

The
Ben Poulter
Story

The
Ben Poulter
Story

As told to
Jean Taylor

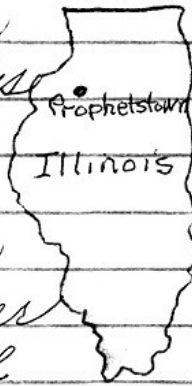
Published by
Fred South
Prophetstown Area Historical Society
June 2025

Introduction

The Poulter family has been on the Prophetstown scene since the early 1880s. Jean Taylor, a local teacher, interviewed Ben Poulter while he resided in the nursing home, then put together a little booklet detailing Ben's life. We have added other information that will enlarge your view of this family.

This is the
Journal of Ben
Poulter written
by Jeane Taylor
as dictated by
Ben while living
at Prophets River view
Good Samaritan Center
1999

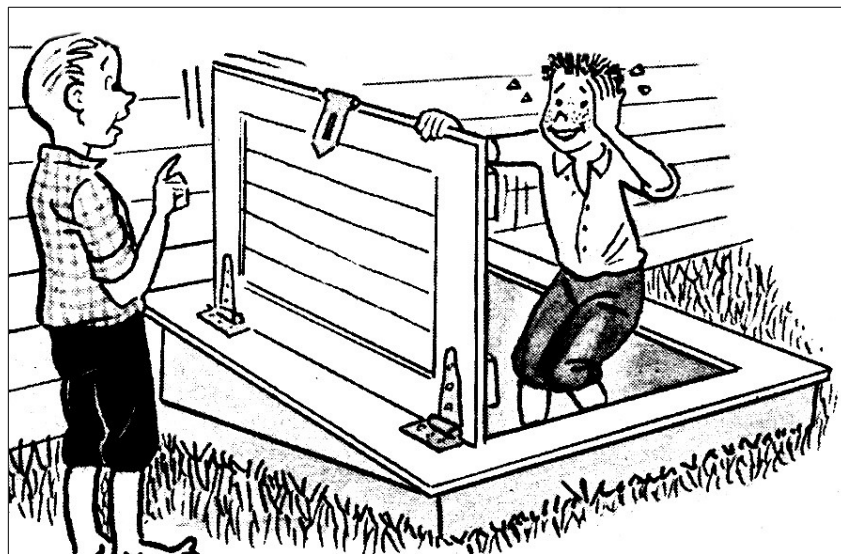
I was born in Prophetstown, Illinois March 16, 1914. My father was Ralph Houlter of English descent and mother was Viola Olson of Swedish descent.



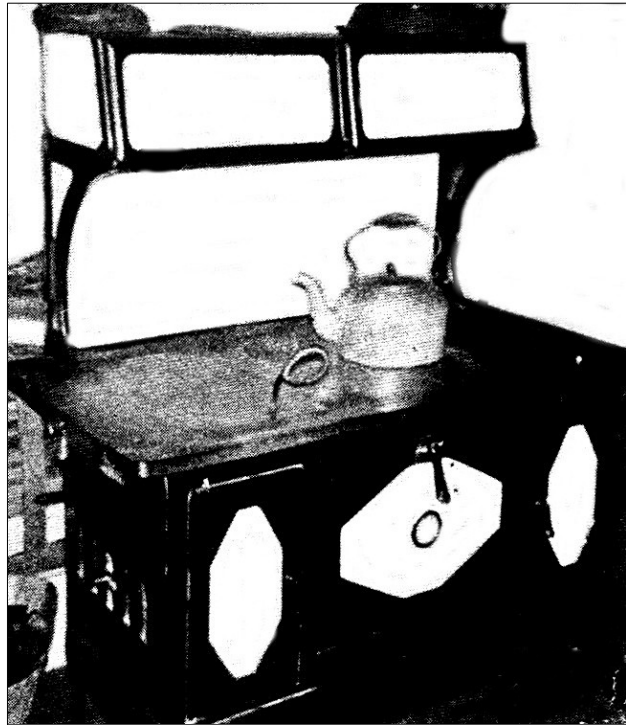
My father did wall-papering.

I had one brother, John. We were close but did the average type of fighting that most boys do.

We had an outside cellar door and we'd play hide-and-go-seek. Inside that door was a good place to hide.



My mother
cooked on
a Cookstove
or Kitchen
range as they
were called
There was
a reservoir
on the side
for heating
water.



THE KITCHEN RANGE

by Carlton C. Buck

The kitchen range, a household
friend,

Served us in many ways;
It was the faithful heating stove
On cold and wint'ry days.

It popped our corn at party time,
And made the kettle sing;
It crackled an accompaniment,
A bright harmonious thing.

The reservoir provided us
With water, steaming hot,
And kept the coffee nice and
warm
There in the coffeepot.

