

# L. A. MILLER DIARY OF 1928

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

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

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Jan. 1: A high wind and colder – 4°. A whizzer all last night and this AM. The new year has come in with a bang.

Jan. 4: ... Stock Co. met and only 7 members present. We came **near disbanding**. Two for and 5 against. I have held the bunch together for the last 3 years.

**Comment [Office1]:** Interesting "close call," for the Darrtown Stock Protection Association. It survived this "straw" vote to disband and continues to meet to this day.

Jan. 9: Arnold and I put in some Tel. poles on line above town this PM.

Jan. 14: ... I went to Oxford this PM on biz. **on bus**. Arnold came up after a reel to stretch wire tomorrow, from Mee's to Davis' Corner.

**Comment [Office2]:** This comment, coupled with one that Mr. Miller made last year (Nov. 19, 1927) confirms that a bus line was operating between Oxford and Hamilton – through Darrtown.

Jan. 21: ... Arnold is working on line between Mee Res. and Jos. Davis.

Jan. 22: ... The men, Arnold Miller, my son, and Pin [?] Long worked all day on line above town... Long was not looking well, but did not complain ... He came up on bus and took 8 PM bus for home (Hamilton, O.).

Jan. 31: I went to Hamilton on the bus to attend to some business.

Feb. 4: Cinti. has a bad case of **unemployment** that has existed for the last five years. But, the thing has been kept out of the newspapers until now. Estimated 20,000 to 70,000 people need work. ... Soup kitchens have been opened.

**Comment [Office3]:** Unknowingly, Mr. Miller is providing a bit foreshadowing, as we know that the Great Depression will strike the U.S. next year (1929).

Feb. 5: ... I saw the **barber** today, as usual, and got shaved.

**Comment [Office4]:** To date, Mr. Miller has not mentioned the name or location of the "barber."

Feb. 8: At home all day, except attendance at Stock Co. this PM. We secured a good number of new members. I directly and indirectly secured 8 new members. ...

Feb. 9: ... Much stock has been moving to market for the past four weeks. Not enough work in cities to move the pork and beef from the butcher's shop to the table of the working man.

THIS MONTH, AS HE DID LAST MONTH, MR. MILLER WROTE FREQUENTLY ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF THE "WORKING MAN," THE FAILURE OF NATIONAL LEADERS TO PLAN AND PROVIDE FOR THE NEEDS OF THE COMMON PEOPLE, AND SOCIETAL ILLS (ALCOHOL, THEFT AND CRIME).

Feb. 19: ... Got shaved at the Barber and Bobber shop, as we call it now days – due to the women's style of bobbed hair.

Feb. 20: I attended a sale of a **near neighbor, Geo. Kolb.**

Feb. 21: ... The K of P's gave a supper and card party. A good time.

Feb. 24: At home all day. The young folks are going to Cinti. tomorrow to attend a Masonic meet.

Feb. 25: ... The youngsters got off on the bus for Cinti. O.

Mar. 7: ... Our son, **Arnold**, has the mumps and is being housed up.

Mar. 10: I went to Oxford on a biz and shopping trip. Took 11 AM bus.

Mar. 11: Much warmer and sunshine. The usual Sunday bobs. Then, the barber shop. The barber has gone downtown and somewhere and somehow, as is becoming his after 12 noon custom, found some bootleg moonshine and was not just in apple pie condition to do a good job of shaving or cutting. However, I let him do both and I had to get out my razor on arriving home and touch up the spots that he was unable to see. I was unable to touch up the hair cut he gave me. "Prohibition!" Nix!

Mar. 15: ... Eva has been out of the going and has been for almost eighteen months. The winter has been bad for her. No sunshine and too bad to take her usual walks. She does not care to walk and her condition has got me worried. I have been trying to get her to go to Dr. Bixler, an osteopath.

Mar. 27: ... Eva went to Hamilton to Dr. Bixler. **Bill** takes her down. He [the doctor] is putting her on a three-day diet. She hates to give up eating.

Apr. 2: Arnold and I went up in **Preble County** and cut down and hauled out 1 and ½ miles of telephone poles. Will commence on **Swamp Road** extension tomorrow up to

**Comment [Office5]:** This sale likely occurred at the Kolb farm, which was located immediately west of the village property line, on the south side of Schollenbarger Road. A 1914 map (see the map section of [www.darrtown.com](http://www.darrtown.com)) shows 38 acres belonging to Justus Kolb (1834-1912), who was George Kolb's father.

