

*Excerpts from “I remember...” by Iva Estaline (Snedegar) Steele, Mariner Village, Everett, Washington, 1983 (her father, Jesse Edward Snedegar was a brother of Audrey Snedegar Brandley Decker; her mother was Elsie Pearl McAuley (born 1889) who came to teach at the Brandley school in about 1909). Author was born July 6, 1911 in Matfield Green. Her family owned a grocery and hardware store in Matfield.*

Aunt Audrey, as previously noted, married Harry Brandley (Uncle Had); it was at their country home that Mamma roomed and boarded when she came to the Brandley school to teach. The Brandleys were a rich—and very colorful—local family. I’ll tell more of them later. Uncle Had died of a heart attack when their only child, Gorman Duri, was about three years old and I was five. All I can really remember of Uncle Had is that he had dark eyes, hair, and mustache, quite handsome—and that he used to lie on the floor of the big kitchen to play with Gorman and me. He apparently had a lot of personality. My father says he was very good to Aunt Audrey and Gorman, and very generous with money. But he would periodically disappear for a week or so at a time, with absolutely no explanation to anyone. Mamma tells of their often playing duets when she was staying there, Aunt Audrey at the piano and Uncle Had on the violin.

After his death, Aunt Audrey helped Grandma at the Matfield Hotel, as well as managed the 640 acre section that Uncle Had had left her and Gorman.

One of my memories of Aunt Audrey is when she took Gorman and me on the train from Strong City to Emporia. The limit for half-fare was five years. When the conductor asked if the little girl was five, Aunt Audrey said yes—but I piped up, “No, I’m not, Aunt Audrey; I’m six!” I don’t think Aunt Audrey was exactly happy with me!

She had a good head for business, and loved managing things—and people!

When Gorman was about seven, Aunt Audrey moved with him to Emporia, where she purchased the Clinton Hotel, downtown. I visited them often; I remember the fascinating high bed in my room there; and hearing the clop, clop of horses on the pavement of the street, and the calls of newsboys, “Extra; extra. Read all about it,” on the early morning air. [p. 35-36]