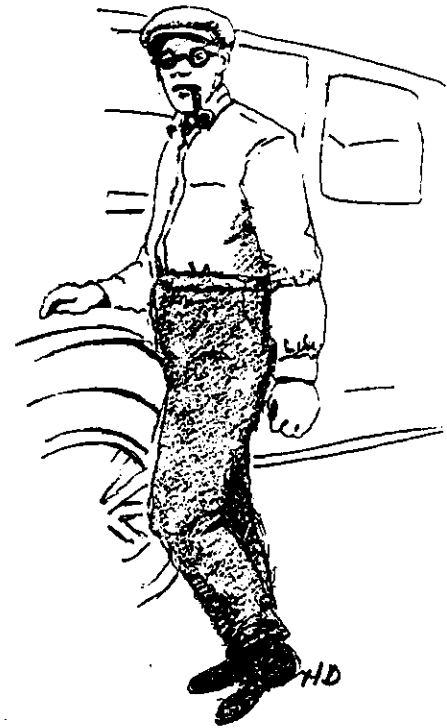




Act One The Norton Years 1922 - 1946

Introducing the Nortons, Entrepreneurs

William ("Bill") A. Norton (62) and his younger, but taller brother, Leslie ("Les") R. (43), established the Corn Belt Oil Company in Marshalltown in 1922. The white-frame gas station, with a canopy over the pumps, proudly stood on the northwest corner of Center and Church Streets. From 1924 to 1926, attendants at the station were Florian Wilcox and Donald Beeson; the tank wagon was driven by Jeff Lorenzon. Herb Norton, Les' oldest son, helped at the station in 1926 when he was 15 years old. In the 1960s, Chuck and Vern's Sinclair Station operated at the same location; and today, it is the site of the drive-through branch of the Marshalltown Savings Bank.



Les Norton

This new innovation of a service station with multiple gas pumps and extended hours, seven days a week until midnight, went over well with the public. Cars lined up for service; sometimes the weary attendant had to shut down a pump so he could lock up at closing time.

Bill had never driven a car when he and his oldest son, Raymond, developed the "self-serve gas pump." It was coin operated: 50 cents on one side, and a silver dollar on the other side. According to Dick Norton (Raymond Norton's son) of Algona, they had to hire a man to sit in the station at night to guard the gas pumps, as some fellows shot holes in the pumps with glass tanks on top.



Bill Norton



First Five Cabins

Since silver dollars were rare after the Depression, everyone who could run a lathe could make slugs. According to Bill's youngest son, Wayne, "Sometimes my father would take a half a cigar box full of slugs out of the coin-operated pump. He had a magnet installed as well as a system that sensed whether or not there was a knurl on the slug."

The Nortons developed ideas as Bill stroked his mustache and Les smoked his pipe. Sharing and planning business endeavors could have allowed one to discourage the other. Secrets can be like boomerangs; tossed lightly, they may come back to haunt you. Soon Bill and Les began building Shady Oaks Gas Station and Eatery on the Lincoln Highway east of Marshalltown.

The perceptive Nortons were aware that many tourists were seeking overnight lodging in the Marshalltown area. In 1924, the brothers selectively cleared Shady Oaks, which is 5.77 acres in size, into a park-like setting and began work on the cabin camp. That winter, Les

traveled to Florida to check on tourist camps; and he returned home full of ideas.

Five cabins were built in 1925, and Shady Oaks Cabin Camp officially opened that summer. Les discovered the foundation of the original Rock Valley Schoolhouse when construction began. It was reputed by the Nortons that the lodge/residence was later built on this foundation.

Both the super service station and the cabin camp were exciting, new concepts on the American scene. These two enterprises were recognized from coast to coast as some of the firsts of their kind. The public was ready and waiting for such service and accommodations as they took to the roads. The Nortons recognized these needs and were successful entrepreneurs of their day.

In this same time frame, Les set out on a Lincoln Highway journey through Nebraska to put up signs advertising Shady Oaks. Max Adair, a young lad from LeGrand, accompanied him. According to Ruth (Adair) Brintnall, a

Marshalltown octogenarian, Norton had already put up signs to the east.

Close friends thought that the Nortons had a 99-year lease on the Shady Oaks tract of land. In actuality, the ground was rented from Corydon Bramer Moore. It wasn't until July of 1930 that Les purchased the property from the estates of Matilda Moore and Corydon B. Moore at a cost of \$2,400.

Now, come with me and travel down memory lane to Shady Oaks as seen through the hearts and minds of real people.

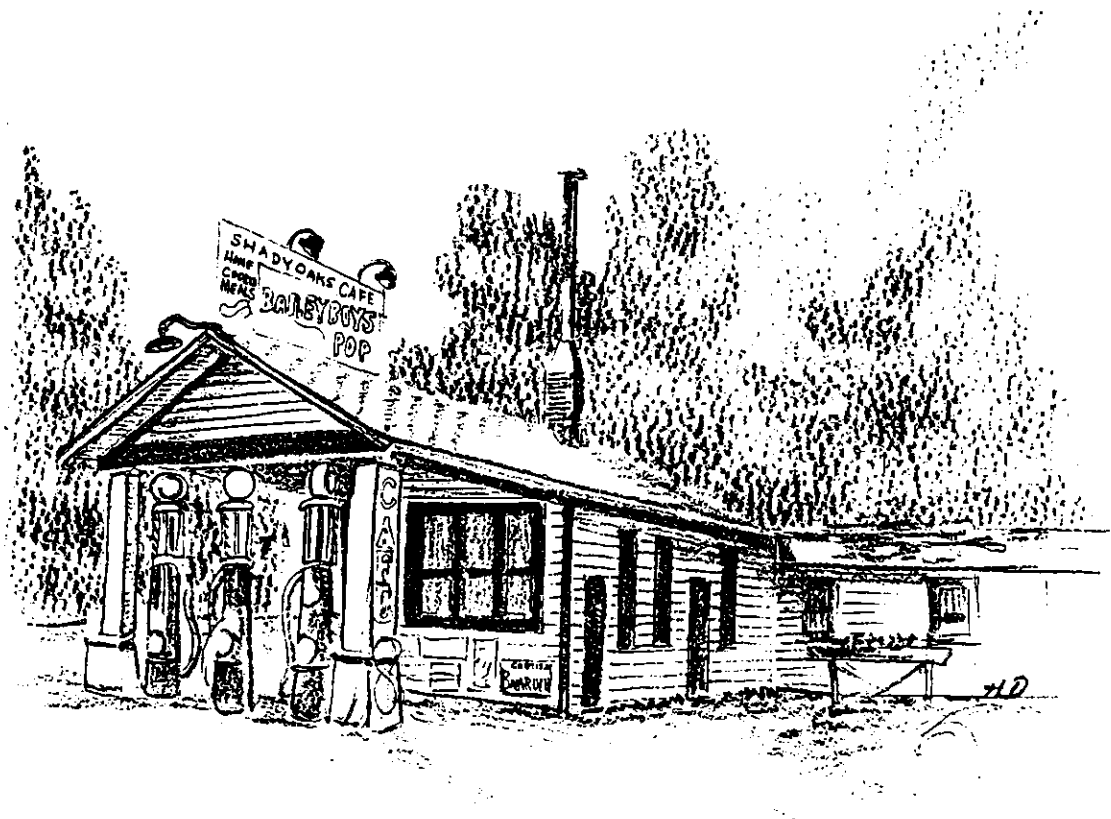
The land in Section 8 of LeGrand township is the stage on which the following people have left a legacy of their endeavors to posterity. Each is distinctly different in their goals and degrees of satisfaction. It's been tremendously rewarding to locate some of the original cast and direct this production. It has made me aware of many simple wonders.

**Act One, Scene One
Shady Oaks Cabin Camp,
Eatery & Gas Station**

The Phelps

In the Spring of 1925, Bill asked Roy and Arlie (Shank) Phelps to be the first operators of Shady Oaks Gas Station/Eatery, Grocery Store, Camp Ground and Cabin Camp. The Phelps were happy to accept the offer. It was the first and only stop west of Cedar Rapids for all of these conveniences, plus conversation which was a way of spreading the news.

When the Lincoln Highway passed Shady Oaks, there were from one to three gas pumps under the canopy of the Gas Station/Eatery. The simple, one-room Cafe boasted a 10-foot counter with five stools. There were three small tables that seated two people at each.



The Gas Station and Eatery

A large sign on top of the station advertised the locally produced Bailey Boys Pop which was bottled in more than six styles of green and clear, and short and tall bottles. The now almost obsolete match-book form of advertising said, "Bailey Boy's Pop, Quality Counts." Similar matchbooks are now only in the hands of collectors. Near Beer was another popular soft drink.

Other pictures show signs of the times that were posted on the station: tubes, tires, groceries, beer, milk, chicken sandwiches, ice cream cones, candies, cigars and cabins, plus the telephone number.

The Phelps moved into the small, three-room white house adjacent to (south of) the Shady Oaks Gas Station/Eatery on the yet unpaved Lincoln Highway. The Phelps' simply designed, one-story house pre-existed the Nortons' gas station by at least 10 years.

My visual sensitivity is aroused as I dream of vintage automobiles like the Model T, and other Aurora raceway-type roadsters and coupes, driving up to the little roadside station. After cranking their cars to start them, imagine the puffs of dust trailing behind them as they took off at the phenomenal speeds of the day.

A crank was attached to all Model Ts; and a first production 1912 Cadillac had self-contained lighting and starting capabilities which resulted from storage batteries, rather than kerosene. By 1928-1929, starters with keys became standard equipment; however, a crank (commencer) and crankhole were still included for good measure. In 1937, some Plymouths still came with the crank option which meant that a section of the grill could be removed to crank start the auto. Just as today, the cost of early-model vehicles was largely dependent on starter equipment and other options.

Snapshots of Shady Oaks during this time period are invaluable to me. One shows a large Sinclair Oil sign on the station; and on the globe on the top of the single pump, reads "Self Serve." A popular slogan of the day was, "Treat your car with care, buy Sinclair."

Another picture shows a Frye gasoline pump that is clear above; and it says, "Visible Gas." The customer could watch the gas gurgle out of the pump. These pumps required pushing a big handle back and forth to elevate the gasoline into the five-gallon

glass globe. Squeezing the nozzle allowed gravity to let the gas flow into your tank. Gravity-flow pumps were very inaccurate.

In November of 1993, Florian Wilcox told me about Roy and Arlie Phelps and their part in the history of Shady Oaks. I began corresponding with Arlie, and she shared many interesting stories with me. According to Arlie, there is much to tell, but her fingers and brain don't work as well together as they once did. The following will provide a profile of this remarkable lady.

