

University of Montana

## ScholarWorks at University of Montana

---

Cub Tracks, 1943-1946

University of Montana Publications

---

Winter 1945

### Cub Tracks, Winter 1945

Students of the Montana State University (Missoula, Mont.)

Harold G. Merriam

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cubtracks>

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

#### Recommended Citation

Students of the Montana State University (Missoula, Mont.) and Merriam, Harold G., "Cub Tracks, Winter 1945" (1945). *Cub Tracks, 1943-1946*. 7.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cubtracks/7>

This Journal is brought to you for free and open access by the University of Montana Publications at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Cub Tracks, 1943-1946 by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

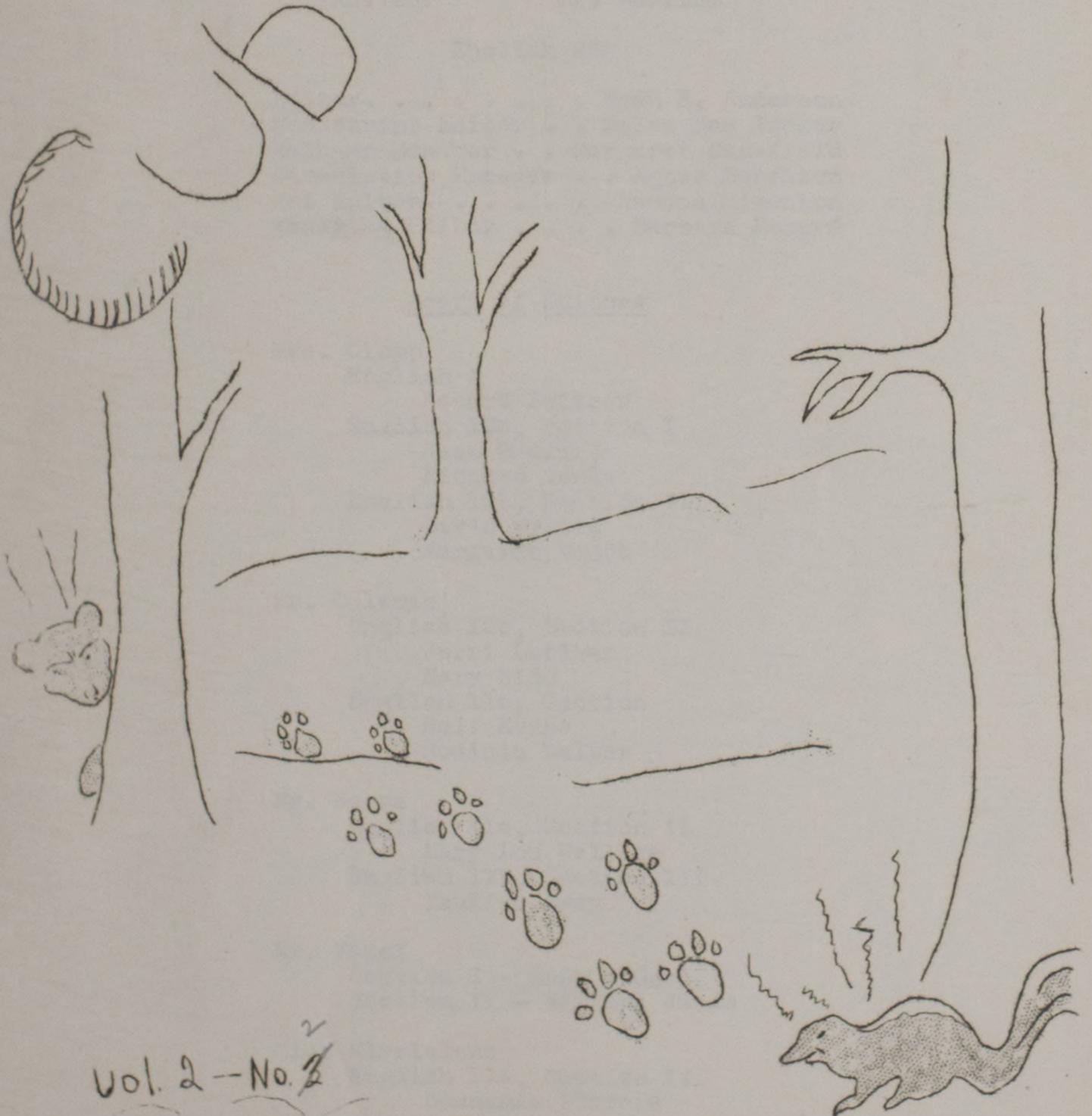
v. 2, no. 2

Wtr. 1945

cop. 2

Whitman

# Tracks



Vol. 2 - No. 2

CUB TRACKS

Freshman Literary Magazine

Advisor            Mr. Merriam

English 25b

Editor . . . . . Ruth E. Anderson  
Manuscript Editor . . Helen Mae Packer  
Make-up Manager . . Margaret Mansfield  
Circulation Manager . . Agnes Sorenson  
Art Editor . . . . . Ramona Simonton  
Managing Editor . . . . Barbara Menard

Board of Editors

Mrs. Clapp  
English A  
    Robert Switzer  
English 12a, Section I  
    Jean Bessire  
    Richard Bodle  
English 12b, Section III  
    David Martin  
    Margaret Mandt

Mr. Coleman  
English 12b, Section II  
    Jerri Latimer  
    Mary Kidd  
English 11a, Section  
    Rolf Evans  
    Rosinia Walter

Mr. Moore  
English 11a, Section II  
    Mary Lou Wallace  
English 11b, Section III  
    Pauline Bray

Mr. Youel  
Section I - Anna McGee  
Section IV - Barbara Janes

Miss Mirrielees  
English 11a, Section III  
    Donnamae Winters  
    Dale Ryan

## ARRIVAL

I think I shall always be glad to see Conrad. It isn't a large town. Neither is it particularly important. When you view it from a hilltop, you aren't reminded of one of those picturesque Christmas card scenes with a steepled church, quaint houses, and the like. No, it's just--well, it's just Conrad.

Whenever I'm returning home, as I did at Christmas, I always sit up and watch the country flashing by the window as we approach the town. I know just when to look for that first glimpse of it, lying in that enormous valley with farmland stretching out on every side.