**Comment [Office6]:** Ernie Miller (who L.A. Miller refers to as "Arnold") would have been 41 years old, when he contracted the mumps.

**Comment [Office7]:** In 1928, L.A. Miller's grandson, Bill, would have been 10 or 11 years old. So, presumably, Bill was accompanying his grandmother on the bus.

**Comment [Office8]:** First indication that the Darrtown Telephone Company ran lines this far north.

**Comment [Office9]:** The location of Swamp Road is still unknown. This entry suggests that it may have been located in southern Preble county.

Wm Ruchels [?]

Apr. 5: ... Russell Wagonfield plowed my lot this PM. I helped him lay off the lands and showed him how to start a land, without leaving a sweet potato ridge.

Apr. 8: ... Tea Pot Dome scandal still not entirely completed. ... Everybody – most of them nobodies, want to be the next President of the U.S. Looks like “Hoover H.” or Al Smith – Rep & Dem respectfully.

Apr. 9: We put in a pole at Scott farms. Wind took old one. We are trying to get Wm. Ruchel's line up – but, storms are putting our lines in trouble.

Apr. 10: Arnold and I went up on Swamp road and worked on Ruchel line today.

Apr. 11: ... Arnold and I worked on Ruchel line. All poles in, but one on road. Three poles to put in Ruchel's lane. We have all poles out of Preble County; wire to run 5/8 mile at crossing of road at Cecil Keller's...

Apr. 18: ... Arnold and I went up and completed the Ruchel extension and put phone in.

Apr. 25: ... The presidential primaries indicate Smith and Hoover will be nominated by the two great parties.

THROUGH MUCH OF APRIL AND INTO MID-MAY, MR. MILLER DESCRIBED HIS INVOLVEMENT IN SELECTING AND PLANTING SEEDS OR SETS FOR HIS GARDEN, ALONG WITH WEATHER REPORTS AND COMMENTS ON THE NATIONAL SCENE. HE SEEMED LESS ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES AWAY FROM HOME.

May 6: ... I really have no time to play in my old days. For I must acknowledge that I am in my 66 year – that will be finished Oct. 16 – between the hours of 12 AM and 1 AM.

**Comment [Office10]:** We know from genealogy records that Mr. Miller will live for another 15 years, until the age of 80+ years. (in 1943)

May 13: ... Mr. Fowls [?] and wife called this AM for a short visit. Mrs. Harry Miller of Crestown [?] – Union Twp. Butler Co. O. and daughter, who is attending Miami University, called this PM to pay a short visit. “Cousins.”

May 14: ... Arnold and I went up to Jerico and dead ended line we bought of Cinti. Sub. Bell Tel. Co. at Dunnmeyer's and proceeded to cut same down. Mr. Dunnmeyer wanted the wire, so we dropped it along the fence for him as agreed. ...

May 15: A fine day to work. We finished up line taking down on Swamp road and left five poles by agreement with Mr. Wm. Withrow, who wants a phone as soon as he can rebuild a house that burned, several years ago. He expects to build this summer.

**Comment [Office11]:** It may have been that the cars that were available to Mr. Miller had to be hand-cranked to start. The self-starter was patented by Kettering in 1915, and by the 1920s would come standard on nearly every NEW automobile.

May 19: ... At home. I have no auto that I care to drive, as they are hard to start and not easy to control.

May 27: ... I attended a local ball game this PM.

May 29: ... Some new houses being erected in this village of Darrtown, O. Harry Kolb on the S. West corner of Cherry and Mulberry Sts. | Julius Kolb on the S. West corner of Apple and Cherry Sts. | Harry Teckman, out of town, north of Main St. on East side.

June 4: ... Dr. H.E. Twitchell called on old friends in Darrtown today. He will be with us tomorrow.

June 5: ... Dr. Herbert E. Twitchell called to pay us a visit today. A good friend who has been playing in much hard luck all his life. A wise physician on many diseases. He is pretty much alone in his old age, in the world. An age old story. | made out a deed for Julius A. Kolb, wife to Geo. A. Kolb, for his little farm of 15 acres. | Dr. H.E. Twitchell was with us today – dinner and supper. He enjoyed the strawberry shortcake. We took him home late this PM. He rooms below (south) of depot B & O.

FOR THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF THIS MONTH, MR. MILLER WROTE (ALMOST DAILY) ABOUT HARVESTING AND ENJOYING HIS STRAWBERRIES.

June 17: ... The ballgame ended last of ninth inning, Darrtown at bat, a loser up to that time. Some good batting won them the game 6 to 4.

