

LM Berry

John Frain

(A biography in progress)

johnfrain@mac.com
www.greathousestories.com

Contents

Before The Lights (1820s – 1880s)	3
The Magic Lights (1880)	6
A Light Goes Out (1892)	13
Finance, Fair & Fire (1893)	16
Horseradish & Politics (1896)	23
Century End (1897 – 1899)	27
Silver Beach (1907)	31
<i>Notes</i>	39
Afterward	40

Before The Lights

(1820s – 1880s)

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, the Northern half of Indiana had very little white settlement. The Miami and Potawatomie Indians had suffered serious defeats at the hands of General Anthony Wayne along the Maumee River in 1794 and William Henry Harrison at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811. However, they still held the rights to the land in this area. There was a need for additional land for white settlement and the need to establish a canal system along the Wabash River.

By the early 1820s the federal government had acquired Indian land south of the Wabash River except for the 760,000 acres in the Big Miami Reserve, but settlement was slow due to a lack of adequate transportation routes. In fact, there were no towns on the Wabash between Fort Wayne and Terre Haute until 1825 when a river boatman named Grigsby recognized the site of Lafayette as an excellent site for flatboat navigation and platted a town there. Even then residents of envious neighboring towns jeered and called it "Lay Flat" or "Laugh At" when it grew so slowly. The need for better roads, navigable rivers and canals was evident to everyone.

Turnpikes, canals and improved river navigation became an obsession among Hoosiers by the time the National Road and Erie Canal opened, and political parties of the time vied for voters' attention by promising more and better "internal improvements." Hoosier leaders immediately began agitating for Indian land for right-of-ways through north-central Indiana together with tracts of land large enough to sell and finance the construction costs. The most frequently mentioned projects in the Upper Wabash were a road connecting Lake Michigan with the Ohio River and a canal connecting Lake Erie and the eastern seaboard with the Mississippi system and Gulf of Mexico. These were called the "Michigan Road" and the "Wabash Erie Canal."

Only the federal government could handle the problem, and James B. Ray, Governor of Indiana from 1825 to 1831, appealed to Congress and President Van Buren's administration, proposing an Indian treaty with the Miamis and Pottawatomies. He asked that his own name be included among the Indian Commissioners and was so-named, leading to a loss of popularity with many Hoosier voters since the Constitution of 1816 prohibited a state official from holding more than one salaried office at the same time. The other two Indian commissioners were Governor Lewis Cass, Territorial Governor of Michigan at the time; and John Tipton, Indian Agent who lived in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Both Cass and Tipton were experienced in Indian affairs, but Tipton was given the assignment of taking the lead in selecting a site for the Treaty Grounds, and for arranging details for advertising, official notifications of tribal leaders, hiring guards, ordering supplies, building quarters for housing and making all other arrangements necessary for negotiations that were expected to last more than a month. This was not all that complicated, for all that. By 1826 Indian treaties followed well-established patterns and the three commissioners were practical and experienced politicians.

As the events unfolded leading up to the Mississinewa Treaty, for such was its official name, it became evident John Tipton was the man for the job. Born in Tennessee in 1786, he was only 40 at the time of the treaty negotiations, but had already had a full and active life on the frontier. Cherokee Indians had killed his father when he was 7, and he was 20 when he came with his mother and her family to Indiana. He became Justice of the Peace in Harrison County at age 24 and a few months later was elected a captain of his Rifle Company following the Battle of Tippecanoe in November, 1811.

In 1826, Congress made an appropriation to hold a treaty meeting with the purpose of acquiring additional land from the Indians. Governor James B. Ray of Indiana, Governor Lewis Cass of Michigan, and Captain John Tipton were appointed commissioners to represent the U.S. Government. Captain Tipton was assigned the task of locating a site for the meeting. This location was chosen, as it was centrally located with many favorable natural features. These features included a plentiful spring and enough open land to construct the treaty camp.

John Tipton was the man of the hour, the right man at the right time in history. Tipton's rise in the Army was rapid. Commissioned a major of the 5th Regiment of the Indiana Militia in May, 1812, he went through the positions of Lieutenant Colonel, Colonel, Brigadier General and eventually Major General by 1822 at 35 years of age. During that time he had held various jobs locating county seats, a site for our state capital and marking the Indiana - Illinois boundary. But it was his role as Indian Agent to the tribes of northern Indiana in 1823 that made him invaluable in arranging the Indian Treaty of 1826, as he was acquainted with various tribal leaders and they knew and respected John Tipton from experience.

The treaty camp was constructed in the spring and summer of 1826 and the treaty meeting took place in October of 1826 and lasted approximately two weeks. On October 26, 1826 the Miami and Potawatamie Indians surrendered the rights to their land in Northern Indiana and southern Michigan. The signing of the Treaty of 1826 allowed for white settlement of this land and the construction of the Wabash and Erie Canal.

Construction of the Wabash and Erie Canal began in 1832 at Fort Wayne, Indiana and continued all the way to the Ohio River. It was a shipping canal that linked the Great Lakes to the Ohio River by an artificial waterway. The canal provided traders with access from the Great Lakes all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. Over 460 miles long, it was the longest canal ever built in North

America.

The canal was actually a combination of four canals: the Miami and Erie Canal from the Maumee River near Toledo, Ohio to Junction, Ohio, the original Wabash and Erie Canal from Junction to Terre Haute, Indiana, the Cross Cut Canal from Terre Haute, Indiana to Worthington, Indiana (Point Commerce), and the Central Canal from Worthington to Evansville, Indiana.

The canal opened up settlement in the area. The first settlers were Colonel David Burr, Colonel Hugh Hanna and Alexander Worth. In January 30, 1833, Wabash County was established and in March 1835, the county around Wabash was politically organized. The main impetus for settlement was the great canal. Wabash City was first incorporated in January 1849. In 1856 the first passenger train arrived in Wabash, Indiana. The railroad continued to play a major role in the development of Wabash and the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad were persuaded to build shops in Wabash.

For a number of years, the canal and the railroads were the main impetus to the growth of Wabash. But by the 1870s, the canal was seeing less and less use and playing a smaller role in the growth of Wabash.

By 1880, the canal was almost abandoned.

And the railroads were not what they used to be.

The Magic Lights

(1880)

Ideas for new ways to promote the town of Wabash and the surrounding area were fermenting in the late 1870s and the early part of the new decade. Something was needed to spark tourism and interest in Wabash. There happened to be two young entrepreneurs in Wabash at this time by the name of Theron P. Keator and Thad Butler. They were owner-editors of *The Plain Dealer*, one of the newspapers in town. One night they were strolling past the elegant new courthouse perched high on a hillside overlooking the town. Keator exclaimed to Butler, “If you had a barrel of tar on the dome of the court house and set it on fire it would light up the whole city.”

The idea of electric lights followed naturally as inventor Charles Brush had made headlines the previous year when he tested his electric lights in a public square in Cleveland. Keator and Butler traveled to Cleveland to meet Brush, who was eager for an opportunity to test the latest improvements to his lights. At the time, Wabash’s gas streetlights, although not extensive, were a considerable drain on the town budget. The prospect of a far cheaper system was probably a key factor in the town council’s decision to authorize Keator and Butler to strike a deal with Brush whereby the town would pay Brush one hundred dollars to install the lights for a trial period. The terms also specified that the lights should illuminate a half-mile radius with the brilliance of a standard-size gas burner at all points, thus lighting most of the town. If fully satisfied, the Wabash council could purchase the lights and generating equipment for \$1,800. The town council approved the plan and preparations to light the town at night moved forward.

In the next few weeks preceding the lights’ debut, the Keator and Butler’s *Plain Dealer* worked hard to arouse public interest. Only a few months before, Thomas Edison’s light bulb had begun attracting great attention in Menlo Park, New Jersey. Edison had spent more than a year working on the lights and had made some premature and boastful claims about them. Not until the New York *Herald's* exclusive story on Edison’s lights in late December of 1879 prompted thousands of people to travel to see the lights did the cloud of doubt begin to subside. Even though the lights produced only a dim glow, visitors found them to be absolutely spellbinding.

Keator and Butler and the town planners had the event with Edison firmly in mind and saw that the lighting event in Wabash could turn the event into a large public spectacle. It was the type of event that could help boost the economy of the town at a time some type of boosting was greatly needed. The *Plain Dealer* announced that special reduced-rate excursion trains would be bringing one of the largest crowds ever assembled in Wabash. The paper also promised in its

March 6, 1880 edition:

Those who come can rest assured of seeing the first city in the world that proposes to be illuminated by a single light, and also one of the most beautiful artificial lights in the world; a light that shows all the beautiful colors as distinctly as the sun, and gleams as pure and white as the full moon. Wabash extends to the entire country a cordial and hearty invitation to come and see this marvel of the nineteenth century, which already is a success of years' standing in all the large cities of this country and Europe and which promises to open up a new era in the illumination of cities.

* * *

Twenty-two-year-old Charles Berry Charles Berry is teaching school in a small brick schoolhouse on Sivey Street in South Wabash. Newspaper articles from the *Plain Dealer* newspaper about the lighting event are tacked all over the walls of the little classroom. For the past few days his class has been learning about the new energy form called electricity that was being used in different ways. Like making nighttime into daytime.

Before school is dismissed, Charles Berry warns his students about the great event in a few hours.

“We are honored to host such a spectacle,” he says. “But like anything new and untried, there is potential danger. No one knows how bright the lights will be tonight so I encourage you to take something to shield your eyes. And be sure to stay near your parents.”

