

The Daly House in San Pierre, Ind.

by Herretta (Daly) Sharritt

In the first quarter of the eighteen hundreds many Irish families arrived in a small farm area on the Monon Railroad. They migrated from New Jersey, Connecticut and Delaware.

Many names I recall were Dalys, Welsh, Delaney, Keys, Carols, and McCl... They purchased farmland called San Pierre about four miles from the Kankakee River. This land was very productive.

As time elapsed, these people passed away, but the children remained.

Owen Daly was my father. As a young man, he became a telegrapher for the Monon R.R. At twenty-one he married Maggie Welsh. Four children, Irene, Nell, Tom, and Boy (Owen) were their children. Maggie died in 1899.

Then in 1900 Owen married a 21-yr. old girl (Anne Koza) whose parents lived in North Judson. This family of Czeck [sic] descent migrated from Minnesota to No. Judson.

The Welsh family had built a seven-bedroom house that was a Hotel. When the elder Welsh family had passed on, this Hotel was willed to Maggie. Owen and Maggie continued the business. When Maggie had passed away and a year after her death in 1899, Mother Anne Daly and Owen Daly continued the Hotel business called "The Daly House."

On June 1901, Leona Daly was born. On Mar. 2, 1904, Herretta Daly was born. Then on May 2, 1907, Eleanor Daly was born.

Mother had a lady seamstress come to our house to sew all of our clothes for seven children. Also sew sheets, pillowcases, tablecloths, napkins, and dish towels for the Hotel. By this time Dad was buying linen hand towels for the customers that stayed overnight. Bath towels and washcloths were

bought, too.

A farm north of town was owned by the Delaney couple. Growing old these people sold the 190-acre farm to Dad Daly. It was a good investment for eight to ten cows pastured there. Dad would buy horses that were used in the livery business. They could pasture there, too. He always had Boy (young Own) and a hired man plant corn and wheat, also some oats for feed. Tom drove the traveling men who came by train and needed to go to towns such as Kouts, Valparaiso, etc., that could not be reached by the Monon R.R. by this time another R.R. started called the New York Central that went from South Bend to Kankakee, Ill.

I recall all of our beautiful horses. There was one that could be used for a single buggy. Then a beautiful team that was used for a double buggy that had side curtains or a glass carriage that was used for the family. It had two side doors, a big front seat, a back door and two side seats that were big enough for all of us. We were always so thrilled to have this ride.

I recall how we young girls would walk to the farm to get the cows every evening. They were at the gate waiting for us. One old cow was the leader and the others would follow. It was Boy's job to milk.

Oh yes, we had hogs, chickens, and ducks. It was necessary for this was food for the big family and Hotel.

There was no electricity at that time, so Kerosene lamps, wood and coal stoves were used. I recall cleaning thirteen lamp chimneys and filling the lamps after school.

We had to pump all of the water by hand. The pump was in our summer kitchen. In this kitchen, I can see the huge cook stove, a long wooden table about 7 or 8 ft. long. A large wooden cabinet that held pots, pan, and other needed articles such as salt, sugar, and spices. Off of this kitchen was the family dining room. The Hotel dining room was a huge room. A big long table and chairs, also another table and chairs. This table wasn't as big.

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Mother had a glass china closet in this big room that held so many lovely dishes that had been gifts.

Off of the family dining room was a big room that was the pantry. It had an icebox that big pieces of ice could be placed. That kept our milk, butter or other perishables. The flour was bought in 100 lb. sacks that were kept in a big round wooden barrel. The shelves were loaded with Jelly, Jams, and canned goods. Our home rendered lard was kept here, too, in 10-gal. round covered tubs. There was no basement in the house, but there were two cellars. One on the north side. In this cellar you'd see a huge bin for bushels of potatoes and onions. On the shelf were many more glass jars of canned food that everyone had to help put up.

There was a lower shelf that held one-gallon crocks for milk all covered securely to sour, for the making of butter and cottage cheese. The churn was a wooden 3-ft. high container that had a stumper with a handle. That had to be worked up and down. After the cream was taken from the top of the sour milk. The clabbered milk was poured into a spick & span big flour sack, tied at the top, and hung on a limb of a tree by the back door. A big dish pan was placed on the ground under the sack where the whey would drain into. This was used for food, too, for the chickens and hogs. This was mixed with oats.

Oh, I recall the big frying iron pans, huge tea kettles, big pan for cooking, big dish pans, baking pans of every kind, a huge wooden bowl used for bread dough. I don't know what happened to these things.

How did we do the washing? A dear old woman (Mrs. Pete Smith) washed clothes by hand in a building a short way from the kitchen. This was called the Wash House. We had four big galvanized tubs, one for the washing clothes or a washboard, another tub for the first rinsing, the second for blueing [sic] water. There was another big wood stove here, too, that held a big brass boiler. The white were placed in this hot water and placed in another or third tub to rinse, then the blueing [sic] water. The back yard was

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equipped with four long wire lines for hanging sum & winter. When the clothes in winter were frozen, they were brought in and hung on a big wooden folding rack to dry. The fire had to be kept up. When things were almost dry—then the ironing job. Monday, without fail was washing day, Tuesday, always ironing day. All of the girls had jobs to do.

