

Anna Boynton

By Carlyle Boynton and Gene Bavis

I recently saw a little book written by Rev. Carlyle Boynton, a native of Walworth. In the early part of the book he talks about some of his memories of growing up here including a section he calls "Our Munn." Following are some excerpts:

Now a more complete introduction of our next door neighbors, who were Frank and Anna Dumond. They had no children of their own, which left a big place in their hearts for the children of their neighbors. To us children he was "Ank" and she was "Munn." Munn and our mother were like sisters in their love. No uncle and aunt could love us children more than they did. How we loved to go over to Ank's and Munn's!

The winter my mother died, they had sold their house and it was a serious concern where they would go to live. Who first suggested it, I never knew. Perhaps it was the combination of circumstances that presented the suggestion. Ank and Munn must find another house in which to live. My father must find a "mother" for his family. They could move into our house; their furniture could be stored in our attic and Munn could be our foster mother. So it came to be. We could no longer have our very own mother. Munn would be the nearest to that as any other possible one. My father could better bear his sorrow with the comfort of having his home and family together. Frank died in 1927. Munn lived as our mother until her last sickness in the year of 1958, giving fifty years of her life to an orphaned neighbor family. "Greater love hath no man than this!"

When I was born in 1946, my parents (Ray & Etta Bristol-Bavis) lived on Main Street at the west end of Center Street, just south of Anna Boynton (Carlyle's "Munn"). Anna was a widow, and her sister Maggie Tellier lived with her until she passed away (probably in the early 50's). When I was only 2 or 3, I lost 3 out of my 4 grandparents within the span of about a year, and my mother's father lived in Michigan, so I essentially had no grandparents. Anna Boynton became my adopted "grandmother." I would go next door to visit her and she always gave me cookies. I guess she even adopted my mother as kind of a "daughter." When she passed away in 1958, I was named in her will along with her other grandchildren, and my mother also got some of her things, such as her china and a Roseville Donatello jardinière. I still have the jardinière, and my daughter now has the china. My parents bought the house, and in 1959 we moved next door. We lived there until we built the "new house" just north of town in 1963.