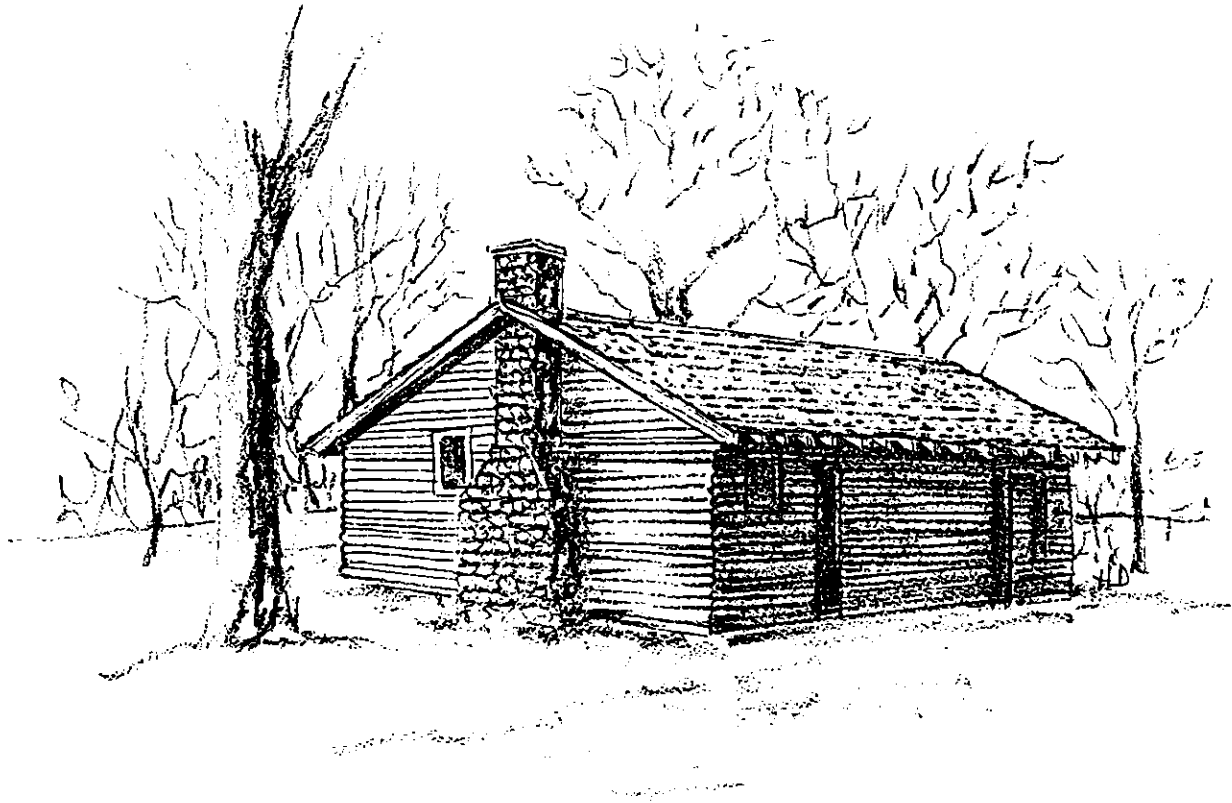
Arvilla L. Shank was born to Stephen and LaNora Shank on July 21, 1900, at their farm seven miles south of Marshalltown. She is the oldest sister of the late Senator Elizabeth Miller and the oldest, living daughter of seven children.

After attending country school, she drove a horse and buggy to high school in Marshalltown every day. Her work experience began at Kresges Store in Marshalltown. Four years later, June 15, 1921, she married Roy S. Phelps, son of Fred and Annibel Phelps of Green Mountain. Phelps was a World War I veteran.

The young couple drove out West in 1924 when the Lincoln Highway was still part dream and part reality. On that trip, they couldn't find any camps with cabins. Only a few places were available to park their car overnight, except where there was lodging with breakfast.

Roy and Arlie moved to Shady Oaks in the Spring of 1925. That year, five cabins were erected on the camp ground. These cabins were 12 by 16-foot rectangular frame structures with lapboard siding and attached carports. They were built on skids for mobility. The cabins were painted white with green trim. Basic attributes included a door and screen door at one end, two small windows on each end and three windows on one side and four on the other with horizontally-sliding sash. All the windows had screens. The interiors were painted light green, and the flooring was wood (pine).

Les told the Phelps that Shady Oaks was the first camp ground west of the Mississippi River to have cabins. This was corroborated by campground visitors who said they knew of none other. It was also said to be the only three gas-pump station along the Lincoln Highway west of the Mississippi; although,



The Dayroom Cabin

there were some in towns away from the Highway.

The couple enjoyed their work at Shady Oaks and made numerous friends. They had no trouble whatsoever. Arlie said, "Bill Norton was a good man and always treated Roy and I very well. He appeared to be in good health until he was hospitalized for a carbuncle on his neck. Complications of diabetes caused Bill's unexpected death on December 16, 1931."

The Phelps left Shady Oaks late in 1927. After leaving Shady Oaks, they moved into Marshalltown to operate the Easy Inn; and they remained there until 1930. The Phelps' twins, Sherwood and Shirley, were born in February of 1930. The family moved to Centralia, Missouri, in 1936 where another son Richard was born. In 1941, they moved to a farm near Fulton, Missouri.

Roy died February 25, 1988, at the age of 92. Arlie still misses Roy, as they were happily married for 67 years. Arlie's younger sister, Mildred Zeisness, resides in State

Center. Presently, Arlie lives alone in a nice trailer home close to her son and daughter-in-law, Sherwood and Joretta. Sherwood, now retired, was a guard at the Missouri State Penitentiary in Jefferson City, Missouri.

Reminiscing Shady Oaks with Arlie's Homespun Stories

Roy and Arlie nestled happily into their new surroundings at Shady Oaks, and their lives became interesting and extremely busy. Prior to the Phelps' sojourn at Shady Oaks, Roy had been in the service and worked in a Marshalltown theatre. He became Bill's right-hand man as he helped dig the well and build all the buildings in the park, including the Log Cabin and the outdoor toilets.

The 16 by 30-foot Log Cabin was built from native oak. In 1924, some of the larger trees were cut down and allowed to dry over the winter. The following spring, the wood was milled to build the Log Cabin. The next year the brick chimney was added, and sleeping

quarters were partitioned off for overnight lodging. The primary plan to build all of the cabins from logs was sacrificed due to the constraints of time and money.

Taking care of the cabins and the resident goats kept Roy busy, while Arlie was left in charge of the station. She pumped gas, made sandwiches, sold ice cream and washed by hand. The following history is extracted from Arlie's recollections.

The Gas Station/Eatery was one of the first quick shops on the Lincoln Highway. Arlie was often told by early-day travelers that there was nothing like it anywhere. At Shady Oaks, all the staples and even some canned goods were sold. The Phelps were on duty day and night. Neither were ever afraid when they opened up for a late-night customer.

Bill gave the Phelps a big Airdale dog. Airdales were originally bred in England's Aire River Valley. They are a working dog and the largest of terriers. Rags had a black and tan wiry coat, flat head squared off by whiskers and V-shaped, folded ears. His legs appeared large because of his thick coat.

Rags was a wonderful animal. One day they heard him barking out by the big ditch (small stream) that ran along the east side of the camp. They went to see what was wrong. A little, two year old boy from the camp ground had fallen into the ditch. Rags pulled the boy out of the water and saved his life.

It's interesting to note that Shady Oaks had its own Delco electric light plant to supply electricity. This DC (direct current) system required a generator which was driven by a gasoline engine. Electricity (voltage) was built up and stored, the opposite of AC which generates electricity all the time. A series (18 to 20) of rectangular, glass-encased lead-core batteries generated 32 volts. Each charged battery equaled one and one-half volts. It took three days to recharge a run-down battery. One battery in the series had a hydrometer-type ball which floated higher as the voltage increased. As the voltage decreased, lights would dim and quickly go out. Some systems were automatic. The wiring was clumsy and large like a battery cable.

A Delco plant was not only expensive to own and operate, but it required lots of maintenance for its limited supply. Arlie said, "There wasn't much electricity, just enough to get by." The undaunted spirit of the Phelps made things work.

Soon after, electricity was introduced to the Shady Oaks area. The post holes were dug by hand, and the 25 to 30-foot poles were set in the ground before the linemen arrived on the scene. When opportunity knocked at the Nortons' door, they were ready to purchase and install the utility poles for their property.

During the Phelps' years, they carried two grades of oil which sold for 15 and 25 cents per quart. One dollar bought five gallons of gas. Sandwiches cost 10 and 25 cents, hot chicken sandwiches were 25 cents, pop was five cents a bottle, three loaves of bread cost 25 cents, two pounds of coffee sold for 25 cents and sugar was three cents a pound. Ice cream cones were five and 10 cents. The cost for overnight tent camping was 25 cents a car which included the use of the "day room" in the Log Cabin.

Arlie described the day room, "It was one large room, with tables and chairs; and it was mainly used in the daytime. People from everywhere met at the Log Cabin for picnics and get-to-gethers." The Rock Valley Social Club occasionally met in the cabin.

The children that came to picnic played with Rags and the resident cats. A spirited Billy-goat, a nanny-goat and their family were part of the ambience. Billy and the kids, Mae and Tillie, kicked up their heels and climbed on rooftops and in the trees. Pictures of Arlie and the goats evoked childhood memories of the book "Billy Whiskers." My favorite picture shows Arlie wearing a ball-fringed sombrero over her dark, bobbed hair; she was sitting in the tall grass with Mae on her shoulder and Tillie under her arm.

Shortly after the Phelps moved to Shady Oaks, a car stopped in the middle of the road; and the driver started honking his horn. He had hit and killed a very large snake. It was about eight feet long and was as big around as a man's arm. The old man who lived south of Shady Oaks said it was just one of the many snakes that lived in the river (Timber Creek), and it was probably very old. The snake was hung on the park fence along the road. Passersby stopped to view the huge, colorful snake which was thought to be a water snake.

The Winter of 1925/26 was long and cold. The Lincoln Highway, yet unpaved, was closed most of the winter. The couple's mail

box was under a snow bank until spring, and business was poor.

In the Spring of 1926, the river (Timber Creek) went out of its banks. There was usually a pond across the road, but water was everywhere. The bridge approaches washed out. Wild ducks were confused; the land east of the house was covered with water. Several dead cows washed down stream. When Arlie opened her door one morning, she thought the water was ready to come into her house.

The Summer of 1926 was quite warm and pleasant. Business was good, as there were very few filling stations on the Lincoln Highway at that time with both a day pump and a self-serve night pump. When you put a silver dollar in the self-serve pump, five gallons of gas ran out immediately. If the hose wasn't in the tank, the gas ran out on the ground.

Roy and Arlie had many Indian friends, both young and old. Arlie wrote, "Shortly before we moved to Shady Oaks, Iowa moved all the Indians to a reservation near Tama." Every day at least five or six Indians, sometimes more, drove from Tama in their cars (mostly Model T's). They never went beyond Shady Oaks. Arlie still emphasizes, "The Indians were wonderful people; we learned a lot and really enjoyed visiting with them."

Of all the groceries, the Indians wanted vanilla. However, they couldn't sell it to the Indians due to its alcohol content. Thus, the vanilla was removed from the shelves. They never had a problem with customers not paying.

Arlie still laughs when she thinks of the big Chief with his feathered headdress, beads and shawl (blanket). She emphasized the word "big." His wife, in comparison, was quite small and pretty. He always ordered her around in their Indian tongue.

The old Chief and his wife came by every week and filled their Model T with gas. He always sat in the back seat. Usually the daughter came too; she had long, black hair and dark, sharp eyes and was very pretty. Both women always wore beautiful, beaded shawls which the older woman had made. Arlie wanted to buy one of the shawls, but they were not for sale.

According to Arlie, the Chief's wife always drove and did whatever needed to be done. One day, after getting their supplies, a flat tire



Chief Young Bear

was discovered on the back of the car. Their jack wasn't in good repair, so Arlie used one kept at the station. As the old Chief sat in the back seat, Arlie jacked (raised) both he and the car up so the tire could be removed.

Roy wasn't home, as he had gone after supplies. When Arlie finally got the tire patched and back on, the car wouldn't start. The Indian woman tried to crank the car, but it still wouldn't start. Finally, Roy came home and got the car started. The Chief never got out. That was the last time they ever saw the Indian family.

