

The Diary of Carrie Spalding Ingalls (and sometimes Truman) 1886-1893

Truman and Carrie (Spalding) Ingalls
married November 24, 1885

Truman - 2nd of four children, 2nd of three surviving adult children; older brother Edgar lives across the road, younger sister lives in same house in care of parents (Ransom B. Ingalls & Adaline Losee) who share house.

Carrie - 4th child of six of Edgar Spalding & Hannah Hotaling; sister Theresa (Rissie) dies during these years; parents' homestead in Lambs Corners.

Truman & Carrie both write in same diary in 1886 & 1887; Carrie only thereafter. The diary often is a Christmas gift from Truman. Diaries change between a one, two or three entry a page book.

Wording of diary typed exactly as in diary, except for the abbreviation period for Trum. Less than a half dozen instances of no period exists in the diary. Other inaccuracies are typos or typist's inability to correctly read handwriting, hopefully only a few. Most obvious "errors" are in Carrie's words.

So, what is life like? First, the big brush strokes (based on an interpretation of the diary). First, the initial words of all entries deals with weather. Second, there is the man's world. Third, sometimes second, is the woman's world. And then, children have influence, especially in Carrie's world.

First, Trum's world.

Truman's life and work is based on making a living. Farming and being a teamster are his life. Day after day, season after season, year after year, farming chores makes up the overall picture. Activities include:

- plowing
- drilling
- rolling
- cutting
- mowing
- drawing in
- reaping
- pressing
- of hay, buckwheat, and rye.

Corn is the other major crop, needing plowing, drilling, lots of hoeing, cutting, husking, etc.

Apple and pear trees need planting, have the fruit picked up, put into barrels and shipped off, usu-

ally to Cocksackie.

Wood plays a major element. Trum and the men cut down wood, draw out logs, get slat lumber, etc., usually buzz saw the wood, split wood, stack wood, take logs to the mill, mark the logs, draw lumber from the mill, etc.

Trum does a lot of "choring around" - probably milking cows (although cows are seldom mentioned), taking care of horses and sheep, raising pigs, filling the ice house, burning brush piles, drawing stones, fixing fences, etc.

Trum becomes an active teamster in late 1887, buying out Attwater Dubois. Before that, he does mention going to Cocksackie a dozen times. After the buyout, he, and his partners (2-5 other men, varying from time to time), go to Cocksackie 40-60 days a year, sometimes with four teams at a time. Loading cars (RR) is mentioned occasionally. To find enough material to draw, Trum must go out to buy up material, or to draw for other farmers in the area. A Bedell from Cocksackie comes out to the farm a few times and appears to be a prime business contact. Many details about trips to Cocksackie are noted in the diary, especially departure and arrival times.

Next, Carrie's world.

Carrie's world is her house. Her primary chores are cleaning the rooms, sewing, coloring clothes, ironing, washing, patching, cooking, canning, taking up of carpets semiannually, baking, churning and noticing what the men do. She'll note people staying for tea.

Carrie has 2 1/2 years of "freedom" before the oldest child Warren is born, in which case the taking care of children is another dominant element of daily entries.

The weather world is omnipresent, affecting what outdoor chores can be done, what traveling conditions are like, how comfortable the house is, what danger property and life is in, etc. The vast majority of days fit patterns we experience, but sometimes nature forces us to notice. Examples of some of the extremes in this diary include:

- -8° 2/4/86
- 8" snow 11/13/86
- -10° 1/19/87
- 6" snow 4/18/87
- terrible roar up north 7/29/87
- cyclone in Rensselaerville & Chesterville 9/17/87
- view damage 9/18 & 20/87
- blizzard of 1888 3/11-13/88
- snow all day 4/10/88
- can't get through snow drifts 12/20/90
- pump froze - had to melt snow 1/28/92
- 99° 7/29/92

- lightning struck, burned Losee's outbuildings 7/29/92
- lightning struck Salomi Hartt's house 8/19/92
- heavy storm, Savannah cyclone 8/29/93

Church life:

Spiritual life is a major strand in their life. Church attendance is higher in their early years; Trum & Carrie typically attend church half the time, usually at Lambs Corners and Norton Hill, with Norton Hill being attended a little more often as time goes on.

