

In April, 1982 Aunt Rosie Suess was living near Rock City, IL and was taking a writing class. Following is one of her stories:

Something that will always be vividly engraved in my memory is the frequent walks to the farm of my earliest childhood. Walking along the quiet, dusty country road, I can see the old empty white house where I was born, that is now neglected and unkempt.

An assortment of weeds, grass and wildflowers cover the front yard. The air is filled with the fragrance of summer.

To turn into the driveway, I cross an old wooden bridge which clatters as I walk on it.

Just inside the yard, a huge wealthy apple tree grows on one side of the drive-way. Its branches are so weighted down by the abundant crop of luscious red apples that some of them nearly touch the ground.

Two tall plum trees, towering high above the other trees, grow on the other side, still bearing their small, purple and red fruit.

I zig-zag past the trees to avoid stepping on the fruit that covers the ground.

Then I can see what was at one time the large family garden. Concord grape vines grow in the center of the large plot, growing precisely as they were planted extending nearly the full length of the garden. Every year, in the fall they produce their rich, succulent purple fruit.

There is an assortment of flowers growing here and there among the weeds underneath the vines, still persistently blooming where they were tenderly planted and cared for many years before. First I see the Star of Bethlehem, their little white star like heads pushing their way through clumps of long narrow green leaves. Then an abundance of purple violets peeking through the long grass and weeds, and Bachelor Buttons with their tiny immaculately shaped golden yellow heads.

It is then I see the daisies, not a large bed, but still a stunning sight. They seem to greet me, as they wave in the soft summer breeze.

Long stalks of rhubarb with their enormous leaves are at the fall end of the garden. They are growing profusely through the weeds, looking up at the tall Illinois corn, growing on the other side of the fence

As I keep walking, I hear the windmill, and can see it reaching far up into the sky. It is pumping water, which I can hear running into the large round wooden tank. This provides water for the cattle left there by the family to graze.

I wouldn't think of leaving without taking the tin cup off the hook on the windmill frame, and having a delightfully cool drink. How refreshing a cup of that water would taste now.

Crossing the sagging, cracked, cement walk, the dry unpainted porch with its floor full of splinters I enter the house, and am greeted by a stale musty odor, dust, cobwebs, peeling wall paper, and loose plaster. The windows are dirty and bare.

As I shout hello, my voice sounds hollow.

If this house could speak, it could tell us many a tale; mostly happy ones, but, no doubt, some sorrowful ones.

What a privilege it was to have a quiet, secluded place like this where, as a child, and then as a teen-ager, I was free to come. I came often, sometimes accompanied by my sister as it was only a short pleasant stroll from where we lived.

