



Manitou Memories

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Stories of Ethel Paulina Furst Stormer (Continued from page 2)

Stork Story

When Ethel was around four years old, she was told the story of the day of her birth by Florence Haas. One day Florence, the island midwife, stopped over to visit with the Fursts. When she began to talk with Ethel, she told her all about the day that Ethel was born. She said that she had been walking past the house when she heard a baby crying. Amazingly, it seemed like the sounds was coming from that prickly, old juniper bush in front of the house. So, Florence went and looked and, "What do you know? There was Ethel!" Florence pointed out to Ethel the exact spot that she had found her in that prickly bush.

Being a midwife, of course, Florence knew that the stork had placed the baby near the home of people, to whom she was to be delivered. She picked the baby up gently from that prickly bush and carried her to the Furst house and, in fact, they were waiting impatiently for their new baby.

"So," thought Ethel, "It must be true but it looked like an awfully prickly place for a baby to be!" At the time, Ethel couldn't help but be convinced of the veracity of this tale, but as she matured, she became somewhat skeptical of this questionable explanation.



Banker's Hours

In the 1880's, Dorothea's youngest brother, August, had lost his money in the collapse of the banks, and he never again put his money in a financial institution. He purchased a large and very heavy safe and kept all of his valuables in it. (The National Park Service now has custody of it.)

Dorothea thought that this made good sense, and she too kept her money in August's safe. Often on a pleasant sunny afternoon, when Ethel was visiting her grandparents, she and her grandmother would hike up to August's house.

August was a farmer, and therefore could generally be counted on to be somewhere nearby. Occasionally though, Ethel and Dorothea would make the long trek to August's in the heat of a summer day, and he had the audacity to be away from home! At times like this, Dorothea felt personally abused by August's lack of reliability. On that hot and arduous hike home, Dorothea would freely express her disgruntlement with her brother's unreliability. Apparently, Dorothea thought that her brother should keep banker's hours for her convenience.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE HAAS /JENKS COTTAGE TOLD BY PETER JENKS

The following events are recollections of Peter Jenks, son of Jack and Polly Jenks.

Sometime in the spring of 1958 my parents, Jack and Polly Jenks, closed on the sale of the Haas cottage located on South Manitou Island. They bought the cottage from the father of a family friend who lived in Frankfort. The former owner was a fisherman named Charters who had purchased the cottage in order to expand his fisheries to include the waters around the Island. Having retired from the business, he was willing to sell at a price that my father could afford. My parents saw the cottage for the first time that spring. My mother told of the first boat ride on the Smiley and how the first trip was rough enough to make her quite sick. I recall my mother telling that they received the acceptance of their offer on the same day she learned she was pregnant with my older brother, her first child.

She also told the story of how she fell in love with the front door of the cottage which had a beautiful oval window of beveled glass. I think that window helped close the deal. To her utter disappointment, on the next trip out to the island, after closing on the sale, she found the door with the oval window had been removed. Liberated by an opportunistic islander, the door had been exchanged with a suitable replacement, however with no oval but with a nice rectangular glass panel instead. She was heart broken, nonetheless this began a 45+ year love affair with South Manitou and the former Haas cottage.

My parents had always believed the house to be a kit house purchased from Sears Roebuck. I understand there is speculation that it was actually a Montgomery Ward kit house. My father was a capable carpenter and a jack of all trades. He began at once to make the cottage more comfortable. It had after all, none of the modern conveniences of plumbing or electricity that we all take for granted. There was a hand pump on an existing well and an outhouse out toward the lake that I can remember as a small boy.

The fall of 1960 or 1961, my mother and father had assembled a small army of 26 willing friends and family to help with the erection of a windmill tower that my grandfather had found and bought from a local farmer on the mainland. He and my dad disassembled the tower and brought it out on the ferry and then with their crew of helpers, reassembled the tower next



to the house. My father's plan was to erect the water tower and install a water tank on it to supply the house with running water. He had procured a gasoline powered pump that would be used to fill the tank. My mother tells of how the group of volunteers camped in the post office and a couple of intrepid adventures, Jan Saltzgaber and Bob Kull even camped out at the base of the lighthouse, where the fall winds were so fierce that it nearly lifted them off the ground in their sleeping bags.

On another trip to the Island, my father and his brother Terry Jenks of Traverse City and their parents worked to hand dig a septic tank and drain field on the property. This completed the plumbing necessary to have an indoor toilet and sink as well as a kitchen sink. My father and his dad were able to find and install the windows that face toward the south. The large picture window that offered a view of the lighthouse was installed in the back wall of a closet. The interior closet wall was removed which created a larger dining room, which still has a pretty nice view of the lighthouse. Additionally, my dad installed the windows in the corner of the kitchen which gave a nice lake view while standing at the kitchen sink. This made cleanup duty quite enjoyable. We used lanterns as lighting for a long time until gas lights were installed later.

