

An Autobiography by James Archibald Rye - March 10, 1943

The fact that I was born in a cow pasture probably had something to do with the fact that I have always been a little bull-headed. At any rate being born undoubtedly had a very profound effect on my life. Otherwise I might have been doomed to a very sordid existence.

Those at the ring side agree that I weighed in at 14 pounds stripped (I suppose), although have heard my mother stretch that to 16 for psychological effect when swapping yarns with other mothers and prospects.

Another profound impressive item was the fact that I was ushered in without benefit of medicine or surgery - Doc couldn't get there! "Grandma" Newcomb came over and gave me a dash of cold water and slapped me into subconsciousness - from which I never recovered, and to me water is only fit for street sprinkling.

I decided right there that I would grow up and be a doctor, and resolved never to have a damsel in distress after that fashion. As to how well that resolution was carried out remains to be seen, but, I did get to do a little horse doctoring.

Some of my early recollections:

- The robin that built each spring on the thatched roof of the lean-to barn.
- The steamy atmosphere where the cattle were on a winter day with moist bedding underneath, and poles overhead covered with hay.
- The time I set fire to the barn and how my mother ran a mile for help while the barn burned down.
- The hammock under the big oaks. It was made of a section of "lath" fence.
- The railroad "on the other side of the woods." All of two city blocks but it seemed miles to us kids.
- The spring on the hillside where we got our drinking water, boarded up around the sides and a trap door cover that blew down on my back while leaning over to bail out a pail of water.
- The creek that flowed under the bridge at the foot of the hill and the "corduroy" road leading out to the highway. The duck pond in the swamp where we kept the wooden wash tubs in soak between wash days so they wouldn't dry out and leak.
- The road to town - formerly a railroad and the ties were left in after the rails were taken up made a bumpy ride in the buckboard or lumber wagon.
- trips to town with dad were epochs. Down to the mills for stock feed, where we could stand on the bridge and watch the water in the millrace
- Dad's stories of pioneer days - running the ferry where the Hennepin Ave bridge now is; Butchering cattle at Fort Snelling before the Civil War; Farming in the Minnesota River bottoms; Fighting with the other farmers in the Indian outbreak of 1862-3: His enlistment in the old First Minnesota volunteer infantry; the battle of Gettysburg; other battles in Virginia and the South.
- A great event in my very young life was the building of a new home and moving! - what a day! The bull in the pasture used to stand at the foot of the hill and paw

dirt up over his back and snort and bellow. The horses were frightened and tried to run just as the furniture was loaded. A mattress slid off adding to the confusion.

- Father and Mother's trip to the Northern Baptist Convention in Washington D.C. in 1887 or 8 and their return home in a "Hansom Cab."
- The old two wheeler with the driver up over the back. (*Note: Arch was 3-4 years old*)
- In their absence an aunt took care of us kids after a fashion. We all had the measles and the mumps. DR Ricker called just at supper time and volunteered to milk the cow for Aunt Jennie. He was strange to the cow, maybe she didn't take to his long tailed black coat, anyway she kicked him over and put her foot in the pail.
- Paying the doctor-bill with a load of hay for his horse or potatoes and rutabaga for the cellar.
- Sister Lou trying to "teach the baby ducks to swim" and drowning most of them.
- Jess falling into the creek and having to be pulled out feet first.
- Starting school at Old Calhoun - my first teacher - Red headed Sherwood.
- (~1891)
- Being vaccinated and nearly died with infection - delaying my start to school until after seven years old.
- Scarlet Fever - Pneumonia - Mumps.
- Starting to earn money - carrying papers at nine years. (1893)
- Changing school to St. Louis Park - waiting at the telegraph office every nite until 5:30 for the papers to come from town by train. Then the trek home and deliver the papers enroute.
- My first girl - at 10 years - I later married her - and lost her. (*Pauline Truscott 1894*)
- Halloween - putting a buggy up on the roof of the blacksmith shop - transferring the Town Hotel sign from the hotel to the front of the school - Taking the water pails and dippers from school and throwing them onto the front porch of the principles house.
- Gospel services at Calvary Baptist Church - conversion and baptism by G. L. Morrill. Preceded and followed by many years with parents in the same pew at Calvary and First (*Baptist Churches*) -
- Working in the C. E. (*Calhoun Elementary*) Grade School. Finished with honors and working in the summer vacations. Two summers herding cows on horseback - my first cigaret - Sweet Corporals - "Ask dad - He knows." (*age 15 & 16 in 1899-1900*)
- Hoeing sugar beets for the factory at St. Louis Park. (*age 14 in 1898*)
- Working two summers in the Monitor Drill iron foundry - one season in the "rattler" - one summer doing iron moulding - making forms all day and pouring the hot iron in the late afternoon. (*age 17 & 18 1901-2*)
- Moldenhauer being killed in front of me as I wheeled a load of castings into the machine shop - Looking for my brother-in-law - I found him on his knees in prayer in a corner of the rattle room.

- 1931 “Mama” - Grandma Crittenden passed away after a long tiresome suffering - We hope we did something to ease and comfort her last years.
- “Nana” Seath and all the pretty flowers she grew and paintings she did and beautiful dresses and rompers she made for you kids. Her illness and how I went every night for months to her bedside and “fixed” her pillow and gave her a hypo so she could sleep - and then after months of suffering she passed on to her reward - never doubting - never fearful.
- France Ave Mission - and the times we have had there - The Shortridge Club - Shortridges in Africa and their return.
- Arloene - going away - her return to our home and the blessing of her fellowship in our home.
- Janet graduating from high school - the thrill of success - and better than I could have ever dared to hope for myself - going to college.

Keynote?

It has been the keynote of my life since grade school - to smile, and make wrinkles in my face - To be fair in all human relationships - so much so that even my enemies - if I have any - will admit I have been fair; - and to do each days work, just so far as possible to keep it in mind, as a service to Jesus Christ - If He is satisfied with my work I don't care what anyone else thinks about it.

Much Love
Dad

Transcribed on October 31, 2009, from a copy given to me by his daughter Janet Goodrich in October 1995.

George Rye (Grandson of James Archibald Rye)