

ELLEN FRAGA ASSESSOR

(This is a tiny biography or bird's eye view of your Life.)

It is January 11, 1922 on a snowy blizzard night that you saw your first light, in a drafty old house that had been built among hundreds of maple trees, near North Branch. It was the "John Simmons" Place. I heard your first cry around 11 p.m., then a little later again around 2 a.m. when mother called the midwife (who lived upstairs). Mother told her you were soaking wet, but in blood. Your cord had come untied because they had to work almost in darkness with only one oil lamp, and under the blankets because of severe cold, wind, and snow coming through all the cracks and holes in the old house. But you came through like the good trouper that you are.

Life went on for 3 or 4 more years in that house, then we moved from farm to farm for a few more years. Then we came to the "Hampshire Place" and you missed a year of school when you started helping Dad to milk the cows, do chores in the barn, cultivating the fields in the summers, and driving the wagon with a big team of horses. This brings to mind one day when the team ran away from you. How scared you must have been but, always brave and true, Dad helped and you got it all together again. Dad saw how strong you were, how good natured you were, never getting angry (you still don't), how you handled the team of horses, how you lifted those 10 gallon cans of milk into the cooler. So he loved to have you always helping him.

We also remember one time when Dad's cows got into "Gutchikowski's" cornfield and he was taking them to his barn until Dad paid him damages. Dad told you to head him off while he got Bob (the dog), but you stood. You told him, "you are not taking our cows" and you turned them around and he didn't take them and you got them headed back by the time the dog came.

As time went on you continued to work in the barn, in the fields you worked coming home from school, putting on Joe's or John's overalls and sometimes even Dad's. They knew it was too much for a young girl especially after that cow kicked you, knocking you into the cow pit (milk and all !!!) That was it for this skinny little girl with the big overalls, old straw hat, big work boots and all. Then the boys talked to Dad and told him they were old enough now to help and that they didn't

think you should be doing all this hard work by yourself, and so it was that you began to retire from all those chores in the barn and the fields. You still continued to work hard in the house as we all did, coming from a large family. But from then on, you had more time for yourself to finish school and go on about your life in the outside world. You came to the city to work and met your wonderful husband Ambrose. Then your beautiful marriage and having a lovely sweet gentle and loving daughter who can fill your life and your heart with all the love you need and deserve. For you are a most wonderful sister, mother, grandmother - generous, kind, thoughtful, faithful, and loving not only to your family and loved ones but to your friends and neighbors. That is a gift for God, dear Sister, that you apply to your life so wisely and so well.

From all of us who love you so much.
Written by your Sister Frances,
for your 60th Birthday on
January 11, 1982.