This last vacation the ceremony was repeated. As the bus came over the edge of the hill, I sat up to look as I had a hundred times before. There lay the town, the same as ever. I could pick out the courthouse, the school houses, the elevators, and the railroad station. Coming closer, I was able to find the houses of some of my friends. Then when we got to the little truck gardener's farm, I could see my own house.

From that farm on into town, I kept my eyes fixed on my house. Pretty soon the courthouse got in the way, and I began looking for other familiar sights--the town cop strolling up Main Street; the little boys on their way to school. No Christmas decorations down town this year, I noticed. A new jewelry store with a still-bright gold sign on its window had moved into an old office building. There weren't many cars in sight, for it was still early in the morning, but the grocery store across the street from the bus depot was just opening. I could see the clerks taking the netting off the fruit and vegetable displays as we drove up to the station.

Just as I was going down the steps of the bus, my brother came clattering up in our little green Ford. He opened the door, unwound his long legs--so much longer, they seemed, than when I had last seen him--and climbed out. Grinning rather shyly, he came toward me and shook my hand before I had a chance to kiss him. (He's at the age which thinks that kissing his sister is slightly silly.) I was amazed at his astonishing new height and maturity. From the way he carried himself, I judged that he, too, was rather awed by it.

Gathering up my bags, he carried them to the car, and we drove down Main Street again. We turned up past the high school. How wonderful it looked! I think I shall never have any more enjoyable years than those I spent going to school there.

Just a block past the high school we turned down our street, and there was our house. It's not impressive, but it is home, and always will be. Somehow, whenever I think of home, it's never one of the other houses we've lived in, but always this one, the one with the yellow roof.

When we started up the walk, my dog, Gilmore, came bounding off the porch to meet us. At first I know he didn't recognize me, but then he started jumping all over me and wagging his tail madly as if to say, "I knew you all the time." When Mother opened the door for us, the dog slithered in before anyone could stop him. He knew he shouldn't be there, but since nobody seemed to mind, he just stood in front of the Christmas tree grinning at us and wagging his bushy tail, which knocked handfuls of icicles off the tree.

