

Chapter 8
Grandparents Irvin H. Dietle & Alma C. (Miller) Dietle



Mr. Irvin Dietle, his wife Alma (Miller) Dietle, and their children. Back row, L to R Luther, Roy, Irvin, Jr. Front row, L to R: Ralph, Irvin, Sr., Alma, Julia. This picture is from the early 50's.

Grandfather Irvin Henry Dietle, son of Adam Dietle and Susan (Werner) Dietle, was born on April 6, 1899^{1,14,73,83,122,252,257} in Greenville Twp.^{73,83,252,257} and died at age 87^{83,257} on Oct. 13, 1986^{1,122,257} in Summit Twp.¹³⁵ at his son Ralph's home. He was known as "Grandpa" or "Grandpap" Dietle to me. His wife was Alma Catharine Miller* , eldest daughter of Harvey Miller (b. Sept. 21, 1873^{9,14,35,132,281,372}, d. June 8, 1957^{9,14,281}) and his wife Belinda (Baer) Miller^{9,14} (b. May 28, 1875^{9,14,35,290,372}). She was born on Feb. 7, 1901^{9,14,73,122,132,253,265} in Greenville Twp.^{73,253} and died of a stroke on Jan. 9, 1974^{12b,80,122,265} after 49 years of marriage^{12b}. The official cause of death was a cerebral vascular accident due to arteriosclerosis²⁶⁵. Irvin and Alma were married on June 15,

* The ancestry of Alma Catharine Miller can be traced using Ref. 9, 12b, 14,35, 46, 62, 63, 91, 122, 132, 158, 227b, 281, 286, 290, 308, 315, 356, 357,358, 359, and 372.

1924^{9,14,132} at the bride's home⁹. They had a large ornate framed marriage certificate which hung on their bedroom wall when Dana and I were growing up. This certificate had a light blue background, white flowers with green leaves, and near the bottom a picture of Jesus within a circle.

The names of their children, in order of birth, are as follows:

Luther^{2,9,14} Lloyd^{9,14} Dietle^{2,9,14}, born May 3, 1925^{2,9,14,132}, died Nov. 12, 1976^{9,14,131a},
Julia^{2,9,14} Lavaughn^{9,14} Dietle^{2,9,14}, born Oct. 13, 1926^{2,9,14,132},
Irvin Dietle, Jr.^{2,9,14,131a,257*}, born May 28, 1928^{2,9,14,131a,132},
Roy^{2,9,14} **Emerson**^{9,14} **Dietle**^{2,9,14,257}, born Jan. 3, 1932^{2,9,14,131a,196}, and
Ralph^{2,9,14} Eugene^{9,14} Dietle^{9,14}, born July 18, 1944^{2,9,14,132}.

All of the children except Ralph were born at home; Ralph was born at Dr. Glass's Hospital³²⁵.

Like many of the Somerset County Dietle's, Grandpa was short in stature. His sons all grew up to be much taller than he was. Our father has always attributed his own height (6 ft.¹⁹⁶) and size to the Miller blood flowing in his veins. According to dad, Grandma Dietle's family were all big people. Tradition has it that the original Miller immigrant (the father of the Peter Miller who married Elizabeth and Rebecca Gaver) was 6'6" tall and could cut and stack 6 cords of wood in a day⁴⁰.



Harvey Miller, father of Alma (Miller) Dietle
(Courtesy of Ralph Dietle from Irvin Dietle, Sr. papers)



Belinda (Baer) Miller, mother of Alma (Miller) Dietle
(Courtesy of Ralph Dietle from Irvin Dietle, Sr. papers)

