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Forman H. Craton - 1902 - 1924 - Memoir

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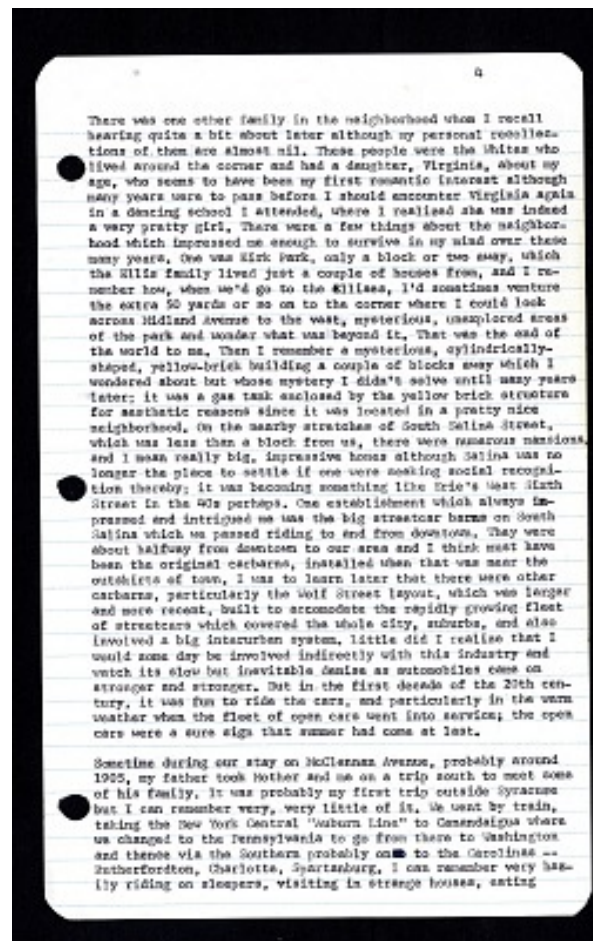
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There was another family in the neighborhood whom I recall hearing quite a bit about later although my personal recollections of them are almost nil. These people were the Whites who lived around the corner and had a daughter, Virginia, about my age, who seems to have been my first romantic interest although many years were to pass before I should encounter Virginia again in a dancing school I attended, where I realized she was indeed a very pretty girl. There were a few things about the neighbor-hood which impressed me enough to survive in my mind over these many years. One was Kirk Park, only a block or two away, which the Ellis family lived just a couple of houses from, and I remember how, when we'd go to the Ellises, I'd sometimes venture the extra 50 yards or so on to the corner where I could look across Midland Avenue to the vast, mysterious, unexplored areas of the park and wonder what was beyond it. That was the end of the world to me. Then I remember a mysterious, cylindrically-shaped, yellow-brick building a couple of blocks away which I wondered about but whose mystery I didn't solve until many years later; it was a gas tank enclosed by the yellow brick structure for aesthetic reasons since it was located in a pretty nice neighborhood. On the nearby stretches of South Salina Street, which was less than a block from us, there were numerous mansions, and I mean really big, impressive homes although Salina was no longer the place to settle if one were seeking social recognition thereby; it was becoming something like Erie's West Sixth Street in the 40s perhaps. One establishment which always impressed and intrigued me was the big streetcar barns on South Salina which we passed riding to and from downtown. They were about halfway from downtown to our area and I think must have been the original carbarns, installed when that was near the outskirts of town. I was to learn later that there other carbarns, particularly the Wolf Street layout, which was larger and more recent, built to accomodate the rapidly growing fleet of streetcars which covered the whole city, suburbs, and also involved a big interurban system. Little did I realize that I would some day be involved indirectly with this industry and watch its slow but inevitable demise as automobiles came on stronger and stronger. But in the first decade of the 20th century, it was fun to ride the cars, and particularly in the warm weather when the fleet of open cars went into service; the open cars were a sure sign that summer had come at last.

Sometime during our stay on McClennan Avenue, probably around 1905, my father took Mother and me on a trip south to meet some of his family. It was probably my first trip outside Syracuse but I can remember very, very little of it. We went by train, taking the New York Central "Auburn Line" to Canandaigua where we changed to the Pennsylvania to go from there to Washington and thence via the Southern probably on to the Carolinas -- Rutherfordton, Charlotte, Spartanburg. I can remember very hazily riding on sleepers, visiting in strange houses, eating



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