After picking the dog up bodily, putting him outside, and closing the door in his expectant face, I went to the kitchen where Mother, Daddy, and Grandma had been at breakfast before I came in. I sat down at the table and looked around. There were new curtains, and the walls and woodwork had been done over, but it was still our kitchen. It occurred to me that this was the first kitchen I had been in for three months. I think it was then that I realized that, at last, I was home for Christmas.

Constance Rachac, English 11a  
Section I

### THE MORAL IS?

Once upon a time, indeed it was a great many years ago, there was a little man whose name was Egglebert Pchustiocelebus. Everybody called him Uncle Bertlebus for short.

Uncle Bertlebus lived alone in the forest for many years entirely unmolested by the world's troubles and woes. He just roamed around at will talking to the bees and birds and the pretty little flowers. It was such a happy life, but it was too good to last.

One dark day a wicked and evil thing came to pass. The little King Bee and the pretty Wood Violet had a very serious disagreement about which way the wind blew every afternoon at four o'clock. Wood Violet said she was sure it came from the east and flew to the north. King Bee was just as certain that it came from the west and blew towards the south. No matter how much they argued neither would change his mind.

Uncle Bertlebus happened to pass by one day when they were squabbling, so they asked him to settle the argument. Never before had Uncle Bertlebus been confronted with such a problem. Of course, he was pretty sure that the wind came from the southeast and blew towards the south, but he didn't want to hurt the feelings of Wood Violet and King Bee. What should he say to them? He stood there a long, long, time trying to decide what his answer would be. Finally he came to a weighty decision. He told them that he would have to go out into the world to gain more knowledge on the subject before he could give them the information they sought.

All the flowers, trees, birds, and bees got together to give Uncle Bertlebus a farewell party. They ate and danced, and wept copiously, but finally sent him off to his quest with all their love and best wishes.

That is how Uncle Bertlebus happened to come to Montana State University. He arrived all dressed up in his new black suit and the orange bow tie that had been given to him as a farewell present by the inhabitants of the forest. His heart was filled with hope, and his mind eager to absorb all the gems of wisdom that dropped from the learned professors' lips. Uncle Bertlebus enrolled in as many classes as he possibly could. He took biology, zoology, astronomy, chemistry, social science, English, economics, Spanish, trigonometry, chorus, physiology, psychology, physical education, forestry, journalism, law, French, and every other thing he could find, but no matter how hard he studied or how much he learned he still couldn't find out which way the wind blew at four o'clock every afternoon in the forest.

Uncle Bertlebus stayed at the University for years and years. He became a very wise and learned man. He traveled about the country speaking about economic and political problems. In the eyes of the world he was more successful than Aristotle or Plato, but in the eyes of King Bee and Wood Violet and all their forest friends Uncle Bertlebus was a failure. He still couldn't answer the fateful question.

Uncle Bertlebus had become used to praise and admiration. He enjoyed his power and prestige greatly, but there came a day when he grew old and weary of the life he was leading. He longed to go back to the peace and quiet of his forest home. However, he knew that he couldn't face the forest people until he had found the answer to their great question. Uncle Bertlebus started meditating. He thought and thought until he was almost in a coma from thinking so much. Then he called in all the wise men of his acquaintance. They had a great conference; everyone offered suggestions and theories, but no one found an answer that pleased Uncle Bertlebus.

Following days of concentration and cogitation, Uncle Bertlebus became very ill. He lapsed into unconsciousness from which he could not be roused. All his friends and admirers gathered outside the sick-room to wait for any new development in his condition. On the ninth day the miracle happened.

Uncle Bertlebus leaped from his bed and ran out the door as though he had been a pebble in a sling-shot. There was a great light on his brow, and his eyes held a most peaceful expression. Not a word of explanation did he offer to account for this marvelous recovery.

He dressed in his good black suit and orange bow tie, now slightly worn, and took the first train back to the edge of the forest. When he had reached his home he went around to visit all his forest friends. He told them all to gather at the foot of the Biggest Pine Tree, and the great question would be answered.

The next afternoon all the birds, bees, flowers, trees, and little furry animals scurried to the meeting place. When everyone had arrived Uncle Bertlebus arose. An expectant hush fell over the crowd. Profound words were about to be spoken.