The children are excited about the event. It is impossible not to be excited. People have come to Wabash from all over the state for the past few days. The hotels are full, the restaurants busy. Even distant relatives one never sees are arriving and stuffing themselves into family homes that are much too small to hold them.

When the children are gone, Charles Berry erases the lesson on the blackboard and puts up tomorrow's assignment. Everyone is to write a short report of the lighting event tonight and tell how it might change the history of Wabash. He then works for a while grading papers but his mind wanders up from his work and he looks out one of the windows of the small classroom and thinks about Elizabeth Murphy again and his date with her tonight to watch the lights. He had known her for some time but tonight is their first date and what could be a better date than watching the lights of the city with her? The words from the *Plain Dealer* article have echoed over and over in his mind the past few weeks. “A light that shows all the beautiful colors as distinctly as the sun, and gleams as pure and white as the full moon.” It seemed such a good description for the lights tonight but it also seemed to describe the light he saw in Elizabeth Murphy.

* * *

Three miles west of Wabash along the Farr Pike, twenty-year-old Elizabeth (Lizzie) Murphy is completing her chores on the family farm. She has been living and taking care of her grandmother since her grandfather Philip Murphy died in 1875. The area had gotten the name as Murphy's Corner as her father David Murphy had a farm just down the road and her uncle George Murphy a farm next to her father. Elizabeth has two sisters and four brothers. Her brothers Philip and Michael hope to have a career as schoolteachers while Joseph is said to be the lawyer of the family and David the doctor. Her sister Florence is known for her ability in music both as a singer and a pianist. Her sister Etta is known for her ability in the art of hand painting chinaware.

Lizzie often wonders what her role in life will be? For the past five years it has been consumed with caring for her 86-year-old grandmother Elizabeth Sterner Murphy whose health is declining and her once sharp memory fading away.

It is late afternoon and her grandmother is inside the tiny farmhouse taking her daily nap. Her brother Joseph is helping her with the farm chores and as they go about tending the few animals on the farm they talk about the big lighting event in Wabash tonight. It is the biggest event in town since anyone can remember.

“So you are going to the big event with that schoolteacher Charles Berry,” her brother says.

“You are the nosiest person in the world!” Lizzie says.

“The Berry family is a good family,” Joseph says. “I know Charles Berry's father Thomas Jefferson Berry. He lives on a farm in Paw Paw Township right outside of Wabash. A hard worker. An honest man. He has created a family of teachers. Everyone seems to be teachers in that family. They say Charles is one of the best teachers in town.”

“It's an honorable profession,” says Lizzie.

“Yes, an honorable profession,” says Joseph. “Looks like we're going to have a few Murphy's in this honorable profession.”

The two complete their chores and go into the farmhouse.

Lizzie wakes her grandmother up from her afternoon nap and helps her to the dining table where she has prepared her dinner.

“You're sure you don't want to try to go into town tonight grandma?” Lizzie says. “Biggest event ever in Wabash.”

The old woman just smiles and shakes her head and Lizzie knows that she doesn't understand anything about the event tonight.

By early evening clouds have formed and it is beginning to drizzle. Joseph leaves and Lizzie's sister Etta comes to watch Elizabeth while Lizzie gets ready for her date with Charles Berry. As she gets ready she thinks what one should she make of this young teacher? She had known him for a few years like everyone knows everyone else in a small town. He was a descent, hard-working young man. They have seen each other at various events around town. But this is the first time Charles Berry has asked her on a date.

At seven o'clock it was dark and Lizzie could hear the sound of a buggy coming down the road and then stopping and she could hear the puffing of the horses and then the knock on the door. Charles Berry appeared dressed in his best Sunday clothes. He held a small bouquet of flowers in his hands and presented them to Elizabeth. She said they were beautiful and gave him a hug and then went into the house and put them into a vase and then put the vase on the family dinner table and the two of them were off to the big event.

* * *

They walked with a growing crowd of people towards the downtown courthouse. Clouds were overhead and a light drizzle of rain continued to start and stop. They recognized a number of friends and relatives from Wabash. Joseph Murphy was there as well as a few of Lizzies' other siblings. Charles saw some of his family members. But there were many people from out of town they didn't know. They found a place maybe a hundred yards from the courthouse and stood talking about nothing while the night got darker and darker. Thousands of people surrounded them. It was more people than they had ever seen in Wabash.

Then, according to the plan, at 8:00 pm the Court House bell sounded as the signal to start and suddenly from the towering dome of the courthouse burst a flood of light. Elizabeth grabbed Charles and shielded her eyes from the blinding light. Charles was mesmerized by the brilliance and could not take his eyes off the great ball of light coming from the top of the courthouse.

Under most circumstances, all of this would have caused shouts of *rejoicing* from the thousands crowding and jostling each other in the evening's darkness. But right after the lights were turned on everything was strangely silent. No shout or token of joy disturbed the deep silence that suddenly settled on the vast crowd gathered from far and near to witness the consummation of a singular enterprise. Everyone stood, almost with bated breath, overwhelmed with awe as if they were near a supernatural presence. The strange, weird light, exceeded in power only by the sun, yet mild as moonlight, rendered the courthouse square as light as mid-day. But after a minute of stunned silence there was much hurrahing and shouting from the thousands assembled. A new era was upon them and they were witness to its beginning.

* * *

After a while, the crowd around the courthouse began to disperse into the electric light night, amazed at the golden glow the arc lights spread over their town. None of the gas lamps were on but the electric light seemed sufficient to illuminate the streets of the town and even the signs on the buildings. It was a light no one had ever seen before.

Charles and Elizabeth walked around town basking in the glow of the electric arc lights of Mr. Brush from Cleveland. Charles tried to take Elizabeth for a soda but everything was so crowded with celebrations that he decided to drive Lizzie back home.

They drove west on Farr Pike and even when they were a few miles out of town the glow from the courthouse lights were so bright that Charles had little trouble seeing the road. Most of the farmhouses were dark as everyone was in town to witness the grand event. However, lights were on in one farmhouse right next the road and outside a farmer she recognized as a friend of her father was on his knees facing the lights from the town and shouting over and over "The end is near! The end is near!"

"Not everyone reads the *Plain Dealer*," Charles said as they drove by the crazed farmer.

When they arrived at Elizabeth's home the lights from town could still be seen. If one didn't know better they would have thought that some great conflagration was consuming the entire town not more than four miles away. In front of Lizzie's home, the great glow was strong enough to make the horse and buggy cast a shadow.

Inside, they found Lizzie's grandmother in an agitated state. She was sitting next to the window in the front of the little farmhouse and looking out at the great glow coming from Wabash. She was shaking terribly and Etta was trying to comfort her.

"She thinks it's the end of her life," said Etta. "The lights came into her bedroom and she began screaming."

Elizabeth knelt beside her grandmother.

"It's alright grandmother," she said. "It is only the new electric lights I have been telling you about."

But the old lady heard little of this.

"It's not long now," she said to Elizabeth. "Not long now," she kept repeating as Elizabeth and Etta walked her to bed.

In a few minutes Lizzie appeared.

"Thank you for a wonderful evening," she said to Charles.

“A historic evening,” he said.

“Yes, a new era of electricity is upon us,” Lizzie said.

“I didn’t mean that,” Charles said.

“What did you mean?”

“ I meant historic as it was our first date.”

Lizzie smiled and gave him a quick kiss on the cheek.

“Yes,” she said. “Historic in this sense too.”

On his drive back to town the great lights suddenly went off and Charles had to stop and light the gas lamps on the sides of the buggy in order to see the road.

As he rode along Farr Pike back into a dark Wabash, he thought about the amazing lights tonight. But more than this, he thought about Lizzie Murphy. The lights were brilliant for sure but they were not as brilliant as the light he saw in the Lizzie’s eyes.

* * *

So great was the initial interest in the lighting that Wabash’s Western Union office worked late into that night telegraphing information to large daily newspapers across the country, which ran the following headlines: “Wabash Enjoys the Distinction of Being the Only City in the World Entirely Lighted by Electricity,” and “The Entire City Brilliantly Lighted and Shadows Cast at Midnight on Buildings Five Miles Away,” and “The Test of the Brush Electric Light Witnessed by 10,000 People and Councils of 19 Cities.”

In the next month, tourism picked up rapidly as word of the news spread. Hotels were packed with people who came to see the light. Passenger trains would stop in town and allow passengers 5 minutes to see the light before heading on their way. The experiment proposed by Keator and Butler was a success and the town of Wabash moved full-steam-ahead into the new decade.

Later that year Thomas Edison established the Edison Illuminating Company in New York City. It was the pioneer company in the emerging electrical power industry. Edison’s system was based on creating a central power plant equipped with electrical generators. Copper electrical wires would then connect the station with other buildings, allowing for electricity distribution. And Charles Brush, after installing his lights in Wabash, installed carbon arc lights along Broadway and a small generating station was established in Manhattan on 25th Street. The electric arc lights went into regular service in New York on December 20. Soon, towns all over the world came

alive at night with the magical electric lights.

* * *

Not long after the event, Charles and Elizabeth began seeing each other on a regular basis. Both of them would often talk about that night. There was a special mystery to it that somehow went even beyond the brilliant illumination of the town. Something special, personal, just between the two of them. It might have marked the beginning of a new era for Wabash and the world, but it also marked the beginning of a new life for Charles and Elizabeth who were falling more and more in love with each other.

