

L. A. MILLER DIARY OF 1920

(EXCERPTED BY FRED LINDLEY)



NOTES TO READER: Mr. L. A. Miller wrote an entry in his journal for every day of the year. The dates/entries that appear below were selected and excerpted, because they reference Darrtown people, places, and events and/or portray life as it occurred during this particular year. The clarifying comments that appear in the right margin are provided on the assumption that some of Mr. Miller's terms and/or references may lose their meaning, with the passage of time. Most terms and/or references are clarified when they first appear in the collection of Mr. Miller's diaries and not addressed thereafter. Consequently, The L. A. Miller diaries are better understood, if one reads them in chronological order.

- A question mark within brackets [?] indicates that a word or phrase was illegible.
- Dots indicate that some text that preceded or followed the excerpt has been intentionally omitted.
- Content that appears in UPPER CASE font signifies commentary by the person who excerpted the diary.

If you can offer additional clarification, please contact the Darrtown.com webmaster.

Jan. 3: I attended stock meeting this PM. Old officers elected. Dinner for all members and their families, Sat. Feb. 7, at high noon.

NOTE: FOR THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF JANUARY, MR. MILLER REPORTED "ROUGH" WEATHER (COLD, SNOW, SLEET, AND ICY CONDITIONS) AND MENTIONED THE CHALLENGES OF KEEPING PHONE LINE REPAIR, UNDER SUCH CONDITIONS. SEVERAL TIMES, HE MENTIONED COMPLETING OFFICE/PAPER WORK.

Jan. 15: At home. Arnold went to H. Kramer's to do some electrical wiring. The K of P had a social this PM. Cafeteria lunch and dance cards upstairs. I came home at 11 PM.

Comment [FL1]: Perhaps this "upstairs" comment refers to the second floor of the K. of P. hall.

Jan. 17: The thermometer hovers around freezing and seldom gets above. The roads are very icy and have been since the middle of Dec. 1919.

Jan. 18: No zero weather as yet, but we seem to be on the dividing line between real winter and the unreal. Sleet and ice have been more frequent this winter of 1919 and 1920 than any that I have a record of for S.W. Ohio.

Jan. 20: ...I see by my Ocala, Florida paper that the temperature got as low as 24 degrees one AM; but generally is 45 to 75 (AM and PM).

Jan. 29: Slowly thawing. Trucks have been moving stock the last two days at a high rate.

Jan. 31: Arnold came home this PM, having been two weeks owing to ice - not able to get home. European conditions are very bad and death rate due to malnutrition

Comment [FL2]: A reference to the aftermath of World War I.

and actual starvation in many sections is, if accounts are true, something to appall the nation who can share food to these war-cursed nations.

Feb. 1: Getting ready to go on a strictly business trip South. Will join Ohio parties at Cincinnati and there take the 8:30 L & N for Atlanta, Ga.

Feb. 2: We had some difficulty this AM in getting off; but, finally got to Hamilton, Ohio and Cincinnati. Met our party, Mr. Frank B___ of Mt. Vernon, Ohio and others. Left on 8:30 PM – via L & N RR. The boys enjoyed themselves playing Solitaire. That is not Solitaire, as any number up to 8 can play. We arrived in Knoxville, Tennessee, sometime in the AM; probably around 6 o'clock.

Feb. 3: Knoxville, Tn – 6 AM. No change of cars. We are now in a steady rain that looks good to last all day. We arrived at Atlanta, at about 2 PM and met a goodly number of telephone men from all sections.

Feb. 4: (STILL IN ATLANTA)...we went out to see the ostrich farm. 90 odd birds, but not doing well. Climate too cold & need sandy country. Red mud spoils their plumage.

Feb. 5: ...Our party left at 8:30, stocked for Chattanooga, where we will lie on track until 7 AM tomorrow, getting in at 12 midnight or a little later.

Feb. 6: After breakfast, we all took in Chickamauga battlefield, where our boys fought, bled, and died. I stood on Snodgrass Hill, so renowned in history and saw the battle in my mind's eye...Mathias Henry of Darrown, Ohio, uncle of Mrs. Miller, was in Chickamauga fight.

Feb. 7: We left Chattanooga at 9:40 PM last night for Cincinnati and home. We ran into snow in central Kentucky and slop and mud in Cincinnati. We bade goodbye to the boys and landed in Hamilton and home by 5 PM, where we find plenty of ice yet.