Before Grandma and Grandpa married, she worked in a confectionery store at Somerset, PA⁹ and he taught school. He and his brother Harry also bought and ran a sawmill^{9,24}. Harry, who was engaged to be married²⁴, borrowed money from their father Adam to buy a farm from Ephriam and Mary (Dietle) Geiger¹⁰. (Mary was the daughter of our GG-Grandparents John Adam Dietle & Margaret (Ritter) Dietle^{12b} and Ephriam Geiger was the brother of our Great-Grandmother Mary (Geiger) Korns.) Harry died intestate²⁰⁰ (without a will) in an accident at the sawmill⁷⁷, and his parents Adam and Susan Dietle inherited his farm and its contents²⁰⁰. Grandpa then sold the sawmill²⁴. He and Grandma bought Harry's farm for \$2,900.00²⁰⁰, borrowing \$1900.00 from Adam and Susan to do so³⁸⁹. The terms of the loan were \$200.00 annually (with a final payment of \$100.00) without interest, except in the event of deferred payments, which were to bear interest at 3%³⁸⁹. This purchase also included the stock, farm implements, and the household furniture²⁰⁰. One of Grandpa's pocket notebooks indicates what he paid for the personal property, and what the value of Harry's estate was, as follows³³⁶:

Appraisment at Harry Deatle (sic)	
What I paid for personal property	
Potatoes	125.00
Churn	1.00
Buggy Harness	2.00
grind stone	50
Kettle	3.00

Hogs	100.00
Sleigh	3.00
Spring wagon	5.00
1,000 Shingles	5.00
2 Pigs	10.00
Hand spray	2.00
Harness	10.00
Horses	40.00
Wagon	20.00
Hog ladders	2.00
Hay Rake	2.00
Hay	80.00
Straw	<u>40.00</u>
	450.50

Appraisalment at Harrys Death (*new page*)

Oats	90.00
Mower	20.00
Corn	15.00
80 chickens	40.00
1916 Model Ford	10.00
1921 Model Ford	20.00
3 Cows	90.00
3 young Cattle	<u>60.00</u>
	345.00
	450.50
	<u>51.00</u>
What Irvin Bought	846.50
<u>Farm</u>	<u>2100.00</u>
Farm and Personal	2946.50
Mill	500.00
Lumber	210.00
Account Collectable	400.00
in Bank	<u>232.77</u>
	4289.27

The deed for their purchase of the farm was made and recorded on April 8, 1927^{200*}. A copy of the deed is included in Appendix B. This farm of 110 acres[§] was in Larimer Township, Somerset County, Pennsylvania²⁰⁰, and was one and one half miles east of the White Oak Church²³⁸. The house was quite old, as evidenced by the simple board construction of the upstairs doors, and the simple iron latches which were used instead of door-knobs. The attic was filled with interesting antiques, such as a dovetailed rocking cradle with heart shaped cut-outs that Irvin Dietle, Jr. now owns, an ancient rope bed which I now own, and assorted German books which I presume were left there by Ephriam Geiger or a previous family. The house and barn were directly at the base of a very steep hill which was used for pasture, and the cultivated fields were at the top of the hill. The hillside pasture behind the house, like many Somerset Co. pastures, was so steep that it was often joked that the cows had to have longer legs on one side in order to keep from rolling down the hill. When I was young, I found some interesting fossils of tiny marine-like creatures lying atop the ground in that pasture. Grandpa's barn still contained a horse-drawn buggy and sleigh when he held an auction to sell the house-hold contents and left-over farm equipment after Grandma died.

When Bud and Sis were born, Grandma and Grandpa Dietle were still living in Wittinburg in a rented home¹³⁵. Dad recalls hearing that not long after Sis was born, they moved to the farm in Larimer Twp.

* The Somerset Co. Deed Index ⁹⁵ incorrectly indicates that this transaction occurred on April 9, 1927.

§ The farm consisted of a 98 acre tract and a 12 acre tract.

where he was born and raised¹³⁵. The move was accomplished by going across the fields in sleds¹³⁵. Dad speculates that the roads may have been blown shut by snow at the time¹³⁵. The fields would have been bordered by rail fences, which could have been easily parted for passage of the sled(s)¹³⁵. Dad recalls that the road from the White Oak Church down to the farm often blew shut. The neighbors would get together on Saturdays and shovel it out so that they could get into town. Grandpa often had to walk to the Witt Schoolhouse to teach due to the roads being snowed shut. He would have to leave home before daylight, so he'd take up a shotgun and away he would go, taking a shortcut through the woods. Grandpa himself made note of this in a pocket notebook he owned, as follows³⁰⁹:

“Winter of 1939-40 Was an old fashioned winter The ground was covered with snow from Christmas until the first of april There were plenty of drifts and our road was closed for 3 months I brought the car home on the first day of April only had it home once since before Christmas There was no plowing done untill April. I taught Witt school and walked both ends about 6 miles a day.”



