

THE AVERY MADISON RICE NARRATIVE

Covering the period from his birth in 1878 in Iowa to Circa 1929 in Aberdeen, WA

A TRANSCRIPTION

The original text, follows this transcription. It was authored and in the handwriting of A. M Rice, written circa 1960. 1960 is a 'citation needed date'. The narrative ends abruptly. I do not know why. Perhaps the termination occurred due to health, or later narrative existed but is missing. It is interesting that some of the text is written on used greeting cards.

A.M. Rice would have been 82 in 1960 and the penmanship in places and repetition of stories or contradictions suggest an elderly hand and perhaps declining memory. Someone previously made some page number changes and underlining of not clearly understood text.

I made some changes in spelling and grammar thought to be helpful to future readers, acknowledging at the same time that there may have been errors made by me in doing that. For any of those errors, I apologize and accept responsibility.

To future readers: Please feel free to accept the challenge of reading the original text as well as this transcription.

Doug Lundgren, grandson of Avery Madison and Pearl Ivy Rice, and son of Ada Pearl (Rice) Lundgren.

February 5, 2012

THE TRANSCRIPTION

In 1878 in the State of Iowa in Marion County there was born one male man, Avery Madison Rice, son of Wilber Fisk Rice and Mother Lovilia Adeline Rice. And brothers and sisters there were many. We moved to Jasper County, Iowa in 1883, a mining town and Dad worked at Draper Coal Mines and farming. Mr. Fisk was an engineer in mines and two brothers dug coal and hauled some with a team and wagon.

In this mining town were blue flannel Irish (?) on the side of a hill. The rest were mining shacks with the chimney on its end, including the shed and kitchen. They were in rows with just a walk between and no walk (to the shack?) with a dry goods box for a door step. The coal was taken out of the hill from the side. W F and family lived on the hill facing the mine. The home I remember very distinctly. Maggis (?)Murphy, my playmate, age four years, with both of us in dresses. I remember the attic in the old home. In the evening we had fried nuts for after supper snack . Dad Rice would take me and hoist me up to get nuts (from the trees). My, it was dark.

Other times I used to have; Once I was playing and a nigger (sic) lady went by the house with two Rat Terrier dogs. I was afraid of them I let out a yell and then they started to eat me up. I had a big Newfoundland dog. Dad hopped over the fence and then I was in trouble.

One time Dad said we are going to butcher a 325 pound hog. It was in the spring and we put the barrel in the stairway to the cellar. The boys and Dad killed the hog and got ready to put it in the barrel. We put the hot water in the barrel and heaved all together. In he went into the barrel, and out he came and in and out and then Dad took a look on the ground. The hot water went right through into the cellar through the barrel bung hole. Then the air was blue. Then he said, all right, get the sharp knives and we will skin that hog. Some job.

And in a high wind storm Dad got scared and headed us for the hole in the hill. The wind blew a flock of wild geese against the house and windows and the noise they made gave us a start. Thought the house was going on the way. Dad and the rest headed for the hole in the hill. At night, I got lost and ran off into a deep ditch in the coopers (?) water and they were all in the hole. I was in the ditch.

When dinner time came, Ma put dinner in the tin plates. That was my job; to take dinner to the mine. Dad ran the steam hoist so I hopped on the carriage and down now so I set down the plates and told the boys to come to the air shaft. Then up I went.

I remember the first school house. I could draw a picture. It had four large slippery elm trees with the bark all stripped off. The brothers used to go hunting and fishing. A dozen gray squirrels and a string of fish. Then Dad decided to move west. Once more we had a heavy gray team and wagon. We had a team of mules and a Canadian horse and buggy. Dad had a team of mules and the wagon, one cow, one razorback sow and started to Adair County, Iowa (about 60 miles west)

Mother and six boys and girls started for Adair County on the Rock Island Road. We landed at Adair County with plenty of snow. Jim Buckley met us at Adair in a bobsled and started for the farm eight miles south and then trouble started. New land, new neighbors, new chores and everything new. Me the man on the farm at seven years old. (1884-5)

Dad had a large blacksmith shop and everything that goes with it. I and my three sisters older than me did the farming so the times we had down on the farm.

Those mules! What a team. Sometimes Dad would hitch the mules on the riding plow and stake out the land, then give me the lines and whip. If I got within ten feet of the corner I was lucky. Along about seven (?)o'clock the mules started for the barn. All I could do was pull on the lines and that was where I learned to swear.