Uncle Bertlebus began his speech. He told them of his long unfruitful search for the answer to this great question, and how he had finally become ill from worry and fatigue.

"While I was lying there unconscious I had a vision," he said. "An angel came to me and said, 'Uncle Bertlebus, go to your people and tell them this; every afternoon at four o'clock the wind in the forest blows in what ever direction it damn pleases!'"

Once more the forest lies peaceful and undisturbed.  
Elizabeth Withrow, English 12a

#### A CHAPTER FROM MY LIFE

According to all the laws of averages, I was to have been a boy. This presumption relieved the family greatly. For father, quite a busy man as missionary for the Presbyterian church, kept constantly on the job with his church duties and field social service work and had little time left to enjoy bringing up his family. Mother had more than she could do keeping her eye on four individualistic young Bessires--three giggling girls and one wriggling boy. This was the situation.

So, when even the neighbors agreed that I was bound to be a boy, plans were made for me to be entrusted to my brother for my safe keeping and upbringing. Brother Bernard, three years old at the time, would be in complete charge of my early education, amusement, and safety--providing companionship for the both of us, and saving much wear and tear on mother. All in all an ideal situation.

But I didn't turn out that way. An eight-pound girl, blonde, blue eyed: mother and daughter doing nicely. For a while my misforecast sex quite startled family and friends; but plans proceeded whereby I was to be protected, humored, and supervised by brother Bud.

During my infancy Bud had little to do with shaping my character; I am sure, however, that during this period of random movements, cod-liver oil, and orange juice my life pattern was schemed out. But by the time I had reached the walking-talking phase, Bud was conscientiously undertaking the task of making a man out of me. The first plan of attack centered around a vigorous physical training program.

At the stage when most young ladies are decorating sand-piles, I found myself in the business of constructing and occupying tree-houses. This education covered not only the best and most scientific methods of building all types of tree-houses, but also the quickest ways of getting to and from the. The era came to an abrupt end the day I fell from our house in the highest elm and broke my arm.

Brother and all his robust friends greatly admired my fractured arm, but mother, for once, came to my rescue. For a while I was entitled to investigate the favorite pastimes of my contemporaries. Mud pie parties and neighborhood circuses stand out clearest in my memory, but soon I learned that these traditions were not mine in the customary doses.

A mud pie spree for me was not a scene of a bustling housewife fussing the morning over a hot stove, the mimicked pretence most children affect. Instead, under my brother's instructions, I was a big-game hunter and speared the prize goldfish from our backyard fishpond. Next, my aspirations to be the tight-rope walker in the gang's circus were dashed when Bud, with hopes of my being a daring animal trainer, had me train a troupe of caterpillars.

The cultivation of masculine tastes was always first and foremost. They were not only encouraged, but enforced. At times I would have liked to serve tea parties or dress dolls, and I envied girls taking piano lessons, wearing curls and ribbons. Instead, I flew kites, walked stilts, took bicycles apart, or made "demon" scooters from roller-skates.

I wasn't the tender nurse that first-aided the gang through its bloody "Custer's Last Stand" battles. I was the heap brave squaw who fought side by side with the warriors.

One of the vicious phases of my young career was that of rubber gun fights. Rubber guns are those ingeniously wicked weapons young boys master early in life to add spice and zip to their mock battles. In our battles, according to laws of what is fair in rubber gun war, anyone shot by the hand of an opposing gangster was dead for the duration of the game. Not being quite so agile at this life of crime as Bud's colleagues, in the first few minutes of fracas I inevitably was target for all rubber bands. The rest of the war I would spend prostrated on the ground.

Thus went my childhood: baseball and fishing, building rafts on the river, army tactics and secret clubs, hockey, jiu-jitsu, then football. It was at this point that I proved bruisable and feminine.

It was sudden, that turning of mine from the boisterous guidance of my brother to a delicately personal life of my own. Suddenly it happened; I remember it clearly.

One afternoon I had been reading one of my favorite books. I can not now remember the name of it, but it was a sad little story that had made me mildly sentimental. Probably I would have been crying if tears for me had not long ago been tabooed. Bud interrupted my reverie by demanding my presence at the football game outside. In my usual meekly worshipful manner, I followed him.