The Chief that Arlie referred to was Young Bear, who was the oldest son of Push-e-to-ne-qua, the last Tribal Chief of the Mesquakies. Young Bear's father was appointed Chief by a special act of Congress and reigned for 40 years. Push-e-to-ne-qua was the only Indian Chief in the United States recognized as such.

Young Bear's Mesquakie name was Mucqua-pon-na-sha. He was born in 1867 along the Racoon River, where his parents liked to hunt and fish. Upon his father's death in 1919, the last survivor of Indian royalty, it was believed that Young Bear would be the next Tribal Chief. Although he was not a real Chief, he was adopted to be the acting Chief per se. He was a religious leader of the Bear Clan and Chief of the Tribal Council when the new Constitution and bylaws were approved in 1937.

Young Bear married twice and fathered many children. His first wife, mother of his children, died of pneumonia in 1920. She reached the end of her life's pilgrimage at the age of 50 and was allowed to sleep under the whispering trees that met above her head, near the body of her father-in-law, the last Indian Chief. Young Bear's second wife preceded him in death in 1944. Young Bear died in 1945 and was buried on Mesquakie Hill overlooking the Iowa River.

The Indians thought Roy could do anything. One afternoon the Phelps looked out their window and saw a car being pushed up the road by five Indian men. Their car had stopped about a mile away, and they were sure Roy could fix it. He cleaned the carburetor, sold them their customary two gallons of gas and sent them on their way.

Arlie wrote, "At that time, the Indians all were clean cut and looked like they had been cut out of the same piece of cloth. The men were big and strong. All had black hair, sharp brown eyes, straight noses, medium-sized mouths and straight white teeth. Their distinct facial structure suggested strength. Many had animal names. We saw very few females and only one small baby wrapped in a shawl. Their language was much different than our's, as it consisted mostly of grunts and motions. Even though I couldn't always understand, Roy could."

One day a man and lady drove into the station to fill their car with gas and check the oil. The lady went into the outside restroom. The man paid for the fill, got into the car and drove away. Soon the lady appeared and realized she was stranded. After two hours, the man returned. His story was that when he reached home he looked in the back seat and discovered she wasn't there. He thought maybe he had hit a bump and had thrown her

out of the car. When they drove away, she was in the front seat with him talking very loudly.

One cold, wet morning a tired little boy, with a tear-streaked face, came walking into the station with good old "Rags." Arlie didn't recognize the bedraggled child, and he couldn't tell his name as he was very frightened and only three or four years old. After eating, he fell asleep with Rags at his side. Just as the Phelps were ready to call the Sheriff, the child's folks arrived. They had been looking for him, as he had been gone overnight and was over three miles from home. The story ended happily.

In November of 1926, a Model T Ford drove in from New Orleans. A man, woman and boy about six years old were on their way to visit relatives. They had never seen snow before and needed a cabin for the night. They warmed up a cabin by building a fire in a little heating stove. They had blankets with them, so they made out just fine that night.

The next morning, as they were all eating breakfast, they heard sleigh bells. It had snowed about five inches during the night. It was a beautiful sight, as the wet snow hung heavily on the tree branches. The little family went out to play in the snow, making snow angels and even eating some of it.

The little boy thought the bells he heard belonged to Santa Claus. It was really the farmer who lived back in the field across the road. The man was driving his big team of dappled-gray mares. The excited little boy was sure it was Santa in the sled with the sleighbells. No one could change his mind. The farmer went along with the young boy, and the horses became reindeers.

The farmer asked the stranded family if they would like to ride down the road with him. The mother and father sat in the straw, but the little boy stood up front with the farmer. When they came back, the happy boy was driving the big team. This was the first time the parents had ever seen a bobsled or heard sleighbells. Roy and Arlie were afraid the young boy would be sick, because he was so very excited. When Santa left, he said he had to get back to the North Pole before Christmas.

The family stayed in the camp a second night. On the radio the next morning, another winter storm was in the forecast.

With this news, they turned around and left for home. The Phelps often wondered if the family got home safely, as they never heard from them again.

The day that Rags came up missing, the Phelps were sure he hadn't wandered off alone. Probably a dog-napper had taken him. The loss filled them with anxiety and despair. When they were almost resigned to life without him, the weary dog with sore feet and cracked tongue walked up and laid down by the doorway. He had found his way home. When he was about 10 years old, Rags was hit by a car and died.

In the Spring of 1927, Arlie and folks at the station were startled by a terrible noise. An airplane that had barnstormed the Shady Oaks area in the past landed on the road near the station. It caused quite a stir. A mixture of fear and curiosity soon drew a crowd. Some young folks at the station recognized the pilot and ran after the plane as it taxied down the road and flew away. Arlie said, "A couple of years later, the Barnstorming pilot (Karl Lorenzen) was fatally injured when his plane, which was being piloted by a student (Will Evans), crashed two miles southeast of Beaman."

Veteran pilot Lorenzen was 29 years old when this tragedy took his life on May 25, 1929. Evans was killed instantly, but Lorenzen was unconscious when removed from the plane. Both men were found clutching the control sticks; they had apparently frozen the controls. At the Deaconess Hospital, Dr. R. I. Keyser said that Lorenzen had no chance of recovery as his head and spine were crushed.

Arlie wrote, "They were trying to clean up Chicago. One day around four o'clock in the afternoon several carloads of people drove in. There were many women and kids, and they wanted overnight lodging. We had to put up cots in the Log Cabin so we could crowd them all in. They bought groceries and filled up their cars. The next morning before sunrise they were gone. We wondered who they were but didn't ask questions. Two days later (word didn't travel as swiftly) officers from Chicago stopped by looking for them. We heard sometime later that they found some of the crooks in Omaha, Nebraska."

One day when Arlie was alone five car loads of gypsies arrived. They spread out

everywhere, stealing everything they could find. Arlie finally got them out of the station, but then they got into her little house and started rummaging through things. A neighbor noticed the disturbance and called the sheriff. The gypsies finally left but not until they had filled up their cars with gas and oil. They were probably remnants of the early-day gypsies with horse-drawn wagons who had first camped in the area.

Many tramps stopped at the Eatery. The Phelps fed at least one a day and sometimes five or six. They usually gave them an egg sandwich and a cup of coffee. Only one man offered to work for his dinner. Arlie put him to work scrubbing the cistern. He had just begun when a salesman arrived who was on his way to Omaha, and the tramp left with him. A year later the same man (tramp) returned; he had almost been around the world and had some interesting stories to tell.

In a phone conversation with Arlie, another incident made her laugh. One lady usually stopped in with a crate of eggs to trade. On this occasion, she brought her little boy with her. While Arlie was putting gas and oil in her car, the child wandered into the station. By the time the ladies went inside, the little boy had thrown out eleven dozen eggs; only the bottom row was left. The egg lady spent most of the rest of the day cleaning up the spattered eggs. She then had to pay for the gas and oil as she had nothing to trade.

It's been a privilege to correspond and visit with Arlie about early-day Shady Oaks. Having rummaged through hundreds of archival postcards for a glimpse of Shady Oaks, I had nearly given up. It's my good fortune that Sherwood took the time to look through Arlie's treasures and locate the precious photos of Shady Oaks that his parents had taken in 1925, 26 and 27. Arlie said the Lincoln Highway postcards sold for nickel apiece. The pictures helped fit the jigsaw pieces of history into their proper places. Even the oak trees are easy to identify.

I was pleased to receive a note from Arlie in February of 1994. She thanked me for the pictures I sent to her, including one of Chief Youngbear. Arlie wrote, "I could hardly believe my eyes, it was a picture of that Indian Chief. He had on the same shawl, with a line of white beads along one side. He always wore a string of beads that sparkled in the sunlight; perhaps

it was made of shells and stones. He looked just the same as he did in the back seat of that old Model T car. I wish Roy were here to enjoy these pictures."

In closing one of our telephone conversations about Shady Oaks, we told each other "Merry Christmas" and wished we lived closer. It was a Christmas miracle to hear Arlie's wonderful stories of seven decades earlier. This gift, tied with heartstrings, is about both my home and Arlie's. Time seems irrelevant.

I detected a note of sadness in Arlie's voice when I told her that only one of the cabins remains. Her stories tell me that this alert lady has always felt a keen awareness of life; they are gems. Receiving and reading her letters were like warm bands of sunlight streaming across the floor on a cold, winter day. I thank Arlie for her wonderful stories and homespun philosophy.

The Nortons

When the Nortons opened Shady Oaks, Les was married to Delia Dorn. They had three children: Herbert Leslie, 1911 (died June 20, 1989); Norma Dell Munter, 1915; and Wilbur ("Bill") Linn, 1922. Both reside in California: Norma in Oceanside, and Bill and his wife in Carlsbad.

Although the business was going smoothly, the Nortons' personal life was turbulent. Les and Delia were divorced in the mid-1920s. As part of the divorce settlement, Delia sold their Marshalltown home, two gas stations in town and kept the Studebaker car. In 1927, Delia and the children moved to Long Beach, California.

Shortly afterward, Les eloped with Ruth (May) Marsh from the Garwin area. They were married in Sioux City. The Nortons continued to operate the Shady Oaks Cabin Camp and live in the original office/residence, opposite the Log Cabin.

Delia Norton made occasional trips back to Iowa, and the family was reunited on friendly terms. Ruth made them all welcome. On a return trip to California in 1956, Delia was killed instantly in an auto accident in Utah. Her daughter, Norma Dell, was thrown out of the car, but survived the accident. According to Norma, her mother had been haunted by a dream and premonition of impending death.

Norma fondly recalls a reflecting, glass globe atop a pedestal. It stood across the driveway from the Nortons' home at Shady Oaks. As a little girl, Norma was too small to put her arms around the large globe, but she was fascinated by its reflections. Later, when her father moved to Florida, he took this treasure with him. In ancient Europe, these glass globes were thought to attract garden fairies and ward off witches.

As a teenager, Herb grew tomatoes at Shady Oaks. Les took him into town to sell them on a street corner and picked him up when it was time to go home (or when the tomatoes were gone). Herb's son, Don Norton, who operates a greenhouse in Toledo, believes he may have acquired his "green thumb" from his father.

In March of 1994, Margaret (Gossard) Bradley of Denver, Colorado, visited Marshalltown to celebrate the 103rd birthday of her mother, Frances (Wilbur) Gossard. Margaret said, "My mother and father were friends of Les and Ruth Norton. Around the age of 13 (1927), I became ill with what the doctors called 'leakage of the heart.' It is now called rheumatic fever. I was sort of puny at the time. The illness required complete bed rest, and no medication could cure the malady. For a young girl, and only child, it was a horrible way to spend an entire summer vacation. It was very hot in town, and there was no air-conditioning."

Margaret's folks thought they could scrape up enough money to rent a cabin at beautiful Shady Oaks. Frances believed the cool, fresh air and tranquil environment would be therapeutic for her daughter's illness. The Gossards rented a cabin in the middle row for two consecutive summers in the late 1920s, and Margaret's father drove into town every day to work.

Margaret said, "I still remember the restful setting and kindnesses extended. Ruth Norton, a caring person, furnished a reclining lawn chair for me. Each evening, overnight guests visited with me and went on their way the next morning." The pleasant change and relaxed atmosphere was healing to Margaret, and her family all benefitted from their experience.

Faye (Carter) Appelgate (deceased 1994) of Hollister, Missouri, was a first cousin of both Ruth Norton and Kermit Peek. In the

Summer of 1927, she visited Shady Oaks. She loved running over the jiggling foot bridge between the Cabin Camp and Cafe. In Faye's memory, it was a swinging bridge. She also remembered staying in a cabin with her mother one damp, chilly night; her mother was afraid to light the heater in the cabin.

