

The Story of Twin Oaks — in the Words of Lomira Perry (1887-1961): Part 4

by Dr. James Paul

I was the third daughter born to Alvah and Ida Perry on June 11, 1887 in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago. When I was 11 years old, my father died on Feb. 26, 1899, at the age of 48. After his death, my mother, Ida (age 40); my two older sisters, Bertha and Sarah (ages 20 and 15, respectively); my maternal grandmother, Sarah Andrews (age 60) and I lived in our home at 319 Bowen Ave., Hyde Park, Chicago. My maternal grandfather, George Andrews, whom I saw often and loved to play with—he and grandmother lived next door to us, died when I was 7 years old on May 29, 1895. I did not know my paternal grandparents, David and Martha Perry, who died in 1887, the year of my birth.

Grandmother Sarah still practiced medicine in 1899. She died two years later on Feb. 25, 1902. In 1899, I was in the fifth grade at Hyde Park Elementary School. Sarah was still attending Hyde Park High School and Bertha had just graduated from that high school. Bertha and Sarah were accomplished musicians.

In 1906, I graduated from the same high school as my sisters and, in 1910, graduated from the University of Chicago with an associate's degree in philosophy and a bachelor's degree in history. I continued to live in Hyde Park with my mother, my sister, Sarah and her husband, Harvey Augustus Bush, who was a fire insurance examiner.

On the happy day of June 3, 1908, my two sisters had a double wedding ceremony in Chicago. Sarah wed to Harvey and Bertha wed to dentist Dr. Daniel Scott. Bertha and Daniel lived in Kankakee at 743 E. Locust St.

While I attended the university, I stayed at Spellman House and was active in the Girls Glee Club and Young Women's Christian League.

After graduating from the University of Chicago, I began my teaching career at Kankakee High School, became Dean of Girls and lived with my sister, Bertha and her husband, Dan. I joined the Colonial Coverlet Guild of Kankakee, Kankakee Women's Club and Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR).

My family often stayed at the Twin Oaks farm (presently known as Durham-Perry Farmstead and Perry Farm Park), especially during the summer months. After father died, mother turned over the tending of the land, horses and cattle to George and Olive Oakes in 1902. Their son was born in that same year and they named him "Perry" out of fondness for my family and the farm. Additional rooms were added on the west wing of the farm house, both upstairs and downstairs, for the Oakes family to live. Little Perry had five "mothers" when we were all in the house together (his mother, my mother, my two sisters and me).

When we unlocked the door between the tenant and our part of the farm house, Perry could go anywhere. One time I showed him a large firecracker that I kept on a shelf in the kitchen. I said that I would light it on Independence Day. When that day arrived, Perry ran to me. I took the firecracker, pulled the fuse, and candy popped out everywhere. What a laugh we had.

The Oakes family eventually purchased a farm in St. Anne and, in 1918, the William and Hattie Wilken family became our next tenant farmers. They had two children, Emma and Arthur. In 1924, we hired Swiss immigrants, Armand and Yvonne DuVoisin, to care for the farm. Their son Francis was born a year earlier, on March 1, 1923.

In 1920, my mother, Ida, lived for a time in the Village of Wilmette where my sister Sarah and brother-in-law Harvey Bush had moved to 721 Greenwood Ave. In 1927, my mother, at age 69, moved into the Twin Oaks farm house at 309 Vassar Ave. (today 459 N. Kennedy Dr.). I stayed with her during the summer months. Mother also took turns, until 1940, living with Sarah and Harvey in Wilmette and Bertha and Dan in Kankakee. However, she wanted to die in the farm house at Twin Oaks (then also referred to as Woodlawn Park).

After several months of illness, she died there on Sunday evening, Aug. 25, 1940. Her wake and funeral services were held in the farm house before her burial the following Tuesday at Mound Grove Cemetery. Mother was past regent of the Kankakee chapter of the DAR and member of the Kankakee Women's Club, the Minerva Club, Thursday Thimble Club, Wilmette Women's

Lomira Perry (right) was the third daughter of Alvah and Ida Perry.



