

L. A. MILLER DIARY OF 1926

(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 Dartrtown 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.
- The use of "sic" within parentheses marks (sic) acknowledges a grammatical error or misspelling.

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

Jan. 1: New Year. Nature knows no new year. But, man evolved a calendar to keep run of time and seasons. Hence, he finally divided the seasons into 12 mo. ~ 3 mo. to each season. Thus, he can the better regulate his biz and accounts and the farmer his timing of planting and harvesting. John W. Fisher, my nearest neighbor for many years is very sick with pneumonia. Mrs. Ed Teckman passed away today; stroke of paralysis a few days ago.

Jan. 2: We were awakened this AM and informed that neighbor, John W. Fisher had passed from earth about 6 AM, aged 75 years, 4 mo.+ A man who always wished to do right, since I knew him. An obliging neighbor.

Jan. 3: ...I called on the barber this AM for a shave. ... I stayed overnight with Mrs. Fisher and sister, as company. Funeral service, 2 PM Tuesday, Webb of Hamilton Funeral Director Services at M.E. church, Dartrtown, Ohio.

Jan. 4: ... Mrs. Ed Teckman was interred at Dartrtown cemetery this PM. Another family disturbed by Old Man Death. So it goes on and on always.

Jan. 5: ... Our neighbor, John W. Fisher, was laid – his body, I mean – to rest. He is not there. You can't bury the soul is my belief. They mourn over the useless house we have lived in.

Jan. 6: ... I met with the Stock Protection Association this PM at schoolhouse. Basement dining room. A good meeting, attendance small. K of P Lodge held its regular

session and installed officers. ...

Jan. 13: I went to Hamilton this AM with Harry Teckman on his truck. ... Home by 12:40 PM. Attended K of P lodge this PM.

Jan. 15: At home. My neighbor, Andy Neanover, is shredding fodder. Corn is in bad shape. ...

Jan. 20: ... The Farm Institute is in session at the Lutheran church today and tomorrow. I attended the 7 PM session. Very good, but attendance was mostly women and kids. ...

Feb. 2: Weather above the freezing mark and frost going out slowly. I called down at the drilling rig this PM for the first time since they commenced last August. It is not a safe place to loaf or loiter around. They are now 2,000 feet and drilling in 1,800 ft. of water. Have not been able to case it out, as yet. Have tried a number of times.

Feb. 3: ... This PM, I attended the recessed meeting of the Stock Co. Meet again Feb. 17. ... A large number of short skates... bellyaching that the dues are now \$1 per year. ...

Feb. 7: ... Ordered 1 bu. of potatoes from [?] through Mr. Anderson of Morning Sun, Ohio, our present barber on Sundays...

Feb. 14: At home all day, except to call at J.F. Phenis on biz and at the barber shop for a shave.

Feb. 20: Another one of the usual Feb. days. At home cleaning up some work. The Pythian Sisters had an old-fashioned dance at hall this PM. A general good time had by everyone.

FOR THE NEXT THREE WEEKS, MR. MILLER WROTE MOSTLY ABOUT THE WEATHER AND OFFICE (TELEPHONE COMPANY) WORK.

Mar. 14: Another winter day. Fur garments have been right at home on one's bill of fare. Winter clothing has not been discarded in this section of Ohio, so far this month.

Mar. 15: Out all day setting poles on Seven Mile line. I got tired and weak – having no dinner along. We got in 4:30 PM, very sore and weary, not having done any hard, muscular work in a long time.

Mar. 20: At home AM. I went out on No. 1 to repair a broken line that a tree had fallen on. Also, called at Collinsville to see about some wire – none had arrived as yet. Mr. Fisher promised to call me when some comes in. Ind. Steel & Wire Co. are the shippers.

Apr. 3: At home not doing much. Batteries came in; 50 Blue-Bells [?] sent by Mr. J.E.

Peavy of Carbon Mfg. Co. of Cinti.

Apr. 7: At home. Much sickness and a great amount of flu in U.S. Not so violent as 1918, but, many deaths. Pneumonia setting in. Old people are passing out over U.S. – due largely to an extremely long and bad winter. Not enough sunshine. ...

Apr. 13: Some prospect of a little sunshine; but, colder and cloudy this PM.

Apr. 17: I hauled one load of manure AM. I then went to sale of Teckman estate and bought a few things. A bunch of shingles. Some buckets and etc. Things sold very cheap.

Apr. 20: I left for the Independent Telephone Assoc. to be held 21-22-23 at Columbus, O. I arrived about 4 PM. ...

FROM APRIL 20 TO APRIL 23, MR. MILLER DESCRIBED EVENTS AT THE TELEPHONE CONFERENCE.

Apr. 23: ... I left on 3:15 PM **Big Four** for Middletown and there caught the bus for Hamilton, O. Met L.C. Keller and came home with him in time for supper.