Meanwhile, Father & Mother attend church at Greenville (Methodist) 80%-90% of the time.

Church entertainments, sociables and donations are mentioned 5-10 times a year. Changes of ministers are noted. Children's Day services (mid-June typically) are noted as the children are old enough. Trum helps draw children for the annual Sunday School picnic - to Shady Glen or to South Westerlo.

Other parts, or recurring events, of their life stand out.

Their living/**housing situation** is vital. Trum & Carrie live in his parents' house (Old Plank Rd), living in the east half of the house while the parents live in the west side. Both families are quite independent but obviously share many experiences. A younger sister Nellie lives with the parents. The effect of the parents' standing in the community can not be understated in the influence it has in the background effect of who Trum & Carrie often see or hear about.

Across the street lives Trum's brother Edgar, with whose family Trum & Carrie often visit, work with, etc. The single most visited place is Edgar's house. Later, both families' children play together frequently. Thus, Trum, his brother and father are in physical contact almost every day of the year.

Carrie's parents and siblings will often come to visit, often taking dinner and/or staying overnight. Carrie witnesses the death of her brother-in-law Orrin Stevens, the death of her sister Rissie, the frequent visits of brother George who seems to be teaching in Norton Hill, the rearing of Jerome's family, etc.

The Ingalls and Spaldings get together for holidays, cousins reunion, picnics, church, etc.

The amount of contact with neighbors is obvious. Trum will work with other neighbors. Someone seems to be stopping by everyday. Parties and teas occur a couple times a week.

Some of this contact is fostered by the use of hired help. Carrie always has someone to help her with house chores. Mrs. Powers and Julia Bishop are noted daily for the chores they do around the house. In fact, one must wonder if Carrie's situation is not

somewhat unusual in the amount of hired help she has. At the same time, Trum has a few hired men to work around the farm or to actually drive the teams to Cossackie. My estimate is that Trum drives to Cossackie about one quarter to one third of the time. Some of the hired men are there for a few weeks, a few for a year, and occasionally, one like Humph Tryon who is there a few years by diary's end.

The amount of people staying for dinner is staggering to the modern day reader. Someone other than family (or Julia or Mrs. Powers) stays for dinner (the noon meal) two-thirds of the time. Sometimes, it's family, visiting neighbors, a peddler, a tramp, friends, business associates, men working at the farm, etc. A few times, Carrie notes there are 15-20 people for dinner. More commonly, it's two or three extra. Maybe a quarter to a third of the time, someone is staying overnight who is not family or Julia. (This seems to decrease as children come along.)

Holidays are noted. New Year's Day, Easter, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving and Christmas are usually noted. The oyster dinner is likely to be noted on New Year's Day.

Attendance at the Cairo Fair (end of August, beginning of September), the Lambs Corners picnic, the Rensselaerville picnic, the Dormansville picnic, ball play at Norton Hill (especially before children) for Trum is noted.

The care of animals, especially horses, is noted. Many are named, and as Trum's teamster business gets busier, the trading of horses and the illnesses of horses is noted.

Illnesses and physical discomforts are mentioned frequently. The flu comes and goes, the colds are tolerated, a soreness is waited out, the Dr. is called a dozen times a year, etc. If a person appears about to die, family and friends will often sit up nights with the ill person. Obadiah & Ella King sit up with Grandpa before he dies. Rissie's illness meant many a long night for Carrie and Ma. Many an other illness in the community is written down.

The birth of the children especially stands out for the modern reader, mostly for its seeming lack of importance or detail. The only two clues before Warren's birth is a March entry about Carrie's growing and the call for Ma the day Warren is born. Carrie stays in bed for a couple weeks, finally sits up and goes down stairs a couple days later. This trend continues for the birth of Ransie in 1890, Carrie in 1891, and Stanley in 1892. In fact, Stanley is only mentioned by name twice the following year and is referred to as babykins a few times a few months after his birth. Warren, the first born, gets the lion's share of attention, Ransie considerably less, baby Carrie more as the first daughter, and Stanley gets less attention than the horses do in the diary. Collectively, the

four children take up much of Carrie's day - tending to, feeding, making clothes, taking care of hurts, trading with Edgar with his children, etc.

