

## **MARIA HICKEY BRENNAN**

### REMEMBERING OUR GRANDMA BRENNAN

Grandma Maria Hickey Brennan was born 28 November 1862 at the Hickey Farm on Mushtown Road, Spring Lake, Scott County. A short time later a man arrived at the farm to recruit men to serve in the Civil War. Michael had anticipated his arrival and was out of sight. When the man asked about him Margaret Hickey replied "Sure, didn't he leave me." To which the man, looking at little Maria in the cradle said, "Well, he left his image behind."

I had the opportunity to spend many days, weeks and months with Gram and have many lovely memories.

In the summer she was up early every Monday morning and at the washtub scrubbing clothes on the scrub board. She had her laundry on the line before setting off to seven o'clock Mass.

One summer afternoon in 1936, Gram and Mrs. Marrinan were visiting near the flower garden when a woman selling beauty soap and creams stopped. After giving her sales pitch she admired Gram's soft hands and face and asked what soap she used to keep the skin so soft. Gram's answer was, "I use my good old fashioned homemade soap." She often added a few drops of perfume to the lye soap she used in the bathroom.

Every spring I looked forward to fresh asparagus that grew in the northeast corner of the garden. Sometimes we had it creamed. Fresh strawberries and rhubarb were spring specials at Gram's.

We had our own little games – the four-leaf clover hunts, the south clothesline post was the spot to find them, if you got there first. Sunday afternoons usually brought company and a special lunch, but on quiet Sundays we sat on the porch, while Gram crocheted, we made a game of counting the passing cars. One counted those going south and the other the cars traveling north, for an hour. Wouldn't we have a great time now with the increased population of the Lakeville area?

As I pass Gram's house now, I recall how she trimmed the lilac hedge with hand shears. The lilacs are far beyond hedge height now.

A few of us remember the hens Gram had in the 1930's. Their house was the former outhouse behind the garage. The five or six hens provided eggs for cooking and sometimes I traded a dozen at Berres' store for groceries.

It was a great occasion when Mrs. O'Rourke sent her chauffeur to bring Gram to Antlers' Park for a visit and dinner. I went along and enjoyed the day. George O'Rourke was very busy at the Lodge. A large platter of a variety of meats, salads and rolls was sent over from the Lodge.

The years of 1930-32 were busy ones. Aunt Gert was teaching and preparing for her marriage. Aunt Irene worked at the creamery, as did Florence Filesticker and Edith Kelly, who roomed and boarded at Gram's. They were involved in social events: Hardtime Dances, Showers and Weddings. Being the flower girl for Aunt Gert's wedding I had a few fittings for my dress at Margaret Gears. Those were very important days in my young life!

Gram fell and broke her hip and spent some time at Aunt Gert's home in Minneapolis.

When Gram returned to Lakeville, her daughter felt she needed someone with her so they hired a lady to stay with her. Our Mother came to visit one day and Gram in her wheelchair was at the kitchen table making an apple pie and her caretaker was resting in the parlor. Needless to say, Gram said she didn't need a live in helper.