

Mrs Laura M. South being elderly and having a hearing difficulty asked if she could write her "Oral History" instead of speaking it. The following is a transcript of what she wrote much as a letter to Mrs Nell Jamèson of Downingtown. (425 E. Lan. Ave.)

It is interesting to think of my life here. I was born at 36th and Market Streets, Phila. Pa. on March 11, 1882, in a happy family. I have no type writer so please skip the mistakes.

My Father was a musician, builder, bricklayer, architect and general mechanic. He could play anything but a piano, hence at the age of 10 I was given music lessons. I was given a flute and taught to play by a German teacher. My Mother could play the piano and sing.

(as you see I disregard margins and paragraphs)

I played a flute at our Flute Club in Philadelphia, led by Mr. Kincaid, now gone. He was the head Flute Blower of the Phila. orchester.

My Father had become frail with consumption and we were scattered. I came to Downingtown in 1898. Fostered by my dear cousins, Mr and Mrs A.T. Hess.

When I graduated from the old 3 department High School, I took the 2 year course for teachers at the Teachers College, West Chester. I got a school as the teacher of the 2nd grade at Broomall, Del. Co. A lovely happy time occurred in 1903, I graduated and I joined the First Baptist Church of Downingtown, Pa. and played my flute every Sunday morning and evening with T.A. Philips at the organ. He and I helped with the music.

Other Churches gave entertainments and all attended. There were many church suppers and Strawberry Festivals held on the church lawns. On Sunday afternoons several of us took walks. Once Marian Powell walked to West Chester from Downingtown, rested a while and then walked back. One Sunday Ola Philips and I picked daisies near home and saw in the meadow near the bridge 2 big snakes in a coil about 10 feet apart. We saw them before they could spring. We took our daisies and went home and that ended our trip for wild flowers. We did lots of work at the church. Our evenings were pleasant, we could put our chairs on the curb at Hesses Bakery and talk until about 9:30 o'clock.

Gormly had his grocery store where the auto store now is. Bill Pollock was a genius at doing arithmetic problems. Someone always gave him one to do and Bill had the answer ready before he went home. Bill was deceased a few years after that. He had been married to Elizabeth Wilson and had a nice family with one son who had talent for mental arithmetic.

These were the years when the auto were being put in the public. The first one in 1906 was Friend Baldwin's, then Harry McFarlan got one and then A.T. Hess. I had my first ride in Friend's car. I like autos but do not drive as I have poor eyesight.

In 1901 I was married to Edwin Clinton South. His brother, Will was in the throghs of his colored photography in which everyone was interested. But on of the great powers keep Will out even going as far as to make designs on his life. The Eastman Kodak Co. did not succeed as he had some good friends as well as those who conspired against him. Will never went onwith his invention and gave his samples to his friends. I want all ofyou to go into the Downingtown * Council Room and see his best picture o fthe grapes hanging on the wall. See the great sheen that the weather put on the grapes. All of Will's money was put in this invention and some of the family's as well. The whole family as well as Ed and I. Will died in 1938 and was interred in the romb at Laurel Hill. Ed got the residence and now all is sold. I am the last of the family.

The great destroyers are Power, Rehabilitors, Education and Polotics, Welfare. The only magazine I read and still do is the United States News and World Report.

I lost Ed. in 1929 with cancer. Will had nervous trouble, naturally I never cared to marry again. I tried to help the Hess family ,but the taxes were to high at that time and my money was low. In1935, I tutored a young girl into the 5th grade and then the family moved to Florida.

I am in Pocopson Home and am sure I will stay a while. I had arthritis in the lower legs. It is a form of arthritius when the veins weaken and form ulcers as Dr. Smith said. Now the dead skin is falling off and I am much better, but I do not walk alone. My age is 97. Since 1975 ,I have been failing. Mary V. Worrall has been waiting on me, but I couls see I was not serving myself as I needed. I felt better when I had my reserve food pills, but they took them away from me saying they were not right. This I resent and so will The Reserved Foods of Pittsburg, Pa. I am here so as to give Mary V. her freedom. Come to see me hereh at Pocopson when you wish. It is a long drive so start early. No, I do not like it here and want to be with a family. When I find one I will let you know. I take medicine often here which I did not have to do with Reserved Food. I can not get out in the public now. I have no children. My Father was not strong and could not pass his health along. Otherwise, he **was** a fine man

Come to see me and we will talk.

