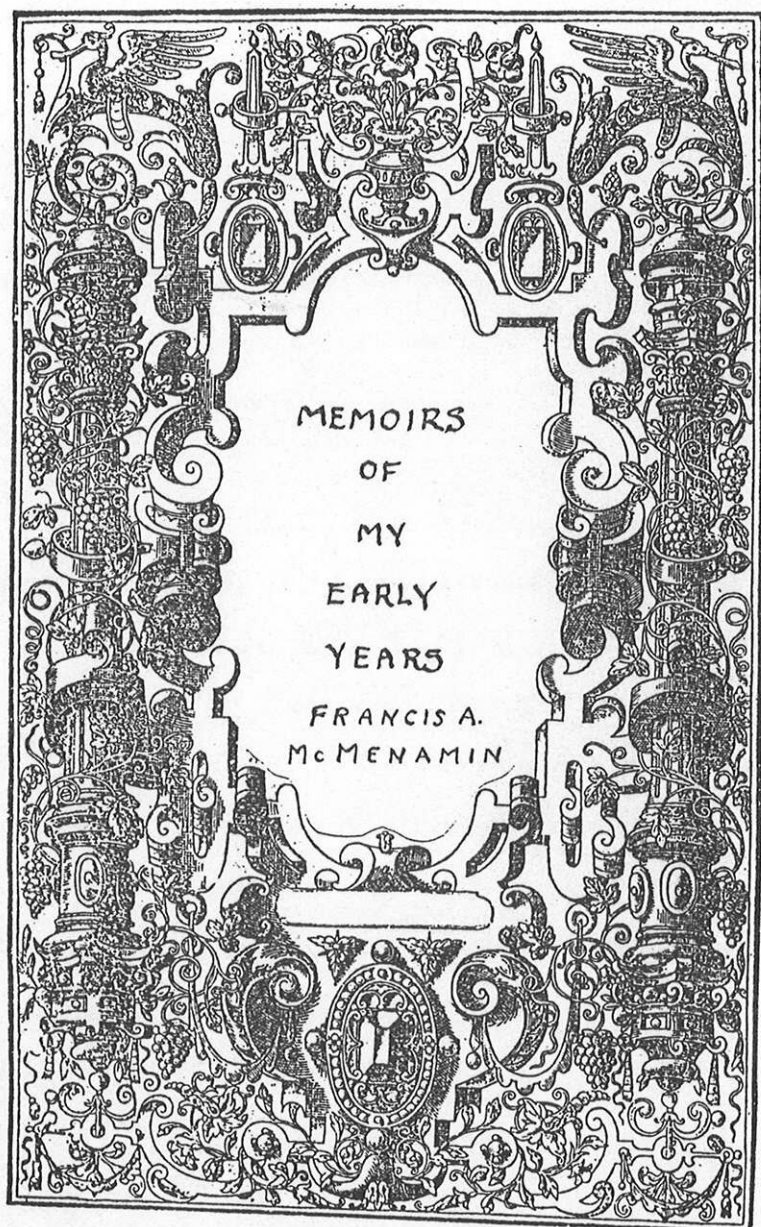


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Introduction

These memoirs were found among my Uncle Frank's papers after his sudden death in 1952 at age sixty-two. He was the eighth of twelve children born to Patrick and Mary McMenamin my paternal grandparents. A copy of these recollections was sent to me by his attorney son, Robert, in 1975, for which I am grateful.

Francis Aloysius McMenamin was born on September 27, 1889, married on July 28, 1914 and died on February 2, 1952. He was the tallest and strongest of Patrick's sons and probably the most sensitive. I could believe he was my grandfather's favorite son. His leaving the family circle at twenty-one must have been particularly hard on his father.

When I visited my Oregon cousins in August, 1935, Uncle Frank and Aunt Justine were expecting their eleventh child. It was during

this visit that this remarkable uncle confided his disappointment in hearing so little from his boyhood family after leaving Illinois. Now, having lived over seventy years myself I offer an explanation as to how this may have happened.