June 19: ... A Miss Earhart of Boston, Mass. Has succeeded in crossing the Atlantic to Europe. The first woman to succeed in making the trip by aireoplane (sic). None have (sic) succeeded in going from Europe to America (women, I mean).

July 4: ... A general holiday for many people and that is well. ... I called on a Mr. Dietrick in regard to cutting some alfalfa hay. He probably will do so as soon as he gets his corn in shape.

July 8: ... Mr. Fowls and wife spent the day with us. We had a very pleasant day; saw the finish of a ball game 5-2 favor of Hamilton team Coca-Cola's.

July 14: ... The Russian ship built for arctic ice is slowly recovering the men lost by the Italia dirigible disaster of May 18, 1928. IN EARLIER ENTRIES, MR. MILLER WROTE OF THIS EVENT AND, ON THIS DATE, SUMMARIZED THE RESCUE OF THE SURVIVORS.

July 16: ... My grandson, William M. Miller, 10 yrs. old, has been helping. I took him this PM down to the River "Talawanda" for a swim. I did not go in. A neighbor boy came along and they both had a great time.

DURING THIS STRETCH OF JULY, MR. MILLER DESCRIBED THE WEATHER (UNUSUALLY HOT) AND PROVIDED DETAILS OF WORKING HIS GARDEN, HARVESTING, AND PRESERVING PRODUCE.

**Comment [Office12]:** For reasons unknown, Mr. Miller placed this "Kolb" anecdote in the middle of his comments about Dr. Twitchell's visit.

**Comment [Office13]:** Dr. Twitchell is acknowledged as one of two doctors known to have served Darrtown. See more about Dr. Twitchell at page 10 in the History section of Darrtown.com.

**Comment [Office14]:** Presumably, this refers to a section of Hamilton, Ohio that lies south of Maple Street, as that is the area where the former Hamilton, Ohio railroad depot was located.

**Comment [Office15]:** This means that only 13 months after Charles Lindbergh finished his solo flight from New York to Paris (May 21, 1927), Amelia Earhart set the women's record.

**Comment [Office16]:** Now more commonly known as the Four Mile Creek; located just south of Darrtown.

July: 29: ... I attended a very interesting ball game of 11 innings. Darrtown won 5-4.

July: 31: ... Swimming has been all the rage for the last four weeks or better. Boys and girls and old folks of mature years. Nothing on, most of the swimmers, but a fig leaf. The U.S.A. is becoming Russianized gradually.

Aug. 5: ... I attended a very interesting ball game. Darrtown won by playing the visiting team the last of the ninth inning.

Aug. 7: Another real hot day. ... Half & ¾ & 5/7 & 9/10 naked men and women are passing up and down the roads in autos on their way to and from the swimming holes & willow thickets along the Talawanda River. I am too old to be in the swim.

Aug. 8: A real hot one that fills the swimming holes on Talawanda. The Darrtown Stock Protection Co. met this PM, with a good attendance. I am Sec. of the Co. It is getting to be a real live organization.

Aug. 12: ... At home all day. A few callers this AM. Mr. & Mrs. Fr. Fowls & Mr. & Mrs. Sheard. This PM, Mr. & Mrs. Geo. Kyger; also, Mr. & Mrs. Jas. Decker. A number of folks stopped and bought garden truck and honey.

MR. MILLER CONTINUED TO REPORT THE EXTREME HEAT (MANY DAYS WITH TEMPERATURES IN THE NINTY DEGREE RANGE) AND PROVIDED DETAILS ABOUT HARVESTING HIS GARDEN PRODUCE.

Aug. 16: I went to Albert Dawson's Pisgah, O. section today. Mrs. Sheard, on the Journal staff, also went along to write up my cousin's, Albert O. Dawson's plantation of ginseng and Goldleaf Seal. He and family of wife & three bright children live right in the woods – trees all around them. ... Albert and his family are well fixed by their own labor and by inheritance. They are probably worth one hundred-thousand - \$100,000.

Aug. 19: ... I attended the ball game and the heat drove me away to Mr. Wolf's nearby - in the shade, where we watched a very poor game. 12 – 0, favor of the home team.

FOR THE BALANCE OF AUGUST, MR. MILLER'S MOST COMMON TOPIC WAS THE VERY HOT TEMPERATURES AND THE LACK OF RAIN.

Sept. 2: 80° - Much cooler. I attended a baseball game at West Elkton this PM. Our home team won 15 – 9. About 20 of us went in a truck.

Sept. 9: ... I attended a ball game this PM. Darrtown vs. Hamilton. 2 – 3 favor of Hamilton.