The White Oak Mount Carmel Lutheran Church as it appeared in 1994. The left hand portion of the church is a recent addition that was carefully made to match the original architecture.

Grandpa and Grandma Dietle attended the White Oak[†] Mount Carmel Lutheran Church in Somerset Co. during my lifetime, but are buried at the Greenville Lutheran Church along with many of Grandpa's

[†] The locality known as White Oak is located along the old Plank Road about 10 miles south of Berlin at the confluence of several country roads, and is conspicuous by the presence of 3 country churches. The area was known as White Oak at least as early as 1842, when Rev. Christian Lepley began to preach in a school house there⁴⁰⁹ that was evidently made of logs⁷⁴. In 1844, after preaching in the school for 2 years, Rev. Lepley organized a congregation that took the name “Mt Carmel Evangelical Lutheran Church of Larimer Township, Somerset County”⁴⁰⁹. This congregation⁴⁰⁹ joined forces with the Reichards Reformed congregation in 1847 to build the original White Oak Church, which has been known in recent years as the Grace Reformed Independent Bible Church⁷⁴. The first church was jointly dedicated by the Lutheran Minister Rev. Christian Lepley and the Reformed Minister Rev. William Uhl⁷⁴. The Lutherans withdrew from the congregation in 1891^{38,409} and built the Mt. Carmel Lutheran Church nearby, and the Reformed began the third church in 1900³⁸. These churches are said to have been built near the original site of a Breastworks fort that dates back to 1755⁷⁴. As a deed for a seven acre church tract at White Oak was executed on Feb. 3, 1819, which indicates the presence of some type of congregation at that early date⁴⁰⁹.

ancestors. According to a large (12" x 16"), colorfully decorated confirmation certificate[†] which is in Dana's possession, Grandma was confirmed as a member of the Greenville Lutheran Church on July 23, 1916⁵⁹.

The reason they attended the White Oak church rather than the Greenville church was probably because it was much closer to their home in Larimer Twp.. They formally moved their membership to the White Oak Lutheran Church on March 24, 1957^{72,132}. Grandpa and Grandma were faithful church members, and Grandpa was the Sunday School Superintendent at Mt. Carmel for many years⁵³.

Grandpa Irvin H. Dietle was a School Teacher and Farmer⁵³. He went to Normal school in Meyersdale, and took correspondence courses from Penn State¹⁰. He also took classes from the Southwestern State Normal School, California, PA (My Alma Mater) during the term of 1923-24³⁷⁸. He received his permanent teaching "standard certificate" in 1934³⁸⁴, after having a partial certificate from 1923 to 1932³⁸⁵, and a non-permanent standard certificate from 1932-1934³⁸⁶ in the elementary curriculum^{385,386}. He also had Teacher's Provisional Certificates for the years 1915 through 1919 which were awarded via examination; each certificate contains grades in 13 different categories ³⁸⁷. It is interesting to note that he was only 16 years and 3 months old when he received the 1915 provisional certificate. The name on the 1917, 1918, 1919, and 1923 certificates is spelled "Deitle", while the 1915, 1916 and 1932 certificates have the spelling "Dietle".



The Geiger School
(Courtesy of Ralph Dietle from Irvin Dietle, Sr. papers)

At one time or another Grandpa taught all of his children⁵³ in school. He also taught his daughter-in-law Lerene, and Bud and Lerene's daughter Judy Dietle⁷². Judy had him in the fourth grade, and reported that "It was very difficult to call him Mr. Dietle instead of Grandfather"⁷³. His daughter Julia had him for Grades 1, 2, 5 and 6, and recalls that she was afraid of him in the classroom¹⁰¹. His son Irvin Dietle, Jr. remembers calling him "Mr. Dietle Daddy" in school. Our father Roy E. Dietle was taught by him in Grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 in the one room Geiger school^{53*}. Dad has joked to me that he was once first in his class because he was the *only* student enrolled in his grade level. I can recall waving to Grandpa as he stood outside a one room school house (probably during recess) as our family drove by on the way to visit his home. He did most of his teaching in the Geiger, Pine Grove, Wittinburg, and Wit schools, but retired from the Meyersdale Joint Schools^{53,237} after 36³¹⁸ years of service⁸³ on June 6, 1962²³⁷. He was teaching 4th grade at the time of retirement³⁷³. His first teaching job was at Spruce Dale in 1917-18³¹⁸, which was evidently in Greenville Twp.³⁶⁷. He also taught at the Pocahontas, Miller, and Somerset Twp. schools³¹⁸.