When he left home, his fifty-one year old mother, who had borne twelve children, was already unwell. She was diabetic and would die within three years, just before insulin injections were underway. At home yet were Frank's three sisters, unmarried, able to care for her (Nan, already a nurse) and able to reply to Frank's letters and cards; but they were young and insensitive to his distant need. And, his father who had ample time now, being newly rehired, could neither read nor write.

I am glad to edit these memoirs since I was born in the farm house Frank knew as home for sixteen years. I milked cows in the same barn, worked in the same hay loft. I, too, plowed corn with a team of horses, learned to operate the cream separator, and took the milk to the depot. My brothers and I recall when Monkey, Uncle Frank's horse died.

A few years back, I located some old faded post cards Frank sent home telling about his football team at St. Martins. I marvel at the graceful script his fingers penned - those fingers that had husked corn and milked cows not long before.

Few fathers are heroes to their families.

Proverbs says: "Children's children are the glory of old men: and the glory of children are their fathers."

At fifty-one Frank McMenamin still recalled that glory. He went back once to see his aging father who never "made it West" to know the children of his special son.

Joseph Patrick McMenamin
Dec. 18, 1983



Freudenberg
DE KALB, ILL.

This is the energetic farm lad who horse backed to De Kalb for dancing lessons, who had yet to get a high school education and who went to Oregon at 21, where the air was reportedly better for asthma sufferers. Here he must be about 17; the year 1906

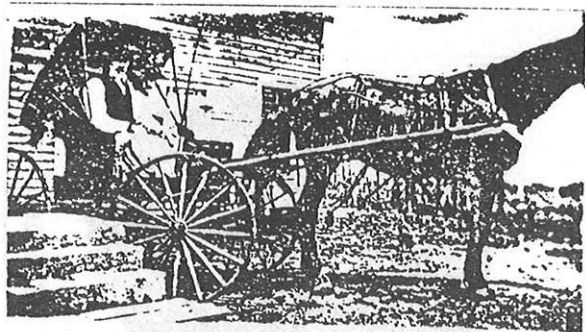
HIS PARENTS AND ILLINOIS FARM HOME



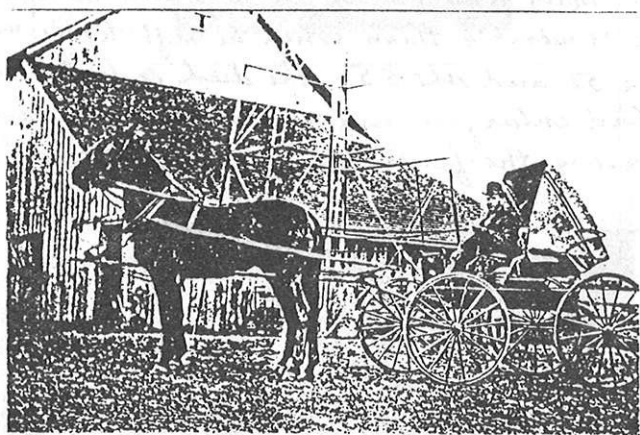
Mary and Patrick McMenamin, as Frank would remember them when he left home in 1910. He was 56 and she 55. She died of diabetes at 58. They had enlarged and remodeled this house after purchasing the farm. This was the result.



HORSE AND BUGGY DAYS



An old photo of Frank's parents about to leave for home after visiting relatives. Note the blanket over their knees. (Date - about 1905)



Frank's brother John with his "courting" buggy. Notice his gloves, hat, and tufted cushioned seat. I think the wheels had rubber rims; note how the check rein holds the horses' heads erect. Note the small hay loft window, Frank wrote about.



