

## Chapter 12

### THE FARMS AT SUNBURY OHIO

What happened after the foreclosure? Cousin Harvey V. Warner found some letters written by RJ to RB between March of 1936 and January 2, 1943. RJ and Esther kept a ledger of investments and expenditures. The information from these sources reveals a difficult and painful time as the members of the family attempted to recover, care for each other and meet financial obligations during an unfavorable time for farming.

Thurman found two available farms about five miles from Sunbury, near the intersection of State Routes 61 and 656, in Delaware County, Ohio. The farms were adjacent to each other but the land was divided by the state roads. The larger farm, on Route 61, had an attractive two-story red brick home for his family and the other farm had a frame house for his parents and Ethel.



*TG's House*

RJ's ledger contains a record of an investment and the related expenses. There is an entry for March 1934 for down payment on the 60-acre farm of \$1575. Additional expenses include lime, paint etc. \$103.81; well drilled \$71.40; grass seed \$30.48; wallpaper \$12.45; electric plant \$248.52; wiring and fixtures \$40.25; pump parts, lumber, blinds and hardware \$26.81; washer \$52.80; plowing \$23.25; chickens \$13.50 and feed \$9.15. Total investment \$2235. This farm was rented to MH Warner for \$10.00 a month. Some of the rent received was in lieu of cash for fence installation, various repairs and an amount for produce from the garden, honey from MH's bees, and extra chickens raised by broody hens.

The moving date was May 14, 1934. The sun was subdued through the haze of airborne topsoil, lifted by mid-western dust bowls. This was fourteen days before Shirley Ann



*The New Home of MH, Louisa Belle and Ethel*

(Warner) Pugh York was born May 28, 1934 to JH and Helen.

Louisa Bell had been ill for two years and was moved in an ambulance to Roger's home in Ashley. Ethel remembers she cried all the way and thought it was the saddest day of her life.

The house on state Route 656 was a step back when compared to the modern

improvements that had been made on the house in Woodstock. The house was large with one bedroom upstairs and two down. There was a parlor, family room, kitchen and storeroom. There was no electricity or inside plumbing.

Among the first purchases was a Delco Plant to produce electricity. A small building was erected a short distance behind the house for this equipment. The Delco Plant was a small engine that ran on kerosene, after being started with gasoline. On more than one occasion I watched as my grandfather primed the engine and spun the fly wheel to start the engine. This engine turned a generator that produced 32 volts and charged 16 glass gallon size lead acid batteries that were shelved on one wall of the building. A full charge would run the few lights for a while. Ethel soon learned that it was necessary to start the engine for adequate electricity whenever she did washing or ironing.

In addition to the house there was an old barn, another building, a chicken house, and an outhouse. MH soon had a flock of sheep, some hives of bees, and several kinds of chickens. There were two or three very small portable metal pens or cages for broody hens to hatch baby chickens. My earliest memories of this farm was when I learned to "broadcast grass seed" while walking across what was to be a pasture field and later getting into trouble trying to teach baby chickens to swim.

There was another entry in RJ's ledger for May 1935 for a 283 acre farm. This was designated as an \$11,000 investment--land value \$6000 and buildings \$5000. The buildings listed included a 34x20 brick house \$2000; 2 story frame 44x84 barn \$3000; 34x84 barn \$200; 14x24 garage \$200-- all with metal roofs. The down payment was \$1304.71+143.22 taxes. Mortgage \$8800. Rent was \$800 a year paid from a share of the crops. Thurman moved his family to this farm.

These farms became a place for family to gather. Because Louisa was ill they came often. Once again the closeness that working together had produced in the earlier years became evident. They had known their chores at an early age and that the work they did was contributing to the welfare of the whole family. The older brothers offered much advice to their younger sister during their visits.

Aunt Ethel was single and going to school at Urbana College. Her mother was ill and needed her care. She had moved away from her friends and especially her boyfriend Eskham Hayes. She was pressured by her brothers who had become school teachers "to get an education." They cherished their younger sister and Eskham had to win them over.