A Light Goes Out

(1892)

Charles Berry was rising fast in the Wabash school system after becoming principal of the South Wabash High School in 1887 and it seemed the best way to increase his advancement was to get a college degree. The question was discussed with Lizzie as it would mean he would be away for a while. She agreed that a degree would be a good thing for him to obtain and the family made preparations for his enrollment at Indiana University at Bloomington in the fall of 1892.

When school ended for the year, Charles began to review some of the books on teaching for the upcoming year at Indiana University. He was excited and a little intimidated at the thought of being a student again. He would miss his wife and son but it was just a little over a hundred miles away and he would come back for holidays and other breaks from school.

He spent a lot of time with Lizzie before he left. They had seldom been apart since their marriage in 1886. He told her how much he loved her and wondered if he was doing the right thing but she assured him he was.

On July 4th, he took his family to the big picnic celebration of the day at the edge of town on the road to North Manchester. The residences and businesses of Wabash were liberally decorated with flags and bunting and everywhere were the sounds of firecrackers and overhead the sight of bursting torpedoes. They fell in line with the large crowd that followed a brass band marching from City Hall to the picnic area. Hacks and buggies carried women, children and the elderly over the route.

It was going to be another hot summer day but the trees of the grove offered shade to much of the affair. Some Sunday school group sponsored the picnic and spent \$74 on lumber to build the speaker's platform, dancing floor and beer counters. After the noon meal came the usual round of orations and patriotic music. With the speeches over a little orchestra struck up some tunes and until 6 o'clock in the evening the dancing platform was kept hot by the feet of the merry dancers. Charles danced again and again with Lizzie, more than he had ever danced with her. Four-year-old Loren watched them dance and then explored a pond with a few other boys.

Around dusk, the throng at the picnic area trickled back to town where most joined an even larger crowd at the Courthouse where fireworks began at dusk on the south steps of the building. For two and a half hours the crowd heard the explosion of the fireworks as they echoed off the

limestone bluffs on the far side of the river. Skyrockets burst over the roofs of nearby buildings and houses, and an occasional illuminated balloon rose over the courthouse tower.

Charles pulled Lizzie and Loren close to him as they watched the fireworks and knew how much he loved them. It had been one of the best days in their marriage and there was such a future to look forward to.

* * *

That summer, Chicago (only 150 miles northwest of Wabash) was battling a great epidemic of typhoid fever. In the last half of the 19th century, typhoid was the great killer disease. Transmitted by the ingestion of food or water contaminated with the feces of an infected person, the disease was spread through poor hygiene habits and public sanitation conditions and sometimes also by flying insects feeding on feces. During the American Civil War, 81,360 Union soldiers died of typhoid or dysentery.

The disease hit the growing American cities particularly hard but the worst city hit was Chicago. In the late 19th century, the typhoid fever mortality rate in Chicago averaged 65 per 100,000 people a year. The worst year was 1891, when the typhoid death rate was 174 per 100,000 people. Typhoid struck the city in cycles reaching epidemic levels in 1852, 1854, 1864-66, 1872, 1881 and 1890-93, and causing as much as 7 percent of the city's total mortality. In non-epidemic years, the city's typhoid mortality hovered around 3 percent of total mortality. The greatest typhoid epidemic in Illinois' history occurred in Chicago in 1890-93. During those four years, the disease killed 5,164 Chicagoans. At its peak in 1891, the epidemic accounted for 7.2 percent of all deaths within the city.

"I'm glad we don't have to depend on the Chicago River for water," Charles said to Lizzie while reading an article in the *Plain Dealer* about the Chicago typhoid epidemic.

"One of the good things about living in a little town like Wabash," Lizzie said.

"Yes," Charles agreed. "One of the good things."

* * *

Charles left for DePauw in early September. Lizzie had packed a few suitcases for him. She was much better at this than Charles. Then he was in the buggy of his friend with his suitcases heading south a hundred and thirty miles to Bloomington.

A few days after he arrived, Charles used that new device called a telephone to call Lizzie and tell her he was all settled in. The classes were going well and he had rented a small room in a boarding house near the campus.

He wrote letters to Lizzie and called her every week on Sunday using that new device called a telephone.

Things seemed to be going well until early November when Charles called and told Lizzie he had a fever and was going to the infirmary to take care of it. A day later there was a call from the school nurse to Lizzie that they were sending Charles home as he was not well at all.

Charles came home in the first week of November and Lizzie could see that he was very sick with typhoid fever. The *Wabash Sunday Call* newspaper of November 15 ran an article on page one of the newspaper noting that “Prof. C.D. Berry is lying very ill of typhoid fever at home in South Wabash. He was attending college at Greencastle and had to return home last week.”

Lizzie did everything she could do. She had learned much from nursing her grandmother all those years. She called her the family doctor. But Charles continued to get worse and worse.

At four o'clock on Monday morning, just a few days before Thanksgiving, Charles died at his home in South Wabash. There was an obituary on page one of the *Plain Dealer* about his death. “Prof. Charles D. Berry, formerly principal of south Wabash schools, died at his home at 4 o'clock Monday morning, of heart failure, superinduced by the grip and typhoid fever. Deceased was born in Wayne county May 8th, 1858, and moved to Wabash county with his parents when quite young. He succeeded Harvey Hutchens as principal of the South Wabash schools five years ago, and filled that honorable position to the entire satisfaction of his assistants and patrons of the school, until the annexation of the south side to the city proper last spring. Mr. Berry was a successful educator, and was attending the State University at Bloomington, when taken sick. He would have graduated this year had his life been spared him. He returned home Saturday the 12th suffering from an attack of the grip when the typhoid set in. A sad feature of the case is the fact that one of his brothers is sick of typhoid fever at Terre Haute, where he was attending state normal and another brother is just recovering from an attack of the dread disease at Urbana, where he is teaching school. Professor Berry leaves his wife and one child, father, mother, five brothers, five sisters and a host of friends and associates to mourn his untimely departure. The funeral took place from his late residence Wednesday morning at 11 o'clock.”

Charles was buried next to his son Philip in the Wallace Cemetery in Noble Township. He was only 34-years-old. The whole episode happened so quickly Lizzie had no idea what she would do to get by. Her grief at the passing of Charles was great but there was the immediate matter of simply putting food on the table for her and Loren. Part of the financial burden was lifted in early December when H.B. Lassell, local agent for the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co., of Milwaukee, gave her a check for \$1,000, the amount of the policy her husband held in that company. The settlement was unusually prompt, Mr. Berry having been buried Nov. 25th. It was a considerable amount of money equal to a year and a half of Charles' \$700 a year salary at the school.

Finance, Fair & Fire

(1893)

Not long after the death of Charles Berry, Loren's uncle Joseph and aunt Florence came to live with them to help their widowed sister with her son and her life. In these years, families didn't move away to distant cities and states but continued to recirculate to various family homes to save living expenses or help ailing family members as Lizzie had done with her aging grandmother for seven years.

Joseph Murphy became the man of the house and a stand-in father for young Loren Berry. As an only child, Loren had always received much attention from his mother. But there was only so much a mother could do and the young boy needed some example of a man in his life for he hardly remembered the brief four years his own father was with him.

There was a strange element in the air, something that seemed out-of-place in all the growth and expansion of the nation during these years that would later be defined as the Gilded Age. Some great economic crisis seemed moving towards the world but Joseph couldn't decipher what this was. In early Spring of 1893, Joseph Murphy met for lunch with a banker friend of his at the Collins House Hotel in downtown Wabash feeling his banking friend would be able to offer some explanation on the events.

Joseph's banker friend was one of the most positive people he knew, a constant booster of the new world and all type of local ventures as much as those newspaper entrepreneurs Keating and Butler were thirteen years before with their promotion of the electric lights in Wabash. He was always stopping along the street and asking businessmen about their businesses and he always seemed able to somehow put together money to help their business expand.

But on a cold day in Wabash with snow flurries lightly drifting over the city like feathers from a broken pillow, his banking friend wore a rare, worried look on his face. He pushed lettuce around his plate and stared down at it like someone trying to read tea leaves on the bottom of a cup.

"The bankruptcy of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad was only the beginning," his banker friend told Joseph. "We're in for many more bankruptcy's. There's been much shaky financing of the railroads. The Northern Pacific Railway is having problems. The Union Pacific Railroad is in over their heads. The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad is shaky. Things are a mess."

"What can one do?" asked Joseph.

“Not much,” said his friend. “We’re already seeing people withdrawing their money from the banks.”

“A panic?” Joseph asked.

“It looks that way,” his friend said. “I see little that can stop it.”

His banker friend was right. Things continued to get worse through the Spring and into the summer of 1893. Joseph worked as a teacher to bring in a meager income but he thought of one day becoming a lawyer and was sure he would go back to school soon to pursue this ambition. Lizzie brought in a tiny income as a seamstress and Florence continued to practice her piano and sing through all of this. At least the growing economic crisis had various musical soundtracks in Lizzie’s home.

Just as his banker friend predicted, Joseph watched as his friends withdrew money from the banks in Wabash. The *Plain Dealer* said there was a growing danger of a bank run. It seemed a ominous thing to Joseph yet something that was difficult to identify with since there was not any money in the bank for him or his sister Lizzie to withdraw from it.

