

Dear Grandchildren:

Perhaps your parents have told you about the origin of the Sperry "Coat of Arms", but in case they haven't or in case you might forget and not be able to tell your children about it, Grandfather and I thought you might like to have it written down.

After we had lived in Brown County for a few years, Charles said "I think we should take as the Sperry motto "Sweet are the Uses of Adversity" because we are having so much more fun with very little money than we used to have with plenty of money." That set me to thinking and I thought we really could make our own coat of arms using Charles' motto as a beginning and then showing how we "got out of the depression".

First of all our garden - we couldn't have lived without our huge garden and all the hundreds and hundreds of quarts of vegetables we canned (my shoulders ache right now just remembering all of the carrots Grandfather and I scraped and canned). You see we promised ourselves that we wouldn't borrow a single penny to live on, and vegetables, especially when they are creamed, go a long way to fill up hungry boys. So - the first thing to go on our coat of arms would be a rake and a hoe, symbols of our garden.

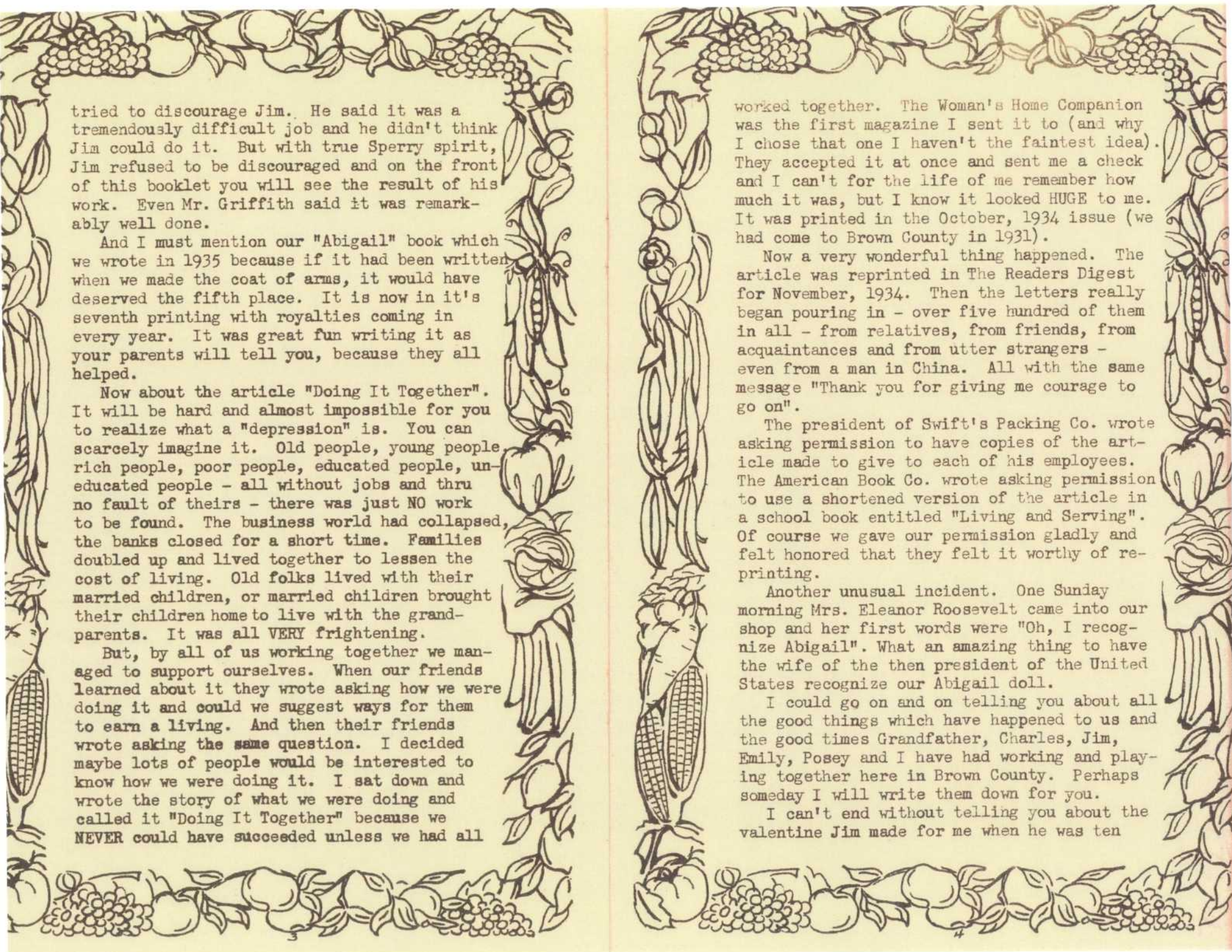
Then our beloved cow - we never could have made the grade without that cow. She not only gave us all the milk we could drink, but enough so we could exchange milk for things our neighbors had which we needed. We owe a lot to that cow, a lot of fun as well as a lot of milk. Ask Jim about the time she ran away and he had to find her and bring her home, - that's a story. And ask Grandfather to tell you about the moonlight night she got in the

garden and started eating things - that's an even better story. So - we would put our cow in the lower left hand corner.

