



Tools of the stone carving trade

## Looking back

# Albert McIlveen was a master stone carver

By ROSE WOERTZ

Special to the H-T

In the summer of 1911, the Monon train stopped a couple of times a day at Stinesville. That year 26-year-old Albert V. McIlveen stepped off one of the trains with his suitcase and tool box.

Irish-born, trained-in-art-at-Carnegie-Tech, and apprenticed to an Italian carver for three years, Albert had been carving in the winter and playing professional baseball in the summer.

THAT SUMMER he had been playing semi-pro ball in Iowa, when he saw a newspaper ad which said J. Hoadley and Sons of Stinesville, Ind., needed carvers. He packed his bag.

Standing on the platform when he got off the train at Stinesville was a 15-year-old girl. Albert engaged her in conversation and asked if she had been waiting for someone in particular. She told him she wasn't and explained that on days when there wasn't much going on in town, people went down to the station to see if anyone got off the train.

Albert found out her name was Mary Neal. He didn't find out until later was that she was the granddaughter of his new employer, J. Hoadley, Sr.

**IN THE HOADLEY EAST** and west mills there was plenty of carving to be done. Albert set up shop with the other carvers and cutters in one of the mills. Carving was done with both mallet and air hammer, which is a holder for carving tools. It is attached by hose to a compressor to make it vibrate.

Carvers carried their own tools and wouldn't let them out of their sight. They were custom-made by the mill blacksmith to suit the carver's whim or taste. Some carvers had their name stamped on the tools so they wouldn't stray. With several carvers

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working together it was easy to reach for someone else's chisel.

There was always something to do in Stinesville on weekends. Albert, a Presbyterian, didn't have any qualms about turning Methodist so he could sit in church with Mary and the rest of the Hoadley clan.

**THERE WERE PICNICS** and ice cream socials and for a special date a fellow could rent a buggy at the livery stable. John Hoadley, Sr., played the fiddle and the organ and Sunday afternoons the family sometimes would gather in the parlor to sing.

Dating the boss's granddaughter had its hazards. Albert took a ribbing from his fellow workers who said with a wink: "You sure know which side your bread is buttered on."

When Mary graduated from high school, her grandfather shipped her off to Bloomington to go to IU. He also found her a room with relatives because she was only 16.

Tired of taking the train every time he wanted to see her, Albert moved from Stinesville to Bloomington. Three years later, after she had taught for a year, he talked her into marrying him, and they eloped to Indianapolis.

**ALBERT SET UP** a contracting business.

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