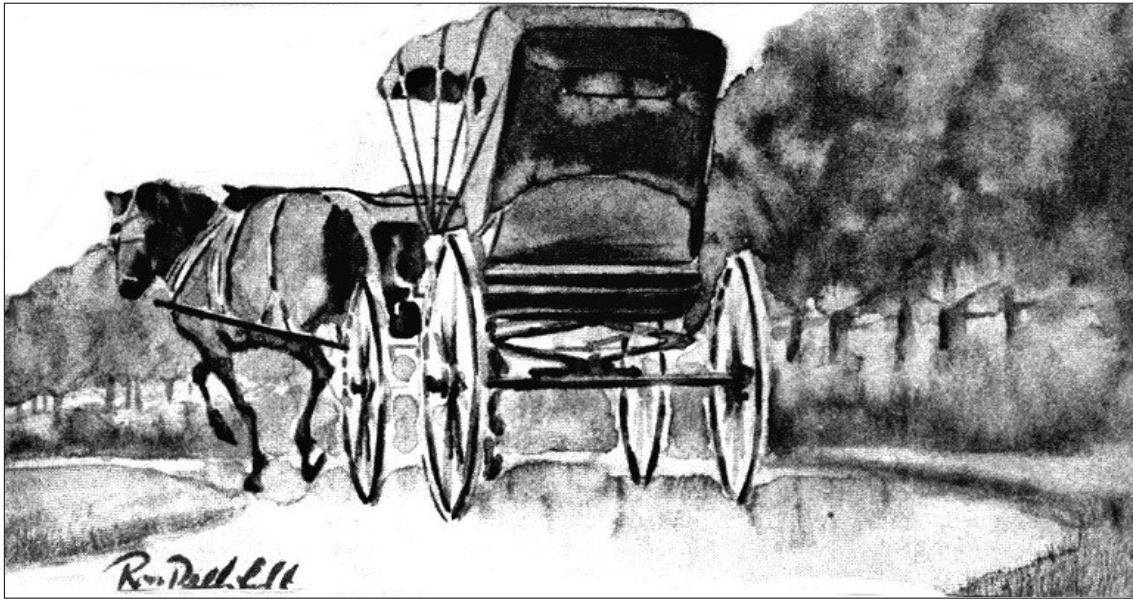
The warming oven held the yeast
With temperature just so;
Then mother took the leaven out
And mixed it in the dough.

The range top served to raise the
bread
To loaves fit for the Crown;
The oven then would do its part
Until those loaves were brown.

On washday, it could boil the
clothes
To make them clean and white,
And mother turned them with a
stick
To see that all was right.

The woodpile was the source of
fuel,
And it wasn't far to go
To bring the wood in after school
And keep the fire aglow.

The kitchen range, the faithful
friend,
Served us in many ways;
It was a vital part of life
In those rural childhood days.



Horse & buggies were used
when I was small but
Henry Ford began to build
model T's and quite a
few were seen in town



We had
apple trees
and every
fall dad made
Cider. If we
kept it too
long, it had
quite a "kick"
to it.





My mother had
a washing machine
that we had
to operate by hand.

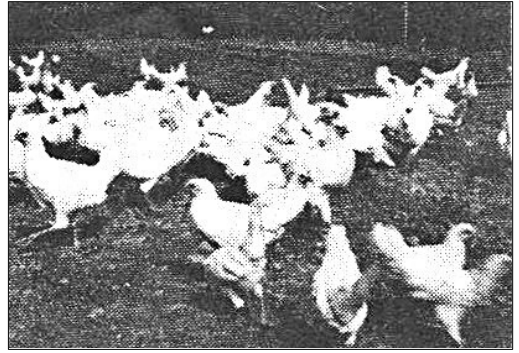


We pumped
water from
a well
out in
the back
yard

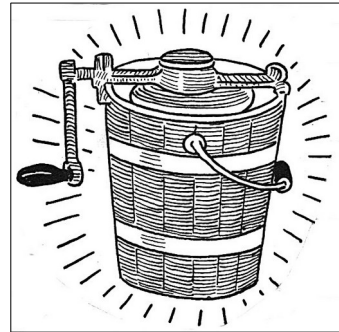


Farther out
back was
the "little
privy" that
was a
necessary
thing for
every family.

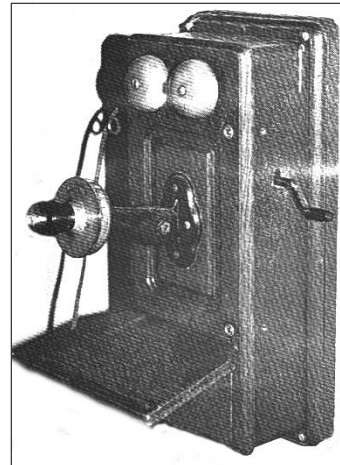
We raised
Cows, pigs,
Chickens and
Ducks. We
sold ducks.



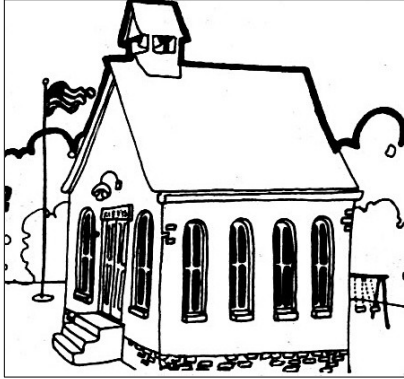
In the summer
we made home-made
ice cream.



Our telephone
was mounted
on the wall
and we
were on
a party
line



Country Schooling



Letha Boone taught at the Rock River School
In Fenton Township in the 1927-1928 school year.

When I went to school,
Just a wee little cuss,
I knew nothin' about
That thing called a school bus.
I carried my dinner in an old butter
pail
As I straggled along, come rain,
snow or hail,
Them seats they was hard
And our desks was all scarred
Where with initials + hearts
With our knives we had carved.
We raised up two fingers when we
hadda go out
To that cold house back, then we
wandered about.
Drinkin' water was carried from
that spring up the hill,
We all drank from the same gourd, I
remember it still,
That old school was heated by a
great big iron stove
An' was stoked with the wood that
we got from the grove.
How we begged of the teacher to tote
the wood in,
Or to go after the water with that ole
bucket of tin,
An when recess was called you
should hear us kids yell,
What fun for the privilege to ring
that brass bell.
As I see these kids now with their big
load of books
An the gals with their hair-dos and
new fangled looks,
How I long for the days when a wee
little cuss,
I knew nothin about that thing called
a school bus.