There were larger and larger headlines in the newspaper into the summer. One headline read “5,000 companies and 200 banks fail.” A little later a headline read “10,000 companies and 400 banks fail.” Another headline estimated almost 20% of the workforce was unemployed. But Joseph read the unemployment rate in Pennsylvania hit 25% and in New York it was 35% and in Michigan 43%. There were photos in the newspaper about soup kitchens opened in order to help feed the destitute. The newspaper reported that facing starvation, people chopped wood, broke rocks, and sewed in exchange for food. In some cases, women resorted to prostitution to feed their families. There was an article in the paper about Mayor Hazen Pingree of Detroit who started things called “Pingree’s Potato Patches” which were community gardens for farming.

* * *

With the economic storm swirling about the nation, Wabash went about its daily activities. In May a new iron bridge was built at Carroll Street and the Aukerman & Baer Band Saw Mill was built on West Canal Street. Lizzie and her sister Florence continued working as seamstresses. Even in the declining economy there was always dresses to mend and some shirts to fix.

The world was beginning to come into focus for the five-year-old Loren Berry but the great economic crisis was something vague and distant to him. It was summer and time to explore things in the nearby creek and follow uncle Joseph around town on his daily activities. With school ending Joseph was free for the summer except for the part-time jobs he picked up here and there and was always willing to let his five-year-old nephew follow him around.

While the news of the economy continued to get worse, there was increasing articles and advertisements in the newspaper about the great World's Fair in Chicago called the Columbian Exposition to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' arrival in the New World in 1492. Joseph read the articles with growing interest and an idea got into him.

"Why not let me take Loren to the Chicago fair," he asked Lizzie over dinner one summer evening. It was turning out to be one of the hottest summers on record in Wabash and Chicago was on the cool banks of Lake Michigan.

Lizzie considered the idea. Loren had hardly been out of her sight since he was born. But she had a lot of trust in her brother and thought the experience would be a good one for Loren.

"That might be a good idea," she said.

In the next few days, Joseph made reservations at one of the inexpensive hotels that had spring up near the fairgrounds and secured their tickets on the train. A week later, the two of them were off for the world's fair.

* * *

Lizzie packed a small suitcase for Loren and saw the two of them off at the station in Wabash. She held Loren for a long time at the train station. He had never been away from her before.

Then the two of them were off riding north on the Big Four Railroad to Warsaw where they transferred to the Pennsylvania line for the rest of the trip. It was Loren's first trip outside of Wabash and he watched the farms pass by his train window and then buildings and more buildings outside his window. More than he had ever seen before. Buildings as far as the eye could see.

The two were off to the fair early the next morning in a special trolley that ran from the hotel to the fair. Upon entering the fair there was the iconic centerpiece of the large water pool that represented the long voyage Columbus took to the New World. The exposition covered more than 600 acres featuring nearly 200 new buildings of predominantly neoclassical architecture, canals and lagoons and people and cultures from 46 countries.

Joseph took Loren to see a number of the exhibits that included wondrous installations of electric lights and inventions such as the telephone and the automobile. They rode the massive Ferris Wheel with carts on it as large as trolley cars. They ate all types of exotic food and sweets and Joseph even won Loren a stuffed animal at one of the games. They visited the Wild West Shops of Buffalo Bill and tapped their feet to the military marches of John Phillip Sousa. Displays throughout the grounds gave them looks into the future.

* * *

It was a time when great contrasts in America bumped up against each other. During a summer of a deepening economic crisis, here was this magical fair in Chicago, perhaps a symbol to the coming end of the Gilded Age. The Gilded Age of excess was what Mark Twain called this period of late 19th century America. By this, he meant that the period was glittering on the surface but corrupt underneath. In the popular view, the late 19th century was a period of greed and guile: of rapacious Robber Barons, unscrupulous speculators, and corporate buccaneers, of shady business practices, scandal-plagued politics, and vulgar display. It was modern America's formative period, when an agrarian society of small producers were transformed into an urban society dominated by industrial corporations. A national transportation and communication network was created, the corporation became the dominant form of business organization, and a managerial revolution transformed business operations.

Within a stone's throw from the Chicago hotel Joseph and Loren stayed in, was one of the lodging houses where part of the floating population of 30,000 single men lived. The two walked by the small, one-storied frame structure every day on their way to ride the trolley to the fair. If they had gone in they would have been overcome by the odor that resembled a long disused tomb. They would have seen a dim sleeping room but little else as it was impossible to see anything in the place, the only light coming from a dirty lamp at the farther end of the room. The darkness heavy, thick with smoke from a dozen pipes of men lying in the beds and smoking. The beds consisted of a piece of canvas fastened to the wall on one side and supported on the other side by upright wooden poles running from floor to ceiling. The beds were arranged in tiers, four deep. The covering on each bed consisting of one thin blanket. In the center of the room was a large stove filled with blazing wood which only served to dispel any breath of air which might have inadvertently entered the room where one hundred and fifty men sleep.

But the two always walked quickly past the lodging house towards the fair trolley a block away. Loren looked at a few of the men sitting out in front of the lodging house holding cuts and heard them ask for money as they passed. They wore rags and were sad and not like the cheerful crowd in the bright clothing of summer at the fair. In a second he could feel the tug on his arm as uncle Joseph pulled him along the sidewalk towards the trolley and the magnificent city within the city.

* * *

That summer 27 million people from around the world attended the Columbian Exposition during its six-month run. It had a profound effect on Chicago's self-image and American industrial optimism in the midst of the growing economic crisis.

It had a profound effect on Joseph and his nephew Loren. When they got back to Wabash the town seemed much smaller to Joseph and out of touch with the grand currents of life that flowed past them up in Chicago like a vast, powerful river. He had been born on the little farm a few miles west of Wabash and had seldom traveled much farther away than Marion Peru. Once he

went to Indianapolis and Fort Wayne but they were nothing like the grand city of Chicago with its magic world's fair.

The experience also had an effect on young Loren Berry but it was something that was too big for his mind at the time to process. A great ball of experience, wound up like a ball of twine, not subject to being unraveled and examined.

Joseph talked for days about their trip and gave Lizzie and Florence a number of souvenirs from the fair. Lizzie was glad Loren had a good time but she wondered if her brother might be exposing him to too many things at such a young age. Loren made a scrapbook of the postcards and photographs and flyers he had collected and went through it over and over again explaining the various places to his mother. The great Ferris Wheel. The big water pool. The Wild West shops.

* * *

The great fair continued on through the summer and Joseph read articles about it in the Plain Dealer. Over 5,000 citizens of Wabash went to it and in the restaurants and bars of Wabash there was constant discussion of it. But the news of the fair was mixed with increasing bad news about the economy and news of the economy mixed with news of the fair. The banking crisis continued to grow worse and one day Joseph saw his banker friend at a bar he stopped in now and then. Joseph thought this was strange as it was unlike his friend to go to bars. It was a small town and word got around quickly and how could one trust their banker if he went to bars?

But worse than being at the bar, Joseph's banker friend was roaring drunk and talking loudly about the growing economic crisis. Joseph took a seat at the bar beside his friend.

"We closed the bank today," his friend said slurring the words together so they sounded like just one long word. "Things are bad."

Joseph ordered a drink and was going to ask him about the crisis but his friend was gone in a flash.

Late summer in Wabash County consisted of a drought, hot weather and fires. The fires were mostly ignited by sparks from steam locomotives on both the Big Four and Wabash lines. Fires along the rights-of-way of railroads were not unusual in any season, but the heat and the drought made it worse. Near North Manchester, sparks from a locomotive set fire to a large wooded area, and then the flames spread to cornfields. That blaze burned for several days before it was snuffed out. According to the *North Manchester Journal* "the woods were as dry as powder, and the flames swept through like a tinder box." The fire spread to surrounding farms, and fields were burned over and rail fences destroyed. Farmers rushed to plow up sections of the fields to stop the spreading flames before more crops were destroyed.

Joseph was on the volunteer fire department in town and was constantly getting calls to battle fire. When his sister was away, he would take Loren with him to watch the fires at a safe distance in the background. He never told his sister about this as there was little chance that she would allow Loren to do a dangerous thing like this.

One day Joseph took Loren to a fire that had broken out at the Wabash County fairgrounds. It was another fire started by locomotive sparks and was consuming several sheds, animal pens and large privy when they arrived. The fire department had not yet arrived and neighbors had turned out to fight the fire but a stiff wind was pushing the flames towards buildings. Loren stood behind a fence and watched as his uncle and others battled the fire until the fire trucks arrived and it was soon out.

A few weeks later there was an early morning fire at the Collins House in downtown Wabash and Joseph took Loren to this one also. Reece Eaton, an old hand on the fire department, drove the hose cart down the Wabash Street hill and a half-block or so west on Market Street, and soon with the help of bystanders had four streams of water trained on the flames when Joseph and Loren arrived. John Potter, day clerk at the hotel, manned one of the hoses. Horace Murphy, the assistant postmaster, left his desk at the Post Office and joined the others in fighting the fire. Captain David Marks supplied a moment of humor when he turned out to fight the fire still in his nightshirt. Firemen and citizens had the blaze under control in 30 minutes. The *Plain Dealer* reported the next day that a major loss was a large quantity of fine cigars.

Major M.H. Kidd thought he had the answer to the drought and fires. The major was a believer in the Dyrenfurth method of rain making, and he urged that when clouds gathered a few hundred pounds of dynamite be detonated. This, said the major, would bring forth a deluge to end the long drought. During the hot, dog days of August, clouds did cover the sky, but few offered their help in raising the \$300 dollars needed to conduct the experiment. A few drops of rain did fall, and the next day the indignant major cruised the streets of Wabash complaining that few had faith in his idea.

