

Recollections and Anecdotes
as recorded by Lucius Whitebec Killmar

August 3, 1929

I was born July 24, 1851, at Watertown, New York, near what was then known as the little red school house, which building was in place and use for some years afterwards, as I remember seeing it when I was quite a boy.

I was the youngest of a family of eight children, five boys and three girls. The oldest was Nathan, then Miles Cooley, Caleb, Ruth, Fidelia, Anna Eliza, Byron Homer and myself. Nathan married Miss Orilla Morry of Watertown, New York and had one son Garwine who died in South Dakota about the year 1883. There was three girls, Ida, Minnie and Ruth. Ida married and lived in South Dakota for some time but died in Michigan. Minnie married a Mr. Johnson of South Dakota, and was living near Ordway the last I heard from her. Ruth also married and was living in the State of Washington at Bellingham in 1901.

The second son of my father's family Miles Cooley married Miss Emily Gurnsey of Watertown, and had at least one boy whose name was George. Cooley, as my brother was more often called entered the Union Army as First Lieutenant, in which Nathan was Sergeant and Byron was a Private. Both Cooley and Emily died in Watertown and are buried in the cemetery out North of the City. I have no knowledge of the children.

Brother Caleb married Miss Ann Comfort at Watertown, N.Y. and they had two boys, Byron and Frederick. This family came to Michigan in the late 60's I think and settled in the township of Goodland, Lapeer County. Caleb died at Almont, Michigan. Ann married again and had some children. I last saw her in Detroit about the year 1905.

Caleb's son Byron was also in Detroit and married, but I do not know if he had any children. He was for sometime in the show business as band-man. Fred was unmarried and lived in Battle Creek as Train Dispatcher for the Grand Trunk R.R.

My sister Ruth married a Mr. McIntyre at Watertown, and moved to Central Illinois where she died. There were no children from this marriage. She was buried in Illinois.

Fidelia married Mr. Tyler Spencer and lived in Watertown. They had two children, I think a boy and a girl. Fidelia died at Watertown (while Tyler was in the Union Army) and was buried at Watertown. Tyler came West after the war was over and settled in Berrien County, Michigan.

Anna Eliza married Mr. Ira Laffin in Watertown where he died after leaving the army. Anna married again to Mr. George Dawson

of Imlay City, Michigan, and later moved to Bethel, Washington, where she died. There was no children to these unions.

Byron Homer married a Miss Morrey, a sister of Nathan's wife. They lived in Almont, Michigan, where she died. He married again Miss Maggie Walker of Imlay City, Michigan. There was no children by the first wife, but five by the second, four boys and one girl. The children were Chester, Cooley, Ernest, Caleb and Maude. The mother died at Lake Linden, Michigan. All the rest are living in Houghton County at this writing (8/3/29). Byron must be about 85 years old, as I have always thought him about seven (7) years older than I am and I have just passed my 78th year.

Chester married a Miss Jean Hoatson of Calumet and they have two boys. Cooley married Miss Trathen of Houghton and have one son.

Ernest married at Lake Linden. His wife died without issue.

Caleb married and had three children.

Maude is unmarried and is at home as her father's house-keeper and comfort.

Lucius Whitebec Killmar [the writer] married Miss Mary Merton of Calumet, Michigan November 13, 1882. Our family consisted of one girl, Marion Elmina, born December 25, 1883, and two boys, Henry Merton born February 6, 1887, and Frederic Whitebec, born September 25, 1890. The children were all born at Calumet, Michigan.

Marion graduated from the Calumet High School in 1903. Was one year at Oberlin, Ohio and in 1907 graduated from the Cleveland, Ohio Kindergarten Training School. She was married to Melvin Bradner Smith December 31, 1910 at Calumet. There was two children born to this marriage, Merton Charles Smith, born in Detroit, Michigan, August 30, 1914, and Marion Effie Smith, born April 15, 1921, at Tampa, Florida. All now (1929) living in Phoenix, Arizona.

Henry Merton Killmar graduated from Calumet High School, had one year at Oberlin and entered the Michigan College of Mines at Houghton from which he graduated in 1909. He was with the Calumet and Hecla Mining Company at Calumet for a short time and then went to the Winona Mine, Houghton Co. From there he went to Staunton, Illinois as Mining Engineer of the Mount Olive and Staunton Coal Mines, which position he held until his death June 11, 1925.

He was married to Miss Mamie Matilda Weissenborn, June 19, 1917, at St. Louis Missouri. They had three children, Henry Merton Killmar, born October 16, 1918, at Staunton. Frederick Lucius

Killmar born June 25, 1920, at Staunton and Marion Matilda born December 14, 1924.

The mother of this family married again Mr. Henry Hopper of Staunton. All are living at Staunton.

Frederic Whitebec, after leaving Calumet School, had one year at the Oberlin Business College. While at work in Detroit for the Bell Telephone Company he entered the Army as member of 310 Engineers and after the war was over he returned to Detroit and his job with the Telephone Company. He married Miss Eva Lasbaugh of Detroit, October 4, 1919. Of this union there are three children, Barbara Ruth, born September 27, 1920, Janet Elaine, born January 15, 1922, and Frederic Whitebec, Jr., born October 3, 1923.