*I attended a country school
Letha Boone was my teacher.
She was very short but we
had to mind and learn.*

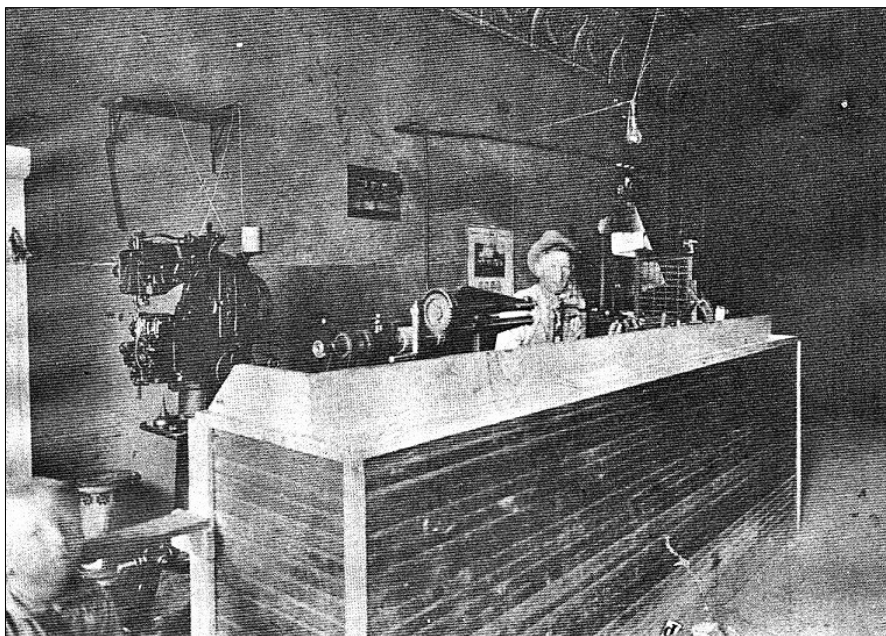
The interior of an old school,



*All boys liked to do Halloween
Pranks.*



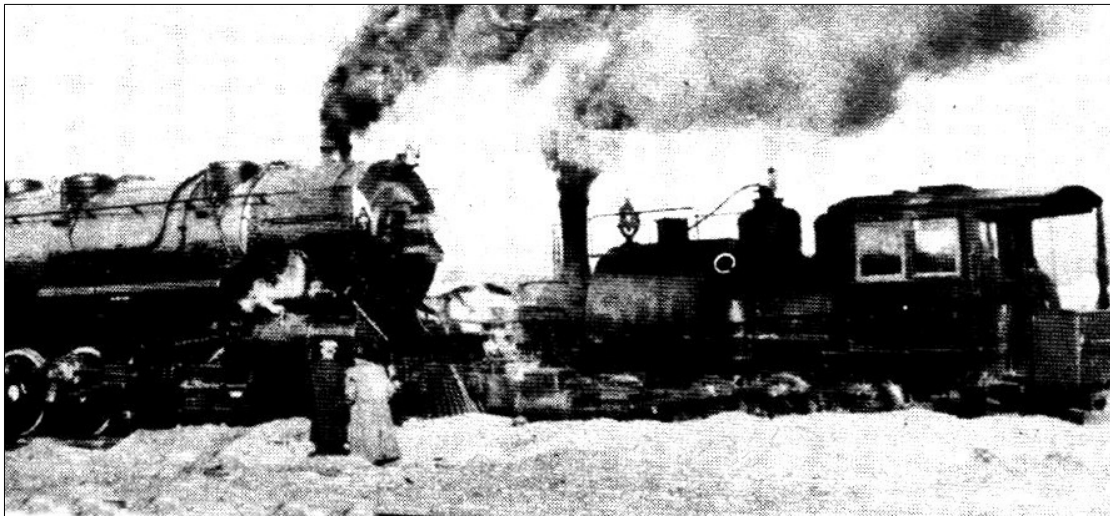
**Remember
THE OLD SHOE REPAIR SHOP?**



Prophetstown had one on Main Street.