Comment [Office1]: This refers to the train line running from Columbus to Middletown, Ohio and beyond.

Apr. 27: Doing the usual chores. **Nothing to record, except** murders, robberies, divorces, and crimes of all sorts in these U.S. Something awful to contemplate. What is the matter with so many of our people?

Comment [Office2]: We know, from previous entries that L.A. Miller subscribed to several newspapers and it appears that he was an avid reader, as he often recorded his observations about world and national events and trends.

Apr. 29: I got Mark Nichol to plow my garden this afternoon. Charge \$2 – to be credited on telephone.

May 1: Summer heat came with a bound today. I harrowed lot. Dick and I (Dick is my drawing and riding horse). He was very soft and we let him have his time. He sweat very freely. I rubbed him down and made him comfortable for the night.

May 4: At home. We are doing some tel. work, rebuilding line from **Davis crossroads east.**

Comment [Office3]: This refers to the intersection of Rt. 177 and Rt. 73.

May 9: At home. Called on barber. Worked in office this PM. **Baseball is not the rage anymore.**

Comment [Office4]: Presumably, Mr. Miller is referring to the local scene. It has been several years, since he described any games played by a Darrtown team.

May 14: ... An American by the name of **Byrd** has reached the Pole (North) in a Fokker airplane. Crossed and circled same and returned to Spitsbergen, his hopping off place, all in 15 hours, without landing.

Comment [Office5]: Richard E. Byrd (see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_E_Byrd)

Comment [Office6]: A Norwegian island in the Arctic Circle.

May 21: ... Telephone work this PM. Stretched ½ of line and then some. Davis Corner to Witherby's. ¾ mile.

May 23: ... We are working on lines now every day that we can to get them off the right-

of-way for widening of road – Collinsville to Oxford, old state road to Miami University. I attended a baseball game near Scipio this PM. Darrtown won.

May 26: At home today. Forty-three years ago today, I was joined in marriage to Eva May Phillips of Milford Twp., Butler County, Ohio. We have had our sunshine and our shadow. Of five children, one lives. Due to a fall down a cellar stairs (sic), we lost our first – miscarried at about 6 months, - 2nd miscarried at 3 mo. – 3rd at about the same period – 4th born at 8 mo. and lives – 5th at about 5 mo. and no more to bless us... The loss of these four has been a deep sorrow to me.

June 5: ...At work on tel. line. Getting along slow. The worst will soon be over, when we get through McVicker's woods.

June 6: High wind – showers. A baseball game this PM. When game was ½ over, a squall struck; but, only gave us the edge for a few minutes – did not stop game: Darrtown won 9-2 over Cherokees.

June 9: ... Out on line this PM. Worked on J.J. Beiser's frontage this PM and will get to his gate soon.

June 10: At home working on Telephone line move. This work should be pd for by someone beside the Co. The farmers have been occupying public property for years and no Tel. line should have been placed on their account that they would have to move at their own expense.

June 13: ... Baseball boys went to Gratis, O. where they won.

June 19: I put up alfalfa this PM. Two big loads – 4 ton, at least. _?_ Neanover furnished team and hand. A Mr. Wolf helped also.

June 24: Arnold and I commenced at Township line this PM on Oxford line and will work east to Jos. Davis's Corner.

June 25: Arnold and I and Jack Snavelly worked on Oxford line today and made good progress.

June 27: ... Ball game. Darrtown vs. Scipio. 4-2 favor of Darrtown.

July 4: At home AM. This PM, attended ball game. Darrtown vs. Clippers. Score 1-3, respectively.

July 9: Work on Oxford line this PM a few hrs. – a storm came up and stopped us. We took to Roy Coulter's big barn just in time. A lively scene outside for a few minutes. Much local damage by the storm's path. We have a lot of lines out. Trees over lines; poles broke, wires broke drops down, etc.

Comment [Office7]: A 1914 map shows J.J. and Ida Beiser property located on the south side of the Oxford-Trenton Road (St. Rt. 73), a little over one mile east of Davis Corner, where the road angles north slightly.

Comment [Office8]: This entry appears to be a somewhat convoluted expression of Mr. Miller's frustration about being forced to relocate existing telephone poles along St. Rt. 73. Apparently, when the phone company set its original poles, they were placed at the edge of the existing roadway, rather than along the edge of the state's right-of-way...because farmers had, for many years, planted crops inside the right-of-way. Now, the state of Ohio's plans to widen the road, meant the farmers crop line had to be moved back...along with the telephone poles and line...at the expense of the telephone company.

Comment [Office9]: West side of Milford Township; now known as the Oxford-Milford Township road.

July 13: We removed a pole at Coulter's - out of the way of some bridge men this AM.