Dad bought a fancy ?? horse, and say, she could outrun everything in the county. Dad put her in a three horse team and she wouldn't work, just bucked (?). Dad hooked the mules on her neck and hauled her into the barnyard. That didn't do any good. She never would work but my how she could run. One Sunday Orpha and I had to water the horses and mules. I took three and she would take three. When we got down to the spring she would go back to the barn first. I would turn two mules loose and would have a horse race. I would ride on my knees and then I would get up on my feet and stand up. Well, I forget to watch and we got to the corner of the fence and when we made the turn off I went on my head. Orpha came back and we talked it over and decided not to tell anybody.

One week later we all went to brother Merrill's for dinner and I took sick. Dad came home with me and I didn't get up again for nine weeks. Then Mother took sick and then three older sisters; Ida, Nellie, Mary and Orpha, brother Arthur and Wallie. All but Dad.

Two of my sisters died at that time. (transcriber note: Records indicate Nellie, 18 died then - DOB, DOD unknown). Well, time goes on and I learned to walk the second time.

One morning at 6:30 my sister took me to the window, and what a time . Ten teams and wagons and men all ready to harvest the corn. By 7:30 in the evening, all the corn was in the crib real high.

Dad had a large shop with all the tools that go with it. That was where I put in my spare time. One day, I got hungry for some molasses. I spied a bottle on the shelf. I got a spoon when Mother wasn't looking. I got the bottle, went out back of the house and I got the cork out. And then I waited and out it came and my mouth was just watering and then that spoon was full. It was ? varnish! Say, some sick boy. Mother got the spoon back.

Well, I had to go to school and sister Orpha and I went early Monday morning. We got there with frozen hands and feet. There we stood on the door step bawling our eyes out.

One time a one horse buggy drove up to the shop. Can you put shoes on this mare(?), the owner asked. Dad said I can shoe any of them and that got hair on?? Well, it's a long story. They tore up the shop and then out in the road they finely threw the horse and roped him/her (if a mare) tight and put the shoes on. No fooling. Try it sometime.

Some of the implements that we had to do our farming with were not so hot. Hand checking and marking the

ground for corn was one, and checking the ears by hand. Dad was driving the mules and Mother was checking the corn. Dad came in and said you get to walk home Mother. I can ride back. (She said) watch me and then she got on the planter seat. Dad held Jack and then he jumped and off they went, she catching her skirt on the harness hook and down through the field with Dad trying to stop Jack. That was the first and last time Ma tried that. The old harvester the same.

All harvest was by hand. Then Dad bought a new Harvester Champ(?). Then Dad did all of the neighbors the same. Oh, the times from then on to the times I had to leave them were the happiest memory to me.

From then we went west just two miles and built a home, a house and barn and all that makes life complete, and settled down to enjoy life - sweet. Lost one sister there as my oldest sister was married to Willard Morgan. (Ida in 1889)

They leased *1/2 section (320 acres) of land from (?) Kirk and I had the privilege of working there in my spare time.*

The times we had there . All kinds of stock. One Halloween night we put the black bull up in the hay mow on one side and on the other side we put one team of mules, 2060 pounds with harnesses on.

Can't remember just where we went from there. Then they built an M E Church. (Methodist Episcopal Church) The Crawfords, Hadlys, Guber Knight, Kennedy Newport, Anderson and many others. One party, Jane Elliott sang (?). All old timers.

I went to school at Lone (?Store) one mile west. Don't think we didn't enjoy ourselves spelling (?) and literary ball games. (?) We all had riding horses or mules but very few buggies. There were dances, old time oxen sale selling out farm stock always in February to March. The times we had foot races, ball games and wrestling matches, boxing, free lunch coffee and (?) buns and more coffee made in a 40 gal. pot over a fire. October 12, 1895 on my 17th birthday had some time. Got a large trunk. I have the same one today. A surprise, but I (?)them to... I went out and got my girl and came in as one of the many. (?)

The farming and Dad's shop went on very well. Everybody seemed to be busy. Along came a tramp. I and my brother were out on the ground rolling. I bet what the next object would be coming over the hill. It was, it dropped down in the draw and then came up over the top. Well, here came a Jewish Peddler with a tick (?pack) on his back. Everybody stopped when he went by, as did Ruben Sanders. (The wares) He had laces, diaper pins, and more laces and steel pins. He left the next morning. In one year back he came with a new pack.

Then things went Democratic. Cleveland came in (again-1892) and things began to pop.

