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## ***Marie Averill memories ...***

*by Gordon Stevenson, Grandson of Walter and Anna Averill*

Growing up in San Antonio, Lugerville was a constant presence in my life, even though I only visited there a couple of times. The names of Bodenbug, Vojtech, Berg, Kenyon, and many others were like family to me. Mother (Marie) discussed many times, the joys of walking with friends down the narrow trail with picnic baskets, and swimming at Rocky Carrie; loading the town people up on railroad cars with Mr. Kenyon running the engine to drive the entire town out to the woods for berry picking; and playing Run Sheep Run with the tree stump in their front yard as home base. I learned much from Mom in that you can survive and have wonderful childhood experiences without phones, TV, running water, and electricity. Mother attended Lugerville School, starting at age 5, one year earlier than her siblings. This was by accident, as she'd followed the kids to school the first day, and sat down with the First Graders. The teacher told her mother that this was just fine, she had a small First Grade Class, and Marie was welcome to start school a year early. Mother's best friend growing up was Feffie Bodenbug. I remember in the sixties, playing with the Bodenbug children out on their farm, when we visited from Texas.

*Our Aunt Dorothy was born in Lugerville in 1919 and lived there until her graduation from Lugerville School 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. As each of the Averill daughters, Margaret, Marie, Dorothy, graduated from the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, they then attended and graduated from Merrill High School. They lived with their mother's (Anna Averill) sister, Lillian Wickstrom Anderson in Merrill. Dorothy was a Teacher for over 35 years in Antigo, WI, retiring in Merrill, WI. Dorothy passed away in 2008.*

*These memories were written down by Dorothy in the 1980s at the urging of her nephew, Gordon.*

QUESTION: Mother (Marie Averill) told me a story about when she and two of her friends went skiing out in the woods. One of them broke their leg, and they made a stretcher out of two jackets and the set of skis, and carried their friend back to town.

DOES ANYONE KNOW who these other friends were? Gordon Stevenson [b24b24@aol.com](mailto:b24b24@aol.com)

## ***Dorothy Averill remembers ...***

### **Lugerville**

Lugerville was owned by the West Lumber Company, including the homes. The employees rented their homes for \$6.00 per month. Anyone who had skills could remodel their house, the lumber was given to them for free by the company. There was a General Store, Doctor's Office, Barber Shop, Saloon, School, Town Hall, Ice Houses, Bunk Houses, and a Cook Shanty. The men who lived at the bunkhouses ate at the Cook Shanty. The large building that housed the Store also had the Company Offices and the Post Office. Papa (Walter Averill) was Assistant Post Master and he also served 25 years as the Town of Flambeau Clerk.

## Lugerville Store

The General Store was just that – general. There were shelves along the walls of the store, the clerks had to climb ladders to get to the tops of the shelves. The families purchased coupon books for the purchases they made at the store. They came in various denominations by the time payday came again, little was left after the rent, doctors, and coupon books were deducted. Each family paid \$5.00 for the doctor, and could visit the doctor for as many times as needed.

The meat was kept in a walk in freezer. It wasn't packed as it is these days, but the cut of meat you wanted was cut as you waited. Coffee was ground as you waited, sugar and flour came in 100 pound bags – you got as much as you wanted. Cookies, crackers, and pickles came in barrels. You brought your own container for syrup, molasses, and kerosene. If someone lost the cover for the kerosene can, a potato was put in the spigot so the kerosene wouldn't splash out. Kerosene was used mostly for the lamps, and some people used kerosene for heat. The store also sold clothes, shoes, yard material, notions (thread, buttons, etc.), dishes, table & bed linens, towels and curtains.



This scale was used in the Company store. Walter was Mill Bookkeeper, Postmaster, and Town Clerk.

## House WORK

The Saturday night bath – in a wash tub – with water from the stove reservoir was a weekly ritual. All three of us girls bathed in the same water. The shades were drawn, and the doors were shut, and the room became hot and steamy, and smelled of Palmolive soap. A hot fire was put in the stove so we wouldn't get a chill – then the tub was placed in front of the open oven door, giving us more warmth.

A snapping fire in the stove was just the thing to get us moving on cold mornings before school. Sometimes the house would go below freezing and our water pail would freeze. We grabbed our clothes and ran near the stove to dress.

Monday was wash day. A hot fire and lots of hot water was needed to clean the clothes. The copper boiler sat on the stove and when the water was ready, the whites were put in the boiling water with Fels-Naptha Soap. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fels-Naptha> Then the clothes were scrubbed on a washboard and rinsed and wrung by hand. It was long hard work for our mother, but no woman hung out her wash unless it was white as the neighbors.