James Hugh
Mc Menamin



Graduate of
Valparaiso University
Valparaiso, Indiana
June 1902

Age 25

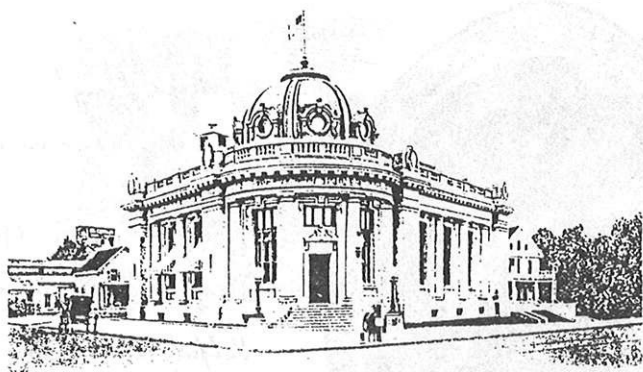
John Henry

Mc Menamin

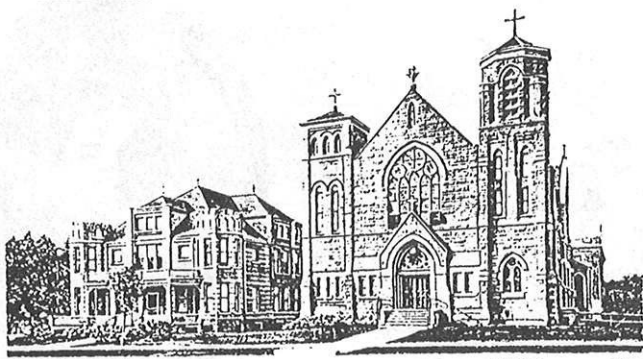
Best man at James'
wedding, October 1902



Age 23



DeKalb's post office building as Frank would recall it; note the horse and buggy "parked" at the curb.



St. Mary's Church and rectory in DeKalb; the rectory has been replaced and the church's main entrance, remodeled.



The year before Frank was married (1913) this photo was taken of me sitting in my Uncle Gene's lap. Gene was twelve now and had changed some since Frank last saw him three years before.



McMenamin-Wilkinson Wed

The marriage of Miss Grace E. Wilkinson of Mechanicsburg, Ohio, to Jas. H. McMenamin of Chicago, son of P. J. McMenamin of Carlton, took place Wednesday evening Oct. 15, 1902 at St. Mark's Catholic Church, in Chicago. Rev. Thomas Kearns officiating.

The bride wore white silk mull over taffeta, a veil of beautiful lace and carried bride-roses and lilies of the valley. The bride-groom was dressed in conventional black. Miss Cassie McMenamin acted as brides-maid and John H. McMenamin, brother of the groom best man.

A large number of friends and relatives witnessed the ceremony. A reception followed, and luncheon was served at the beautiful home of the bride and groom opposite Humboldt Park.

The bride is a very estimable young lady having taken a library course at Valparaiso college. The groom is a young man of exceptional ability, a graduate of Indiana college of Law last June, since which time he has been engaged in the practice of law in the city of Chicago.

The friends and relatives of the young couple wish them a prosperous and happy life.

When Frank was 13 his eldest brother (who was to become the "Uncle Jim" of Frank's children) was married at 25 for the first time. The local paper in DeKalb carried the above report of the marriage, which was of brief duration. After separation Jim went West in 1903 opening a law office in Tacoma, Washington. In 1914 he married Miss Nellie D. Diehl.

THE THREE SISTERS OF HIS YOUTH



Mary Gertrude
"Mame"
1886 - 1952



Anne Cecilia
"Nan"
1888 - 1964



Kathryn Jeanette
"Kate"
1894 -

SOME OLD "Snapshots"



1907

Gene, Frank's "baby" brother at six; three years before Frank left for the "West".

"PJ" McMenamin, Frank's father, after retirement



Kate, Frank's sister and cousin John McMenamin — a son of Frank's Uncle Hug.



Mam and Gene must have had this taken "for fun" when Gene was about eight.



Mam with what appears to be twin colts; she was teaching school at this time.



Frank's sister Mame, with her rural school pupils in 1909; note brother Gene, front row.



*Brother Charlie, 1917
(No known photos prior
to this).*



Brother Gene, 1909



Uncle Hugh & Aunt Mary McMenamin

Here they appear as Frank would remember them, "Uncle Hugh", two years younger than Frank's father, emigrated several years later. His wife, Mary McGuire, like his brother Pat's wife married upon arriving in America. Hugh and Mary McGuire were married at St. Mary's Church in DeKalb, Illinois, in 1885. Hugh died at 80 in 1936.

