

Written May 9, 1970 by Max Forrest

"66 years ago my older brother Hans, then 23 and me 21 left our home in Barde, near Herring Denmark, and walked 12 miles to our Mothers Homestead Lem Railroad Station. I remember that in the deeper ditches there were still snow and that the grass had started to be a little green, but there was no green on the trees as yet.

2 days later our Father and Mother came in a buggy with our luggage, and the next day we took a train to a seaport, and boarded a ship for Hull, England (on the east coast.) The trip across the North Sea took about 24 hours. At Hull we were herded aboard a waiting train at night, and at daylight saw a most wonderful green countryside of England. At Liverpool, we stayed overnight in beds, but there were 6 or 8 in each room. The next day we were put aboard the Ultonia, laying at anchor in the outer harbor.

The trip to Boston took us 9 days, and most of us were sick most of the time, and we did not eat much. There were over 3,000 immigrants aboard.

On a train at Niagara Falls, the coaches were sealed up for our trip through Canada to Detroit. At the 12th Street station in Chicago we were herded into big carry-all horse drawn vehicles to be taken to the different other depots in Chicago. All we had to do was to show our tickets and they would point to the spot we had to go.

At the LaSalle Station of the Rock Island & Pacific Railroad, we could understand the blackboard markings of train departures and knew the word, Morris, where we had to go. We spent the night in the waiting room, and got on a train for Morris in the morning. We, of course, had maps, and we could understand when the conductor called the station names. So we arrived in Morris, and there at the depot was my, or our, Mother's brother's wife with a horse and buggy. She, of, course could spot us greenhorns as we stepped off of the train. She took us home and later somebody got our luggage.

Horrors. We had to take a bath. Never, never in my life had I had a bath only in the Creek. Never heard of a bath tub, but they were in the upper class and had one in the pantry, wood with tin sides and bottom. Water had to be heated on a coal stove, and after the bath, the tub had to be drained with a pail and wiped dry with towels.



There was water in pipes, but no sewers. The kitchen sink was drained into a hole in the ground, and there was a privy out back.

Mother's brother's name was James Hansen. There were 2 girls going to highschool, and a boy, Vigo. James Hansen had a POP SHOP, and the girls liked my brother Hans better, so they decided that he should stay and work in the POP SHOP. I was to go to Chillicothe and work for Tony Andersen in his POP SHOP. I worked there June, July, and August at 18 dollars a month and board and room. Back to Morris September 1st and got a job in the Oat Meal Mill at 9 dollars a week. (60 hours) Got room and board for \$3.50 a week in the second house west of my Uncle Hansen's house with shop in the rear.

During the winter, Hans and I got 2 hours a week of evening classes in English. Saturday nights we got shaved in a barber shop for 10 cents. They also had a bathtub for 25 cents which saw very little use (no waiting turns), but the Hansen family insisted that we get a bath once in a while even in winter. (Horrors) Such people.

The second summer I went back to work for Tony Andersen at 21 dollars a month. Back to the Oat Meal Mill in September, and was on a machine wooden box nailer at 11 dollars. The 3rd year Hans got a diploma as a bookkeeper, and promptly hired out to a farmer as a farm hand, and I got the job at Uncle James at 26 dollars a month. In winter I got 15 dollars a month.

After one year Uncle had to have a cheaper man, another "greenhorn", and I went to a milk farm on the edge of town. Got up at 4 A.M., fed the cows, and milked them. Bottled the milk while the drivers were in the house for breakfast. Clean the milk house, clean the barn. If nothing else to do, we could brush the cows. There were about 7 men on this milk farm and it was interesting work, except the 4 A.M., and I still wanted to get back to the POP SHOP.

One Sunday while visiting at my Uncle's house, there was a phone call from Claude Bowen of the Coco Cola Bottling Works at Kankakee, IL, and that was how I got to Kankakee at 12 dollars a week. Room and board 4 dollars per week.

There was a Danish Lutheran Church in Kankakee, and I contacted one of their members. He invited me to his home and we went to church together. I was a good singer, and one day a Deacon, or somebody came down the aisle and asked me to come with him to the choir platform. He sat me down alongside of Hansine Outsen, whom I later married. Could you think of a better place to meet your future wife?

I was soon made a third partner of the Coco Cola Bottling Works, only to find out a year later that both of the Bowen brothers had been in the Crazy House and that their father at that time was at the Kankakee State Institution. A friend of mine advised me to start some disagreement or quarrel with Claude Bowen, (The other Bowen boy had disappeared.) and get him to buy me out. I did not like the idea, but it worked. Claude Bowen's mother had a hotel in Windsor, IL, and she signed his note and I got out with \$1,120. I looked around awhile and bought the Sol Morrel Crown Bottling Works at Watseka, and the Bottling Department of the Volberding Ice Cream & Bottling Works. Sold pop at 50 cents a case of 24 bottles, red, white and brown only. At that time there was no pop sold at grocery stores. Just pool rooms, saloons and restaurants. I called a dray man (horse and wagon) for my deliveries to the train and others. You could send about 7 cases of pop on a train for 50 cents. I did fine for the first 2 summers and bought a lot at 157 W. Fleming Street for 500 dollars, and that fall --- " (We lost this next sheet of paper, but Max built a house on this lot with a cement block building in the rear.) To continue with the next sheet ---



Max purchased a truck with wheels like wagon wheels with a 2 in. rim, and a chain drive.

"The next year I bought another and bigger one with smaller wheels with 3 in. rubber tires."

"The first World War came on. Sugar went to 30 cents a pound. Pop had to be 10 cents, and nobody had that kind of money."

"When the summer was over, I got a job at the light plant west of town passing coal, wheeling out ashes, unloading coal cars, at 55 dollars a month. Later I got to be part fireman. There were about 20 men there and all working 60 hours a week. Firemen got 60 to 65 dollars a week. The chief engineer got 90 dollars."

"When summer came, I went back to making some pop, but it was not much use. Winter came again, and I went back to a fireman job at 60 dollars per month, and was graduated to 65 dollars. There were four 250 horse power boilers. Late in the winter I got the Own (?) run, 11 to 7 a.m. Just me and the engineer (Francis Giroux.) The chief was James Hartley's father. This job was a life saver for me."

"The following summer, I bought out a small milk plant for 900 dollars. How I got this money together I can hardly believe. I could not borrow any money. I bought an old Ford truck from Jay Fanyo for 500 dollars. I hired George Horton, and we had two boys after school to help deliver the milk. A few times the boys had to stay after school, and did we have trouble delivering the milk! Some of the older folks got a pint a day, and those with children got a quart. Milk ten cents a quart."

(squise?)

"Got a small churn and made some butter. The farmers started to squeeze me on the bulk price, and soon I was months behind with the bigger suppliers. I sold out to the bigger suppliers and bought a bigger churn."

"It was bad the first year. When spring came, butter was about 40 cents, and there was a lot of cream coming in. Then we had a small depression -- about 1920 --, and nobody bought butter, and we had to "dump" some 40 cent butter in Chicago some for as little as 14 cents a pound. we lived through it, and we incorporated the company."

Written by Max Forrest  
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Age 87