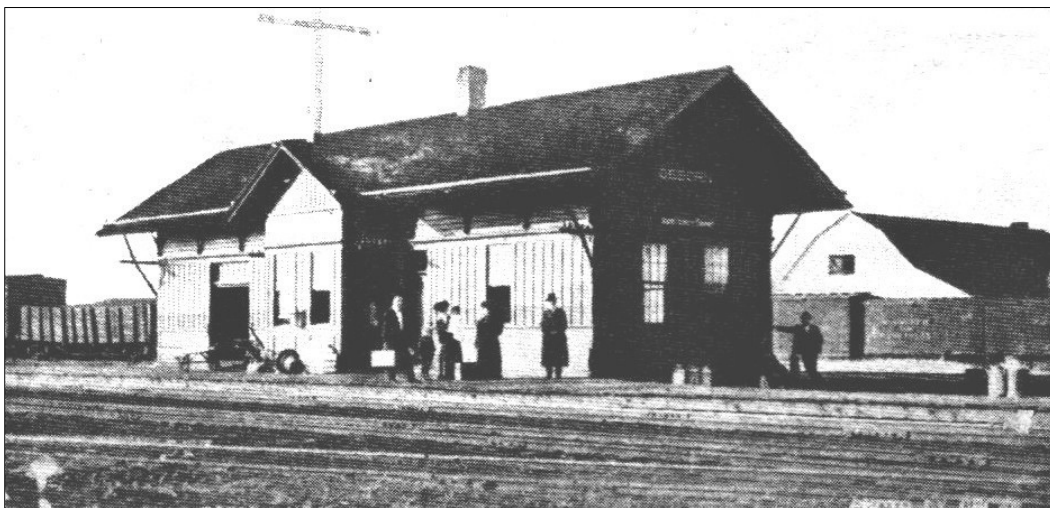


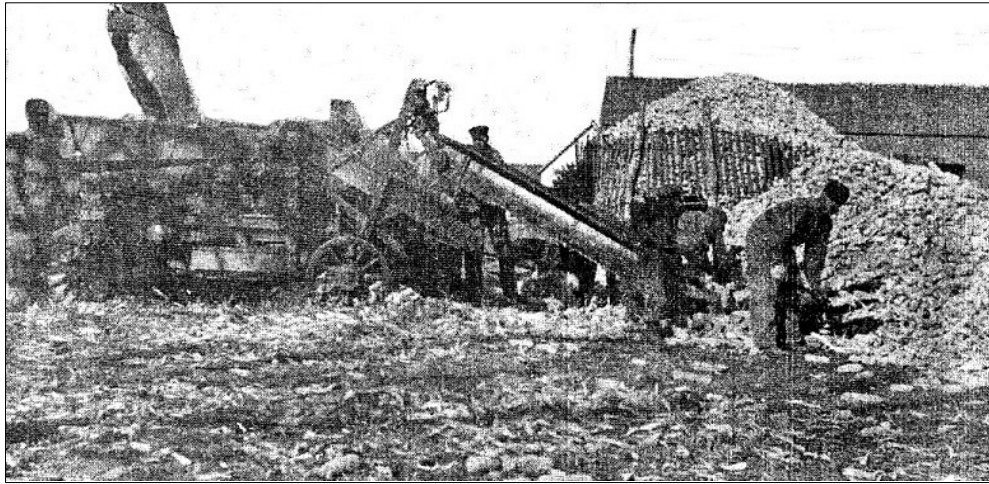
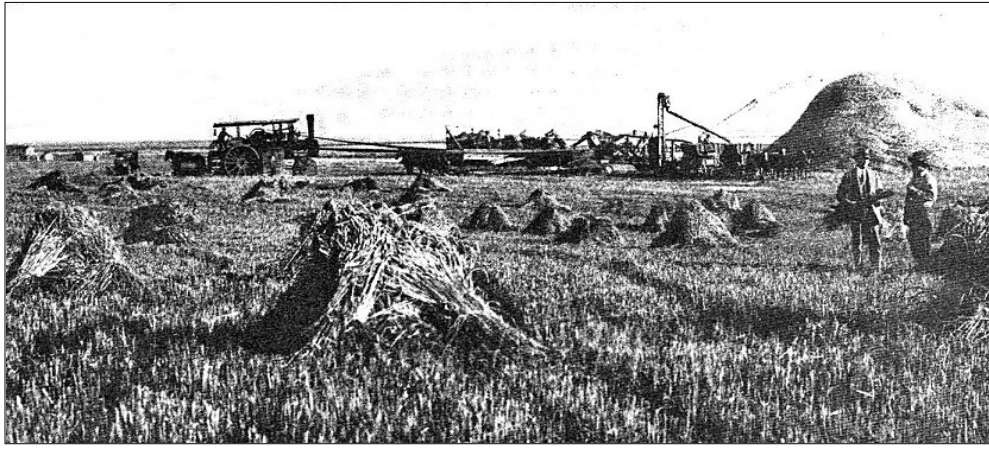
*An old
fashioned
meat
market
in
Prophetstown.*



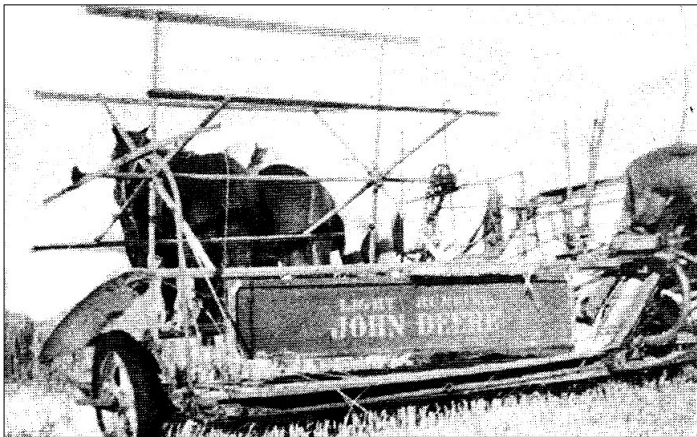
The trains once
ran through Prophetstown.

A depot like this
has now been removed





Neighbors worked together
to thresh and shell corn.



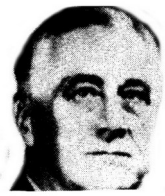
An old
fashioned
binder.



Silo filling was a group project
also



An old
fashioned
gas
pump
at a
filling
station.



The Year Was 1935—The Great Depression

Times were hard. Money was scarce but we worked hard and looked ahead to better times.



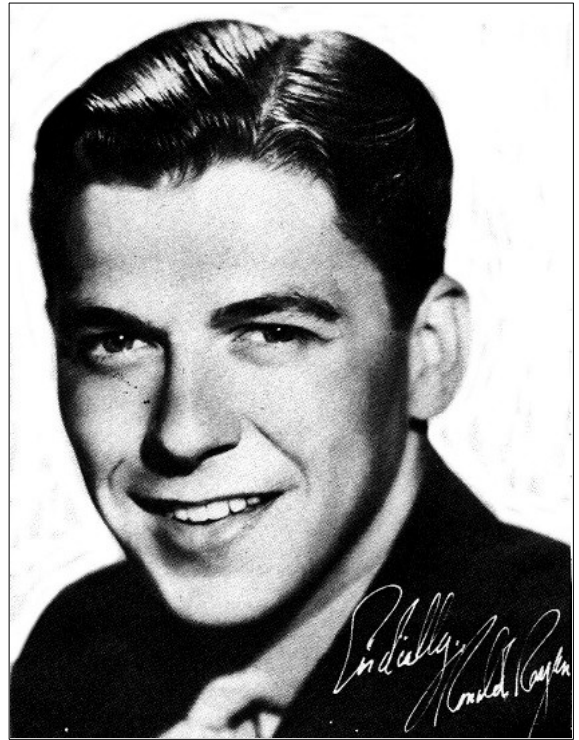
On Saturday nights there would be a band Concert in town.