A man dropped in one evening and he stopped. He knew it all. Fed his horse and stayed all night, and had two meals. Dad and he talked over things about the farm in general and he asked Dad if he had done all the work. He did thank Dad and left. In two months they cut Dad's U. S. Pension to \$4.00 per month. (transcriber note: Civil War veteran pensions - some based on disability in the war or after- and 'adjusted' in subsequent years)

The next summer or fall I got up to do my chores and I had a big Newfoundland dog. I called him out of the straw. I had go get him and bring him out. Out came a man with a gun. He said, call him off. It was a Marshall with "attachment" papers closing up the farm.

They left us a team of mules, a team of horses and one blind horse. When they came for the stock Dad said you go and see all about them. Well, they got the stock in line, trying to catch them but one mule was wise. It had learned tricks. Three of four times they thought they had it but with mouth open and just stomping at them he would come at them and then us boys would laugh at them. Then one more time they tried but that mule made it plenty hot so the Sheriff says boys, I give you that mule and blind horse.

Then I got busy, hauling grain to town that was in the cribs. Then we moved to Atlantic, Iowa. Dad and brother took a trip to(?) Moira? (Kansas City area?) looking for a place to settle. Left me to look after the family. No

work.

I went on the Rock Island Road (railroad?) but they had old ties for wood and did a lot of burning. Did a lot of bumming around gathering hazel nuts and black walnuts, shucked sweet corn in the cannery, and raised a garden so kept the wolf from the door.

Well, the men finally came home. Then we started to move to a small town seven miles east, Wiota, Iowa on the Rock Island Road. Dad put in a shop repairing machinery and shoeing horses. Then I had a job helping in the shop.

Well, I was kept busy, and then along came my old friend Rube Sanders, the peddler, with a one horse wagon with his laces, diaper pins, iron pins and steel pins.

The next year he came with a new wagon and team and more pins. The next year he came again with a spanking new wagon and team with chickens in a crate. Buying for the Omaha fair (?), then we built a large coop close by the shop and put in 500 chickens into the coop upstairs. He said us boys made it very interesting for him.

In the shop, I learned many things. Working one day in the shop we had one of those Iowa storms; thunder, lightning, rain and wind. Dad was shoeing a horse and I was at the forge when she came a ball of fire down the stack and all the tongs were dancing around the forge. I was knocked out and Dad had his time with the horses.

Lightning struck a black walnut tree about 30" in diameter and 80' tall from top to bottom. It was split like a broom. We found a new view.

I hauled corn on the (?) roads. The wagon broke all the spokes out of a wheel. Dad says that is your job. Fix up those wheels and do a good job. You be sure you are right with all the spokes and hubs (?). I had two other sets for wagons. I got ready to set them. When I got the tires all on and cooled off, what do you think; the dish in the wheel was in, instead of out. Then you heard Dad take them off and turn them over.

Two covered wagons stopped in one day and wanted sleeves (?) set on two teams and Dad was the man that could do it. When he got done, the man said "I got no money". They had a new picture Bible, How will this do? he said. Dad says, "all right, and 32' (of?).

The wagons drove north two miles and a storm came up. They stopped at hog shed (?) by a tree. Lightning struck them, killed a man and two horses. Dad was shoeing a team of mules in a closed barn and the loft dropped. Those mules were bad one. Dad got ready to nail shoes on and Dad took a summersault over their back and landed on his feet with hoof rasps 18" long. Only two licks were struck but the mules never moved a muscle from then on. Mr. Close (the customer?) asked if Dad would like to shoe his big team of Morgans. Dad said bring them down. The next day he brought them to the shop all ready to fit. Dad handed Close two bits and said you go up town while I put the shoes on. Dad did not tell about the first one. He went flying but landed on his feet with an 18" rasp. He got one lick with that rasp, and all was quiet. Dad told close they never moved a muscle. Ha, ha.

In my spare time I went over to the (grain) elevator and worked loading cars with grain. I made some money and saved it. A salesman came along and I bit. I bought three (a pattern/or yardage/?) new for the buggy. I never sold one set so learning right along. Oh well, I had some fun going along.

We used two teams of horses on each bobsled with straw and robes in the box. (We) trussed them up with four cupfuls in each sled (?cupfuls of? Four sleds ? All loaded on a four mile square one mile through town. All had teams with bells on a double string. It was a relay (race). Make the trip the quickest and change teams - twice around. I said we should keep "the old lady" (horse I hope) tid up during the night. My team, Buck and Merrill's Team, B. B. teams, large teams_?, all good teams. The best. You never had a time like that. Plenty of snow and good road, but take you_? along.