FROM SEPTEMBER 11 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 19, MR. MILLER DESCRIBED THE PROCESS OF REPAIRING THE ROOF ON THE MILLER RESIDENCE (SHINGLING,

**Comment [Office17]:** From the Internet: *"The herb ginseng has been used for thousands of years to improve people's overall health."* Ginseng has mixed reviews; conduct your own research about possible benefits and/or side effects.

**Comment [Office18]:** From the Internet: *"In herbal medicine, goldenseal is used as a multi-purpose remedy; however, there is little scientific evidence it works."*

PAINTING, AND REPLACING THE GUTTERS).

Sept. 19: ... No rain in sight. We have had very little rain since June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1928.

Sept. 24: ... Mr. Ed Wolf finished painting the house. The remainder of the work, we will do ourselves.

Sept. 25: ... Mr. Ed Wolf called this AM. He worked 120 hrs. @ 65¢ per hour = \$78. I gave him a check for said amount.

Sept. 29: I called at Oxford this PM on some biz. Eva remains much the same: some days she seems to be improving. It has been almost 2 years since she was taken ill with this nervous ... condition that brought it on.

Sept. 30: Warmer, but nothing can grow without rain – of which we have had little since June 30, 1928. I called on the barber, as usual & got shaved. The young folks and Bill (grandson) went to Butler County fairgrounds this PM.

Oct. 7: Another dry, hot day. Cool at night. At home, as usual. That is where I have to stay most of the time, as I don't drive an auto and have none to drive at present. That is something I must get: one that can be easy started, stopped, and controlled. I got a shave and haircut today.

Oct. 9: ... Dry weather has continuously continued in this S. West section of Ohio, since last June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1928: Only a few insignificant local showers here and there. The late summer and autumn harvest is short in all lines of agriculture.

Oct. 11: ... I did odds and ends all day, except this PM. I worked at switchboard. Eva, I sent to bed to rest. She will stay up too much. Bell was off to a woman's club – a "gossips meet." Arnold is working at Oxford this week – electricity. The Teckman heirs called to sign a deed – except for Lottie Teckman Holleweg, who lives in Indianapolis, Ind.

Oct. 12: A record breaker for heat and dryness. Real July weather.

Oct. 16: ... A light rain set in this PM and is falling at 12 PM.

Oct. 17: A rain set in here and continued all night. The campaign for Pres. of US is warming up on both sides. A lot of narrow fool people won't vote for Smith, because he is Catholic. ... The Catholic has been my warmest friend. I am a Deist at the time and have been for many years. I reserve the right to change my mind, when convinced I am wrong.

Oct. 18: Local showers all day. I attended the sale of Mrs. Flora B. Ward of farm tools, horses, cows, & etc. I met a number of old friends from Bethany, O.

Oct. 19: At home all day doing chores. I had a number of callers on business matters, among them Milo B. Clark, in regard to the settlement of his father's estates telephone

**Comment [Office19]:** As previously noted, Mr. Miller seems isolated by his lack of transportation. In earlier years, when horse and buggy transportation was the norm, L.A. Miller traveled about frequently.

**Comment [Office20]:** First reference to significant rain since June 30<sup>th</sup> - a stretch of 109 days without rain.

**Comment [Office21]:** From the Internet: "A belief in the existence of a supreme being, specifically of a creator who does not intervene in the universe. The term is used chiefly of an intellectual movement of the 17th and 18th centuries that accepted the existence of a creator on the basis of reason but rejected belief in a supernatural deity who interacts with humankind."

acct.

Oct. 21: We had a few callers today. Mr. & Mrs. Fowls of Hamilton, O. Very pleasant people indeed. We had a good trade in honey today – sold six 5-lb. buckets to passing Sunday joy riders.

Oct. 24: ...I made a trip to Hamilton to get the signature of Amelia Teckman to a deed of property of which she is ½ heir.

Oct. 26: ... The political situation points toward Al Smith, very strong, as the next Pres. of the U.S.

Nov. 2: A cold rain. I went to Troy, O. with Mr. W.C. McSherry, our mgr. at Oxford, O. I met quite a number of old telephone men...we had quite a respectable crowd of what is left of the old gang. Over 100 independent Co. have sold out this year to moneyed interest. And the few left don't know where they are at the present writing. I think I know – the A.T.&T will have the entire field. If they are let alone by the Gov.

Nov. 5: ... I listened in to the farewell speeches of Hoover & Smith – Republican and Dem. candidates for Pres. of U.S.A. My vote & sympathies are all with Alfred E. Smith – but, I fear it will do no good. Religion is the only real issue – Protestant vs. Catholic.