Tuesday was ironing day. There was no 'wash n wear' so ironing was essential. Flat irons were heated on top of the stove. You used one until it cooled, then released the heavy iron from its handle and exchanged a cool iron for a hot one by clamping the wooden handle onto another iron onto the stove.



Anna Averill's irons

Once in a while you had to let the stove cool, so you could put on a coat of 'stove blacking', which gave the old stove a like-new look. It took washing and re-washing to get the 'stove blacking' off your hands. Then, the chrome trim of the stove was polished with Bon Ami – this had to be buffed and buffed with an old rag til the chrome had a nice shine. Cleaning and maintaining those old stoves took a lot of work. The first time a fire was started in the stove after the stove blacking was put on, the house smelled to high heaven until the blacking burned off.

Note: The stoves were also used to heat rocks to warm other areas of the house.

### Averill's Stump

Our house was built on a slight incline. To the east of our house a large tree had been cut down and the stump had never been removed. It too was on a hill. Here, all the kids gathered at Averill's Stump to play games – hide & seek – go my good sheep go – King of the Hill, and others. The Stump was used as a goal for all our games. Young and older kids came to Averill's Stump to play or just gather to talk. Grandma said she didn't mind the kids coming as then she always knew where we kids were. The old rotted stump still stands today.



Margaret, an unidentified friend, and Marie Averill, sitting on "Averill's Stump"

The rowdy kids in town called our end of town Angel Town. Guess it was because most of the people who had better jobs at West Lumber Company lived there.

There are also two silver leaf maple trees standing in our yard that Grandpa planted when we lived in Lugerville. So when we go back, the silver maples show us our lot, as the house was bought, and I think the man who bought the house moved it out in the country somewhere.

### Lugerville's Telephone

There was only one phone in town, which was located in the company office. Many times Papa (Walter Averill) was awakened at night to go to the company office and use the phone to call a doctor or notify somebody of some catastrophe that had happened.

### Train Trips to Phillips

The company train would go to Phillips approximately 10 miles and take people to shop in Phillips for things they couldn't get in Lugerville. They would stay in Phillips for 3 hours. Papa was the Conductor on those trips. He always brought something home for us – **I can remember records for our victrola.** I also remember him bringing us coconuts and fruit.

NOTE: the victrola and records are currently in possession of Walter's Grandson, Gordon



## Berry Picking

We went berry picking on the company train to the company logging camps. We had to stay up there all day, so had to take a lunch along. The cook at the camp always gave us cake or pie for dessert. There was a lake up there and all the kids could go swimming. While these were fun weekend excursions for people in the town, the main purpose was to gather berries to make jellies and jams for the winter, and pies and cakes for the summer.



Berry picking pails

used by the Averill family

## 4<sup>th</sup> of July

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Papa (Walter Averill) bought a lot of fireworks (much cheaper than they are today.) He would shoot them off from our gate, propping up a wood board on the fence to use as a rocket launcher. Everyone in Lugerville would come to watch.

## Halloween

Since Papa was the Mill Accountant in charge of much of the activities at the Mill Store, the bigger kids, as a Halloween prank, would take our gate and put it up on the flagpole at the store. Many times, our toilet would be tipped over also, then Papa had the toilet secured by 2x4s to two trees. That ended that!

## The Car

We didn't take the car out very much in the winter. The car was usually put up on blocks and the battery taken out and stored in the house. If we did go in the winter, bricks were warmed in the oven and used to warm our feet in the car. They didn't work too well, but were better than nothing. There were not heaters in the car then. *We do not know what type of car Walter owned at that time.*

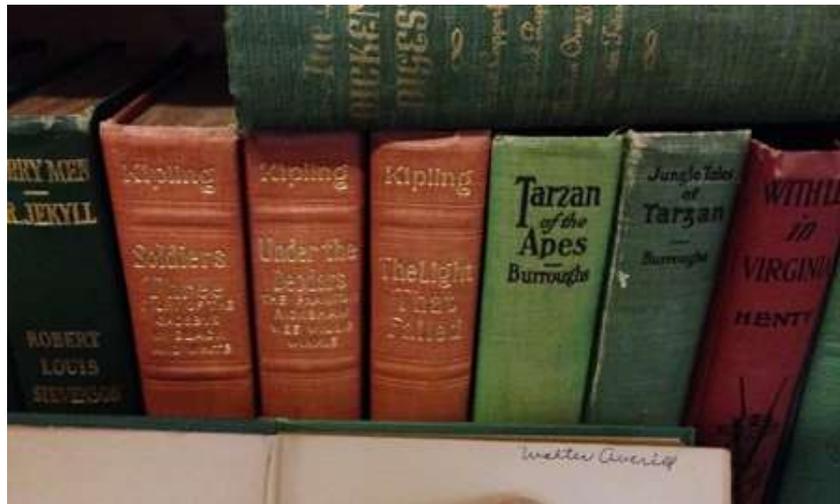
## The First Radio

We were one of the first families in Lugerville to have a radio. Papa would listen to the ballgames on the earphones. A lot of the kids from the town would come by to listen also.

