondness for "home and mother" were not getting him down — "terrible pangs of Hoamciknesse (sic) have not transversely pierced my aching heart" — but adding, "still I shall be very glad to see her on Tuesday," meaning his Mother. In fact, the most obvious evidence of his joy in his family are his repeated invitations and hope that one or more can join him at football games and his pleasure when they visited him in New Haven. His own trips home were frequent and always happy.

We have quite an accurate picture of Father's physical characteristics from one of his letters to his Mother, who, like most mothers, was always concerned about her boy's health: "I weigh stripped just 141 pounds, 19 pounds more than I did 15 months ago." The weight presumably did not include the winter flannels which he adds he is wearing. There is also an "Anthropometric Table" issued by Dr. Leaver, September 1888, the time of his

entrance to Yale, on which are traced all of his physical dimensions against an assumed average and which shows him to have been somewhat below average in weight and girth measurements and somewhat above in height and length measures — in other words, a tall, slender boy.

Partly, undoubtedly as a result of this build, he was somewhat subject to colds, and thereby worried his mother further, as evidenced in the following quote from his letter of March 6, 1889: "*Please, mamma, don't worry about my underwear or my feet...all the while you are away. I'm all right, and I'm going to stay so.*" And, as we shall see from his activities, including physical, he was about as healthy as any but the most robust types.

Finances were not a serious problem — at least for him. Thanks in part to a small bequest that my grandmother received at her father's death in 1881 and, of course, by sacrifices necessary on a minister's salary, Father was apparently in reasonable good financial shape in college; as my uncle says in his book about my Grandfather, "Elisha and I cannot but be grateful for the sacrifices that put us both through four years of Yale...and topped it off with a trip to England — after graduation." Not that money was plentiful or his allowance, like most, ever adequate. The references started optimistically with his letter of September 25, 1888, to his father, which starts off with thanks for the enclosed "spondulicks" — adding that, "My treasury now registers \$22.41 so that unless I want to start a bank or speculate my credit will be good for some time." Apparently this happy state lasted pretty well through his Sophomore year, but as his friendships broadened and his tastes became more sophisticated, references to financial problems became numerous. On May 18, 1890, he writes to his father: "Can you spare me half of my June allowance now? I need the money but I will try to come out square at the end of the term." On June 6, he says, "Your check is received, I *am* a little close for money, what with society, summer trousers and shirts, window seat (for room) and summer sundries the money goes pretty fast. However, I do not mean to run over my allowance unless absolutely necessary. As for supporting the rest of the Class, I don't understand you. I have never lost any money from those to whom I have lent and do not expect to. In fact, I have borrowed myself about as much as I have lent. I am sure you would not have me mean enough not to do a man a favor when it is in my power ... I have had only a quarter to my name since last Saturday and I assure you I am not extravagant." The clincher — "I cannot come home on Saturday. There are about 3,000 lines of Greek (etc.) and besides it costs \$1.20."

That he regretted this outburst is clear, for in a letter the next day he apologized thus: "Last night I wrote you a letter of acknowledgement of your check and I am afraid I said some things that were both unkind and ungenerous." He then goes on to detail additional expenses, including \$4.00 for "tennis pants" and \$6.00 for three tennis shirts, a total of \$89.90.

When you add items at various times such as guitars, cameras, tickets to plays and trips to New York and home, it is evident that Father was not too badly off financially, and that although, as he frequently says in the letters, he overspends his allowance, it is evident that any sacrifices were probably more at home than in New Haven.

When he started Freshman year he boarded with a relative of the family, Mrs. Charles Downs — "Aunt Mat" in the letters — at 21 Wall Street. In May she and her family moved out to Sherman Avenue, several miles from the college, and he took a room near his eating club — 117 Elm Street. For Sophomore year, however, he wanted to be in a college dormitory with a roommate. This latter brought him some temporary headaches because by the end of Freshman year he had accumulated so many friends, several of whom suggested rooming together, that he had some difficulty making a choice. A quotation from a letter of May 19, 1889, is typical: "Since Sunday I have had another roommate offer and am bewailing my luck to think I cannot accept it. Crosby, the man who made the noted run in the Yale-Harvard Freshman football game and is now port stroke of the Freshman crew. A quiet, Christian fellow but one of the best-liked in the Class and sure to make his mark in college and sure "Bones" man. How he came to ask me I don't know since I haven't seen him much since the first term when he was in my division."

This "opportunity" followed only a week after a letter of May 12 in which he informs his father: "I have very nearly decided to room with Huntington, Marvin's present chum, for next year. He isn't just the man I would like, but is on the whole a good fellow. He is two or three years older than I, rather short and decidedly not handsome. But he is in with a first-rate crowd, most of the athletes of the Class. He is a good football player and probably the best tennis player in the Class, and withal a great lover of good books and poetry ... In addition to this, he has a brother in the Senior Class who will probably give him a good pile of 'duds' for the room. Marvin leaves him to room with one of his society men (sic)..."

Obviously, Father was not without social ambitions and material considerations! But apparently ambition and uncertainty were becoming tiring for on

May 26 he writes: "Everything is all right again. I have found a good roommate and have taken from my mind a great deal of anxiety. Another Hartford man, Freeman, a popular and good-natured fellow who has been rooming with a Sheff (man). Imagine he is more of an athlete than a literary man, but he is a mighty pleasant fellow all around."

For some unexplained reason, although their friendship later lasted through their lives, this arrangement lasted only through Sophomore year, and in Junior and Senior years he roomed with Harlan Taintor, also of Hartford, and apparently a handsome (almost beautiful), gentle but popular man.

The drawing for rooms in the Spring of 1889 was a great event. Father was apparently on the whole lucky in this and subsequent draws, living on the fourth floor of South College with Freeman in Sophomore year, and with Taintor at 144 Farnam in Junior year, and 75 North Middle in Senior year. Apparently, too, as the years went on friends appeared to congregate in the same areas. The letters also show Father's concern with the appearance and furnishings of the successive rooms and frequent requests for help or suggestions from his mother on these subjects.

Eating arrangements were, of course, separate matters, although for the first few weeks after his arrival Father naturally ate at Aunt Mat's. From then on, however, there were a series of "eatingclubs" varying in price from five to seven dollars a week, in the monotony of the food very little, and in the membership considerably. The eating clubs were, in fact, the first means of sorting out friendships for the Freshmen, and, judging by the letters, it took quite a lot of trial and error to finally settle down with the "crowd" you wanted. In his four years Father made numerous changes, usually with pithy comments about the society and the food, favorable and unfavorable.

Thus the financial and social aspects of his college life. On the mental side the first priority was, of course, his studies and particularly the elimination of the "conditions" under which he had entered. That this was not easy for him is made evident in a letter on November 18, 1888, not too long after he had entered: "I don't know whether it is want of ability or want of early training ... but my natural antipathies (for translations) are in no wise decreasing when I spend twice the time that the others do and then flunk."

In spite of the difficulties, his natural talents and hard work enabled him to eliminate the conditions fairly soon, and by March 24, 1889, he was setting

his own pace and was able to write: "The biggest thing that I have done recently is to 'stick' in the second division — news of which was celebrated by a party with four friends who had come up from the third division." He even had time now to develop a philosophy of study, the letter continuing — "The longer I stay the more I am convinced that the second is the place for the man who is neither a dig nor has special endowments or fit in languages."

Even earlier, and when there might have been a touch of sour grapes, he was writing on January 28: "I am afraid I don't have quite the enthusiasm I ought to have for a first division stand. Ninety per cent of them are habitual digs, weak eyes, round shoulders, consumptive or something else ... in fact, a large per cent of the smartest men are in the 3rd and 4th divisions; in the second are — Bronson, Taintor, Upton, Marvin." In a later letter he indicated that his aim would be the second division.

Some idea of the courses at the time are given in a letter to his father at the end of Sophomore year ... "Dutch (German?) 3 hours, Analytical Chem. 3 hrs ... 1st term Tennyson and 2nd term Shakespeare 2 hrs"; on the back of this letter in Father's longhand at a later date is a list of other subjects recollected and including English Masterpieces, Political Economy and Calculus.

Father had apparently been giving some thought to being a doctor, because in addition to Chemistry he had also been considering Physiology and Biology. The matter of his courses and his future came to a head at the end of Junior year when, after having advised his family of his schedule for Senior year, which included these courses, he made a complete switch, writing — "Both chemistries have been dropped and in their place I have substituted German, European History, Renaissance, and Romanticism." The explanation given to his family cited over-concentration on a subject — Chemistry — which he felt would be of no use unless he planned to study medicine — "only a moderate probability" — compared with "the opportunity of broadening my education." He also would have had to take an extra course to make up his lack of Physiology. Under the circumstances, including his health, the decision seems to have been a wise one, and was so accepted by his father. As it was, he had had to stay in New Haven during Spring vacation of that Junior year to make up credits which he had lost in the Fall term due to his illness.

Aside from his formal class work, Father was also writing occasionally. I

have reviewed several essays which at a later date he incorrectly ascribed to his high school days. One of these was entitled, "An American Country Gentleman" and is a somewhat self-conscious essay about an imaginary character in a small country town — probably Buckland, Conn. — in an English novel kind of a style. A statement in it that large lawns "suggest ... lavish waste of real estate that was characteristic of our forefathers" is a little startling.

Other essays — both carefully written in longhand and bound in string — are one on Emily Bronte, and another entitled "Is the Influence of the American Newspaper Likely to Increase or Diminish?"; in this letter he criticizes the then apparent tendency of newspapers to devote too much time to poor literature, gossip, and prejudiced editorializing and not enough to news. I thought that for a college boy this was a very creditable performance, but, illustrative of the higher writing standards of the time, is his instructor's pithy comment at the end: "Better than the last."

At this period — Sophomore year — Father was also competing for "reading honors," for on May 19, 1890, he writes — "I have got my appointment for reading honors and have selected the first part of the Christmas Carol. I am afraid my chance for a prize is rather slim."

In Junior year he talked about going out for the "Lit" because "a large number of men are writing but there seems to be plenty of room for good work." Apparently he was unable to fill this gap, for he never became a "Lit" editor. My impression from the letters is that he was too busy and not quite enough inspired to tackle the grind of serious writing.

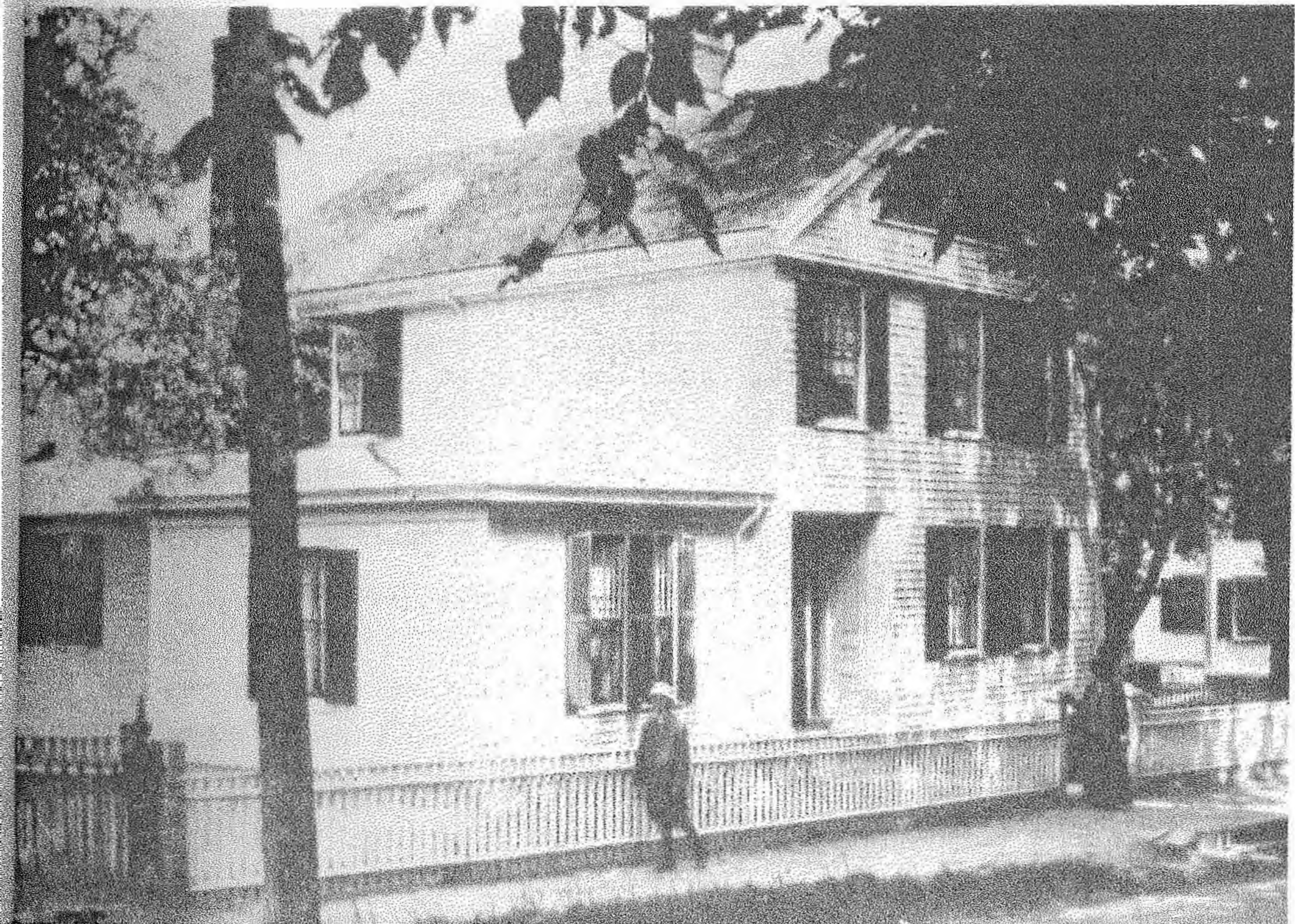
Of course, another parallel interest, which continued all his life, was reading. Some of this was for an "optional" reading course, but it is plain from the letters that he enjoyed it. Books mentioned among others are — The Sketchbook, Reveries of a Bachelor, The Opium Eater, Silas Marner, and Lamb's Essays. This interest, of course, did not develop until after the initial hectic days and the necessity for making up his entrance conditions.

In spite of the early rigors of study, Father found even in his Freshman year time for outside activities and interests. Strong among these were religious and political matters. In the 1888 letters there is frequent mention of the services in Battell Chapel and comments on the standard of the sermon. Also in that year and early 1889 there is mention of attendance at Bible Classes, Dwight Hall, the Y.M.C.A., the Grand Street Mission and visits to other



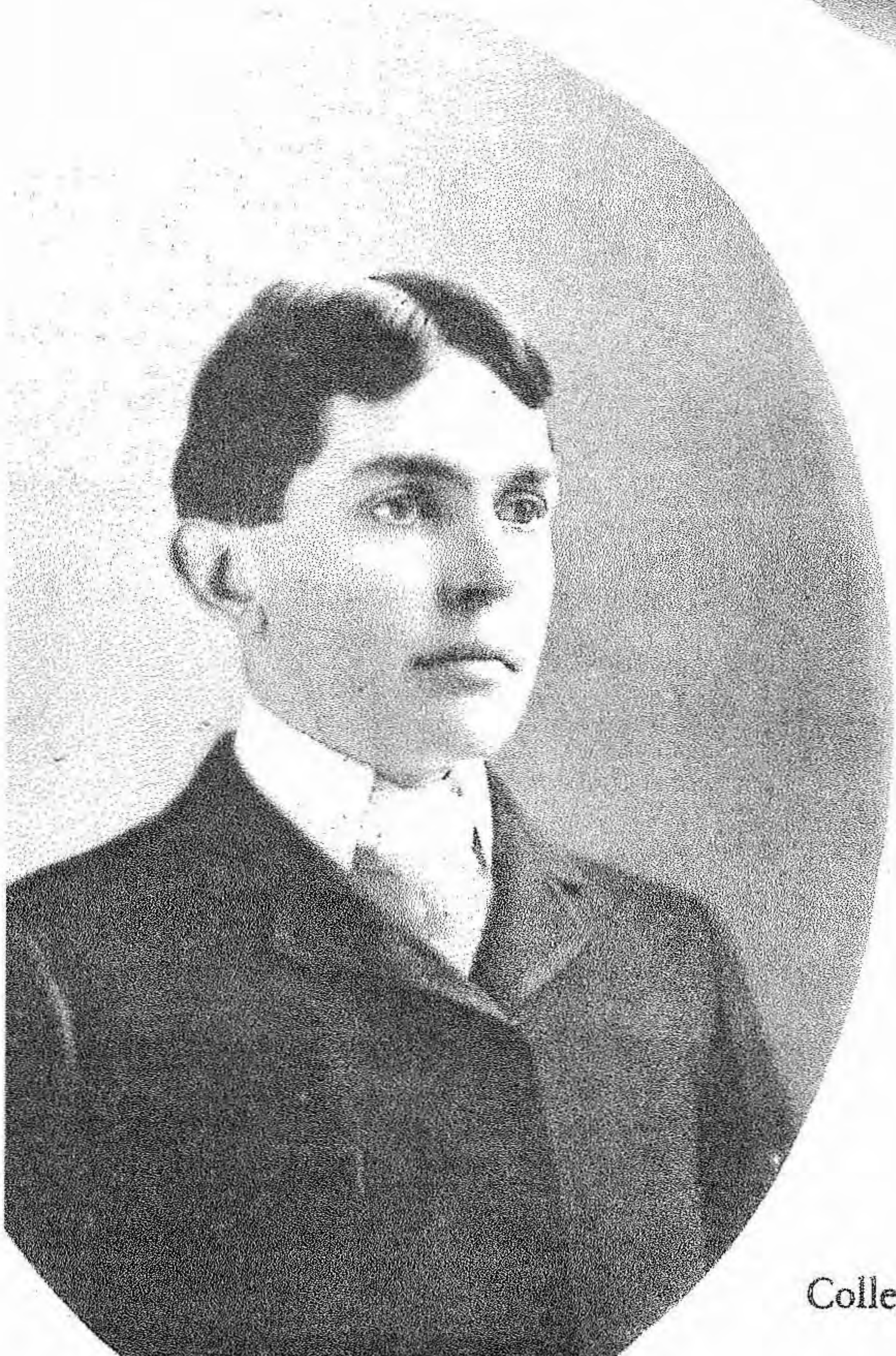


James W. and Ellen Hilliard Cooper — 1868





High School  
graduate



College graduate

Yale Sept 23 11  
Dear Father -  
I have now begun life  
at Yale. I have been with most  
of my recitations. I have learned  
not to ask questions of a Sophomore  
but to how to have no child  
let to do a number of things.  
The recitations come now  
twice a day and during  
the week I write for at least  
seven days. The students  
from the new state are here  
and helpful so that I am  
succeeded without any trouble  
that I am here to study.  
Prof. Simon is our division  
and I am sure  
that he will get along well  
with the others.