The circle of Trum and Carrie's travels is circumscribed by the conditions of the day. Horse is the only way to go locally. If it weren't for Trum's teamster business, a ten mile circle around the house would suffice for 99% of their life. Two occasions do deviate from this. In September 1889, Trum & Carrie go to the fair (State Fair?) in Albany for a two day trip. In October 1893, Trum & Carrie go to Chicago to the World's Fair.

Carrie, in her recording of her life, occasionally produces a nugget or phrasing that catches the eye. A few are produced below:

- busy as a bee 4/20/86
- Grandpa is quite smart 5/19/86
- lousy (used often)
- dark as a stack of black cats 9/19/86
- I am threatened with the blues 10/26/86
- I feel rather dumpish 11/23/86
- slicked up the house 1/15/87
- I have lounged some 4/25/87
- pardner & I 12/20/87
- didn't enjoys myself one bit 12/26/87
- I went to the barn an airing 2/22/88
- dont't feel as well as common 4/18/88
- I have done a great deal 4/23/88
- regulated my dish cupboard 4/27/88
- Miss Burnett somewhat riled; I felt blue 9/22/88
- I am plodding along 10/1/88
- Quite pleasant overhead but fearful underfoot 1/8/89
- I felt rather dull 2/2/89
- Trum took care of Warren at church & had a lively time of it 8/11/89
- first time to church a foot since married 9/22/89
- he gave me some medicine so I guess I will get along 1/11/90
- Warren taken sick tonight don't know whether it is LaGrippe or worms 1/17/90
- I have felt blue today for some cause & no reason as I know of either 3/90
- Mate & children came up 1/28/91
- work is so thick you can hardly see through it 11/30/91
- Julia & Mother up to their necks taking care of meat 12/3/91
- rained like suds all after noon 3/10/92
- we had a lively ride 6/12/92
- Humph has creek in back 9/26/92
- we were alone on the plantation 9/27/92
- Santa Clause brought the childrens presents in their stocking 12/24/92
- these are long days for me. but thankful things are as well with us as they are 12/11/92

Finally, for whatever reason, Carrie stops writing diary. Of course, with four children born, and five more to come, she might be busy. No reason is known for sure. Nineteen years pass before Carrie starts again in 1913, and that will be my next starting point.

Surnames of people frequently mentioned:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| • Ingalls | • Tucker |
| • Spalding | • Powers |
| • Losee | • Rundell |
| • Tryon | • Prevost |
| • Showers | • Griffin |
| • Verplank | • France(i)s |
| • Cameron | • Abrams |
| • Knowles | • Shears |
| • Bishop | • Utter |
| • Chesbro | • Palmer |
| • Gardiner | • Stanton |
| • Turner | • King |
| • Rivenburg | • Stevens |
| • Goff | • Delamater |
| • Hunt | • Utter |
| • Smith | • Sisson |
| • McCabe | • Barlow |
| | • Roe |
| | • Fish |

Carrie's diary is her own account of **vital records**. Death, sitting next to everyday chores, lies everywhere. Note is made of:

Births:

- boy to Eugene Spalding 8/6/86
- to Jerome's folks 6/10/90
- daughter to Van Rivenburg 9/23/91
- girl to Jerome's folks
- girl to Reuben & Alice Mabey
- boy at Edgar's 10/26/92

Marriages:

- Charlie Sanford & Fannie Gedney 10/20/86 with reception on 10/28
- Henry Lorenze & Luella Bryant 10/27/87
- Della Merrit ("I suppose") 12/12/88
- Frank Stevens 12/27/88
- Charles W. Freese & Nora Salsbury 6/25/89
- Anna Earl & Charles Calender 7/11/89
- Ed Rivenburg & Minnie (her sister) 12/5/89
- Will Palmer & Carrie Cowell 12/6/90
- Jennie Campbell & Mr. Miller 12/24/90 at Freehold
- Viola Ramsdell & Frank Hagadorn 12/31/90
- Ann Rundell & Elmer Hunt 1/26/91 - 80 guests

- George & Frank Miller 10/26/92 at Greenville parsonage
- Grover Bell & Eva Ingalls 11/24/92