My father, Henry Killmar was born July 12, 1800 at or near West Troy, New York of Dutch parentage. His mother's maiden name was Whitebec. I do not know how large a family there was, as I can only remember hearing of one brother, Urial and one sister, Ruth. I think his brother, Urial was younger than father and Ruth, about his age or older as the following story, as told me may show.

Father and his sister, Ruth were traveling through Central New York with horse and buggy and coming to a town too late for the usual dinner hour, were having their dinner all alone except for the help of a couple of buxom Dutch girls, who seemed to be having some cause for merriment. Father noticed that his sister was enjoying the chatter and when he got out, he asked her what it was all about and she said, "The girls wanted to know how so beautiful a woman as I am could marry as homely a man as you are."

So much for knowing more than one language, a common and grave mistake made by many people coming to America. Letting the children forget the mother tongue to learn the English.

The child life of my father's time had its happy days, the same as now, if not as many of them.

There was the Christmas holidays and the parts taken in them were enjoyed by old and young. It was the custom in father's circle for the parents to choose one of their number to represent Santa Claus to whom all gifts were given for his pack before hand. Then at the proper time, Santa Claus started on his rounds and when he came into the homes he was dressed about the same as our "idea of Santa in a funny fur-lined jacket and bells on cap." He was welcomed by the old folks with due decorum and by the youngest in strict silence. After a due time and visit Santa might call on a boy or girl to dance. If the candidate for this honor could not or would not comply with this request Santa did not hesitate to use his whip in regular fashion. He seemed to have foreseen some such an occasion and was prepared. The parents of the household said not a word against it, for he was King for the time. Perhaps some

smart boy got a lesson much needed for there was such smart ones in the good old days of our father's time. When the visitor was through with the children, then he opened his pack and gave gifts and left to visit the next home on his list.

There was another strange custom which was very popular with the older folks, especially the men, but whether it was connected with the Christmas days I do not remember. You may know that many of the Dutch houses of early date had doors divided half way up so that the upper half could be opened and the lower half closed at the same time. At this special day it was the custom for the house-wife to make special provision for company, by seeing that there was a goodly store of cider and fried cakes, etc. on hand. By a previously arranged plan, one neighbor would go to his next door neighbor's house and knock at the door, there would be no response and he would knock again and again with more force each time. Finally he would be admitted to find all the folks waiting for him and enjoying his perseverance. After he had sampled the good things to eat and drink, the man of the house would join him and away they would go to the next house, where the same ceremony was gone through on a more or less elaborate plan and it does not require a very great stretch of imagination to see a pretty jolly party before the whole neighborhood had been called upon. For even good, hard cider can contain a good sold "kick" not mention the schnapps which was supposed to be the cause of Rip Van Winkle's long sleep up on the Catskill Mountains which were only a short distance away. It was permitted to use all means to gain admittance, and an old ancestor of our's said he always counted on making a new door each year, for he would sit and laugh at the racket the callers were making until they broke the door down and then he was the jolliest one of the bunch.

Father and mother must have been married about 1825, as I was told mother was eighteen when she married. I do not know where they lived during the early days of the married life, but sometime during those years they moved to Pennsylvania, as the following story will illustrate.

Going from North Eastern New York to Pennsylvania in those days was a large undertaking for the "Clinton Ditch", as the Erie Canal was then called, was the quickest mode of travel, and when you left that line you went by horses or oxen and covered wagon and was at home wherever night or accident overtook you. One day while sitting at the cabin window of the canal boat the baby fell over board, as mother tells it, she did not know how she got to the shore, but she found herself out on land, and had the child in her arms. This babe must have been Nathan for he always liked water and could swim like a fish. He made good use of that gift by saving his brother's (Caleb) life in after years, when they were men. Caleb could not only not swim, but had not the power to stay up for a short time. He would sink as if made of stone. After many days of canal and wagon travel, they settled in the State of

Pennsylvania somewhere near Erie in what was then back-woods country new and wild.

One evening after dark, while father was out taking care of the stock after supper and mother was busy at the house work she noticed that the house dog was acting funny, barking and holding on her dress, but thinking it was all in play she did not mind until looking at the door she saw a large Indian filling the only way out, who greeted her with the salutation, "White Squaw 'fraid." She would not acknowledge it, but woke the boy and sent him to the barn for help, which came promptly, and found the wild man was hungry and wanted a place to sleep. Both of his wants were granted and after a short talk he lay down on the floor in front of the fireplace, and went to sleep. How much sleep the rest had, the historian did not say. But I am sure the slumbers must have been light, for it was not far from the times when the noble red man tried to even up the wrongs he often suffered from the white men, even if they did not get the one who had wronged him and most Indians in those days believed in the doctrine of, "an eye for an eye" etc. But this Indian must have been one of William Penn's followers, for he left at day light and was never seen again. But it was always a question as to how he could have come through two doors and a wood shed in the dark and never have made a noise loud enough to have been heard.