Original  
of early  
Yale letter





View to "The Birches"  
from Hartford —  
Manchester Road



Hilliard homestead "Hawthorne Dell"  
(Mill in background)



churches in New Haven. I am sure that Father's activity in this field was due not only to his upbringing as a minister's son and to the compulsory aspects of certain Chapel and religious class attendance but also to a genuine interest in religion at this time. Its diminishing concern to him as he became involved in other and more social things is not unnatural, if unfortunate, but even in Junior year he writes to his Father that he attended Dwight Moody's revival meetings, adding, "His visit, I think, has been very successful and he has influenced a large number of men, strange to say a large number of 'society' men."

His interest in politics, too, was most pronounced in Freshman year. During the Presidential campaign of '88 between Blaine and Harrison he attended several rallies in New Haven, hearing Chauncey Depew, Foraker, and Blaine himself; as a good Republican, he was for Harrison and he mentions "drilling with the Depew Battalion." He even continued an interest in New Britain politics, referring in one letter to an upcoming election and how exciting it must make New Britain.

Father was also, at least during the first two years in New Haven, attracted to the theatre, several times mentioning plays, and even the opera, to which he had gone, and lamenting those which he was missing. In the former category were — "Il Trovatore" and Boothe in "Othello", and in the latter — "Romeo and Juliet" and Sullivan's new opera, the "Yeoman of the Guard." In "Held by the Enemy," a war play, he saw "Mr. Gillette, a Hartford boy." He even acted himself once in Senior year, appearing in a program of a "Mellow Drama" put on by Zeta Psi at the '94 initiations in which Father had the part of "Cashin," a conspirator. In that year he also heard Paderewski.

In addition to these cultural activities, Father found time to be quite athletic — not on teams but informally with friends. In the light of present-day attitudes towards walking it is interesting to see casual references to "off on a 12-mile ramble this afternoon" or "yesterday Huntington, Taintor and I walked to Mount Carmel, starting before dinner and getting home to supper" or "On Wednesday afternoon I walked to the Lighthouse and back." That he was a good walker is also testified by a casual remark in a letter datelined April Fools' '89 that "the train from New Haven to Hartford was late and I missed the train to Buckland. So as the day was fair I walked out." Seven or more miles!

Other activities at various times included rowing sculls on Lake Whitney, both two- and four-oar, tennis on a court near the college which he and some friends rented one spring, and sailing in the Thimble Islands with "a crowd of fellows." In fact, it was at Yale that he first developed his lifelong interest in sailing. In the letters of the spring of Junior year there are several references to hiring a boat for a sail in New Haven Harbor, both described as "smooth times" and in one of which he and a "fellow" were "doing up everything our size with comparative ease."

His range of interests, if not competence, was amazing. In addition to the above activities he was at various times trying out for the Glee Club, taking dancing lessons at the Loomis Temple of Music, buying and playing a guitar and learning photography, including doing his own developing, and playing quite a lot of "whist." He invested in dress clothes and attended at least one prom — girless — in the early years.

Although not an athlete himself, his interest in Yale athletics and his patriotic fervor for the teams was undoubtedly in part a product of college attitudes in those less sophisticated days but also a part of his happy adjustment to college life and his vigorous participation in it. On November 11, 1888, he wrote his mother as follows: "I wrote to Aunt Minnie asking her to work a banner for me and offering to furnish the material ... the 'Yale' blue is very hard to obtain and if she asks your advice you may not know about it. I enclose a sample. The letter 'Y A L E' may be put on in white according to her taste." On November 23, 1888, he and two others journeyed to New York carrying sandwiches and "abominable coffee" to see the Princeton game, played at the Polo Grounds. Of it he says in a letter the next day: "I wouldn't have missed that game if I had been obliged to pawn my shoes to raise the 'rocks'. If I'd had to wear red all-wool shirts all winter. If — anything. It was simply immense."

The Yale-Harvard crew races in New London combined a spectator sport and sailing in one outing. On June 8, 1891 — Junior year — he writes: "I think our scheme for New London has materialized. We engaged a boat this afternoon — a sloop with a man to run it — for \$8 a day as long as we want it. Now all we have to do is to get the party and this will not be hard, I am sure. We already have four — Marvin, Taintor, Manson, and myself ... it will be easy to get two or three others and then we will be ready with a mighty good crowd."

In addition to sports, other strenuous collegiate activities, particularly in Freshman and Sophomore years, included Class "rushes" and informal melees on streetcars, trains and the streets of New Haven. Father writes so vividly about these that the letters are of real historical interest, as are his reports of Class and fraternity hazing and Yale traditions. The latter brought out a side of Father with which we are not familiar. In a letter of February 4, 1890, he writes: "Last night Taintor and I 'swiped' a rail of fence. We will divide it and save it out of sight 'till the pieces can be carried home. The penalty for the act is quite severe but almost everyone has a rail."

Finally — and most important — were friendships. In Junior and Senior years it is evident that Father's room, and, in fact, those of his entry, were a gathering place for a large crowd, and it is rather surprising that with all the interruptions there must have been he was able to keep up the scholastic standing that eventually led to Division 2. His friends were a diversified group, from football players to "grinds," and most of whom were successful in later life and with whom Father kept up after college. In this respect, he was fortunate that a considerable number came from Hartford and environs, including such lifelong friends as Harry Freeman, Waldo Marvin, and Walter Steiner. Harlan Taintor, his roommate for two years, was also from Hartford and was his closest friend, but unfortunately died a few years after college. Other names that keep coming up are Trump Huntington, Sid Hosmer, and later Charlie Haight, Clive Day, and one who became a life-long close friend, Arthur Marsh of Bridgeport.

Father graduated on June 27, 1892, as evidenced by the programs of Presentation Exercises of the Senior Class and Class Day which he has left us. I am sure that no member of the Class had enjoyed the Yale experience, gotten more out of it or was sorrier to leave than my Father.

## BUCKLAND and the HILLIARD COMPANY

Prior to graduation, and in fact as early as January of Senior year, Father's future plans were pretty well settled — to go to work for "Uncle Clint" at the Hilliard mill in Buckland. Uncle Clint, referred to in one of Father's earliest boyhood letters, was Elisha C. Hilliard, Grandma's brother, and the head and principal owner of the E.E. Hilliard Company, woolen cloth manufacturers in Buckland, also the seat of the family homestead, "Hawthorne Dell." Through Father's numerous stays at the "Dell," continuing even after the family's move to New Britain, a mutual respect had grown up between uncle and nephew. In a letter of January 8, 1892, to his mother he says: "I am waiting to hear from Father in regard to Uncle Clint — whether the matter is fully decided and the details settled. I still think as I did that it is a great opportunity." On February 14 he acknowledges a check and then says: "And speaking about money, why shouldn't I use my own money the rest of this year? ...since it is pretty well settled that I will not go through a professional school..?" The clincher was in a letter to his mother on February 28 in which he says: "I am really looking forward with a great deal of pleasure to my work next year. It seems good to think that everything is settled ... On the whole I think I should prefer to go right to work on leaving college and postpone any traveling until I have earned the right to take it."

That he started work very soon after graduation is evidenced by a letter to "Mama" from Buckland on July 20, 1892, in which he mentions that "because Julia has been on vacation this week ... I have been called in to do office work and have done no weaving at all. But I am getting hold of different points all the time and the change has been quite a rest for me."

That someone in the family should go into the Hilliard mill was only natural. Wholly owned by the Hilliard family, it was not only its chief source of income but a responsibility — providing jobs for several hundred "hands" and even houses for some of them.

For the E. E. Hilliard Company was that, today, almost extinct organism, a feudal community industry, smaller than but not untypical of many of the



great textile communities of its time. When Father joined it the area it occupied, or more properly, created, was even known locally as Hilliardville, comprising about sixty acres in the town of Buckland, a part of Manchester, Connecticut, with a woolen mill, a mill-pond for power (still referred to as Hilliard Pond), and 15 houses of various sizes, including the family homestead, "Hawthorne Dell."

I am again indebted to my Uncle Earnest for a history of this mill and of my great grandfather, Elisha E. Hilliard, who with it founded the Hilliard dynasty and the modest fortune on which our family's subsequent prosperity was based.

The mill itself is said to have been built around 1780 by Aaron Buckland, who must have given his name to that part of Manchester where the mill stood, just as later Buckland itself was subdivided to "Hilliardville." It was then called the Aaron Buckland Woolen Mill, and was said by one historian to be unquestionably "the oldest site of a woolen mill in the United States upon which that manufacture has been carried on continuously since that time." In this tradition, the mill produced blankets for the army in the War of 1812 and cloth for uniforms in the Civil War.

Elisha Edgerton Hilliard was born December 8, 1806, in Mansfield, Connecticut, one of five children left orphaned at five years old. Brought up by friends, he entered the woolen business in 1824 as an apprentice for three years to Sidney Pitkin in Lebanon, receiving a certificate of completion in 1827. So satisfactory had he been, that after he had spent a year at the Kellogg Mill in Vernon, Pitkin asked him to join him at the Aaron Buckland Mill which he had bought about a year before. He came to Buckland in April, 1829.

In 1831 Pitkin sold Mr. Hilliard a quarter interest in the mill, and a year later when Mr. Hilliard was twenty-five years old, a full partnership, the business being renamed Pitkin & Hilliard. Ten years later (1842) Pitkin sold out his interest to Mr. Hilliard, including a quitclaim deed on the house where he lived and which is presumably the house that became the Hilliard homestead. He also made Mr. Hilliard the executor of his estate, a mark of their friendship and of his confidence in his ex-apprentice.

After a joint venture with a partner, one Spencer, which did not work out, Mr. Hilliard bought out Spencer's interest in 1871 and became again the sole

times, the first being to his son, Elisha Clinton Hilliard, Father's uncle and later employer.

That Elisha E. Hilliard was successful is attested not only by the fortune that he left at his death in 1881, but by his reputation as a citizen of his town and state. At various times he was deacon of his church in Manchester, state legislator, and tax collector of his school district.

His estate came to over \$300,000, a large sum in those days and particularly because the figure included only a nominal value of \$43,000 for the Hilliard Mill with its 176 acres and his interests in several other mills. As one of four children, my grandmother must have come into a comfortable nest egg to supplement a minister's salary and one which presumably grew as the Connecticut stocks, which made up the bulk of the estate, prospered. It was from this that she was able to assist Father in building the savings which finally ended in Fafnir.

At the time Father joined the Company, the business was growing and getting beyond the ability of Uncle Clint to finance solely within his family. As a consequence, on June 23, 1893, as related in a letter of that date from Father to Grandpa, a new company, The E. E. Hilliard Company, was formed to take over the assets of the previous company but with a larger capitalization. This provided for subscriptions by a number of new "outside" stockholders, including Father, who said in the above letter that he had been offered \$10,000 of stock, "which I shall take, with as much more as I can raise the money to pay for." This statement indicates that at this early point in his employment he had great confidence in the future of the company — and himself — and was willing to risk everything he had to back his judgment, an attitude which foreshadowed a similar spirit almost twenty years later in the case of the Fafnir venture.

Father was equally happy about the personal side of his new position. He was living at the Hilliard homestead, the "Dell," just across the road from the mill, taken care of — and probably mothered — by his aunts, Minnie and Addie, Uncle Clint's unmarried sisters, and his grandmother, old Mr. E. E. Hilliard's widow. Uncle Clint apparently lived in Hartford with his own family. I am sure that his room and board expense, if any, was nominal, enabling him to save most of his pay.

THE LOCH was a relatively modest ten-room, two and one-half story house, white, and of Greek Revival ambitions by means of a columned porch on the side facing away from the mill.

In spite of the mill proximity, it was a pleasant place to live. There were stables and horses with a coachman across the road, and nearby ran the busy millstream carrying water from the Hilliard Pond to the mill. A stone's throw away was the trolley to Hartford, Father's early magic carpet to the outside world.

My own recollections of the place include not only Aunt Addie and Aunt Minnie, E. E. Hilliard's unmarried sisters, by then old and feeble, but the stable with its smell of hay in the loft and the coach dog who ran with the carriage and later tried to do the same with the automobile. I can also remember the mill itself and the attached office — a gray, wooden building with stained glass over the office entrance door — and the warm, pungent smell of wool and machine oil when I accompanied Father to his office. As to the mill, I distinctly remember the night in 1909 when we were staying at "The Birches" and the dam at the pond broke and Father was called out to help cope with the disaster.

About "The Birches." This was a high, wooded property of twenty acres more or less, adjoining the mill property and reached either by a wooden bridge across the millstream and a steep footpath or by a pine needle-covered driveway through the woods from the Hartford - Manchester road. On it, in 1893, Grandpa had built a summer home and a barn which, sometime after I was born, was converted into a vacation cottage for Father and his family. It was largely through our stays at "The Birches" in the Fall and Spring that these recollections come, but "The Birches" was also a goal for many others in New Britain, such as the Cycling Club, also known as "The Buckland Scorchers." The Earnest Coopers were also visitors, and my cousin has written a nostalgic monograph on his recollections of the sights and smells of the place.

Father continued to use "The Birches" even after we began going to the shore, but its attractions diminished as we got older, and after his break with his uncle in 1910 we ceased to go there.

Returning to Father's start at the mill — his enthusiasm for his work continued, and he was learning all he could about the woolen business and manufacturing in general. He also increased his holdings in the company from time to time with the help of loans from Uncle Clint.

Evidence of his application to business is found in files and a scrapbook which he left. In these are clippings from technical magazines on textile operations from carding to weaving, as well as tables of mathematical terms, sheet steel gauges and content pages of several books on Machine Design.

Against his previous background of literature and writing this early interest in mechanics and manufacturing is a prime indication of Father's versatility. It continued into, and perhaps made practical, his later move from woolens to ball bearings, where again his scrapbooks show his major interest in what he referred to as "the development and manufacture of the product." Even his later fascination with automobiles and their workings and his ability with them was an extension of these aptitudes.

That he was also concerned with the financial side is shown by his having saved a longhand memorandum with the title, "Perpetual Inventory." This outlined the basic steps in that then new method and at some later date bears a pencil notation — "L.F.C.," indicating that he sometimes sought help from his more advanced New Britain manufacturer friends, — in this case Charles F. Smith of Landers.

Also in the files is an envelope containing in his own handwriting inventories and balance sheets for the Company back to 1894 when he probably took over the bookkeeping.

Another of his interests and probable responsibility was power, and included in the scrapbook are data on this subject. The original water power at the mill versus the new steam or electric power was apparently on his mind, and here again he turned to his New Britain friends for help. There is in the files a letter from E. A. Moore giving Father his experience with Stanley Works' generation of their own power; enclosed with this letter is a pencil drawing by Father of the cross section of a generator which, perhaps foreshadowing the future, contains the outlines of anti-friction bearings at both ends of the armature shaft. It also shows mechanical drawing familiarity. His investigation of alternate power for the mill was the stimulus, about 1905, for a paper entitled Water Power for the Literary Club, (Hartford) which begins — "I well remember as a boy the ponderous water wheel that used to furnish power to the mill with which I am now connected."

That he was working hard, perhaps too hard, comes out in several remarks about his health and, in particular, an undated poem which Father's notation of "J.W.C." indicates was written by my Grandfather:

“There was a bachelor man at Man-chester  
Who would take neither rest nor siesta,  
He worked night and day  
And never would play  
This busy young man of Man-chester

This fellow would take no vacation  
For fear it would ruin the nation —  
So he toiled at the mill  
Till he made himself ill,  
To the grief of his nearest relation.”