NOTE: FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS, AMONG OTHER ROUTINE MATTERS, MR. MILLER DESCRIBES THE UNPLEASANTNESS OF THE WEATHER (COLD, ICY CONDITONS) AND REPORTS THE OCCASIONALLY HAULING OF STRAW, DOING PAPER WORK RELATED TO THE TELEPHONE COMPANY, AND CRITICIZES THE INFLUENCE/CONTROL OF BIG BUSINESS ON SMALLER BUSINESS OPERATIONS.

Feb. 20: ...Called for an hour on James Phenis. We had a game of Canfield Solitaire.

Feb. 22: A cold, raw day. A regular February day. Roads are bad. Congress is no better than the roads. The finance of the world is going bad. Look out for hard times, when they do come.

NOTE: FOR THE REMAINING DAYS OF FEBRUARY AND INTO THE MONTH OF MARCH, MR. MILLER LAMENTS ABOUT THE CONDITIONS OF THE WEATHER AND THE FINANCIAL WORLD.

Mar. 9: Bill was down today and got caught in a rattrap, but no harm done. He is just that age to be investigating every thing he sees. He spied the trap in the workshop, while my back was turned for a moment and he went after it and it got him. But, I released him in quick time. More scared, than hurt.

Comment [FL3]: From the Internet: The Louisville & Nashville Railroad started in 1850. During the Civil War, due to location, the L&N sometimes served both the North and South. At the end of the war (1865), the L&N expanded. By 1895, the L&N had tracks to St. Louis, Cincinnati, Birmingham, Mobile, Pensacola, and New Orleans. In 1982, the L and N RR merged into the Seaboard System Railroad.

Comment [FL4]: Presumably, "Mrs. Miller" is a reference to L. A. Miller's wife, Eva (Phillips) Miller. More genealogy study needed.

Comment [FL5]: From the Internet: Canfield is a solitaire card game named after the owner of a celebrated gaming house in the old-time resort town of Sarasota Springs, N.Y.

Comment [FL6]: Mr. Miller's continuing complaints about the weather are better understood, when we recognize that the homes in 1920 did not have central heating, home insulation was meager compared to today's products, and clothing was more susceptible to heat loss.

Comment [FL7]: "Bill" was L. A. Miller's grandson, the child of Ernie and Bell (Wilkie) Miller. Bill (William Moulton Miller) was born August 31, 1917, so he would have been about two and a half years old, when this incident occurred.

Mar. 16: A heavy rein fell last night & this PM. Not much doing, but few autos on the road. They get mired on both sides. School bus has been unable to bring children this week on account of roads.

Mar. 19: A cold rain all day. The ball team gave a Ball this PM at the K. of P. hall. The K. of P. donated the use of the Hall to them, except for fuel, lights, and janitor. I did not attend. The young folks did.

Mar. 23: I am getting ready to go to State Tel. Association tomorrow. I went to Hamilton and attended t some biz. Attended Good Road meeting at school house this PM. A committee, of 10-12, (is) to go to the County Commissioners tomorrow.

Mar. 24: ...I took 1:05 for Dayton and Columbus, where I arrived about 5 PM – having made good connections all the way through.

Mar. 27: I left this AM on 7:45 Big Four for home. Dropped off at Middletown, Ohio & took the traction car for Hamilton. ... I came to Collinsville & Arnold met me with auto on way home...

NOTE: DURING THE FIRST HALF OF APRIL, MR. MILLER WROTE ABOUT THE WEATHER (Late snow and one day of icicles on southern side of house), HIS DISAPPOINTMENT IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THE FINANCIAL WORLD IN GENERAL; AND HIS INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPING A POSITION PAPER/PETITION REGARDING THE INDEPENDENT TELEPHONE OPERATORS ASSOCIATION THAT HE PLANS TO FORWARD TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Apr. 23: A cold rain set in about 3 PM. The Darrtown High played Trenton High baseball in the rain. 8-7 favor of the home team (Darrtown).

Apr. 28: At K. of P. this evening. We are doing some work and have some cranks who want to initiate the whole county, Tom, Dick, and Harry. Fools are not dead or for that matter, never will be.

May 1: ...I had planned to go to the K. of P. Ball; but, I have all the Bawl I need at home. I get bawled out every day...

May 5: Weather is warming up very slowly. Farmers are plowing and hurrying up work. Quite a number of tractors in this neighborhood. I hear them humming on all sides...