Mother's maiden name was Elmina Morgan, of an old New England family, later of Watertown, New York. The Morgans were a tall, aristocratic bearing family of farmers of the olden type. In those days the farmer did not wait to be boosted by the government, but did his own boosting and by hard work and a just frugality reaped a just reward. I can just recall seeing mother's father, a tall, upright man, dressed in knee pants, low shoes with buckles, blue coat, etc. There was at least two brothers and one sister in the family. And, at Thanksgiving day dinners it seemed to us youngsters as if there would not be enough for us when our turn came, but we never went hungry. There was enough for all. All members of Grandfather's family had something to do, and my mother the dairy maid, took care of the milk and butter.

They were a musical family and evenings after supper often spent some time singing and playing the violin and flute. One old sour neighbor once said of them, "I do not see what these Morgans have to sing about, they are not rich, I could buy them and give them away." But this ability to play musical instruments does not seem to have come to me in any marked degree. One of mother's brothers was an official of the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg R.R., a road not much longer that its name, running from Rome on the New York Central to Ogdensburg on the Saint Lawrence River.

The other brother was later a shoemaker and musician, a true yankee. The sister married a man by the name of Stowell, a newspaper man and a short story writer of some note in his day.

I can only recall one of two sayings of hers. Once when they were getting up a party to go somewhere, the question of safety came up and she wanted to know, "who was to drive", and when told that my father would do so, she said, "All right, I will go anywhere if "Hank" drives." This scattered account of my father and mother is all I can recall, except that mother had recorded many events of their married life in the family bible, which was burnt in a house fire and much information lost which I should very much like now to pass on to you.

Your grandfather's [the author's father's] life covered nearly a century of American History and during that period of time very many important events have transpired. The first steam boat up the Hudson River, the war of 1812 with England, the war of 1830 with Mexico and the unfortunate war between the Northern and Southern states during 1861-5. The original thirteen states strung along the Atlantic Coast, mostly as wild and unknown as the native indians, has by purchase and conquest spread from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from Mexico beyond the Arctic Circle, and including the Aleutian Islands, we cover now over a fourth of the distance around the world.

Many of the cities of our country were not in existence at the beginning of his life. Anything a few hundred miles West of the Mississippi River was known as the Great American Desert. He lived to see this same desert "blossom like the rose" and adorn itself with many rich and beautiful cities. Railroads radiating like a spider web to all parts of our land. Now Chicago calls Boston or Seattle and does business or visits as easily as if in the same room. Then it was a work of many weeks hard work not unmixed with danger. After a more or less active life in five states, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, South Dakota and Washington, father died in Bethel, Washington, in the summer of 1894, being 94 years old.

Mother died in Ordway, South Dakota, in the year 1887, making her eighty-one years old.

Now as I have said all I recalled of my father's family, I will try to tell you some of the doings of myself, which may be of interest to you.

I lived in Watertown, N.Y., until the close of the war of 1861-5. My life was the same as that of most boys of my age and circumstances, school and play making up the most of it. We were rich in ball games in my boy-hood as we had One Old Cat, Two Old Cats and Rounders or New York Ball, which last was the beginning of the now so popular Base Ball. This was my time to learn to swim and I often went to the "Old Swimming Hole" where I have not doubt the water was anything but good for health or cleanliness. But the swimming hole was comparably safe, while the river never was safe and always took its toll of young lives each year. It was a proud thing to swim the rapids and jump from the high banks.

Being in the water so much that summer may have helped to exaggerate the injury I got on the street one day. As I was getting away from some playmates, I fell on some sharp broken rock, which the men who were fixing the road had left. My right knee struck the stone and nearly laid me out. But I got to the sidewalk and after awhile and some grunting, I went on my way. Later that summer, I began to have trouble with the knee and was taken to a doctor, who probed it with what looked to my eyes like a large fish needle, such as the fish peddlers used in that day to string fish with. I remember when I winced the doctor laughed, and said to my father, "The boy is afraid." He told the truth that time. But he was certain I was all right and would soon get over it. That is where the good man was wrong.

At the close of the war, father determined to come to Michigan where Nathan and Byron were. I remember I thought we were going into an indian country and a playmate of mine agreed to run away from home and join us. We thought we would do wonderful things to the game and indians also, if they got in our way. For we were more familiar with a very popular series of dime novels (I think they were called the Muroe Dime Novels) then we were with our school history.

The boy joined us at Cape Vincent where we were to take a Steamer for Detroit, and mother soon became suspicious of our company, and had me up on the carpet and when she knew all she gave us a good motherly talk and my chum consented to return to his home. And thus faded out a most wonderful picture of the great things we would do. None of which would have one chance in a hundred of ever coming true.

We stopped at Oswego, N.Y., and were all one day loading our boat with boxes of starch and some other freight. It seems as if there was enough starch on that boat to stiffen up the water of Lake Ontario, so we could not sink even if we sprung a leak. Boy like I watched the men loading and I saw how they put on a lot of dried herrings in boxes, and as they slid the boxes down into the hold of the boat some would break open and in a short time, a very short time, there would be no loose ones in sight. And I also noticed that these boxes did not break when the officers of the boat were around.