My introduction to the world of romance was the observation of the courtship of Eskham Hayes with my Aunt Ethel. They both had attended school in Woodstock, Ohio. This was during the great depression when there was not enough money for anything. When the Warner family moved to Sunbury he had a distance to travel. Covering the distance from Woodstock

to Ethel's new home may not have been the only obstacle in this developing relationship. Eskham also had to contend with a number of Ethel's nieces and nephews all begging for a ride in that marvelous rumble seat.



*Model of the Hayes Courting Car* which

We really enjoyed being in the wind and the feeling of going fast while riding in that rumble seat. The car also had a radio played music we did not hear at home.

I remember *Red Sails in the Sunset* and *When Its Springtime in the Rockies* as the first popular songs I heard on his radio. On more than one occasion RJ came out to the car and ordered us to "get away and let them visit."

According to the ledger the plan was good on paper but otherwise in reality. Information from the several letters written to RB indicates that it was a very difficult time. The year 1936 was a gloomy year that was brightened by the birth of Nancy Gene (Warner) Montgomery born to TG and Jo April 3, and Ethel's engagement to Eskham Hayes.

#### Letter 1

Bath Exempted Village School Mar 11, 1936

Dear RB

Congratulations on the 3 yr. contract. I sent the note to you as instructed. I lost my job here Monday night by a 3-2 vote. I know not which way to turn. I don't think there is much chance for a revision of the vote. The deciding vote was my banker. I wish there was some way for me to unload the farm. Forget I wrote you. RJ

P.S. I sent Ireland a note telling him one of us would make a payment in Apr & each month after that & we hoped to clear up all in 6 mo. Keep in mind I will pay half if the other boys pay nothing. I am writing them tonight but I didn't mention the note. I hope and pray that I shall never mention my financial problems to either of them again. I received our original note for \$500 payable in two years from Urbana tonight. ... R.J.

RJ was hired as the Superintendent of Xenia schools, August 1, 1936, with a two-year contract. His son R. David remembers that Dad lost his job in Bath Township because of an incident with a member of the Board of Education. Mr. Fulton came to a meeting really under the influence and in no condition to conduct the business of the Board. His conduct was such it caused RJ, who had been active in the WCTU, to call the sheriff to have him removed from the meeting. The irony here is that a neighborhood friend had taken me into his uncle's house to show me what was hidden in the bathroom. He lifted the cover on the toilet tank to reveal several bottles of liquor. His uncle was a sheriff.

Aunt Ethel Hayes told a story that she had wondered about for many years. Many times while her mother was in pain she had said she didn't understand why the Lord did not take her. MH had attended the Palestine Christian Church and evidently felt that maybe her Methodist Church

had not adequately prepared her. Ethel remembers the day that several men came into the house with a large vat that was usually used to water livestock. They carried a lot of water to Louisa's bedroom and a short time later they carried it all back out. Louisa had been now properly baptized.

Juanita (Warner) Crawley remembers the events of the summer of 1936. She celebrated her 11<sup>th</sup> birthday June 3, her mother, Jessie, died unexpectedly June 19, from complications with an ectopic pregnancy. Her grandmother, Louisa Belle, died June 28, and Thurman's barn burned July 1. I remember that we made a fast trip to Ashley. Harvey and I were sent out of the house and played in an old barn. A hearse came for Jesse and we were there a long time.



*Louisa Belle Warner 1874 – 1936*

Just over ten days later the family gathered for the second funeral that month. Cancer had taken Louisa Belle. I only remember her as being ill.

Joy May remembers her grandmother working in her kitchen in Woodstock. She had all the ingredients to make bread, cakes, and pies. Joy May considered it a treat to see her at work.

One of the stories about Louisa Belle that my brother, Dave, recalls, was about Louisa's ability to work with bees and beehives. MH had a hive of bees that swarmed. He followed them across several counties and got them into a box. He said Louisa would get them into a hive. She had the ability to move bees with her bare hands. She described the experience, "They feel so very soft from the flutter of their little wings."