## The Averill Library

Papa loved to read – often he would sit and read til midnight using the kerosene lamp. He loved western stories and his family often gave him books for Christmas and Birthdays. Our house was like the town Library – people came and borrowed our books to read. They always returned them promptly.

Photos: Walter’s bookcase purchased when they lived in Hazelhurst; and some of his favorite books which have remained in the family since c. 1913



## Our Christmas Tree

We always had a big Christmas tree. Papa would tramp a whole Sunday afternoon through the woods looking for a perfect tree. Those years a person could cut a tree almost anywhere. We used real candles on our tree, and when those candles were lit, Papa sat and watched in case of a fire. He never left the room. Christmas morning we always had a mound of presents under the tree. Papa and Mama always trimmed the tree after we kids had gone to bed.

## Ladies Social

One time when Mama had some of the ladies and children over, Marie put all of her toys in the stove because she didn’t want the other kids to play with them. One of the ladies happened to see her do it, and told Mama right away, because there was a fire in the stove.

## Life in Lugerville

Lugerville was a small lumber town 10 miles west of Phillips. At peak employment, Lugerville had about 500 people. Everybody in Lugerville was a big happy family – most who settled there were newly married with small children, so we all grew up together. Many lasting friendships were made there. The single men lived in the bunk houses and ate in the Cook Shanty. A large saw mill cut logs

that were finished at the planning mill. There was also a large barn, home for the horses that pulled the cars of lumber to the yard where the men piled them to dry.

### Our Home in Lugerville

We lived in six-room house, all on one floor. It was one of the nicer homes in the village and was set on a large lot. We had a kitchen, two bedrooms, dining room, living room, a third bedroom was divided to make a closet and a pantry off of the kitchen. There was a large screened in porch on the front of the house, and a small porch on the back of the house. Mama and Papa always had a large garden. They really had green thumbs. We ate, and Mama canned, out of the garden for winter. We also had lots of flowers. We picked lots of berries, which were also canned for winter use. There were no freezers in those days. The canned goods were kept in a cellar under our house. We went down to the cellar through a trap door in the pantry. For a long time, Mama washed our clothes by hand with round tubs a ringer we turned manually. The dirtier clothes were cooked in a boiler before washing to get out some of the dirt. Later, Mama got a washer run by gasoline – this made her work a little lighter. There was an exhaust pipe on the washer, so a hole was made in the mop board to put the pipe through, so the exhaust could escape.



Averill home, garage in background. Margaret in her confirmation dress, 1925; Dorothy in the garden

Our clothes were ironed with irons heated on the wood stove. Later, Ma got an iron that used gas. At first we used kerosene lamps, and later we got gas lights that gave much more light. We cooked on a wood stove that had a warming closet on top, also a reservoir on the side which was filled with water. This gave us warm water. We had a wash stand in the kitchen next to the stove. There were towels, wash bowl, and our toothbrushes. We had no running water, and had a pail and dipper where we drank. Our home was heated with a coal heater, situated between the dining room and the living room; hard coal was burned. We had a coal bin in the woodshed. Our house was situated on a gradual incline, so under the front porch was storage area where Pa kept tools, lawnmower, etc. Our house had

a fence all around it. We had a garage, chicken coop, outdoor toilet, and a wood shed. There was a water pump between our house and the next door neighbors. We had wooden sidewalks from the house to the pump, to the woodshed, and to the toilet. Our house was painted white, as were most of the houses in Lugerville. The front of our home faced south. Most of the homes were built so they faced east and west. The village roads were all made of gravel so there was a lot of dust.

We had a wood box in the back shed to keep wood for the kitchen stove. Papa filled the box every evening.

In the winter, Papa put a slender cylinder inside the coal stove. It was called a magazine. Papa would fill this up with coal just before bedtime, and all night the coal dropped onto the burning coals and kept the fire going to keep us warm all night. We stood behind the coal stove when we dressed in the morning.

The kitchen stove had 4 or 6 lids. These were lifted up to put in wood. Wood could also be put in from the front. There was an opening in the front to remove ashes. On the side there was a grate to open to give the stove a draft so the wood would burn better. The chimney also had a draft. There were two warming closets above the stove, and a reservoir on the side for water and an oven for baking. Dad filled the reservoir every evening so Mama would have hot water the next day.