From Oswego to the end of the Welland Canal was a night run and how we were to get our boat up that hillside where we could see other crafts was much beyond my comprehension. But make it, we did, and I had another full day of wonderment. When we left the canal, or if we called at Buffalo, I did not know, but I have a vivid recollection of a shaking up we had before we got into the Detroit River, and if there were any remains of our wonderful doing, I left my share in the rolling waters of Lake Erie.

From Detroit we went by rail to Ridgeway, Michigan, by way of the Grand Trunk Junction (a place I have not been able to place since). From Ridgeway to Romeo by stage, where we changed coaches to Almont, some nine miles further North. Here we stayed with some friends, a brother of Nathan's wife. Henry Masey, by name until Nathan came for us, I think with an ox team. I do not remember that he had a team of horses at that time, and anyway the speed of the ox team was better suited for most of the remaining fourteen miles we had to go to reach our destination, the Township of Goodland, Lapeer County, which was to be our home for some years.

We stayed with brother until we went on to a new "80" of our own, which had been touched by the ax handle only to make a roadway on the section lines. And such roads!! If you drove a wagon, it was turn this way to go around a stump and that way for another and finally straight through a mud hole, which took your wagon up to the hubs.

We lived in a log shanty of the most primitive type, sides of course of unpealed logs, in which the wood borers live for many a day, as we could hear them. The logs were notched at the ends to form the corners of the house and somewhat smoothed so as to be as close together as possible. And the spaces between the logs "chinked" with some moss and mud held in place by strips of wood fastened in place with wooden pins. The floor was made of logs split in the middle and smoothed as much as you could on the flat side and the edges straightened somewhat; they were laid flat side up and pinned to stringers, thus making a rough uneven floor, but a very solid one, good only for the ground floor. And as such houses had only one story, why worry about the next floor?

Now comes the roof, the most primitive part of all and one of the most effective. Get "free" grained logs, usually of Bass Wood (Linden) split them in the middle and cut out the inside, thus making a long trough opened at each end. Lay a row of these troughs open side up and close together on the top logs of your shanty, then put the second row over the joined edges of the two lower ones round side up. The rain falling on the round upper row would run in the lower ones and soon pass down and off the roof. A warm and dry roof warranted not to leak or rust out and by its very thickness being fire proof.

Such shanties should have a fireplace made in an opening in the wall and built of splints of wood laid in the mud on the outside up to or above the roof. But our house had a stove and a stove pipe hole in the roof. In such a home I spent some very carefree years, and some years of low physical vitality.

I was about two miles from school by road, so I often cut across through the woods, but I did not see any Indians on such walks. In fact the only Indians I saw there passed me one day out on the main road, mounted on some of the finest looking horses I

ever saw. The head of the family at the head of the line, the squaw and papoose next and the young bucks bringing up the rear, and they gave little or no apparent notice of the white boy, who was to do such wonderful things to them.

The school house was in those new places the only public meeting place and here we went to worship as well as learn our "three R's." We had meetings sometimes when a Minister came our way. His hearers came all ways mostly on foot, some rode horse back, and even the ox team was used.

Nathan had a couple of young oxen, that he had trained to draw a sleigh, and he used them to go to meetings and when the roads were good, they made very good time. One day this same team made more than good time, I thought. He had been down to our house, and on going home father went with him. All went as happy as a marriage bell is said to do, until some fool notion or the scent of some wild animal put a good scare into the steer's heads, when with a jump and a flirt of their tails, off they went down that twisted road. And let me tell you all the road that team wanted was just enough for them to pass through. They did not seem to care if the sleigh hit a stump or not. Nathan jumped off, telling us to stay, he intended to head his team off, but that he could not do it, and he was soon a poor second in the race. Next father was off somehow and the boy of the outfit left alone, "on the burning deck when all but him fled" and he was looking for a chance to do so, when like a summer storm, the team calmed down and waited for the rest of the crew.

At our church meetings the folks dressed as they could, not as they wanted to do perhaps. After service was a time of visiting and the exchange of news, and then we started for home. Many who walked knew trails through to the woods, which would shorten the distance home and these would soon be lost to sight. The minister was usually invited to come home, where both he and his horse were fed, then he was on his way again to his afternoon appointment, perhaps six or more miles away.

The little school house where these meetings were held was a one-room log building, with a door in one end. Windows on each side put in lengthwise in the end. A long bench on each side and a shorter one in the end furthest from the door for the teacher or preacher. In front of the benches was a desk of usual length. So if you were one of the middle ones behind the desk you must disturb all of the ones between you and the end if you wanted to get out. But owing to the size of the room the teacher could hear a recitation from any one and not leave her pace.

Books were scarce, and so the pupils often joined in using one book. Not a disagreeable task if the one was a girl. Blackboards and chalk there were none in this school, while I was there, and I recall another school where I taught some years later where the

board was three feet long and the chalk a piece of carpenter's chalk. But while I did not enlarge the board I did get some crayons and we got good help from our board.

