

## MARGARET DOHERTY

Dear Sister Zacchaeus,

Your letter came a month ago. I had sold my house on Selby Ave and was in the process of moving to my daughter Monica's home and am now very much at home with her family. I admire you very much for tracing the hickey family tree. My grandson, Timothy Carroll thinks it's a great idea, he's 16 yrs.

"I would like to relate a few things I remember about Grandpa Michael and Grandma Margaret Hickey. Grandpa was a tall lean man with kind blue eyes and was soft-spoken. He raised large flocks of sheep and sometimes the mother sheep had two or three lambs and one would be orphaned, but Grandpa fed the little one with a bottle and nipple filled with cow's milk. Sometimes he'd have five orphaned lambs and he made slots in the board fence to hold the bottles. Then each lamb took its place at feeding time. ... Grandpa Hickey raised chickens and ducks. There was a bond below the hill where the farmhouse stood, the pond was surrounded by willow trees and there the ducks hatched out their young in the sheltered area. When the ducks were very young they lived in the pond and by October the pond was a mass of color with the Mallards swimming about.

Grandma made the best raisin pie and rolled sugar cookies. ... Grandma Hickey was short of stature and when she and Grandpa went driving; it was with the one-seated cart drawn by a mule. The cart was quite high so Grandpa would drop a small stool to the ground and then help Grandma down. ... Grandma kept her promise to Our Lady of Mount Carmel by always wearing the brown scapular where she was enrolled on her First Communion Day. Her desire was to be buried in a brown shroud. As she was bothered by numerous heart attacks, to quiet her mind her daughters, Maria, Nancy and Margaret bought brown cashmere and the shroud (a very plain dress). Then Grandma was at ease, but in a few weeks, here good neighbor and friend, Mrs. Deegan passed away so the shroud was given to her. Grandma told the Deegan family that her daughters would make her another one, which they did. One day the sad news came as the St. Catherine's bell was tolling. It told of the death of Mrs. Doyle. She was another of Grandma's friends and neighbors. Grandma by her kindness gave the shroud again. "Love they neighbor as thyself," was fully carried out and her daughters made one more shroud"

I'm sorry I have no pictures.

Sincerely,

Margaret Doherty  
September 9, 1977

Dear Sister,

“Reading 100 Years of Graceville in Saturday’s paper I scanned for something concerning the James Hickey family. ... I remember Agnes very well as a visitor at our home when Mother was living. Agnes was tall with auburn hair and quite a talker. I was five or six years of age. Small post offices were scattered through the country-side, in village stores and sometimes in a home. The mailman, Mr. Pope, a great conversationalist, passed our farm on his route so we had delivery every day; some had to walk to the post office for theirs. Agnes met Mr. Pope everyday. We did get the St. Paul Daily News and she would have a chat with him about any new happenings. She was lovely to Mother and to us, but she did enjoy talking to my Father and neighboring men as they sat on the open front porch of our farmhouse. We sat out there, also, but those were the days “when children were seen and not heard.” I have copied Agnes’ mottoes they still sound good to me. When I glance back eighty year, I thank God for all my memories.”

I hope this finds you well. May God continue to bless you.

Love and prayers,

Margaret  
July 17, 1978

Dear Sister,

“Here are two pictures perhaps you could use ...

They bring back many pleasant memories when we ran in the back door to the kitchen when Aunt Mag made such delicious meals. I think of this home with Uncle Pat playing the fiddle and Mae at the piano, and of course Uncle Simon, who they say was an even better fiddler. We waltzed to the music or took partners for a square dance.

When we farmed in the country, friends of ours were rearing Uncle Pat’s farm, that’s how I have those pictures.

Yesterday I had a pleasant surprise, an invitation to be a guest of honor by the “Twin City Irish American Club to a dinner and dance on March 17th. They wanted to pay tribute to Tony, who with others furnished music for their dances

for many years. So you see, it's nothing I did but it's nice to belong to someone who did nice things!

I hope this finds you well and happy. Agnes chats with your mother occasionally, my hearing is not the best and her voice is soft. I have difficulty hearing one of my brothers also.

Love,

Margaret  
March 2, 1979

Dear Sister,

I shall write what I know about early St. Catherine's.

The first Mass said in St. Catherine's parish was in the home of Mathew and Winnifred (Clune) Donnelly in d1857. Mr. Jos. (Margaret) Shea is their granddaughter. That home is still there on the same ground.