Deaths:

(Names are arranged chronologically in the year)

1886

- Ransom Stannard
- Orrin Stevens
- Mrs. Knowles
- Amelia Nicholl
- Old Mrs. Hunt
- George Swartout
- Charles McCabe's baby

1887

- Uncle Stephen Thorn
- Theresa
- Grandpa
- Emeline Brown
- Luman Ramsdell
- Mrs. Burnett (minister's wife)
- Ezra Cleveland
- George Anson's baby
- Joe Cowen's baby

1888

- Aunt Harriet Lobdell
- Freddie Griffin - saw mill accident
- Rebecca Cheritree
- Old Mrs. Hartt
- Aunt Caroline
- Anson Purinton
- Franklyn Hartt
- Rosa Frost
- Old Mattie Powers
- Aunt Hattie Ramsdell
- Rev M. Burnett - typhoid
- Channing Haines

1889

- Kelsey's baby
- Horace Palmer - bur. @ Stevensville
- Gideon Carr
- Sailsbury
- Mrs. Smith Griffin
- Mrs. Hallenbeck (Smith Griffin's dau)
- Professor Ayres
- Mrs. George Palmer
- Mark Roe
- Aunt Polly Webster

1890

- Mrs. Betsey Knowles
- Old Mrs. Smith - from Prevost's

- Miss Baldwin - sis. of Mrs Widow Ramsdell
- Mrs. Layman
- Sam Palmer
- Adelbert Barlow
- Mr. Garrison
- Mrs. Hayses
- Mrs. Jacob Hunt
- Old Mrs. Winegard
- Mr. Schenker's little child
- Mrs. Ben Hisert
- Kittie Roe - typhoid fever
- Mr. Dodge - of Freehold, RI bearer
- Ely Bogordus' son - shot through heart
- Mrs. Delia Winans nee Townsend
- George Robbins
- Henry Knowles

1891

- Edsil Furry
- Libbie Searls' brother
- Victor Ruland
- Laura Francis
- Willis Whitford - inflam. of bowels
- Potter Cameron
- Effie Rivenburg
- Mrs. Israel DeWitt
- Mrs. Orrin Wood
- William Norton
- Vanderbilt's baby

1892

- Jared Reynolds
- Mrs. Mary Furry
- Gideon Palmer
- Thaddeus Ingalls
- George Barlow
- Sylvia Husted
- John L. Hailinger
- Mr. Bouton
- Uncle Williams - at King Hill

1893

- Gusta Coonley - apoplexy
- Rachael Miller
- Zeb Hunt's boy - dyptheria
- Felter girl - dyptheria
- Fred Irving
- Millie McCabe
- Justice Moore - of East Durham - RI bearer
- Joseph Cowell - dyptherial croup
- Matt Cameron's mother
- Mrs. Tremmel - TI bearer
- Mr. Hayes
- Egbert Palmers
- Old Mrs. Norton

Food

Food is mentioned at various points, often, as I suppose, to point out the specialness of the moment. As I understand it, a typical meal might be meat, potatoes, and a vegetable, to be followed by dessert - baked goods or a fruit. Foods that are mentioned in the diary are:

- oysters (often on holidays)
 - apples
 - beefe
 - chicken dinner
 - clams
 - sweet potatoes
 - plumbs
 - maple syrup
 - Indian pudding
 - custard pie
 - herring
 - shortcake
 - chicken pot pie
 - ice cream
 - green beans
 - raspberries
 - cherries
 - peas
 - currants
 - dried apple cake
 - oyster stew
 - chocolate cake
 - turkey - esp. Thanksgiving
 - celery
 - biscuits
 - honey
 - marble cake
 - hard sugar cakes
 - bread
 - spitzenberg apples
 - eggs
 - ginger cakes
 - pie
 - maple sugar & bread & milk
 - green apple pie
 - sweet corn
 - partridge broth
 - sausage
 - lard
 - fruit cake
 - cream taffy mince meat
 - lemon pie
 - white cake
 - onions
 - pork & beans
 - sweet corn
 - lamb
 - apple dumplings
 - walnut cake
 - cod fish
 - peaches
 - tomatoes
-

A Random Sampling of Events:

(Not dated; clumped together for an overall effect.