Probably at about the same time, July 6, 1900, is a letter from his New Britain friend, Harry Boardman, on his learning that Father had had malaria, with the following advice:

“Cut work and get away! Take a good long vacation. You will find the Mill still there when you return. Suppose you don't make so much money — you may live longer, etc. I won't charge you anything for this advice.”

Actually, Father had taken a vacation in the summer of 1896, the occasion being a trip to Europe with his brother after the latter's graduation from Yale. This would be the trip that he had refused after *his* graduation, preferring to go to work “until he had earned it.” The trip was, of course, financed by his family; entries in his mother's account book for 1896 show items of \$86.25 and \$50 in April and May for “Steamer St. Paul for boys” and in June \$100 to “E. H. Cooper, trip to England.”

The only correspondence surviving from this trip is a letter of July 7, 1896, by Father to his mother on the “USMS St. Paul” stationery in which he describes the trip over and mentions their first destination as being England and the Henley.

That Father, even as an ambitious businessman, had not lost his ability to have a good time nor forgotten his Yale experience is indicated in a description of his part in a passengers' concert in which he took the part of a college student “and sang Yale songs under the advice and direction of ‘the Judge’ (Earnest) with the rest of the Yale crowd.”

Sources that my cousin Jim has investigated do indicate that the brothers returned on the “R.M.S. Britannic” on August 5 and that in the meantime they thoroughly covered England, Wales and Scotland by bicycle; this latter deduction is from a cyclists' map with routes but no dates. It is surprising that

no further record of such an important event has come to light — it is hard to believe that such a pair would not have written voluminously on this or any subject!

But back to Buckland! The Hilliard Company, like most of the textile mills in those days, sold through commission agents. By 1900 it appears that in addition to his duties in the plant and with the accounting, Father had also been entrusted with dealing with these agents, for there are several letters from them in a tone which bespeaks a considerable intimacy and respect. One in 1901 from a Mr. McCloy of M. Brown & Sons, Dry Goods Commission Merchants in New York, congratulates Father on his engagement, and disagrees with him that prices should be raised, suggesting, in fact, that they should be reduced. In another letter from an agent who had apparently either retired or been fired is evidence of Father's tact and ability with the pen, as he writes: "The spirit that actuated you to write that letter will make some 'young fellow' when you arrive at my age feel towards you as you have expressed yourself towards me, but I doubt his being able to express himself so well."

While Father was thus busily employed at the mill he was also leading an active social life as an eligible and popular bachelor. Since he was living in something of a backwater and the bulk of his friends were in Hartford and New Britain, this required considerable travelling on his part and keeping up with three separate groups, including Manchester, of which Buckland was a part.

Manchester contained his college classmate, Howell Cheney, and the numerous Cheney family. I have the 1897 Yearbook of the Orford Golf Club of Manchester, to which Father belonged. It is significant that, with the exception of a Mr. Pulsifer, who was President, every other officer and committee member was a Cheney; we may assume that Mr. Pulsifer had married one. From one of Father's letters it appears that he did find so many Cheneys a little too much at times, although Howell Cheney remained his fast friend. Father was, nevertheless, undoubtedly indebted to the Cheneys for his first introduction to golf through the Orford Golf Club. That he continued to play during this bachelor period — and his level of skill — is confirmed by letters from New Britain golfer friends setting dates for matches in which scores of 58—51—109 are mentioned. Father continued golf spasmodically for many years at about the same level of competency, hampered by increasing competition from sailing.

Hartford was a natural center for Father, having not only his Hilliard relatives living there but also, and fortunately, a number of his best friends at college — Waldo Marvin, Harry Freeman, Hal Buck, and, until his untimely early death only a few years after graduation, Harlan Taintor. He also became a member of the Literary Club, an organization similar to those in New Britain.

And finally there was New Britain, his home town, with his many, many old friends. Chief among these was, of course, his “Kid Brother,” Earnest. Others were William P. (Cap) Felt, Max, George, and Howard Hart, Harry Boardman and George Landers. Max Hart, Cap Felt, the “Kid,” and Father are immortalized as the Buckland Scorchers Club in an old blue daguerrotype taken on the grounds at “The Birches” after a ride from New Britain.

The geographical diversity of Father’s social life, combined with his work, leads to speculation as to how he got around this circuit. Cars were not mentioned by him until 1905, so the alternatives must have been horse and buggy, bicycle or “public transportation” — train and trolley car. Oddly enough, there is no mention of the subject in his letters so that getting around must have been fairly routine. My assumption is — and it is a commentary on the present state of mass transportation — that the usual method was trolley car and train, and that, to excite no particular comment, it must have been excellent. One example — in a letter to his mother in 1899 referring to a visit to the parsonage in New Britain while she was travelling, Father mentions casually that because the cook was away he had to go all the way to Cheshire to get dinner; how, in those days, did one get to Cheshire from New Britain for dinner and back the same evening?

Some mystery also surrounds the matter of financing all these peregrinations. Aside from the fact that he probably boarded free at his Aunts’ home, there are several letters indicating that his mother came to the rescue, always without solicitation. In fact there are several letters in which he protests gifts that he felt were not warranted and one in which he returns a check with the following explanation: “You must allow me to judge in this matter and I am sure you can find a much better use for the money than by buying me a suit of clothes. Besides, I don’t really need a suit and, if I did, I should wish to pay for it as far as possible myself.”

What else were Father’s interests during this Buckland period? The earliest one, which I doubt lasted long, must have been a fox terrier; apparently this

animal was not working out as hoped, for there is a letter dated December 17, 1892, from a Dr. Deane in Hoosick, N.Y. (from whom he apparently had gotten the dog) making suggestions to overcome a complaint that the dog was sluggish; aside from suggestions about food, handling, etc., was one specific one which I somehow doubt Father ever tried — namely, “Shut the door on him in a room with a rat and watch his spirits pick up!”

It was in these early days at Buckland that Father thought to continue the interest in music that he had shown in college — by means of a pianola, which he had apparently persuaded his aunts they would enjoy as much as he. His initial enthusiasm for this instrument seems to have waned, but it was the forerunner of the modern organ that he had installed in New Britain many years later. Occasional efforts with his guitar are mentioned now and then.

Sailing was apparently becoming an increasing interest although confined to temporary charters with other enthusiasts. There is a long, enthusiastic letter (October 11, 1897) from Howard Hart, then working in Chicago, recalling various cruises involving New London and Lyme, but particularly a cruise that Father had apparently organized with Cap Felt that summer from Hamburg Cove to Sachem's Head. The vessel was apparently a sailboat because there is a reference to boiling in the sun and the need for a naphtha launch as a tender next time. It appears that at least at each end girls were involved as guests. The references to Sachem's Head (“that night of agony”), mosquitos and hitting rocks contrasted unfavorably with those to Hamburg Cove; this early experience with the beauty and tranquility of the Cove must have etched itself on Father's mind, for it was to this area that he turned when it came time to leave Madison. And there was an ardent wish expressed by Hart to repeat the event the following summer and a suggestion about possible joint ownership of a boat to be kept at “Lyme.”

In a letter from Walter Schutz of Hartford shortly before Father was married, there is another offer of joint ownership of a “knock-about” to be kept at Saybrook, with my mother to be lady “admiral” because Schutz had heard that she was “fond of the water”; investment — \$250 to \$300 apiece.

Numerous warm letters from his many and varied friends have survived. Among them, a letter from Ed Hart on a trip to Europe reminding Father to keep up his golf preparatory to a game when he returned; a letter to “My dear Lime and Seltzer” from John Buck vacationing at Chatham; a series of postcards from E.M.Z. (?) travelling in Europe — from Holland, London and



Germany, the last being addressed to "Hochwonnigedoren Herr E. H. Cooper ein Kiefer und auch ein Tuchfabricant."

The Lobsterville Club was another social organization to which Father belonged. This was a New Britain group, of which Cap Felt seems to have been secretary and Howard Hart the principle promoter; its activities consisted of more or less regularly scheduled clambakes, usually at Martha's Vineyard.

Finally, there were literary clubs, apparently involving both New Britain and Hartford, for there is a reference to "Pelton" in a letter from "Pink" Marvin involving payment for wine at some previous joint affair that must have involved New Britain and Hartford groups. These were the Literary Club in Hartford and "The Club" in New Britain, the latter to be merged with the Saturday Night Club.

During these bachelor years, and particularly between 1895 and 1897, Father was also writing poetry — principally light verse. A revelation of his versatility, it may also have been a reflection of a lingering uncertainty of the course he had taken, as the following poem would indicate.

Now this willingly working a weekly rote  
Once seemed such a sensible scheme  
That I thought things would throng through my  
throbbing throat  
In a turbulent dactylic stream.

But they didn't — for when I had something to say  
There wasn't a rhyme fit to catch it  
And when the rhyme came after tiresome delay  
The sense that was left woudn't match it.

So I've laid out my time on a volume of prose  
That makes a most heart thrilling story.  
Without doubt it's "the book of the year" and  
it goes  
By the title of Inventory

I can reproduce only a few of the dozen or more other poems of this period. The first is significant in being the only one to appear in print — in the Hartford Courant of November 14, 1896.

## MEMENTO

Half buried in a dusty lot  
Of trinkets and old letters,  
I found a crumpled silken knot  
That roused dim memories long forgot  
And bound my heart in fetters.

I heard, far off, an old waltz play;  
I felt her hand in mine;  
The whispering night breeze seemed to  
say,  
"This is the time, to-day, to-day,  
Just speak and she is thine."

I dallied till 'twas time to part,  
O, Cupid, lagging, lame!  
I begged this ribbon, not her heart,  
Which now I'd sue with every art,  
But, — I've forgot her name.

Buckland, Ct.

E.H

The second was delivered by Father at a birthday party in New Britain in 1900, shortly after he met Mother.

Fourteen hundred and ninety-two  
Sixteen twenty and seventy-six  
The centuries roll and only a few  
Are the years of note as the great clock ticks.

Then bursting out with a thunderous crash  
From the boiling cauldron of Time's design  
One year stands out in a vivid flash  
It is eighteen hundred and sixty-nine.

That was the year made famous by  
Bessies two and Carol B.  
Martha, Clara and, I can't lie,  
Norman P. and E.H.C.!

Perhaps as the centuries roll along  
Some later years may in history shine  
But never one so famed in song  
As good old eighteen sixty-nine.

The next, and last, is both charming and unexpected in subject, but also shows that Father was experimenting in verse structure.

TO BARBARA

(with a copy of Stevenson's "Child's Book of Verses")

When grown up folks are horrid,  
and sit reading in their chairs,  
And every frowning forehead  
is wrinkled up with cares,  
What can poor little girls do then  
Who want to hear the tales again  
Of fairy queens and mighty men  
When grown up folks are horrid?

Be quiet as a kitten  
as you find a cozy nook  
And give them all the mitten  
while you read this little book;  
And when you've read the pictures through  
And learned the verses one or two  
They'll wish that they were all like you  
As happy as a kitten.

1895

That Father's poetic talents were known and appreciated then and later is shown by references to him in the minutes of "The Club" as the "poetic Cooper brother" and an imaginary cable read on the occasion of the Hundredth Meeting of the club.

London, England  
December 5, 1908

E. H. Cooper

Am tired of my job. Do you want it?

Alfred Austin, Laureate

He was also chosen to wind up this gay occasion with a long and very clever poem on the beginning of The Club which he placed on an imaginary South

Sea isle. The twenty-odd verses are too much to reproduce here, but can be found in full in the little volume which was published to commemorate this meeting.

Finally, in spite of this absorbing business, social and literary activity, Father never neglected his family, even writing them from Buckland when he was not going over to New Britain. Although as was true in college the letters were generally to his father, there are several letters that show his very great affection for his mother. One playfully opens with the salutation, "My dear little girl" and is signed, "Yours Forever — Fighting Bob Acres." In another, written to Maine where the family were on a vacation and he could not join them, he ends a letter to her: "We await your return like little phoebes," followed by an amazingly clever pen sketch of two small birds with their mouths wide open for food.

His feelings about his mother were summarized in a letter he wrote my mother right after they were engaged: "I hope you will like her, Margaret. Up to now she has been the greatest joy of my life. The dearest, kindest, jolliest little mother that a man ever had. If I am good for anything, she has done it. She is the queen and slave of us all."

The fact that other women have had no place in this story is notable, as is the fact that Father was almost 32 before he married. There appear to have been two reasons for this: first and most important, was that he was too busy and satisfied with his bachelor life to have time for women, and second, that he didn't particularly like women or at least have any great need for them. He had, in fact, picked up a reputation as a woman hater and a life member of the Forever-Bachelors Club, as indicated by the cries of anguish — male and female — when he finally succumbed to my mother.

It was certainly not that Father was unattractive to women — quite the contrary. Pictures of him in his bachelor days show a handsome, appealing and well got-up young man. And there are a few letters that show the other sex was not unaware of these physical charms abetted by an intelligent and sensitive personality. There are three Valentine poems to him of a sentimental nature in feminine handwriting in the years 1897 and 1898, two in the same handwriting. And there is correspondence — short — with several ladies, in which one gets the impression that they were in pursuit, and there is at least one letter congratulating him on his subsequent engagement which has a

definite air of shock and disappointment — even reproach. As a safer outlet for whatever feminine contact Father needed, there was a more-or-less regular correspondence with his cousin Cordelia Hilliard, later Mrs. Lucius Barbour, in which he demonstrated his command of a charming and sophisticated writing style, fond but never sentimental.

The first of this file was a letter to "My dear Cousin" on October 14, 1894, from the American House in Hamilton, Bermuda, to which he had gone alone for a short vacation. It contains just the right combination of travelogue and humor in a charming description of the island as it used to be. In February and March of 1897 Cordelia was in Europe, and letters to "Deedie" followed her to Paris and Rome. So spritely were they that she apparently gave them to him or his mother when she returned to save for posterity. But, aside from the literary gems, they contain such interesting bits of solid information as that in March he was "now residing at 19 Charter Oak Place as the guest of Mr. E. C. Hilliard and spending the rest of the day on the trolley between Hartford and Buckland." And showing that business was still on his mind, he writes — "We are making all wool goods at the mill now that rival the textures of Oriental looms. I speak to furnish the contract for your next suit of bloomers." Apparently at this time he was still on very friendly terms with his uncle, and was even having some success in upgrading the Hilliard line from the staple rough "shoddy" to less competitive cloths.

## ENGAGEMENT and MARRIAGE

This carefree bachelor life was about to end with his meeting, at a party in New Britain in April, 1900, a young lady, Margaret Miller, of New York City and Smith College. Born in Terryville, Connecticut in 1872 and thus about three years younger than Father, she was the daughter of Nathan and Celia Stanley Miller of Audubon Park, New York, a niece of Darius Miller of New Britain and related to the numerous Stanley clan of that City. She was thus a not-infrequent visitor to New Britain, and it is surprising, not that Father met her in that early Spring of 1900, but that he had not done so before. In his first letter to her on April 20 of that year he comments on this fact plaintively, saying that even his "kid brother" calls her by her first name while he is still addressing her as Miss Miller.

The four years previous to this meeting had been difficult for Mother, although giving her opportunity to demonstrate her determination and character. Her father, a broker, had had the final downward swing of a series of ups and downs in the stock market, and Mother had to give up Smith at the end of her Sophomore year in June, 1895, for financial reasons. It was a great blow because she had been most happy and successful there.

Her position with her classmates is indicated in a letter from one of her friends expressing dismay at the news that Mother was not coming back for Junior year and saying, "I suppose it is useless to ask if you have thought ... what it means to our class to go along without you ... for if there is a girl who has done a great deal for '97 that girl is you and we shall miss you terribly." There were other letters of surprise and loyalty.

The evidence of her academic and artistic record is confirmed in two letters sent to her in July, 1895. The first was from the registrar of the College confirming her successful completion of two years of Literature and Latin, ending, "Her rank as a student and as a lady is all that can be desired." The second is from her art teacher who says "has done excellent work. Her ability warrants her devoting herself to this line of work."

Returning to New York and thus living at home, she was able to attend Pratt Institute in Brooklyn for the school year of 1895-1896, majoring in art.