FOR NEXT TWO WEEKS, MR. MILLER DESCRIBED WORK RELATED TO STRINGING CABLE WITH WORKERS FROM COLUMBUS, OHIO THAT INVOLVED THE INSTALLATION OF "DUPLEX."

July 25: I am very tired and resting up today. Attended ball game. Darrtown vs. Brookville, Ind. 18-9 score, favor of Darrtown.

Aug. 4: ... We have a good lot of holes dug. Mr. C.O. Mendenhall and horse helped. Took all day to get farmer's fence lines located for them.

Aug. 6: ... Some awful explosions of electricity. Barn burst on Jim Larkin's farm N.E. 1 1/2 of Darrtown. No one living on the farm.

Aug. 9: At work on Jerico line - getting along slowly on account of no system to the engineering of the road. A kid survey of the road. Farmers don't know where to put fences. Stakes driven by haphazard guess, about 500 ft. apart. Gussed at the center of the road and measured 25 ft. each side and drove a stake. No plat of road.

Aug. 14: ... We are still hanging around Jerico - delayed by rain and farmers have not moved their fences.

Aug. 18: Still on telephone line work. That's all we are doing this summer.

Aug. 28: We are at Geo. Francis farm this PM and want to get to Kramer's Corner by last of next week.

Aug. 30: At work on line near Geo. Francis. Thos. Shears on the job, digging hole and etc. We pay him \$3 per day.

Aug. 31: We had two men helping today. We got lines moved to near Chas. Krebs.

Sept. 1: We got to the Bill Irwin place with holes and transferred poles 1/2 way. Albert Witherby has helped yesterday and today at \$3 per day.

Sept. 3: Arnold had to wire the Luther McVicker house now building and it looked so rainy that Thos. Shear and I concluded to not dig Tel. pole holes today.

Sept. 6: ... This is Labor Day and it being a fine day the auto travel was fast and furious. 5,000, at least, passed through Darrtown, coming and going today.

Sept. 8: Out on Richmond line. Phaff's place shifting poles and digging holes. We are moving south slowly, but surely. ...

Sept. 10: A good day to work. Thos. Shearer and I dug all Tel. holes from Harry

Comment [Office10]: Presumably this refers to work being done to widen the Oxford-Trenton road (St. Rt. 73) - see May 23rd entry.

Comment [Office11]: This relates to, and amplifies, Mr. Miller's June 10th entry.

Comment [Office12]: The Kramer farm sits in the southeast corner of the intersection of the Hamilton-Richmond Road and Harris Road.

Comment [Office13]: This figure seems inflated. At 12 hours of daylight, the pace would have averaged 416 vehicles every hour - or nearly seven every minute. Maybe it only "seemed" like 5,000.

Comment [Office14]: This would have been Clem Pfaff's orchard farm, located in the northeast corner of Hamilton-Richmond Pike and Harris Road.

Kramer's to Jms. Smith – today. We have about 14 more to dig. I paid Thos. Shearer for nine days work this evening = \$27 (\$3 per day).

Sept. 12: ... I attended ball game. Darrtown vs. Cubs. Score 6-3 in favor of Darrtown. Too much wrangling in these local games.

Sept. 17: ... Arnold and I were out on North line as usual. Jumped over poles from old tollgate corner down to 1st bend in line. We stopped the Bell crew this PM and they agreed to come out Sunday and work: \$6 per day and dinner.

Comment [Office15]: "Tollgate corner" most likely refers to Davis's Corner, as history shows that location to have once been the site of a tollgate for the roadway.

Comment [Office16]: "Bell" crew *may* refer to a crew of workers for the Bell Telephone company.

Sept. 19: The Bell boys hove to in good time. Four of them. We did a big day's work; ¾ mile of poles set; over ½ of old line poles pulled and trans. fixed. Clearance cut, except a short space at junction of Kramer and Smith farms. Big trees that we will wait for State to pull. The Bell boys worked until 5 PM. I gave each \$1.50 for overtime. Four men x \$6 = \$24 plus 4 x \$1.50 = \$30.

Sept. 22: Arnold and I went up to the Burris' place and set in pole to hold wires; also took out one that way in the way of road workers. ...

Sept. 24: A sultry day. Arnold and I went to New Paris, O. Preble County and attended Tri-Co Tel. Assn. A good meeting. Some biz done ...

Sept. 26: At home AM. This PM, attended ball game. Darrtown vs. Cubs. Score 4-0, favor of Darrtown. A shutout of the Cubs.

SEPT. 27: MR. MILLER WROTE AND MAILED A \$6 CHECK TO ALBERT WITHERBY; PROBABLY FOR WORK PERFORMED ON OCT. 31 AND SEPT. 1. SEE MORE INFO WITH THE OCT. XX ENTRY BELOW.

Oct. 3: Eva had a nervous collapse this AM due to indigestion and growing nervousness.