The Norton brothers dissolved their partnership in the Shady Oaks operation in May of 1928, leaving Les in charge. He enthusiastically continued to build fireplaces, place lawn furniture, provide recreational facilities (such as horseshoe courts) and construct buildings necessary for the operation of the Cabin Camp.

Periodically, young Bill returned to Iowa to live with his father and step-mother. When he was small, the Nortons' home at Shady Oaks consisted of one great room with a pot-bellied stove in the center for heat, a bedroom to the right (south) and the kitchen to the back (east). In the winter, baths were taken in a tub near the stove. One can almost feel the radiating heat, visualize the ruddy glow and hear the crackling and sizzling of the fire, as the family was drawn together around the stove. On cold, winter nights in the late 1920s, this was a comforting way to end the day. I am warmed by these thoughts.

Doris (Paul) Kvidera, originally from Gilman, was a student at Grinnell College. She recalled bringing a group of 12 Girl Scouts to Shady Oaks for a camp out in 1929. She thought they stayed in the newer, larger cabins. The names of these cabins hung over their doorways on the small porches. The most unforgettable part of that outing was the never-ending rain during their two-night stay.

In 1931, all of the freshman girls at LeGrand High School made pajamas (the popular long, colorful lounging style) in their home economics class. To celebrate, they decided to have a slumber party at Shady Oaks. The seven girls were Maxine (Hoover) Beane, Esther (Hoover) Stoner, Rosaline (Haynes) Sharp, Esther Mahle, Lois Gaunt, Helen Radloff and Martha Garrett. They stayed overnight in one of the larger cabins, and Maxine recalls making waffles for breakfast the next morning in the kitchenette.

According to Maxine, one of the earliest cabins is in repose at the Dave Beane farm north of LeGrand. Its heater, sink and carport are intact. At first, the little cabin was placed high on a hill. Later, it was moved to a wooded site by a man-made farm pond. It is comforting to know that Cabin #2 rests in the shade of an oak tree.



Bill Norton's Saturday Night Bath

Genre of Shady Oaks: Act One

The Nortons' son, J Leslie, was born in July of 1932. The letter J was his given name. Due to J's poor health, he had to drink goats' milk. J also enjoyed riding in a goat-pulled cart. His brother, Bill, took care of the goat, but neither he nor Norma could remember its name. J attended Rock Valley School and was a good student. Photos of J show him with his family, friends, toys, and pets. He brought great joy to his parents.

The first five cabins with carports were built on the front row next to Lincoln Highway, just north of the Log Cabin. They were identical. The convenience of parking cars in carports next to each cabin was ideal for unloading and organizing belongings for the next day's travel. The carports were complete with overhead light bulbs that could be switched on or off as needed.

In the center row, Les added seven more cabins also with adjoining carports. Unlike the first five, each new cabin was different in size and design. The cabin with the garage was the first one north of the office/residence; and the third cabin to the north had an additional room. Each cabin had a striped awning above its front window and a park bench out front.

According to a 1930 Conoco Travel Guide, Shady Oaks had 12 cottages at \$1 and \$2 per night. Shortly thereafter, there was a total of 18 cabins. Three of the 18 were small, overnight cabins with half-baths. They were built south of the sidewalk, east of the office/residence. The larger cabins, Dollhouse and Dreamland, boasted front porches that faced the east. The rates varied with the number of occupants.

Cabin #18 was like an early day mobile home. It was parked in "Sleepy Hollow" in the northeast corner of the camp, and it claimed its own outhouse. This corner was appropriately named for the story, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." "There is a lap of land, . . . one of the quietest places in the world. A small brook glides through it, with just murmur enough to lull one to repose and the . . . tapping of a woodpecker is almost the only sound that ever breaks in upon the uniform tranquility. If ever I should wish for a retreat, . . . I might steal away from this world and its distractions . . . I know of none more promising than this little valley . . . This sequestered glen has long been known by the name of SLEEPY HOLLOW."

Before the plumbing was complete, combinets were used in the primitive cabins; and outhouses were nearby. Originally, the pump was outside the Log Cabin. In the winter, Les worried about the pump freezing; and an addition was built on to enclose the pump.

Les converted the Log Cabin's dayroom into a showerhouse and laundry. The mens' shower was toward the highway and the womens' was on the inner-drive side. The restrooms were added later. Ruth had two Maytag washers and rinse tubs in the Log Cabin, where she laundered endless towels and linens for the cabins. The large room between was private, and it was used for the storage of mowers and other equipment.

Max Duncan of LeGrand worked at the Shady Oaks Cabin Camp in 1935 and 1936. His duties were to clean the cabins. Changing the beds, cleaning the bathrooms, scrubbing the floors and putting on clean linens took a big part of the morning. All of the laundry was collected and taken to the wash house, where Max and Ruth did the washing. Then Max did most of the ironing using the mangle on the south end of the Norton's porch. In the afternoon, he mowed the grounds; and it took several days with all of the trimming.

While stripping a bed one day, Max found a pistol. Soon after, a man drove in and went to the cabin where he had stayed. When asked if he had found a pistol, Max gladly gave it to him. The man was very grateful.

Max said, "In those years, Shady Oaks was exciting and busy with all of the cabins filling up every night during the summer. I enjoyed my work, but I was just a young man. Eventually, I found a better-paying job and left the Camp along the old Lincoln Highway behind."

A bird bath, unique wind machine, park benches and classic Adirondack lawn chairs beautified the park area adjacent to the camp entrance. The chairs' art form originated in the Adirondack Mountains of New York; these porch or lawn chairs were often seen at family cabins and camps. Beautiful Shady Oaks was always kept in excellent repair, including fresh white paint, flowers and other cosmetic touches that enhanced the homey setting. The smallness of the cabins emphasized the size of the trees.

The popularity of Shady Oaks spread rapidly and many guests made return visits the same and following years. Norton was the proud owner of a tourist accommodation which he constantly groomed and enhanced to make it attractive.

Ross Howard was a teenager in the late 1920s when he was hired to mow the entire lawn around Shady Oaks Cabin Camp and Cafe with a push mower. He compared the never-ending summer job to that of maintaining a golf course.

In 1935, Les asked Gilbert Chinn to build a natural-looking rock garden, lily pool and small waterfall in the gully between the Cabin Camp and Cafe. Twenty-two year old Gilbert was a near neighbor. He could only work on the project at night or on the weekend, as he had a job at Ford's Flower Shop in Marshalltown. Gilbert collected the stone at the Rock Valley Quarry below the cemetery. He took great pride in his work. The plants were chosen with care. Upon completion, the beautiful landscaped hill was visible from the footbridge that paralleled the highway between the Cabin Camp and Cafe. The bridge was frequented by overnight guests as they walked between the two places. In 1993, my grandson, Mick Jurgensen, found the cement pool on the hill south of the present "Valley of Deep Green Fern."

Many groups such as Gra-Iron Foundry Corporation had their annual picnics at Shady Oaks. Tom Pohle accompanied his dad to several such affairs (spreads) in the 1920s.

Another group that picnicked at Shady Oaks park in the early 1930s were members of a Mission Band from the First Evangelical Church in Marshalltown. The band was led by Anna Banghart. Some of those attending the picnic were Martha Austin, Janice (Banghart) Barnhart, Mary Lou and Dorthea Banghart, Lucille Beaterstaff, Jean Brown, La Moille Duncan, Lova and Leta Duncan, Beulah Knoll, Gerald Adkins and George Zeigler. I. C. Banghart provided transportation for his wife and the band; he pulled them around in a trailer behind his Model T Ford.

It was customary for the Quaker Lane Society to hold their annual family picnic at Shady Oaks. Laura (Keen) Smaha

reminisced about these picnics. Favorite activities were playing ball and wading in the creek. The section of highway west of LeGrand, between the two sets of railroad tracks, is historically know as "Quaker Lane." Bill Etter recalled a large group picnic at Shady Oaks that he attended with his father in 1935. It was a state picnic for the NPEA (National Power Engineers Association). His father, an engineer, worked at Glick Supply Company and called on power and water treatment plants throughout the state. One of the highlights of the picnic was the stock tank over a fire where they cooked enough corn on the cob for a county fair. Bill didn't tell me if he participated in the sack and three-legged races. Imagine how this impressed a young boy. It sounds equivalent to a feast set before a threshing crew. It whets my appetite to write about it.

In the mid-1930s, a Groff family reunion of at least 25 relatives was held at Shady Oaks. Most arrived in Model Ts, but Bob's family came in their 1923 Chevy sedan. Bob said, "I was 10 years old and remember seeing my first black bear cub. It was in a slanted, rectangular wire cage atop one of the cabin roofs. I kept hoping it wouldn't escape."

In this same time frame, Eleanor Day, who was working at The Marshalltonian, a semi-weekly newspaper, and three friends decided to spend a summer at Shady Oaks. According to Eleanor, "We met after work at 5:00 p.m. and drove out to Shady Oaks Campground together on old U.S. Highway 30. It was so cool! There was no air conditioning in those days. Of course, we couldn't wait to scramble out of our work clothes and put on shorts, or something comfy. We did some of our own cooking, cleaning and took turns with the other chores. There was a little cafe on the grounds and sometimes we walked over to eat, play the juke box and dance. I wish you could visit the place as it was then."

Cabin Camp signs were both large and small and placed along what was the Lincoln Highway. They were lit at night. The Log Cabin had both "Laundry" and "Showers" signs posted on it. On trees, there was a sign for "Water" and another offering "Trailer Spaces." A large sign discovered in May of

1995 read, "Shady Oaks Cabin Camp, 4 miles, Laundry, Showers, Fine Water and Shade."

Bill lived in California, but his roots were in Iowa. When he returned to visit his father, he always hoped to go hunting or fishing with his dad, but Les wasn't interested in those sports. Bill did join scouts; and his Uncle Bill's son, Wayne Norton, was his scoutmaster. In the late 1930s, Bill attended Rock Valley School. The following year he walked a third of a mile south to the Trowbridge Corner to catch the schoolbus to Le Grand.

The new add-on room to the north in the Norton home was Bill's. When he missed his friends and returned to California, the room was used as a sleeping room for hired help or for storage. If Bill returned while the room was occupied, he stayed in Cabin #8, which faced west on the inner road; it had both a front and back door.

Bill remembers his dad going to town once a week for groceries and supplies. In the winter, one of the small cabins back of the house was used as a deep freeze. The wrapped meat was laid on a table in the cabin where it remained frozen or chilled until it was used. Bill's favorite food was the breaded pork tenderloins that were served at the Cafe. They were prepared in advance and fried in a skillet on the simple gas stove before serving.

Bill was always intrigued by his father's roll-top (S) desk with its many, tiny drawers. Les conducted all camp business at this desk. It maintained its place of honor on the north end of the glassed-in porch until the early 1960s. The doorbell for late arrivals is also gone.

The "Main Street across America" (Lincoln Highway), with its distinguishing emblem on cement posts, encouraged the widespread use of automobiles that brought early travelers from every state. Cabins were an important milestone in the early tourist business, especially to women and families. This type of lodging brought welcome relief to weary travelers.

Norma admired the great compassion her dad showed for his clients. Finding a cabin along the road was easier than driving into the next town, locating a hotel and carrying heavy luggage up a flight of dark steps or paying a bell boy for his service.

Shady Oaks belonged to the ITA (Interstate Tourist Association) which offered approved accommodations in the late 1930s. This special insignia gave class and let tourists know that Shady Oaks met up to certain criteria such as comfort, location and service.

