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Black's Cross Roads

Elizabeth Smoot

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Houtz of Dayton, Ohio, announce the marriage of their daughter, Margaret, to P. F. C. Jess C. Wasson, son of Mr. and Mrs. John J. Wasson of this community, April 5, at Dayton, Ohio. After a short visit with the bridegroom's parents, they returned to Ohio where P. F. C. Wasson is stationed with the U. S. Army at Patterson Field.

Mr. and Mrs. J. M. DeAtley, Mrs. Charles Thomason and little daughter, were Sunday guests of Mr. and Mrs. B. Bramblett.

Mrs. J. M. Wasson and little son returned home Sunday after spending a few days last week with Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Bell and son.

Eva Wasson spent Friday with Mrs. Leonard Wasson and children.

Mr. John B. Stewart remains critically ill.

Mrs. Charles Thomason and daughter, of Cincinnati, are visiting Mr. and Mrs. J. M. DeAtley.

Mr. and Mrs. George Buzzard and daughter were last week end guests of Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Buzzard near Paris.

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Gillispie and family were Sunday guests of Mr. and Mrs. Noble Gillispie and sons at Ishmael Chapel.

Pvt. Raymond Garrison, Camp Gordon, Fla., and Misses Pearl and Teal Garrison, of Ohio, visited Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Stewart Sunday afternoon.

Pleasant Valley

Alice Campbell

Mrs. Emma Hammond, Mrs. Helen Hunt, Mrs. Carl Isbwell and Mrs. Leonard Hunt were Sunday with Mrs. Leslie Valiant, Indiana.

Mrs. Tom Hunt, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Jolly and Mrs. Lucy Isbell were Sunday with Mr. Leonard Wasson.

Mr. and Mrs. Guy Alexander were Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ferris of Carlisle.

Mrs. Frankie Bassett spent Friday with Mrs. C. F. Hall.

Mrs. Allen Hall and son, Mrs. Revell Hunt and children were Sunday with Mrs. Bertha Thackerson.

Silas Campbell spent a few days with his mother, Mrs. Mary E. Campbell.

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Hacker and family spent Sunday with Henry Zornes.

Mrs. John Lusher left Saturday for Detroit, Mich., to join her husband who is employed there.

Mr. and Mrs. Bradley Eastwine and family, Mr. and Mrs. Buster Jones and baby spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Sam Mayhriar.

BALD HILL

Mrs. T. P. Dotson

Since our last appearance in the Mercury many things, local, national and international have taken place.

Raymond Jackson has been in on a furlough. Mason Miller is in now and Leslie McVey is expected soon.

Sunday Mr. and Mrs. William Miller entertained the Conrad family and G. T. Sellers.

Mr. and Mrs. Walk Flora had as their guests Sunday, Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Dotson and daughter, Nelma Rose, Leroy Dotson and son of Bourbon County, Mr. and Mrs. Hamer Miller of Carlisle, J. M. Dotson and family, Mrs. Heavy Selby and two small sons, Mr. and Mrs. T. F. Dotson and Norma Ritchie of this community, and Mr. and Mrs. John Fitzgerald and daughter of Lexington.

Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Herndon came in Saturday night from Lexington, preparatory to moving to Detroit where Mr. Herndon will be employed.

J. M. Dotson and Jesse Herndon were in Lexington on business Saturday.

There was quite a heavy rainfall in this community Friday, deferring the getting out gardens and preparing the ground for crops.

The health of the community seems quite normal at present, despite the epidemic of flu and colds.

Mrs. Mamie McVey is at her daughter's, Mrs. Bernice Ritchie's near Paris, at present.

G. W. Shepherd and family went to Burdine to see her brother, Jess Stewart, who has been ill for some time.

Thompson Anderson has bought the late B. M. Hamm farm.

SCRUB GRASS

James P. Minton

Mr. A. C. Bowen of Myers spent Thursday with Mrs. C. L. Tapp.

