

## A YEAR IN THE LIFE

Transcribed by Dani Crossley

[We thank Lorraine Frost for lending us the 1911 journal of Cecilia Edgar that was given to her. Refer to the family tree at the end of the article to identify the people Cecilia wrote about. ~Editor]

### Part One

Cecelia Alice McHenry Edgar was 63 years old in 1911 and her husband, Thomas Hardy Edgar had been dead since 1902 of appendicitis. She lived by herself outside Stillwater, Pa. We look over her shoulder as she writes her thoughts, feelings and activities in the journal she received as a gift from her daughter, Leila Edgar McHenry [Leila spells her name this way, Cecelia spells it Lelia]. It is the Daily Heavenly Manna style journal, purchased from a newspaper ad. Each day begins with a scripture verse and Cecelia often refers to these lessons in her writings. She wrote every day; I've chosen the more interesting ones to share.

January 1 – *This is a rainy Sunday and could not walk to church. I would like to have gone.*

January 4 – *Today it is bright and sunshiny – am all alone.*

January 5 – *This is another clear day – have been in the house all day so far, have been sewing.*

January 6 – *This is a beautiful day – seems like spring. Am getting ready to go to Bloomsburg.*

January 8 – *Lords day morning finds me at Bloomsburg.*

January 9 – *Monday morning very windy. W. L. took the early train for up the river. Marjory started to school. Lelia, Donald and myself are here feeling a little lonely.* [W. L. refers to daughter Leila's husband, William L. McHenry, age 47. The family lived at 420 or 422 Jefferson Street and William was a lumberman, most likely traveling to the northern part of the county for his work. Marjory, 6, and Donald, 20, are two of their children.]

January 10 – *This morning is bright and sunshine. Am going to the Bank this afternoon, also Lelia and I are going to the Milliners.*

January 11 – *This morning is cloudy. Am going to iron for Lelia. This afternoon we expect to go up town.*

January 14 – *Today Mrs. Albert Mc and I went out shopping after we started it rained very hard. Received a letter from Roy* [her son Orvis Roy Edgar, 1886-1918. He was a cashier in a bank in Sligo, Clarion County, PA in 1910].

January 16 – *This is a bright clear morning. Lelia is washing. I sent off a letter to Roy, also one to Mrs. Hess.*

January 18 – *This is a beautiful morning. My heart was made sad by hearing of the sudden death of Charlie Smith.*

January 22 – *This morning it is a little colder. The ground is almost covered with snow. Edgar and Marjory have gone to Bible School. I am going to stay in the house today have a cold, but it pains me that I do not feel well enough to be at the services.*

January 23 – *It is quite cold out this morning. Lelia is washing. Have read the morning lessons. Sent off a letter to Roy. Was made sad by hearing of the death of Mrs. Wesley.*

January 24 – *Last night I was entertained at five o'clock dinner at Albert McH had a enjoyable time. Mrs. Hartman took tea with Lelia.*

January 26 – *This is a gloomy morning. Have read the morning lessons. Sister Mira was with me last night went on the morning train to Stillwater. Then she is going to Benton in the evening. Am going to sew again today. Lelia is baking bread went to station with Mira.*

January 27 – *This morning it looks as if it must rain. Willie came home from Maryland last night. We are going to sew again today.*

January 28 – *This morning finds us all well and going to church. Then after we are going with Hunts for dinner.*

January 31 – *This is the last day of January a very bright and pretty morning. Am going home on the afternoon train.*

February 1 – *This morning finds me at home a very desirable place. The morning lessons read and appreciated. Scarcely know what I will do today have been to Bloomsburg for three weeks, seems so quiet and lonesome here, but I have some good papers to read. Standard Lookout, Christian Philanthropist.*

February 2 – *This is a stormy morning. Recd a letter from Lelia last night also wrote her in the afternoon. Sadie and Grace were here a while yesterday. Think I will knit today am knitting pair of mittens for Mrs. Trainer.*

February 3 – *This is a beautiful morning, quite a bit colder than yesterday. Am baking this morning or Sadie is. Yesterday wrote to Roy.*

February 6 – *This morning it is cloudy looks like snow. Sadie has gone up to Mary's. Donald is here but as yet has not made his appearance. Wrote to Roy last night and to Lelia.*

February 7 – *Snow on the ground and the bells are jingling. It is a very pleasant winters morning.*

February 8 – *This morning finds me up with Sister Mary. Sadie is here too. We are having a nice time together. Sadie and I are making Mary a dress.*

February 9 – *This morning finds the sun trying to shine. Mr. Trainer is hauling the bailed hay to station. Called on Stokers yesterday found Mr. Stoker feeling badly.*