May 13: Europe still in a troubled condition. Armies in the field fighting on border of Russian and Poland.

May 16: A baseball game here this PM between the home team and the Lindens of Hamilton. Score: 23-10, in favor of the home team.

May 23: ...the town went to Hamilton this PM to witness Baseball game between Darrtown & Lindens. Won, 6-5...

May 30: I attended a Baseball game at Darrtown Ball grounds this PM. Darrtown vs. West End of Hamilton, Ohio. 16 to 9, favor of Darrtown.

June 4: Arnold went to Oxford to help a Mr. Kumler do some wiring "electrical." I have either lost or misplaced my Klein pliers and it worries me.

Comment [FL8]: From the Internet: A **traction motor** is an **electric motor** used for propulsion of a vehicle, such as an **electric locomotive** or electric roadway vehicle. From stories told locally, by persons who lived during the 1920s , a traction car ran on the railroad tracks that ran through Collinsville.

June 6: A Baseball game this PM. Darrtown vs. the Foresters of Hamilton. Score 6 to 7, favor of Foresters. A close contested game. Darrtown had a man on 3rd and one at bat, with 2 outs. The batter fanned out.

June 12: ...Harding and Coolidge are the Republican nominees.

June 13: Baseball this PM. Darrtown vs. Oxford. 14-1. A close game up to the sixth or 7th inning, when Oxford began to slip badly.

June 14: I left this AM for Winona Lake, Indiana where U.S. Ind. Tel. Assoc. meets. We arrived via Richmond, Ind., Portland, Ind., and Fr. Wayne, Ind. At destination 6 PM ...

Comment [FL9]: Winona Lake, Indiana located northwest of Fr. Wayne, Indiana, is about 160 miles from Darrtown.

June 27: Arnold went to Brookville Baseball game; Darrtown team vs. Brookville. Score 10 to 4 favor of the Darrtown team..

July 4: I went to the ball game on Darrtown school ground. Shandon vs. Darrtown. Darrtown won. Score 8 to 7 favor of the home team.

July 5: I went to Homecoming at Somerville, Ohio. Ball game, Somerville vs. Darrtown. Score 10 to 8 favor of Somerville, Ohio.

July 8: Arnold took me to Collinsville, Ohio, with Dick. Early AM train to Cincinnati. Will leave for Columbus at 2 PM.

Comment [FL10]: "Dick" is one of Mr. Miller's horses; so, the Millers were still (in 1920) traveling by horse and buggy – even though they, and others, had access to automobiles. See similar "horse and buggy" comment in July 21 notation.

July 10: ... I found mother well and spry as a kitten. Aunt Ann, her sister, is with her.

July 18: ...Baseball game. Darrtown vs. Foresters. 7 to 8, in favor of Darrtown.

July 21: A hot day. In Hamilton, I got Revenue Cap. Stock report off. Home via Talawanda & Taylor school house. A hot ride with horse and buggy.

July 25: A hot game. Nalmets (? Sp?) vs. Darrtown. Score 10 to 3 favor of home team, as usual. Darrtown is laying them out.

Aug. 1: Ball game at Shandon. Score 6 to 7 favor of Shandon. Some of the boys dropped their dough.

NOTE: DURING THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF AUGUST, MR. MILLER OFTEN WROTE ABOUT THE LACK OF RAIN IN THE DARRTOWN AREA AND THE SAD CONDITIONS IN EUROPE (POLAND AND RUSSIA AT WAR).

Aug. 16: ... I went over to McGonigle's Station after my nephew, Raymond Phillips, who wants to come over before school commences. I took them some apples and plums. Mr. Alston went along with me for a ride.

Aug. 21: ...Jersey cow came in fresh...a bull calf. His voyage on this earth, I fear, will be rather short.

Aug. 22: A cool day throughout. A Baseball game this PM. Beelers of Hamilton vs. Darrtown Tigers. 1 to 7 favor of the Tigers.

Comment [FL11]: First time the name, Darrtown "Tigers," has appeared in any historical records available to this website.

Aug. 23: ...Poland has Russia on the go, for awhile, at least.

Aug. 25: Jersey & calf are doing fine.

Aug. 29: A fine Ball game this PM. Darrtown vs. Jacksonburg. 1 to 0 favor of Darrtown.

Sep. 2: Russia is having a hard time with enemies without and traitors within. Such is human progress. I believe she will come out from under the old tyranny.