Football had always seemed a fearful work-out to me, but like all the other sports and games, I had thrown myself in and played my hardest. Yet suddenly, in the midst of the game's smashing hub-bub, I realized that I had no compelling part in it. I had no sense of belonging. There was not, now that I was able to care for myself, any reason for my dogged submission to the tom-boyish existence my brother coached me in. With clarity of purpose in that moment I knew I could break away from this rugged pattern. I did.

Perhaps it was the sudden impact of change, the break of patterns; maybe it was a hangover from the mood of the interrupted story, symbolic of all the personal sentiments I had missed, but I found myself in the center of the field torn with uncontrollable sobs of relief. The moment Bud saw the tears streaming down my face, he knew, I think, instinctively, that I was no longer his protege and side-kick, no more his to mold and bring up. He came to me and placed his hand on my shoulder and looked long and deeply into my eye.

The look recognized the passing of my hobble-de-hoy phase into a personality of my own choosing, but the look pleaded, too. And as I remember, I believe I realize what his eyes were pleading for. It was that he wanted me to keep the high code of straight forward boyish honor he had tried to give me during all the physical conditioning and masculine training. It is a code of ethics and fair play that is partly instinctive, partly earned by boys. A code seldom realized by outsiders--frankness, courtesy, straight thinking, good sportsmanship. All these idealistic qualities Bud had tried to thread through my pattern of upbringing.

It is by this code that men are proud to live, to shape a world. From you, Bernard, I have gleaned much of that code, I have gained much.

Jean Bessire, English 12a

### THE PRAIRIE

The air was dry and still this morning in the late spring. The sun was high in the clear, blue sky, and its warm rays beat down on the Dakota prairie. As I looked out over the rolling countryside, I thought of the herds of buffalo and the tribes of Indians who for hundreds of years had roved these prairies. The landscape now was undoubtedly different. In the distance I could see the land which some farmer had cultivated. The wide strips of newly-ploughed black earth were in sharp contrast to the rich green fields, the pride of the farmer who had toiled long hours in tilling and seeing the soil. Bordering these strips of green and black were the pasture lands, still green, covered with bunch grass, and dotted with cactus and colorful wild flowers.

The cattle looked like tiny black specks on the blue horizon. At a closer range, the cows were seen to be quietly grazing on the hillside. To protect themselves from the flies horses were bunched on top of a high knoll.

A flock of wild geese flew over, and I thought of planes --fighter planes and bombers. I tried to picture them firing guns and dropping bombs. The thought fled from my mind, for nothing could disturb this peaceful atmosphere.

Four months later I stood again looking out over the prairie. It was harvest time and, in my opinion, the most beautiful season of the year. The pastures were no longer a green carpet spread out over the rolling hills. The grass was brown and dry from the intense heat of the summer sun. A fat gopher poked his head up through a hole in the ground and looked sharply and quickly around, then darted out of his hole and over the hill.

The wheat fields were ripe and their golden heads swayed and rippled in the wind. A combine was moving slowly around the outer edge of the field and the golden heads fell, leaving only short brown stubble.

The clouds were fleecy and white and looked like froth or bubbles floating on blue water. They moved lazily and gently across the sky.

As the sun sank lower, a dog half-heartedly rounded up the cows and started them homeward. They nibbled the short, dry grass as they went. The combine in the wheat field was now silent. A breeze rippled the straight stalks. The western sky was one mass of bright colors: red, orange, yellow, blue, and purple. The predominating red bathed the pastures and fields in a rosy glow. Not even an artist could paint a more beautiful picture.

Soon night would fall and the plains would look black in the dim light of the moon. The Big Dipper and the North Star would stand out in a sky full of bright stars. There would be no sound except the howling of the coyotes.

Joyce Kilmer, 11a, Section IV

#### WAR WIDOW, 1945

When once again it is night and lamps are lit  
 Shedding a honey ray through gathering gloom,  
 I go alone and by the window sit  
 Where once you were beside me in this room.  
 I know you now are half an earth away,  
 Else why this cloak of loneliness I wear?  
 Else why each night so fervently I pray  
 That God will keep you in his love Out There?  
 We are but like the leaves from Autumn's tree  
 That the wild winds of war and senseless strife  
 Have whipped and lashed with reckless tyranny  
 Until we seem but broken shards of life.  
 Yet we, though torn apart this dreadful while,  
 We'll live again when calving Fate shall smile.