Uncle Hugh
Mc Menamin
and family,
1910



Here are cousins Frank played with as a boy. Uncle Hugh, the dog, Aunt Mary, Margaret and Kate are on the upper step. Below are seven-year-old Mike, Jim (with hat) Ellen (Frank's age) John (with cap) and Hugh in overalls & cap. Kate was the first to die - drowning herself at 25. Michael was the last, dying recently at 80.

James Henry...1885-1967
Margaret.....1887-1937
Ellen.....1889-1972
John.....1891-1948

Kate.....1894-1919
Hugh.....1899-1973
Mike.....1903-1983



Margaret in 1902



Ellen in 1902

This post card photo was enclosed in a letter evidently; it had a message on back but no stamp or address. A note on the back was dated May 11, 1911.

A change is noticeable in his penmanship, indicating his interest in scholarship as well as football. His note read:



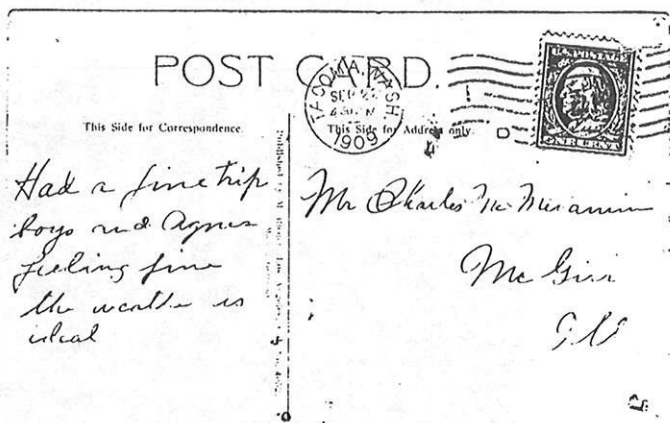
"This is my debating partner and myself. Do you think I look any different than I did at home?"



JOHN'S VISIT

In September 1909 John went to visit his brothers Jim, Mike and Frank. Mike had gone West after deciding that Valparaiso Univ. was not for him, and was already married and had two baby boys. He sent this photo home of himself and wife, Agnes (Garcia). John returned to Illinois and married in 1911. Frank married in 1914, as did Jim - for the second time.

Below is a post card John sent to his 17-year old brother, "Charlie," in 1909. It had a picture of Mt. Hood as seen from Lost Lake, Oregon. Charlie, a physical replica of Frank, would remind their father of a great loss for Charlie lacked Frank's ambition, drive and sensitivity.



Notice how
his
penmanship

changed
in
two years

Oct 12 10

Just warning up
before a game
Aint it a pretty
kneek?

Lovingly
Frank

Miss Mary W McManis
McGirr
DeKalb Co. Ill.



Oct 12 10

This is how we
looked after winning
a game 27 to 5. Am
feeling fine.
Lovingly
Frank