My health becoming somewhat better, I was able to do a little work and took a job of cutting the brush off a sheep pasture for a sheep, and how I was about to fail on it, when father came to my help and together we finished the job, and helped to eat the sheep. I also husked some corn for a neighbor and earned enough to buy cloth for a winter flannel shirt which mother made for me.

I also learned to milk and helped to make shingles. The shingles were all hand made and were about the only real money makers the backwoods man had. The best of the white pine had been taken by the lumbermen, but they left in those days, what was afterwards considered good stuff. This was considered common property to anyone who wanted it and was made into shingles. Much of this was good Number 1 short pieces and made fine shingles. More was not so good, and some perfectly useless for the purpose for which they were intended. The maker sold to the small town merchant for tea, coffee, sugar, etc., and the merchant passed them on to the larger company for what he could get. There was a question often asked about shingles: "Will they lay?" meaning would they lay four inches to the weather, etc., in good water tight fashion. "Sure they will lay" was the reply. "Lay wherever you put them." The seller would say: "Shall I cut open a bunch?" The buyer had no way of replacing them and so the bluff often carried many a poor shingle to market.

It was my wish to go to Almont, which had the best school for that section, but with little or no money and far away, it was not a very promising outlook. About this time my brother Caleb died in Almont, where Nathan and family had gone. Father had a fine steer and a butcher from a nearby town gave him fourteen dollars for it, which he passed on to me with his blessing. So one fine morning "there might have been seen" as the story books used to say, a boy with a small bundle and a large expectation of what the future had in store for him, making his way toward Almont fifteen long miles away.

When a few miles from home I came to where a man was making shingles at his front yard near the road. I must have stopped for rest and water for he wanted to know where I was going. I told him I was on my way to Almont to go to school. I remember he gave me a good looking over and perhaps wondered how far I would get before giving up. Then he wanted to know if I knew how to pack shingles, and as I had learned that much of the trade, I said, "Yes." He made me the offer: "You stay here and pack a few bundles and I will give you a ride to Almont, when I take them in as I am going this forenoon." I closed that bargain at once and was at the job promptly, and he was as good as his word, so I made Almont that night. But I have often wondered how I should have

made out on my adventure had I not found so good a friend. I did travel that road sometime afterwards, when in much better physical condition and found it a large job. It must have put some indelible pictures on my mind, for I have dreamt of being on that trip alone and wondering if I should ever come to the end of it.

One more picture of the road and we will let it rest. When on a visit home a neighbor wanted I should take a letter to man in Almont, as he, the neighbor was too busy to go himself. When I started back I took his letter and put it in my pocket where it was safe and started. I was within about three miles of Almont, when I noticed a man on horse back following me. It turned out to be the owner of the letter I was carrying. When he over-took me he wanted his letter, which I gave him, and he went on his way, and I do not remember if he thanked me or not, but I do know I was hurt, to think he had so little faith in my honesty. Had he offered me a ride for a short distance, I no doubt would have refused it as he was an old man.

At Almont, I entered the Fall term of school and the tuition for outside pupils and a few books took nearly all my money, but I was gaining strength, and had but little to do, so I was happy. I here met Mr. Edwin T. Curtis and wife, whom it was my lot to know and very highly respect, and later I taught under him at Calumet for some years.

Before it was time to pay another tuition fee my parents came to live at Almont, so my calf money somehow held out, like the widow's cruse of oil. But my clothes and shoes did not, and I recall how I suffered on the last day of that term from a new pair of shoes I somehow got. They must have been too small, or my feet had not gotten used to confinement, for while I enjoyed the exercises I was truly thankful for release from their fond embrace.

At this school I soon made friends, some of whom I worked with in Houghton Co. Of this number were the Paton family that lived about a mile east of Almont, and came up to town to school. The Patons were a family I was to know in after years, as men and women of true worth. Andrew and I were room-mates for years at Calumet, where we were members of Mr. Curtis' teaching staff. And that friendship remained true and steadfast until it was my sad duty to see him laid away in his grave at Ann Arbor.

I was no good on the ball team and like sports, but I made my way with the school plays and exercises. About this time, I took an examination for teacher, and won a third grade certificate, good for one year. And as I was in need of money I applied for and obtained a school in what was known as the Shepard District East of Almont. I taught there a three months winter term and had fair success. My pupils ranged in age from six to twenty-one years of age. I think some of the latter class might have come to school

as a good place to visit among themselves, but they were always proper and attentive to the school duties.

As I was just fresh from my school studies, I had no trouble in keeping in the lead. I would walk down some three miles Sunday afternoon and home again. Sometimes when there was to be something extra doings at Almont Friday afternoon, I would so manage as to reach home for a part of the fun.

My wages for this school was twenty dollars a month, and "board around." I found use for the money and made good use of the latter considerations. This "board around" now almost a thing of the past can be made a help both to the teacher and to the parents of the district, as it brings them more in touch with each other. As a rule the teacher was treated with the best of everything the home had. Sometimes to the best bed room off from the parlor, where the heat of the nearest stove never got to it. The sheets were a good substitute for ice as far as a comfort was a consideration. But some folks did better than that. One good lady made me a frank and sensible offer. I could have the best room and the cold, or sleep with the hired man in a room over the kitchen, where the kitchen stove pipe went through. The hired man won on the first ballot. Both of these rooms were in a much richer and older settled part of the State.