Everyone had designated jobs that could not be shirked.

Nell always helped Mother and Dad with the cooking. When I was four years old, my sister Irene died and I missed her so much for she played the piano and sang for me. I watched her and listened to her all of the time. Irene was a beautiful girl, as I recall, but always seemed rather frail. I saw her dye [sic], that made a tramatic [sic] impression on me. I guess, I always vowed that I'd play the piano and sing like Irene.

Leona, Eleanor, and I (Herretta) had jobs, too. We helped set the table, carry dirty dishes from the table. Fill the little salt holders, toothpick holders, fill sugar bowls, cream pitchers, and keep the water glasses filled at the meal. We didn't realize that this was work because it was our way of life.

Mother and Dad worked so hard preparing meals. Besides the Hotel, Dad's room was a great long room, that was the office as we called it. It had a big potbelly stove, a lot of different chairs. Dad even had a saloon here, too. A long bar, a big mirror back of the bar.

The saloon business soon came to an end, but the Hotel continued.

In the spring, Dad would get up about 4:30 A.M. go out to the big garden. He did all of the hand plowing, seeding, hoeing by himself. He would hoe that early to turn over the wet soil. We had all the vegetables we needed for canning. Leona and I loved to help Dad pick the vegetables. Then everyone helped clean, wash, & prepare the things for cooking. Dad and Mother were such good cooks. I can always see Dad preparing the meats—pork, steak, roasts, and veal. Mother always prepared the chicken or duck.

Oh, I can see Mother baking all of our bread. Huge loaves of white and

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rye bread, also special, buns, kolacki, coffee cake bread with fruits. Nell would make the pies and cakes.

As Leona, Eleanor, & I grew we helped with all of this cooking and baking.

I am sure you wonder where we got the ice for the ice boxes—one in the pantry and one in the summer kitchen.

We had a huge barn like a big horse barn that was filled with sawdust that was gathered when trees were sawed down and made into wood, or into lumber. Dad had a big bobsled that two men were hired to hitch up two horses to this sled. They would go out on the Kankakee River. (At that time, the river was pure water—unpuluted [sic].) They had strong ice saws and ice tongs. They'd saw big chunks of ice, put on the sled, and bring the ice to the icehouse. They'd take shovels to push the sawdust aside, line the chunks of ice in a row, cover securely with the saw dust, then start another row on top of this row, that was continued until the icehouse was filled to the very top using every speck of saw dust. The ice had to be covered so it wouldn't melt in the summer. You can imagine how many bobsleds full this would take.

When it was real hot in the summer, we kids loved to go into the ice house. Dad always knew when we were in there for some of the sawdust was disturbed, but we were too dumb then to know that was so important. Finally, after his explaining to us—we knew we should stay out. That was only for him to go in to get the ice. Carrying 25, 50, or 100 lb. blocks of ice was no easy job, but Dad was a strong man and he did it.

As time went on, we were grown, the folks older and changes occurred. Nell, Leona, and Boy married. Eleanor left, too, working for Henry Schricker who was Lt. Governor of Indiana. Tom went to the Army, came home & later married, too. I was the only one left, but didn't leave. I taught school in San Pierre, we gave up the Hotel business, but Mother would have lady teachers room and board at our house.

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To keep Dad occupied, he rebuilt our buggy shed into a little store, where he had a big round table and chairs. pool table, a candy, cigar case, and ice cream freezer. This was a place for all of the old men in the area could come, play pool, play cards, smoke, and just talk. It was a good place for all of the men and Dad liked it.

Dad had a sister Ella that was in her late 60s. She come [sic] every summer and stay [sic] about three months. It was all right with the folks because she knew there was always a good bed for her, good and plenty food, too. In fact, she loved to cook so it did help Mother.

Jerry and Leona had Pat and Eileen. How they all loved to come home. We looked forward to their coming and loved all of them. Nell, Frank, and Mary Margaret Dusek came every Sunday. We looked forward to their coming, too.

Then two more little girls arrived—Mary Jean Maloney and Mary Ann Daly. Mary Jean belonged to Leona and Mary Ann belonged to Herretta.

After all of this dear time, Dad passed away. Mother, Mary Ann and I were left. Then, I started renevating [sic] the house. We had electricity now, so the first thing Mother & I did was to put in a bathroom. All of those years we used and outside toilet, a freezing thing in the winter, but in summer we didn't mind, until the convenience of a bathroom and running water. There were so many other changes made in the house for comfort.

How did everyone take baths? We used the wash tubs that worked out allright. We take baths in the family dining room—where we had a stove³ for warmth. The water was heated on the summer kitchen stove in big pans and kettles.

Mother was such a kind, thoughtful, hardworking lady—very religious, going to Mass everyday [sic] of her life. She read the Bible from start to finish many times. At 78 yrs. she passed away. Dad was 81 yrs old when he left us. He tried very hard to make a living for the family.

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Our home was like a haven—always open to friends and relatives. Earl Sharritt and I married in 1940. Eleanor and Bob came along. Se we had three children, Mary Ann, Eleanor, and Bob.

Now that I am old, it is great for me to recall all of those wonderful days of our youth and our wonderful Mother, Father, Sisters, and Brothers.

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