One should read the diary, or its transcription, for the authentic feel.)

- we played dominoes
- to church at Tarry Town
- trim bonnets
- peel apples for mince pies
- ice house filled
- to mill to get flour
- cut pine tops
- sleighbing
- cousin party
- Mrs. Mattie washing
- molasses cakes
- knit stockings
- visit on King Hill
- tea & walnuts
- shod horses
- to Town Meeting
- cow down
- hunt for eggs
- make sheep rack
- church at Lamb Town
- wagon upset near Prevost
- up for mail
- to the sociable
- clean oil clothes
- work on blue calico dress
- made riggin
- heavy thunder
- press hay
- got load of saw dust
- mend horse blanket
- took up kitchen carpet
- cleaned parlor
- tin pedler
- trim hats
- Easter sunrise service
- rinsed clothes
- dynamited rocks
- clean cellar
- plow for corn
- Quarterly meeting
- drew 11 loads manure
- oat straw to river
- walk to falls
- wash walls
- to milliner's shop in Greenville
- made chicken coop
- paint buggy
- dig burdock roots
- plant corn
- fill ditch
- pick strawberries
- shear sheep
- hoe corn
- saw dress make in Greenville
- dress fowl
- saw ball play
- 4th of July dinner
- scour milk pan covers
- reunion
- paint barn
- work on sateen dress
- temperance meeting
- Cairo Fair
- pick apples
- thresher at house
- Rensselaerville picnic
- long dry spell
- butcher pigs
- sow wheat
- finished cradling buck-wheat
- headache
- lecture in Norton Hill
- practice for concert
- cistern gave out
- husk corn
- filled straw beds
- stone bee
- sore eye
- jewelry peddler
- traid at store
- Trum broke lamp

- tinkering
- skinned sausage meat
- stuck in snow bank
- boys to river
- trade cutter for calf
- drew lumber to mill
- measles
- took down coal stove
- farewell sermon
- shingle barn
- 6" snow
- churned 10 lbs
- drilled oats
- fixed fence
- to lime kiln for lime
- cultivated gardens
- hunt crows
- hoe potatoes
- to LaSerte (blacksmith)
- finished cashmere basque
- made soap
- lost part of cream of churn
- tooth drawn
- mow meadow
- got me a hat
- cut fodder corn
- strawberry tea
- sole 24 sheep
- re-opening of Lambs Corner church
- wash window
- made pickles
- Trum's birthday 11/2
- varnished melodian
- Charlie Craw fixing windows
- Carrie's birthday 11/14
- trimmed hedge
- took care of tallow
- Norton Hill Christmas tree
- made brine for beef
- mules shod
- hang curtains
- dressed 18 fowls
- shovel snow banks
- work on satin dress
- scarlet fever
- Cowen's house burned down
- cheat at dominoes
- roads in terrible shape
- washed feathers
- sewed kitchen carpet
- many calls outside
- draged oat ground
- burn brush heap
- got fresh fish
- plant corn
- washed sheep
- teeth filled
- baby mouth sore
- put reaper together
- raspberrying
- leap year party at Shady Glen
- Warren is named July/88
- team ran away - injured on barbed wire
- picnic at LC 4000? people
- tipped over hay
- dress for Warren
- hard frost on Sept 7
- fixing horse power
- new buckwheat thrashing machine
- James G. Blaine speaks in Albany 10/30/88
- new buzz saw
- to Rundell's cider mill
- pork to Cairo county house
- crochet scarf
- mop agency stops by
- made 3 paper roses
- pack pedler
- Heran's barn burned
- 1st Ladies Home Journal
- NH church - 14 bpt, 17 new members
- Masonic Order funeral
- fine new colts Jim & Nell
- draw stones
- quilted a comfortable
- sow tomato & pansy seed
- used spring tooth harrows
- man went by on a bicycle
- cows got into oats
- reeled rags
- colored rags red, pink & black
- caught Budd boy stealing eggs
- 151 pear trees planted
- sack oats
- doctor Jim colt
- picked strawberries
- lawsuit 6/28/89
- Flora & Nell ran away - bruised, broke tongue
- Uncle Tom's Cabin show at Greenville
- reaping & binding
- drew ice to Greenville for festival & old folks concert
- got blackberries for pie

