

These men paid board and the surplus was marketed in that way. By the time they moved on the railroad was opened and the men who operated the trains were buying butter and eggs and fruit. The customers made regular engagements for what they wanted on regular days. My Mother had ~~to~~^{the} produce prepared in shape for them to carry with them, ready and waiting at the track side the hour the train was due. The train was stopped for the transaction and the customer returned the empty container in which his last purchase had been carried away. ~~P~~ It seems quaint now to think of men operating train's shopping along the countryside in that way. I have no idea how general was the practice, but I do know that our own relation to the railroad was so personal and intimate that we not only sold to the men considerable quantities of food products, but that we casually stepped out and ~~fl~~^ogged a passenger train and climbed aboard whenever we took trips away from home. ~~P~~ The conductors were all our friends and they readily accepted us, even when quite young children, from the hands of our parents and delivered us safely to our relatives in Houston or Galveston,, as instructed. When we returned home the train was stopped opposite our house for us to get off. Many of our friends and relatives enjoyed the same privilege when they came to visit us. It was particularly convenient when an arrival was made on a night train.

With comfortable, pleasant relations like this of course it didn't seem strange for the trains to stop for the regular customers to get their packages. Later on, however, as railroading became less informal as to wayside shopping and more uncertain as to time schedules it was found better for everybody for the packages to be left with the station operator at New Waverly.

From selling to individuals on the trains to making commission merchant connections in Houston and Galveston and shipping products by express was just a step easily taken.

Now be it known that all this business of selling various items in small quantities to individuals and later in larger quantities to commission salesmen was initiated and carried on by my Mother. My Father ran the farm. At first with negroes hired for wages after they were freed. Then with Polish families, money for whose passage to

America he advanced in company with other planters who acted through a steam ship company to bring a number of such families to Waverly. Each family settled on the farm of the man who paid their passage money. They were fine honest industrious people who paid back the money debt in work at once. I never heard of a one who defaulted on that. ^PEven after their debts were paid and they were free to go they stayed to work and save money to buy homes and land for themselves. And even yet they still maintain a certain tie with the descendants of the men who brought them from a life where they might tend geese for the over lord but could never own a goose themselves, to a country where they could not only own geese but cows and horses and finally land itself. Young men of these families leaving their parent roofs to marry and establish their own homes tend to go back to the farms where their ancestors started life in America. On Fisher Farms today there are tenants who are grandchildren of those first comers. Mostly they save money and buy farms themselves but they like to get their start on "the old place".

The sums of money which my Father achieved as a result of his farming operations went for taxes, general upkeep of the place and the ordinary expenses of feeding and clothing his family; together with needful expenditures of a civic nature and a bit to help out an old negro fallen upon hard times.

His generosity in this ^{part} particular was my Mother's despair and often she spoke short and sharp to him about it. It exasperated her to have him go into debt to buy things for the negroes because she was desperately afraid of debt for him. But he could not bear the sight of want if he could assuage it. When at the age of 79 he died of pneumonia, a tramp in the town was heard to say, "Cap'n Fisher dead! There went a good man. I didn't know him but he took me into a store and bought me these shoes I have on my feet because he saw my feet on the ground!"

Someone told my Mother about this and she said, "Yes, and his own shoes were worn thin when he did it. But he was always like that." The ^{she} sat long without another word, perhaps thinking back over the years and her rebellion at his generosity. Perhaps regretting that she had scolded him for the ^{thing} which she now realized was so much a part of his character that he couldn't help it.

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At any rate there early came to be two purses in the Fisher Family. My Father's which was replenished from the farming operations and emptied by rash transactions with credit merchants, and my Mother's which was filled by small sales, often very small, from the dairy, garden, orchard and poultry and emptied only for expenditures such as she deemed essential to a correct standard of living.

The expenses of sending us off to school were listed in my Mother's column. Special teaching in music and art went there also. And fresh paint, paper, a carpet, a piano, and the walnut furniture of the period for a proper "parlor" as soon as the first daughter was old enough ^{were} to feel the need of one ~~was~~ My Mother's ideas and she financed ~~this~~ expenditures.

This division of the family purse was never discussed. It just was. A great many things which mattered greatly to my mother were like that. She never talked about how much she loved her children; she only lived for our welfare to the complete exclusion of other aims in life. She never discussed religion; but after we were grown and able to be a little analytical we found that we had been profoundly influenced by her ~~religiously~~ in this field, through her loving ^{habit} to read the Bible aloud as a part of our education.