“Had they done as I said, we would have had a rain last night worth thousands of dollars to farmers,” quipped the major. “Henceforth I will decline to give this community the benefit of my scientific ideas, and while they are slowly roasting, they’ll think of what I said and they will repent their indifference.”

Joseph Murphy read the story about Major Kidd in the *Plain Dealer* over breakfast one day and then laughed and shook his head. Loren sat across from him and his mother and Florence were out mending clothing somewhere around town. It was going to be another hot day without any sign of rain in the forecast.

“We live in crazy times,” Joseph said to Loren. “Crazy times. Some day you’ll understand how crazy they really are.”

Horseradish and Politics

(1896)

In July of 1894, there was a huge fire at the location of the Chicago World's Fair that destroyed most of the buildings. It was not an important event in history and most of the grand structures were little more than wood and plaster facades like the coming movie sets of Hollywood. Yet the destruction of the buildings of the 1893 World's Fair seemed to have a symbolic importance suggesting the great optimism expressed at the fair was not a permanent mood of the American public.

The Panic of 1893 officially ended in the fall of the year but the economic depression it caused remained severe in 1896, making economic conditions a crucial issue of the campaign. The sitting Democratic president, Grover Cleveland was wildly unpopular because of the depression. His unpopularity helped foster a deep rift in the Democratic party, and also made William Jennings Bryan's campaign an uphill battle from the start.

But progress moved on towards the new century in spite of the economic depression. In 1894, the New England Telephone and Telegraph installed the first battery-operated telephone switchboard in Lexington, Massachusetts and Coca-Cola was sold in bottles for the first time. In 1895, the Supreme Court of the United States decided the federal government has the right to regulate interstate commerce, legalizing the military suppression of the Pullman Strike. In El Paso, Texas, the outlaw John Wesley Hardin was killed by an off-duty policeman in a saloon. The first professional American football game was played, in Latrobe, Pennsylvania between the Latrobe YMCA and the Jeannette Athletic Club (Latrobe won 12-0). Wilhelm Rontgen discovered a type of radiation known as X-rays while Auguste and Louis Lumiere displayed their first moving picture film in Paris. And, in September of 1895, the old carbon lights used in March of 1880 to light Wabash at night were found by Thomas McNamee in the attic of the courthouse. Only fifteen years old but already resigned to the status of antiques in the nation speeding so quickly into the future.

* * *

The years after Charles Berry's death in 1892 were tough ones for Lizzie Berry and her son Loren. She took a number of jobs to make ends meet but her main jobs were as a baby nurse and a seamstress. At the time there were not many options for women in the workplace.

In 1896, Lizzie's mother's cousin, Charles Bradley, gives her job with the Bradley Brothers Drug

Store as a door-to-door salesperson handing out literature and samples of medicine. One of leaflets she carries with her when selling medicine door-to-door is a letter from Miss Mary Lengham of Brooklyn testifying that the seven bottles of Lydia B. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound she consumed made a complete change in her life.

Although Lizzie Berry had a strict sense of morals that would later support the prohibition movement, it is a fact that many of the medicines of the time contained large amounts of alcohol and other questionable substances. There is the story of Colonel John Pemberton who was wounded in 1865 during the Civil War and became addicted to the morphine used to ease the pain. Being a pharmacist, he searched for a cure for his addiction. In 1866, he started working on painkillers that would serve as opium-free alternatives to morphine and came up with something called Dr. Tuggle's Compound Syrup of Globe Flower, the beginning of that "medicine" called Coca Cola.

Lizzie brother Joseph's career as a lawyer and Republican in town was taking off and Joseph continued to mentor his nephew Loren by letting Loren follow him around town on his various activities. Often, he took Loren to dinner with him where Loren overheard political conversations.

* * *

In the spring of 1896, Loren went to a restaurant in Wabash with his Uncle Joe and found that he liked the horseradish they had with dinner. When he got home, he asked his mother if he could gather wild plants and grind them up and sell it. Lizzie thought this was a good idea and the two of them went down to a small stream about a mile from their house and dug it out and took it home where his mother ground it up and helped Loren put it into glass jars. Loren then went door-to-door selling the horseradish. They sold a good-sized jelly glass of horseradish for a nickel. Reorders simply meant refilling the original jars and returning them to the customer. There was no expense involved in the production process, since the jelly jars had been purchased for their contents and then recycled for the horseradish venture. The horseradish project really marked the first business idea of Loren Berry, an idea that he came up with and developed at the age of eight.

His horseradish business continued through the spring and summer of 1896. Loren was eight-years-old and beginning to read so his world was expanding outside the immediate events of daily life in Wabash. Young boys at the time were reading a new genre of book called science fiction such as H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) and *The War of the Worlds* (1898). Another new genre of literature called the detective story was created in 1892 when Arthur Conan Doyle published *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. And that genre called horror would begin in 1897 with the publication of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*.

There were also popular boy's books such as the Oliver Optic books written by William Taylor

Adams. One series “Blue and Gray On Land” consisting of the books *Brother against Brother; or, The War on the Border* (1894), *In the Saddle* (1895), *A Lieutenant at Eighteen* (1895), *On the Staff* (1896) and *At the Front* (1897). Young boys were also reading the other Civil War series of Oliver Optic books called “Blue and Gray Afloat” consisting of *Taken by the Enemy* (1883), *Within the Enemy's Lines* (1889), *On the Blockade* (1890), *Stand by the Union* (1891), *Fighting for the Right* (1892) and *A Victorious Union* (1893). Also popular with boys at the time were the Rollo Books created by Jacob Abbott. His *Rollo Books*, such as *Rollo at Work*, *Rollo at Play*, *Rollo in Europe*, etc., are the best known of his writings, having as their chief characters a representative boy and his associates.

Young boys were also exposed to the series of books by Horatio Alger best known for his many juvenile novels about impoverished boys and their rise from humble backgrounds to lives of middle-class security and comfort through hard work, determination, courage, and honesty. His writings were characterized by the “rags-to-riches” narrative, which had a formative effect on Americans during the Gilded Age (the last three decades of the 19th century). In the Horatio Alger books, young Loren Berry saw much of his own life.

Loren’s reading of the newspapers also widened the scope of his life and his knowledge of the world beyond Wabash. In May of 1896, there was news of the deadly St. Louis tornado leveling a mile-wide swath of downtown St. Louis and killing 255 people. There was news of the summer Olympics in Athens. In August, news of the great Klondike Gold Rush began dominating the news. The newspapers reported a massive movement of people, goods and money towards the Klondike, Yukon District of Alaska. Men from all walks of life headed for the Yukon from as far away as New York, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Australia. A large proportion were professionals, such as teachers and doctors, even a mayor or two, who gave up respectable careers to make the journey. One resident of Camp Skagway Number One was William Howard Taft who would become President of the United States.

* * *

But the big news of the year was the presidential election in November. Loren heard Uncle Joseph talk about getting the Democrats out of office and it looked like it might happen in the fall. The Democrats were deeply divided and the ongoing depression had made the Democrat President Grover Cleveland wildly unpopular. Cleveland, the first Democratic president since the Civil War, had served two terms (1885-1889 and 1893-1897). In the early years he was popular as a reformer who opposed the corruption of big-spending Republicans in the capital, but the economic shock of 1893 eclipsed this issue and for the past three years, the nation had been mired in a deep economic depression, marked by low prices, low profits, high unemployment, and violent strikes. The Democrats had a fiery orator named William Jennings Bryan running against the Republicans William McKinley and Joseph told Loren it might not be an easy victory.

Yet the Republican victory in November was substantial. Many factors led to Bryan’s defeat. He

was unable to win a single state in the populous Northeast. Laborers feared the free silver idea as much as their bosses. While inflation would help the debt-ridden, mortgage-paying farmers, it could hurt the wage-earning, rent-paying factory workers.

* * *

Loren had his first exposure to politics that summer and he was learning much about politics from his Uncle Joe, one of the leading Republicans in Wabash.

“The election came down to one of the city against the country,” his uncle told him after McKinley won the presidential election. “Things are changing quickly. People are leaving the farms and moving to the cities. America is becoming an urban nation.”

After his trip with uncle Joseph to the World’s Fair in Chicago in 1893, it was not difficult for Loren to understand this. Who could not want to live in a magic city like Chicago?

Loren entered elementary school that fall and got his first real job as a paperboy for the *Wabash Plain Dealer*. He supplemented this income by selling subscriptions to the *Saturday Evening Post*. The money supplemented the small salary his mother got by selling medicine door-to-door. He was a good little salesman. Efficient and organized far beyond any other boy his own age. Under the watchful eye of his mother. The watchful eye that an “only child” naturally gets from his or her mother. But also the strict eye of a rising moralist in the county, a person of growing importance in the local temperance movement. On the other hand, her brother was a growing lawyer and politician in town. The two lifestyles and philosophies couldn’t have been more at odds with each other.

On Christmas day of 1896, John Philip Sousa composes his magnum opus, *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. The grand march expressed a renewed enthusiasm in the American dream after all the years of the economic depression and seemed the perfect theme song to the new Republican administration which moved America towards the upcoming century.