My next school was a Summer school in Sanilac County, about the Summer of the Chicago fire and it was about as dry there as anywhere. I lived with a family whose husband nearly lost his eye sight, fighting fire to save his home and crops. This was the district where I had the yard square blackboard. An isolated district almost surrounded by dense woods. On one of my off days I was roaming around and came to a little grave yard on a sandy hill side and I thought of the saying: "It matters not where the body shall lie when the heart is cold", but I could not quite see it that way. I was only out of my district twice during the term.

On the Fourth of July, there was to be great doings at a town some ten miles away, and everyone was going. Of course the teacher must go also, as there was room for all in the lumber wagon and the horses were strong, even if they were not fast. So I went and in time, we got to town. The "doings" were to be in the park, and I was to look around and see the town, then we would all go out to the park. I soon saw about all the town there was and turned to the most popular house and went into the public room of the hotel, and all the floor room all ready occupied by men and boys in their Sunday best, and some of them recruiting the inner man as well. One look was enough for me, and I went out and was standing on the platform, when something the size and force of a ham hit me on the shoulder. I thought I was in for something unpleasant from someone already keyed up, but as I turned I saw my brother Nathan.

He was waiting to do some business with some men of the town. But as there was only one thing doing that day, and as I had seen all I wanted, we made up our minds to leave as his way was the same as mine, part way. I found and told my friends, and Nate hitched up and we left the town and visited until I saw my trail. After being sure I was on the right trail (for it is not fun to follow a wrong one) we parted and he said afterwards, he was tempted to turn back and get me for he was not sure I could make it. But of course I did and was home long hours before the rest came.

It was at this school I won the love of the family of one of the boys, by being a doctor. I was sitting in the school room, when a little boy came all excited, and said: "Teacher, come over to our house right away. Johnnie has cut his leg, and it is bleeding awful." I went and found the mother nearly beside herself. I dressed and bandaged the cut with pine pitch, which I had one of the boys get for me. The cut was made with a drawing knife on his knee. All I had was some pitch, rags, water and nerve. But they all helped, the first three helped the boy and his mother (there father was away) the last helped me. And it was from this district I got a "call" to come back at a better wage. But when I received their letter, I was already promised to the Calumet school, where I went in the summer of 1872, having received a letter from Mr. E.T. Curtis, through Mr. W.W. Stockley, who was visiting his wife's folks at Almont. I did not know just where I was going, and I had no money to pay my way, but I was going just the same. I borrowed some money, thirty dollars, I think it was, and the lender took his interest out first, a sharp and not very honest practice, but lawful at that time, if the borrower consented to it.

We went by boat from Detroit on one of the old Anchor Line boats. A great treat to me. The weather was kind to us, and but little escaped my notice, either on ship board or along the way. Out ticket read Portage, which I found out meant either Houghton or Hancock, as these towns are situated on opposite side of Portage Lake. There was no bridge between these towns at this time. A small steam tug was the ferry, and she looked as if you were to push your engine up too much, you would be shaken to pieces in the boat.

We arrived at Houghton late in the afternoon and landed at what was known as Class Dock on the Hancock side, which received all kinds of freight, men, women, children and live stock, as was evidence by eye and the sense of smell. Fortunately Mr. Stockley had been here before, so he left his wife and myself to watch our trunks and he went after a team to take us out to Calumet some fifteen miles. He returned, having hired one of "Cronin's stages" for the trip. Cronin's stages were as well known at that time and in Houghton County as the Parmley Bus line of Chicago is now.

Considering the stops we made and our outfit, we made good time for the road to Calumet was much better than I expected. I found later that the roads had to be kept good, as the mining Companies drew their copper over them from the mines to the smelters and docks, and such heavy trucking in return to the mines. But that was almost a thing of the past then, and only once in awhile would you see a team loaded down with one or two small barrels, more often one was a load. It looked strange to an outsider to see a fine span of horses, pulling a large heavy built wagon and one small barrel chained down to it. But the "greenhorn" was learning and soon "caught-on."

My first school was in Rambault very near where Mr. E.D. Johnson lived just across the railroad track. Calumet Avenue was not extended over the railroad then, but there was a hole in the snow fence and a path up to Rambault. The school house had an entry across the front used for a hat-room and one school room and a woodshed on the rear. There was double seats for about forty pupils, and part of the time I had as many as eighty in the fore part of the morning. But I sent part of them home at recess time, much to the disgust of at least one fond mother.

She met me one day and wanted to know why her little boy was sent home so early in the fore noon? When I had explained it all to her, she said, "she guessed it was all correct, but she did not want the little brat around if she could help it." This sounded pretty hard at the first, but since I saw more of the lives some of the wives of the miners led, cooking and washing for six or eight men, day and night almost, I am sure she meant only good for the boy, and less worry for herself.

