

Hazel Ernst Haller Memoirs Biographical and Contents Notes

Hazel Ernst Haller was born on January 21, 1896 to Henry Morris and Minnie (Carpenter) Ernst at Atchison, Kansas. She was the youngest of six children; her siblings were Edna, Arthur, Morris, Fred and Ruth. Arthur and Morris were twins; Arthur died while Hazel still lived at home. Edna married Ralph Blackburn; they moved to Salt Lake City, Utah.

Hazel began her college career at Midland College in Atchison before transferring to the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas. After graduating from the University of Kansas, she landed a job as a reporter for a daily newspaper in Manhattan, Kansas. Then she moved to Wichita, Kansas where she was the club and feature editor for the *Wichita Eagle*. It was probably there that she met and married Paul A. (Pete) Lightner who was listed in the 1920 census in Wichita, Kansas as a newspaper reporter. On March 4, 1923, Paula Ruth (Polly) Lightner was born to Hazel and Paul Lightner in Wichita. Hazel and Paul divorced sometime during the later 1920s; Paul was listed as divorced in the 1930 census in Wichita, living with his parents and still working as a newspaper reporter.

Hazel moved to California and worked for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Later, she moved to Hillsdale, Michigan to work on the *Hillsdale Daily News* and there met her second husband, Frederick A. Haller. They were married in Atchison, Kansas on June 1, 1929. Their daughter, Phyllis, was born on February 1, 1933. One of Hazel's memories was taking the train to Wichita when Phyllis was about four to pick up Polly who had spent the summer in Wichita.

Hazel and Fred moved to Toledo before the 1930 census was taken. They were members of Collingwood Presbyterian Church where Hazel was active as a member of the Women's Association and the Eunice Circle and taught Sunday School. Fred served as an elder and trustee of the church and was a member of the Men's Brotherhood in the church. Hazel was also active in the American Association of University Women, 1896 Literary Society, Samagama and the Toledo Women's Educational Club.

Fred retired as Chief Clerk of the Toledo freight division of the New York Central Railroad. After retiring from the railroad, he worked for the Johnson Brothers Furniture Company, retiring from that job in 1960. He served as President of the Toledo Association of Grocers' and Manufacturers' Representatives and was also active in the West Toledo Compass Club.

Polly married William G. Underwood in Toledo on February 7, 1942. Later she moved to Wichita, Kansas. She had one daughter, Paulette, who married Bob Edmiston on October 3, 1966. Paulette and Bob had two sons, Ian and Paul Edmiston. Polly married Herbert Bruce on January 3, 1968. Phyllis married Parke Lamb in Toledo on June 30, 1956; she died on July 23, 2004.

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Fred Haller died on April 11, 1973 in Toledo, Ohio at the age of 83. Hazel lived until January 12, 1998 when she died at the age of 101. Both of them were buried at Oak Grove Cemetery in Hillsdale, Michigan.

Fred Haller, born March 21, 1890 in Illinois, was the son of John and Emma (Stanfield) Haller. Emma died in 1895, the same year Fred's sister, Emma, was born. Fred, Emma and their older sister, Lillian grew up in Hillsdale, Michigan with their maternal grandparents, Edmund and Hannah Stanfield. Lillian died in Hillsdale on January 3, 1981; Emma died there on January 20, 1989.

Hazel began writing stories of her memories of growing up in Atchison, Kansas in May 1976, using four notebooks, which form most of this collection. These memories describe people and places in Atchison. There is some repetition of stories with an occasional difference in the name of the person involved. There are descriptions of the city of Atchison and nearby locations. The Atchison notebooks mention a few events in her adult life.

A fifth notebook is a diary of special events in her life for the years 1965-1970. There are events in Toledo history mentioned in passing. For example, one of Hazel's birthday gifts in 1966 was a new telephone and memo book that she found "handy" because Toledo had just gone to all digit telephone numbers. She writes about the arrival in Toledo of a segment of the Poor People's March on Washington arriving in Toledo on Mother's Day, May 12, 1968 and the tornado of July 4, 1969.

The fifth notebook refers to activities with both of her daughters, especially with Phyllis and her husband, Parke, who also live in Toledo. Many of the holidays were celebrated with Phyllis and Parke as well as with Parke's sister, Marjorie and her husband, Lee Slayton.

This collection arrived in the Local History Department as an anonymous donation drooped off at a branch library.

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