350 Washington St.

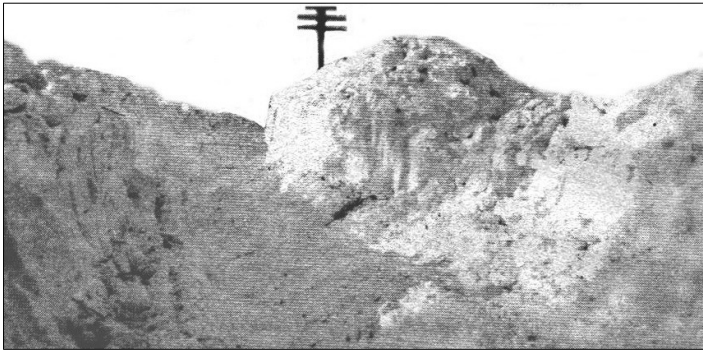
The A+P Company began opening stores all over.

I graduated from high school in 1933. Eileen Detra was a classmate.



A young actor in the 1930s just starting his movie career. His name was Ronald Reagan.

He was born in Tampico, Illinois, a few miles from my home.



We had heavy snow storms in the mid thirties.

Fond Flashbacks

A look at a specific year from the past, recalling the people, places and events that made the news. This issue, we turn back the clock to...

The Year in Review: In 1938, most news reports focus on the continuing economic turmoil at home or the worsening situation in Europe. Although there's widespread concern about the possibility of war, few actually believe America will be involved.

Historian Charles Beard speaks for many when he says, "The American people surely want to stay out of the next world war. It may cost us the blood of countless American boys."

In mid-February, the second Agricultural Adjustment Act is passed by Congress. Because the law allows the government to buy and store farmers' surplus crops, it should give much-needed stability to farm prices.

On March 13, as Nazis march into Austria and take control of that country, a young CBS newsmen named Edward R. Murrow reports "live" from the scene. It's the first radio newscast of its kind.

With nearly 10 million people unemployed, Congress is especially active in June. On the 21st, it approves funding for the Emergency Relief Appropriations Act, providing billions of dollars for new work programs.

A few days later, the Fair Labor Standards Act also makes it through Congress. It sets the minimum wage at 25¢ an hour (eventually rising to 40¢) and mandates a 44-hour workweek.

In predicting the bill will raise the

1938

national income to \$60 billion a year, President Roosevelt claims, "A few drops of rain have been coming down from the heavens and probably will be followed by a much-needed shower."

Nowhere will that shower be more



THE KING. For hepcats from the 1930s, Benny Goodman was the King of Swing. His 1938 Carnegie Hall concert is considered a classic today, and recordings of the show are still sold to swingsters.

welcome than in the South, where the average annual wage is estimated to be about \$865 a year.

In mid-July, the exploits of Douglas "Wrong Way" Corrigan provide many Americans with a much-needed laugh. Denied federal permission for his proposed transatlantic flight because his aging Curtiss Robin J-6 isn't considered up to the task, Corrigan takes off from New York allegedly headed back to California.

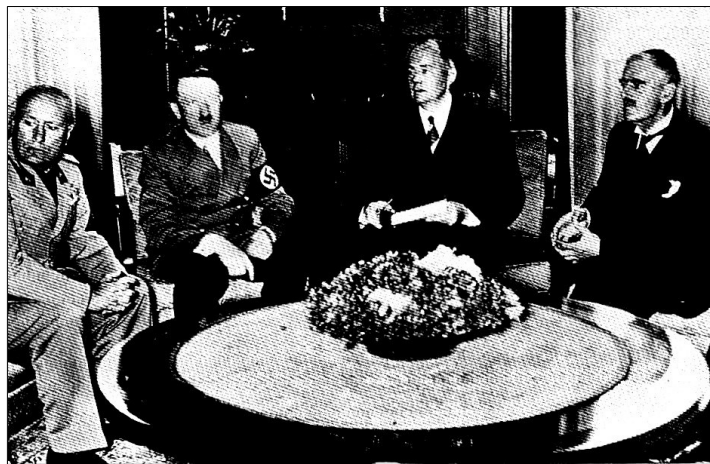
The next thing anyone knows, Corrigan lands in Dublin, Ireland. When asked to explain this incredible turn of events, he says, "I intended to fly to California but got mixed up in the clouds and must have flown the wrong way."

At the end of September, there's another crisis in Europe as Hitler demands that Germany be given portions of western Czechoslovakia. Representatives of Britain, France, the Soviet Union and Germany meet in Munich, where they give in to virtually all of Germany's demands.

For a brief period of time, there's hope that hostilities have been averted. Reporting from Munich, CBS radio correspondent William Shirer sums up the mood: "It took the Big Four just 5 hours and 25 minutes here to dispel the clouds of war." British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain goes even further, announcing the achievement of "peace in our time".

Meanwhile, it's turning out to be a good year for synthetic materials. The Du Pont Company comes up with nylon and teflon, while James Slater and John Thomas of Newark, Ohio perfect methods of making fiberglass. Another technological breakthrough is made by the Biro brothers, George and Ladislav, when they invent the first ballpoint pen.

Names in the News: Benny Goodman, the "King of Swing", appears with an all-star band at Carnegie Hall in January of this year. The talented group includes Harry James, Ziggy Elman, Lionel Hampton, Gene Krupa, Teddy Wilson and soloists from the



PEACE IN OUR TIME. That's what British Prime Minister Chamberlain announced after meeting with Hitler and Mussolini, and an interpreter. World War II proved him wrong.