Shady Oaks offered a complete package of overnight accommodations, gas station, cafe and groceries. The Cafe and gas station provided service to the early traveler and supplemented the Nortons' income in the off-tourist season. However, it was never just a Ma and Pa operation, as another couple ran the gas station; and Les often hired help to assist in the Cabin Camp operation.

At Shady Oaks, Les was the host; and his wife Ruth, a gracious lady and mother, added dignity. Let us not forget that they were tourist camp pioneers. The Nortons' pleasure was serving the public.

In November of 1993, I received a letter from Norma (Norton) Munter. Enclosed was a shiny, black and white photo postcard of early-day Shady Oaks. She thought she had disposed of the postcard during the past year, as she couldn't imagine any living person wanting it. Having searched in vain through many orphaned postcards, I was elated. Toss-aways are often another's treasure.

Without a doubt, the picture on the postcard is of Shady Oaks. It is noted as such on the face of the card. The trees, original office/residence and Log Cabin are still here. The picture shows a white archway over the drive with a vintage railroad signal arm on top. Guests stopped at the office to register, pay and get the key to their assigned cabin. Perhaps they also picked up towels and instructions.

The postcard is a treasured, historical reference. There is a 1940s Plymouth parked in front of the office/residence. Young Bill said his father always drove a Plymouth, usually a new one each year. On the card, it says "Shady Oaks Cabins, 5 Miles East of Marshalltown, Iowa, on No. 30." I imagine this was the distance from the courthouse.

J's children, Douglas (1958), Robert (1960) and Nancy (1956) lived with him in Florida and Louisiana. Most holidays were spent at his parents' home in Pensacola. After Les' death, Nancy (13) lived with her

grandma for a while, but Ruth smothered her with love in an attempt to fill the void. After that, Nancy moved to Bermuda with her father and family. When Nancy was a senior in high school, she again sought safe harbor in Ruth's home. While waiting on her out-of-town boyfriend, Nancy listened with her heart to her Grannie's stories of Iowa. It was fortunate that the two had the opportunity to redeem their relationship and once again bond.

In 1995, Nancy (Norton) Hynes was living in her grandparents' home in Pensacola. This busy wife and mother of six (four boys and two girls), ranging in age from 17 months to 12 years of age, home schools her older children. Her brothers, Douglas and Robert were living in Italy and Kansas, respectively.

J's only daughter, Nancy, added a miracle element to my story. She was like a sand dollar on the beach; a treasure just waiting to be discovered. Ruth's stories, retold by Nancy, add color to the faded memories depicted in the black and white pictures of the Nortons' years at Shady Oaks.

These stories are still within Nancy waiting for a receptive ear. In February of 1995, Nancy asked me, "Did I tell you about Bonnie and Clyde or the Persians? They were some of grannie's favorite remnants of Shady Oaks and happened over 60 years ago."

It is rumored that the notorious team known as "Bonnie and Clyde" passed this way early in April of 1934. A couple in a Ford, matching the newspaper's description, stopped briefly at Shady Oaks. Usually unafraid, fear engulfed the Nortons. They were relieved when the couple left without incidence.

Could it be that Bonnie, the country's most wanted woman, and Clyde, public enemy number one, actually passed this way. Diners and gas stations were the prime target for their hold-ups. The time frame is correct, but details are lacking. At the time, the management was not eager to share this information.

The 90-pound, cigar-smoking Bonnie Parker loved the thin, young man with big ears and wavy, dark hair named Clyde Barrow. "The Ballad of Bonnie and Clyde,"

was written by Bonnie Parker in 1934, shortly before they met their bloody demise in Texas and their crime spree ended forever:

"Some day they will go down together, and they will bury them side by side. To a few it means grief, to the law it's relief, but it's death to Bonnie and Clyde."

For a few summers, Persian families (as Les preferred to call them), arrived at Shady Oaks and set up four or five tents in the camp ground area. The women and girls had dark, creamy complexions, pretty black hair and moved gracefully. The men with the entourage sold their Persian rugs. The rugs were rich and harmonious in color and came in a variety of avian, floral and foliate designs.

After the Persians canvassed the area for several weeks, they moved on to a new territory. They didn't linger in any one place, as selling rugs was their livelihood. They left the camp ground tidy, and their return visits were welcomed.

I am impressed and amazed that Nancy has kept her grannie's memorabilia until I discovered her. On the many snapshots, it was interesting to read the dates and Ruth's comments. On one, Ruth wrote, "Beautiful Shady Oaks," and on another, she wrote, "My beautiful baby and my beautiful fur coat." I believe the notations reflect the beauty Ruth found in life. Tucked away among her cherished keepsakes was the following note from Mabelle (Hill) Jerome of Pasadena, California; it was typical of other notes Ruth received at that time:

"And we thought Iowa was a prairie state without trees . . . now we're passing the word about the beautiful trees at Shady Oaks. It's a haven for travelers! I enjoyed our evening stroll around the park and listening to the brook and singing crickets. Contentment lulled us to sleep. A soft breeze drifting through an open window and a songbird symphony awoke us.

"Yes, we fell in love with your auto camp and hope to return next year. We've stayed in other tourist cabins but none compare to your commitment to excellence. Fragrant white sheets, your genuine warm hospitality and the lovely setting make Shady Oaks an oasis."

Nancy also mentioned the wool blankets with the Shady Oaks' logo on them. She has kept two of the blankets even though they are threadbare. They are light gray, and Shady Oaks is woven in red in the dark gray eight-inch border.

According to Nancy, "This neat poem, written by Mabelle (Hill) Jerome, was also among her Grannie's keepsakes, but there's no hint of a date:

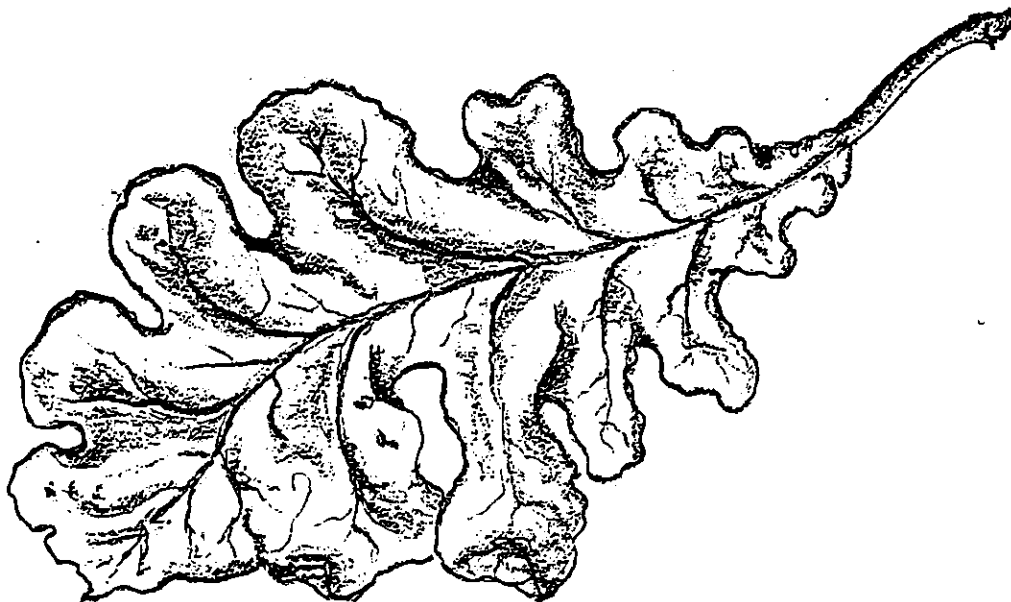
*"There's a lovely spot in Iowa
on the bank of a little brook;
While others rush and hurry by,
you can rest in a shady nook.
The birds all sing their morning song
in the beautiful old oak trees.
Forget you are going somewhere,
and just rest there at your ease.
There too, you're always sure to find
the nicest kind of folks;
Who love to stop and stay awhile
at beautiful Shady Oaks."*

In closing, Nancy told me, "Everytime I hear from you, it touches my heart and stirs memories of my grandparents and dad."

Our neighbor, Maynard Johnson, is a short wave enthusiast. Several years ago he contacted a man in Florida on his radio. As they chatted, the fellow said that he used to be a patrolman on Highway 30 out of Cedar Rapids. Maynard said, "Maybe you know where I live. I'm just north of Shady Oaks Camp." The fellow was quiet for a moment and then said, "Sure, I know the place. That's where Al Capone used to stay."

Who can question a patrolman? It was the Lincoln Highway, a direct route to and from Chicago. Kermit Peek's daughter, Judy, from Crystal Lake, Illinois, remembers the stories her aunt, Ruth Norton, told of Al Capone stopping at the gas station for a fill and staying overnight at the Cabin Camp. Ruth told her that Capone was very polite.

When the Phelps moved into Marshalltown, Les asked his good friend, Walt



Lawler, and his pretty young wife, the former Ruth Wolfgang, to manage Shady Oaks. He chose a couple he believed were strong in their convictions and not easily intimidated by a new challenge. Lawler was ready to tackle any job offered to him. This roadside stop continued to play an unique role in Marshall County history. It made a statement of the way times were in America regarding transportation and commerce.

Act One, Scene Two
Shady Oaks Cafe

The Lawlers

In 1927, when America was in a state of economic optimism, the Lawlers began operating Shady Oaks Cafe. Large Curtiss, Baby Ruth and Denver Sandwich signs were on the outside of the building. Other signs were Old Gold, Chesterfields are Milder, Copenhagen, Avalon, Prince Albert and Coca Cola.

The Lawlers lived next door to Shady Oaks Cafe ("Cafe") and gas station for approximately ten years. Their son, Bart, was born several years after their arrival. In back of the simple Lawler home, there was a small rock garden with paths and a pool. This was verified by a picture of Bart and his dog in the garden. The Lawler home was not modern. Bart remembered walking up to the Cabin Camp to take a shower in the Log Cabin. The young boy had to cross the 25 to 30-foot long foot bridge over a ditch to reach the camp.

Several large picnic tables were kept down by the twin oaks where the small stream joins Timber Creek. The once famous fishing hole was located in this cove. A driveway that turned off at the lone oak led to this place. Small, scrubby trees now grow in this former pasture area. At night, during the Prohibition Era (1920-1933), bootlegging flourished nearby. Hardy Friend parked his car in a secluded spot in the shadow of Rainbow Bridge. Here, the bootlegger sold alcohol (hooch) by the gallon. His customers brought their own fruit jars to be filled.

During this time period, nice young fellows protesting prohibition were taking their own pints or flasks of alcohol along to eating establishments. The bottles were

discreetly kept under the table for mixing drinks. Many hoped for an end to this era, as bootleggers were everywhere.

Shady Oaks and "Spike Beer" days were synonymous with prohibition. "Spike Beer" was made by pouring the top off of a bottle of Near Beer, adding alcohol and shaking well. Dean Elder, Sr. thought everyone in his generation would have a flat thumb from putting it over the mouth of the bottle when shaking it. Although Walt was big and fearless, he wasn't a bootlegger; and Ruth, his wife, was a very pretty, pleasant and polite lady.

Fred Kollin was a Marshalltown fireman who sometimes assisted as a law enforcement officer. His son, Robert (of Lawrence, Kansas), said, "My father was often staked out near Shady Oaks awaiting Chicago bootleggers."

Walt Lawler was firmly established on the scene at Shady Oaks when Herbert Hoover, a native son of Iowa, became the 31st President of the United States in 1929. Hoover's boyhood environment in West Branch and influence of heredity were strongly marked in his character. Hoover was an engineer, statesman and humanitarian.