A log church was built east of this home on land donated by Mathew Donnelly and Michael McMahon. When the parish grew larger, the log building was moved away and a frame church was built. In 1896 lightning struck the building, which burned to the ground. Then the present church was built that year. In 1949, ground was excavated from under the church and the basement finished into a hall, kitchen and restrooms.

The early pioneers: Michael Hickeys, James Hickey, Deegans, Michael Doyles, Thomas Conroys, Steven Conroy, Blacks, Spratts and McMahons these lived down the Mushtown road. And then there were the Daniel O'Keefe's, Patrick O'Keefe's, Dennis Ryans, Michael Sheehans, Michael Pynes, Hylands, Cornelius O'Flynn's, Neilans, Doyles, Michael Corcorans, Thomas Kennefeck, Charles Kennefecks, Festus Mulkerns, Michael Stevens, Anthony Dohertys, Thomas Dohertys (my Tony's grandparents). I'm sure there were others also.

I'm sorry dear Sister, to be so tardy. I was waiting for Joe and Margaret Shea to help me, but now with our winter on, I decided to send you what I can.

I have Mother's obit, but it is beyond frail so I decided to give it to you this way ... a little incident about my mother (Margaret Hickey Doherty). When Mame Brennan Kohls was born, Grandma Hickey went home after four days and sent Mother down to help. Mother wasn't married. Aunt Maria was to remain in bed for nine days, but the baby would be baptized on Sunday, which was only the eighth day. Mother feared that her apple pies would not be good enough for the

Mike Brennans, who would be Godparents, so Aunt Maria got out of bed and made the piecrust. On Sunday Mother proudly served dinner. "What good apple pie," exclaimed Mrs. Mike Brennan! I'd swear Maria made it." I'm sure that Mother blushed.

Thank you for the Murray sheets and the copy of O'Doherty's and the picture of John Murray—really handsome—resembles Mother some, the nose, the cheekbones.

I'm thinking of visiting daughter Helen's family at Christmas in California. It's been twenty years since we had Christmas together. Christmas has always been a special time and it's difficult to leave the families here, but they all say go. I was looking forward to meeting you at that time, so I know you will do well, as you have done so much already. It's really wonderful of you.

May you have a blessed Christmas.

Love,

Margaret

## MEMORIES

"In our day, jeans never got out of the meadow. But the young people today can have just as much fun in jeans as we had all dressed up," says Margaret A. Doherty who writes about dress-up Fourth of July celebrations. She bore 12 children and is grandmother and great grandma as well. She records for posterity, and her family, bits of family history, tunes and rhymes in a journal she calls "Letters from Grandma." Mrs. Doherty lives at 1752 James Ave.

## NEW DRESS SEWN FOR A LONG AGO FOURTH

As I sat at my sewing machine one recent beautiful June day to make a summer dress, my mind wandered back a few years. The days was of a kind like so many years ago when we prepared for the Fourth of July celebrations in New Market, in Scott County about 15 miles from St. Paul.

I folded up my sewing and just sat down and wrote how I remembered those Fourth of July celebrations in the mid-1900's.

It was the only big celebration of the summer. People were very patriotic and of course it was the time of firecrackers.

It was in June we used to make our Fourth of July dresses. Every female, without exception, had a new dress for that day.

I remember having a lavender linen with white collar and cuffs. That was a plainer one. Most of the dresses we used to flower up quite a bit. And I remember wearing a white organdy with pink flowers and pink bows.

Fabrics were not expensive, but many yards were needed because the dress was either ankle or floor length. Ruffles were in vogue, along with yards of lace and insertions to match. Eyelet bands and colored ribbon made pretty trimmings, as did tiny bows of contrasting ribbon. We often made our own patterns, unless we were fortunate enough to borrow a real pattern.

There weren't many parades in New Market then. We didn't have cars. But all around there was bunting, red, white and blue. And we'd put flags on the horses. New Market was a couple of stores, a post office and a saloon, then. It's just about the same size today.

A temporary pavilion would be built by the business people who made great preparation for this gala event. The little hotel on the corner, the Baltes, hired extra people for the dinner served between afternoon and evening dancing. It was often a chicken dinner. Beer, lemonade and popcorn were sold, too. The crowd took over the dance floor from two o'clock in the afternoon until the wee hours of the morning.

Old and young danced as the band music rang through the town. And those dresses of pongee (like silk), voile, batiste, linen, all-over embroidery and many other materials in all colors of the rainbow made a pretty sight. The men and boys were attired in suits, shirts, ties, dress shoes and hats.