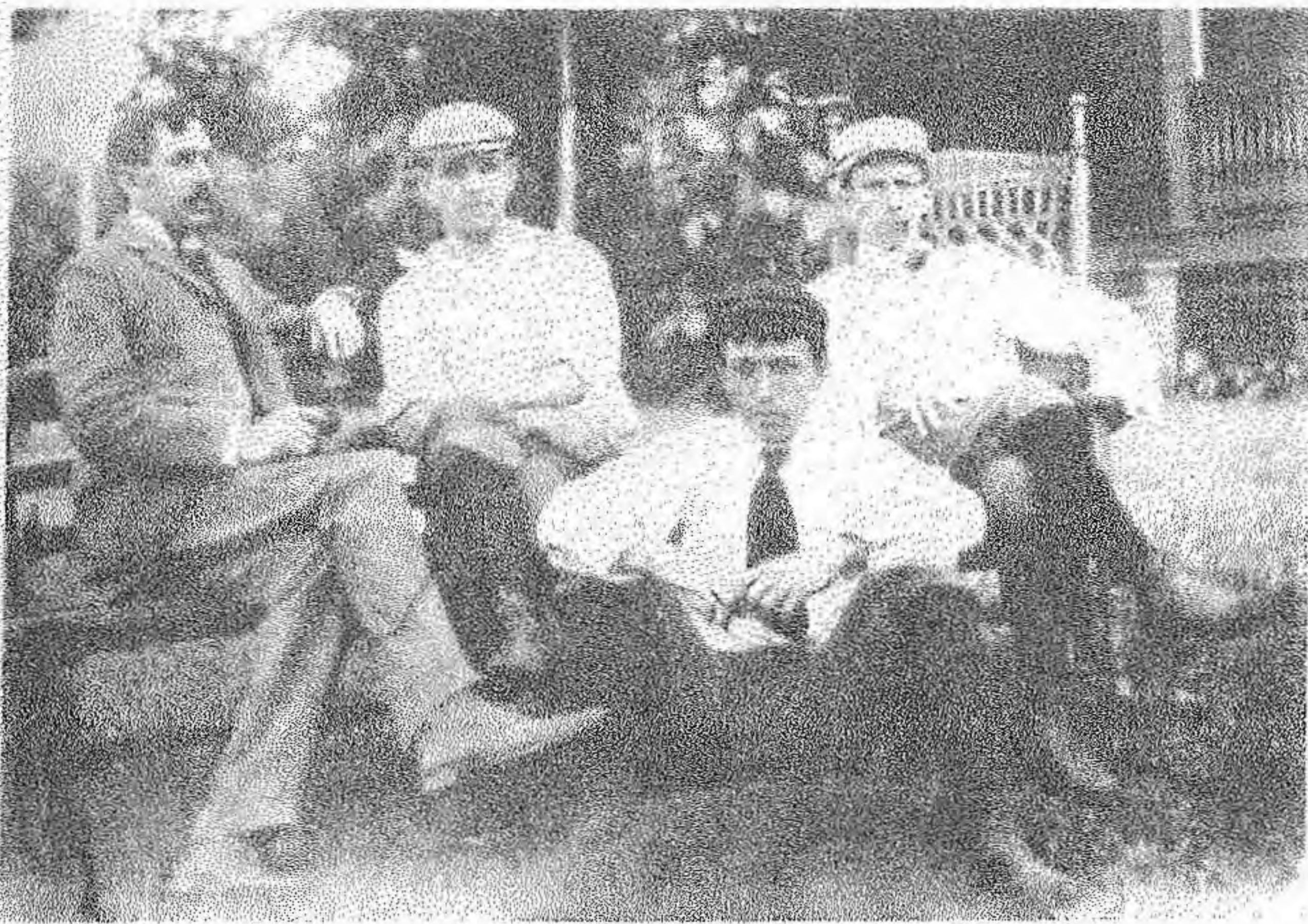
It was here that she also produced an essay on "The Old and New Education" at the close of the school year in June, 1896, a mature and thoughtful piece which showed that she had more than artistic ability.

But this time, however, family finances had become such that she found herself compelled to go to work. Listing herself with the Fisk employment agency in New York, she received an inquiry from the Superintendent of Schools in Stamford, Conn. After interviews, she was offered and accepted the position of "assistant teacher in drawing," the subject on which she felt herself best qualified, for the school year of 1896-1897 — salary \$450. Her appointment was renewed the following year, 1897-1898. During this period she lived variously at "Gothic Hall" in Stamford, in Bridgeport with relatives, in Brooklyn with friends, and with her family. That she did have social connections and some fun in Stamford is indicated by an intimate, though thoroughly proper, correspondence with a Walter Houghton of that city, apparently a potential beau.

After two years she was able to give up this position and resume studies in New York at Pratt Institute and the Art Students' League during the 1898-1899 terms, probably as the result of the first of several generousities from her "Aunt Lizzie," Darius Miller's wife, with whom she was a favorite. In 1899 she resumed teaching, this time in the New York Public Schools. The additional income enabled her to get away from home, where relations with her stepmother were difficult. Her addresses during this period were successively 122 Madison Avenue and 204 W. 78th Street, both being apartments shared with friends.

The first advance after the New Britain meeting came from Mother in a letter dated April 16, 1900, in which, referring back to statements Father had made about occasionally getting to New York on business, she invited him to call on her at her 78th Street apartment. Father's letter of April 20, referred to above, was written at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and bemoaned the fact that though he was in New York and had expected to call he had been unable to do so because of getting tied up by Mr. Hilliard — "my boss" — who had just returned from the South. That he needed no further encouragement is shown by the length of this letter, other subjects covered and the future hopes expressed.

These hopes were shortly realized, for in May and June there were several letters exchanged as well as several meetings in New York. Things were



Buckland Scorching Association  
at The Birches — early '90's.  
L. to R: E.H.C., J.E.C.,  
Max Hart, Cap Felt

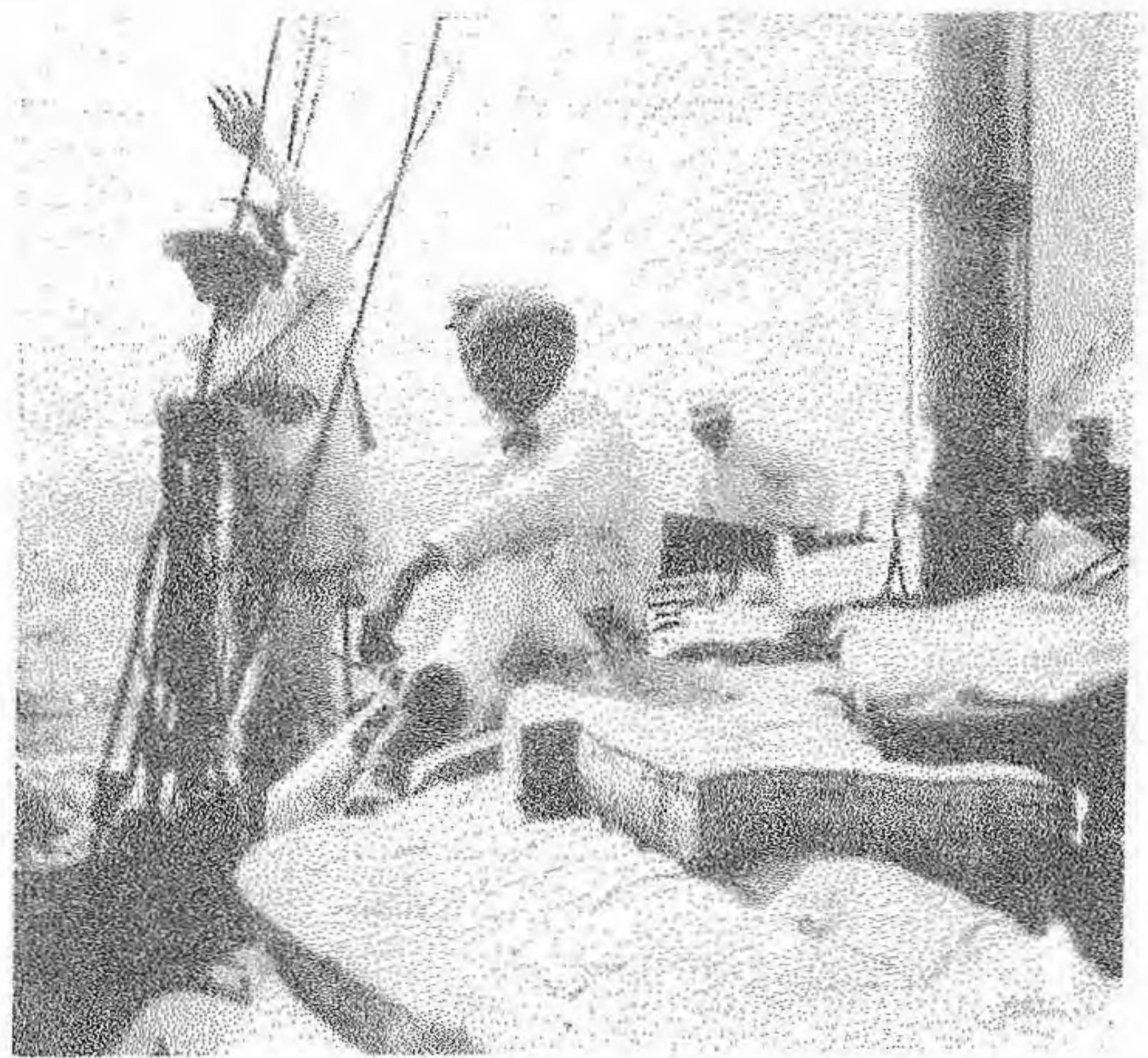
The "Edith"  
(E.H.C. left for

New Britain party — 1900

Back row — Isaac Russell, E.H.C.,  
Howard Hart, Carrie Felt, Harry  
Boardman.

Center row — Bessie Russell, Bessie  
Hart, May Booth, Norm Cooley.

Front row — Minnie Cooley,  
Margaret Miller, Letty Learned, Carol  
Boardman.





Mr. and Mrs. Nathan G. Miller  
announce the marriage of their daughter  
Margaret  
to  
Mr. Elisha Williard Cooper  
on Tuesday, June the fourth  
one thousand nine hundred and one  
Audubon Park  
New York

Wedding  
Announcement

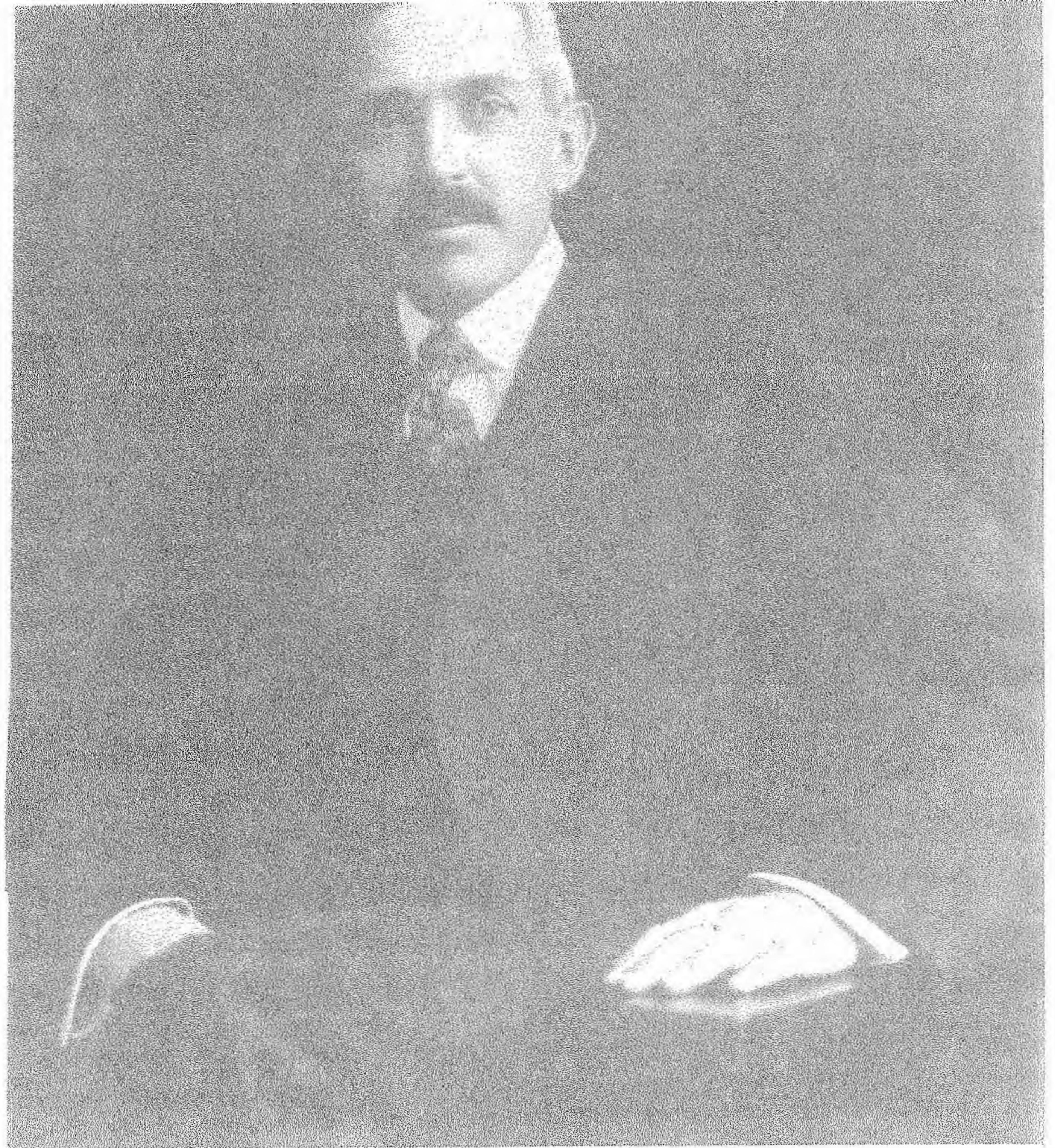


S.M.C. with  
"Little Mary"  
in front of  
Sigourney Street house



with F  
S

The cousins —  
front steps  
of the big house  
at The Birches



FATHER  
CIRCA 1905



*Circa 1905*

Father  
and first(?)  
automobile

progressing, although the salutations in the letters continued to be "Miss Miller" and "Mr. Cooper."

This budding romance was almost brought to an end by a breakdown in Mother's health brought on by the intensity of her education and teaching efforts and probably concern over her own and her family's financial problems. The cure was a complete rest and vacation made possible by an "allowance" from "Aunt Lizzie" which she undertook from July to November by apparently visiting friends almost all over upper New England — Gloucester, Mount Desert, North Sutton, New Hampshire, and last, for some time, Salem, Mass. That the vacation ran beyond the usual summer season is explained by a letter from her doctor in New York in September ordering her not to go back to work or even study, assuring her, however, that if she followed this advice she would fully recover.

In the meanwhile, unaware of how much her health might delay any return to work, she had been applying for teaching positions at both Columbia and the New York Public Schools. In August she was promised a position at Teacher's College at Columbia, and, when she could not take this in time, was virtually offered a position in "Drawing" in the public schools to start with the second term. This, too, she had to give up, and it was not until December that she returned home.

It is amazing with this long absence that the affair with Father did not end, particularly as there was very little correspondence between them. The fact is, however, that they did keep up their interest, and when Mother finally came back in December, first staying in New Britain for a month, the fire blazed up again. It was not that there had been no competition. During her vacation Mother was not so ill that she could not see friends, including male ones, or take part in both social and outdoor activities — in fact, this was part of the cure. Accordingly, there are a number of letters from various ambitious admirers which indicate more than a passing interest in her.

And another period of separation was still to come, for early in January, 1901, Mother left for Boston for a stay which was to last, except for brief visits home and to New Britain, until April. She apparently felt that even though she could not go to work she could resume studying, and that Boston, living with relative strangers in a boarding house run by a Miss Hersey at 23 Marlborough Street, was preferable to New York. And I think that again Aunt Lizzie helped on the finances.

But the brief proximity had done its work and the courtship continued and accelerated with daily letters, books and flowers and almost weekly trips to Boston. Although Mother was the cautious one, perhaps because of her health and also a reluctance to abandon a promising career, Father was so persistent and ardent that within a few weeks the correspondence shows Mother admitting her love, and by the middle of the month their engagement was informally announced.

The correspondence during these weeks and after the engagement is charming and itself worth publication as an example of the love letters of two cultured and articulate people in those Victorian days.

Because of Mother's absences, the final courtship in Boston and their joint inclination not to publicize their interest, very few of their friends had even an inkling of what was going on and could hardly believe it, even in New Britain where they had mutual friends.

But aside from chagrin and surprise the engagement was an instant success. The notes of love and admiration that appear in the congratulatory letters that they both received are an amazing confirmation of their characters by friends and relatives. Quotations could be given endlessly and are almost unbelievably complimentary to both. Typical is a letter from George Landers to Father on January 28, 1901: "Lige — of all the clever things you have done in your life there is nothing that makes one so proud of you as the conquest of Margaret Miller ... She is the bright particular star of the girls I know and has kept her place in my esteem ..."

Aside from her bravery and artistic accomplishments, what was it that had so enthralled Father and his friends? Mother's photographs in this period are of a very pretty girl with an eye for clothes. And there are numerous verbal descriptions of her, all of which emphasize the words "gay, lively," and "charming." The ultimate compliment, a poem, is also available — in fact, two of them. One is signed, "Aunt Mary" (?), and is in part as follows:

"Here's to Margaret who's so  
handsome and lively and gay  
And has such a lark all  
along life's highway,  
Not only herself but everyone else

---

“The subject of dancing brings  
out all the fun  
She merrily dances right  
into the sun.”

These words are not inapplicable to Mother in her later years when properly stimulated by music and people.

A Valentine poem unsigned was perhaps from a former beau:

“Brightly the moon is shining  
Over the world  
Gaily she skates along  
This slender girl.  
Brightly her skates flash  
In the starlight  
Rosy her cheeks glow  
Only tonight!  
Only a few short months,  
A short time,  
And I shall be parted from  
My Valentine! But the moonlight, the maiden  
The roses and skates,  
Have stolen my heart by decree  
Of the fates.”

Aside from these poetic descriptions, numerous letters attest to the affection with which her friends and relatives regarded her. There are in the records many letters from both male and female with references to visits, rides and sports — including golf and sailing; this was particularly true of the period in the summer of 1900 when she was vacationing for her health and having a good time doing it. Nicknames included “Dusty,” “Mag,” and “Polly,” but all the letters contain the common themes of admiration and affection.