Ruth Anderson, 25a

## POLITICS IN A FARM COMMUNITY

When I was quite young, my parents operated a general store at the crossroads of a small farm community. Every year this little settlement was roused from its lethargy by the concerted efforts of local, county, or state politicians seeking votes. Though the methods of these gentlemen differed only slightly from year to year, I learned to look forward to each election with anticipation.

First came the posters on the telephone poles, fence-posts, or vacant buildings. I never knew how those posters got there, but on hot afternoons I would come plodding home from school, and there they were--nice, shiny, white placards to brighten up an otherwise drab and dusty world. If one had a stub of pencil in one's pocket one could occupy the time pleasantly, drawing curly black moustaches or beards, according to whim.

Not long after the advent of the nice white posters would come the politicians in person, dropping in at our store to chat pleasantly and to hand out seeds of bright little cards bearing photographs and a statement of the platform of the gentleman. Often more prominent dignitaries, state officials and the like, not deigning to appear in person, would send little buttons or cardboard pop-guns that delighted us young sprouts no end.

Sometimes on Saturday nights the members of one party would sponsor a free dance at the community hall. As this hall was right next to our store, we never missed a dance. The only string attached to these free dances was that all the candidates made speeches to which everyone was required to give polite attention.

At last came election day, and on it the whole community dutifully turned out to cast its votes. This was quite an occasion. Cars would come and go all day long to the hall. All day groups of farmers or farmers' wives would form for discussion of things in general. At last, as it neared suppertime the groups would disperse, wagons or cars would roll away, and the old hall would be deserted except for a handful of election judges busy counting votes. The counting would continue until late at night, and we children would be in bed as the judges departed.

The next morning we would rush over to the hall, tear down the last of the posters, collect all the loose ballots, and have a wonderful time; but in our hearts we would be sad that this glorious event had come and gone for another year.

Roger Barton, 11a, Section 1

## THE BATTLE OF WAR BONNET GORGE

The sand was golden yellow,  
 The sage a touch of green,  
 And on the blue horizon  
 The Sioux braves were seen.  
 "Halt!" yelled a blue clad captain.  
 He turned to Buffalo Bill,  
 "Is this War Bonnet Gorge?"  
 His voice broke through the still.  
 "Yes," said the frontiersman.  
 The captain white with fury,  
 "A court marshal," he bellowed,  
 "Will greet you in a hurry!"  
 "We'll 'tend to all that later,"  
 Said Bill to those who know,  
 "We've got to keep the Cheyenne  
 Separated from the Sioux."  
 He turned to the captain  
 And said, "I know these tribes.  
 They don't want treaties.  
 They won't accept your bribes!  
 They want to live in peace.  
 They're just like you and me.  
 Their skin may be crimson,  
 But they want liberty!  
 You've killed off their buffalo  
 And left them here to die.  
 They have no food or shelter,  
 And that's the reason why  
 They're joining with their brothers  
 To drive the whites away.  
 And for each slaughtered buffalo  
 All of us must pay."  
 "But," stammered the pale captain,  
 "We can't fight them all, ----  
 Our whole army isn't here."  
 "Then we'll have to stall!"

A silence then fell heavy  
 Between the red and white;  
 A young Indian chieftain  
 Rode into their sight.  
 The captain raised his rifle  
 And carefully aimed his gun,  
 "Wait," said Bill, "That's Yellow  
 Hand,  
 The child of the Rising Sun."  
 "Well what's the fool out there for?"  
 The captain glared at Bill.  
 "He's riding out to parley,  
 To try and stop this kill.

