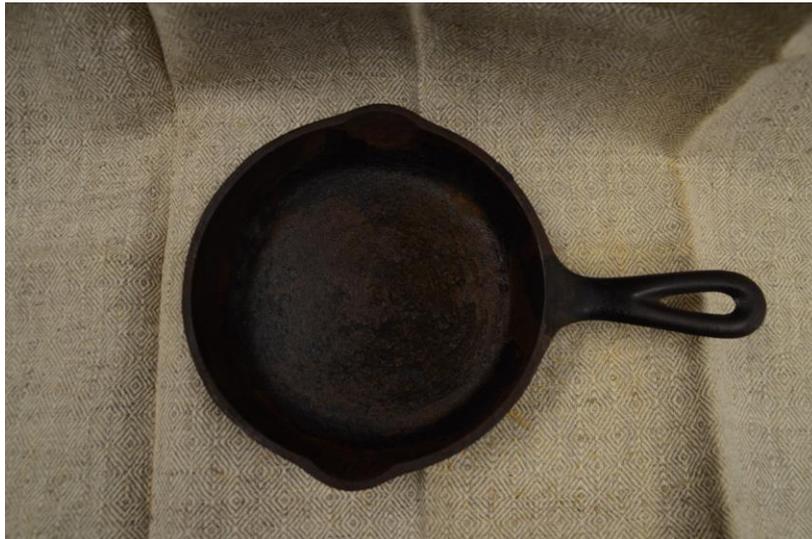


Watching out for Annie

Anna Brown Davies 1882-1981

For the readers' information — Annie was no blood relation to me. She was my great aunt's (by marriage) sister. Annie fit into my life because I always was attracted to older people. Probably it was because of my great attachment to my Grandfather Garlock. Those who were born long before I was became my window of the days long before I was born. They and their possessions which I collect made those yesterdays live again. Annie was born in 1882. Before I became 87 years old that sounded like many centuries ago but it now seems somewhat different. Annie had genes which made long life a possibility, along with the headstrong qualities she had. She was far up into her 80's when I really got to know her. Annie had outlived her mother and father, her sister and two husbands. She ruled that I was the one to watch out for her as I had done for her sister.

Her eye sight was not great but her persistence was. She lived alone even after she broke her hip. Annie had no children. Like many ladies of that period she was a great housekeeper and cook. When she was approaching 90 years I stopped in to check on her. Her small house on Phillips Avenue in Canajoharie was filled with smoke. I asked where all the smoke came from. Her question was, "What smoke?" She had fried to a crisp some meat in her small frying pan. One day I asked her what she was doing. "Making a pie to see if I can still do it." Annie liked pie as I did also. When she was in the nursing home my wife baked pie and I would take a piece down and feed it to her. One day the usual zeal was not there. I asked her if she liked elderberry pie which is what I brought. No complaints until she said, "I'm not crazy about it."



One day I stopped to see if Annie was doing alright. Her cheek was very swelled. She had a lot of teeth yet one was aching. What dentist do you go to? The name she came up with was one I had historically heard of. The only thing was my great uncle, Dr. Clint-Snyder, had taken over his practice 50 years before. I took her to my fathers' dentist in Fonda. The tooth could not be

pulled until the antibiotics had cured the infection. Then we were to go back when there was no more pain. Then it could be pulled. Finally the pain was gone. "Annie, I'll make an appointment to pull the tooth." The replay was, "It is not bothering me. Why should I bother it?" Finally it disappeared — I know not where.

There are so many memories of Annie that I cannot overcome the reader with them. Probably just one more can't hurt, I hope.

Let's recall a social security and grocery shopping day some 40 years ago. I'd ask what money she wanted. "Two tens, four fives, ten ones and change." Next question — what breakfast food do you want? "The one with the big red 'K' on the box." For a long time I would call night and morning to see if Annie was all right. Then one day she could no longer walk and could not stay home. It was among the hardest things I ever did to see her go to the nursing home. I'd wheel her up to the west window where I hoped she could see Happy Hollow where she and Aunt Nell were born so many years before. One day I ask if it was true when you get old if time goes faster. Her reply, "Sometimes it does." I guess I understand that now.

One of Annie's sayings was "You have to have something to take you out of the world." As she approached the end Annie was in the hospital. One day I received a call to come right away. When I arrived I went directly to her room. I found she had gotten out of the world with no one knowing it. I was glad that I was the first one to know she has passed because she finally had a smile on her face for the first time in a long, long time. Annie was approaching 100 years but her memory will always remain with her friend.

Skip Barshied, Stone Arabia