This was the gay, high-strung girl with whom Father found himself falling in love. So much for Mother — how about Father at this time? There are three letters which contain very perceptive appraisals.

The first is in a very early letter of Mother’s to him which said — “I have always been a little bit afraid of you and that letter makes you seem quite human and natural and like (something, I mean) other people.” And later in the same letter, “I think you always sound so much more dignified than the

other New Britainites that as I said before I think we all stood a little in awe of you." She admits that this analysis is based on almost no knowledge because, of course, Father, living in Manchester, was not always around New Britain when she was.

The second appraisal is a mystery. Written in pencil on the stationery of *The Harbor View House*, East Gloucester, it is signed by an Elinor Lane and has no date. It is in an envelope of the Superintendent of the New York Public Schools, addressed to Mother at Salem, Mass., and postmarked November 19, 1900, from New York. Was this appraisal made at Mother's request? Who was Elinor Lane and how did she know Father so well?

"Very truthful in the main, honest from taste as well as principle — capable in spite of his caution of a headlong infatuation for the wrong woman, inclined to be cold-blooded and philosophical most of the time, but on off days his nature seems to slip a cog.

A very nice sense of justice, great caution, inclined to conservatism of a rather dry nature, a very fine idea of the right tastes in life, a bit of a snob, inclined to the luxuries of life.

Excellent taste in dress, a little bit pedantical, would forgive a breach of the Ten Commandments sooner than a breach of good breeding. Lacks real enthusiasm — when he might easily go to the devil.

Has singular gift with people, great tact, and determination to succeed, a man whom I would be willing to trust implicitly.

(signed)  
Elinor Lane

P.S. A very great consideration of the feelings of the people around him."

The third analysis is from the one who knew him better than anyone else and whose opinion, in view of his own character, is to be valued — his brother Earnest. It is contained in his letter to Mother in January, 1901, right after the engagement was announced:

"Perhaps nobody on earth knows Lige better than I do. We have been companions since we were kids, in college and out, travelled together and have always been confidents (sic) and the closest friends. I never have known him to think an ignoble thought or intentionally do anything mean. He is straight as a string, unselfish and lovable and I am gladder than I can say that you have made him happy."

serene. Mother's health was not yet fully recovered, and the energy with which, in spurts, she attacked the problems of getting ready for marriage did not improve it. Father's letters during this period, as before, have repeated admonitions not to get tired, and expressing concern about her health. In addition, I have a feeling that, although she had decided to marry him, there was enough uncertainty in the back of her mind to keep Father nervous.

First business, of course, was the procurement of the ring. Here Father, without too much demurrer from Mother, went overboard. Porter and Dyson of New Britain was selected as jeweler, but the ring had to be designed by Mother specially and the design was changed several times before being acceptable. In its final form it was an 18-carat gold ring with a single 1-3/8 carat diamond.

During the engagement the letters continued to flow back and forth, Father writing every day and Mother being not far behind; rather surprisingly, she stayed in Boston until April, presumably improving her health while continuing her art classes. Of course, meetings in Boston and later in New York continued, with visits to the opera and even dancing. Father was on the move constantly.

It was probably during this period of courtship that Father finally made use of the long-neglected skills acquired in the dancing classes at the Loomis Temple of Music during college. That they had been neglected is indicated by an anonymous poem in his scrapbook, part of which went as follows:

Had anyone told me a day ago  
That Lige would come through ice and snow  
With eager feet and joyful eye  
To dance while the merry hours go by  
I couldn't believe it, 'twould not seem true  
Yet now you can see it, as even I do —

etc., etc., etc.

These efforts apparently exhausted his, terpsichorean interests forever, because I can never recollect his dancing again.

There was also in the letters continuous discussion of Mother's coming to New Britain to meet Grandpa and Grandma, but amazingly it was not until sometime after her return to New York from Boston for good in April that



this meeting took place — almost four months after the engagement! The meeting and subsequent relations were highly successful, so much so that when the house in Hartford had been decided upon, Grandma, to help Mother, took over with Father the task of decorating and furnishing, Mother only expressing her tastes and coming up occasionally to see the results. Arrangements also, of course, had to be made after her return from Boston for Father to meet *her* family and friends in New York. So secret had been their pre-engagement meetings!

Even Father was making personal preparations for his wedding with the purchase of a new suit — “dark olive green,” which remained his favorite suit color. His weight, mentioned in this connection, was 138-1/2 lbs., which seems light for his age, although his health must have been good.

They were married on June 4, 1901, at Mother's home in Audubon Park in New York. Probably due to Mother's health and the limitations of the house and her father and stepmother it was a small wedding, the forty guests being largely members of the families and very close friends. The list in Mother's handwriting is still extant, as are the very formal wedding announcements and, of course, the marriage license in Father's handwriting, signed by Grandpa as the minister and witnessed by Uncle Earnest.

Their honeymoon was spent at the Silver Bay House at Silver Bay on Lake George — two weeks. In a letter to — “Mr. and Mrs. Lige” on June 16, Uncle Earnest, apparently on the basis of their reports, refers to it as “the very expensive resort where you are now at.”

They did not move into their new house at 201 Sigourney Street in Hartford until early November, 1901. Prior to that time they were in Buckland at the “Dell,” and they also had the use of the Cooper parsonage in New Britain during a period while Grandma and Grandpa were away on a vacation. About the first of November, Mother spent a few days in New York with her family, shopping for herself and the new house and seeing her old friends, and her letters to Father indicate that the new house was in the last stages of reparation, confirmed by a pencil list in Father's handwriting on the back of one letter which includes “nails, screws, handy tool, saw, picture hooks and a pal shovel!”

A curious result of this New York stay is a letter dated November 6 from Mother's old friend, Bertha Brown, to Father. In it, with apologies for interfering, she expresses shock and concern at Mother's appearance and ap-

parent poor health, recalling the earlier days when Mother had been such a healthy, active and vital girl. By itself, this could have been taken as an indictment of marriage and Father; it must be remembered, however, that Mother had been in poor health prior to their engagement, and undoubtedly the courtship and marriage, all within six months, must have slowed her recovery. Plus one other fact that Mother apparently had not confided to her — Mother was three months pregnant in a good cause — me!

I was born at Sigourney Street on May 10, 1902, followed by Ford on July 8, 1904. The house was of the attached-row type, brick and two stories, and I assume Sigourney Street was a better neighborhood than it is now. In any event, I am sure the family was happy there, particularly because of the entree that Father had into Hartford society through his college friendships. I remember clearly being aware as a child of the Harry Freemans, the Jim Turnbells, the Hal Bucks, the Lucius Barbours, and others all of whom with their wives became friends of Mother. Most of them had been married for some time before my parents arrived in Hartford.

It was the year after my birth that the custom was started of having Mother and the children go to the shore for the summer. There are a number of letters from the first such haven, Black Point, between 1903 and 1905, dealing in fascinating (to me) detail about my eating and teething habits that summer. Although I have no recollection of this sojourn, I do remember taking my first sail with Father on the pond at Weekapaug at a very early age, so they must have gone there, too. Madison first appears in the letters in 1907 and became the permanent summer place until the Lyme purchase in 1925.

While Mother was at the shore, Father stayed at 201 Sigourney, occasionally spending a night at "The Birches" with his family. The resumption of bachelor life appears from his letters to Mother to have been not unpleasant. He joined the University Club, and all of his evening meals were eaten there or at Heublein's except when he was asked out or was away, usually with different friends and with great gusto. In one letter to Mother in August of 1907 he mentions staying with Grandma at Heublein's for a time — "living on locusts and wild honey." When he was alone, however, he usually ate at the Club because, as he said, "This place is a money saver for me. Supper costs 35¢ instead of \$1 and it is a lot pleasanter."

But these were only poor compensation for the absence of the family. He was still very much in love with his new wife, and they wrote almost every

day, his letters always referring back to a happy weekend or expressing his impatience for the next.

He was, of course, only able to get down to the shore on weekends and a few weeks of vacation. But the mere fact that as early as 1903 he could do this regularly, to say nothing of commuting from Hartford to Buckland almost every day plus frequent trips to New Britain and other nearby towns for all kinds of social events, raises the question again of what he did for transportation. Amazingly, there is in all the records and letters no mention of this subject or any problems with it until 1905 when Father became the owner of an automobile, his scrapbook having in it what was probably his first car registration, Number 2699, from the Secretary of State, dated March 31, 1905. The car was apparently a Columbia, and there is an interesting correspondence in 1906 with the dealer, The Electric Vehicle Company of Hartford. The letters indicate that by that time he had owned two of these cars and had had continual trouble with them. This was evidenced by an itemized bill from a Guilford\* garage which appears to have involved virtually rebuilding the second car. The letter from the dealer in answer to Father's complaint agreed to split the charge with him.

Up to that time there is no alternative to the assumption that he was using public transportation and particularly the trolley which covered the seven miles between Hartford and Buckland, passing directly in front of the mill. How he got to Black Point and Weekapaug in 1903 is not disclosed, but by the time the family had settled on Madison, Father was driving down each weekend — and enjoying it. And by 1907 he was thoroughly spoiled for mass transportation, as evidenced by this passage in a letter of September 4 to Mother during a period — not infrequent — when his car was laid up for repairs:

“I don't like this plugging around after trolley cars like ordinary mortals. So far everything I've tried to take has been late or I've missed it or its run off its track. This morning I lost half my breakfast, ran the length of Main Street, caught the car and it ran off the track at the bridge (over the Connecticut River) and waited thru 50 minutes in the rain.”

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\*In those days the route from Hartford to Madison was via Durham, Lake Quonapaug and Guilford, and the best garage was in Guilford — Hull's, I believe it was.

Aside from their convenience, Father loved cars and knew a lot about them, including their ailments. Of course, this was the heyday of the "motor car" boom, and Father was not alone in it. My Uncle Earnest apparently had a car in 1907, as evidenced in Father's letter to Mother on September 3 in which he says: "Earnest is back — had a fine trip without accident — made about 650 miles." In the same letter he mentions having brought back with him from Madison a Mr. Richardson, saying, "His Corbin is broken down again and he is about discouraged — it's too bad." (It must have been about this time that Howard Hart in New Britain was trying to straighten out The Corbin Motor Corp. for P.&F. Corbin.) In 1908 he mentions in a letter of July 22 that "E.C." (His Uncle Clint) has bought a 6-cylinder Stevens.

Even my Grandfather had the fever. In 1910, writing Father from the Murray Hill Hotel in New York where he was living with my Grandmother while acting as Secretary of the American Missionary Association, he instructed him:

"I would like you to order me a little Maxwell at your convenience, to be delivered April 1, with the "fixings" you mention — tho' I don't know what a 'Presto-lite' is. If you can get it in black instead of red by special order, I should prefer it — *especially* if they would provide it at the regular price. I want a good top."

In a letter only a few days later he reminds him of the matter, and in tribute to Father's knowledgeability says:

"...either a Maxwell or a Buick, as you may decide. You will know whether the Maxwell is enough of a machine for me after trying — I would rather trust your judgment than my own — If the Maxwell proves insufficient or inadequate, or unsatisfactory, get a Buick!"

A good idea of automobiling in 1907 and of Father's part in it is revealed in a few quotations from his letters that year to my Mother, the first to New York where Mother was visiting her friend, Bertha Brown, and the others to Madison after he had driven back from a weekend:

April 16

"Took my car to the E. V. Co., and they couldn't find anything the matter, but I know and am sure now that I can fix it in half an hour."

In this letter he also mentions that he is going to have a "top" fitted.

- July 8 "Fine trip after we got started but blew out a tire just east of the East River bridge in the flat where the mosquitos live. It took an hour."
- July 15 "Back safe without killing anyone or turning turtle or any other excitement except running out of gasoline. Had a fine ride, it's too bad you are missing them all."
- July 18 "Caught in the rain halfway in (from Buckland to Hartford) ... that top came in pretty handy — but didn't help the brasses that were just polished to dazzling brilliancy."
- Aug. 12 "We had a bad trip up, crawling in at about 10 miles an hour. Couldn't find anything the matter but think the muffler is plugged up. Took it off and am now doing an imitation of a gatling gun — you ought to have heard it."

On August 29 he took Aunt Addie and his father and mother for a drive from Buckland. "Had a fine ride — Tariffville, Simsbury, and Farmington. Father and Mother had never been there."(!)

Father's interest in cars continued for many years, even after he left Buckland and Hartford. I remember in particular his love affair with Pierce Arrows, sign of growing affluence, with their headlights on the fenders and the first spring starter; if the latter failed on the first try, it was necessary to dismount, rewind it and try again. Father adhered also when motoring to the driving cap of earlier days and I can always visualize him thus hatted in the enormous Pierce Arrow roadster which he acquired after the First War.

## Chapter Five

### CHANGE OF JOBS

Having made this long but necessary detour into ladies and automobiles, we now return to Father's business career and, more specifically, The E. E. Hilliard Company and Uncle Clint.

Here things were not working out as Father had hoped and expected — a happy, useful and profitable career in the family woolen business. Oddly, in spite of the voluminous correspondence after 1901 with Mother and also with his family, there is no indication that the relationship was deteriorating, and it is not until a letter written by his father on December 31, 1905, that the situation is first mentioned, as follows: "Don't work too hard. Don't be afraid to take your uncle's offer (?). You are a young man and have lots of friends — New Britain seems to have places for other new men — why not for you! Talk it over with Earnest and Howard, etc." From this letter it is evident that something had been openly discussed in the family for some time.

Trying to recollect what little I heard later from Father on the subject, I think that the main difficulties were a clash on policy between an older, conservative boss and an imaginative and aggressive assistant; there were probably changes and innovations in both manufacturing and sales which Father wanted to put into effect but on which he was turned down. This disagreement on policy would account for Uncle Clint's later unwillingness to delegate more responsibility to Father, an insupportable situation for an ambitious man in the prime of his business life.

The entrance of Uncle Clint's son, Earnest (Father's cousin), solved the dilemma by forcing the issue. Aside from the father and son relationship, Earnest was undoubtedly less aggressive in *his* ideas and more amenable to his father's, and, therefore, less of a burr to Uncle Clint. And Earnest's entry meant that there were three "executives" in a company which needed only one.

That the matter was coming to a head is shown in a longhand letter which Father wrote to his Uncle on January 2, 1906. This letter is such an example of

Father's ability to express himself and is of such importance to his entire future that I am reproducing it in its entirety:

201 Sigourney St.  
January 2, 1906

Dear Uncle:

I could always write better than I could talk and perhaps I can make plainer some of the things we talked about Monday.

In the first place don't believe that I am trying to take advantage of your statement about the value of my stock to force it on your hands or that I am making a bluff for a raise of salary.

As a matter of fact I think that my present salary is high for the amount of work I am doing at the present time.

You must realize that, for some reason, in the last few years my position in the Company has entirely changed. I have had less of your confidence, less of the business than five or even ten years ago. This may be my fault — I don't know. It is nevertheless a fact. It isn't enough that I should still draw my salary — I want to feel that I am earning it. I don't want to be a passenger. After a man relapses he isn't good for anything in any business — and I have felt for some time that I was advancing backward.

This condition has been growing slowly for five years and I am afraid can never change for it seems to have developed into a constant misunderstanding and lack of confidence in me. Those things don't change.

Gradually I have come to believe that it was a matter of entire indifference to you whether I staid or not. And now that Earnest is taking such a good hold of things I do not feel that I am necessary either to the success or the continuance of the business.

With these things in mind, when you said with some emphasis that 'you knew someone who would give me \$50,000 for my stock' I certainly believed you were making me an offer yourself and would be glad of its acceptance. That is why I spoke and it was not without a good deal of thought and a very sincere regret that it seemed necessary.

When I went into the business I little anticipated such a conclusion.

I have not forgotten your many kindnesses of the old days when I used to think of you more as an older brother than an uncle — our trips to Maine and the shore together — I haven't forgotten your generosity and kindness in the earlier years of business. Your tolerance of my mistakes, your interest in my success. I haven't forgotten your refusal to draw the salary you were entitled to nor the interest in loans to the Company — nor your endorsement on my notes of interest 'in recognition of faithful service.'

But somehow things are all changed now and I believe it will be best all around if we cut the cards and take a new deal.

It is harder for me than for you for I have put in 13 good years that ought to be just beginning to count for something and I hope you will not deny me the satisfaction of feeling that they have been years of conscientious and efficient work. The best I knew how.

It seems a strange thing to be writing you all this but it may help you to understand how I feel better than I could say.

I believe that you will treat me fairly and I hope you will believe that I am honest.

Yours sincerely,

E. H. Cooper

But now there is a mystery. Although the letter is unequivocally a resignation, Father did not leave the company for another four years.

I had always assumed that this letter was delivered to his uncle until I began to wonder why in that case Father would have it — and in an unaddressed envelope. The letter is so frank that, had it reached Uncle Clint, it would have made the situation impossible.