Century End

(1897 – 1899)

An article in in bold black type from the 1897 *Wabash Times Board of Trade Edition*, personified Wabash somewhat like a miniature Statue of Liberty. “In her bright and charming 1897 costume with arms wide open (Wabash) welcomed all worthy enterprises seeking a location where every essential advantage exists in its most attractive and encouraging form. A city of factories is Wabash, but combined with her manufacturing interest are churches, schools and other moral environments. Add to these advantages her large mercantile interests, her abundant supply of pure and wholesome water, her cheap natural gas, and you will then understand why Wabash is styled “Queen of the Wabash Valley.”

Wabash Times Board of Trade Edition observed that Wabash had 11,000 citizens and growth was above normal, promoted by the discovery of natural gas in Indiana fields. Some believe Wabash was in an industrial renaissance about this time. Wabash citizens are described as conservative and Wabash capital looked with disfavor on visionary schemes and wild booming. For rent signs were seldom seen on business rooms or residences. “Conservatism rules the local roost, so to speak, but, while this is true, all legitimate demands for better and more residence and business blocks meet a spirit which disavows any intention on the part of Wabash capital to move along the lines of mossbackism” or old-fashioned, extremely conservative ways.

The *Edition* described the people employed in Wabash manufacturing firms as “superior.” Many were born in Wabash and a large percent owned their homes. Wabash had many essential advantages leading toward its industrial growth—cheap fuel, first class railroad facilities, ample fire protection, an abundant supply of water and a “population that is in hearty sympathy with all its local enterprises of a commendable character.”

Shipping facilities were provided by the Big Four and Wabash railroads. Both roads responded to factory-owners requests for special tracks or switches. The Big Four built miles of extra track within the corporate limits of the city for the convenience of local manufacturers. The fire department was “admirably equipped for fighting successfully an fire that may occur within the city limits.” Thirty men served on the fire company with W.A. Williams, chief. The Gamewell system of fire alarm was used with 12 boxes judiciously located. There were 186 fire hydrants distributed throughout the city.

Its sidewalks were described as “wretched” and Wabash streets weren’t much better. But the city council was taking some steps toward improvement.

Oil fever burned in the veins of Wabash County men soon the Rock City Oil and Gas Company was formed with plans to drill three wells, two on the south side of the river and one on the north. Drilling had already begun on the R.F. Lutz farm north of the city.

Wabash had prosperous businesses and a fertile farming area surrounding it. There were three banks the oldest being The First national chartered in 1863. The two newspapers were the *Plain Dealer* and the *Tribune*. The post office had four regular employees and two substitutes. Receipts for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1897 reached nearly \$13,000. Wabash had nine churches, an opera house, a hotel and a city park. Among Wabash's 12 attorneys were Plummer and King, J.W.R. Miller and Lincoln Guynn the prosecuting attorney.

Thomas Alber had his blacksmith shop at the corner of Miami and Water streets, Bietman and Wolf department store and grocery was at Canal and Miami Streets and W.P. Jones furniture and undertaking was at 8 and 10 East Canal Street. The T.W. King and Son elevator was on Canal Street on the Big four Track and the William A. Elward elevator on Sinclair Street on the Wabash track. Wabash had 13 grocery stores, four milliners and six saloons. Wabash Business College was located in the Alber Block at Hill and Wabash streets. Dr. J.H. Ford has his office at 29 W. Canal St. Mark G. Mitten's Troy Steam laundry was next door at 27 West Canal.

* * *

In 1898, Loren Berry was in grade school and onto his next venture. It was a laundry route with initial pick-ups and deliveries made on foot. Soon, though, he raised enough money to purchase a bicycle and basket and was able to speed up the process. Before long, 25-30 customers were paying anywhere from a 5 to 40 cents per week to the ambitious young man, giving him the tidy sum of \$3 or \$4 that he could hand to his mother at the end of each week for household expenses.

Uncle Joseph was increasingly active in the Republican Party and was elected the new Prosecuting Attorney of Wabash County. His life was becoming busier and busier but he always had time for his young nephew Loren.

In April of the year, the first volunteers left the county to fight in the war breaking out between the United States and Spain. There was growing sentiment against Spain and for the Cuban patriots who fought against them for their freedom. The American press played a central role in the conflict led by the "yellow press" of William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal*. The results of the fighting are short and decisive with the U.S. destroying the Spanish fleet in Manila and Teddy Roosevelt making a name for himself by leading the Rough Riders up San Juan Hill. America emerges as a new international power in Latin America and the Far East.

* * *

In the summer of 1899, Lizzie Berry talked her cousin Joe Rife into helping her move her one

story house to property she owned around the corner on Chestnut and Middle Street. She erected a new two-story house and rented the older building for seven dollars a month that fall. Elizabeth continued to live in this house for over thirty years.

Eleven-year-old Loren Berry started working for Marcus Mitten on another laundry delivery and pick-up job. He kept detailed records of all of his laundry deliveries and payments as well as other money he earned. Between January 1 and March 22 of 1900 he saved \$6.35. He found a nickel on April 23 and also made 15 cents hauling wood. The following day he was paid 25 cents for handing out handbills.

* * *

The music of the final year of the century is a mixture of a rising form of music called ragtime and frivolous songs like “Hello Ma Baby” the most popular song of 1899. Scott Joplin’s *Maple Leaf Rag* is registered for copyright and “Hello Ma Baby” is about a man who has a girlfriend he knows only through the telephone. It was the first well-known song to refer to that new device called a telephone.

Hello! ma baby
Hello! ma honey
Hello! ma ragtime gal
Send me a kiss by wire
Baby, ma heart’s on fire!
If you refuse me
Honey, you’ll lose me
Then you’ll be left alone
Oh, baby, telephone
And tell me I’m your own!

The old century was almost over and the nation moving from farm to city with all the new challenges and problems this would bring. At the beginning of the year, the first known use of the word “automobile” appears in an editorial of *The New York Times*. Later in the year, Henry Bliss of New York City is killed by a taxicab while stepping off a streetcar becoming the first automobile fatality in the US. Yet vestiges of the fading century spotted the events of the day. On May 30th of the year, the female outlaw Pearl Hart robs a stagecoach 30 miles southeast of Globe, Arizona.

* * *

As the new century approached (with ragtime music in the background) America was conscious it had a part on the world stage yet uncertain and divided about what role it would play. The quick defeat of the Spanish in 1898 imbued America with a new sense of power and Teddy Roosevelt was the spokesman for this emerging power. On April 10, Roosevelt, enthused by his triumph with the Rough Riders, called on his fellow Americans to meet the challenges of the

dawning age:

“The twentieth century looms before us big with the fate of many nations. If we stand idly by, if we seek merely swollen, slothful ease and ignoble peace, if we shrink from the hard contests where men must win at hazard of their lives and at the risk of all they hold dear, then the bolder and stronger peoples will pass us by, and will win for themselves the domination of the world.”

Later, Teddy Roosevelt’s remarks to an older opponent in a debate over war with Spain captured this new spirit. “You and your generation have had your chance,” he said. “Now let us of this generation have ours!”

Silver Beach

(1907)

“It should be fine tomorrow,” Lucile said to Loren. “But we’ll have to be up with the lark.”

The two sat on the porch of Lucile’s family home in Marion, Indiana on the hot afternoon of June 27, 1907. Big bees buzzed around the porch and hovered around the large pitcher of lemonade next to them. A red interurban car came down the street and stopped depositing a few passengers across the street and then clicked-clacked away and around the corner.

For nineteen-year-old Loren Berry there was an incredible joy in Lucile’s words. They were the words he was waiting to hear. They would be eloping and getting married and no one could stop them. His mother in Wabash twenty miles north thought he had been coming down to Marion for his growing business in selling barbershop annunciators and advertising on the interurban timetables. She knew nothing of the romance with Lucile in Marion. And the two had kept the romance hidden from Lucile’s parents in Marion. They were now away in Chicago for a week and it seemed the perfect time to elope and get married.

Loren extracted the interurban timetable card from his pocket and looked at it. He knew the schedule well but the confirmation of Lucile and the passing interurban car made him want to recheck it.

“Six tomorrow morning,” he said batting away a large bee in the syrup-thick humidity of the Indiana afternoon. “We take the red car up to Wabash and transfer to the yellow line at eight fifteen and then the yellow line to Warsaw and then at ten the green line to Plymouth and the orange line to South Bend at noon and the red line to St. Joseph at three o’clock.”

Lucile picked up the dog-eared flyer next to the lemonade pitcher with the photograph of the Silver Beach Amusement Park in St. Joseph, Michigan on it. The photograph was taken from a boat in Lake Michigan a few hundred feet from the shore where the amusement park rose out of the white sand. In the background, like the bone structure for rolling hills, was the famous Chase Through the Clouds roller coaster.

* * *

They stepped on the red car at six the next morning and were soon out of Marion gliding through the countryside heading north to Wabash. Lucile had packed a few things in a small suitcase and

was asleep next to him. He looked down at the brown leather suitcase his mother had given him when he graduated from Wabash High School.

His mother Lizzie had worked so hard to buy it for him and she had so little money from the various jobs she was always patching together. He remembered the suitcase was somewhat of a reluctant gift from her. She would have preferred him to follow his father into the more respectable career of teaching.

“Our world is changing so fast,” she said to him many times. “There is a great need for teachers to tell the young about it.”

His mother was a deeply religious person and connected with a temperance group in Wabash and his budding career in sales seemed connected with alcohol consumption and taking the interurban to far off towns. But she was constantly amazed at how good at sales he was. She told him this many times.

