

## High Flight of the Eaglets

by

Alice Baker

"Well, here it is ", I said to my neighbor, Mrs. X, as I almost flaunted the sheet of paper showing the names of the Eaglets, as I liked to call them.

"What do you mean by Eaglets? " was Mrs. X's animated inquiry.

"Oh, the boys and girls from Eagle who have been valedictorians or salutatorians at the various high schools where they have attended. You see our little village down in the southeastern corner of Waukesha halfway between that town and Whitewater, has never been large enough to have a high school. Until 1947 it had a State Graded School and provided instruction for ninth and tenth grade pupils, but since that time pupils have had to go to nearby towns for their High School work. And in previous years, pupils from the District school in the township went directly to nearby high schools. My neighbor studied the paper with eager interest. She knew some of the pupils and most of their parents; hence to her the list was as compelling as an open secret. Together we went over the list noting and commenting.

Mrs.X. read aloud, "Lenna G. Baker, Salutatorian, Whitewater city High, 1902; Miss Emily Pardee, Valedictorian 1910, Waukesha High. No more records till 1922. How do you account for that?"

"There are several factors entering into that gap" I answered. "The first is that at the turn of the century, schooling beyond grade eight wasn't generally popular. Another fact is that High Schools haven't kept a list of their top ranking students and to find those pupils would mean endless computations that no inquirer could expect to have made. Some students attended at State Teacher's Colleges (Normal Schools) but no ranking of pupils was made. And last of all, I said, not all students had the MA to get top ranks. By MA I mean mentality and ambition necessary for standing out in front."

"They really soared in 1922" was Mrs. X's fervid remark. "Harriet Cruver, Waukesha High School, Valedictorian; John Agathen, Salutatorian, both from Eagle".

"Yes, and on the honor roll was Mary Belling (Mrs. Dick Williams, Eagle)" I added.

"1923, Arlene Rhoads (Mrs. Harold Matteson, Pewaukee) was Salutatorian, and Carl Meier and Cecilia Smith (Walter Dahl, West Allis) both from Eagle and both on the honor roll" I gloated.

"In 1924 Grace Belling (Mrs. Elroy Rundle, MillTown, Wis) wins after rank II. "After that date there are no winning Eaglets in Waukesha" was my neighbor 's rather dampened reply. "How do you account for that change?"

"I may be wrong, but I knew that in some High Schools there was a change in policy. Only those pupils who had attended a school all four years of their secondary education were considered for the two top ranks. Principals said it was not fair for people who attended a school for one or two years to be considered for top honors. Whether this regulation was carried out at Waukesha I do not know. Of course, Waukesha H.S. was getting larger and competition was getting keener".

"Victory seems to have lighted elsewhere" was Mrs. X's response.

"1928, Mary Cummings (Mrs. Dudley Lloyd, St Anne's, Canada) at Whitewater College High was Valedictorian. She is appropriately called an Eaglet. Went to Columbia Hospital in Milwaukee, finished with flying colors; did Frontier nursing in Kentucky; went to Scotland to study further along nursing lines; She surely has reached the high spots in living," was Mrs. X's praiseworthy comment.

Then in 1934, Anthony Agathen, brother of John, was Valedictorian at Whitewater College High.

"They keep on coming," Mrs. X. read, "1935, Sam Cowles Valedictorian at Palmyra."

"Yes! I broke in. "I think I shall have to classify the Eaglets into two classes viz. Pure eaglets and Consanguineous Eaglets. Look who was Salutatorian, June Gilbert (Mrs. Ed. Glinke, Milwaukee). This illustrates what I mean by Consanguineous Eaglets. June's mother was born and raised in Eagle. June's home was only a mile outside the limits of Eagle township.

We read together down the list; "1936, Betty Reed (Mrs. Gordon /Stolp, Whitewater) Salutatorian Whitewater College High: 1940, Elaine Jones (Mrs. Gerald

Cook, Janesville) Salutatorian Whitewater College High and Virginia Perry, Valedictorian College High.

"Guess you'll have to label her consanguineous "

"Surely can, both her mother and father were born and grew up around Eagle and for a time Virginia lived in the township".

"1943, Shirley Mae Watson, Valedictorian College High, Whitewater. You're stretching a point there aren't you? clawed Mrs. X a bit.

"Her mother was born in the township of Eagle and lived there till her marriage Eagle is still their homing center " I said in defense.

"1944, Maxine Smart (Mrs. Chas. Kennel, Waukesha) Valedictorian at Mukwonago."

"1945, Mary Lou Williams (Mrs. Walter Weinkauff, Palmyra) Salutatorian at Mukwonago."

"1948- Audrey Watson -rank 2, College High, Whitewater."

"1949, Daphne Hengen (Mrs. Norbert Zajc, Milwaukee) Valedictorian at Whitewater City High."

"1952, GERALD D CRAWLEY was Valedictorian at Palmyra. I really think that Jack Crawley should have had a rank in his High School work but his Father was principal of East Troy High School and for personal reasons made no records of rank."

"There surely are a lot of top-notchers" Mrs. X acknowledged.

"1953, Arlene Lutz Rank 2 at Whitewater College high.

"1954 was a pretty good year-two Salutatorians, Donald Enright, Mukwonago and Patty Doman, Palmyra. But look at 1955" I gloated, "both ranks I and II at Palmyra; Hazel Wilton Valedictorian, Marlys Knowlton Salutatorian."

" And you top it off with Janice Lake as Valedictorian at Mukwonago" my neighbor said as proudly as I did.

"Can you stand a little bit more of Bragging?" I asked. Last year Dickie Jones lost the second place by a mere fraction of a point.