I'll ride out there and meet him  
 He's a friend of mine,  
 That will help us stall  
 And gain a little time."  
 So he rode to greet the Indian,  
 To greet him as a foe.  
 His heart was very heavy  
 With its burdening woe.  
 But all the men were waiting,  
 Depending on his skill  
 In holding off the Indians  
 From the soldiers on the hill.  
 He said to Yellow Hand,  
 Tears welling in his eyes,  
 "Today, we fight to kill, my  
 friend,  
 Beneath these peaceful skies."  
 The red boy looked into his hear  
 And grimly bowed his head.  
 "Our friendship must end here  
 and now;  
 We're enemies instead."  
 Then suddenly they began  
 To fight like enemies,  
 First hand to hand on horseback  
 Then down upon their knees.  
 They tumbled on the glistening  
 sand,  
 And rolled on crimson clay;  
 They stumbled on the desert dune  
 Fighting all the way.  
 Then Yellow Hand pulled out his ax  
 And furiously leaped at Bill;  
 His eyes were red with pain and  
 rage,  
 His heart willed to kill.  
 Bill grabbed the ax away from him  
 They tumbled in the stream;  
 They fought; the water splashing  
 Neither could be seen.  
 But soon the pool grew calm again  
 Solemn as a grave.  
 Bill came crawling out, all soaked  
 In blood of the Indian brave.  
 Then hell broke loose  
 And roared upon that plain.  
 The captain led his troops to  
 fight  
 And soon advantage gained.  
 The evening fell like mourning

About that bloody sight.  
 But soon the white man's campfire  
 Brightened up the night.  
 The captain watched the hero, Bill,  
 And heaved a worried sigh.  
 He didn't know just what to say  
 To this stern-faced guy.  
 Bill made his careful way  
 Across the heaped up dead;  
 And stopped beside an Indian girl,  
 Blood oozing from her head.  
 Bill picked her up and turned around

And said, "Her blood was blue.  
 She was the royal princess  
 Of the defeated Sioux."  
 The captain was too deaf to hear  
 Too dumb to understand.  
 He went to the heartbroken Bill  
 On his shoulder placed his hand  
 "A friend of yours, Bill?"  
 He wished to make amends.  
 Softly came the answer,  
 "They were all my friends."

Betty Grayce Nichols

### C. I. LIFE

They were inseparable then--Tiny, Major, and Double-Barrel--and now only one is left.

The three fellows were stationed at Buckley Field and my husband, Major, had an apartment in Denver. Tiny and Double-Barrel supplied the trio with the brawn and aggressiveness; Major, the intellect. There was no detail they couldn't evade, no top sergeant or C. O. they couldn't get around, no pass they couldn't wrangle, or no army duty they couldn't handle. As for me, I was putty in their hands. I spent most of my leisure time sewing on chevrons, straightening out their romantic affairs, broiling huge steaks, or bandaging cuts and caring for black-eyes.

When there was K. P. duty to be done, seldom was any of the boys a victim. These three always made it a point to know the right people and then they began their strategic campaigns. If they failed to charm their victim into submission, there was always the last resort--threats. Although the army is not supposed to be run in this manner, this, of course, always proved successful. On rare occasions when their wiles and ingenuity failed and they would receive K. P. duty, the resulting confusion was such that the mess sergeant let them leave and was thereafter instrumental in keeping them off Kitchen Police during his shift.

I shall never know how they managed to get passes--even when everyone was restricted to the post. When it was impossible for all of them to get passes, as it sometimes was, they invariably insisted that the Major have the one available pass since he had the greatest incentive for going to town--or at least I like to think that was it.

I hope I haven't given the impression that these fellows were absolutely irresponsible and not devoted to their army work. They were merely clever in avoiding army red-tape and the routine work that could be done by less clever men. Each was an expert in his field and was highly regarded by the men under him and by his superiors. Major and Tiny were experts with the machine gun, rifle, and pistol, and Double-Barrel knew and understood his job of armament thoroughly.

Like all veteran soldiers of the regular army, they had their ups and downs in rank. For that reason I believe that I am safe in saying that I have ripped off and sewed on more chevrons than any other woman outside of a tailoring or cleaning establishment. If Tiny or Double-Barrel decided that there was a girl in Cheyenne, Colorado Springs, or even Salt Lake City who should be honored by his presence, he would think nothing of the consequences of being away without leave; but he would stock up with a good supply of liquor and spend the week-end with the aforementioned girl. It was inevitable upon his return that he would be "busted," his head would be pounding, and he would swear sincerely that it would never happen again. However, these agonies would be forgotten when again an opportunity for a "binge" occurred.

