

A VISIT WITH MARY: AN INSIGHT INTO DAILY LIVING IN DOWNTOWN FULTON IN 1938

By Barbara Mask

Reading a diary is a glimpse into one's personal life, but spending some time with Mary Vogel Musk's journal presented so much more; including a unique insight into living above the 'company store.' Her husband, Dr. Enno Musk, was an optometrist whose office was located at 1106 4th Street. The family included sons, Ervin and Leonard. They resided in the upstairs apartment.

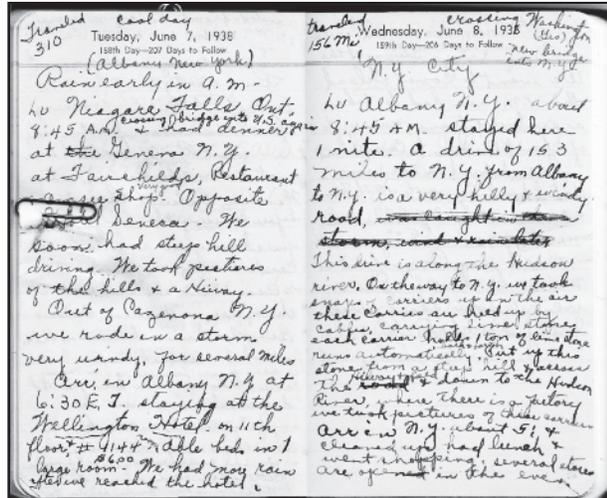
Mary began keeping a journal/diary in 1929 and continued writing daily activities until 1979. One of the delights of membership in the Fulton Historical Society is learning about significant accomplishments of our citizens. And so it was, when, at the November program presented by Dr. Rich Londo on the "History of the Fulton Post Office," we learned that Dr. Musk had flown his own personal plane on May 19, 1938 to celebrate the nation-wide anniversary of air mail service in America. Two of Dr. Musk's granddaughters attended the program, Kathy Musk Huizenga and Mary Ann Musk Giddings. Mary Ann brought several items pertaining to the flight, including a home video and Mary Musk's diary which described the event from an eye-witness perspective.

At the top of each day's entry were recorded the temperature and the weather condition. Often, a comment would be made about the weather when out of the ordinary, such as the Rock River flooding and winter weather driving hazards. The entries are filled with day-to-day activities and peppered with community events. Mary liked to shop and when Enno, who was a devoted aviator, visited the Cram Field Airport in Davenport, she would ride along, sometimes with the boys, and go shopping. Her purchases were listed and the price of each item. Now, 75 years later, those prices seem incredibly low.

In her 1938 diary, Ervin is in 8th grade and Leonard is in 5th grade. Mary and her sons took piano lessons from Lutie Green Harrison who lived in the upstairs apartment at 1100 4th Street. Every Sunday, the family attended church, had dinner and took the traditional Sunday afternoon ride. Often, it was to Davenport or Sterling so that Enno could visit the airports. His personal plane was kept at the Sterling Airport.

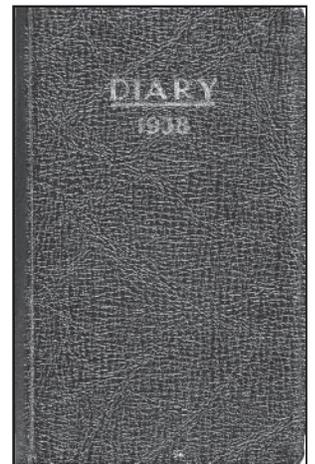
It is evident that Mary enjoyed spending time with her nieces: Pauline Bonneur eats dinner with the Musk family on school nights while attending Fulton High School that year. She writes about Lois, Irma and Doris (Brondyke) and Ida (Boelkens). And she especially liked taking the girls shopping. Her father, Jacob Vogel, had dinner with them most evenings. It is interesting to note that Dr. Musk's optometrist office was open every Saturday night. Frequently, Mary would make mention that guests would visit in their home while a family member had an appointment with Dr. Musk.

Here are some excerpts: On January 8 at 7:00 a.m. it was 3 degrees below zero and "it was the coldest day of the winter." The next day, "the ground was covered with snow." Mary had the piano tuned that day for \$3.00. That Sunday, for Ida's birthday dinner, she served, "roast chicken, dressing, potatoes, bread and butter pickles, jello, carrots and peas, and angel food cake with chocolate." On Sunday, January 16, the family drove to Davenport after church, had dinner at Bishop's Cafeteria and walked the Davenport-Rock Island Bridge, taking pictures along the way. Each week, Mary got a shampoo and fingerwave for thirty-five cents, often at Aurelia's Beauty Shoppe, and sometimes at Balk's Beauty Shop across the street. On February 3, she got a permanent wave: 17 curls for \$3.00.