Miss Mary W McManis
McGirr
DeKalb Co. Illinois



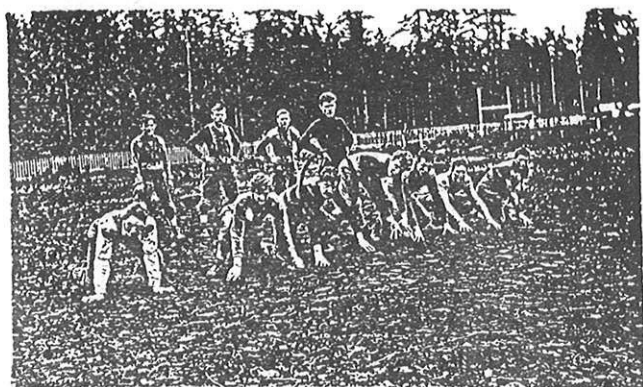
Notice his
report
on
academic
progress

M. C. DeKalb Co. Ill. 11/12

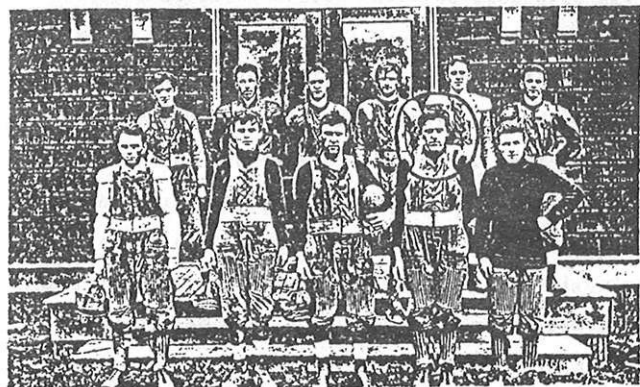
Dear Mary:
I thought you
would like me.
Am well. R. R.
and 1st grade
report card I rec'd
100 of in Appl. & Co.
+ 100 of in Appl. & Co.
average on 13 subjects
I am by the way

I thought you
would like me.
Am well. R. R.
and 1st grade
report card I rec'd
100 of in Appl. & Co.
+ 100 of in Appl. & Co.
average on 13 subjects
I am by the way





Frank sent
these post cards
home to his
sisters to
report on his
football progress,
the upper two in
1909, the bottom
one in 1911



Even the day we lost Little's best team 54-0



CHAPTER X

MEMOIRS OF MY EARLIER YEARS

Francis A. McMenamin, 1889-1952

Having reached the age of fifty-one, I sometimes think of things I have observed and happenings that transpired when I was a young boy. I have had experiences that might be interesting to those of younger years. With this in mind I write a few memoirs that may serve a useful purpose.

My main incentive is due to the many happy memories I have of talks with my father in my youth. He did not have the advantage of an education, and could not read or write. However, he had a very logical mind and a fine memory. And many of his maxims of business, I found later, some authors would take several pages to tell what he had the faculty of saying in one sentence. Consequently, associations with him and the advice that he gave me from time to time caused these principles to remain with me for many years. It is possible that the following ramblings may contain informaton of benefit and cause the reader to think. I believe strongly with Elbert Hubbard that "you may not agree with what I have to say, but if I cause you to think, I have at least done you a service".

My earliest recollection reaches back to the year 1896, on cold days, about the first of March. Father moved from a rented farm to a larger one several miles away. This farm consisted of 240 acres, and was in De Kalb County, Illinois, about seven miles south of the town of De Kalb. De Kalb was 58 miles west of Chicago, on the Chicago-Northwestern Railway.

There were eight children in our family. James was 18, John 15, Michael 14, Mary (Mame) 10, myself 8, Anne 7, Charles 4, and Katherine 2. Edward who died at three would have been 13 and Patrick who died at three weeks would have been 9. When we moved to this big farm mother was "expecting" again and would have Josephine in November; Josephine died about a week after birth. Five years later she gave birth to her twelfth and last child, Eugene. (Mother died of diabetes in 1913 at age 68, after I had gone West.)

When our family made this move in 1896, only three of my brothers - James, Michael, and John were old enough to help father with the heavier farm work. But I would be soon for I had learned to milk at five, drove a gentle team to the milk depot three miles away at seven, and began doing the work of a man at twelve.

At four years of age I started to school, and went nine months of the year until I was eight. Then I stayed out in the spring, and fall, and went in the winter time from eight until I was twelve. This was all of the education I received until I was 21 years of age. (After I went West, I worked my way through high school, college and university.) My early recollections of the farm were quite pleasant. We always had plenty to eat and warm clothing. However, it was amusement that seemed to be lacking. The only amusement which I had was hunting rabbits in the winter time and occasional duck in the spring. Baseball was quite a sport in the summer, but this could only be taken care of on Sunday; with the hard weeks work I do not yet understand how it was possible to play two ball games on Sunday and work as hard as we did during the week.

A few years after Father moved his family to this 240 acres he purchased 120 acres adjoining for, as I recall, \$57 an acre. By

farming the 360 acres and breaking up some of the virgin soil and putting the same into corn, it is my recollection that two years crops made sufficient money to pay for the 120 acres. Later he purchased the 240 acres at \$100 per acre, which left him one of the finest farms in the vicinity. This was in one of the leading agricultural districts of the United States and I believe that De Kalb County was the first in the United States to have a full time agricultural agent.