The farms turned into buildings and soon the red interurban car was in Wabash and Loren nudged a sleeping Lucile.

“We get off in a few minutes,” he said. “Then a half-an-hour wait for the yellow line into Warsaw.”

Lucile smiled and squeezed his arm rested her face on his shoulder.

“Still love me?” she asked.

Loren kissed her briefly.

“Still love you,” he said.

* * *

It went like this for the next few hours traveling between the towns of northern Indiana. A town and then farms and then a town and changing to another interurban line. Lucile was engaged in looking out the window at the new world outside the confines of the town of Marion where she had lived all her life. But it was all familiar territory for Loren who had travelled to these towns many times before in his sales job and he worked on the little book he always carried with him that listed his various sales accounts.

They had a few hours in South Bend, Indiana before their final trail to St. Joseph, Michigan and Loren took Lucile to the grand Oliver Hotel one of his favorite lunch places in town.

The young Loren had finalized a few advertising contracts at the restaurant inside the hotel and knew that Lucile would be impressed by it. She was impressed. It was hard not to be impressed. The lobby and rotunda of the hotel was a huge space with an Italian Renaissance theme and embellished in gold. Overhead on the ceiling of the rotunda were painted the images of 16 females representing the seasons, the arts, earth, water, fire and air and the lavish decor extended to all other areas of the hotel.

“You know so much about things,” Lucile said to him over lunch.

“Part of my business,” Loren said to her.

“Your business sounds exciting,” she said. “Traveling to new places all the time.”

“We’re both going to travel,” Loren said. “Exciting new places.”

Lucile was silent for a moment.

“It’ll be hard on your mother,” she said. “Leaving her in Wabash.”

“And hard on your parents too,” Loren said. “Leaving them in Marion.”

“Not as hard as it’ll be for your mother,” she said. “I have a lot of brothers and sisters to keep my parents company when I’m gone but your mother only has you. I know how much you talk about her and know how much she must dote on you.”

The nineteen-year-old waived his right hand in a sweeping motion so that it made reference to the great rounded painted sky above them.

“You can’t have success like this in Wabash,” the young man said. “And my mother wants success for me. Joseph Oliver who created this hotel travelled a long way from his home in Scotland to become create all this. I think I’m also going to have to travel a long way to become successful.”

Lucile forced a slight smile.

“Maybe,” she said. “But success is not always related to traveling great distances.”

“Your father was successful and he grew up just a hundred miles from Wabash.”

“If you call teaching successful,” Loren said.

“He was a high school principal,” Lucile said. “I call that successful.”

Loren Berry shook his head and extracted the brown sales book he always carried with him and put it on the dining table. He opened it to a page and pushed it across the table and pointed his finger at a part of the page.

“My sales of advertising on barbershop annunciators and interurban timetables,” he said to her. “Just for one month. More than my father made in a year.”

Her hand moved across the table until it encircled his.

“So a salesman it is,” she said.

It seemed a strange, exotic career to a family like hers who had been farmers and she felt it must be a strange career to him also who came from a family of so many teachers.

Loren moved his other hand across the table so that he was holding Lucile’s hand with both of his hands.

“Yes,” he said surveying the great rotunda room of the Oliver Hotel. “A salesman.”

The word hung on his tongue like a particular fragrance.

“A salesman,” he repeated.

* * *

They had some time before the three o’clock red line up to the Silver Beach Amusement Park in St. Joseph, Michigan and Loren walked Lucile around the downtown area of South Bend, Indiana. On many of the windows were posters celebrating the Notre Dame football team’s spectacular 12-2 season under Coach Tom Barry. There were ongoing debates in town whether Notre Dame could have another winning season this year under their new coach Victor Place.

They passed a few barbershops and Loren told Lucile they were all clients for his barbershop annunciators.

“South Bend is a good market,” he said to her. “Lots of barbershops.”

They turned onto Washington Street and in a few minutes were in front of a magnificent mansion.

“Joseph Oliver’s home,” Loren said to Lucile. “Creator of the Oliver Hotel. Built in 1862 and purchased by him in 1881. He sold off all the interior woodwork and hired a New York architect who had designed Canada’s parliament buildings to enlarge and re-design the house. He hired an army of workmen to lay stone.”

Lucile looked at the great mansion in awe. It was larger than any home she had ever seen. She could count at least five chimneys but there might have been more. Ivy edged up the outside stone giving it the appearance of something that had been there since the beginning of time.

“It’s magnificent,” Lucile said.

“James and his family moved into the completed home in 1882 and in 1883 held a reception for 500 guests who danced in the third floor ballroom and dined on food prepared by a Chicago chef.”

“You sound like a tour guide,” Lucile said.

“I’ve studied his life,” Loren said. “It’s important to study the lives of great people.”

The young couple stood in front of the big mansion for a few minutes just taking in the majesty of the old place.

“James came a long way from the simple life of a shepherd in Scotland,” he said. “His wife died in 1902 and he is 84 years old now and in poor health.”

Just after he said this the front door opened and an old man in a wheel chair came out pushed by a person in a black suit. The old man was feeble and had a blanket over him even on the warm afternoon. His head was hanging and he just sat in the afternoon sun for a few moments and then lifted his head and saw the couple and waived at them a feeble waive.

Loren waived back.

“Oh my god,” he said. “James Oliver! We’re one of the few people who have seen James Oliver! No one in South Bend ever sees James Oliver!”

In twenty minutes they were getting aboard the red car for St. Joseph.

Loren told Lucile more about the famous James Oliver as the red interurban car left South Bend and headed north for Michigan. He told her about all of the businesses James had started and how much of an inspiration he was for him. However, he didn’t tell Lucile that in spite of affluence, he remained a simple man with simple tastes, who preferred the heat of his foundry and the dirt of a farm to the elegant surroundings of his new hotel or home. This was something that the young Loren Berry could not understand about the man. He had come so far yet he really hadn’t come that far. It was one of those paradoxical questions that hovered around him at this time, a question that only the time of his own life might provide an answer for.

* * *

The red interurban travelled almost straight north into the flat farmlands of western Michigan with patches of forest here and there. Soon, they were moving west towards the shores of Lake Michigan and the great expanse of blue water could be seen on the horizon like a slim, shimmering presence.

Loren looked out the window, deep in thought about something. Lucile was starting to realize this was a common expression of his. Thinking about something, someplace, some time in the future. Perhaps envisioning a home like James Oliver's home. A life like James Oliver some day.

He was such a different boy from all the other boys she knew. Most of them were still working on farms around Marion, content to move the operations of the family farm forward at a slow, steady pace. Content to take their place in the long lineage of family history. Content with the simple life on the farm when everyone was moving to the towns and cities. Loren was different from them. How was he different? It seemed to be a constantly evolving question. Like the changing morning fogs of October on the farms around Marion.

Lucile snuggled next to Loren and thought about the life that lay before them.

* * *

It was a little after six when the red interurban pulled into the lakeside town of St. Joseph. In the middle of summer the town was full of tourists and they saw license plates from all over on the Model T cars parked in the downtown area.

The interurban stopped at the edge of the Silver Beach Amusement Park and the two got off and walked towards the entrance to the park. Loren had secured one of the cottages by the lake inside the park and it was a short walk to the one he had rented that had been left open for their arrival.

It sat on the beach next to the other cottages, sitting on blocks above the sand with wooden steps going up to a little porch and then the open unlocked door into the cottage.

Lucile put her small suitcase down and spun around the cottage. There wasn't much room to spin around.

"It's wonderful," she said. "Our own little place."

A bed was pushed against one wall and a small desk and a few chairs placed against another wall. On the desk was a bouquet of flowers and a bottle of wine and a plate of bread and cheese.

Loren opened the bottle of wine and poured two glasses and gave Lucile one and lifted his glass in a toast.

“To the most wonderful woman in the world,” he said.

Lucile clicked her glass against his.

“To the most wonderful man,” she said.

They sat out on the porch eating the bread and cheese and drinking the wine and watching the sun sink into Lake Michigan.

Behind them, the evening lights of the amusement park were a glow over a thin line of trees and they could hear the sounds of the amusement park: a calliope, the screams from the roller coaster, the pings and pongs of the games, the music of a band, laughter, an organ playing the popular song of the day “School Days.”

After the sun disappeared and a pale moon hung in the sky they took a walk along the beach right in front of their cottage.

“Logan Drake created Silver Beach,” Loren said to Lucile. “He spent part of his courtship to Maude Schlenker walking along this beach. Maude coined the name ‘Silver Beach’ because the moon path on the water shimmered like silver.”

They stopped and looked out at the lake.

“Like it’s doing tonight,” Lucile said.

* * *

Their wedding was at noon the next day in a small chapel next to the amusement park. Loren had arranged for the minister and the ceremony was a short one. A few photographs were taken and the minister wished them good luck and then quickly but politely ushered them out as there was another wedding ceremony to perform in a few minutes. Silver Beach was a popular place for couples to elope and get married and the little chapel had a good business in weddings.

They walked past some games at the amusement park and Loren won a stuffed animal for Lucile by tossing some beanbags through a hoop. They filled themselves with candy and soda pop and went on a steamboat launch called the Wolverine. It went up the St. Joseph River for a few miles and then turned around and came back to the amusement park. It was open on the sides like a trolley car and had benches on the sides and down the center.

