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Forman H. Craton - 1934 - 1935 - Diary

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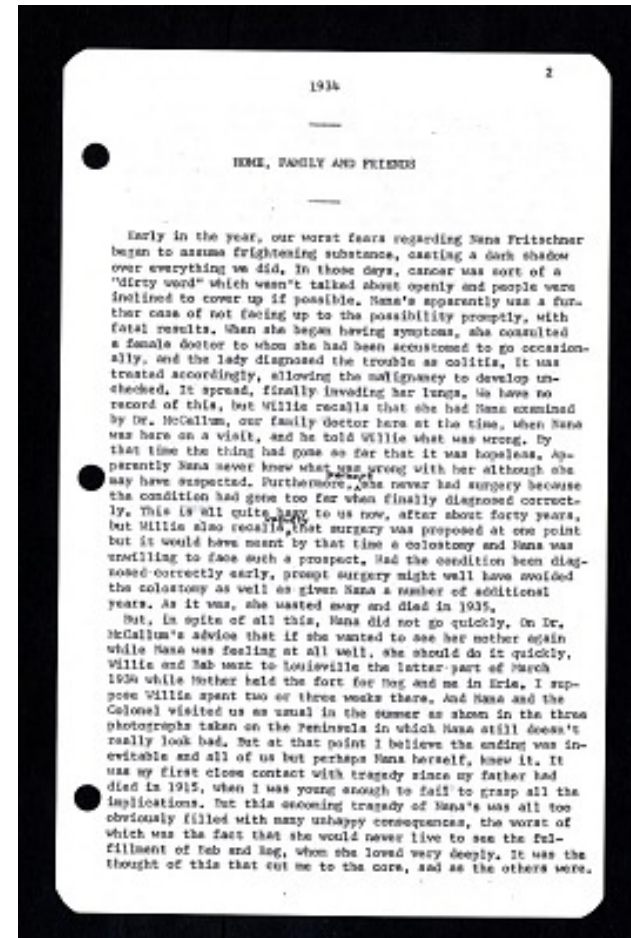
1934

[[short line]]

HOME, FAMILY AND FRIENDS

[[short line]]

Early in the year, our worst fears regarding Nana Fritschner began to assume frightening substance, casting a dark shadow over everything we did. In those days, cancer was sort of a "dirty word" which wasn't talked about openly and people were inclined to cover up if possible. Nana's apparently was a further case of not facing up to the possibility promptly, with fatal results. When she began having symptoms, she consulted a female doctor to whom she had been accustomed to go occasionally, and the lady diagnosed the trouble as colitis. It was treated accordingly, allowing the malignancy to develop unchecked. It spread, finally invading her lungs. We have no record of this, but Willie recalls that she had Nana examined by Dr. McCallum, our family doctor here at the time, when Nana was here on a visit, and he told Willie what was wrong. By that time the thing had gone so far that it was hopeless. Apparently Nana never knew what was wrong with her although she may have suspected. Furthermore, [^][[insertion]] ^[[perhaps]] [^][[insertion]] she never had surgery because the condition had gone too far when finally diagnosed correctly. This is all quite hazy to us now, after about forty years, but Willie also recalls [^][[insertion]] ^[[vaguely]] [^][[insertion]] that surgery was proposed at one point but it would have meant by that time a colostomy and Nana was unwilling to face such a prospect. Had the condition been diagnosed correctly early, prompt surgery might well have avoided the colostomy as well as given Nana a number of additional years. As it was, she wasted away and died in 1935. But, in spite of all this, Nana did not go quickly. On Dr. McCallum's advice that is she wanted to see her mother again while Nana was feeling at all well, she should do it quickly, Willie and Bab went to Louisville the latter part of March 1934 while Mother held the fort for Rog and me in Erie. I suppose Willie spent two or three weeks there. And Nana and the Colonel visited us as usual in the summer as shown in the three photographs taken on the Peninsula in which Nana still doesn't really look bad. But at that point I believe the ending was inevitable and all of us but perhaps Nana herself, knew it. It was my first close contact with tragedy since my father had died in 1915, when I was young enough to fail to grasp all the implications. But this oncoming tragedy of Nana's was all too obviously filled with many unhappy consequences, the worst of which was the fact that she would never live to see the fulfillment of Bab and Rog, whom she loved very deeply. It was the thought of this that cut me to the core, sad as the others were.



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