Most all my pupils were of foreign parentage. I have often wondered what some of the present day teachers would have done if such a bunch of live-wires had been dumped down on them. I had six Mike Murphys in one class and none of them more than six years old. I do not know if that was their right name or not, or if the little fellows followed the lead of the first one I questioned, who had answered "Mike Murphy sir", so why worry? "A rose by any other name would smell just as sweet." The change of names was a common thing with the old time Captains, either because they could spell it or had too many of similar names on the list. And the new name stuck to that man while he worked under than Mining Captain.

Years later a man from Boston, Massachusetts joined our office force at Calumet and he turned the world upside down or tried to do so, when he saw some of the old time work. Such men are useful when one is working on personal lineage, but to spend a day or more to find out a name should be spelled with the "ie" or "ei", or the termination "son" or "sen" was poor economy for the Mining Company.

During the Summer vacation before my second year Mr. Curtis had written to Mr. Paton to look out for a couple of lady teachers,

Miss Mary Nowlin and her sister Laura, from Ypsilanti who were coming up to teach in our schools. And as Paton's sister and cousin were going at the same time we were quite a party who took the boat at Detroit. All went fine until we were on Lake Huron where we ran into a good sized blow and soon our ship which had been so very kind to us now began to show how sprightly she could be. The ladies soon wanted their protector with them and I joined the party. Soon like the famous story: "We were crowded in the cabin, none would dare to sleep." But our Captain did not come "Stumbling the stairs", nor did he say anything about our being lost, but if he knew anything about us he would smile at our discomfort. But our time had not come then, and the charge given to Mr. Paton of looking after the ladies was not to quit so soon, and in fact it turned out so fine a proposition that he made it a life job for one of them. Miss Mary Nowlin, becoming Mrs. Andrew Paton some years later.

Like many storms this one stopped before morning and all was well with us again. And in due time we were at the Sault St. Marie and time to visit some of the old stores, which must have looked somewhat like the old time Hudson Bay stores. As they contained most everything a Hunter or Fisherman would want. There were plenty of trinkets to catch the eye of the traveler. At this date the fort was near the river and the banks of the river had a row of Indian huts on them. On one trip I and a stranger took the ride over the falls in an Indian canoe. As we started down one of the guides told us to "look up" or give our hearts to God. My companion on this trip was proved to be Mr. William Baird Anderson of Houghton who married Miss Margaret Miller Merton, a sister of Mrs. Lucius W. Killmar. I had a letter from Uncle W.B. a few days ago (about 25 or 26 of August 1929) in which he recalled this canoe trip of ours as well as some other good times which came our way.

My second year I was sent to the School Craft School, where I taught in the loft of a vacant warehouse. It was all right in Summer time, but beastly in Winter. As there was no fire down stairs, and single board ceiling, the floor never got warm. I put my dinner pail in the corner of the room when I came in morning and when I got ready for dinner I usually found things frozen and I had often to thaw my bread before I could eat it. So it became a common thing for me to have toasted sandwiches long before they became so popular at the lunch counters.

At this school I got into trouble by correcting a young Irish lad in a severe manner. His mother took up the battle and informed me among the other things she should like to do to me, was to run a knife into me, "just so long" and she measured it out to me on her muscular arm, a good two feet, and I think she meant every inch of the way, but such a length would have gone beyond the mark, for I never felt quite as big as that. This was the only real trouble I ever had with the parents in my six or seven years teaching. But I was obliged for the sake of the order of my room to send one

young lady home and told her to stay there. Some few days later, her father sent me a note, asking me to take her back as he confessed, "He could do nothing with her." I thought if a parent could say that, I could at least try again, and I did.

The most of the teachers from "Below", (as all parts of the State was called in the Southern Peninsula) boarded with Mr. Curtis. He lived at the corner of Mine and Church Streets, just back of where the new M.E. Church stood. My next school was an ungraded room No. 7 in the "new" building, now burnt. I had classes in some of the other rooms where I taught reading and arithmetic, besides my regular room. While in this building I met some of the "Home Girls", Miss Mary Merton, who consented to be my wife, which she did on the 13th of November 1882, at Calumet, and she is still nobly performing that work. Her parents were Mr. and Mrs. James Merton. Both were born in Scotland, but had lived in America for many years. Mr. Merton was a machinist as were his two sons John and James M. The latter was Superintendent of Shops, until his death in 1906, and John died in 1919.

There were three sisters, Margaret, Carrie and Marion. Margaret married Mr. William B. Anderson of Hancock, later moved to Calumet, and was Vice President and Cashier of the Merchants' and Miners' Bank of Calumet.

Carrie K. married Mr. Robert H. Shields, of Houghton, Mr. Shields as he himself says graduated from the college of hard knocks, and is now General Manager of the Arcadian Mine, and a strong man politically and fraternally.

Marion married Mr. William M. Argell of Ishpeming, Michigan, who was for many years connected with the Ishpeming Consolidated Fuel and Lumber Company.

Mr. James Merton, Sr., died in 1900 at Calumet and was buried with Masonic Honors. Mrs. Merton died in 1906.