The years continued to roll along and as I went through boyhood and early manhood, considerable hard work was always ahead of me as I was big and husky and seemed to take the lead with much of the work. Father was a very hard worker and for years beyond when it was necessary for him to do so. He seemed to be of a nature that he would rather be doing something than to sit and rest. He had a beautiful philosophy of life and if he had heavy worries he did not inflict them on others and seemed to keep them to himself. Each day at noon after he had his lunch he would lie down and sleep for a half hour or so and then get up and approach the afternoon work with all the vigor he had in the morning. He enjoyed hard labor and did not take too easily to mechanical improvements. However, he did not stand in our way and as we urged him to buy machinery, he gradually fell into line.

One of the things that stands out in my memory was the ownership of a small horse whose name was "Monkey." This horse was bought when he was two years old at a farm sale for \$10. He was stunted and had a very heavy coat of hair as he had been out in the winter without proper shelter. When he was taken home he looked very poor but as I had been doing such good work, father gave him to me. In fact, I was

taking a man's place from about the time I was 12 years old, having learned to milk cows when I was 5 and drove a team to the milk factory when I was 6 and 7. I decided that milk would be good for him as we had a cream separator and plenty of warm skim milk. I gave him about a three gallon bucket full each morning and evening. This seemed to work like magic and by spring I had the colt looking much better. He then went out on grass pasture and it was only a short time before he was developing into a very handsome horse. He never weighed over 825 pounds. I took him in hand and broke him gently. He was rather stubborn and always high spirited. However, I worked with him carefully and taught him to single step and also to pace. I finally hitched him to a little rubber tired run-about; he had a nice harness to fit and a fancy fly net; this was quite a thing in those days.

When I drove down the street in town, trotting him down one side of the street and then bring him up pacing on the other side, people would stop and look to see whether or not he was a trick horse. He was wonderful under the saddle, and many and many a fine hour I spent with him as he was my means of transportation as well as my means of relaxation. He was my pal for some ten years and lived a couple of years after I left the farm. I believe he became quite old and died of old age.*

In addition to the farming of 360 acres, we always had a herd of large polled shorthorns, a milking strain. Father sold 15 to 20 of these cows each year which made it necessary to "break in" a number

*Editors note: My brother, Bob, reminded me that Monkey was found dead in his stall, when we were boys.

of heifers into being milked after having their first calf. I seemed to have a good knack in doing this; at least I was given the assignment. I believe that if I now have patience, milking those heifers in the spring and summer in a hot cow barn where the windows were very small, may be the reason. The cows stood side by side in stanchions. If a cat came into the barn and disturbed one cow, she would kick and commotion would spread through the barn. After awhile, however, by continual care and no abuse, the heifers would get acquainted with you. They would learn that you were their friend and it would not be long until they would be just as gentle to handle as the other cows were.

In those days, no one ever thought of ventilating a barn (which was free and should have been utilized). Also, there was too little consideration given to the welfare of the person doing the hard work. For instance, each harvest time it was my duty to go up into the big barn and to move the hay away from the center of the loft as it came up in big fork loads from the driveway just outside the barn. At the top of the barn was a very small door, probably about 4 by 6 feet; now, there should have been four or five such doors or at least one or two big ones which would have let more air circulate into the barn. But, as I say, no consideration was given to this. I worked for hours, the sweat running off of me in streams, with no ventilation at all. On a hot summer day the temperature was 95° or 100°F. We accepted all this thinking it was necessary. Time gradually improved conditions, however, and some three or four years before I left home, along about 1906, hay loaders came into general use. The hay loader would be attached behind a large wagon and would rake the hay up from the field, push it up onto the wagon. The team would be walking along

and the field would be rough in places. For a person to hold his balance as he was building up a large load of hay and field some 30 to 35 loads a day was an ordeal. I can assure you that when night came we had to have a real ardent love affair or some other impelling motive to go out and not roll into bed as soon as we had supper. It was very hard work and as I look back now, we needed a union and an eight hour day.