Oct. 5: ... Eva is a very sick woman, but is getting along as well as can be expected.

Oct. 6: Butler County Fair now on. We worked a new circuit – Davis's Corner to Kramer corner.

Oct. 8: At home digging potatoes and etc. Arnold and Bill went to fair. Bill had a time seeing all the sights. Total Ex. .70¢

OCT. 11-14: MR. MILLER DESCRIBED HIS EXPERIENCES AT THE CONVENTION OF INDEPENDENT TELEPHONE COMPANIES IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. TRAVELED BY RAILROAD BOTH WAYS. FOR MUCH OF OCTOBER, MR. MILLER REPORTED ON HIS WIFE'S RECOVERY FROM A "NERVOUS COLLAPSE" ON OCTOBER 3RD.

OCT. 29: THE \$6 CHECK THAT MR. MILLER MAILED TO ALBERT WITHERBY ON,

OR ABOUT, SEPT. 27 OF THIS YEAR WAS LOST IN THE MAIL. A DUPLICATE OF A SECOND (REPLACEMENT) CHECK WAS FOUND IN HIS 1926 DIARY. SEE AN IMAGE OF THE SECOND CHECK AT:

Comment [Office17]: A duplicate of the second \$6 check paid to Albert Witherby and drawn on the Farmer's State and Savings Bank can be seen at:

Nov. 5: ... I had a sad duty to perform in being a pall bearer to one of my brother-in-laws, this PM. Elmer Wilson.

Nov. 10: ... Wm. Weiss had a sale of Holstein cows today, near this place. Prices were good. \$76 to \$230 a cow.

Comment [Office18]: See sale bill at:
<http://www.darrtown.com/people/weiss-william-f.html>

Nov. 16: At home. Eva is not improving as she should. Liver, I think is the base of her worst trouble, as well as some bad teeth. A meeting of electric skimmers this PM. Succors are biting slowly.

Comment [Office19]: Mr. Miller used the term "succors" in a previous entry about local residents who considered investing in the Darrtown Oil company. This may suggest that electricity is coming to the village.

Nov. 22: ... The general talk here is electricity at this place. The Union Gas and Electric Co. of Cinti., through a bunch of promoters have now raised enough \$, by subterfuge and lying, to build the lines and then propose now to charge \$2.25 per month, whether you use current or not – and \$6 for connecting, etc., etc.

Nov. 27: Doing chores and trying to get things in shape for the winter. ... The Duersch Coal Co. has hauled me 3 more tons of coal this week.

NOV. 28: MR. MILLER DESCRIBED HIS PLEASURE OF PLAYING A GAME OF "CUT-THROAT" SETBACK AND LISTED THE RULES OF THE GAME IN DETAIL, AT THE BOTTOM OF SEVERAL PAGES OF HIS DIARY.

Dec. 3: At home. We had a little scare. Arnold built a fire, when told not to – too dry and windy. It got away from him and help stopped it, in fair time. ... A scare that I hope will do him some good in the future.

Dec. 9: I helped Arnold put in a big Tel. pole this AM, in front of Luther McVicker's new residence on East Road. A taller pole being necessary to carry drop wire across road at proper height. Arnold installed phone at Luther McVicker's this PM.

Dec. 18: At home. In office most of the day doing office work – getting out bills and etc. Recording toll tickets. Eva and Bell and Dr. Wilke went to Cinti. to see a specialist for Eva. He says nothing ails her; but, all defective teeth must come out and then she will get well.

Comment [Office20]: As previously noted...Eva was LA Miller's wife; Bell was his daughter-in-law (married to LA Miller's son, Ernest); and Dr. Wilkie was Bell's father and local physician.

Dec. 19: At home all day; except for a few calls. Called on John Phenis and wife and Nathan Flenner – who is an old bachelor – 85 years young.

Dec. 24: Brother-in-law, Hugh Gadd, and sister-in-law, Jessica Phillips Wilson called this PM for a short visit. I gave Gadd a bushel of pears.

Dec. 25: A real white Christmas and a bad day to be out on the road, with auto or any

other mode of conveyance. The Wilkies were with us for dinner. Billy M. Miller, our grandson, was happy. Many useful presents came his way – and he is always pleased with what is given him.

Dec. 27: ... I went with Arnold over **near Seven Mile** near the end of our line to put in a couple of poles that the ice and wind had blown over in Sunday's sleet storm.

Comment [Office21]: This confirms that the Darrtown Telephone Company provided service to the outskirts of Seven Mile, some six-plus miles southeast of Darrtown.

Dec. 31: Roads covered with ice. Arnold, Billy and I went to Oxford to attend to some biz. ...

*“Goodbye old year!
You came and went.
Like all the rest,
That God has sent.*

*Goodbye to men!
They came and went.
Like all the rest,
That God has sent.”*

Composed by L.A. Miller