June 7 & 8 entries detail a family trip to the East Coast. Mary kept a diary each year for 50 years, 1929-1979

Mary Vogel Musk's Diary



Dr. and Mrs. Enno Musk family
Leonard, Ervin, Enno and Mary

Also, in February her sister, Jennie, visited with Mary while her husband, Earl Bonneur attended a Whiteside County Union Consistory Meeting at Trinity Church. An on the 11th, the boys had an appointment with Dr. Hendricks, a dentist. Both boys had their teeth cleaned and Leonard had two fillings—cost \$4.00.

Leonard tried out for a play at school. The director, Miss Ewing, came to visit the Musks and discussed his part in, “The Boy and the Rabbit,” which was a success noted a month later in her diary. Special care for Leonard was always present because of his diabetes condition. A family dinner was held to honor the Bonneur’s 18th wedding anniversary and Mary also gave Irma Brondyke a toy cedar chest for her 9th birthday and Pauline also received a birthday gift. Arie Post, a local contractor, was remodeling the front windows of the office.

In March, Mary writes about a fatal automobile accident that involved Henry Musk and John Dykhuis, who lost his life. In March, Mary attended the Kiwanis Club to hear Ervin make a presentation on his hobby.

April, the family boarded the train for Chicago and spent several days there while Enno attended an Optical State Meeting. A highlight for Mary was attending a flower show at Navy Pier. She and the boys visited museums and other interesting sights. The train ride home from Chicago to Clinton took two hours.

Some observations of interest: The boys could ride their bikes over the bridge and spend time at Eagle Point Park with their friends. The amount of time that Mary and her sisters and nieces spend cleaning was startling. (I don’t know why this surprised me because I recall my own Mother spending an enormous number of hours cleaning in the spring and fall, too). They scrubbed walls, cleaned carpets, emptied closets, hung new wallpaper, painted, and cleaned, cleaned and cleaned. Upstairs and downstairs. The entries in the fall months were filled with cleaning activities and she was always pleased when she could hang the laundry in Temple’s yard. The J. E. Temple Hardware Store was in 1104th Street and the Temple family lived above their business, too. Later, the Musks purchase that building and ownership of both 1104 and 1106 4th Street remains with the Ervin Musk’s family today. It was a pleasure to read about the close relationship that Mary and her sisters shared. They made jelly together, organized family dinners and picnics and spent a lot of time together. They frequently exchanged visits of their children with one another. The Brondykes would visit in town and the Musk boys would “go out to the farm for a couple of days.” One of Mary’s nieces said that her own Mother kept a similar journal all of her adult life, also. Mary’s conversational style of writing allows the reader a special time—like a visit—with her. It is as if she is talking with someone rather than to a piece of paper. The diaries are a unique gift to her family.

Enno spent a great deal of time devoted to his interest in aviation. Besides operating his office in Fulton, he also had one in Morrison. In each daily entry, Mary made a note who was working in the office. But, most of her entries on Enno were in regards to his love of flying and his accomplishments in that endeavor. He flew his plane on a major trip to Florida and Cuba (an amazing feat in ’38), up the East Coast and into Washington, D.C. She was proud of him and this was reflected in her comments. Enno died suddenly of a heart attack on March 16 1945, only seven years after this 1938 diary was written. Pfc Ervin Musk was stationed in France and Leonard was a senior in high school. Both of the sons became optometrists and continued the family business at 1106 4th Street until Ervin retired in 2000.

Mary died on February 27, 1986. She had lived through the depression and became a widow at the age of 48. But our peek at Mary’s life in 1938, a resident of Fulton all of her life, was a happy and contented time and we are grateful that she took/made time to write it all down and to her granddaughter and namesake, Mary Ann, for sharing it with us and allowing us a personal glimpse of Fulton seventy-five years ago.

Mary Vogel Was One Of Ten Children

Mary (Vogel) Musk was the daughter of Jacob and Ida (Fokens) Musk, who immigrated from the Netherlands in 1886. She was one of ten children: John (Elizabeth); Martin (Nellie); Grace (Mrs. Sid Foelkens); Bertha (Mrs. Fred Boelkens); Jennie (Mrs. Earl Bonneur); Richard (Winnie); Mary (Mrs. Enno Musk); Peter (Grace); Gertrude (Mrs. Ralph Brondyke); and Coe. Her relatives are entered in the 1938 diary frequently; especially her sisters, Jennie and Gertie, and their children.