The headlines in The Des Moines Register, on Friday, October 25, 1929 read, "12,800,000 SHARES ARE SOLD — Police Called, Ambulances Clang As Stocks Crash." No administration ever began more happily than Hoover's did and ended in such panic.

The big depression of the 1930s followed. In one year, 30,000 businesses failed; and the gross national income dropped from 80 billion to 40 billion.

Two local attorneys and octogenarians also have memories of Shady Oaks. Ed Adams and his pals rode their bicycles out to the Cafe and gas station to buy pop and candybars. John Mowry (deceased 1995) recalled that Ruth Lawler raised colorful banty chickens to serve at the Cafe. Their meat was dark and tender, much like wild game. Tourists and local town and country folks alike all stopped at the little Cafe.

Gerald ("Jerry") B. Cox related the following unforgettable journey in a Velie in the late 1920s. A Velie was an automobile that was manufactured in Moline, Illinois, for several years before going bankrupt around 1930.

Jerry, his brothers and parents lived in Davenport; and they often visited an aunt and uncle in Marshalltown. Jerry's brothers were masters at informing him of dangers that lurked everywhere as they sped along at 35 miles per hour in their big, black touring car. When they passed Tama on their way for a Fourth of July weekend in Marshalltown, Jerry's dad casually mentioned the nearby Indian reservation. His brothers mouthed the word "Indians" and told Jerry to hide on the floor under the car robe.

After what seemed like an eternity and gasping for breath, Jerry sat up for air just as Rainbow Bridge south of Shady Oaks came into view. A gust of hot wind snatched his swimsuit (not swim trunks) out of his hands, and it fluttered about before landing in some weeds in the ditch. He knew his dad would have stopped to retrieve the swimsuit, but Jerry was speechless. His heart was pounding, and he could picture Indians lurking everywhere!

During the entire Fourth of July weekend, Jerry remained silent and pretended not to care about swimming. Later he learned that his brothers always talked in low tones so their mother couldn't hear the stories they were fabricating.

Jerry now lives south of Marshalltown. He recently said, "Whenever I pass the Shady Oaks and Rainbow Bridge area, I always think of the Indians and that long ago Fourth of July."

Popular cars at this time included Terraplane, DeSoto, Pontiac, Dodge, Plymouth, Ford and Chevrolet. The models were called touring coach or sedan, standard or touring fordor, deluxe coupe or business coach, custom sedan, master coach or sport sedan, etc.

In the 1930s, Pontiacs, as well as others, featured front and back doors that opened from the same place. The front and back door handles were opposite each other in the center. During these years when the back door opened to the front, many back-seat passengers were thrown out of the cars; and they were called "suicide" models. These stylish models were discontinued due to many insurance claims.

Jessie B. Ralls-Alexander was employed at Shady Oaks from the late 1920s to 1932. Prior to that, she taught school in

Marshalltown from 1914 to 1916. Henry Alexander, now of Peoria, Arizona, often heard his mother talk about the many happenings at the Cafe. His visit to Shady Oaks in 1994 was prompted by a desire to learn more about his childhood so he could pass it on to his daughter, Janet Benesh, of Marshalltown.

At the peak of the Depression in 1933, the 32nd President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, took office. Bank closings, hunger and unemployment prevailed. Shady Oaks was destined to weather the social and economic crisis.

Signs on the station now advertised Skelly Gasoline and Credit Cards. The Skelly Oil Company began in 1931. I found it amazing that oil companies were offering credit cards in the mid-1930s. Containers of Quaker State Oil sat in wire baskets where a customer could easily find it. Omar Nuese and Melvin Rasmussen often assisted Walt as attendants at the station.

One day in 1933, three fellows in a large, black Buick with an Illinois license plate pulled into the station. The attendant noticed Tommy guns on the back seat. Before driving away, one of the fellows pulled a gun and shot out three of the 25-watt light bulbs in the canopy. Lawler, who was over six foot tall and weighed about 260 pounds, was in the Cafe. He hastily grabbed a seldom-used gun, went outside and also began shooting at the canopy. A witness to the event said that Lawler shot out at least four bulbs before the trio made a speedy get-away. Perhaps they were Chicago gangsters, as crime sprees were prevalent.

During the Lawler years, the Cafe was enlarged. Five booths, plus extra tables, could now accommodate more patrons.

In 1934, Shady Oaks was part of the "Dine and Dance" scene. The dance floor was in the room with the new booths. The Cafe was advertised on the Marshalltown Diamondball Association's 1934 Official Schedule. Other ballrooms were Winter Garden and Forest Park, both without dining.

In the mid-1930s, Western Grocers had a Speakers Club, similar to Toastmasters. Fellow employees met once a month and gave speeches. Since they chose a different place each time, they included Shady Oaks.

During the Summer of 1934, Clyde Long (now residing in the Wolfe Lake addition) was

a pump boy at Shady Oaks. He had just finished his junior year at LeGrand High School. That year, Highway 30 was especially busy with a multitude of vehicles traveling to and from the Worlds Fair in Chicago. Families were magnetized to the "Century of Progress" which was in its second and final year. Clyde dreamed of attending the Fair.

"On March 28, 1935, Omar Nuese of Dillon, who was employed as a repairman at the Shady Oaks service station, was badly burned. While working on a truck, gasoline ignited in an undetermined manner and set fire to Nuese's clothing. According to the April 1 edition of the Times-Republican ("TR"), "Both his hands and one leg were burned before the flames could be extinguished. He was given medical attention at once and is resting as well as could be expected."

Until the Cafe had refrigeration in 1935, Walt made numerous trips to town in his old green Model A to buy clean ice. A heavy canvas was used to insulate the 50 to 100-pound cakes of ice. Although the Rock Valley Pond ice harvest was a neighborhood celebration and included Lawler, the ice couldn't be used for serving.

In June of 1935, Shady Oaks Cafe made the news. The article, entitled as follows, appeared in the TR: "SHADY OAKS CAFE POPULAR LOCALITY — Lawler Has Plan To Cater Picnics."

"Devises Cold Drink Service For Supplying Picnic Parties With Ice Cold Pop and Near Beer — Stocks Fireworks in Anticipation of Fourth.

"Started initially to catch the tourist trade, the Cafe and service station at Shady Oaks tourist camp, five miles east of Marshalltown on the Lincoln Highway, has become a place much frequented by local people. The natural beauty of the place, its easy accessibility from Marshalltown and the food and service put out by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Lawler have combined to build up a large local trade.

"It is all home cooking served at Shady Oaks, as Mrs. Lawler herself bakes all the pies and cakes sold. All kinds of sandwiches are served, including cold fried chicken on Saturdays and Sundays, and Mrs. Lawler will, if notified in advance, prepare any special menu desired for birthday parties and other special occasions.

"An additional unique service is planned by Lawler, that of packing cold drinks, pop and near beer, to take out on picnics. He has tried out a plan of packing bottled goods in covered pails, filled with plenty of ice and salt, and his customers have been enthusiastic. Heretofore, picnic parties had to be content with lukewarm drinks unless they wanted to go to the trouble of taking a small ice box along.

"Mr. Lawler is preparing for the July 4 celebration by laying in a supply of firecrackers and fireworks, which are now on sale. Being out of the city, he is not affected by the city ordinance preventing the sale of fireworks before July 2, although he warns his patrons not to shoot off any firecrackers within the city limits before that date, lest the offender be apprehended by the police.

"Shady Oaks Cafe is a clean attractive little restaurant seating 25 persons at its booths, tables and counters. It is open as late at night as customers appear. Sandwiches, short orders, ice cream sundaes, malted milks, candy, cigars and cigarettes are handled, as well as a line of canned goods for the tourist trade.

"Mr. Lawler handles Skelly gasoline and oils in his service station and features curb service in his sandwich business."

Needless to say, I am impressed with all the conveniences offered at Shady Oaks 60 years ago.

Fireworks were both dangerous and exciting, and Roman candles were a popular item at roadside stands. Around dusk one evening, Walt and a neighbor lit a Roman candle. Following the "POOF," something unexpected happened. The candle didn't shoot skyward. It raced through the open window of a passing car. Fortunately no one was injured, and Walt made amends by feeding hamburgers to the motorist.

Laura (Keen) Smaha of rural Marshalltown smilingly recalls that her father, C. T. Keen, sometimes loaded up his family to go into Marshalltown for supplies. Along with her three brothers, Dale, Beryl and Walter (now deceased), they eagerly anticipated getting ice cream cones at the Shady Oaks Cafe on their way home.

Eyes twinkling, Maxine Demmon said, "Sometimes my husband (Lane) asked Chuck and Margaret Plander to join us for an

evening at Shady Oaks. It was a rather risqué thing to do."

Quite a few people remember the early-day casino tucked away in the back room of the Cafe. There was a very heavy-duty nickel slot machine. It was the kind with fruit on it. If you got "three of a kind," nickels would roll out of the machine. Nearby farmers, Emmett and Russell Rubenbauer and a couple of Wolkens, gathered for half the day to shoot the breeze and play their nickels in the machine.

The sheriff always told Lawler when State agents were going to be in the area for several days. Walt then removed the machine from its stand and placed it under a blanket in young Bart's bedroom. The metal stand stood empty! Although slot machines were illegal, nothing could be done without the evidence.

An ad that appeared in the TR read, "SHADY OAKS, If You Want the Finest Cooked Foods, Served the Way You Like 'Em - You'll Find Them Here. LUNCHES OF ALL KINDS, Cold Drinks - Short Orders - ATLAS BEER - East Lincoln Highway, 5 Miles."

One of the first patrolmen, Major Ed A. Conley of Marshalltown, frequented the Cafe and gas station. He was a veteran of World War I. When his black patrol car was parked in front of Shady Oaks Cafe, people hesitated to stop. Lawler let the patrolman use the garage next to the Cafe so patrons would stop as usual.

Harold Woltjer, a former Iowa State Highway Patrolman, said, "Major E. A. Conley was a state motor vehicle inspector for two years prior to the creation of the Iowa State Highway Patrol (now Iowa State Patrol)." Conley dressed in the uniform of the day — a worsted medium-brown, suit-length jacket, tan jodhpur pants and black, English riding boots.

Conley was both instructor and student simultaneously for the first class of patrolmen who graduated on July 27, 1935. He taught two more classes yet that summer. These original officers received their training at Camp Dodge. Their administrative duties were interspersed with cleaning up the abandoned military camp.

A popular, former Story County Sheriff, John Hattery, was appointed chief of the first highway patrol in 1935; and he appointed Major Conley as an assistant chief.

In 1994, James Macholz (84) of Des Moines, one of the six living members of the first class of 53, recalled, "It's true, we had Bonnie and Clyde, but our main duty was assisting the injured."

It's been six decades since this uniformed para-military organization rolled onto Iowa roads for the first time. Virtually every patrolman between Marshalltown and Cedar Rapids stopped at the well-known Shady Oaks Cafe, as it was a landmark for almost fifty years.

After high school graduation, Rosa Ash worked and boarded in a backroom at the Shady Oaks Gas Station and Cafe. She said, "I baked pies, shot gas and waited on tourists. I did everything!" Rosa saved her tips and bought a Model A roadster for \$40. The proprietor, Walt Lawler, jokingly told folks that she ran into the Cafe and moved it over.

Rosa began sewing at four years of age and was a talented seamstress. She made her own tan and brown uniforms for waitressing. On one occasion, her uniforms and underwear alike were washed together and "starched."

When lightning struck the phone line at the Cabin Camp, the Norton's came to the Cafe to use the phone. They also dropped in for candy bars, bread or other staples.