I met my wife,
Irene Clements, at a
wedding dance at
Specht's Corner south
of Prophetstown.

We dated and when
we decided to get married
she wanted to elope.

We were married
in Davenport, Iowa.
LeRoy Johnson and "Pee
Wee" McDonald stood up
with us.

Our first boy, Jim, was
born March 24, 1939.

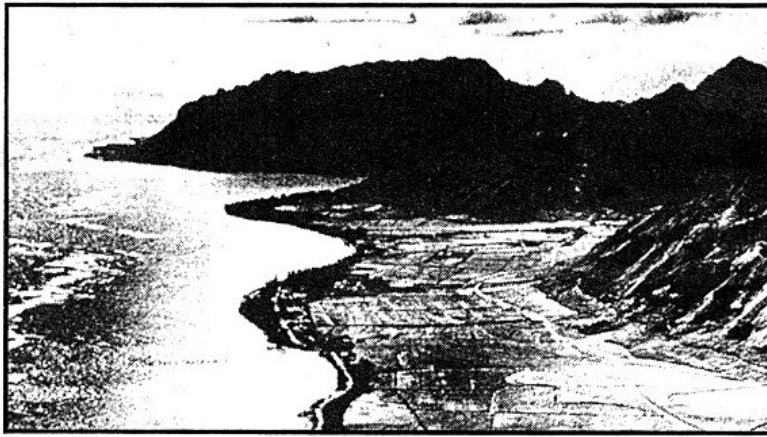
Our daughter Rita, was
born March 3, 1943.

Later that year Pearl
Harbor was attacked and
America was plunged
into World War II.

Pearl Harbor was attacked in
December 1941.



The Island
of Oahu



Site of the
Pearl Harbor
attack.

How Pearl Harbor Shocked a Nation

*The War lasted from 1941
until 1945 and was hard
but people pulled together.*

Patriotic pride buttons made after the war,
possibly for the victory celebrations.



Pre-American involvement buttons.



We worked for Ted Clary
and then moved into
the West Hume District.



Once when I was
putting a horse in
the barn, I was
kicked in the
head. Jim found
me washing off
the blood in
the milk house. I still
have the scar.

On the 160 acre farm
we raised corn and
Hereford Cattle.

Jim and Rita attended
West Hume School and
had the writer of this
Journal, Jeanne Taylor, for
a teacher.

Irene liked to bowl and one night in 1953 she was in an automobile accident on her way home. Her ankle was badly broken. She had it set in Iowa City.

Our son Bryan was born April 15, 1957. He now lives in Colfax, Iowa. He has three children.

Rita married Bob Lindberg. They have a sons named Chad & Charles. They live in Albany, New York.

Jim has stayed in town after he served in Alaska at a remote base.

He has three children, Jimmy, Angie, Nickie

I worked at G.E. in Morrison for several years. We had moved to town in 1965.

In 1976 I got my arm caught in a machine and now wear a false arm with a hook. I get along quite well, though.

Irene became ill and after hospitalization and skilled care in Morrison, she came here to Good Samaritan where she died in 1994.

I stayed at home, though I have Parkinson's disease and other problems until this year (1999). Neil Clementz (Irene's nephew) visits me often.



THE GOOD OLD DAYS

by K. C. Anthony

They speak about the good old days —
The way things used to be —
Well, I got news for you, my friend —
For life is good to me. . .

The Good Old Days are here to stay —
They never have gone by —
It's just the way you live that counts —
Don't just give up and die. . .

You say you're old, well, so am I —
But this I have to say —
Old Mother Nature is the same —
You can see that any day. . .

Now we are old, we got the time —
To stop and look and see —
The things the younger folks pass by —
They don't have time, like you and me.

The roses bloom and do their thing —
Just like they used to do;
The bees are humming as they work
Beneath the sky so blue. . .

A second life is granted us
When we reach three score and ten;
The grass is just as green right now
As it was a way back when. . .

A wild rose just in bloom —
Wild beauty on display —
Nature has her way with things —
It brightens up each day. . .

The Good Old Days are gone, you say —
I might agree with you,
But how about the bad old days
They have gone by too. . .

*Here are
some
poems I
like.*

METHUSELAH

Methuselah ate what he found on
his plate,
And never, as people do now,
Did he note the amount of the
calorie count;
He ate it because it was chow.
He wasn't disturbed as at dinner
he sat,
Devouring a roast or a pie,
To think it was lacking in granular
fat
Or a couple of vitamins shy.
He cheerfully chewed each species
of food,
Unmindful of troubles or fears,
Lest his health might be hurt
By some fancy dessert,
And he lived over nine hundred
years!

I AIN'T DEAD YET

My hair is white and I'm almost
blind,
The days of my youth are far be-
hind,
My neck is stiff and I can't turn
my head,
Can't hear one-half of what's be-
ing said.
My legs are wobbly, can hardly
walk,
But glory be, I can surely talk,
And this is the message I want you
to get -
I'm still a kickin' and I ain't dead
yet.

My joints are stiff, won't move in
their sockets,
And nary a dime left in my poc-
kets,
So maybe you think I'm a total
wreck,
To tell you the truth, I do look
like heck!
But still I do have a lot of fun,
And my heart with joy is overrun,
I've lots of friends, so kind and
sweet,
And still more than I'll ever meet.
Oh, this is a wonderful world of
ours,
Shade and sunshine and beautiful
flowers,
So you can take it from me, you
bet!
I'm glad I'm living and I ain't dead
yet.

I've got corns on my feet and in-
grown nails,
And do they hurt? Here plain lan-
guage fails,
To tell you my troubles would
take too long,
If I tried you'd surely give me the
gong.
I go to church and Sunday School
For I live the story that is ever
new,
And when I reach the end of my
row,
I hope to the lovely home I'll go.
And then when I leave this house
of clay,
If you'll listen closely I'm quite
apt to say,
Well, folks, I've left you, but don't
you forget,
I've just passed on and I ain't dead
yet!