While hauling rock on the farm of Taylor Bowen, George McCord's team got scared at a rock and went over a 25 or 30 foot embankment but the horses were uninjured.

Mrs. C. L. Tapp spent Saturday at Myers.

Mr. and Mrs. Gip Davis spent one day recently with Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Minton at Locust Grove.

Mr. and Mrs. James P. Minton spent Sunday with Mrs. James Sadler and son, Raymond and attended Sunday school and church at the Grove.

Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Walton, Mr. and Mrs. Taylor Bowen, Mrs. Ben Hill, Mrs. Nellie Crouch and son, John H. spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. George McCord at Myers.

We welcome Mr. and Mrs. McCord to our community.

Russell Bowden and son Bobby spent Sunday afternoon with Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Bayles.

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Bowen and Roberta Ferris of Carlisle were Sunday guests of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence McCarty.

Mrs. Ben Hill, Mrs. Nellie Crouch and son, John H. spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Ed Arbuckle at Bethel.

Mr. and Mrs. Bayles Bowles spent Sunday afternoon with Mrs. Lillie Bowles.

TUNNELL HILL

Mrs. Anne Henson

Mr. and Mrs. Marion Cannon spent Monday in Maysville.

Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Standifield returned to their home Friday in Indianapolis, after a visit with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Standifield.

While drenching a horse recently, Lloyd Hunt sustained a broken leg and was taken to Hayswood hospital in Maysville. The horse died.

Mrs. B. W. Boone, Mrs. Anne Henson and daughter, Mrs. Elbert Boone spent from Friday until Monday with their brother, C. M. Massey in Ironton, Ohio.

Mr. and Mrs. Willie Hammond and daughter, Miss Edna Hammond, were in Maysville Monday.

Mrs. Charley Balke is improving.

MY FRIEND FLICKA

by MARY O'HARA

CHAPTER I

High up on the long hill they called the Saddle Back, behind the ranch and the corrals, Ken, the boy on a horse, facing east, his eyes dazzled by the rising sun.

The thing, huddled roofs of the ranch house, was below him, began to be red instead of dark blue and the spidery arms of the windmill in the gorge flashed and twinkled. They were smiling here at the sun.

"Good morning, mister!" shouted Ken, swinging his arm in salute, and the chunky brown mare by his knee gave a wild leap.

To keep his seat, riding bareback as he was, he clasped his heels into her sides, and she leaped and reared time with her hard down. Still, legged and with arched head and neck, she danced and bounded.

Over, twice, three times; and Ken was off, slung under her nose, hanging by the reins.

He looked away and pulled to get free, braced like a dog tugging at a long bone. It would not give.

She jerked her head violently sideways to tackle Ken's trousers in anger. "If you break another bridle—"

This thought made him crafty and a voice full as a bellowing bull. "Now Cigarette—a good girl—nice little baby—good girl—"

Ken got warily to his feet and went to her head with it. "A nothing bridle but with leathers—wide—"

Upon this Flicka Ed ever stiffly, gently old thing like you if I had a one of my own but I can't afford it."

The frown faded from his face and his eyes took on a dreamy look. "If I had a colt—"

He had been saying that for a long time. Sometimes it was all he ever slept at night. It was the first thing he had thought of when he left the ranch three days ago. He said it at dinnertime when he sat with his brother riding Rusty. And he had said it when he lay in the hay loft that night, looking in his eyes you'd find—for a colt of his own.

He must get on Cigarette again.

First he had an apology to make. In all fairness, he must tell Cigarette that the fault had been his own. He had put his heels into her sides, and even a cow pony of Flicka's would say if he told him about it.

Cigarette backed and tossed her mane.

"What did you do? Put your heels in my sides?"

"Yes, sir."

He and Howard had to say "Yes, sir, and No, sir, to their father because he was the boss, and he had to say it to Mr. Rutledge.