February 13 – *Cloudy this morning. Yesterday after church I went up to Sister Mary's for dinner then in the afternoon we called out to see Sister Emily and found Sister Bet there also Uncle Joe. They are all quite well.*

February 14 – *Cloudy this morning. Lessons read and I trust I will benefit by them to be careful in word, thought and deed. Wrote to Lelia and Roy yesterday. Spent last night calling at Richards. Am alone this morning.*

February 15 – *It looks like winter this morning. Snow on the ground and the sleds are running. I went to Stillwater yesterday took dinner at Sister Mary's. O.D. came home on afternoon train from Virginia.*

February 18 – *This is a beautiful spring morning, not cold but cloudy. Was calling at Mr. Clewell's last night and talking on phone to Mary. Mrs. Simonson was calling here yesterday. Was pleased to have someone to talk to for I am so lonely at times.*

February 19 – *This is Monday morning. Went up Saturday night and stayed with Sister Mary. Was to Bible School and preaching in the morning yesterday and in the afternoon was to C.W.B.M meeting and teachers training class. Missed reading in this Book but am reading both lessons this morning.*

February 22 – *It is cloudy this morning and very much warmer. Am going to iron this morning. Was made glad last night by receiving a package of flour seed from John G.*

February 26 – *It is now Sunday afternoon. Was up with Sister Mary since yesterday. Received a present from Stella also a letter from Roy yesterday. Donald came up last night. Willie and family this morning. Went to Beishlines for the day. Am expecting them here tonight. I. W. came too.*

February 27 – *A beautiful morning. Donald and I are alone. Am baking this morning.*

February 28 – *The next to last day of February goes out a little cold ground is frozen. Donald tapped the trees yesterday. Lelia and family went home on train last night. I am all alone.*

February 29 – *This is a lovely morning. Willia is here with me come yesterday. Now Mr. Hess is in talking with Willie. Breakfast is over and the lessons read.*

March 2 – *Snowing this morning. Am all alone.*

March 3 – *This is a lovely morning. Have just come home from Hesses. Fed the chickens and read the morning lessons. Sallie Stoker called here yesterday a few minutes on her way to the Teachers Training class. Will now have breakfast.*

March 4 – *Cloudy this morning. The lessons read and breakfast over. Yesterday had fire in summer house boiling sap. Tonight am going up to Mr. Smiths to an oyster supper. Am going to take celery.*

March 10 – *Warm out this morning, the sap is running. Mrs. Simonson and myself were to the Institute last night. Professor Bakeless from Bloomsburg gave a fine talk, also Superintendent Evans. The music was good. Miss Ikeler from Benton was organist.*

March 11 – *I believe this is the most beautiful morning of the season. I am happy and today will have a letter from my Boy. Did not get up to the Drama last night, was so windy. The morning lessons read. How often I have heard my dear Father quote this passage of scripture.*

March 12 – *It is now Sunday afternoon. Was to the Institute yesterday then in the evening went to the play. We served Ice Cream, Cake and homemade candy. The Institute was very good also the drama. Stayed with Sister Mary last night then from there went to Bible School and preaching this morning.*

March 14 – *Frosty out this morning but clear and bright. Am all alone. Was up to Mrs. Trainers a while last night. Mrs. Hess Baby and myself were alone last night. Mr. Hess is over working at Mr. Beishline. The morning lessons read. I canned six quarts of maple syrup last night.*

March 15 – *This morning it is just beautiful out. The snow is on the trees and bushes. It snowed a very little last night. Stayed at home all alone last night as Mrs. Hess was not at home. Have the stove filled with sap it run some through the night.*

March 16 – *This is a cold morning. It is now half past eight. Have canned two quarts of syrup this morning. Have not had any breakfast yet. Golder moved in office yesterday. Zella moves today.*

March 17 – *It is now night. Went up to Sister Mary's last night so this morning did not get to read in this Book but read the Bible School lesson. Today was up to Mr. Richards to a quilting party had a very nice time. Donald came on the afternoon train.*

March 18 – *It is very much warmer this morning. Donald was to a social last night at Mr. Geisingers.*

March 20 – *The ground is all covered with snow this morning, quite deep. We have not breakfasted yet. Brother Burrell preached a good sermon yesterday.*

March 21 – *This is a beautiful spring morning. The sap is running. Last night one of John G. Mcbonds house burned down. Sent a letter to Roy last night.*

March 22 – *It is not cold this morning. Grace Beishline was here a while yesterday. Beishline went to Benton in the afternoon. Mr. Creasy brought me a load of wood.*

March 23 – *I sent a letter to Lelia also Roy this morning. Had one from Lelia last night telling us that Marjory has the measles.*

March 24 – *Cold and clear this morning. Was very windy through the night. Donald was up to Stillwater calling last night. I was at home sitting by the fire.*