Sep. 7: School opened today; pretty generally throughout the US. College generally opens later.

Sep. 9: At home doing usual stuff. Chickens are now ripe and we are plucking a few. I have a good crop of apples and plums, also pears and grapes.

Sep. 12: A fine day. A big Ball game this PM. Okeana vs. Darrtown. Score 17 to 1 favor of Darrtown. Okeana was out-classed. Auto travel is very heavy. How long will it continue? Not many months for the masses. Hard times are sure to come, with all this debt..national and local.

Sep. 13: Ball game is still discussed and a challenge to [the] winning Hamilton teams for the championship of the county.

Sep. 15: At home doing chores. Chores make up the sum of most people's existence: My chores consist of many things - keeping books; collecting telephone rent; working on the line; running trouble; protecting the company's interest, etc., etc.

Sep. 19: At home AM. Attended Baseball game this PM. Darrtown vs. Cocoa Cola's of Hamilton vs. Darrtown. Score 7 to 1 favor of Darrtown. Next Sunday, the Darrtown team plays Lindens of Hamilton.

Sep. 23: At home, not doing much, but chores. Ford has cut his Flivers. Sales have dropped off. Other makers are doing the same. Corn, oats, and all grains - but, wheat - are coming down.

Sep. 24: I went to Hamilton today with Geo. Kolb. I attended to some biz. Hamilton is a dead town, not as it was formerly 30 years ago.

Sep. 26: Very warm. At home as usual. Ball game this PM. Lindens of Hamilton vs. the Darrtown team. Score 5 to 2 favor of Darrtown. Almost a shutout for Lindens. Two tallies made in their ninth inning. 1200 people witnessed the game / 265 autos & 7 rigs drawn by horses on grounds beside. Some autos parked on public road.

NOTE: THROUGHOUT HIS DIARIES, MR. MILLER OFTEN WRITES OF NATIONAL POLITICS; IN THIS 1920 RECORD, HE MADE MANY ENTRIES RELATED TO THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN BETWEEN WARREN HARDING AND JAMES COX, FROM OHIO.

Oct. 1: ...James Cox for Pres of USA is looking much brighter, since the Autocracy that Harding represents has forced him to come out against the League of Nations.

Oct. 3: Baseball game today. Hoovens vs. Darrtown. 14 - 3. A bad blow-up for Darrtown, changed pitchers in the 8th, standing 3 to 3 & every thing went wrong.

Comment [FL12]: Presumably, this is a reference to Henry Ford (manufacturer of the first Ford automobiles) reducing the production of his cars ("flivers" is/was slang for the early American automobiles).

Oct. 5: At home picking apples. Butler Co. fair in full swing **this week** & large attendance predicted.

Comment [FL13]: "Back in the day," when county fairs were considered occasions to display agricultural produce, they were scheduled as Fall events – following the harvest season.

Oct. 10: Baseball. Lindens vs. Darrrtown. 10 -17. A clean up for Darrrtown. The Hoovens come next Sunday.

Oct. 13: Very dry & warm & dusty. Extra travel on Hamilton road, due to **Colerain pike** being closed. Working on some asphalt & Concrete.

Comment [FL14]: "Colerain pike" refers to St. Rt. 27 that runs between Oxford and Colerain, Ohio. The "Hamilton road" refers to St. Rt. 177, which runs past the former Miller residence (see site of Miller home at: People/Families/Miller, L. A.).

Oct. 17: Warm, dusty & dirty. Mr. Laughton and family visited with us today. We all attended the Ball game. Hoovens vs. Darrrtown. Score 0 to 1. Hod Eller pitched for Darrrtown – Root for the Hoovens. The teams were very evenly matched. **3,000 people witnessed the game, over 2,200 pd. admissions, children free.** 0 – 1 favor of Darrrtown.

Comment [FL15]: Information and an image of this Oct. 17, 1920 game is reported at: Events/Miscellaneous/Sports.

Oct. 21: ...a flock of wild geese flew over this PM, at about 10 o'clock. This is a good indication of a cold wave, very soon.

Oct. 24: The Big Game came off this PM. 3,000 people on the grounds. Hod Eller hurt & and could not come. **Alston** hurt in corn binder. Sheard shoulder broken in first Ball game. The new men proved a fizzle & Darrrtown lost the Championship. Score 12 to 2 favor of the Hoovens. A walk-away, caused by three accidents. Putting out three of our main players. The substitutes were no good at all at all.