Next we designed and made our precious Abigail doll, or rather we taught the Brown County women to make her and her clothes. We sold her wholesale all over the country and earned enough money to start our shop. She deserves a place in the upper right hand corner.

Last, but far from least was the beautiful little piano Grandfather designed. For by this time Grandfather had accepted a position with the Wurlitzer Company of DeKalb, Illinois - today the largest maker of pianos in the world. - Before this, piano makers had been unable to build a small piano or spinet, as often called, which had a truly beautiful tone, or one which would stay in tune as well as a regular size piano. In fact, it was thought to be impossible, but Grandfather, with true Sperry spirit, conquered these difficulties and produced a beautifully toned instrument which would stay in tune as well as the larger piano. This brought him national fame in the piano industry. Don't misunderstand when I say he "designed" the pianos and think it was the outside of the piano - Grandfather designed the musical part, the real piano. This enabled us to have enough money to send your parents to college. So - the fourth place must be given to the little piano.

Karl Martz, uncle Bob's brother, drew the coat of arms and painted it most beautifully. But, the story isn't finished. Jim decided he would make an etching of the coat of arms and print book plates from it for Grandfathers and my Christmas present. When he told Mr. Griffith, a very fine etcher whom most of you remember, what he wanted to do, Mr. Griffith

A decorative border surrounds the text, featuring a variety of fruits and vegetables. At the top, there are clusters of grapes and several apples. The sides are decorated with stalks of corn and bunches of grapes. At the bottom, there are more clusters of grapes and apples.

tried to discourage Jim. He said it was a tremendously difficult job and he didn't think Jim could do it. But with true Sperry spirit, Jim refused to be discouraged and on the front of this booklet you will see the result of his work. Even Mr. Griffith said it was remarkably well done.

And I must mention our "Abigail" book which we wrote in 1935 because if it had been written when we made the coat of arms, it would have deserved the fifth place. It is now in it's seventh printing with royalties coming in every year. It was great fun writing it as your parents will tell you, because they all helped.

Now about the article "Doing It Together". It will be hard and almost impossible for you to realize what a "depression" is. You can scarcely imagine it. Old people, young people, rich people, poor people, educated people, uneducated people - all without jobs and thru no fault of theirs - there was just NO work to be found. The business world had collapsed, the banks closed for a short time. Families doubled up and lived together to lessen the cost of living. Old folks lived with their married children, or married children brought their children home to live with the grandparents. It was all VERY frightening.

But, by all of us working together we managed to support ourselves. When our friends learned about it they wrote asking how we were doing it and could we suggest ways for them to earn a living. And then their friends wrote asking the same question. I decided maybe lots of people would be interested to know how we were doing it. I sat down and wrote the story of what we were doing and called it "Doing It Together" because we NEVER could have succeeded unless we had all

worked together. The Woman's Home Companion was the first magazine I sent it to (and why I chose that one I haven't the faintest idea). They accepted it at once and sent me a check and I can't for the life of me remember how much it was, but I know it looked HUGE to me. It was printed in the October, 1934 issue (we had come to Brown County in 1931).