[†] Julia (Dietle) Saylor has a smaller, plainer certificate that commemorates the same occasion; and which refers to the church as the Greenville Evangelical Lutheran Church.

* The one room Geiger school no longer exists. It was within about 3/8ths of a mile from Grandpap Irvin Dietle's driveway. Dad showed the ruins of it to me when I was in my 20's. To get there from Grandpap's house, one turned left at the end of Grandpa's driveway, turned right at the first road, and it was up the road a hundred yards or so on the right⁵³.



This photo shows our Grandmother Alma (Miller) Dietle posing with her children. Left to right are Roy, Alma, Ralph, Luther, Julia, and Irvin Jr.

The Wittinburg School in Larimer Twp. where Grandpa taught was one of the last one room schools in Somerset County²⁹³. A newspaper article about it in its last year of operation (1958-1959³¹⁸) describes Irvin Dietle as Principal, Grade Teacher, Janitor, and Handyman, with a class of 36 children in several grades²⁹³. Wittinburg was described in the same article as consisting of a few scattered homes and barns, Mrs. Walter Christner's store, and a gas station. A teaching observation report at Wittinburg in the previous school year (April, 11, 1958) mentioned that he had 6 grades in his classroom, and did "A very nice job for such a wide range of grade placement"³⁶⁸.

As in today's society, the pay for being a Schoolteacher was not astronomical. Grandpa's contract of May, 1937 provided for a salary of \$100 per month for 8 months of teaching in Larimer Twp. (less deductions for the Teacher's Retirement Fund), and had this extra provision written in: "School to be Scrubbed Not less than Three times"³⁶⁹. By 1959, his teaching salary was \$3,100 for a 9 month term³⁷⁰, which is equivalent to 344.44 per month worked.

Grandpa was a very hard worker⁵³. For example, he walked about 4 miles each way to teach at the Witt school, then still did his morning and evening milking and other farm chores⁵³. Grandma and Grandpa also kept a garden.

His son Irvin Dietle, Jr. recalls that he was thrifty, and a respected schoolteacher in the community, and was a hard worker who farmed with very little equipment¹³⁰. For many tasks he had to make do with hand

equipment, such as the grain cradle, the scythe, and the fork¹³⁰. He did his milking by hand, and the corn was husked by hand¹³⁰. The manure was hauled to the fields with a wagon or sled and spread by hand¹³⁰. The barn was filled with loose hay, which was dug out with a fork in the winter to feed the cows¹³⁰. He used horses on the farm to work the ground, pull wagons, sleds, logs, etc¹³⁰. Irvin Jr. also recalls that Irvin, Sr. cut firewood and mine props, and in the winter walked to school to teach¹³⁰. Aside from being a good provider, Irvin, Jr. also recalls his dad as a caring father who liked to take the family for sled and wagon rides on the weekends¹³⁰.

Irvin H. Dietle's daughter-in-law Lerene remembers him as a man of few, but stern words, with a shy grin⁷². His daughter Julia recalls that he was a very loving, but stern, father¹⁰¹; Dad also recalls that he was very strict when it came to disciplining his children. I recall that his manner had something of the air of a Patriarch, which of course he was to all of us. His daughter Julia recalls that he "made you realize the value of a dollar"¹⁰¹; a statement which I believe all of his children would endorse heartily.

