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Forman H. Craton - 1902 - 1924 - Memoir

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McLennan Avenue

We had a cook named Nancy who pre-dated Indian Annie or possibly she was the "second girl" we had at one time over there.

I find references to Anna and Lena on McLennan ; one of them was probably the one I referred to as Emma Durkis, the redhead goodlooker next door.

During this period, I had two beloved dolls, Arabella and Tudie. I still call Willie "Tudie" when I want to express great sentimentality; I doubt if she'd approve of being called Arabella.

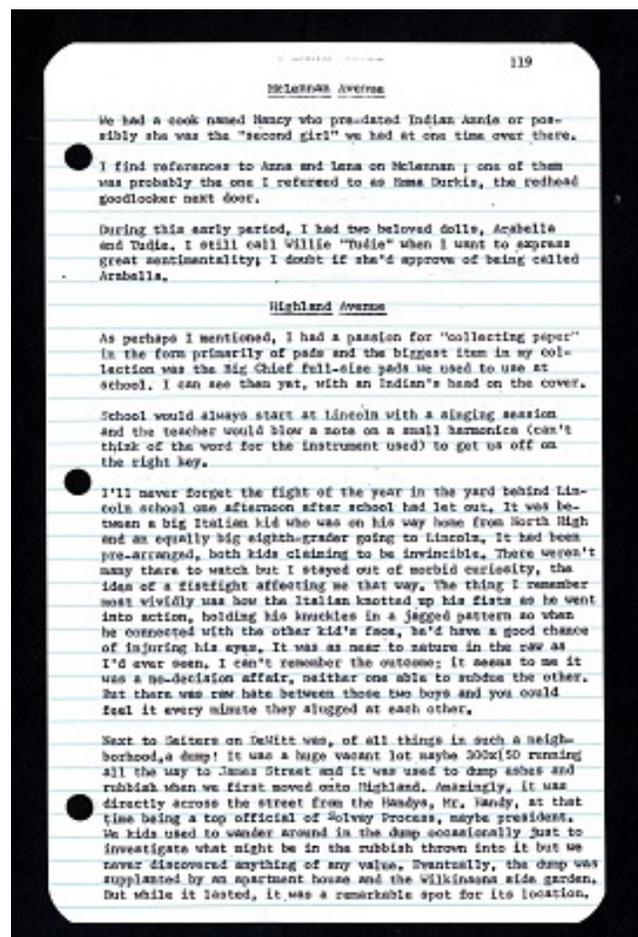
Highland Avenue

As perhaps I mentioned, I had a passion for "collecting paper" in the form primarily of pads and the biggest item in my collection was the Big Chief full-size pads we used to use at school. I can see them yet, with an Indian's head on the cover.

School would always start at Lincoln with a singing session and the teacher would blow a note on a small harmonica (can't think of the word for the instrument used) to get us off on the right key.

I'll never forget the fight of the year in the yard behind Lincoln school one afternoon after school had let out. It was between a big Italian kid who was on his way home from North High and an equally big eighth-grader going to Lincoln. It had been pre-arranged, both kids claiming to be invincible. There weren't many there to watch but I stayed out of morbid curiosity, the idea of a fistfight affecting me that way. The thing I remember most vividly was how the Italian knotted up his fists as he went into action, holding his knuckles in a jagged pattern so when he connected with the other kid's face, he'd have a good chance of injuring his eyes. It was as near to nature in the raw as I'd ever seen. I can't remember the outcome; it seems to me it was a no-decision affair, neither one able to subdue the other. But there was raw hate between those two boys and you could feel it every minute they slugged at each other.

Next to Seiters on DeWitt was, of all things in such a neighborhood, a dump! It was a huge vacant lot maybe 300x150 running all the way to James Street and it was used to dump ashes and rubbish when we first moved onto Highland. Amazingly, it was directly across the street from the Handys, Mr. Handy, at that time being a top official of Solvay Process, maybe president. We kids used to wander around in the dump occasionally just to investigate what might be in the rubbish thrown into it but we never discovered anything of value. Eventually, the dump was supplanted by an apartment house and the Wilkinsons side garden. But while it lasted, it was a remarkable spot for its location.



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