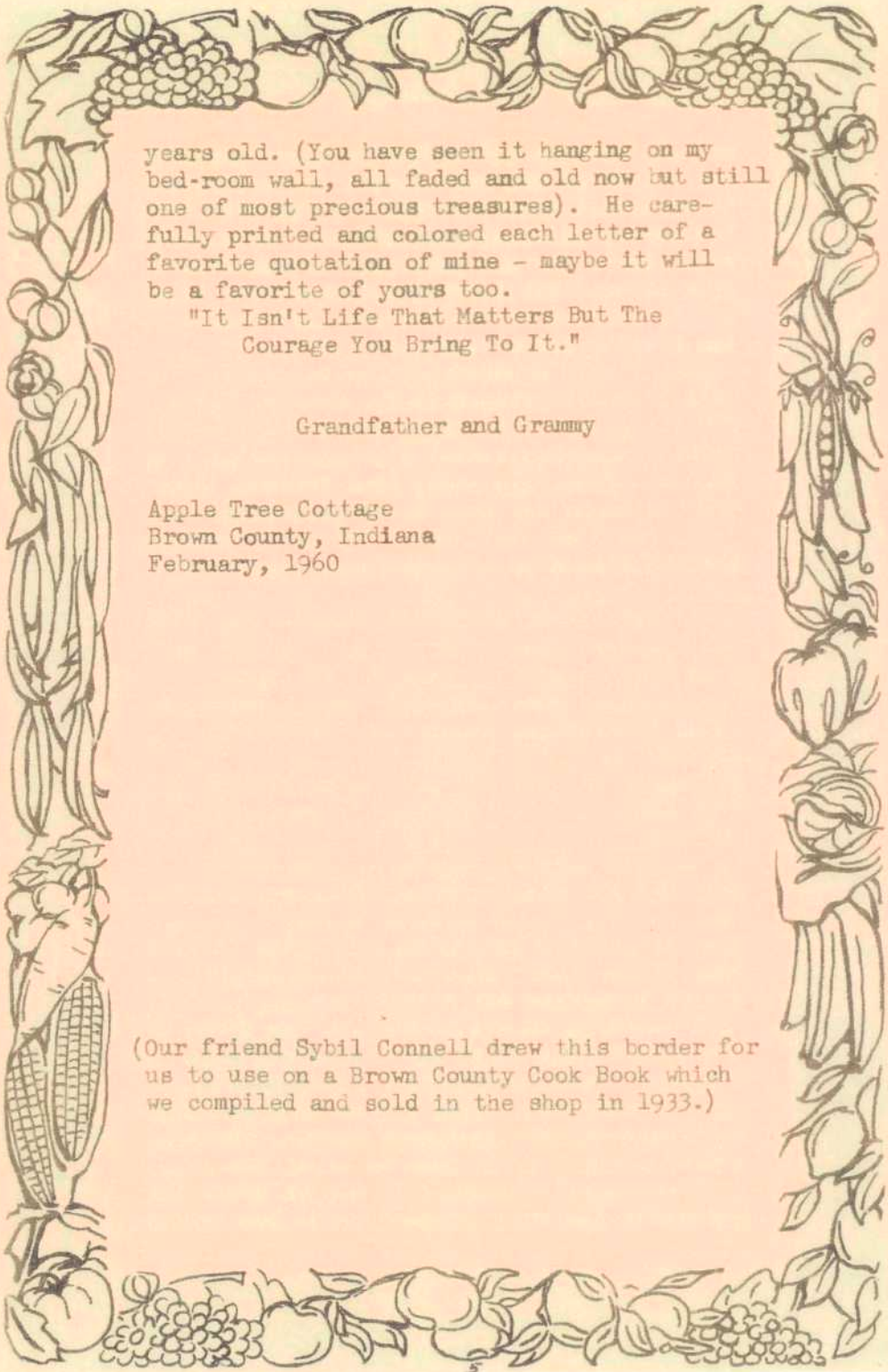
Now a very wonderful thing happened. The article was reprinted in The Readers Digest for November, 1934. Then the letters really began pouring in - over five hundred of them in all - from relatives, from friends, from acquaintances and from utter strangers - even from a man in China. All with the same message "Thank you for giving me courage to go on".

The president of Swift's Packing Co. wrote asking permission to have copies of the article made to give to each of his employees. The American Book Co. wrote asking permission to use a shortened version of the article in a school book entitled "Living and Serving". Of course we gave our permission gladly and felt honored that they felt it worthy of reprinting.

Another unusual incident. One Sunday morning Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt came into our shop and her first words were "Oh, I recognize Abigail". What an amazing thing to have the wife of the then president of the United States recognize our Abigail doll.

I could go on and on telling you about all the good things which have happened to us and the good times Grandfather, Charles, Jim, Emily, Posey and I have had working and playing together here in Brown County. Perhaps someday I will write them down for you.

I can't end without telling you about the valentine Jim made for me when he was ten



years old. (You have seen it hanging on my bed-room wall, all faded and old now but still one of most precious treasures). He carefully printed and colored each letter of a favorite quotation of mine - maybe it will be a favorite of yours too.

"It Isn't Life That Matters But The
Courage You Bring To It."

Grandfather and Grammy

Apple Tree Cottage
Brown County, Indiana
February, 1960

(Our friend Sybil Connell drew this border for us to use on a Brown County Cook Book which we compiled and sold in the shop in 1933.)