Grandpa enjoyed rabbit hunting, and I have fond memories of hunting with him and my father behind an eager and talented though aged beagle named Butch. Granddad also played the violin, and could recite long verses of poetry from memory, even in his latter years. When Grandpa visited Bud and Lerene, sometimes he and Bud played the violin, while Lerene played the piano and the rest of the family gathered around the piano to sing⁷². Lerene remembers that "It was inspiring and a very happy time for us all"⁷². In a high school report that was made circa 1969, Irvin's Grand-daughter Judy Dietle wrote that some of Grandpa's favorite hobbies were "making maple syrup, hunting, and fishing"⁷³. I recall that he and/or Ralph made maple syrup in a big black kettle.

Grandma was a quiet, kindly soft-spoken person. She kept a very clean house, and was a very good cook^{53,101} and homemaker¹⁰¹. One of her traits which dad recalls is that she was very careful not to intentionally hurt other people's feelings⁵³. Her daughter-in-law Lerene expressed this as "She was a lovely lady who never said anything bad about anyone"⁷². Her daughter Julia expressed the same sentiment by writing that she "never gossiped about anyone". Grandma Dietle enjoyed quilting and crocheting¹⁰¹, and each of her grandchildren inherited one of her quilts⁷⁰. She was very loving and hard-working, and did without many things for the sake of her children¹⁰¹.

Irvin, Jr. remembers his mother as a caring woman, and a great homemaker¹³⁰. He recalls that she was a hard worker, and went many years without electricity¹³⁰. It wasn't installed until 1940^{24,238}, at which time they had 33 lights* and 16 receptacles in the residence and outbuilding(s)²³⁸. She had to carry wood for the cook stove, then carry out the ashes¹³⁰. For cooling food she used the stone spring house and her pantry. She papered all the rooms in the house, and washed clothes in the "summer house" with a gas powered washer¹³⁰. She canned much of the meat, vegetables and fruit which they ate, and she also picked wild berries and canned them¹³⁰. Irvin, Jr. also fondly remembers that his mother was a source of encouragement when the children were sad¹³⁰.

* Dad believes that there were no more than 22 lights total.



The home of Irvin Dietle, Sr. Note the full length porch, the steep hill in back, and the “summer house” on the left. This farm house was also once the home of Ephriam Geiger.

On Dec. 1, 1969 Grandpa & Grandpa sold the farm to a land development company named The Flintlock Corporation³⁸³ which was buying up adjoining property to make a Community Resort named Callimont which was incorporated as the borough of Callimont²⁸⁵. He sold the farm on the condition that he and Grandma could remain living in the house for as long as they wanted to^{382,383}, and use the summer house, garage, spring house, and the land immediately surrounding the house³⁸². They received \$16,000 for the farm³⁸². They did stay at the farm after selling it, but Grandpa eventually went to live with his son Ralph Dietle near Meyersdale after Grandma died. He released the right to live on the farm on June 7, 1974³⁸³. Grandpa remained healthy, mobile and alert up until the time of his sudden death at an advanced age. Both grandparents are buried at the Greenville Union Cemetery.

Callimont was not successful, and the property was sold to the Pennsylvania Game Commission for use as State Game Lands. The house and all of the out-buildings on Grandpa Dietle’s farm were torn down by the Game Commission, but the fields were still in cultivation the last time I was there, which was in the summer of 1994. It is difficult to accept the fact that the house which held so much love is no longer there, but I appreciate the fact that the farm is now public property, and the family can go back and visit the grounds anytime.

When Grandpa bought the farm and contents from Harry’s estate, it included a Pennsylvania long rifle made by the J.H. Johnston Great Western Gun Works of Pittsburgh, PA. This gun, which has a cherry half-stock, brass furniture, and an extraordinarily long (36 11/16 in.) hexagonal barrel of roughly .36 caliber, had belonged to Ephriam Geiger, who reputedly used it to kill pigs and beef¹¹. Grandpap Dietle never fired this gun¹¹. He kept it under a dresser in the bedroom which our family always stayed in when we visited. This rifle stimulated my curiosity as a boy. When I was yet too small to lift the rifle, Dad would get it out from under the dresser, then hold the front end while I held the stock to my shoulder. It had a very deeply curved butt-plate, and Dad always used to joke that the gun “killed at one end and crippled at the other”. Dad and Mom purchased this rifle from Grandpap Dietle and gave it to me as a college graduation present. It was accompanied by the original powder horn and a two compartment leather accessory bag which was tanned with the hair on. The rifle is not in working order; in fact it is quite worn out from many years of hard use, but it still makes a nice memento of the old home place. I also have an antique cherry night-stand with dovetailed drawers which was from the same room; I bought it at the auction which Grandpap had when he moved away. I also bought a rope bed which was kept in the attic. Uncle Ralph & Aunt Marg bought