In January of 1936, the Lincoln Highway was closed for approximately two weeks. The Cafe was well stocked when the snowing and blowing began. The chicken was stored where the ice cream was usually kept. Rosa never left the Cafe, as there was no place to go.

Due to the blizzard, two Greyhound busses were stalled at Shady Oaks; and the Cafe ran out of food. The "Toonerville Trolley" that ran on the M. & St. L. (old Central Railroad of Iowa) tracks saved the day. The trainmen threw packages of food (meat, bread and butter) out along the tracks. The Lawlers took a toboggan and bobsled across the field to get the supplies.

The little passenger train, dubbed as the Toonerville, had a gasoline engine; and it made morning and evening excursions to Oskaloosa. If it had problems near Shady Oaks, it would toot its whistle four or five times. Lawler would hitch up the bobsled and go to its rescue. Topsy, Bart's faithful St. Bernard, got used to following Lawler across the snowy meadow and started going over

alone to wait on the train. When the Lawlers heard the emergency signal one fateful day, it wasn't the train or its crew. Topsy had been hit by the train, and it was a sad day for all.

Snow removal was not an easy task. Hayracks were mounted on bobsleds, and the snow was scooped by hand onto the rack. It was then hauled to a place where the hayrack could be tipped over and the snow pushed off.

A Marshalltown business man, Joe Hull (deceased 1995), remembered when Shady Oaks was like a bus stop. If you were contemplating hitch-hiking to Chicago, it was likely you wouldn't wait long at Shady Oaks to find a ride to your destination. Joe encouraged his father to take him beyond the fairgrounds to the Cafe and gas station. Tourists and traveling salesmen enjoyed the companionship of young riders. Highways were happy ways; and the perils of hitch-hiking were minimal, as it was a well-accepted means of travel.

Some of the movies playing in Marshalltown's Family Theater during the Summer of 1936 were Frank Buck's "Bring 'Em Back Alive," Gene Autry in "Red River Valley" and Hoot Gibson in "Feud of The West."

When "Dancing Lady" co-starring Joan Crawford and Clark Gable opened at the Casino Theater, the TR gave it an excellent review: "Through cameracraft and mechanical ingenuity, the motion picture screen becomes a giant kaleidoscope in presenting the spectacular musical ensembles. . . . In one scene, each chorus beauty, revolving through a maze of mirrors, can be seen 30 times at once, this effect created an endless parade of pulchritude. Scenes whirl on the screen in dozens of angles simultaneously." Other stars in the show were Fred Astaire, Nelson Eddy, Mae Robson and Ted Healy and his Three Stooges.

In the Saturday, June 26, 1936, issue of the TR, the weather pattern for Marshalltown was noteworthy. The article stated, "It isn't the heat it's the humidity." The temperature had hovered in the 90s for some time. At 2 p.m. Saturday afternoon, the temperature at Riverview Park was 93 degrees. George Leins, the official weather observer, explained that the moisture in the atmosphere, due to rain the night before, accounted for the humidity that made it seem hotter.

Shady Oaks Cafe was crowded on that hot, Saturday night. It was too sultry to sleep. Many folks had taken an evening drive to cool off. The roadside Cafe was a popular place to meet and chat with friends, and people continued to stop at the Cafe into the wee hours of the morning. This was the setting for the vicious attack that occurred while many Marshall County residents slept, knowing that organized vigilante groups were protecting them.

The headlines in the TR the following Monday shocked readers who had escaped the recent heatwave by staying home or going to the theater over the weekend. The headlines were "Customer Knifes Roadhouse Owner." Although Norton did not sell the Cafe to Lawler, many people thought that Lawler was the owner.

The newspaper account went on to tell, "Walter Lawler, 35, . . . is in the Deaconess Hospital in serious condition as a result of three knife wounds he received early Sunday morning as he attempted to eject an objectionable customer from his place of business. Roy B. Shutt of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, employed as a farm hand on a farm west of Laurel, is in the county jail on a charge of doing the stabbing."

In the absence of Deputy Sheriff H. O. Robinson, who took charge of the investigation, Sheriff C. F. Wickland (appointed March 11, 1929) reconstructed the crime. This is how it appeared in the TR. "Shutt arrived at Lawler's sandwich shop about 3 a.m. just in time to see Lawler stop a fight between two young men in front of the building.

"Inside, Shutt is said to have drawn his vicious looking knife and started to cut the linoleum on one of the restaurant tables. Mrs. Lawler remonstrated and told him to leave just as her husband returned to the building. The man invited Lawler to try to put him out and Lawler rushed him, crowding him into a window which was broken. Shutt freed himself, however, attacked Lawler with a knife, inflicting wounds and then fled in his car.

"Lawler received a deep gash on the back of his neck, extending around underneath the left ear and cutting the jaw, just missing the jugular vein, a deep gash on the left side of his body in the rib section and another equally severe in about the same position on the right side."

A pillow was secured under Walt's neck to absorb the flow of blood from the nasty wound until he reached the hospital. It was a touch and go situation.

It was customary for Shady Oaks to employ a special officer. Frank Haas (former Marshall County Deputy Sheriff in 1931) was on duty that night, but missed the fight as he was busy directing traffic in the parking lot. Fortunately, Mrs. Lawler was able to give a detailed description of the assailant.

Acting on a Marshalltown policeman's suggestion, the sheriff and police traced Shutt's activities for 20 hours following the stabbing. They discovered that he had first gone to a friend's home in Marshalltown to dress his wounds before returning to the farm where he worked. Shutt had the wounds dressed once again by a physician in Newton.

Upon returning to the farm, Shutt told his employer that he would be unable to work for a couple of weeks. Jasper County officers now knew where he could be located and informed Deputy Sheriff Robinson. The gashes identified Shutt as the assailant.

All day Sunday there was considerable concern for Lawler's grave condition. On Monday, the hospital stated, "He is resting more easily and showing some improvement, although he is being kept quiet to avoid possible hemorrhaging from the neck wound." He was given a good chance for survival providing infection or hemorrhaging didn't develop.

Shutt was not arrested until 2 a.m. Monday morning by Deputy Sheriff Robinson, who was aided by the Marshalltown police. Shutt was found on a farm near Haverhill. He was held in jail in default of bond on a temporary charge of assault with intent to commit great bodily injury. This charge would depend on the outcome of Lawler's condition.

Monday morning in municipal court, Shutt, 29, was arraigned for the charges and given time to plead. He admitted his guilt to County Attorney J. W. Pattie.

Although it took Lawler quite a while to mend in both body and spirit, this story does have a happy ending. Walt recovered and had plenty of time to think during his month-long stay in the hospital. The near-fatal stabbing incident was warning enough, and he made a profound decision to move to a safer environment.

Six months after their daughter Lynne (now Mrs. Larry Carlson, of rural State Center) was born in 1937, Lawler moved his young family to Dillon. During this time, Ruth Wolken (now Goshon) took care of Lynne. The Lawlers operated the general store for over 30 years until Walt's death in 1970. His widow, Ruth, resided in State Center until her death in 1992.

Bart Lawler was only six when his family moved from Shady Oaks, but he will never forget hearing about the gash that was cut within a tissue-paper layer of his father's jugular vein. On a lighter note, I have several pictures of Bart with his dogs, Topsy and Spotty, and another with J Norton in the goat cart.

The goat cart era ended abruptly when the goat butted young Bart and inflicted scalp lacerations with its horns. To avoid further incident, Emmett Rubenbauer purchased the aggressive goat and deposited \$25 in the boy's bank account. Bart said, "Emmett bought the 'Judas Goat' to lead his sheep down the road to market at Dillon."

Bart accomplished the boyhood feat of walking over the long arch of the Rainbow Bridge but never encouraged his own son to attempt it. He is married to the former Virginia Welsh of Marshalltown and is the furniture buyer for Smulekoff's Furniture Store in Cedar Rapids.

In the 1930s, Jim Haas (retired Senior Vice-President of Perry State Bank) spent a month each summer with his Marshalltown grandparents, Della and Frank Haas. Haas was the officer on duty in the above story. Jim's "country cousins," Bill and Maxine (Tift) Lawler, lived with their parents (Fred and Minnie) southwest of Shady Oaks. They also looked forward to Jim's visits.

After Lawler, Wayne Buchanan (who had a 7-Up distributorship), ran the Cafe in the late 1930s. The south room was enlarged, and more tables were added. A juke box rocked the walls of the well-known place with such songs as, "Three Little Fishies," "Blueberry Hill," "Because of You," "I'll Never Smile Again," "Wabash Cannon Ball" and "Over the Rainbow."

Fred Naylor, the second to the youngest in a family of nine children, grew up in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. His first job in the United States in 1939 was working at

Shady Oaks for Wayne Buchanan. In 1995, Fred said, "Mrs. Buchanan operated the Cafe, as Wayne was a busy Seven-Up distributor. This job opportunity prompted me to apply for my Social Security Number so I could gain employment, though it was brief at Shady Oaks." The Naylor, Fred and Shirley, are retired and live in Marshalltown.

Marvin Allen, who followed Buchanan, put Shady Oaks back in the news. The Monday, August 28, 1939, TR headlines read, "State Agents Conduct Raid On Shady Oaks." Once again, a bizarre incident happened early on a Sunday morning.

Marvin Allen, from Newton, had taken over the management of Shady Oaks only a month previous to the raid. He disclaimed ownership of any liquor and informed officers that it was "privately owned" by the patrons.

State agents, abetted by Sheriff H. W. Jennings, his officers and local police, made the raid at 2:12 a.m. following complaints that liquor was in evidence at the establishment. The Cafe was said to have been crowded at the time of the close-in. The parking area was filled with automobiles and more were coming. However, some cars sped away when they realized a raid was in progress.

The names of all present were taken and turned over to the County Attorney, John Mowry. According to the TR, "In some instances liquor books of the claimants were examined and note was made of the entries." No arrests were made, and the names taken were not made public. Many of the patrons were from outside Marshall County.

The TR went on to tell, "The spoils of the incursion, labeled and sealed at the office of the sheriff, included 21 quart and pint bottles of liquor, partially filled; seven bottles filled and unopened and seals unbroken, five partially filled bottles of 'spiked' Coca Cola and a wooden box of 'empties'."

A Secret Service agent, Marion Moffitt of Newton, played a role in this early-day raid. His daughter, Sue Moffitt Winter, said, "Most of my father's undercover work was done in the 1920s and 1930s." Sue never knew her father's identification number, but she recalls hearing about the raid following the incident.

It was of special note that a pin ball machine was also confiscated during the raid. How does this raid on Shady Oaks compare to the social problems of legalized gambling in the 1990s? Staid church fathers were also concerned that young people were racing through life at 30 miles per hour.

Although gambling has been ignored in recent years, at one time it was a big part of law enforcement work. In May of 1994, Des Moines police took a nostalgic look back to the time when officers seized slot machines by kicking in doors and bashing the machines to pieces while photographers recorded the event for the morning paper. It does seem a bit ironic that 60 years ago gambling was illegal and supposedly society was against it.

Allen left Shady Oaks and opened two more similar establishments in Tama County.

Act One, Scene Three War Years, Highway 30 Rerouted

The Nortons and Peeks

In 1940, the average income was \$1,725, and a new home was \$6,550 to \$8,011. A new Ford was \$700, gas was 18 cents per gallon, a loaf of bread was eight cents, a gallon of milk was 52 cents, bacon was 27 cents per pound and a stamp was three cents.

What else was new? President Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected for a third term; the Jeep was recognized as a general purpose vehicle; fiberglass for insulation was introduced; and First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, made radio advertisements for charity.