The Fourth of July really was a dress up event in New Market.

That June day my sewing machine was kind of like it used to be.

*(Readers may write their memories of earlier days for the Memories column. Send article with your name, address and telephone number to Memories, Cynthia Boyd, St. Paul Dispatch. Memories printed will earn the writer \$25. We reserve the right to edit material.)*

## GRANDMA'S LETTERS ARE LOVING GIFT FROM MARGARET

Margaret a. Doherty says she sat down and cried when she received her grandson's Christmas present.

The gift was a letter from grandson John Heitkamp telling her how much she had meant to him and all her family.

“Grandmas always occupy a special place in the hearts of their grandchildren, especially when she is such a very special person,” John wrote, in part.

“It was the nicest thing I ever received,” Mrs. Doherty said.

And it is such a thing that Mrs. Doherty will leave as a legacy for every one of her loved 46 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren. She is writing “Letters From Grandma.”

“They can have them after I’m gone,” the 84 year-old woman said.

Today there is not baker’s apron around her waist. She is dressed for company in a Sunday navy blue and white dress, a pearl necklace and earrings.

At a little table in her bright bedroom, facing an eight by ten framed photograph of her late husband, Anthony, Mrs. Doherty “scribbles.”

Surrounded by photographic records of important family events like weddings and reunions, she writes in her homey, cloth-covered journal.

“Love one another; love your parents and love God most of all,” she advises her children’s children and all who come after. Her hand is steady; her writing flows decoratively across white, lined sheets of paper.

“I tell them about the way we did things when we were young.” Mrs. Doherty said.

She wrote in that journal on March 23, 1976, of Grandpa’s birthday. She wrote of a home with “A kind father, a tall man with blue eyes and black hair. He also played the violin and was a good singer.” There was “a happy mother with blue eyes and brown hair. She danced the Irish jig.”

Mrs. Doherty recalled her growing up.

“On the farm there was no pay. You just went and helped people. There was all goodwill. I had a very good growing up, we thought of other people.”

She says she writes about things like honesty and thrift. She said old people today think there is a great deal of waste. They’re used to using every scrap.

“Right now I’m making a patch quilt,” she said. She kits, crochets, embroiders and sews. “We did a lot of sewing with seven daughters. We had to have those prom dresses.”

Those were the days of caring for 12 children. Ten are alive. Those were the days she made 45 loaves of bread a week plus rolls.

Now she lives in the home of one of her daughters, Monica Carroll, at 1752 James Ave. Sometimes there is meeting of “the clan,” the 10 children, 46 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren.

But day to day, Mrs. Doherty bakes, does her handwork and writes.

“I scribble,” she said, adding that she took a creative writing class at St. Thomas a few years back. An instructor told her she was “very much in the Laura Ingalls style.”

Mrs. Doherty said she thought after that course about doing some freelance writing but didn’t find the appropriate publication.

She did write her husband Anthony’s biography in a composition book. He passed away six years ago.

It was not until last summer that Mrs. Doherty moved to her daughter’s home from the family house at 1974 Selby Ave. Before that, the family had farmed at Cedar Lake.

Mrs. Doherty taught for five years beginning in 1912 in a Scott County log house. That was the era, she said, when a girl either became a mother, a teacher or a nurse.

“I married a farmer, and, well, that took care of that.”

By Cynthia Boyd  
Staff Writer  
St. Paul Dispatch

## MEMORIES

By Margaret A. Doherty

Very early in life, we were taught to be thrifty in a rather obscure way.

As children, much of our social life centered around church dinners, Fourth of July celebrations, Farm Bureau picnics and county fairs, which we attended with our families.

Father paid for meals but there were other small treats we could buy. So he gave us 25 cents each to spend, with one stipulation—that we would not spend every last penny, but have something left for our little banks (a small box or jar) at home.

It really wasn't too difficult. Small cones of ice cream were a penny; oranges two for a nickel, and so on. The payoff was the kindly look on father's face when we displayed our savings. He had taught us a lesson for life, he hoped.

Later on, when I started teaching in a country school, my salary was \$35 a month and my board and room cost \$10 a month. But I was determined to put some of it in savings.

Expenses were different in those days. We washed and curled our own hair. Makeup was a 10-cent box of face powder. A perfume sachet kept our hankies and ribbons in order, and we made all our clothes. Ladies were admitted free to dances and parties.

Also, I saved a dollar a month by starting the schoolhouse fire each morning, as I lived close by and had the school boys bring in the kindling and wood from the woodshed the day before.

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