- took 12 lambs to East Durham
 - put up pears
 - old tramp call - gave him 2 cocks
 - Bedell from Coxsackie
 - to vendue
 - blasted a tree by Hallock
 - masons lathe pantry
 - Emma has sewing machine
 - turkey dinner & Christmas at Father's
 - folding table agent
 - load straw
 - book agency - Stanley's Travel in Africa
 - Addie & Bertha (Edgar's children) up
 - Father starts for Orange NJ
 - tin pedler
 - got log for hay press lever
 - missing a bag of oats & oil meal
 - to Forest mills
 - Trum's shoulder pained him
 - sow 7 acres oats
 - raised wood house
 - take care of pet chicken
 - Mary Palmer Amy - give pork
 - roll oats
 - filled 2 straw beds
 - bought Warren an express wagon
 - ripped summer dress
 - well chain broke - went to bottom
 - tree agent
 - tea party 12 ladies
 - 4th of July - ice cream, lemonade, watermelon, chicken pie
 - cradle oats
 - men to Coxsackie - fireman's parade
 - 11 cans black berries
 - headache
 - German pedler
 - 3 rigs to Lambs Corners picnic
 - 25 passengers to Coxsackie (rare passenger entry)
 - Dr to see Ransie's face
 - Trum & Carrie go to Coxsackie, see Bedell (rare trip for Carrie)
 - Uncle Tom's show in NH - local talent
 - butcher beefe
 - to Ireland to press hay
 - tooth out
 - 19 different callers
 - Trum to Philmont
 - Trum to Wright Street
 - 4 teams to Coxsackie
 - Truman Smith to Oregon
 - to Freehold for curtains
 - 4 teams in NH July 4 parade
 - can plumbs
 - Fletcher Smith moves to Amsterdam
 - horse sick with colic
 - needle pedler
 - Lambs Corners picnic takes in \$80
 - Addie & Bertha (nieces) up
 - 379 bu. oats
 - to Dean's cider mill
 - Trum sick - gave him a sweat
 - fed Carrie Mellins food
 - sleigh ride
 - donation at NH
 - press hay at G. Shaws
 - tip apple wagon by Prevosts corner
 - Pa fell off load
 - election - McCabe Supervisor
 - Christian Endeavor convention
 - traded mules for horse
 - pants for Warren
 - paint sink
 - rolled rye
 - ploughed 4 acres
 - Easter concert
 - to Grapeville for horse
 - lightning strikes Academy 5/4/92
 - new lumber wagon from Isaac Verplank
 - horses Frank & Kitt ran away
 - July 4 fireworks
 - visit Rissie's grave
 - to Central; Bridge (local?)
 - to Freehold for clothes for Trum
 - Trum doesn't come home overnight
 - impression for Mother's teeth
 - cleaned lamps
 - father goes to Amsterdam
 - quiet Christmas
 - Chet clipped Flora
 - blister on Carrie baby
 - coffee agent
 - two meats today
 - mend vest
 - 8 pies, 2 kinds of cake
 - new horse Bess
 - blizzard weather
 - Ransie has influenza
 - Edgar as juryman to Catskill
 - Colonel horse died
 - Delamater's horse stolen
 - washing of carpets
 - transplanted pansy plants
 - Henry O'Keefe lives at Prattsville
 - dress at Miss Alverson
 - swarm of bees
 - concert at Norton Hill
 - fix bridges by Greenville Center
 - Mother recruiting for house-keeping
 - draw in wheat
 - circus at Greenville
 - work on barn & foundation
 - Warren got fly in his ear
 - 2 teeth extracted - Carrie
 - Min sick with dysentery
 - can peaches
 - Chicago
-
- my notes
 - fat fool 1/31/86
 - Rissie 3/87
 - fix house 5&6/87
 - Minnie sick early Feb/88
 - Warren borne April 30/88
 - recipes 88
 - August 22 89 - busy week
 - State Fair 9/16/89
 - recipes 89
 - Ransie 3/22/90, name 3/28
 - fix road 6/10/90
 - busy week 11/4/11/10/90
 - baby girl 11/28/91