He took hold of her mistress' ear and scratched it gently. She was not to answer her bad temper.

Cigarette was sorry. She tossed her head and pawed the ground, coming up from school in Lexington to the ranch, past the weather, past the trees and cedars, past the corrals and cabins, and there, there was the pasture. Even now it was bursting with the sweet grass of spring, and the high bush and sage on the crest of the clearest sky and the windmill as shiny and brave as a star.

This was what he had been with his father, Rob, for, to the considerable surprise of school, the ending of the school year.

At this an unsentimental feeling had come over him. Mr. Rutledge's report cards had arrived in yesterday's mail with a letter from his Principal of the school addressed to his father. Certain Mathematics and Mr. McLaughlin had slung them on to the ranch with some papers and bills to open later. By the time Ken got back to breakfast next day his father would have opened them. There was that examination—Ken knew he hadn't done very well—

He wondered what time it was now. He looked down at the ranch. It wouldn't be long before breakfast. Everybody was awake. Going downstairs, his mother would call, "Time to get up, boys!" His father was sitting up in bed with his hair rumpled, pajamas rumpled, hand reaching out for a cigarette.

"Gosh—if his father had read the reports! And that weren't all there was the saddle blanket too, the lost saddle blanket.

He turned from looking at the ranch house and let his eyes sweep the hillside. Saddle blanket, saddle blanket—every time he asked his father for a colt, McLaughlin said, "I'll give you one when you deserve one.

A jack rabbit sprang up almost underfoot. Cigarette jumped, but Ken sat tight, and as the rabbit sailed away, he gave a yell and chased after.

Cigarette loved a good run.

Leaning back as Rob McLaughlin had taught his boys to do, feet forward and out, reins free, Ken rode like a steeple chaser.

Rabbit, grey and low disappeared over the crest of the Saddle Back.

Rob McLaughlin pulled the dropped leather buckle from the fender, opened the knives so that it would comfortably accommodate four people and clung a red-checked cloth over it.

The roomy kitchen was full of bright sunshine over the front terrace. It made squares of gold on the painted pine floor, and on Isobel's coat of pink and cream and making table linen were hooked until Rob's face flower patterns. A little frown set his face.

Neither motherhood nor the hard living at the ranch had deprived Bell of her figure or her rosiness. At thirty-seven, she looked much older than when she had won a silver cup, at Eryn Mawr, for being the best all-round athlete of her class.

Of medium height, with a long slender waist, her curves were held where they belonged by trained muscles, and, as she walked, there was a lightness in her step that came partly from natural vigor and partly from the way she threw the weight from the shoulders to face whatever was to be faced, a danger, a trouble, a lovely day or a feast.

She was late to breakfast.

Coming in, he looked first at his mother's face if he had opened the report cards.

Then he said, "Good—morning, Mother, good—morning, Dad," piled the cereal dishes in front of him, poured an unbelievable chair with next, and began to eat with a will.

Rob looked at his wife. "Have you got to say for yourself?"

"I dunno," answered Ken.

"Don't you know enough in that English exam? What were the questions you missed?"

"What did you write?"

"I didn't get started."

"Didn't write a word?"

Ken shook his head.

"Couldn't you think of anything?"

"Yes, I had it all planned. I was going to write the story about how you lost your pole mine. How the bronco stole her from Boone—Ken's eyes went to his father's. "He could write anything he wanted, it had to be at least two pages—"

"Well, what happened to you?"

"I—I—got to thinking about it. Thinking about Gypsy and the Albino and Flicka and how I never took her somewhere to look for a good mate and the will horses in the band—and where they were all that day. And then I thought how I'd like to have Flicka for long hot days and—and everything."

Rob looked at his wife. Isobel's eyes were shining.

There was a shock at the back door and McLaughlin shouted, "Good—morning!"

Gus, the Swedish foreman, came in carrying a big fish and his dog hand. His thinnest body lost in a coat