This photo shows Walter & Anna's dresser and brass bed, acquired in Hazelhurst when they were married, and were moved to the Lugerville house.

These two pieces have remained in the family since approx. 1912.



Margaret & Dorothy, outhouse in background

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Walter & Anna's dresser & brass bed

### **Fishing on the Flambeau River**

The saw mill was built on the banks of the Flambeau. The hot pond used to soak the logs before they went up to be made into lumber was part of the Flambeau. We kids also swam in the Flambeau and did our ice skating in the winter. Some of the children would swim on the edges of the hot pond,

since the water was a little warmer there. If any of them had a problem, one of the men used his long pole that directed logs into the mill, to pull the kid to safety.

Pa fished on the Flambeau near the saw mill below the dam. He would sit for hours and fish. In the spring he caught Suckers. There were also Bass, Pickerel, and Pike. Pa would also fish at a spot called Rocky Carry. The surface in that area was almost completely covered with rocks. We used to go there for picnics, as it was only a short walk through the woods from town. When Pa fished, he put on his straw hat, and took his corn cob pipe to smoke – the smoke kept the bugs away. He used an old cane pole and angle worms which he dug in our garden, and carried them in an old can. Pa just sat on the riverbank and fished. Sometimes he would fish off the Red Bridge, which got its name from the color it was painted. From time to time, we kids would go fishing with him, but we never wanted to stay as long as he stayed. I will always remember how beautiful the Flambeau River was.

Ma pickled the Suckers that Pa caught in the spring. Then she canned them and we had fish all winter long. Everyone always said that Suckers were best in the spring when the water was cold – they also said they had a lot of bones, and when they were pickled, the bones softened up.

Pa smoked “Standard” tobacco in his corn cob pipe. He also smoked a cigar on “special occasions. He never smoked at work, but only at night, after he got off work. Pa stopped his smoking when there was the first scare of Cancer of the throat.

## **Homemade Ice Cream**

When we were kids, nothing tasted better than licking the paddles of our hand-cranked ice cream maker. When the crank would begin to turn awfully hard, we almost couldn't wait. Then mama would say “just a little bit longer.”

Nearly every Sunday in the summer, when we were kids, we made homemade ice cream. We had a shady spot in a corner outside the window of our pantry. Papa got the freezer ready with chipped ice and rock salt, and mama cooked the custard. The custard was made with lots of eggs, sugar, thick cream and flavoring. The stainless insert was placed in the freezer with the custard and we began to crank. When the turning got hard for us, Papa would take over until the ice cream was done. The paddles (sometimes called dashers) were taken out and put on the platter. Then we kids got spoons and ate the ice cream that was on the dasher. Then the freezer was covered with a clean rug to keep the cold in, until we ate. We ate the ice cream in soup dishes – usually topped with maple syrup or fruit – good, good, good!

The ice cream freezer was a wooden bucket held together with metal staves – a stainless insert for the custard, and then the apparatus for turning was carefully secured on the top. The freezer was placed on a bench so we could turn with ease, and didn't have to bend over. The freezer held six quarts. Papa got the ice we used in the freezer from one of the community ice houses. There were about three ice houses in Lugerville. In the fall, when the Flambeau River was frozen, some of the men from the mill would cut off chunks of ice and store them in ice houses. The ice was insulated with sawdust from the mill. The ice was taken from the river to the ices on sleighs pulled by horses. Papa lifted the ice with large ice tongs and took the ice home in a wheelbarrow. When the ice got home we kids pumped water and poured it over the ice to clean the sawdust off. This was the same way we got ice for our iceboxes to keep other food cool.

## School Days in Lugerville

We all (Margaret, Marie, Dorothy) attended Lugerville School, which was a State Graded school. It was a frame building with four rooms – two classes to each room. In each room was a Teacher's desk, a set of maps, a globe suspended from the ceiling (hung on a pulley,) and pictures of Washington and Lincoln on the wall. As you entered the school, there was a bell tower – that called us when school started and after recess. Some kids would pull bell for fun. We had a bubbler fountain for drinking water – before this, we'd had a big crock jar with a spigot and paper cups for drinking. We hung our coats in the hall, and in the winter, put our overshoes under our coats on the floor. At the end of the day, the Teacher chose someone to clean the erasers and wash the board for her.