Yours lovingly

Laura M. South.

* The picture is in the log House.

(On the next hand written pages Mrs South wrote of some of the families that she knew)

There are many worthy people of Downingtown, of my time, that you would want to put in your book. They will be an honor.

The Carpenters who catered to the quiet force of law and order. The Doan men who built Coatesville as well as Downingtown, with trades, government are nice people to know.

*Ellis in the bank and John a painter, Charles, our farmer. Not to mention the settlers who settled here and became our History. All were cousins of mine. I am proud of the Hubers, All carry the banner of real folks.

Fred and Charlie inventors of the coal chute and other things, all bright people and valuable to Downingtown. Many teachers and leaders of other crafts. There were many Jones and Smiths.

Who could forget the Thomases and the Hesses and the Worralls. All good to us and good patriots. They were ready to march for a steady thinking for all of us in Politics, Welfare, education and Christian living. We must not hesitate to give just a little more than we get. We can take the simple life and meet the waves of our activities. Be careful of your diet if you want to live a while. Senator Hia Kawaw of California found that if we eat less and omit butter and the yellow of eggs we can control weight as these two foods will harden the arteries. He followed a doctors advice and gained good health.

The Ash family were good to the town. All were learned. If a person learns a trade or profession, they can be proud and go along smoothly for a long time. If a man can have both a trade and a profession then he is a rich man.

(games)

My Mother, who was a social worker, used to draw pictures of animals on a slate for us before we went to bed. We also had a blackboard on which we played games. As a teacher, my classes played games on the blackboard on rainy days. In Summer we played until nine o'clock, in winter we played until eight -thirty.

Come to see me sometime and we will talk. Blessings on all who read this.

Yours Aunt Lolly South.

(added)

The Chatauqua came in 1898. I just recalled it, for that year I took Irma and A.T. Hess, oldest, to the large tent which was erected on the lot where the Catholic School now is. While there and in the midst of a lecture a thunder storm blew up and lashed all over. Irma was about 6 years old. She and I stood where there was the least danger but got hit slightly with a guy pole on the forehead. The storm was of short duration and there was no real danger but the lecture stopped and we all went home. The storm finished our outdoor performances as they seemed dangerous.

* Ellis is Ellis Brown.

* Irma is Irma Leavell.

Soon the theater on Brandywine Ave. was built. It was used for lectures, movies and dances. Tommy Philips was the pianist for the theater. The building still stands and I think it was turned into a dwelling, I am not sure.

Later on the Roosevelt Movie House was tried out as a music Hall. Mrs Bausum opened up a small Movie House up town on Main St. and then sold out. It became Bill Barrett's Ice Cream Salon. Hattie McCorkel was the waitress. The Fellows tried to confuse her by mixing up their order. She was a genius and was never fooled by them even though she never used a pencil to write down an order. She was great.

The next Ice Cream Palor was in East Downingtown. A place next to the old Log Cabin. It indured for some time until the Auto Dealer bought it for his cars,

I was married at this time and Ed and I stayed in Downingtown for a short time and then we went to Myerstown, Pa. In 1929, I lost Ed with cancer so I took a teachers Course and got a job in Broomall, Del. Co.

I lived with the Worralls at 141 Lancaster Ave. and then 234 House where I was when I got my school . Due to the shortage of money ,I sold it to an Oilman, Mr Gable who used it as his oil center.

Most of the Hesses and Worralls are gone now, I still remain as a retired school teacher. I am now a member of the Pocopson Home and can reflect on my good times at Downingtown. I give my highest regards for all the Hesses and Worralls. They deserve all I can give them, I love them all. I have one brother in Ardmore who has a family. We have had a happy reunion in Downingtown, a place for a plesantsocial life for all. I establish it as a capital monument to my memory. I especially remember the Philips, Souths, Worralls, and the Hesses.

Affectionately, yours

Mrs Laura Newell Mendenhall South
Pocopson Home.