Nov. 6: A big vote pulled all over U.S. The first returns were favorable to Alfred E. Smith, the Democrat candidate. But, by 11:30 PM, the anti-Catholics had him defeated.  
...

Nov. 14: ... I attended the public sale of the Clark estate on Sohn farm near Jericio. Crowd not large, but a fair lot of buyers. Most things sold reasonable. I went up with Mr. Thome, by auto.

Nov. 22: ... I donated a young cockerel to Pythian Sisters for their supper to be given tomorrow 6 – 8 PM for Past Chancellors Meet.

Comment [Office22]: Cockerel...a rooster.

Nov. 23: ... The Pythian Sisters gave a chicken dinner for the Past Chancellors Meeting held here this PM. We had a fine crowd of some 60 Knights and P.C.'s

Nov. 26: ... Biz is dull. From the court news and local reports, many creditors are trying to collect by way of the courts. The credit of millions has lapsed and hard times with many more is (sic) here. False prosperity must always end some time. Too much credit and buying on weekly payments has run its course. Merchants & Bks are breaking and the worst is not here. Depression has left much paper worthless. Over 4,000 Bks have failed in the past eight years.

Comment [Office23]: Mr. Miller's abbreviation for "banks."

Comment [Office24]: This refers to a financial depression.

Dec. 2: A fine day throughout. I took a walk with F.S. Bufler, over his farm south of Talawanda River. Some farm and soil. If he had the capital to take care of it properly.

Comment [Office25]: "F" stands for Frank; Frank S. Bufler.

Comment [Office26]: The Bufler farm was located immediately south of the Four Mile Creek on the west side of the Hamilton-Richmond Road.

Dec. 4: ... Arnold installed a phone at Fr. Marshall's today.

Comment [Office27]: Four Mile Creek...

Dec. 5: At home doing the usual stunts. Arnold installed phone at Louis Wiley's today. I helped him set a pole this PM. Geo. Bowman brought me a load of corn. ... \$28 ... I gave him credit on his telephone acct. for same.

Dec. 14: ... I received a letter and check today from C.A. Shera, trustee in telephone deal – payment of 3 shares of stock in the Oxford Tel. Co. New York people take charge soon. I have been very busy on telephone books of the Darrtown Telephone Co. for some time: Farmers are slow pay. My neighbor, Ellis Glardon, got his well walled up this PM. He plans to build a house.

Dec. 15: ... I went with W.C. McSherry & party to P.C. meeting at Bethany, O. Alexis Lodge No. 202. My old home K of P lodge. We had a fine banquet at M.E. church and then adjourned to K. of P. Hall, where we were entertained by speakers and singing. After which speeches by P.C.'s for good of order. I met a number of old friends and ex-pupils. I taught there Sept. 1887 to June 1888. Salary \$600 for nine months.

**Comment [Office28]:** Based on Mr. Miller's entry on Nov. 23 (above), it seems likely that "PC" is an abbreviation for "Past Chancellors."

**Comment [Office29]:** This calculates to approximately \$67 per month – or, a tad over \$3 per day.

Dec. 27: ... Wrote a deed for Teckman Bros. to correct an error made by the father, Ed Teckman. ... My only real first love, and last, is slowly improving. ... I am hoping to take her to Fla. the sooner the better for her neuritis. She thinks she is not able to stand the trip. My biz also is in no shape to go. So, here we are.

Dec. 29: I went to Oxford, O. and attended to some business, meeting Jas. R. Harris. I came home with him, arriving 2 PM. I went up with Arnold, but he was working – had intended to walk home. Mr. Jno. Groh called to see me on some biz. I am to sell his 25 acre farm, if I can. Mr. Walter Gullett and A.R. Wolf called to sign a contract of sale to Mr. Wolf of his house and lot No. 116 in the village of Darrtown.

**Comment [Office30]:** The distance between Oxford, Ohio and Darrtown, Ohio is about five miles. Mr. Miller was 66 years old in December 1928... and he planned to "walk home."

Dec. 30: ... I wrote up a deed ... Walter Gullett & wife to A.R. Wolf and Ella F. Wolf. A joint deed from Walter Gullett & wife to aforesaid parties. The neighborhood is agog with the movement in real estate for building purposes, especially. The old Sinclair farm on Talawanda River 2 mi. south of Darrtown has been sold to real estate men.

**Comment [Office31]:** This is the second lot north of South Street, on the west side of the Hamilton Richmond Road.