Sweeping compound was put on the floors to eliminate dust when the sweeping was done – usually a push broom was used. The desks were nailed to long boards so that the kids couldn't move them around. In order to sweep, a whole row had to be moved. There were chairs or benches in the front of the room when we had to recite for classes. Most of the kids used penny pencils (made of unpainted cedar,) tablets, and for spelling classes we had a tablet that was about half the width of a regular tablet. Bathroom facilities had a lot to be desired – a little house behind the school. In Lugerville the girls' toilet was on one side of the wood shed, and the boys on the other side. In each classroom was a big round stove which was protected by a metal coat. The coat was imprinted with scroll-like designs. We stood there to warm up after recess or when we came to school on cold mornings. We dried our mittens near the stove. Mittens were made of wool in those days, so there was a wooly smell as the mittens dried. Blackboards hung on the walls as well as bulletin boards. We, who lived in town, went home for lunch. Kids from the country carried lunch pails, which were either used lard tins or syrup pails. In the winter the lunches froze as they walked to school. No such thing as a school bus then. They would put their lunches near the stove and the food thawed by lunchtime.

We had Spelling Bees and lots of emphasis was put on penmanship. The library was a group of shelves which held the books and there was a set of Encyclopedias in each classroom.

All of the desks had inkwells. We wrote with pens that pen points were inserted into. They always seemed to scratch when we wrote. There was also a wind-up phonograph in each class room (very up to date.) The Teacher had a bell on her desk if we got too noisy.

The flag was special to all of us in those days. School started with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. The Flag hung on a pole outside the school, and it was a privilege to be asked, with a partner, to hang the Flag in the morning. When it rained, we had to take the Flag down. Each room had their turn to take care of the Flag.

A Christmas Program was a must. We started to practice right after Thanksgiving. Each room contributed to the program. A stage was constructed and most of the time, sheets were used as curtains, that were hung on a strong wire. There was a lunch for everyone at the close of the evening, usually brought by the mothers of the kids in the school. We all got a bag of candy from Santa at the Christmas Program. The PTA donated the candy to the school.

We also had a program to celebrate Lincoln's and Washington's birthdays, and Valentine's Day. This was a 3-in-one Program. Valentine's Day was a big day, especially in the lower grades. Each classroom made an elaborate box to hold the Valentines, which were distributed on Valentine's Day. The Teacher always brought us a treat on those days.

Parents visited school on a regular basis those years. The visits were recorded in the Teachers' Yearly Report.

Another big event in rural schools was the Basket Socials. Ladies decorated Baskets and packed a lunch for two in them. The baskets were auctioned off to the highest bidder. The money was used to buy something for the school, books, balls, bats, or other games. School picnics at the end of the year were important, many times whole families came to the picnic (potluck.) We played games and had prizes – there was always a lot of lemonade at the school picnics.

Another day we celebrated was Arbor Day. We spent the afternoon raking the schoolyard and cleaning away anything left from the winter. We also planted a tree on the school ground, the Teacher had a regular Ceremony we followed for planting the tree.

May Day was another fun day during the school year. We made May Baskets and filled them with candy and flowers and gave them to our friends. We also had a May Pole Dance. Sometimes we hung the baskets on our friends' doorknobs when they were not looking.

We had a baseball diamond and playground equipment such as slides, swings, giant strides, and merry-go-rounds.

In those days, the social life of all the people revolved around the school. I think that we were privileged to attend a State Rated School.

There was a special closeness felt among the students, as is shown in the picnics still held in Lugerville each year.

In later years, the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade was added to the Curriculum. There were other small one room schools scattered around the township. They were about two miles apart as the kids were not to walk more than two miles to school.

## The Chicken Coop

Pa raised chickens for many years. We had a chicken coop on the edge of our property. Ma's brother, Uncle Charlie Wickstrom, built the chicken coop for us. The chicken yard was fenced in, in two compartments. One held the older chickens and the other held the new chicks. Through the fenced in areas, the chickens had access to the chicken coop. It was in the farther fenced in area that Marie and Feffie Bodenbug would go and play, so they would be away from Eileen Kenyon and me. We were younger and considered to be pests while they were playing tea. Pa always raised Plymouth Rock chickens. They were black with white throughout. He said he liked the breed because they were a heavy chicken and good for eating. Most the time Pa sent for his little chicks by mail and they would come in boxes with a lot of round holes so the chickens would not suffocate in transit. Once in a while, Pa would set a cluck (hen) on a nest of eggs. If the weather got cold, often times Pa brought the cluck and the eggs into our kitchen to keep them warm. Sometimes a cluck stole her nest. She would lay her eggs somewhere in the woods and incubate the eggs. When the chickens hatched, she would bring them back with her to the chicken coop. Ma often canned the meat of the chickens for use during the



cold winter months.

Averill chicken coop built by Uncle Charlie Wickstrom