Club, Conference of Club Presidents, Farm Bureau of Kankakee County and Hyde Park Baptist Church of Chicago.

In the 1930s, I left Kankakee High School and became a history teacher at Deerfield Shields High School which became Highland Park High School (HPHS) in 1936. While tenured there, I received a master of arts degree from the University of Chicago in 1933. As I taught in Highland Park, and after I retired in 1941, I lived 12 miles away with my sister Sarah and brother-in-law Harvey in Wilmette. Mother lived with us for a while also. However, Twin Oaks was always my summer home.

On June 5, 1941, I hosted a Colonial Coverlet Guild (CCG) of America meeting in the farm house. Members brought picnic lunches and a favorite small heirloom to explain.

I became program chairman of the CCG and invited R.E. Kline to speak on "The Eternal Lincoln" on Feb. 10, 1943; and Mrs. Alden Scott Boyer in March 1943 to display and speak on "Aristocracy and Old Lace"—150-year-old Parisian lace items. These programs were held in the Wedgewood Room of Marshall Field's, Chicago. My retirement social calendar included being a house guest of Mrs. Charles Walgreen (she had spoken at a Sept. 1941 CCG meeting) at her Hazelwood estate on the Rock River in Dixon from July 11-12, 1953. We house guests assisted Mrs. Walgreen in opening her home and gardens as a benefit to the Abraham Lincoln Memorial Garden at Lake Springfield outside the state capitol. I was also the secretary of the Conference of Club presidents as well as program chairman.

I died on Friday, Dec. 29, 1961 at Evanston Hospital at age 74. I was buried in Mound Grove Cemetery on Jan. 2, 1962. Except for Dan, who died on Sept. 5, 1966, I was the sole surviving member of my family. Harvey died in 1938, Sarah on April 22, 1945 and Bertha on Sept. 21, 1960.

In my will, I bequeathed the farm, the Twin Oaks home of the Durhams and Perrys for 125 years, in trust to the Illinois Department of Conservation with stipulation that at least 40 acres were to be used for a park and have the name "Perry" in part of its name. I also gave Francis DuVoisin a lifetime right to live on and maintain the farm.

For the full story of Twin Oaks (Perry Farm Park and Durham-Perry Farmstead), visit a link on the Bourbonnais Township Park District website at http://www.btpd.org/park_history_4_2934382977.pdf.

Dr. Paul is a member of the Perry Farm Living History Advisory committee whose purpose is to teach the community about the history of the Durham-Perry Farmstead. Dr. Paul is also president of the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society.

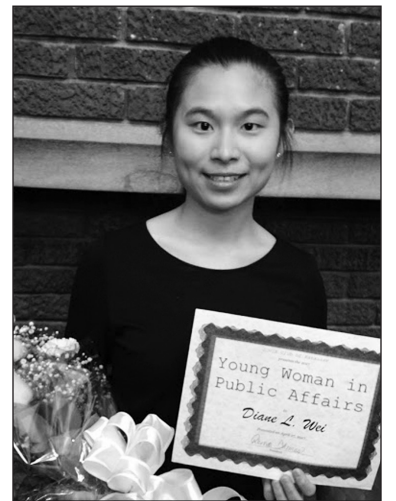
The Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting local history.

Monthly meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month March to December.

Museum hours are 1 to 4 p.m. first and third Sundays of each month, March to December or by appointment.

Visit <http://bourbonnaishistory.org>, on Facebook at <http://facebook.com/bourbonnaishistory> or call 1-815-933-6452.