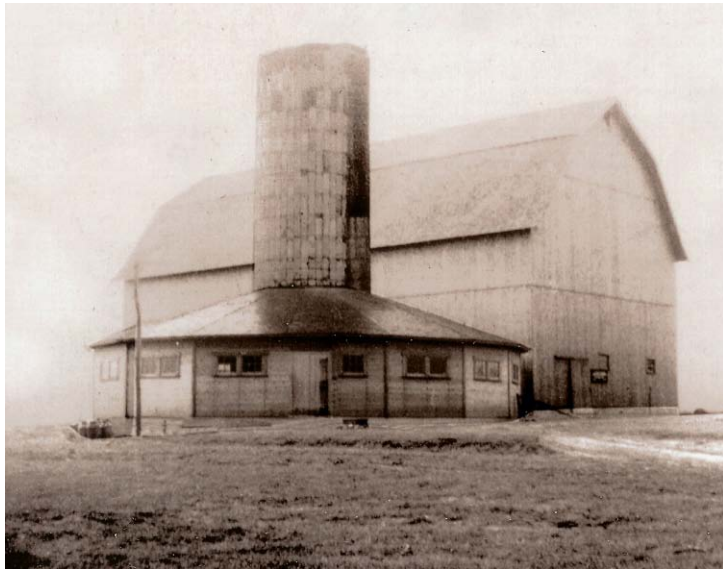
One story that Ethel told about Louisa was about a Christmas gift from Hubert. He placed a small blue velvet box under the tree. When she opened it she found a toy watch. Louisa explained that he was in college and money was scarce and only meant it as a joke. She convinced her not to cry but to proudly wear the watch. Years later he gave her a blue velvet box with a real watch.

There was a sad procession across Ohio to the Calais Cemetery. I remember that we went up a high hill and could look down into the valley where MH and Louisa had built their first home. Her burial was "back home" and next to her firstborn, Mildred Elvira.

The next day there was another quick trip to Sunbury, the barn was still burning when we got there. I remember the crumpled metal and the smell of the burning animals that had not escaped the flames. It would be years later that Cousin James (Jim) Warner would tell that he had been building little fires with stick matches he filched from the box by the cook stove and stomping them out and one of the fires got away from him. The milk truck was there to pick up the cans of

milk and the driver saw the flames. He yelled for help and grabbed a bucket to throw water on the flames but the fire spread too fast. Years later, Jim's brothers and sisters would tell a much different story.

After the barn burned July 1, 1936, it was replaced with a much larger one. Raising the new barn was a big event. Relatives came from Calais to help. MH was in on the design of what was the biggest barn in Delaware County. He had always needed more space to breed, feed and fatten livestock. He often had to buy feed to finish out the winter season. Based on his life experience he advised a huge hay mow on the upper level. On the lower level were stalls for horses and pens for calves and pigs. The center of the upper level was left open through the center. There were large double doors on either side of the barn so a team of horses could pull a loaded wagon inside where a hayfork was dropped from above. A system of ropes and pulleys was used to unload the hay and place it in the mow. We also had the thrill of swinging on a rope from one side of the upper level to the other in this big barn.



*The New Warner Barn & Milking Barn*

Thurman was interested in having a good dairy herd so a state of the art cow barn was added including a large silo for ensilage. This was a unique semicircular milking barn built part way around a silo to expedite feeding milk cows. There were stanchions to hold 20 to 30 milk cows. These were arranged around the center silo to minimize distribution of silage. Cousin Jim remembers, "Twice a day someone would climb up into the silo and with a pitchfork drop 20 – 30 bushels of ensilage down and then place the right amount for each

cow."

Some of us learned to use a scoop shovel to remove manure that accumulated in the barn. Thurman called it "chawed grass."

Nineteen thirty-seven had to be a better year. It began with the birth of Dorothy Louisa (Warner) Stoyer on January 17, to JH and Helen and William Max (Bill) was born April 30, to TG and Jo.

Ethel (Warner) and Eskham Hayes were married in the Church of Christ in Columbus. Ethel had attended Urbana College taking courses to be a teacher. She said she was encouraged to continue her studies by her brothers but instead chose marriage with Eskham Bas Hayes, September 4, 1937. His parents were Bazeal (Bas) Hayes and Amanda Alice (Ramey) Hayes.



