

Feb 1957

Morning View Kentucky

Hello Mr. McCarthy,

The recent possibility of the Ohio's freezing over sent me wandering far back through the long halls of memory; and I find I was away watching distant, warmer waters in the 30s, but have very sharp recollections of the 1918 freeze.

Some one wisely decided that school would be dismissed when word came down from upstream that the ice was breaking up and beginning to move. We were to take street cars to Newport where we could watch from the river bank under the careful eye of accompanying teachers.

However, word trickled down from class to class (one building was ample to house both grade and high school in those long ago days) that some of the "big kids" were not going to Newport, but were simply going to walk down to the river where it passed below our hills. They believed the ice would be running before the galloping little cars could complete the trip to Newport. Best of all, it was rumored that the masonry stem of the Covington pump house would be snapped right off by the driving ice, and the Newport pump house would be badly damaged. Our little gang decided the big kids knew best.

Upon release, wise in the ways of big kids, we grouped quickly and quietly, and set off for the river at our best speed. It would be impossible to accuse us of tagging along if we were leading the way. We were still amid the hilltops when they overtook us and grumbled at us. We explained, truthfully, that a man at the Newport pump house had told us the ice would punch holes in it and that we could come watch if we wished. Their efforts to turn us back were half-hearted; they didn't want to waste the time. Off they dashed, while we, like the straggling tail of a kite, panted after.

An abandoned road wound rockily down the last steep wooded hillside to the pump house, but that was too indirect. Shouting and leaping over obstacles, the big children poured down the rough little foot-path which plunged straight down the vicious slope. We were less noisy, lacking breath for unnecessary talk, and being very busy scrambling over fallen trees and other obstructions.

We arrived at the railroad which lies along the river just in time to see the others vanishing between the cars of a long freight standing on the track, each end of it very far away. We could not very well climb over the couplings between cars, so, with scarcely a pause, we were on hands and knees crawling across the track under a box car. It was frightening under there, and we provoked distant trainmen to clamor, but without incident we joined the others on the river bank.