It looks as if, instead, there were further discussions between the two because on April 9, 1906, three months later, Father wrote another letter with a proposal “which I understand you wished submitted in writing at our last interview.” In this letter he offered to sell Uncle Clint all his stock in the Company — 250 shares at \$200 a share, \$50,000 — *less the amount of his notes to his uncle* by which he had been increasing his holdings; the letter also stated that he was authorized to offer his mother’s shares, indicating that she was back of him and making a serious family break. But this letter too remained in Father’s possession and without any envelope at all. That the stock was not sold at that time is evident in a statement that Father made to Mother in a letter of July 30, 1908 — “E.C. has declared a dividend and I have cashed in all my notes. If there is ever another on *I get it*. This was done in an awful funny way..” Thus, in 1910 when the final break came and Father did sell his stock, it was free and clear and, assuming the same price as in the above letter, provided the money from which he made his investment in the Fafnir venture.

How, after the letters I have quoted, could matters have continued more or less as they were for another four years? Was Father happy or unhappy, were



things patched up and a new start made? We have no idea. One curious thing is that Father would have bought a new house in Hartford at 146 Kenyon Street in the middle of 1909 and moved into it later that year — less than two years before the final break; things must have appeared pretty good to him at that time to more firmly than ever anchor himself in Hartford.

During this period, nevertheless, Father must have been giving much thought to alternatives to the Hilliard Company — specifically to another job. And here we reintroduce his boyhood friend, Howard S. Hart, who by this time was the head and one of the principal stockholders of The Hart & Cooley Company of New Britain. Slightly older than Father, Mr. Hart had passed up college and even part of high school to go to work for The Stanley Works, of which his father, William H. Hart was President, in 1885. Annoyed at charges of nepotism, he resigned in 1892, joining his old friend, Norman P. Cooley, to start a cold-rolled steel mill in Chicago. Selling this company at a large profit to the American Bicycle Company in 1900, the partners returned to New Britain, using the money to start with other investors the Hart & Cooley Company to manufacture warm air registers and grills from strip steel instead of castings. This business was immediately so successful that in 1902 Mr. Hart was persuaded, while still running Hart & Cooley, to become General Manager of Russell & Erwin, shortly to become part of the American Hardware Corporation. As an officer in the new combine, Mr. Hart was even forced to attempt the rescue of one of its divisions — the Corbin Motor Vehicle Division of P. & F. Corbin — in addition to his other jobs. This was his only unsuccessful venture, but the enterprise was too far gone for any ability or effort of his to save, and in 1908 he resigned both the Corbin and Russell & Erwin positions to devote his entire time to his own business.

It is obvious that Mr. Hart had a considerable knowledge of and interest in New Britain industry, its leaders and their requirements, as well as some original ideas on manufacturing and new products. So it was to Howard Hart that Father addressed his first inquiry about job possibilities. Their friendship and Mr. Hart's opinion of Father is best shown by this quotation from his reply under date of November 30, 1910:

“Your letter received.

I have done a lot of thinking and, with a view to keeping you in our midst, some acting which may not meet with your approval...I told Father

(William H. Hart) and Bert (E. A. Moore) that a good man about your size could be had (for Stanley Works) if conditions were favorable. Then I told Ben Hawley and Isaac (Black) how badly they needed you (at American Hardware) and they agreed with me...Bert said he nearly had you a few years ago but your uncle prevailed upon you to stay at Buckville (sic)."

(This must have been around the time of the near break in 1905.)

And in Mother's writing on the envelope of this letter of Mr. Hart's is the pencil statement — "Ben Hawley wanted father." So opportunities were not lacking.

Mr. Hart was not passing the buck in considering opportunities elsewhere for his old friend. Obviously, a position at Hart & Cooley was also a possibility, and he says as much. The problem there was that to justify the kind of position Father would be interested in would require an expansion of the company, probably through additional products. This in turn would require additional capital in an amount beyond what present stockholders could take up, and thus dilute their interests. But that Mr. Hart was thinking about something is indicated by one of his letters at this time — "I have my doubts about shaping up a proposition which you would approve of."

However, in this letter was a significant remark in which he says apropos of American Hardware and Stanley Works possibilities that, "I don't know whether you want to get mixed up with a big corporation." And based on experience — "I am not keen on it myself." As a matter of fact, in view of his experience in the Hilliard Company Father was particularly interested in the idea of taking a significant financial stake in anything he went into, and although he had the money which he had gotten for his Hilliard stock, this would have to be in a smaller company to give him the controlling interest in his own destiny that he craved.

That Father was exploring possibilities along this line at the same time he was working with Howard Hart is shown by a letter from Thomas A. Kirkham, principal owner of the Berkshire Fertilizer Company of Bridgeport, dated December 1, 1910. He is replying to a letter from Father of November 27 in which Father had apparently asked about the possibility of his making an investment in the company and joining it. The two were probably acquainted through Earnest's law partner, John Kirkham.

In his letter Mr. Kirkham indicates a guarded interest in the idea, but because winter is the height of the fertilizer selling and manufacturing season he "does not see how he could find time to go into ways and means until spring"; he does invite Father to come down and see him and the business and he says, "Although it may be in bad odor at times, the fertilizer business is a very interesting one to me...and I believe you would like it alright."

Father kept this alternative on the hook through the complicated and at times uncertain discussions with Mr. Hart, writing to Mr. Kirkham again on December 15. Mr. Kirkham did not get around to replying until January 20, 1911, by which time the deal with Mr. Hart was very close to being made. In it, Mr. Kirkham again pleaded inability to tackle the reorganization of the company to bring Father in but did express the hope that Father might consider coming down and just going to work for a few months (there being "plenty to do!"), which would give him the chance to find out how he liked the business.

This offer was never taken up, partly because a new and more interesting possibility had shaped up in the fertile mind of Howard Hart. While he had been trying to rescue the Corbin Motor Vehicle Company, he had become interested in the number of ball bearings they purchased from abroad, their apparent high cost and the possibility of an American source. When he got back full-time to Hart & Cooley, he set in motion experiments in the design and manufacture of ball bearings in a small part of the shop. At the time of Father's decision to leave the Hilliard Co. both Mr. Hart and his associates had decided that the ball bearing business looked very promising and were trying to decide what to do about it. By this time they had invested about \$30,000 in the experiments and would require at least that much more to go into the business. The "department" had a manager, a German named Hasselkus, whom Mr. Hart didn't like; an engineer, Harry Reynolds, and a few workmen. They also had a connection with a German ball manufacturer, MaschinenFabric Rheinland, to import their bearings, with an office — Rhineland Machine Works — in New York under a sales representative named Stuart Shepard.

That Mr. Hart had more than a secondhand knowledge of ball bearings was the result of a trip to Germany earlier with one of his officers, E. C. Goodwin, shortly after he made the connection with Rheinland, to discuss matters with them and see ball bearings being made. In characteristic fashion, he first proposed that Krefeld Steel, the owner of Rheinland, should sell it to Hart &

Cooley. When this was turned down, he hired a German engineer, Hasselkus, and started the experiments which were in process when Father came into the picture.

Furthermore, Mr. Hart and Mr. Goodwin had investigated the patent situation on ball bearings and their components, most of which were of German origin, reaching the conclusion that there were no patent impediments to worry about, and in the process taking out several patents of their own.

From the first of December on, the correspondence between Father and Mr. Hart becomes continuous, limited now to Hart & Cooley and the ball bearing business — no more about American Hardware or Stanley Works. These latter had been dismissed in another well-written letter by Mr. Hart in which he warns Father against getting into a situation in which his investment would be relatively so small that he would be just a hired man, subject to pressure to produce returns for the other stockholders faster than was reasonable and comparing this with going into a new business at the beginning when it was small with a relatively large personal stock interest. All of the letters are addressed to Father at his new home on Kenyon Street in Hartford, since he had apparently not yet advised Mr. Hilliard of his intention to leave.

By this time, at least in Mr. Hart's mind, there were only two alternative plans. Both involved starting a ball bearing business in New Britain with Father the active manager and with as large a personal investment as he could afford. The alternatives were whether the ball bearing business should start as a department of Hart & Cooley or as a separate company.

In the former case, Father would be an employee of Hart & Cooley and his investment would be in a new issue of Hart & Cooley stock; since Hart & Cooley stock was paying a dividend, this had an obvious advantage in safety of the investment and would partially offset the cut in pay that Father would take from his Hilliard Company salary to the \$2500 per year which Mr. Hart proposed — this being the salary then being paid to Hasselkuss, whom Father would replace. He would, on the other hand, have a relatively small proportionate holding in Hart & Cooley and therefore the ball bearing business.

The other alternative was to take the ball bearing business out of Hart & Cooley and form a new company with its own stock. The idea first appears in a December 3, 1910, letter to Father from Mr. Hart, and this proposal, which is the one finally adopted, is so important to Father's future that I quote from Mr. Hart's letter:

“Dear Lige:

We...will have \$30,000 in it (the ball bearing business) by Jan. 1. Suppose we organized a ball bearing company with capital of \$60,000 — and took stock for what we have in it, \$30,000. Could you place balance and take hold of the job as chief cook and bottle washer? I don't know what our other people would say about this as they look upon this business as very profitable and promising. However, it has got to have some more money to get something out of it and half a loaf is better than no bread... You would have so large an interest (I assume if you looked favorable on it you would take quite a stick yourself) that you would simply be bound to make money out of it.”

Obviously, from Father's point of view this was a big gamble, and at first he apparently favored the first alternative with its relative safety for his investment — which would be made by his taking a considerable share of a new issue of \$50,000 of Hart & Cooley stock. This alternative was also favored by some of the Hart & Cooley officers, especially Mr. Goodwin, a considerable stockholder and a good friend of Messrs. Hart and Cooley.

Both Mr. Hart and Mr. Cooley soon favored the separate company solution. It was a most ingenious compromise, combining the elements of safety for Hart & Cooley and its stockholders by a 50% participation in the ball bearing business and a gamble for the investors in the new company, to participate in which then became a matter of individual choice and judgment.

In the midst of these grave problems and decisions, it is amazing but perhaps characteristic to find that on December 17, 1910, Father wrote a poem, perhaps as a diversion from his problems. It is so short and so typical that I reproduce it in its entirety:

In the north a pine tree standeth and  
over the drifted snow  
It sways and sighs and dreams at night  
of its imagined woes.

It dreameth of a palm tree in a far-  
off southern land  
But the palm is parched and dying on  
its bed of burning sand.

The business matters were brought to a head in a letter to Father on January 30, 1911, which, as the final word, I again quote:

Dear Lige

We will have a meeting of our Board tonight and will recommend new Co., with capital of \$100,000 — H. & C. TO SUBSCRIBE FOR \$50,000 — E. H. Cooper \$15,000 — and balance to be procured by you and ourselves... You can undoubtedly find subscribers for some and I am going to put the opportunity before a few people and don't worry at all about securing subscriptions from good people for all that's left. It is good stuff, only stockholders will have to wait a bit for dividends. I don't anticipate anything but hearty approval of our plans by the Board and if you feel at all shaky about the proposition or not ready to go ahead let me know quick because the steam is up and we are getting busy to push it right thro'. Cooley feels that the makeup of the Board and officers should be determined in conference with you. I am anxious to see you and Cooley and Goodwin on the Board anyway, and would like you and Cooley and Goodwin to be the only officials of the Co., and you only to be a salaried officer. Keep expenses down. I have no objection to being an official but there are enough without me... Head me off if you want to hold up this company because I am on the rampage. It's a good thing and deserves pushing along.

Yours;  
Howard

Although there is no letter of Father's in reply to the above, we know that he did not refuse. How could he? The offer was most generous and most flattering, and the scheme gave him the opportunity to run a show himself and make money if he made good, while at the same time having the backing of a going company and of a proven success like Mr. Hart. The debt to Howard Hart that Father always acknowledged is clearly evident. The whole venture was his idea, and it was his energy and leadership that pushed it through against, at least originally, reluctant associates. And later in the early stages of the new company his experience and backing were critical to Father through the many early crises.

Not that Father did not have anything to offer. Aside from his known honesty and reputation for hard work, he had been, in spite of his disagreements with his uncle, the Manager of the Hilliard Company, and referred to himself as such. In a small company this meant the experience of turning your hand to everything from bookkeeping and finance to factory problems and sales. The figures that he saved from those days show a broad knowledge of accounting, inventory control and costs, and other material

rings out his knowledge of and interest in things mechanical. As Manager, and perhaps even more so because of his disagreements with his uncle, he learned to handle people with tact and persuasion. All of these qualifications Mr. Hart was smart enough to see and want to use.

In his personal history of Fafnir's early days, Father paid unstinting tribute to Mr. Hart's abilities and character and then with his natural modesty added: "The craziest thing he ever did was to turn over to me the organization of the company for the manufacture of a highly specialized precision product for which I had no previous training or experience whatever..."

There was still the little problem of raising the \$50,000 cash to match Hart & Cooley's contribution of a similar amount through its previous expenditures, and this did not come as easily as Mr. Hart had expected. In fact, just before the first stockholders' meeting when everything appeared set, one subscriber to \$5,000 of stock reneged, and Father in desperation added most of this to his own subscription, more than he felt he could afford. Father never divulged to me the name of the backslider, but it is certain that he regretted the decision later.

In looking over the list of original subscribers, I was struck by the fact that everyone was from New Britain, none of Father's Hartford friends being on the list. Did he choose not to approach them or was he turned down?

The largest individual investors after Father were Mr. Hart, Mr. Vibberts, Mr. Moore, Mr. Frank Porter and my uncle; the subscriptions of two of the original incorporators and directors, Mr. Cooley and Mr. Goodwin, were relatively small — they apparently felt that their Hart & Cooley investment gave them sufficient interest in the new company.

Meanwhile Father had resigned from the Hilliard Company as of January 1, 1911. (It is a curious lapse of memory that in his Saturday Night Club paper of December, 1946, which became the official early history of Fafnir, he put the date at January 1, 1910.) In view of his position as manager, customers, suppliers and agents were duly notified of his resignation, and there is a letter dated February 4, 1911, from one of them, in which he says... "yours of the 4th announcing your withdrawal from the EEH Co...from what I know of the policy of that concern you have made no mistake no matter what kind of a settlement you have..."

There is no indication of any particular "settlement," and Father apparently retained for the time being some of his stock in the company, bor-