More than once I have had to call Eileen or Rosie or Lillian to inform her that poor Double-Barrel or poor Tiny was kept on the post for the week-end by the big bad C. O. It was very embarrassing for me when one of the fellows ran into the girl down town. I have also had to offer a comforting shoulder and soothing words to jilted maidens who had loved and lost one of these G. I. wolves. At least with these fellows around, my life was never monotonous--I never knew what to expect.

Those steak dinners at the apartment are memorable--not only the quantity and quality of the food consumed, but also the discussion the boys would have. They invariably spent the rest of the evening telling army yarns and recalling amusing incidents. Our neighbors, I am sure, did not at all appreciate the laughter that would come from our apartment during these sessions. Major and Tiny would have interesting and amusing anecdotes to tell of their past army "hitches," and Double-Barrel contributed incidents of his induction and basic training.

So striking were their personalities, so daring were their deeds, and so impressive were their abilities that the trio has become a tradition of the fort; and many of the new rookies now listen wide-eyed to the somewhat enlarged-upon tales of the escapades of the three fellows.

Doris G. James, 11a, Section IV

THE ROOM

My Denver instructors had told me it was large, but my mind was not prepared for this. I didn't like the hugeness of this room and I didn't like the people. That is except Mary, a tall, straight, clean looking girl of twenty two, my first group leader. When the whistle blew, we new comers flocked together, glad the shift was over. I was young but very sure I was grown up. I soon hated the plant and all the people in that overgrown room. I hated the smoke, the glaring lights, the cement wall, the policemen, and the camouflage of chicken wire and dyed chicken feathers. Oh how I wanted to knock the top off that stuffy room and let all the smoke out. Then the rains came, pounding rains that made me hate California even more fiercely. By the end of three or four months I was one bundle of hate that came out in bitterness and cynicism.

It was then I began to know more and more of those one thousand people in the room. There was Archie, a merchant marine; Gabby, a small French woman; Woddy, a professor of Chicago; Loretta, a unicyclest; Lamberty, a carpenter; Andy, an Italian; Chris, a Filipino; Bellanger, a mother; and so on down the line. Old and young, men and women, all sizes, kinds and makes. I found each one had something new and different to teach me. As I learned to know them I began, little by little, to forget myself and the bitterness.

Always there to help me was Mary. Even though I moved from her group to another, I still turned to her for moral support and soon she became my best friend and teacher. Her husband was a marine and had been overseas for eighteen months so to her the plant was an escape. To Andy and Chris it was a sort of revenge. Chris came from Manila and his mother and two brothers were there when the Japanese took the city. Andy's family was in northern Italy, and he had not heard from them since he escaped in 1939. Every once in a while someone would say, "Ann has gone back to Texas. Jack was killed in action." or "Dan is missing." Everything would go on as usual, each with his own thoughts. A great human machine, each part taking strength and courage from the other. Ruth's two sons were in the parachute troops; their division was dropped behind the lines on "D" day. One is a prisoner of war and the other--

Suddenly I began to understand what the war meant. Not only a story I heard over the radio and watched on the maps but something bigger. Something I couldn't see or explain, only feel. Time after time I realized that my own life had been simple and easy, that I had nothing to be bitter or cynical about. I found myself liking and admiring these people I had hated. I fell to wondering what was behind

the front so many of them threw up in defense. People laughed--when their eyes said they didn't want to. I learned what a cure-all laughter is; it makes the weak stronger; tight nerves loosen; the impatient become more patient, cares and burdens lighten. So I learned to laugh (there is an art to laughing, you know) when I sometimes didn't want to. I was beginning to grow up.

How little I knew. How much I wanted to know. Now I was ready to go to school. I didn't like the huge room, but I no longer hated it. I knew I would miss the mad rush, the friends I'd made, and even the room. It was hard to say goodbye to Mary; I felt along sitting there in the train. A year ago I would have cried, but now I picked up a McCall's and read about a boy and girl very much in love. I had gone far toward growing up.

Donnamae Winters, 11a Section III