Comment [FL16]: This was, most likely, Stanley "Doc" Alston.

Oct. 26: ... C.W. McSherry and I went to Eaton, Ohio to attend the Tri-Co. Tel. Assn. A good meeting...

Oct. 29: At home AM, until 10 o'clock. I then hitched Dick to buggy and went over to McGonigle Sta. to get Mary Phillips. I visited the asphalt plant & looked over the new roadwork. Some machinery to do modern roadwork. They will soon have completed a 16 ft. road from Oxford, O. to Millville. Concrete, and topped with asphalt. Road is **too narrow**. Autos will be ditched every day. \$65,00 per mile is too much. More than it cost to build & equip the U.S. Railroads up to 1915.

Nov. 1: ...tomorrow is the Presidential election and Referendum on League of Nations or no League.

Nov. 3: ...Election results are getting worse and more of it. A regular landslide for the Republicans.

NOTE: OVER NEXT SEVERAL DAYS, MR. MILLER DESCRIBES HIS BUYING AND HAULING WOOD FOR THE WINTER; BREAKING THE REAR AXLE ON HIS WAGON; AND GETTING THE WAGON REPAIRED.

Nov. 15: ...Everything is very quiet, since the election of Harding for Pres. He is now in Texas on vacation. Gone fishing.

Nov. 16: Snow commenced falling about 7 A M and has kept up all day. Some 6 inches has fallen up to 9 PM. Truck drivers are having their troubles tonight. Slipping off the road, where the **crown** is too high. I watched three trucks trying to navigate the ridge through our town that Bonehead Road masters have erected.

Comment [FL17]: "Crown" of the road is the middle, which was intentionally higher than the sides, so that water would drain from the middle to the edges of the road.

NOTE: IN ADDITION TO DESCRIBING THE STOCKING OF WOOD FOR THE WINTER (see note above), MR. MILLER WROTE ABOUT THE PURCHASE OF $\frac{3}{4}$ OF A TON OF COAL — PART FROM THE DUERSCH COMPANY OF HAMILTON AND PART FROM THE STEVENSON COMPANY OF OXFORD. THE TOTAL COST = \$40.13

Nov. 28: ... some company. The Phillips children, Mary and Raymond.

Nov. 30: ... It is now bedtime and I shall take a smoke and retire. I heard from Mother Miller today. Jacob Popst had called on her and Aunt Ann, while visiting his daughter at West Chester, O.

Dec. 1: ... Bootlegging in the old USA is something fierce, from all accounts of the papers and from what one can hear and see.

Comment [FL18]: "Bootlegging" refers to making, distributing, or selling illicit goods, especially liquor.

Dec. 5: ... I called on J. Phenis and we had a game of Canfield Rum.

Dec. 6: ... Whiskey smuggling is now the big game and Home Brew.

Dec. 8: K of P lodge met this PM & elected officers for 1921. Rep to G. Lodge B.J. Smith / Alter. — Tho. Shears

Dec. 9: ... I had quite a trip looking for Jersey this PM. She was by herself in J. F. Kyger's corn stalk pasture & came home about dark.

NOTE: DURING THE FIRST HALF OF DECEMBER, MR. MILLER OFTEN MENTIONS THE WEATHER GETTING COLDER, WITH WIND; AND STAYING INSIDE.

Dec. 16: Freezing weather. Arnold went to Oxford today to finish up some work of wiring at Western College.

Dec. 20: ... This PM, I went to Clem Pfaff's to see a tree-trimming demonstration by Prof. French and learn the ups and downs, ins and outs of the fruit game.

Dec. 24: ... Lutheran & Methodist Sunday school had a Christmas entertainment this PM.

Dec. 30: ... Ford plants have closed down. 50,000 men are idle.

Comment [FL19]: From the Internet:
Western College for Women was a women's college in Oxford, Ohio, between 1855 and 1974. Western remained an independent women's college until 1970 when it formed a "committee of cooperation" with the adjacent Miami University, which opened enrollment between the colleges on a limited basis. This allowed Western students to take classes at Miami and use Miami's computer and hospital facilities, for example, while allowing Miami students access to intramural fields, library space, and cross-country runways on Western grounds.

Comment [FL20]: Clem Pfaff operated an orchard north of Darrtown on Rt. 177.

Comment [FL21]: See explanation of the Darrtown "union" Sunday School at Organizations / Churches / Sunday School.