More Poulter Family Info

KEEP THIS.

No. 154952

Prophetstown Dec 10th 1881

Memorandum of a Ticket issued by

Peter Nelson

FOR STEERAGE PASSAGE BY

Cunard Line of Mail Steamers

From Liverpool or Queenstown to Boston and New York.

Favor of

John Pultor

and family

Two Adults One Children One Inf

From Liverpool

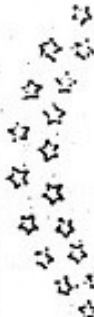
To Prophetstown Dec

Amount Paid, \$ 99.80

Paid by William Hurstwick

Should the above Passengers decline coming, the money will be refunded, less Agent's Commission, on production of this MEMORANDUM and corresponding Ticket.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



SIXTH OF
ILLINOIS

COUNTY OF
Whitewater ss.

Be it Remembered, That on the Sixteenth day of October
in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety, Six personally appeared before
the Honorable Henry C. Ward Presiding Judge of the County
Court of the County of Whitewater and State aforesaid (the same being a Court of Record,
having and exercising common-law jurisdiction, a Seal and a Clerk) and sitting judicially for the dispatch of
County Robert M. Morgan in the County aforesaid
John Coulter
an alien, above the age of Twenty-one Years, and applied to the said Court to be admitted to become a natural-
ized citizen of the United States of America, pursuant to the several Acts of Congress heretofore passed on that
subject: and the said applicant having thereupon produced to the Court record testimony showing that he has
heretofore reported himself and filed his Declaration of his intention to become a Citizen of the United States,
according to the provisions of the several Acts of Congress, and the Court being satisfied as well from the oath
of the said applicant as from the testimony of Geo. R. Shaw and

W. H. H. H. H.
that the said applicant has resided within the limits and under the jurisdiction of the United States, for at least five years last past, and at least one year last past within the State of Illinois, and during the whole of that time he has behaved himself as a man of good moral character, and appeared to be attached to the principles contained in the Constitution of the United States, and well disposed to the good order, well being and happiness of the same; and two years and upward having elapsed since the said applicant reported himself and filed his Declaration of his Intention as aforesaid, IT WAS ORDERED that the said applicant be permitted to take the oath to support the Constitution of the United States, and to renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to every foreign prince, potentate, state and sovereignty whatever, and more particularly all allegiance which he may in anywise owe to the Sovereign of *Great Britain*.

whereof he was heretofore a citizen or subject, which said oath having been administered to the said applicant by the Clerk of said Court, It was Ordered by the Court that the said applicant be admitted to all and singular the rights, privileges and immunities of a naturalized citizen of the United States, and that the same be certified by the Clerk of this Court, under the seal of said Court accordingly.

STATE OF ILLINOIS,
COUNTY OF *Jefferson*.

Geo. W. H. H.
1. *Geo. W. H. H.*
Clerk of the *County* Court of said County and State,
do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of the
Records of said Court.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF the Seal of the said Court is hereto
affixed, at the Clerk's Office in *Macomb* this
16th, day of *October* A. D. 189*6* and of
the Independence of the United States the one hundred and *13th*.

Geo. W. H. H. Clerk.
By *Geo. W. H. H.* Deputy.

Name	John Poulter
Age	47
Birth Date	Jun 1852
Birthplace	England
Home in 1900	Prophetstown, Whiteside, Illinois
Street	West Portland Street
Sheet Number	5
Number of Dwelling in Order of Visitation	95
Family Number	100
Race	White
Gender	Male
Immigration Year	1882
Relation to Head of House	Head
Marital Status	Married
Spouse's Name	Fannie Poulter

Marriage Year	1877
Years Married	23
Father's Birthplace	England
Mother's Birthplace	England
Years in US	18
Naturalization	Naturalized
Occupation	Laborer (Farm)
Months Not Employed	0
Can Read	N
Can Write	Y
Can Speak English	Y
House Owned or Rented	Own
Home Free or Mortgaged	Mortgaged
Farm or House	H

Household Members (Name)	Age	Relationship
John Poulter	47	Head
Fannie Poulter	41	Wife
Robert Poulter	22	Son
Lizzie Poulter	20	Daughter
George Poulter	17	Son
Jennie Poulter	15	Daughter
Harry Poulter	12	Son
Ralph Poulter	10	Son
Jay Poulter	7	Son
William Poulter	4	Son
Madge Poulter	1	Daughter

John Poulter, 79, Of Prophetstown Called by Death

PROPHETSTOWN, Ill., April 26.—(Special)—John Poulter, 79, died at 1:30 a. m. today at his home in Prophetstown after suffering a stroke of paralysis.

He was born in Essingwold, England, June 20, 1853, and was married there to Miss Fannie Johnson in 1876. The couple came to America 51 years ago. Mr Poulter was an assembler at the Eclipse Lawn Mower Co. factory in Prophetstown.

Surviving besides the widower are seven sons, Robert, Jay, William and Lloyd, all of Rock Falls, George of Sierra Madre, Calif., Harry of Hudson, Ia., and Ralph of Prophetstown, and three daughters, Mrs Elizabeth Lyle of Rock Falls, Mrs Ed Peterson of Walnut and Miss Madge Poulter at home. One son, John, died in infancy.

Funeral services will be held Friday at 2 p. m. at the Dudley funeral chapel with Rev. A. E. Simester officiating. Interment will be in the Riverside cemetery.

JOHN POULTER, 72, WHITESIDE RESIDENT, DIES

**Succumbs at His Home After
Stroke; Had Resided in Com-
munity Since 1882.**

(Special to The Argus.)