Zonta presents awards



Herald photos by Toby Olszewski

Zonta presented the Woman of Achievement award to Cathy Boicken (left) and the Young Woman in Public Affairs award to Diane Wei (right) during the annual Zonta Executive Luncheon on Thursday, April 27, 2017 at the Kankakee Country Club. Boicken is president of Municipal Bank and a graduate of Olivet Nazarene University. Boicken said she was honored to receive the honor, but believed that it is one that is due to all the women who serve the community in as many or more ways as she. Wei, a senior at Kankakee High School, is captain of the Robotics team and a hospital volunteer. She will receive a \$500 scholarship and plans to attend the University of Illinois and major in chemistry. Each year, Zonta selects an outstanding woman in the area that exemplifies the mission and goals of Zonta to receive the Woman of Achievement Award. Also selected is an exceptional young woman who has demonstrated an early commitment to her community to receive the Young Woman in Public Affairs scholarship.

Emerging Writers Competition

Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White recently announced that entry forms are available for the 13th annual Illinois Emerging Writers Competition Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Award.

"We created the Illinois Emerging Writers Competition to promote creative writing and provide an outlet for talented writers," White said. "Great poems have the ability to enrich and enhance our lives, and I am looking forward to celebrating talented poets with this year's competition."

The competition is named in honor of the late Pulitzer Prize-winning Illinois Poet Laureate Gwendolyn Brooks, and is co-sponsored by the Illinois Center for the Book and Kevin Stein, who succeeded Brooks as Il-

linois Poet Laureate.

The competition is open to Illinois residents age 18 and over. Entries must be postmarked by June 30, 2017. Cash prizes will be awarded for first (\$500), second (\$300) and third place (\$100). Winning poems will be submitted for possible publication in the "Ninth Letter", "RHINO" and "Quiddity" journals and "Poetic License Press" publications. Winners will read their poems at a ceremony later this year at the Illinois State Library in Springfield.

Entry forms can be found at http://cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/center_for_the_book. For more information, contact Illinois Center for the Book coordinator Bonnie Matheis at 1-217-558-2065 or bmatheis@ilsos.net.

Super Crossword

Answers

H	I	P	P	O	S		M	O	B	C	A	P	S		S	Q	U	A	T	S	
I	D	E	A	T	E		E	U	R	A	S	I	A		Y	U	P	P	I	E	
C	O	N	T	I	N	E	N	T	A	L	S	U	B		B	I	S	E	C	T	
K	I	N		S	A	L		A	I	L			E	M	I	T					
A	D	I	N		T	I	S		N	A	T	U	R	A	L	S	U	P	E	R	
M	O	B	I	L	E	A	U	T	O		I	S	S	O			H	O	L	E	
			T	U	S	S	L	E		M	E	A			B	I	O	L	A	B	
G	R	A	S	P			A	L	L	E	R	G	E	N	I	C	H	Y	P	O	
A	O	L		I	M	F		N	O	G		E	N	O	K	I		C	S	I	
T	Y	L	E	N	O	L		E	G	A	D		D	P	I		S	H	E	L	
			P	R	O	D	U	C	T	I	V	E	C	O	U	N	T	E	R		
I	R	U	N		E	E	L		C	O	L	A		L	I	V	E	O	N	E	
M	E	R		A	R	N	A	Z		L	E	S		P	S	I		M	O	W	
A	P	P	O	I	N	T	M	E	N	T	D	I	S			D	E	E	R	E	
C	O	O	P	T	S			S	O	S		N	I	M	R	O	D				
O	U	S	E			C	A	T	S		S	O	C	I	A	L	A	N	T	I	
P	R	E	C	I	O	U	S	S	E	M	I		A	M	I		M	O	E	N	
						S	T	E	P		I	M	O		I	L	E		N	A	G
J	E	W	I	S	H			E	C	O	N	O	M	I	C	S	M	A	C	R	O
A	V	E	N	U	E			C	O	R	O	N	A	S		A	I	R	O	U	T
M	E	E	K	E	R			T	O	R	R	E	N	T		T	R	A	M	P	S