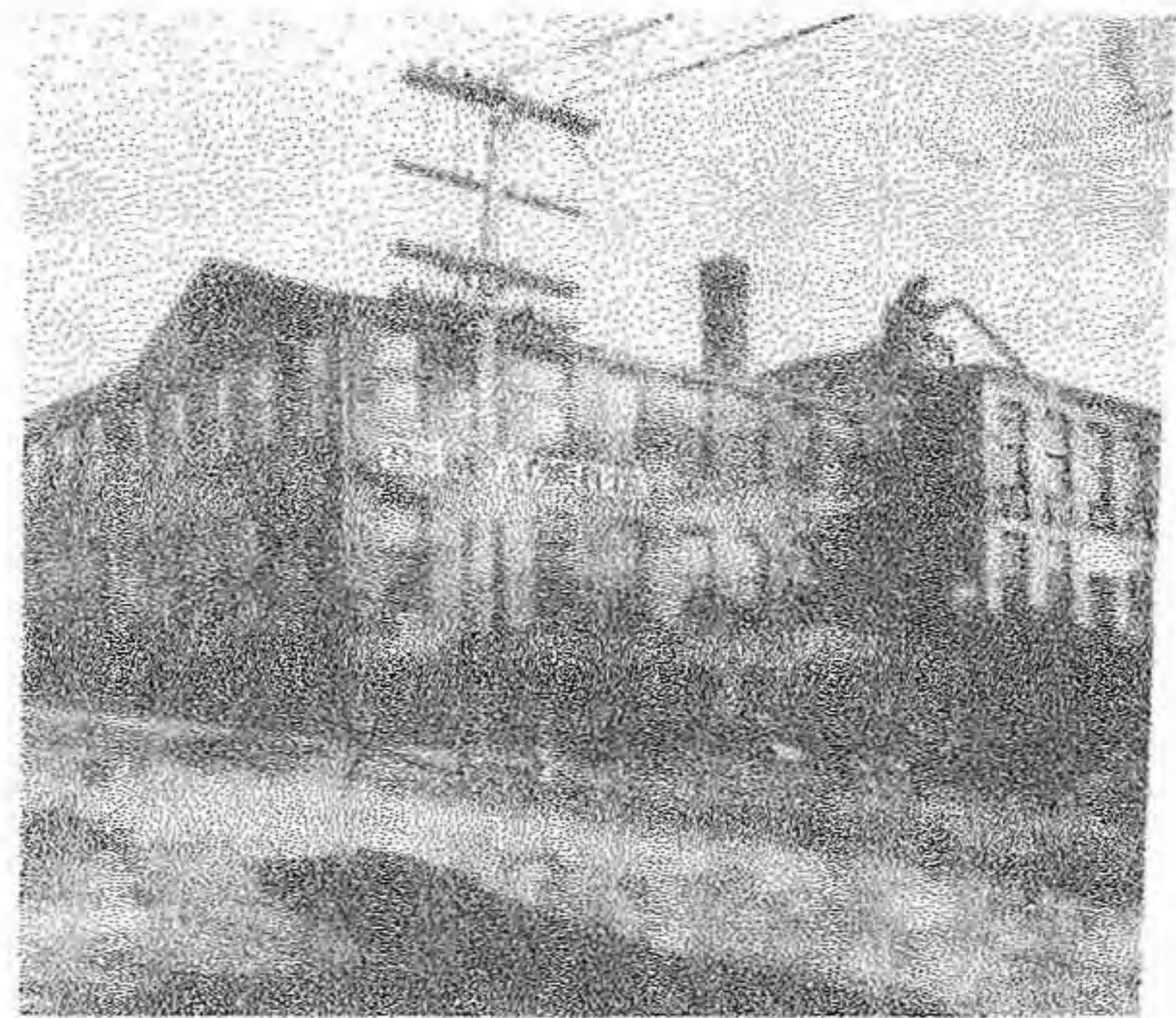


Howard S. Hart

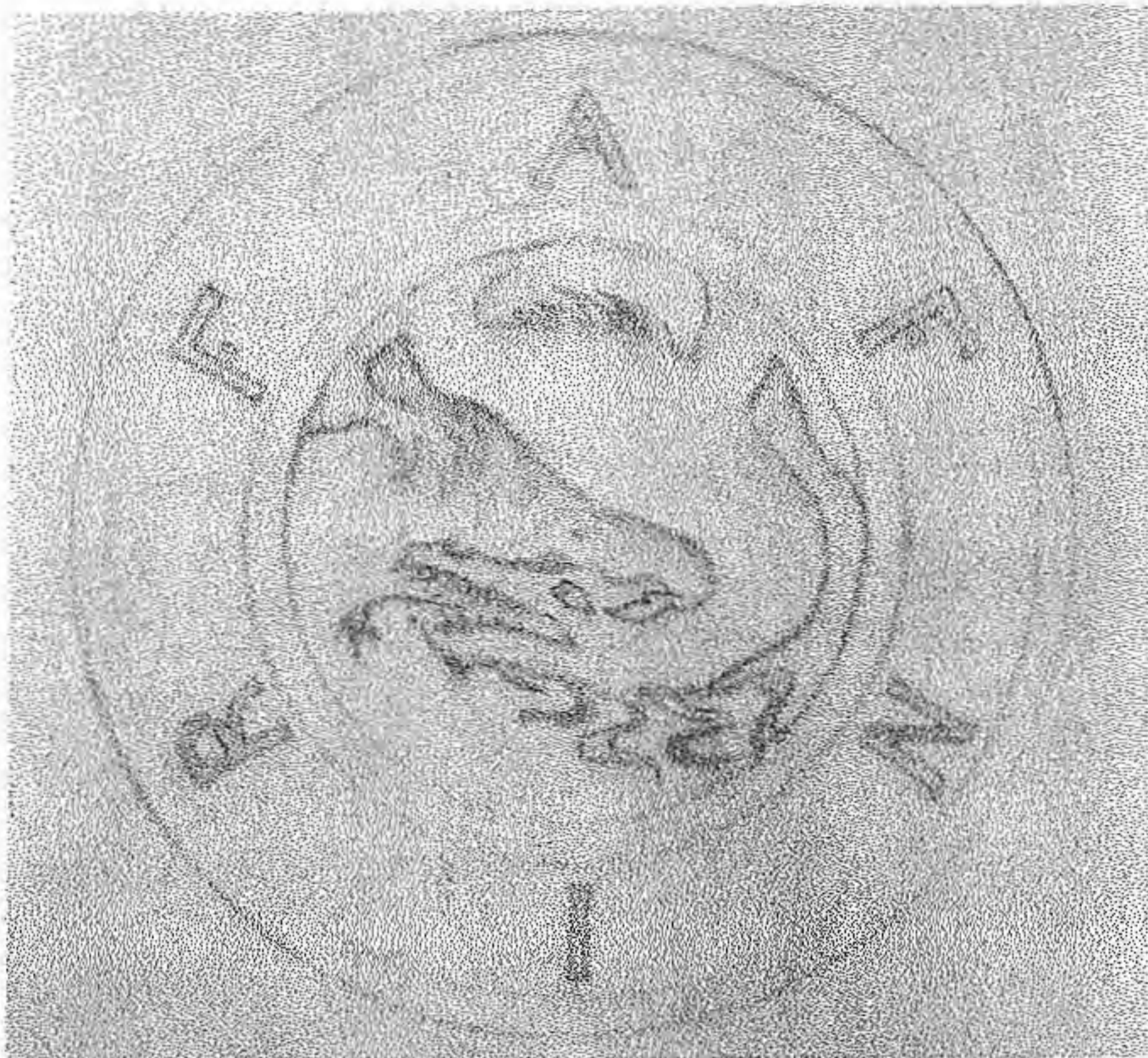
1911

Original locati  
of Fafnir - 19

Corner of Hart & Cooley pl

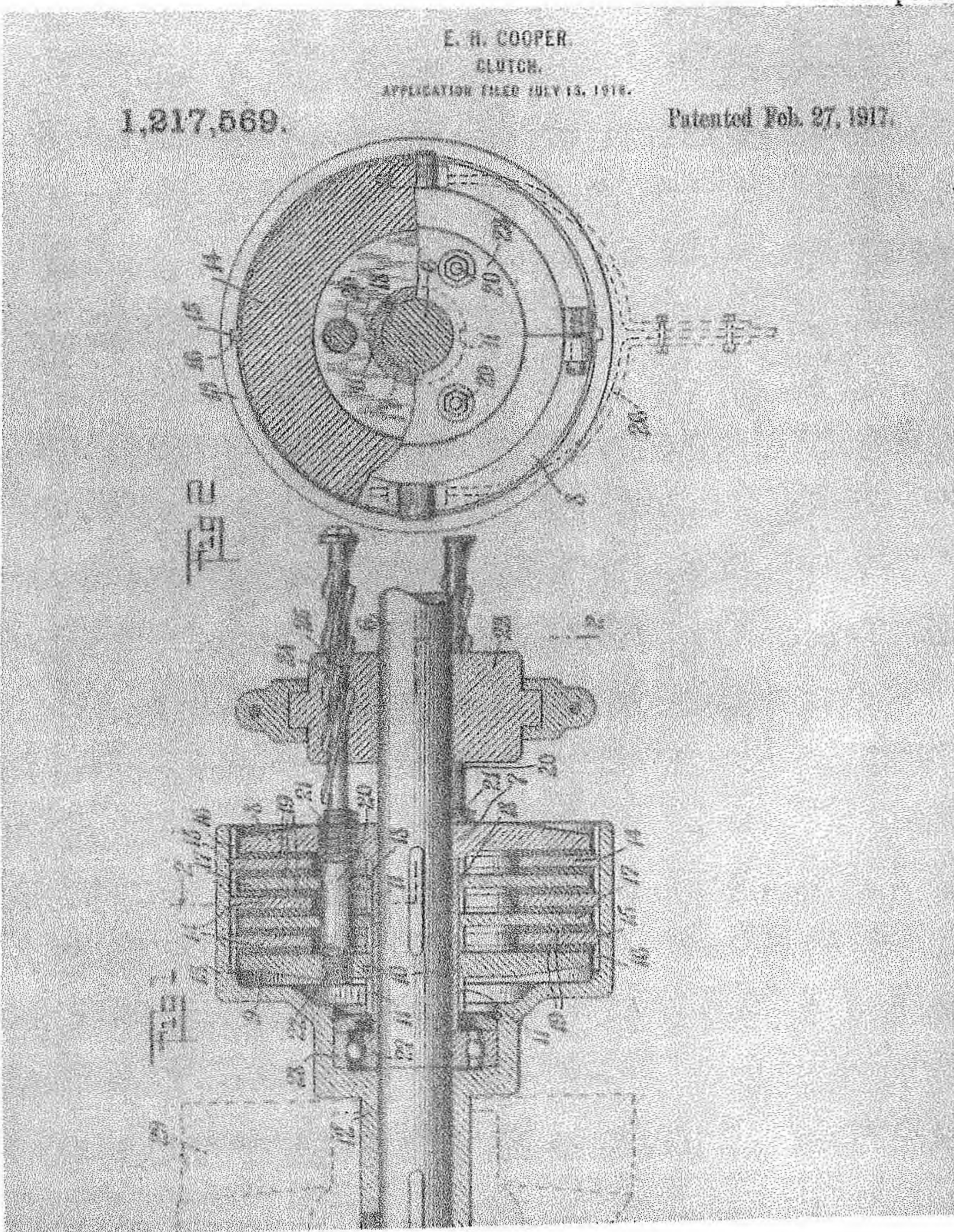


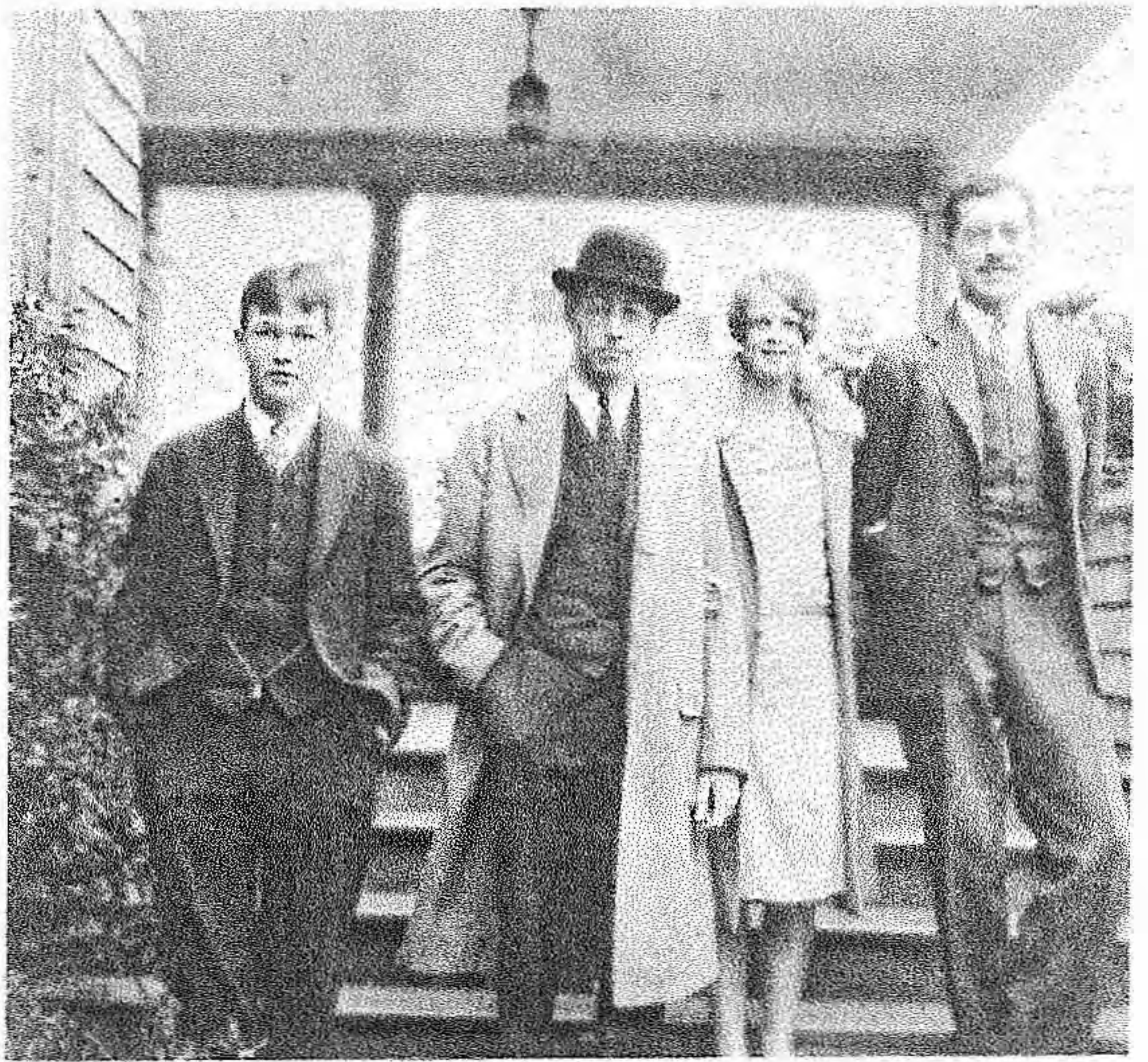




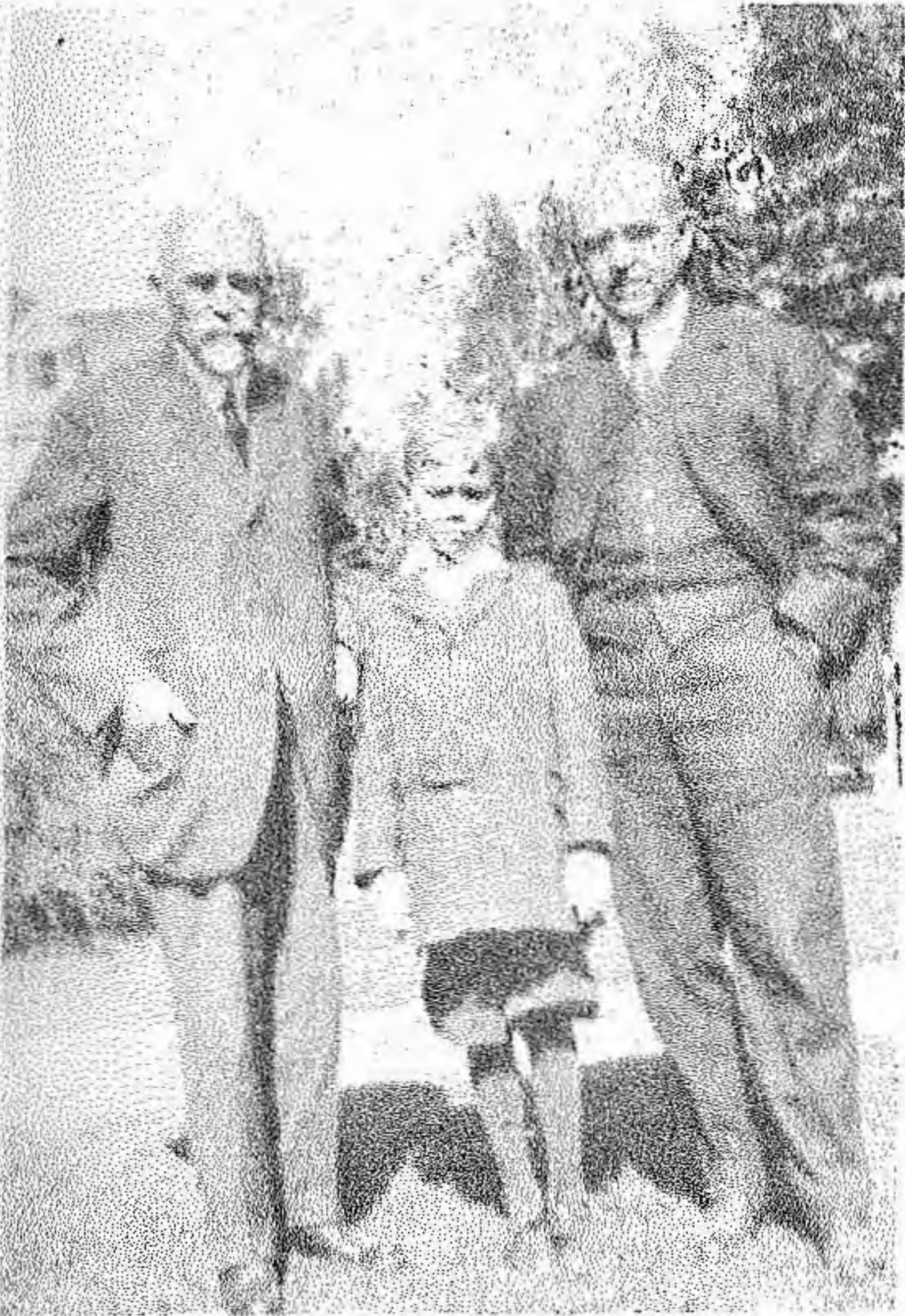
Mother's  
original sketch  
of Fafnir trademark