After an ordinary hard day's work was done, the cows milked, and the cream separated, we sometimes went off to a dance. But, first you took a lantern and hung it on the porch and got out a straight razor, hoping it was reasonably sharp. If not, it was up to you to strap it until it was. Then you shaved and got "dolled up" for the dance that might be ten miles away. Sometimes it was twenty. Often we would come home in the morning just as the gray dawn was streaking and if you got to bed and had one hour of good sleep you would feel very fortunate. You had to get up irregardless and start the day's routine again. If there is anything in the world that is tantalizing it is cultivating corn when you have had very little sleep the night before.

I ran a cultivator for some time which cultivated two rows at once, and was drawn by three horses. This made it necessary for you to keep your horses walking three abreast and proceeding in a straight line. The work was comparatively easy, but if you had one slow horse or a fast one, it would make the machine pull sideways and you would have to use your feet and hands in order to keep the cultivating machine straight over the rows. This, at times, was certainly a job, particularly in fly time, as flies would light on the horses and cause them to become nervous and make it hard to do a good job and not plow

out the small, tender stalks of corn.

We had no regular allowance for spending money on the farm and the question of getting some money for a little spending, as little as it was, was a problem. I did not smoke until after I was 30 years of age and consequently my expense was not very much. One suit of clothes would last a couple of years, until we out-grew it. And if we went to a party, 25¢ would be a big expense. The girls would generally bring cakes and sandwiches, and the boys would probably pay 25¢ apiece to pay for the music. I believe that with this set-up we had more enjoyment than youngsters have now when they feel they have to spend at least \$5 for an ordinary night's outing.

To make extra money, for several years I trapped in the winter time. I was successful in catching mink, skunk and other fur bearing animals that would bring a fairly good price. One morning on my way to school with another boy I found a large skunk in one of the traps. Being eager not to let the skunk get away, we killed it and skinned it. When we arrived at school the teacher promptly sent us home as the room was well heated and "sensitive to odors."

After I was 14 years old, I spent a bit of my time in breaking horses, for harness work, no matter how wild or large they happened to be. I cannot help feeling lucky when I look back at some of the chances I took. We always had to be master of the horse in getting the first harness on him and getting him hitched to a wagon. We would probably have some outlaws that were shipped in from Montana or Wyoming. It was quite an undertaking. However, it was all part of a day's work and I was paid good money for good results by neighbors who heard of my skill. Thus, I generally had some money in my pocket.

When I was 14 years old, unlike the average farm boy, I took some money and went to dancing school in the winter, one or two nights a week. This I did for two or three winters and kept up on the latest dances. Afterwards, I knew the square-dances and others so well that I was taken out a number of times to travel with an orchestra in order to be dance manager and to do the calling for them. For this work I would generally get \$5 a night and free expenses, so it paid me well to keep up on my dancing.

I was also considered a champion corn husker. I began husking when I was 14 years old. When I was 15, I husked and shoveled into a crib 115 bushels in one day. For this I received 3¢ a bushel. Anyone who has not seen 55 or 60 bushels of corn piled up on a wagon does not know just how many ears you have to throw in order to produce that much corn. When we were through with the corn harvest at home, I was generally sure of a few weeks of outside work. This money would go a long way toward paying my expenses during the winter. For instance, in March 1910 (before I came West, to go to school in September 1910) I had a contract to husk corn in March for \$1.75 an acre. I had to use hip boots, the snow and mud was so deep, and had two teams of horses on my wagon to pull it through the mud. I made \$93.30 in 19 days and a quarter, but I lost 12 pounds in doing the work; finally I suffered an attack of rheumatism and had to quit the work. However, I did get my check of \$93.30 and it was the biggest money that I had ever seen. The rest of the summer of 1910 I worked for \$35 per month with my room and board and kept my horse. By September 1910 when I came West, I had saved several hundred dollars which lasted well through the first school year.

In September 1910 I phoned my eldest brother James in Tacoma, Washington where he was practicing law. He did not know the exact date of my arrival and he was somewhat perturbed that I should come to Tacoma and not have him meet me at the train. I got off the train, asked where his office building was and walked to his office. He did not like this as he said I walked through the toughest part of town. I always "felt the lion" however and the new surroundings just meant another day to me.