Later on, a well pump house was built and the back porch off the kitchen. I would like to say I helped but I was too young at the time to be of much use. On another trip, my father and brother and I found a great 45 foot timber on the beach west of the lighthouse. My dad had plans to use it as a support for a sleeping porch that he wanted to build along the south and east wall of the house. He had installed footings to do this prior to the park service acquisition of the island. We spent the better part of a weekend digging this beam out of the sand and using leverage and mechanical advantage to move the beam to the water. There we floated it around to the ferry dock with ropes and paddles and found a willing neighbor to help drag the giant beam to our house with his jeep. We used pipe sections as rollers and slowly moved it home. By the end of the week and with the beam up on its supports, my brother and I had learned a great deal about the power of leverage and teamwork. The porch was never completed. (Continued on page 2)

My dad's death in 1979 brought an end to the expansion of the cottage. Our family had moved to Georgia and the logistics of traveling to the Island from Coastal Georgia proved to be daunting for my mother and four siblings. A large group of extended family in Michigan continued to use and enjoy the property. I was unable to return until 1985 with my future wife Katy. She loved the place her first trip out. We both dreamed of someday moving closer to the island so we could visit more than once a year.

Dreams do come true, we now live in Traverse City and make the time to visit the island 3 or 4 times a year. Several years ago while re-roofing the cottage, Katy and I met Gwen Glatz and a group of volunteers. Gwen and the crew leapt into action helping us finish drying in the roof so we could come back and finish it up the next weekend. Without their help, we would not have been able to finish in time to make the ferry. We knew then that we had to get to know this group and try to help them, as they so willingly helped us. For the past two years, we have been working with MIMS volunteers on several MIMS sponsored projects including the schoolhouse renovation. We also helped the park service restore the old fishing shed behind the cottage that had fallen into disrepair. We are very grateful to be a part of such a worthwhile and generous organization which preserves the past to pass it along to future generations.

IN MEMORY OF ETHEL FURST STORMER

July 20, 1906- March 2, 2007

Thanks to Ethel's daughter Joanna B. Smith
For sharing these memories

December 1916

As told by Ethel Paulina Furst Stormer



It was early December in 1916 and like children everywhere I was excited about the approaching holiday season. It was to be our second Christmas in our new home our father, Martin Furst had built on the Island.

I knew our parents had been mailing out orders to Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward & Co. for the gifts my brothers and I were to receive on Christmas morning. I also knew that my parents had given

Mrs. Burdick, the lady who had the grocery store down near the big dock a list of all the candies and nuts they would be purchasing for the holidays. Several of our neighbors would also order supplies that would come from a wholesaler in Chicago.

On December 10, 1916, Mr. Jim Burdick the lighthouse keeper, stopped to tell my mother that they had received their supplies from Chicago and that my parents could pick up their things they had ordered at any time. My mother told my father when he came home that evening and he said, that he would be making the north patrol from eight to ten o'clock pm and that he would stop by Burdick's store to pick up the order. He told me that he would have to use my sled on which to haul it so I knew that I would not be going out sledding with my friends that evening. I watched as my father tied a big box on my sled and then I asked him if I could go with him as far as Burdick's store. He hesitated at first because he knew that I had been in school that day and I had to go to school the next day. Perhaps I coaxed a little more too, so he agreed I could go.

My father had long legs and was a fast walker, but by taking two steps to his one I was able to keep up with him and soon we were at Burdick's store. I would wait for him at Burdick's, as he went onto the north patrol post about a mile farther northeast. I watched Mrs. Burdick weigh out all those good things my parents had ordered for our Christmas. Hard candies, chocolates, mixed nuts and peanuts with the shells on them. I was so excited and happy, the store however was well heated by a large round oak heating stove and the warmth soon made me sleepy. Working hard to stay awake, my father soon returned and we loaded up the box on my sled with all the brown paper bags of goodies. It did seem like a much longer walk from the store to the station than it was coming down, but we finally arrived home. My mother was quite uneasy about me being up so late, so I was hurried off to bed. My mother told later, of how my father sat and shelled peanuts to eat before returning to the station.