Prophetstown, Ill., April 26. — John Poulter, 79 years old, resident of the Prophetstown community since 1882, died at his home this morning, following a stroke of paralysis.

Mr. Poulter was the last of a family of eight children. He was born June 21, 1853, in England, and married Miss Fannie Johnson there in 1876. The couple came to America in 1882, settling immediately in Prophetstown.

Surviving besides the widow are seven sons, Robert, Jay, William and Lloyd of Rock Falls, George of Sierra Madre, Los Angeles county, California; Forest of Hudson, Iowa, and Ralph of Prophetstown; three daughters, Mrs. Eliabeth Lyle of Rock Falls, Mrs. Edward Peterson of Walnut, and Miss Madge, at home; 13 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

The funeral will be at the Dudley chapel Friday afternoon at 2 o'clock. Rev. A. E. Simester of the Prophetstown Methodist church will officiate, and interment will be in Riverside cemetery, Prophetstown.

Name	Ralph Poulter
Gender	Male
Death Age	88
Birth Date	abt 1890
Birth Place	Iowa, USA
Marriage Date	Jul 1912
Residence Place	Prophetstown, Whiteside, Illinois, USA
Death Date	Abt 1978
Burial Place	Prophetstown, Whiteside, Illinois, USA
Obituary Date	11 Sep 1978
Obituary Place	Moline, Illinois, USA
Newspaper Title	The Dispatch
Spouse	Viola Olson
Child	Ben John

Ralph Poulter

PROPHETSTOWN — Services for Ralph Poulter, 88, of 417 Washington St., Prophetstown, who died Saturday, were today at Gardner Chapel, Prophetstown. Burial was in Riverside Cemetery, Prophetstown.

Memorials may be made to the extended care unit of Morrison Community Hospital.

Mr. Poulter was born in Iowa and came to Prophetstown as a small child. He married Viola Olson of Clinton in July 1912. She preceded him in death.

He was a painter and a park ranger for eight years at the Prophetstown State Park.

Survivors include two sons, Ben and John, both of Prophetstown; five grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

**Margaret Mathis
To Wed June 15
In Prophetstown**



MARGARET MATHIS.

Prophetstown, June 7.—Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe C. Mathis of Prophets-town have announced the engagement and approaching marriage of their daughter, Margaret Lucille Mathis, to John O. Poulter, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Poulter, at a home wedding the afternoon of June 15.

Miss Mathis and Mr. Poulter both were graduated from Prophetstown high school. Miss Mathis was graduated from the Sterling public hospital school of nursing in September, 1939, and became a registered nurse last January. Mr. Poulter is a painter and interior decorator.

Graduate nurses of the Sterling public hospital recently gave a pre-nuptial shower for Miss Mathis.

John Poulter

Services for John O. Poulter, 74, Prophetstown, are 11 a.m. Friday at First Congregational Church, Prophetstown, where he was a member. Burial is in Riverside Cemetery, Prophetstown.

Visitation is 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday at Gardner Funeral Home, Prophetstown. Memorials may be made to the church or American Cancer Society.

Mr. Poulter died Monday at CGH Medical Center, Sterling.

He was born Dec. 26, 1915, in Prophetstown, where he married Margaret Mathis June 15, 1940.

He was a self-employed painting contractor for many years. He also worked as a painter in construction for 17 years at Northwestern Steel and Wire Co., Sterling, retiring in 1980.

He was a World War II Navy veteran.

Survivors include the widow; a daughter, Mary Stegmiller, Prophetstown; a son, Michael Poulter, Elizabeth City, N.C.; six grandchildren; three stepgranddaughters; five stepgreat-granddaughters; and a brother, Ben Poulter Prophetstown.

1990 06 John O. Poulter obit.

1940 06 John O. Poulter marriage.

Name	Ben O. Boulter
Gender	Male
Death Age	86
Birth Date	1914
Birth Place	Prophetstown, Whiteside, Illinois, USA
Marriage Date	2 Sep 1939
Death Date	2 Sep 2000
Burial Place	Prophetstown, Whiteside, Illinois, USA
Obituary Date	4 Sep 2000
Obituary Place	Rock Island, Illinois, USA
Newspaper Title	The Rock Island Argus
Parents	Ralph Boulter; Viola Olson Boulter
Spouse	Irene Clements
Child	James Bryan Rita Lindberg
Siblings	John

Miss Irene Clementz And Ben O. Poulter Marry in Davenport

PROPHETSTOWN, Ill.—(Special) — Miss Irene Clementz, youngest daughter of Mrs Alice Clementz, married Ben O. Poulter, the elder son of Mr and Mrs Ralph Poulter, Saturday afternoon in Davenport. Miss Marie McDonald and LeRoy Johnson, friends of the couple, served as their attendants.

The bride was graduated from the Geneseo high school in 1937 and has since been employed around this city. Mr Poulter was graduated from the Prophetstown high school in 1933 and is associated with his father in the painting and decorating business.

Prophetstown, Sept. 2.—Miss Irene Clementz, daughter of Mrs. Alice Clementz of the Eight Mile community, and Ben O. Poulter, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Poulter, were married this afternoon at 1 in Davenport. Attendants were Marie McDonald and LeRoy Johnson of Prophetstown. A wedding dinner was served in Davenport before the party returned to Prophetstown.

The bride wore a 2-piece blue gray ensemble, and she had a sweet-pea corsage. Miss McDonald wore an oxford gray suit and her accessories were black. She had a corsage.

Mrs. Poulter was graduated from Geneseo high school in the class of 1937. Mr. Poulter was graduated from Prophetstown high school in the class of 1933. He has been assisting his father in the painting and decorating business since he finished school.

Mr. and Mrs. Poulter have taken an apartment in the Pearl McNeill house on Washington street.