They had a few glasses of steam beer when they got back to the amusement park and were giddy enough to try the Chase Through the Clouds roller coaster. The figure 8 rollercoaster was founder Logan Drake’s crowning achievement in the park at this point and its photograph was

circulated on postcards all through the Midwest. The cars on it were not linked like a snake but simply had several two person capacity cars.

Lucile had never been on a rollercoaster before and had some doubts about the whole idea but Loren playfully pulled her into the small little wooden car and before she knew it they were traveling up and down over the tracks and she was screaming and holding Loren tighter than she had ever held him before.

When it was over Lucile dabbed a handkerchief against her forehead.

“What do you think?” Loren asked her.

“I think it’s somewhat like this wild marriage we’re embarking on,” she said.

Loren Berry laughed.

“You’re probably right,” he said.

* * *

That evening they went to dinner at one of the restaurants in the downtown area of St. Joseph and after dinner they went to the dance pavilion and danced to the organ music and then walked along the shoreline again and watched the shimmering reflection of the moon on the water of Lake Michigan.

It was a warm evening and when they got back to their cottage Loren opened a bottle of wine and they sat out on the porch and pondered the new life before them. And how they would tell their parents that they had gotten married. Loren knew that it would break his mother’s heart and he didn’t look forward to telling her.

They were up early the next morning and heading back home on the network of inter-urbans. Loren got off the car in Wabash and Lucile traveled the twenty miles south to Marion. The next few days would be busy trying to find a place where the two of them would live. In the meantime he would be spending a lot of time in Marion with Lucile.

“How was your business in Marion?” his mother asked when he came in the door of their little home in Wabash.

“Excellent,” Loren said. “Picked up a few new customers.”

“That is good,” said his mother.

“Yes,” said Loren. “I’ll need to spend a lot more time down there.”

Notes

“Before The Lights.” Source of the first few paragraphs of the story from the following source. Indian Treaty of 1826, Tipton’s Quest, By Historian Carl Leiter. Howard, Indiana Memory Project <http://www.howardcountymemory.net/default.aspx?id=12842>

“Fair & Fire.” The section on the Chicago boarding house from the novel by William Stead, *If Christ Came to Chicago*.

Afterward

Hopefully, you're reading this Afterward after you have read the seven stories of this publication. That's way we didn't include the Afterward at the front of the book as an Introduction. We did not want something that one would read first before reading the seven stories. But then again, we have no control over the matter. The reader ultimately has the same type of control over the order of reading this material as we have in creating it.

So, if you want to start here when approaching this document this is the place that will explain what we're trying to do in the stories. Method. Technique. This document utilizes different techniques in creating a new type of biography. Normally, a biography explores the history of a person's life and creates a story from this personal history. But what happens when this history – or parts of it – are dim and contain little information? Such is the case with the early years of my grandfather's life. His later years are relatively well-documented but his early years are filled with a few facts here-and-there but little else.

Our attempts to extract information from historical documents as well relatives or friends (or anyone who knew him) have yielded little new information on the early, little-known years of this legend of American business. There are a few stories told over and over again about events in his early life. But whether the stories are true or not does not seem to be a settled matter. Did they really happen or are they little more than convenient fictions that support an overall mythology built around him like George Washington chopping down the cherry tree?

Faced with this situation, not all that rare for a researcher investigating any family history often filled with dim periods of time, one looks to other ways to understand a biographical subject. In this sense, although we might never know the events of his early life, we can know the events in the world around our subject and knowing these events we can draw inferences about their influence on our subject. While we might not know what our subject did, we might be able to surmise how he felt about the world around him. In searching for a new way to understand a biographical subject, perhaps we move towards a new type of biography.

* * *

Our method first involves creating a yearly outline and then filling the outline with information about our subject. When all the information we can gather about our subject is placed into the yearly outline, we then include events, things, people and places of the time. We initially used this outline method for our history of the city of Palm Desert, California and refined it in three other biographical outlines. Most influential are the local events and history of the place the

subject grows up in but national and world events are also listed. A wide net is cast here: the items filling the outline are fashions, media, celebrities, heroes, books, songs, science and technology, government and politics, the arts. A congregation of the social and popular culture at the time. One might call this the construction of a type of biographical “media ecology” around our subject with the thesis that he was part of this surrounding ecology.

From the outline, a narrative is constructed using methods and techniques outlined in Appendix A (Not included in this document). So far, we have created five outlines using the above methods: one on the history of a town, one the biography of a legendary Polynesian restaurant and three biographies: one about a teacher of mine, one about a famous nutritionist and this one about my grandfather Loren Berry. The Loren Berry outline is the first that we have attempted to pull a narrative from one of our outlines and are publishing here seven sections from the developing biography of my grandfather *LM Berry: Invention of An Industry*. The biography is planned to be divided into parts: his early years (1888-1910) and later years (1910 -1980). These stories are all part of the early year part of the biography. The least understood and documented and therefore the most fertile for this method of ours of turning outlines of events into a new genre (perhaps) of speculative fan fiction biographies.

* * *

An interesting phenomenon related to this whole process of writing life stories in a new way. One of the most interesting things I’ve found from pulling stories from a chronological outline already created I find a very fascinating yet mysterious process. I started out writing one of the stories based in 1907. The author is able to fly over all of the material created and swoop down to pick it out of the stream of life and try and breathe life into it. Or at least a new life.

But sometimes one sits waiting for a time period to make a pull on your own creative muse. To convince her to go in this period of time. Sometimes against the demands of other muses who compete in all of this for the attention of someone picking dates to align (alight) upon. Writing this way is not going forward in a linear path to create something new but flying back and forth in time and finally constructing one’s own narrative version of a person’s life.

When one alights on these sections of time in the life to tell about, in a particular order, it seems sometimes like picking Tarot Cards from a deck. And who is to say that this method might not be close to that ancient method of Chinese divination that Jung talked about so much, the i-ching? What in fact regulates the points in time you choose to tell about? And tell about in a particular order? And with a particular type of developing style.

* * *

Anyway, when one arrives at extracting material from the outline then we use the materials in Appendix A. The outline is placed into a structure defined mostly by screenplay structure consisting of a beginning, middle and end. In this sense, the subject of the biography is

considered the Hero of the biography and whose actions are ultimately about pushing against one grand Villain in the story. As with accepted characters in a screenplay, there are also Mentors involved who help the Hero move forward through the biography. This screenplay-biography method also means focusing on particular scenes to tell the story and creating a surrounding “wallpaper” in the scenes containing objects, events, symbols of the subject’s time.

Within this narrative, certainly literary devices are employed that attempt to encourage reader participation in the creation of the biography. These elements have been identified by Marshall McLuhan in his discussion of “cool” media in *Understanding Media* as well as Henry Jenkins in *Spreadable Media*. The techniques are used in part by the literary phenomenon called fan fiction.

Throughout, a narrative voice (or voices) for the biography emerges. We are influenced here in a large respect by the narrative voice made popular by Virginia Woolf in *To The Lighthouse*, particularly the so-called “Brown Stocking” section of the novel discussed by Erich Auerbach in his work *Mimesis*. In this regard, the biography is not narrated by one author as is the case with most biographies. Rather the narrative function is carried by various characters (authors) within the biography. Hopefully at times, if our techniques are working, the function of narration is passed to the reader for his or her participation by supplying their own narrative interpretation of the story.

* * *

In writing 15,000 words and seven stories from the outline, a technique is being developed as well as a tendency noticed about the process of turning an outline of factual events into a structure of fact mixed with fiction. Perhaps it is a new technique for writing biographies or novels? Perhaps the whole point is that some new hybrid form of literature is evolving that doesn’t perfect individual genres but rather creates new ones by connecting old ones. The final product perhaps something between a biography, novel and screenplay. Fact mixed with fiction so that a certain type of story is developed. Whatever you want to call it. Yet it seem to me that the most honest and true respect to an ancestor comes out in some form not meant to be some form of advertising.

Before the advertising people could descend on his advertising life, beneath the biography being created is a type of speculation on the topic of biography and history and how the past is reconstructed. What does one bump into? The great book of literary criticism by Erich Auerbach *Mimesis* that discusses how reality has been presented in western literature?

Certainly this is part of our theme but our real theme is how past reality might be presented in literature. It seems to me that the current methods and techniques of the biography genre seem limited and insufficient demanding some new approach.

Ironically, the beginning of a new biographical method might be brought about this biography born from frustration of knowing more about a grandfather. While I will probably never know the things he did in these years, I can know the things that happened in his world and speculate what he might have felt about them and what he might have done. Again, it is a method for better understanding one life. But I think it might be useful to others, offering a method for understanding other lives. And of course, ultimately, their own life.

* * *

Through the writing process, music from my library comes out of Bose speakers and hangs like a particular media ecology in the background of the story. Something felt more than seen. Something known more than believed.

I often hum the songs of the 1890s and 1900s on my daily rounds around town. I'm able to download a lot of the songs from these years. It comes out of the Bose speakers and blends with the music I'm listening to now. The music of the past mixes with music of the present. The most popular song of 1899 "Hello My Baby" mixes with Coltrane or Tyner.

Tonight, as I write this Afterward, it's the music of DJ Day who has the Thursday night DJ gig around the pool at the Ace Hotel up in Palm Springs. The music of his CDs *The Day Before* "A Place To Go" and *Land of A Thousand Chances*. It is music born in the desert by people who have decided to go their own ways, get off the beaten tracks into the cities. The music seems a good blend for the early years of his life. Music that shows constant expansion of landscapes and horizons.