During the Summer of 1881, I took a job of working on surface under Mr. James Grierson, Sr., and was a surface laborer, then engineer of a pony hoisting engine to hoist brick and mortar to the mason, making the Calumet smoke stack 125 feet high. While working at this, I got a chance to go into the Mine Office, as Clerk and as this was looked upon as one of the best jobs in the town, I took it thankfully, August 1, 1881.

I was with the Calumet and Hesta Mining Company, for forty-one years, including three years on pension. I began as bookkeeper on a labor ledger and assistant paymaster. I had both the Calumet Branch and the Lake men. At first we paid in cash, and as one and two dollar bills were hard to get, we had to use silver dollars, and sometimes gold, 5's, 10's and 20's. This made a very bulky and heavy docket and hard to handle in such amounts as we used. My pay

roll was sometimes as many as eleven or twelve hundred men. Five hundred dollars in silver dollars weighed about sixty pounds. Once in awhile our gold coin caused a misunderstanding on the part of the men.

One day a miner came back at me pretty warm and said I had short paid him. I had used quite a number of gold 20's and I asked him for his docket and he passed it to me with a look on his face as if he wanted to know if he could not count. I emptied his docket in my hat and there was a \$20.00 gold piece. When he saw it he grabbed his money and left very quickly. You see many of the men only count the currency, as a rule, and often turn the change into their pocket without looking at it. In the case of the man above, his \$20.00 did not come out with the paper money and he did not look before jumping on me.

In the earliest days of my service we used to collect from the men such sums as they agreed to give to the support of the Methodist Minister and besides there would be a man at or near the pay window outside and the boys would put into the hat whatever they wanted to. One of these gold days, one fellow just pulled out his paper money and dumped the change into the hat. Soon he was back and he was twenty dollars short. Well I knew I was not "over" in putting up my roll and there we were and no solution to our problem. It looked as if I would have to find twenty dollars, when one of the boys collecting outside came and said someone had put in a \$20.00 piece in the hat, and he thought it must be a mistake as the amount was so large. So once more the old saying came true to us all, "Honesty is the best policy."

Later I became Assistant Cashier and only paid the men on pay rolls when some clerk was sick or absent. Each pay roll was made up and the total amount was given the bookkeeper by the cashier, so that when all the dockets were filled the money was all used up there was the extra work of going over the whole roll. So if you came out even you were sure your money was O.K. Hence, to be "over", some one must be "short" and vice versa.

I served under Chief Clerks Heebner, Cole, Gove, Cox and Eaton and General Managers Wright, Whiting and MacNaughton, and I am one of the Gold Medal men, given to men who had served forty or more years continuously. There was one man who had been in the employ of the company for fifty years. One Irish miner, named Timothy O'Shea, he was given a great ovation, when he stood up to receive his medal before the officials from Boston and the hundreds of his friends.

In speaking of presents, I was the recipient of a very fine gold headed cane from the Congregational Sunday School I had been with this church circle from almost the beginning as scholars teacher and superintendent of the school and as member of the board of trustees. My relations with the church and school had been so

uniformly peaceful. I was somewhat taken aback when an old time friend and fellow worker, Mr. Nathaniel Vivian by name, came to me one morning, the day I was to leave town, and wanted to cane me, which he did, by giving me in the name of the Sunday School a very fine cane suitably engraved.

The "joining" bug of course stung me and I was in due time a member of the Masonic Order and passed from the "Blue" Lodge to the so-called higher order of the Royal Arch, Knights Temples, and the 32 Scotch Rights. I served as Secretary of the Calumet Blue Lodge for some years and was elected Senior Warden in floor work. In the Commanding I was Prelate and a member of the Marquette Shrine.

In the Winter of 1910 I fell and injured my lame leg, so that it had to be taken off, which was done at the C. & H. Hospital, by Dr. Davis, and the best they could do for me was an artificial one made by B.H. Ericson, at Minneapolis, Minnesota. And, as it does not answer back when I grumble at the way it works, we are getting along fairly well.

I left Calumet August 1, 1918, and came to Ann Arbor, Michigan where we expected to make our home. After some three years I got a job with Auditor General O.B. Fuller, at Lansing, Michigan, and did the Commuter Act between Lansing and Ann Arbor each week for about four years. We moved to Tampa, Florida in 1924.

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TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES:

The original of this document was 33 pages in length. It was double-spaced, and it was typed using a manual typewriter. It is not known if the author or some other individual actually typed the document. It was discovered amongst family photographs in March 1969 following the death of Mamie Matilda Weissenborn Killmar (see page two).

Various hand-written corrections were made in ink to the original, apparently by Mamie Killmar. The most notable was the changing of the spelling of "Whitebec" to "Whitbeck" wherever it appeared in the document. Corrections were also made to dates of birth on page two. The corrected dates are contained in this document.

On several pages, the author did not break the text into paragraphs. Paragraphs are used in this transcription, but the text was otherwise not altered except for obvious typographical errors.

This document was transcribed from the original in December 1996 by Frederick B. Killmar, one of two sons of the late Henry Merton Killmar, born October 16, 1918 (see last paragraph, page two).