The Peeks' interlude at Shady Oaks lasted from 1940 to 1943. During those years, Ruth Norton's brother, Kermit Peek, and his wife, Marjorie, lived in Cabin #10 and ran the Cafe and gas station. Their son, Jerry, was born February 2, 1941 at Shady Oaks. The two-room cabin had a bath and kitchenette. Kermit assisted Les Norton with most chores, including pulling the pump. The pump and well were now enclosed. Les and Kermit had good rapport with each other.

Marjorie Peek did all the cooking at Shady Oaks Cafe (morning, noon and night) on a single gas stove. Kermit assisted Les at the Cabin Camp and went to town daily for ice

and other supplies, as there wasn't any refrigeration.

Blanch Haynes of LeGrand recalls spending many Saturday nights at Shady Oaks with her husband Roger (now deceased). They loved the juke box music of the Ink Spots and Glen Miller. In high school, Blanch's mother warned her never to go to Shady Oaks.

In the Summer of 1941, Ople (Abbot) Clemons was a 17 year old high school graduate from Unionville, Missouri. She was seeking work, and Marshalltown beckoned to her as her older brother lived in town. The Nortons hired Ople to serve food. She was paid \$3 a week plus food and lodging; uniforms were not required.

One morning while the Peeks were gone, Ople was left in charge of the gas station. A local fellow stopped for gas, and she filled up his tank. He asked her to charge it to his account. As he drove away, J told her that his parents never allowed this man to put gas on account. J got in trouble for withholding that information.

Ople worked all day, every day, as needed. The gas station opened at 7 a.m., and the Cafe closed at midnight. In the afternoons when business was slow, she and J rode bikes on the trails between the cabins and around the small trailer in Sleepy Hollow. Ople loved the beautiful trees and remembers Shady Oaks as a paradise. Ople now resides in Council Bluffs.

Kermit and Marjorie remember the five one-bedroom cabins on the front row, "Dollhouse and Dreamland" (the family-size cottages) to the east and three overnights down the sidewalk back of the Nortons' home. Seven cabins were in the middle row, including Cabin #12, which had a garage; it was next to the office/residence. One of the two-room cabins had a small, claw-footed bathtub; and it is now at Pilgrim Heights. The white cabins were trimmed in green and had awnings over the west windows.

On a day when Marjorie was alone at the Cafe and gas station, gypsies found their way back to Shady Oaks and the wooded area to the south. The story ended happily, as a neighbor, Chloris Harris, came to Marjorie's rescue. They both kept a watchful eye on the unwanted visitors, and the swarming nomads finally moved on.

Jerry and Chloris Harris lived in a house directly across the road from the Cafe and gas station. Harris furnished milk for the Cafe and often helped Lawler. According to Jerry, he dug the basement on a Sunday in 1936 and then built the house himself. When they moved away in 1942, the house was sold and moved to the northeast part of Marshalltown. Today, only an indentation in the ground indicates where the house once stood.

Barbara Ann Harris (now Barbara Moon, of Stockton, California), Jerry's daughter, often slept on the front porch of their home at Shady Oaks on hot summer nights. From there, she could hear the mixture of voices, laughter and activity at the Cafe and gas station. This childhood memory still lingers.

Jerry's father owned a team of dappled gray horses, one was quite dark and the other was nearly white. Jerry said, "Once, they were stranded on an island in the middle of swollen Timber Creek. The horses, being on dry land, didn't panic, but his father was worried. Several fellows came by to help, but the big grays finally made it safely to higher and dryer ground on their own."

Jerry also reminded me that Shady Oaks was on the main road to Marshalltown; and at that time, where the road curved east to LeGrand, there wasn't any road to the west (Highway 30).

During those years, many Indians stopped at Shady Oaks for pop of any flavor. Kermit recalls that as the temperature soared, the gravel in the driveway became as hot as coals. On one such day in August, he changed a tire for a young Indian. The lad had only a quarter in his pocket, but goodwill prevailed.

When Shady Oaks Cafe wasn't open, the Nortons recommended that their guests dine at Stone's Restaurant in Marshalltown. It's all so *deja vu*. That is the way it is yet today. When guests visit the Treehouse, they often make reservations to dine at Stone's.

In Marshalltown, concerts at the coliseum were popular events. Around 1940, "The Ink Spots" appeared there. No accommodations were available for the group in Marshalltown, but they found refuge at Shady Oaks Cabin Camp. Their cabin had a kitchenette. After buying eggs from a farmer, they cooked a meal and enjoyed their stay.

By 1940, the nation's economy was beginning to improve. More people were

working, but the national debt rose higher than ever before. In Europe, Hitler was on the march and World War II was looming. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on Sunday, December 7, 1941, the United States' fleet was largely destroyed; and this meant war.

For Shady Oaks Cabin Camp, 1941 was an outstanding year. In fact, it was the best year ever. Nearly 6,000 tourists stayed overnight in this well-known camp. Every state but Maine was represented. The 18 little cabins were occupied every night. Sadly, this trend was destined to change. Gasoline rationing slowed transportation down to a snail's pace and brought a gradual death for tourist accommodations.

That summer Ina Picht, sister of the late Carl Sipling, was seeking work in the area. She quickly found employment at the busy Shady Oaks Cafe and took charge of the pie baking. Through the week, she boarded with the Nortons; and on the weekends, she stayed with her brother on a nearby farm.

The Peeks were present during the exciting and busy Summer of 1941. They remained until Kermit was called to the service. The Cafe and gas station were closed during World War II due to the shortage of gas and supplies, lack of money and its proximity to Marshalltown. The Cafe was used as a living area. Fixtures, tables, and dishes were stored in the garage. A new owner and a new vision would revive the establishment. Once again, let us look in on the Nortons and the happenings at Shady Oaks Cabin Camp.

When the Nortons began wintering in Florida, Harry and Mary Garrington and their little daughter looked after Shady Oaks. During the first winter, they stayed in the early-day mobile home located in Sleepy Hollow (it was first occupied by the Knox family around 1938). They were the only inhabitants at Shady Oaks during that long, cold winter; and they nearly froze to death. It was fortunate that the outhouse was close, as the water had been turned off and the pipes had been drained. The following winter the Garringtons were asked to stay in the Nortons' home, and they welcomed the opportunity. Mary loved the warm, cozy home, especially the big kitchen.

It wasn't a surprise to discover that the bathroom was once a pantry at the

office/residence. But it was a real shock to learn that the Nortons brought a monkey home from Tampa, Florida. The monkey's name was "Pat." Sometimes Pat was kept in a cage in back of the house or was tethered to a tall pole with a perch in the yard. He could entertain himself for hours. Pat learned new antics quite easily.

When the Nortons went away one day, the monkey was put in the pantry. He thought it was his playpen. Was this the end of the story? No, Pat was an unhappy camper when left alone. He was just like a spoiled, unhappy child. Pat ripped the labels from most of the cans. Trying to figure out the contents of the cans was a guessing game for the Norton family. If this tree-dwelling, grasping-tailed, day-active, mischievous monkey had ever got loose in the big trees at Shady Oaks, it would have made a story equal to "Billy Whiskers."

The late Faye Appelgate also shared a disappearing goldfish story about Pat. On one occasion, Les Norton poured water from a tea kettle and out came a goldfish. Only Pat knew how it got there. In this story, the fish didn't get away!

Nancy (Norton) Hynes supplied the sequel to the story of Pat. Monkeys are curious creatures; and that, in part, caused Pat's demise. Their natural curiosity attracts them to flames, or fire; and they have to get burned once to develop a fear of fire. Pat's cage was built of wire and wood and was lined with newspaper; thus, it was quite flammable. Pat was learning to smoke cigarettes. Likely, all was fine until he playfully dropped the toy. Pat could not escape, as he was trapped in his cage.

I can almost hear his screams as the cage was engulfed with smoke and flames. Anyone standing by would have been helpless to deal with both Pat's fear and the fire. It is difficult to lose a pet, and I'm sure he was missed.

The Des Moines Sunday Register ("Register"), August 8, 1943, carried a picture of Shady Oaks Cabin Camp and Leslie R. Norton with the caption, "Tourist Camps Hit Hard by Gas Rationing. Tourist business today is just as scarce as 'A' gasoline coupons are." These coupons were good for just three gallons of gasoline per week. Sugar, coffee and tires were also rationed.

The Register (1943) also quoted, "Shady Oaks Cabin Camp . . . still is running and will continue, while many others are closing up. But business, is just a fourth of what it was last year. And last year's business was a half of that of the year before.

"The transcontinental tourist who used to be the mainstay of the business at Shady Oaks is gone. The trickling of trade which still comes in is made up largely of soldiers, war plant workers en route to distant jobs and parents on their way to visit sons in Army camps. The shortage of towels and sheets is another problem. We are just trying to get by till the war is over."

Les' older sons were in the service. Young Bill had enlisted in the Army before the war began. He was stationed on Canton Island in the Central Pacific where the China Clippers (large aircraft) refueled. He was awaiting medical discharge when the war actually broke out. Herb was a Navy bandmaster.

In 1943, occupancy at Shady Oaks Cabin Camp varied from none to 10 persons a night. The sudden lull intensified the woes, but life goes on, even with the shortage of help, supplies and tourists. No one ever promised it would be easy. World War II changed life in many ways on the home front.

When there was talk of new Highway 30 going south of Shady Oaks, Les Norton began running scared. He foresaw this as an end and wanted out at once. Nels Petersen, high on the hill, really wanted the new road, as there was only a dirt horsepath to his home from what is now Underwood Avenue. Nels never really got what he wanted. Les moved away, and the new highway came. Now, both Peterson and the house are gone from the top of the hill. On February 6, 1948, old Highway 30, from Marshalltown to Shady Oaks corner, was turned over to the county road system.

The Nortons continued to operate the Cabin Camp until they moved into Marshalltown. Ruth took a part-time job at Fantles. Other clerks that worked at the same time remember Ruth's wonderful sense of humor. Fantles was in its prime; both the basement and balcony were being used. The Nortons continued to winter in the Tampa/St. Petersburg area.

On Monday, August 6, 1945, the story of the atom bomb broke for the Des Moines Tribune. The headlines for the afternoon

paper read, "U.S. Using Atom Bomb! Truman Bares Our Top Secret — It's equal to 20,000 Tons of TNT."

On Tuesday, August 14, 1945, Iowans awoke to the news that World War II was finally over. The Register stated in bold headlines, "JAPAN SURRENDERS! TOKYO RADIO REPORTS."

The Nortons had enjoyed prosperous times and persevered during the early war years. Les was ready to retire and pass his dream on to new owners when he sold Shady Oaks Cabin Camp to William and Jennie Smith in 1945. The following year Bryant J. Rutherford became the proprietor of the renowned Shady Oaks Cafe. The story of the Cafe's rise to fame precedes opening the door to the Smith's Shady Oaks Lodge and Cabin Camp.

In 1947, the Nortons decided to move to Florida permanently. They stopped in Pensacola, enrolled J in school and established a permanent home. Les died at the age of 91 (1970) in Pensacola; J died tragically of a gunshot wound (mistaken identity) at the age of 45 (1977) in Houston, Texas; and his mother, Ruth (Norton) Moore died at the age of 85 (1990) in Pensacola.

*"Silently, one by one,
in the infinite meadows of heaven,
Blossomed the lovely stars,
the forgot-me-nots of angels."*

— Longfellow

**Fadeout and Curtain
End of Act One**



**This sign was used to advertise the
Shady Oaks Cabin Camp
along the Lincoln Highway**