Well, in 1900 Dad passed away and then the shop was mine to run. Art, brother, wouldn't go in with me. He went to the other shop so I went farming. 18.00 pm(?) And in the winter I dug coal and I tried the railroad; Rock Island for

nine months until (?) it froze up so I took Art and headed for the coal mine. Three months there and then back on the farm.

Then I got married. 1902 - 25. PM? (married 1/29/1902 according to records) And then more work. 240.00 (dollars earned?). And plenty of stock and only one man to run it.

The boss and ten other men went to Seattle to buy timber claims. They were told to look at the timber and be sure and get everything but hemlock. So they got located all right. They went home and in six months, made their second filing. They found out they all had hemlock claims. They all sold out to an agent in Omaha, Neb., while I looked after the farm and stock.

I had 30 sows, had pig(?) in a week out in the hazel brush. 800? And then it rained and blew. Got all of them except three sows. I finally found one in the southeast corner so I took a basket down there. While the sows were feeding I just got them pigs in the basket when that old sow hit me in the back and over the fence I went. I found the other two sows right in front of my house in the hazel brush. The same (west?) with 22 pigs all warm and nice. The pigs were spotted with black and white and part red snouts. I put them all in the big shed by the barn. 300 (?) And say, you would look a long time to ever see the like again. If I could tell you all the times I had on that farm you wouldn't believe it.

I had a mule team on the spot, laid out the lines down them. They would run, so I took them into the corn field. I'll fix you! At 11 o'clock I had those mules stuck with the load of corn. 42 B (bushels?) A bushel of corn on the ear weighs 70 pounds. Weight in wagon = 2940 pounds). I had to get the heavy team to get them out.

(transcriber note: Some repetition of early times follows but transcription was done according to sequence of 'original' text).

From there we hit the road again on west. We landed at Atlantic, Iowa, Cass County and nothing to do. Dad and older brother left for Missouri. (?) I raised a garden, cut hay on Rail Road for the stock and did a lot of bumming around - gathering black walnuts, hazel nuts and hickory(?).

Dad returned and then we went east 8 miles to Wiota. Put in a general repair shop in a very rich farming area. Then I had work so I helped in the shop and worked in the grain elevator.

And who should come along but Rube Sanders the peddler with that straw hat(?) and more laces and pins. Then the next year here he came again with a one horse buggy and more pins. The next year he came with a fancy team and a huskier(?) wagon, and more pins. Then he (I think he meant the peddler) bought some land in back of the shop and built a large chicken coop and started buying chickens to ship to the World's Fair. (Trans Mississippi Exposition, No. Omaha, 1898?) More chickens. He had 300 chickens in the coop and he lived upstairs in the coop. We boys had fun. We would top up the stack with hay and smoke him out chickens and all.

Then I lost my dad and I quit the shop. I went on the Rock Island Road Bridge, and worked from Atlantic to De Moines, Iowa. I was offered a second head job and worked until Thanksgiving and then went home to Mother. From there I went south to ? Line and worked in coal mines that winter.

In 1902 I got married and went on the farm. I had 240.00 (\$?) and no boss. He was running for office. I lived across the road from where I worked. One Sunday away from home I got a call to come quick to the barn. I found 43 head of hogs on the war path. Had beaten (?) up part of the black hogs in the pen so we finished killing them and skinned the hides and we had fresh meat.

Lo and behold, I had another team of mules to work. I drove them to town one Saturday. Driving them up on the about 5:30 o'clock. A lady said take a look back west and the 65 miles west toward Omaha and Council Bluffs a cloud, a cyclone (hurricane) doing things in Council Bluffs. You see it, and then hear it. When I got into town and asked the agent at the depot he said cyclone.

I put the mules in the barn at the shop and left one half of the door open. When I went (back?) to the barn in the

morning you should have seen the mess.

A man rode a western pony into the barn with the mules without knowing the mules were in there. They trampled my harness into the ground and laid both mules up.

In July, 1903, the owner of the farm left for Seattle with 12 other men from Cass County to take up lumber claims. (transcriber note: At this point, page 12 in red pencil, A.M. Rice essentially repeats the hemlock - undesirable timber then - story and a conflict is noted. Elsewhere A. M. Rice notes arriving in Aberdeen, WA in April, 1903)

I worked nine months at this farm and then moved back to town, rented a house for my family and started looking for work.

I went to see my friend, a Mr. Richardson, running a little shop with his wife. I asked if he had a job. I had an offer of \$18.00 per month on the farm. No good, Richardson said. Come with me to Aberdeen, Wash. I asked when he was going. He said next Thursday. I said I'll be ready to go with you.