When I came to Tacoma, I weighed only 153 pounds.¹ I had suffered severe attacks of asthma for a couple of years in Illinois and during summer months, working in the hay fields brought severe attacks. Many nights I would have to sit up in a chair as I would be unable to sleep. The first thing I noticed about the coastal climate was that I could not get enough sleep. I started to take on weight and in about two months I had gained 30 pounds; I also seemed to enjoy life much more.

My brother, James, advised me to go to the state University at Seattle so I went there to enroll as a special student. I must have been a problem because when they asked me where I had taken my high school work I told them that I had never been to high school. Naturally I was turned down and when I returned to Tacoma my brother James could not understand it and sent me back the next day. I figured that he knew better than I, so I went back and repeated the same procedures. This time I was advised to try St. Martin's College at Lacey, Washington where I enrolled and started in taking high school courses. Some of the boys in my class were probably 13 and 14 years of age and some of them were in knee trousers yet.² It would have been rather humiliating to some

1. He was really underweight for a young man over six feet tall.

2. He was just 21 years old as of September 27, 1910.

persons but one teacher soon took a liking to me, admiring my determination to get an education.

It was very difficult going for the first three or four months, but gradually my mind began to work and my studies became much easier. I finished the high school course during the next two years and got in considerable college work. The professors were exceedingly kind to me and some of them would give me private instruction. Gradually, I understood what X stood for in Algebra and what Geometry was all about. In my first Geometry test I received a grade of 40. This made me determined to master the subject as it was the only one that was getting me down. So I began to study Geometry real hard and at the end of the year I won the premium for my class of 1913.

I carried a double load for each of the three years that I was at St. Martins, and received wonderful training. I also played football during the three years and made the first football team two weeks after I entered college. We only had 15 or 16 men on our squad but we were big huskies; we got our share of winnings against the teams we played. Football in those days was somewhat rougher than it is today; we had to be able to "take it" in order to stay on the team.

St. Martin's College was a boarding school chiefly, and I have fond memories of the days spent there. We had plenty to eat although we could figure a day ahead just what the menu for the next day would be. One thing I remember was the hotcakes in the morning with black syrup. They were not very tasty, but if you ate three or four, you were able to play football.

During the three years that I was at St. Martins I would go out

to eastern Oregon or eastern Washington in the summertime and work on combine harvesters so I was able to save a good bit of money each year. I spent two years doing this at Uniontown, Washington and recall one Fourth of July when my college chum, Clinton Fleetwood, was with me. He was a hundred yard man at college and one of the best. We had only the old clothes we wore in the harvest field and during the Fourth of July celebration appeared in the races wearing our work overalls. A number of sprinters were there from the state university at Moscow dressed in shorts and spiked shoes. They warmed up and seemed to be put out that a man in overalls would have the nerve to enter a race with them. The gun shot off, and my college chum came in considerably ahead of their best sprinter. They walked around him in circles and looked at him in amazement when he took first money. We entered some of the competitive sports and were both ahead \$25 in prize money for having spent the day at the celebration. We also got acquainted with some farm girls and as a result had interesting amusement for the rest of the summer on Saturday and Sunday nights.

Time and space prevented me from knowing my Uncle Frank McMenamin better. As a young farm lad, I was surprisingly aware of him however. His name was mentioned often; his expertise as a horse trainer is still recalled by octogenarians about O'Kala today. As a nephew, privileged to know him better after his death, I offer these words of Morris West from The Shoes of the Fisherman as a worthy tribute.

"It takes so much to be a full human being that there are very few who have the enlightenment or the courage to pay the price. . . . One has to abandon altogether the search for security and reach out to the risk of living with both arms. One has to embrace the world like a lover. One has to accept pain as a condition of existence. One has to court doubt and darkness as the cost of knowing. One needs a will stubborn in conflict, but apt always to total acceptance of every consequence of living and dying."

Joseph P. McMenamin
728 Superior St.
Oak Park, Ill. 60302
December 20, 1983