Father's  
clutch patent

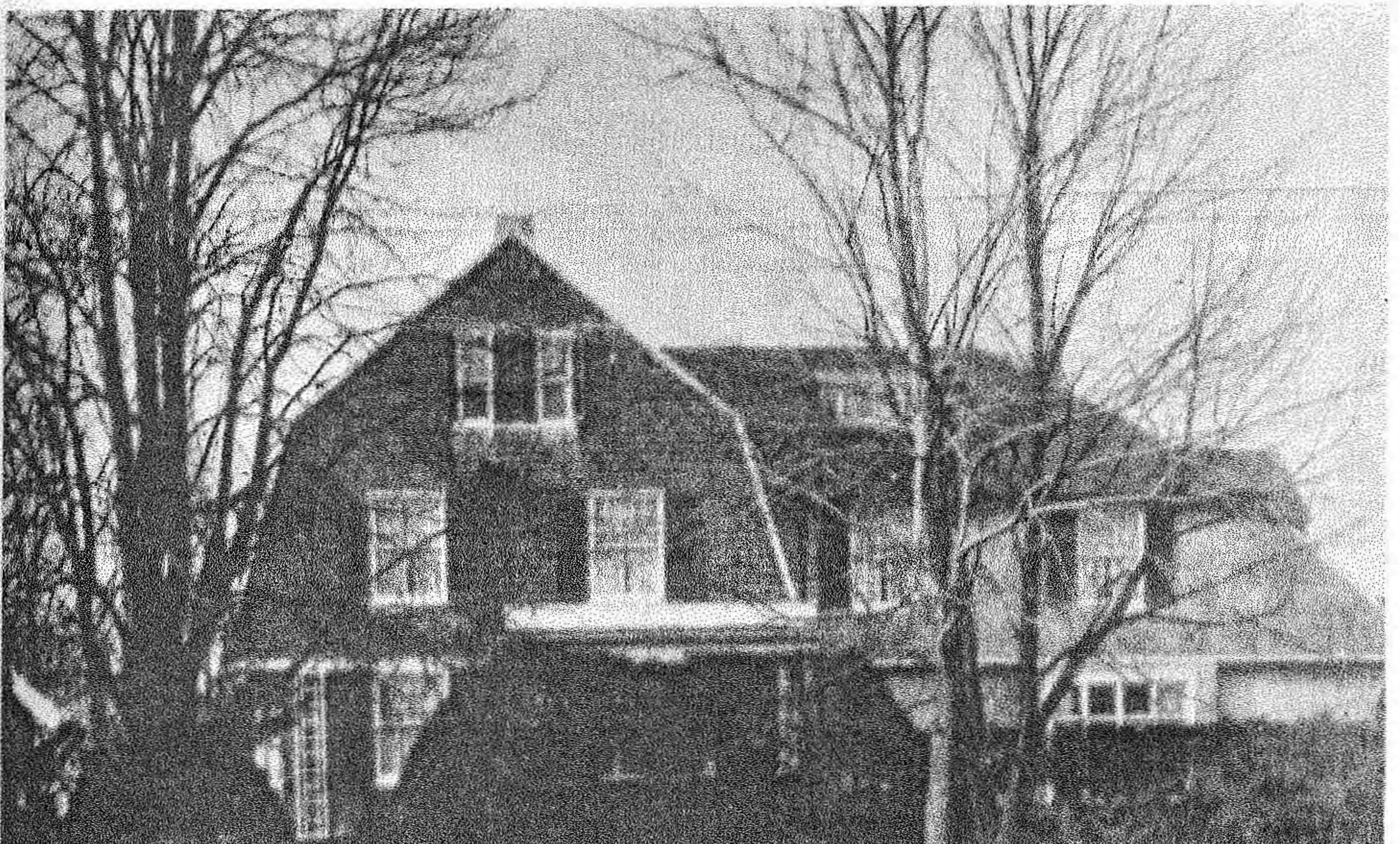


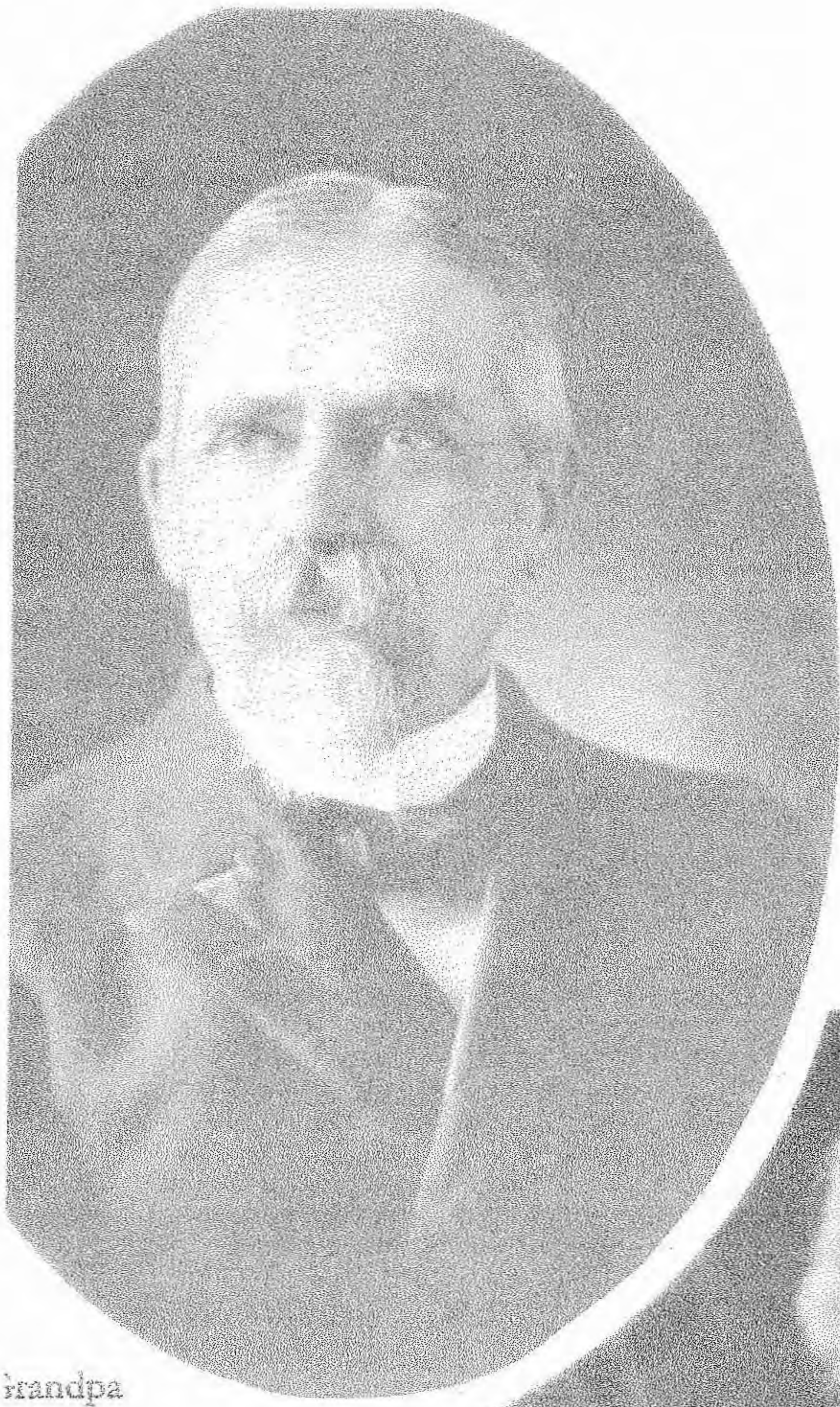


Front step  
brothers and sister-in-law.



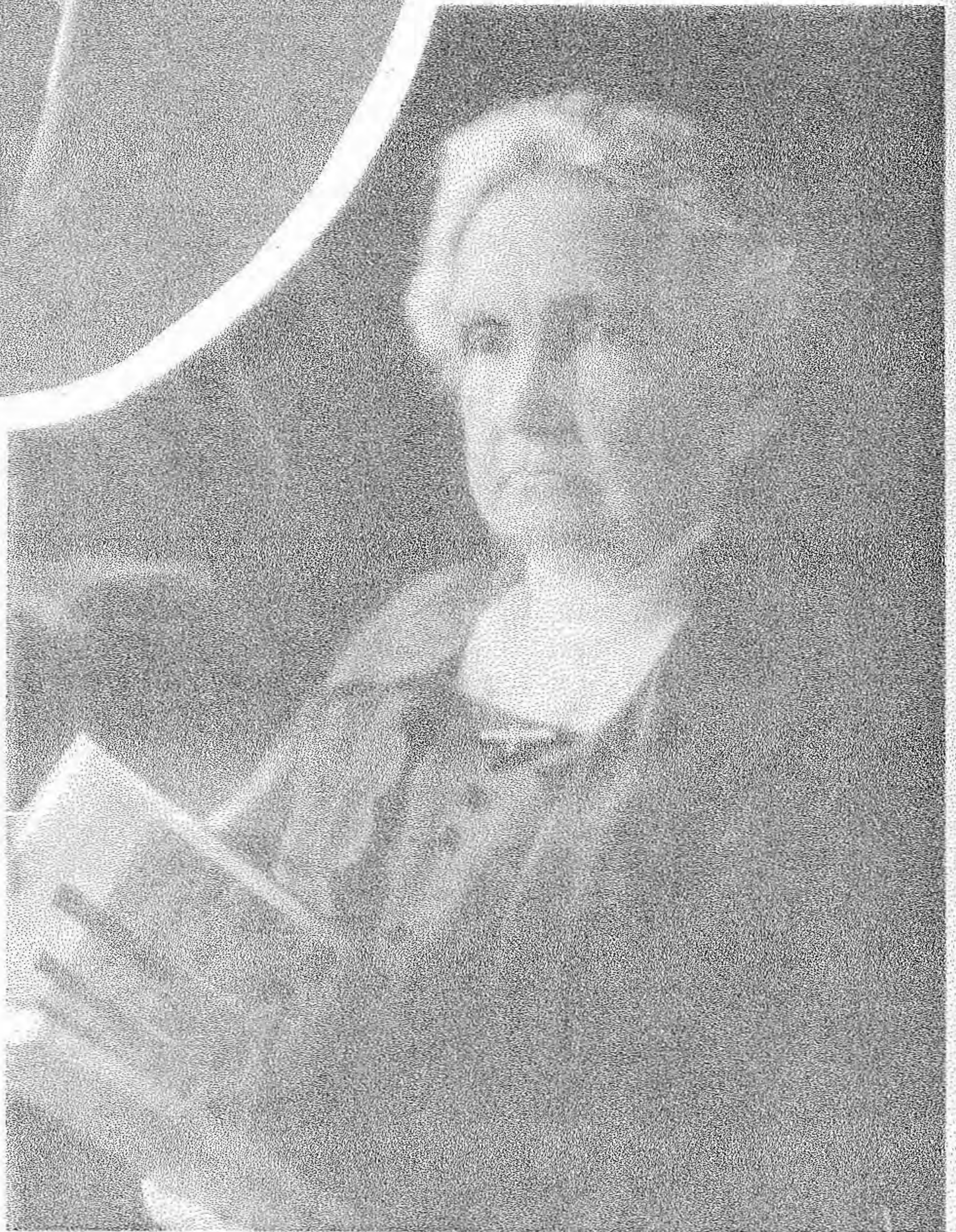
Front lawn —  
three generations.  
Grandpa, Jim, Uncle Earnest,  
circa 1913





Grandpa

AS I  
REMEMBER  
THEM  
CIRCA 1912



Grandma

rowing on it for his needs, but gradually making sales to the other stockholders. Happily, the separation must have been amicable because Uncle Clint asked him to stay on the Board. Father stayed on for many years after, and his relationship with his cousin Earnest, who eventually succeeded his father, was cordial. It was Father who in 1935 in a sympathetic letter from Florida advised his cousin to fold up the business. In it he cited the continuing losses during the Depression, Earnest's health and the unfavorable situation of the textile industry, particularly under New Deal regulations, and asserting that under the circumstances no one could blame him for giving up in spite of his pride in the name and Company and its long history.

Earnest hung on bravely until 1941 when the Company was closed down and the assets put up for auction on December 18, 1941, and the stockholders given a final liquidating dividend in 1942. Since Father's holdings by then were only nominal, this amounted only to about \$3,000 to him.

During the War the buyer leased the entire plant to Pratt & Whitney Aircraft as a shadow operation. Today, in about the same condition as when it was sold, it is subleased to various small firms. The other structures on the property are still generally standing, including the "Dell," a sad echo of the Hilliard community of the past. The brochure issued by the auctioneers at the time of the sale has maps and photographs which are a most complete record of the property as it was.

Earnest Hilliard, after his retirement, devoted his time to investments, and with what had been obtained from the sale of the property and his inheritance became one of Hartford's wealthier men.

## Chapter Six

### FAFNIR and NEW BRITAIN

And so in February, 1911, at the age of forty-two and with a wife and three children, Father left the E. E. Hilliard Company and his house on Kenyon Street in Hartford for a new life in New Britain. The fact that the Hilliard Company situation probably left him no alternative to leaving does not alter the fact that, with safer choices available, as we have seen, he chose the biggest gamble.

He bought a house at 169 Vine Street, New Britain, from his close friend, William P. (Cap) Felt, whose recent financial setbacks made the arrangement mutually timely.

The new company was incorporated on February 28, and the meeting of the incorporators was held on March 8, 1911, at the Hart & Cooley offices. Subscriptions to the stock were received and accepted: Mr. Hart, Mr. Cooley, Mr. Goodwin and Father, E. A. Moore, J. E. Cooper and F. G. Vibberts were elected directors. At the Board meeting following, Mr. Hart was elected President, Mr. Goodwin Vice President, and Father Secretary — Treasurer and General Manager. The notice that, as Treasurer, Father sent to my Mother as one of the subscribers, stated that one-half of the subscription was due and payable on or before March 11 — in her case \$250. There were 27 stockholders.

The name of the new company was Fafnir — The Fafnir Bearing Company. According to Father, Mr. Goodwin was responsible for the name, Fafnir being the dragon in Wagner's opera, the *Nibelungenlied*, "guarding the treasure of quality." At this time, German ball bearings were known as the best in the world, and in addition to the Rheinland connection, it was felt that a Germanic aura would help the sale of the American product which the new company was going to produce. All a little farfetched, and of course with the coming of war with Germany in 1914, a little unfortunate.

With the dragon as the symbol, Mother in her artistic capacity was set to work designing a trademark. There are a number of preliminary sketches of her ideas until she came up with the final one, which is still the trademark today, although it is now played down considerably.

For the next ten years — through the 1921 depression — Father's life was Fafnir and he was Fafnir's life. I have personal recollections of going to the New Britain Post Office with him after church on Sunday, picking up the mail from the company box and taking it over to the Fafnir office on Myrtle Street where he would look it over to get an early warning for Monday's work.

What follows on Father's early days at Fafnir is taken largely from a paper which he delivered to the Saturday Night Club in 1946 under the title of 'Fafnir — A Personal Record of Its Beginning and Early Years,' an intimate and chatty record of the most important event of his life, written and delivered only a few months before his death and his most enduring literary monument.

The office of the Company at the time Father took charge consisted of one desk — his — in the Hart & Cooley plant on Booth Street, corner of Myrtle Street in New Britain. Planned production was 150 bearings a day, and Mr. Hart had estimated sales for 1911 at \$40,000 (they turned out to be \$18,000).

As Father said, "For some time I was general manager, bookkeeper, paymaster, purchasing agent and superintendent." At least there was an engineer, Harry Reynolds, who, as Hart & Cooley's ball bearing engineer, was taken over by Fafnir as Chief Engineer.

Probably Father's greatest and most fortunate talent was his choice of men and women. Miss Jane Middleton, who was hired almost immediately as secretary, became the invaluable first bookkeeper and indispensable right hand. The rest of his early choices were equally fortunate.

The first after Miss Middleton was Raymond R. Searles, engaged in June 1911 as foreman to run the screw machines, who became for many years the manufacturing head under various titles.

Next was Alfred G. Way, engaged in March 1912 for general clerical work, who became the head of finance under Father.

Last of these right hands was Maurice Stanley, engaged in August 1915 as Sales Manager. He guided Sales for many years so successfully that he became President of the Company in 1927.

This was the team who took over day-to-day responsibilities, leaving Father to general management, crises and his perpetual interest in manufacturing methods and product development.

Two of these crises should probably have been foreseen in the patent investigations by Hart & Cooley prior to starting the Company, for both came suddenly and were very nearly fatal.

The first and most serious actually began before the new company was incorporated, having been known to Hart & Cooley early in 1911 and mentioned casually to Father in a letter Mr. Hart wrote to him on February 11. It had reached Mr. Hart in the form of a letter from the attorney for Hess-Bright of Philadelphia, warning him that Hart & Cooley — and the rest of the fledgling industry — were infringing the Conrad patent which his client owned, and ordering them to cease manufacturing this design. Since the patent involved an assembly method which was so basic that it could, if upheld, have prohibited most of the bearings the new company was planning to make, it would seem to have required more concern than simply forwarding it to Hart & Cooley's patent attorney, and in fact, might have postponed the new venture. This carelessness was compounded in 1915 when after Hess-Bright had won a final suit, Father and Mr. Hart then overlooked or misunderstood the necessity of applying with the rest of the industry for a license — on which the books were about to be closed. Only a hasty, last minute visit to Mr. Bright in Philadelphia persuaded him to persuade the other licensees to re-open the books to admit Fafnir; an outcome for which Father gave credit to Mr. Hart's powers of persuasion and bulldog determination.

The other crisis involved the Rhineland Machine Works sales agency in New York, inherited from Hart & Cooley. It came with the realization that Mr. Shepard, the Manager, was favoring the German bearings over Fafnir for volume orders, that the collections and bookkeeping were sloppy to the extent that in 1913 an apparent profit was turned into a loss after further audit, and finally that the bookkeeper had made defalcations of several thousand dollars. During this period Father was in New York every week watching the situation. Fortunately, as it turned out, the War shut off the importation of German bearings and led to what can now be seen as inevitable anyway — the formation of a Fafnir sales force to sell Fafnir bearings. The agency was liquidated at a loss of \$20,000.

That the Rhineland failure was a serious blow to the young company — almost a fatal one — is obvious. At about this same time, and apparently connected with it, there was also a slight financial crisis in Father's own finances which necessitated asking his father for a loan, for which he meticulously sent a note. Grandpa's letter on January 2, 1913, returned the note, saying the money had been intended as a gift because — "You have had a trying year in family finances," and expressing confidence in the "new business, which we trust will give you the income you deserve at no distant date." This was the