I met a man on the street that had just moved. I sold them my (?). We started to Omaha. They wanted to ship us to Cosmopolis, Wash. For \$25.00. We went to Aberdeen, Wash., landed April 7, 1903. I left my family at the Sargent Hotel with a sick wife and baby. They gave me the front room and the oldest daughter took care of my wife and Monday morning I went to work at the West and Slade Mill. I was in line. Plenty of hard work.

I tried all the jobs; grading, marking, sorting, carriage and main dock. All the jobs except sawyer and trimmer. I didn't belong on the dock. I was green and the carriage crew had some fun, stealing my swamp hook and the sawyer would give me a few names. So I said old timer, don't call me names or I run over you. So the next time he did I rolled my log 10' too far ahead. Then I waited until (the saw) got part way through the log. I yelled, "Now, old timer, now I get you. So away went logs rolling. And that sawyer dropped his lever, went over the arbor, hit the iron rails and never stopped until he got to the office. I got another job.

Then I changed over to mill #2. All band saws and cut up the fir logs into framing lumber. The best Wilson Mill burned down in 1904 and I sorted their logs into long lengths to build a new mill. Some of the work in the mill sorting ship timbers. Gathered the best log up to 80' long and cut into 18" x 18" so everything was 3 x 4 and wider. (transcriber note: The Aberdeen fire of October, 1903 destroyed about 140 buildings, mostly in the downtown and waterfront mill area.)

They were cut at the West and Slade mill. There were W & S boats. Made three masts for boats one day. In June, Slade big boat making a turn in the Wishkah River never stopped and rolled up 40 feet of dock at the mill.

I took a job at a black smith shop with Joe Cooper. He was one old bloody Englishman. He was hotter than all. He wouldn't talk for a week. He had the front finger cut off. When he wanted me to do something, he would wag that stub. We were called to the #2 Slade Mill to repair the bull chain. (used to haul logs into the mill.) The dock man was Greek and about 140 pounds. He was holding the dolly. (that the log would go on) I said, keep your head to one side or I might slip. Mud was everywhere and then bang, I slipped and hit him square in the puss and the Greek fell. I felt so bad from this that I moved to A M Lumber Company (Anderson Middleton) oiling the mill. My pal Frank Bene was millwright. I was right at home learning some, and from then on I had it all. (The responsibility?) Every three months a new boss, without a millwright and did all the work.

Then C H Merrott (?) and still I was the whole cheese, with work to do. Things happened every day, repairing and adding to the mill. Put in new filing room, new engine room and new 64" gang (saw), new trimmers, re-saw two. *400' of new line (?) shaft (?) and new log slip.*

In 1913 Merrill left and went to Philippine Islands.

In 1917 Merrill returned to the mill from the island and took over for three months with Cobine (?) Brothers (?) and George Berns. He then took a trip to redwood mill in Californian to wreck it and store the Corliss (steam) engine. Again I took over and had the best of luck. Got the mill going cutting 80,000 (board feet) in 8 hours. I kept the job. If

you think I didn't have a snap you miss a guess.

Then Merrill returned from California and took over for three months and they were gone. (?) put in a new band saw mill double cut, and helped build the log slip 4 times and times we had put in a new deck, three times a new pony carriage, twice repaired the head rig carriage and the track three times. Also wrecked (?)the main deck once. They stored all the long logs with big butts school (?) (?) and twice (?) twin (?) logs on the north boom next to the depot (?) The one that wrecked the deck was *40' long, a twin (?) 14' in diameter log (The biggest log recorded to have gone through Anderson Middleton about this time is estimated - by viewing photo of same - to be about ten/eleven feet in diameter.*

That log broke the bull chain two times and took two trusses over the deck, broke the canter(?) gears. Got the log of the deck and stopped and broke that. It went on the carriage and we had to chop a hole in the log to get (?) so we passed the saw, and then took the guide off also a part of the husk (framework holding saw) of the mill. The first slab of it broke the top wheel (of the band saw). Three spokes and then from there on the timber and cants (aka slabs) were falling. (Name?) was head sawyer and_ Welch was double cut saws(?). Started in the morning, worked all 8 hours sawing that log. That was only one of the man big logs we had. Some were blasted in the boom. ?

? Vic Hill was boss of the boom.

END OF TEXT

For help with sawmill names, dates and terminologies, I of used the Internet, but relied considerably on the book: by Edwin VanSyckle; They Tried to Cut it All, subtitled GRAYS HARBOR ...turbulent years of greed and greatness Craftsman Press, Seattle Published by Friends of the Aberdeen Public Library 1980

For historical Grays Harbor photos go to: www.jonesphotocollection.com