There was a picnic at Roger's house in Ashley to announce the marriage. MH was told it was his birthday party but he was suspicious and would not attend. I remember that either Aunt Ethel or Juanita ate all around the sides of her piece of watermelon and Paul or David grabbed the top and ran off with it before she could eat it. Ethel and Eskham went to MH the next day and Ethel told him she brought him a birthday gift. When he asked, "What?" she told him, "A new son-in-law!" He went right reading his newspaper and did not say a word. Juanita (Warner) Crawley said she thought MH had a phobia about girls' and granddaughters' getting married, but it was alright for the boys.

*Ethel and Eskham Hayes*

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During this time MH was diagnosed with diabetes. He had fainted several times due to this condition. He was only 65 and the stress from the loss of his farm, his wife, his family leaving home may have been events that affected his health. Ethel and Eskham lived with MH for the next two years.

Letter 2 Undated, written about 1939

“Dear RB and Marie,

Sun P.M.

I go from one headache to a heartache and then back to the headache.

Dad refused to take a check of any kind from me Saturday eve. I gave him a check for \$10. He sat and looked at it for 9 minutes without saying a word.

He handed it back with the statement that you and I think he is incapable of taking care of a few sheep and not worthy of a loan until he can get on his feet –he is done with us. He said some very bitter statements.

1. We are forcing Ethel and Eskham to keep him.
2. We have defeated him from getting a pension.
3. We made him a pauper and are determined to keep him a pauper.
4. He was going to Delaware and bid us all goodbye.
5. He knew where the poorhouse was located and we could call on him there the rest of his life.

6. Our efforts to help are insulting -- Done as charity and not as help.

He went out crying, got in the old car and when I followed up to get my car out of his way he was still full and overflowing -- drove away -- I don't know the answer. I'll still go into partnership with you to buy a little farm for him...

The only way “Dad” will ever take money from us to live on and keep Catherine is through old age pension. I am sending my blanks in Monday and waiting for my assessment to be paid through the Bureau.

I left my check for \$10 with Sis. If she couldn't get him to take it she was to get it cashed and give it to him a dollar at a time. Boy what a day! RJ

P.S. The psychology of our effort to help Dad is having the correct reaction on his heart. He needs help – too proud to let it seem like charity. I am still willing to borrow \$100 for sheep and let him mess with them – but pay the \$10 payments on the note and not expect any return.

P.S. TG also was informed that he must make the payment on the note at the Galena Bank. He said he would. Jo seemed in healthy spirits.”...RJ Warner

There were many changes during 1938-40. Six more Warner babies were born into the upcoming generation. Myron Hubert was born to JH and Helen, May 11, 1938. Mary Louisa (Hayes) Mackley was born to Eskham and Ethel on June 29, 1938. Duane Arthur was born to HH and Rheumilla, April 14, 1938. John Mordecai was born to TG and Jo, April 21, 1938. Alice Maxine (Hayes) Stimmel was born to Eskham and Ethel, June 23, 1939; and Richard Dix (Dick) was born to TG and Jo, June 12, 1940. MH and Roger both entered their second marriages.



MH married Catherine English Henry, March 2, 1939, and moved to her house in Delaware, Ohio. He did this quite secretly and it took a while for the family to find him. Some were disappointed and others were shocked. Catherine was of the Catholic faith.

*Catherine* Needless to say, this marriage was disturbing to the beliefs of some, especially  
*1874-1953* cousins back in the hills. In his younger years, MH had attended the Palestine Christian Church where his father James Wells was an Elder.

RJ would later write about his visit with some of his more fundamental relatives back in the Calais area, who had asked if it were actually true that his father had married a Catholic after his mother's death. He wrote, "Remembering that my Grandfather's family of eleven children were separated by religious doctrines (churches), and that for more than 30 years, ending in 1907, they did not meet together as a family, even when they lived within 50 miles of each other, and knowing their convictions, I quickly answered, "Yes, she was a fine lady and made a good stepmother." He was making reference to the fact that she had been very caring for MH in dealing with his diabetic illness.