Grandma's antique hutch at the auction, and use it in their kitchen. Pat and June bought the antique cradle, and dad bought a Stevens .32 rimfire rifle which at one time was used on the farm for slaughtering. Most of the household was sold at the auction; Grandpa thought that it was fairest if the children bought the items which they really wanted. A part of the contents of the sale, as recorded in Grandpa's hand, were as follows¹³⁰:

- tupper ware
- Old table
- Old Kitchen stool
- laundry cart
- Meat saw
- Old Pie pans
- Meat grinder
- old crocks
- jars, 1858 & green
- 2 shoe stands and lasts
- 2 wooden tubs
- 2 Barrels
- butter Churn
- Butcher planks
- 2 Iron kettles (butcher)
- Grain Cradle
- Old cream separator (sic)
- garden tools
- Chains
- Lard can's
- corn dryer
- Oil stove
- wash tub
- maytag washer
- wash basin
- Old antique table (Round)
- 1 wood ironing board
- 1 new ironing board
- Mug tree
- Butter mold
- easter grass
- Antique curling iron
- strawberry boxes
- rolling pin
- straight razors
- painting supplies
- large pans
- Cleaning utensils (mop, broom, etc.)
- Sweeper Old eureka
- Antique Iron Holder or rest
- wash bowl & pitcher
- Old pitcher - Blue
- coal oil lamps
- scales - Modern
- strip cup
- quilt Material
- light fixtures
- Antique suitcase
- trundle bed

2 R.C.A. Victor record player's One works & one doesn't
Vases
light Bulbs
thermos Bottle
oyster can 1 gal.
curtain rods
funnel & colander
tongs
canister set
planters
quilt patches
Old suitcase
Wicker Basket -(clothes)
rolls of rug rags
pillows (bed)
garment bag
toss pillow
lawn chairs
cattle Marker Tattoo
cane
dust cloths
1 game board
rugs
Old antique cradle
1 Hobby horse
organ stool
Quilt Frames
upright sweeper
old pans
Old stands
Old radio cabinet
Chairs
Old antique fruit dish
Hot water Bottle
T.V. light
picture - crewel work
1 Box nick nacks
Antique mirror (sic) & comb
hangers - Bundle of 12
fancy work
Kitchen curtains
Old comfort(er)
2 Bedspreads
2 candle rings
Old Box jewelry
crochet thread
foam ice chest
Hassock
Antique iron (Alcohol Iron) (one piece handle) flat iron
Old dresser set Box
Map on stand
window screens lot of them
venelater (sic)
card table
Living Room

living room suit
General Electric black & white TV
2 old Rocker
Recliner chair-ottoman
floor light
pole light
TV light
4 TV trays
phone chair
card table
magazine rack
clock & sconces
nick nack shelf
throw rugs
living room rug
vases (sic)
drapes
ash trays
sewing machine (old singer)
mirrows (sic)
Super "C" Tractor
Hay wagon
trailer for tractor
10 ft dump hay rake
1 string sleigh bells
1 wood frame harrow
2 wheel barrows
ropes & pullys
Lawn mower (good)
Hand garden tractor
extension ladder
Kitchen
old kettle
stainless - 8 & 6 complete (pot & pan set?)
stove (gas) Maytag
dryer G.E.
refrigerator GE
china cupboard (ant)
Kitchen cabinet (ant)
White metal utility cupboards
utility cart
table 7 8 modern chairs
step stool
freezer GE (new)
set dishes (10 complete)
pans
pressure cooker
small appliances (good used)
Sears electric oven
toaster
knife
2 mixers
iron
pop corn popper
ice cream freezer

