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Forman H. Craton - 1902 - 1924 - Memoir

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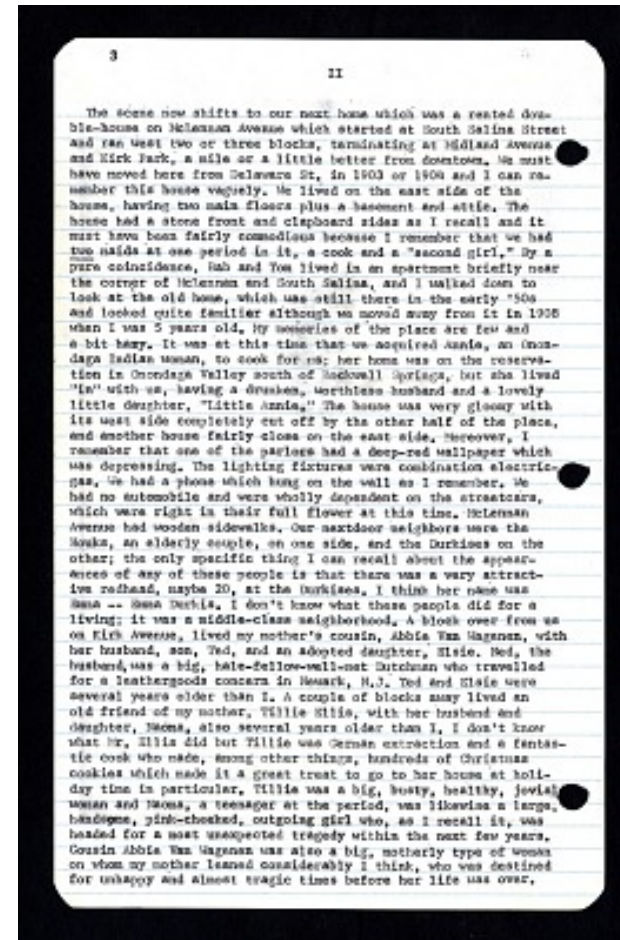
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The scene now shifts to our next home which was a rented double-house on McLennan Avenue which started at South Salina Street and ran west two or three blocks, terminating at Midland Avenue and Kirk Park, a mile or a little better from downtown. We must have moved here from Delaware St. in 1903 or 1904 and I can remember this house vaguely. We lived on the east side of the house, having two main floors plus a basement and attic. The house had a stone front and clapboard sides as I recall and it must have been fairly commodious because I remember that we had two maids at one period in it, a cook and a "second girl." By a pure coincidence, Bab and Tom lived in an apartment briefly near the corner of McLennan and South Salina, and I walked down to look at the old home, which was still there in the early '50s and looked quite familiar although we moved away from it in 1908 when I was 5 years old. My memories of the place are few and a bit hazy. It was at this time that we acquired Annie, an Onondaga Indian woman, to cook for us; her home was on the reservation in Onondaga Valley south of Rockwell Springs, but she lived "in" with us, having a drunken, worthless husband and a lovely little daughter, "Little Annie." The house was very gloomy with its west side completely cut off by the other half of the place, and another house fairly close on the east side. Moreover, I remember that one of the parlors had a deep-red wallpaper which was depressing. The lighting fixtures were combination electric-gas. We had a phone which hung on the wall as I remember. We had no automobile and were wholly dependent on the streetcars, which were right in their full flower at this time. McLennan Avenue had wooden sidewalks. Our nextdoor neighbors were the Houks, an elderly couple, on one side, and the Durkises on the other; the only specific thing I can recall is that there was a very attractive redhead, maybe 20, at the Durkises. I think her name was Emma -- Emma Durkis. I don't know what these people did for a living; it was a middle-class neighborhood. A block over from us on Kirk Avenue, lived my mother's cousin, Abbie Van Wagenen, with her husband, son, Ted, and an adopted daughter, Elsie. Ned, the husband, was a big, hale-fellow-well-set Dutchman who travelled for a leathersgoods concern in Newark, N.J. Ted and Elsie were several years older than I. A couple of blocks away lived an old friend of my mother, Tillie Ellis, with her husband and daughter, Naoma, also several years older than I. I don't know what Mr. Ellis did but Tillie was German extraction and a fantastic cook who made, among other things, hundreds of Christmas cookies which made it a great treat to go to her house at holiday time in particular. Tillie was a big, busty, healthy, jovial woman and Naoma, a teenager at the period, was likewise a large, handsome, pink-cheeked, outgoing girl, who, as I recall it, was headed for a most unexpected tragedy within the next few years. Cousin Abbie Van Wagenen was also a big, motherly type of woman on whom my mother leaned considerably, who was destined for unhappy and almost tragic times before her life was over.



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