Dad recorded something his aunt said, "I never could understand you boys all going to the Methodist church, you all were well enough educated, until-- if you had studied your bible, you would know there is no religion in the Methodist church." She went on to inform him that the Methodists violated the bible teaching on the Lord's Supper, baptism and church organization and informed him what was right in each instance. To keep her going he asked, "How often do you go to a Methodist church?" The answer came quick, "I've never been in a Methodist church in my life, and never expect to be!" He changed the subject.

RJ was concerned about the anguish and division that was often caused by religion and those relatives who thought their theology was the only way. He wrote:

There were Churches of Christ, Methodist, Lutheran, Catholic, Baptist and Presbyterian churches all within walking distance (seven miles). We had relatives, whom we liked, in all of these denominations. It seemed that almost all families attended church. Many young people attended Evangelistic services in more than one denomination.

When harvest time for thrashing grain, or butchering the winter meat supply, or raising new buildings, or a quilting bee, members of all churches met and worked together as a community. These occasions caused some of us to see good church people regardless of denomination attended working together to accomplish a purpose. No questions were asked about religion when the call went out for laborers to harvest the crops of a neighbor who was ill and his crop was ready. It was on Sunday when the church bells rang that the people of our community segregated in an activity. ... RJ Warner



RB married Gladys Marie Jacoby December 21, 1940. She was a teacher and school librarian in the Ashley Schools. She had grown up on a farm near Ashley and attended Ohio Wesleyan. She was the daughter of Homer Allen and Pinnetta (Cutler) Jacoby.

Harvey would later write: "While my sister and Aunt Ethel got me off to a good start in life, this dear lady went a long way in making me what I am today. I have vague memories of Jesse. I know she was sick. I have very fond memories of Marie. To me she was a special person and I never referred to her as my stepmother. She was always my mother and I will always remember her as Mother."



Aunt Marie

Ethel and Eskham Hayes bought a house about two miles up Route 656 in East Liberty. The house and farm where Ethel and her father had lived for seven years was sold and later vandalized and destroyed. That same year Don Livingston was born, October 3, 1941, to TG and Jo and Helen Deanna was born December 12, 1941, to HH and Rheumilla.

After difficult years of farming, Thurman and Jo chose to modify their farming operation. They moved their family to a farm near Utica, Ohio, where Tom Olney was born. July 11, 1944. Eskham Bas Hayes, Jr., was born to Eskham and Ethel Hayes July 31, 1944, and Linda Christine was born December 24, 1944, to HH and Rheumilla.

Shirley Juanita (Hayes) McMullen was born August 20, 1945 to Eskham and Ethel Hayes. The last member of the generation, Gene Dexter Warner was born May 2, 1948 to TG and Jo. It had taken twenty-seven years from the first birth to the last for the new generation. Of course some of the next was already present.

Another letter from RJ to RB, January 2, 1943, contained a payment schedule asking for family help while MH was unemployed. The schedule set the month that each brother in turn would send \$25. "I have asked them to send their checks direct to Dad the first of the month. I also told them you would let each of us know if he got back to work with sufficient funds for himself and Catherine."

Soon after Catherine died, April 15, 1953, MH moved into Aunt Ethel's house for a while, but he finally needed more than home care and entered a nursing home. He died March 25, 1956, at age eighty-five. He had lived long enough for most of the next generation to know him. We can only wonder how he felt when he reflected on his life. He built a house, the biggest barn and the first silo in Noble County; he sold the farm in Calais and bought a new farm in Woodstock for only \$1000 more. He had built a reputation as a breeder and shipper of sheep, horses and cattle. He bought, sold and shipped over 100,000 sheep to various parts of the country. Several times he had champion livestock at the Ohio State Fair. He had worked with farm organizations to make life better for all farmers. He had raised a family that continued to improve life for others and to care for each other.

The gathering place for the family shifted to Ethel's home. Some of us remember the five brothers, sitting in her front yard discussing farming, school and politics. There were always disagreements but they were always brothers!