I know I must have slept soundly and the next morning I was hurrying to get ready for school, when my mother said that it was such a nice morning she was sure the mail boat would be going over to Glen Haven that day. She said she was nearly out of kerosene and that before leaving to go to school I must take it down to the mail boat which was tied up at the dock near the station. I was very upset that I had to do this extra errand before going to meet my school mates to walk to school with them. It might mean that I would be late and would have to walk that mile and a half alone. I ran down to the station as fast as I could, with kerosene can in hand, I went to the men's loafing room where I found my father sitting straddled off the back of a chair with his head bowed and resting on his arms. I rushed in and spoke briefly, he raised his head and as I gave him the message he sort of moaned. I thought he looked different than when I saw him the night before, but I was in such a hurry to meet my friends that I rushed out of the station and went on to school. It makes me very sad to say that I never saw my father alive again.

That afternoon as my brother Norman (who was two years younger than I) and I came home from school we had to pass Aunt Hattie Barnhart's house which is now the National Park's Visitor Center, and it was just across the boardwalk from our house. When Aunt Hattie saw us she stepped outside her door to call to us that we were supposed to come and stay with her. My father had fallen ill and he and my mother had been taken across the lake to Glen Haven in the Coast Guard lifeboat to see a doctor. It was comforting to be with my Aunt Hattie and her children Beatrice and George. They were not only family but were close playmates of my brothers and me. Ethel's story stops

ETHEL STORMER, MY PIONEER MENTOR



"You must be getting tired of hearing my stories over and over", Ethel would always say to me as we turned yet another page of one of her many photo albums. Photo albums which brought us together and on many occasions

the stories within those photos became the purpose of our visits. Photo albums of lighthouses, keeper's quarters, farm houses, schoolhouses, lakeshores, forests, and shore life. The photographs revealed the faces of a story within a story. Albums that tied her life to a life experienced so long ago. Stories which encapsulated the richness and intensity of her entire lifetime. Stories I could hear over and over and over again spoken in Ethel's soft, gentle and ever so humble storytelling style. Of life and time spent on North and South Manitou Islands. A love relationship we shared for these islands which lie just off shore of northwest Michigan, but whose memories lie so much farther away. The stories would hold my attention for hours, often way beyond the tired look in Ethel's eyes.

We shared a yearning to be back in those times, on some of those days ... Like when the three brothers went ashore ... or when her baby sister was arriving into the world on North Manitou Island ... or when she was escorted to a dance on North Manitou by a boy in a horse drawn buggy....or being courted by the "Stormer boy" ... or just the mundane days where dreams of getting off the island preoccupied the mind. Separated by 60 years, I experienced island life through her memories and shared many of the dreams of her day in my day.

What I learned from Ethel brought this island I had grown to know so intimately on a non-human level into the human dimension of life as it was in the early 1900's. These buildings and farms I knew so well, having admired them for their architecture and man's imprint on their soil, came to life with human faces, islander activities, inventions, along with their joys, sorrows and celebrations. In a world so large, Ethel brought these islands into a small and personal perspective. I had walked these islands extensively in the 1980's but with the inspiration of Ethel's memories, I felt more like an old soul walking them back in the 1880's.

Later when my life moved away from the islands, we would get together on Michigan Avenue ... and hours later realize we hadn't spoken about present times. Our world was her living room and the couch was where the remembering of stories and dreams left behind unfolded. It was then we would share a small meal of toast with some of my husband's fresh raspberry jam, and possibly some tea and soup.

As much as those islands shaped who I am today, those times spent with Ethel had a profound imprint in shaping who I am today. She blushed when I told her that she was an inspiration to me in my life. How I looked to her as a role model. How I admired and would try to practice her gentle spirit, her humbleness, and especially her strength of character. I admired her intentions to live her life according to her will - in the home that she and Joe shared their lives and dreams.

Each visit with Ethel held a long goodbye. Including, perhaps another story or two at the back door while I signed the guest book, often a walk around the house to admire her flowers and plants - a reflection of her world today. I always promised to return again soon to visit and share a world we both felt so connected to in many of the same ways. Ethel, "could a person be born one century too late?"

*With fond memories of my friend, and my pioneer mentor,
Kathy Bietau*

FOND STORIES OF ETHEL FURST STORMER TOLD BY LYNN ROE AND LINDA HENRY

Ethel was a real Island girl, having lived on both South and North Manitou. She knew first hand, the rigors and sorrows of life on these beautiful, but isolated Islands. For example, her own father Martin C. Furst, USLSS, died of appendicitis. Her mother, Zella, re-married, Ernest Hutzler, Lighthouse Keeper. Her Furst brothers were Norman and Glen, and her Hutzler brothers were George and Dale along with sister Leota. Ethel married Joseph Stormer and they raised two daughters on the main shore, Joanna and Zella. Many happy years followed. Those of us who were privileged to know Ethel will always remember her zest for life and her gracious hospitality. She loved visitors and possessed a "charming ability to tell a story" as Linda Henry relates! The following are just a few of her many memories of a life well lived.

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