

Sperrys Learned You Don't Have To Buy Happiness

When Mrs. Posey Martz talks about her mother, Portia Howe Sperry, inner courage, inner warmth grows in the room as a living thing.

"She had an inner spirit or strength that sustained those around her children, to a total security," said Mrs. Martz of her mother.

"She was the product of an English father and an American mother and she adored her father. She told me once since she was not pretty or other things some held important, she had decided at least she could listen and be kind. She was the epitome of thoughtfulness and kindness."

"Nothing was going to daunt her. She had a positiveness that has effected my whole life. I remember her saying, 'When you're up against a brick wall and you can't go through it, climb over the top.'

"This has effected my life too — mother used to say, 'If there's something you can do about a problem, DO it. If not, accept it HAPPILY.'"

Mrs. Martz added, "This makes all of life a challenge."

Some philosophical bits from a magazine article Mrs. Sperry had published in 1934 in "Women's Home Companion" about the

family's continuing "adventure" give even more insight into what she was made of.

She wrote, "In the years when my husband had his own business, owned his own home, if anyone had told me that, with the needs of all six of us (seven with the dog) met by an income of \$75 a month, we should have found our real riches, I should have thought him stark crazy.

"But that's exactly what has happened and it has been the most thrilling adventure in living that I have ever known.

"The ingredients of the adventure have been a considerable amount of daring and faith, much hard work and some miracles . . . Perhaps miracles after all are made up of faith and works plus something totally unexpected that seems to be tossed in to crown and reward one's efforts."

In the article she said of one of their early Christmas times as a family together, "We were hilariously happy to be together again . . . And the spirit of Christmas was singing in each of our hearts."

Of the later events in their lives she wrote, "Up to this point our story is just like thousands of other (in the depression). But we faced around squarely and asked

ourselves what are we going to do about it. Patch things up and try to imitate the kind of life we had before or start all over, from scratch?

"I remembered a tiny village we had often passed . . . Somehow my imagination took me straight there, where we could live for far less than in any city. We could have a garden and put up vegetables and fruits for the winter.

"We could all work together in the garden and Ralph (her husband had been sick) would grow strong. Then by the fall he would be able to go after a job."

As her story progressed and they found their "two one room shacks" in Brown County, she continued, "At the foot of the hill we made our garden. One day when we were all working in it, Jim in overalls and no shirt, laid down his hoe and came and sat beside me where I was resting for a little. His face was happy beneath the streaks of dirt. 'We are proving it isn't true aren't we mother?' Proving what Jim? 'People say you have to have money to be happy; we haven't any money and we just couldn't be any happier,' could we?"

She went on in her adventure story, "What

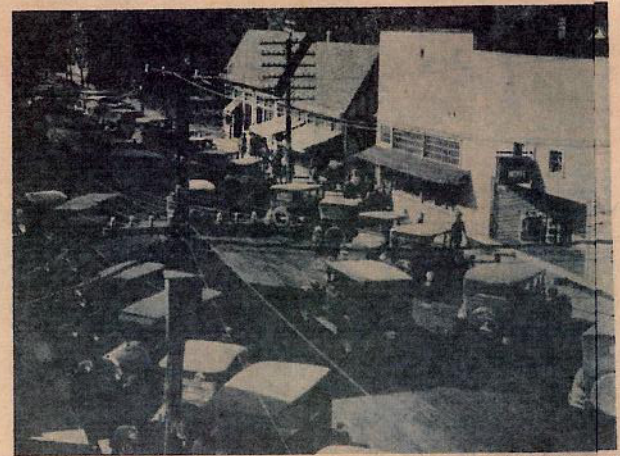
a blessing books were in those days. We always had a plentiful supply on hand from the tiny library which got them on order through the state library. How much more we appreciated them than when we were surrounded by them and all the other excitement of city life.

Mrs. Sperry wrote of her family, "People began to learn that we were not afraid of honest work."

Of the days after Portia Howe Sperry took over the gift shop she said of those in the community who were making items to stock the shop, "And now out of the mud found in Graw Bone Creek we are developing some very lovely pottery known as Brown County Pottery.

"We do not dream of great profits for we have discovered that happiness does not lie in that, but we hope to turn back the surplus to the benefit of the natives who are our neighbors and to whom it means so much."

She ended her writings for Woman's Companion by saying, "If anyone should ask us whether we would go back to the old way of living. I am sure we would one and all unanimously vote, NO."



NASHVILLE — Main Street, looking west from Miller's Drug Store at the center of town, reflected in the 1920's the beginning of what was to be destiny for Nashville. The tourists

began arriving. Though this was of old, the people have continued to arrive and arrive in greater numbers each passing year, especially at autumn time.