Sears sweeper
Waring blender
kitchen clocks
III - Bed-springs & mattress
1 antique stand
1 Library table
1 Plank Bottom chair
1 swivel desk chair
1 picnic basket
1 washstand
1 typewriter
1 metal & fiberboard wardrobe
pictures 7 frames
1 mirror (sic) for bathroom dresser
Box of arrangements & what nots
plastic drapes
picnic jug
Old wood box (antique)
Heating pad
Old Brownie camera
Old books
electric blanket
afgan - new & used
flag
Old clock

Irvin H. Dietle's children and grandchildren have many fond memories of the farm, and came from far and wide to visit at Thanksgiving and Christmas-time. Thanksgiving dinner was one of my favorite events, because Grandma, her daughter, and her daughter-in-laws were all excellent cooks, and put on a memorable holiday spread. I can still taste Grandma's gravy to this very day, and can recall the sense of love and fellowship which surrounded us at the table. Often times, in lieu of, or in addition to the meal-time prayer, Grandpa would lead us in singing a hymn; a pleasant tradition which I try to uphold at Thanksgiving in my own home.

For as far back as I can remember the first Monday in December was always the opening day of buck season, which Uncle Irvin, Uncle Ralph and Dad (and eventually myself, when I became old enough) participated in religiously at Grandpa's farm. The weekend before the big day was usually taken up with small-game hunting, big-game scouting, stand selection, and checking the zero on our deer rifle sights. I recall one time after a long and tiring "Opening Day" at Grandpa's, someone asked dad "Did you see anything?" He replied, "I saw 13, but 12 got away." If I recall correctly, dad was the only one of the family who got a buck on that particular day. This was in 1969⁷⁰. In the fall of 1994, dad told me that he had harvested 40 deer in his lifetime¹³⁵.

Larimer Township Background Information

Larimer township, where our Grandfather Irvin Dietle settled, was created from parts of Greenville and Northampton townships in 1854^{63,375}. This township of 20 square miles³⁷⁵ was named for General William Larimer^{63,375} Jr.⁶³ one time President of the Pittsburg and Connellsville Railroad^{63,375}. Larimer Township's rugged terrain is covered by shale, and isn't really very good for farming⁶³, but the chief occupations have long been farming and lumber^{63,375}. A visit to Grandpa's old farm in 1994 revealed that the topsoil in the ridge fields was of poor quality, consisting in part of shale stone.

The main communities in Larimer Twp. are the small towns of Wittenburg, Deal and Sand Patch³⁷⁵. Wittenburg, which is in the central part of Larimer Township³⁷⁵, got its name from being built on property which was originally owned by John Witt³⁷⁵. Wittenburg was at one time a stage coach stop on the old

plank toll road, which is now Route 160³⁷⁵. The first store in Wittenburg was opened by a Mr. Frichter³⁷⁵ or Fichtner⁶³ circa 1852^{63,375}.

Deal is located at the spot where Daniel Lepley built a grist mill in 1850^{63,375}. The mill burned down when it was only two years old^{63,375}. It was powered by water from Flaugherty creek³⁷⁵. Edwin Deal rebuilt the mill^{63,375}, and eventually the town was named after him³⁷⁵. Edwin Deal also had several sawmills³⁷⁵. Both the Western Maryland and Baltimore and Ohio Railroads came through Deal, and there was a Western Maryland station there at one time³⁷⁵. Wittenburg was the business center of the township before the coming of the railroads, which drew some of the business to Sand Patch⁶³.

Sand Patch, which is in the southwest part of Larimer Township³⁷⁵, was founded in 1872. A building built by the Pittsburgh and Connellsville Railroad was the first to be constructed, followed shortly by a Post Office³⁷⁵. For many years Sand Patch was a shipping point for lumber products³⁷⁵ and at one time Sand Patch had a store, a hotel, and a woolen factory³⁷⁵.



Alma C. Miller
(Courtesy of Ralph Dietle from Irvin Dietle, Sr. papers)



Irvin Henry Dietle
(Courtesy of Ralph Dietle from Irvin Dietle, Sr. papers)



Alma Miller working at a confectionary store
(Courtesy of Ralph Dietle from Irvin Dietle, Sr. papers)