March 25 – *Now this morning is perfectly lovely. Recd a letter from Lelia last night. Was so glad to learn that Marjory is better. Donald is reading in St. Elmo this morning. We must now have our breakfast.*

March 26 – *It is now nearly eight o'clock Sunday night. This morning I read the Bible School lesson but did not read in this Book till now. Donald and I went to Bible School and preaching this morning. Sister Emma and John came from church and took dinner with me. Helen McH and Bessie were here for supper last night. Sister Annie called here tonight. Had a letter from Roy yesterday.*

March 27 – *Cloudy this morning rained last night. Donald is going home today.*

March 28 – *Colder this morning. Was up at Mr. Hesses last night. Sent a letter to Roy yesterday. Beishline and Grace were here a while yesterday.*

March 29 – *This is a beautiful spring morning. The birds are singing. Surely spring is here in all its glory. Received a letter from Roy last night also a package of seeds from John G.*

March 30 – *Raining a little this morning. Took my first flock of chicks off this morning. Am going to send a letter to Lelia and Roy today.*

March 31 – *This morning the snow is flying in the air but it is not very cold. Was up to Stillwater yesterday. Took dinner with Sister Mary. Am all alone since Donald has gone home. Miss him so much.*

April 1 – *The first of April and a lovely morning. Mrs. Hess and myself called on Mrs. Gearhart last night. Today think the sap will run.*

April 2 – *This is a beautiful sunshiny morning but rather cold. Stayed at home last night as Hesses went up to Mr. Karns. Am going to the Church services this morning.*

April 4 – *Cloudy this morning. Wrote to Roy yesterday. Last night I received a letter from Ashley S. Johnson, think he is doing a grand good work and will receive his reward in the sweet by and by.*

April 5 – *Very gloomy out this morning. Received a letter from Lelia last night. Sent a birthday card to Marjory yesterday. Also wrote to Lelia will send it today.*

April 7 – *This morning it is quite windy. The wind blew all night. Was talking yesterday with Mr. and Mrs. Deemer McH. Mrs. has a very bad cold. They are getting old and not long for this world. [Deemer McHenry died in 1914 at 80 years old.]*

April 8 – *This is not a bright morning, is partly cloudy. Mr. Hess is coming down to fix some fence. Am going to bake some pies. Had a letter from Roy yesterday.*

April 9 – *This morning looks like winter, snow on ground and hanging on trees and shrubbery. Stayed with Sister Mary last night, was at commencement, it was very good. Brother Burrell gave a fine address. Was to the Church services this morning. Did not get to read morning lessons till this afternoon.*

April 11 – *Another spring morning. Willie came up yesterday and is staying with me.*

April 12 – *This is a bright and beautiful morning. It appears to put new life in one. Am all alone as Willie went home last night. Am going to iron.*

April 13 – *Cloudy this morning, rained some through the night. My twenty-two chicks are doing nicely.*

April 14 – *Still cloudy this morning, rained yesterday. Received Easter greetings from Roy and Stella. [Notice this is the first mention of any holidays.]*

April 15 – *It is now Sunday evening. Last night was up to the Easter supper. Stayed with Sister Elizabeth and Sadie. Was to the church services today. Took dinner with Sister Mary, was quite cold today.*

April 18 – *This morning am going up to stay with Sister Mary as May is to Bloomsburg. Willie was up yesterday, took dinner with me.*

April 19 – *This morning it is warmer. Came home last night. Mary and I had a pleasant day together. Am going to plant some flower seeds today.*

April 20 – *Was raining this morning. The lessons read. Breakfast is cooking am all alone.*

April 21 – *This is a lovely spring morning. Sun is shining, birds are singing. Think I will take straw off the strawberries today.*

April 22 – *This is a rainy morning. Yesterday Sister Mira was with me and I surely enjoyed her company. Am going to bake bread today.*

April 28 – *Cloudy this morning. Day before yesterday Sister Elizabeth, Sadie and Gaylord came down in their auto. Also Mrs. Hartman made a call. Was very glad indeed to see them. Had a letter from Lelia yesterday.*

April 29 – *This is a lovely morning. Mr. Richie sowed the clover seed this morning. Mr. Ash is going to plough the garden. The morning train is going now. Am going to make some garden today.*

April 30 – *This is a beautiful morning. Received a letter from Lelia and Roy yesterday. Edgar [grandson] was up on his Bike but went home last evening.*

May 1 – *Looks rainy this morning. Was to preaching yesterday. Ella Stoker took dinner with me. Then in the afternoon Grover came and took us to Church. Brother Burrell gave us a fine sermon. Autos were out in fine shape yesterday. How they could fill the churches.*

May 2 – *This morning it is cooler, had a thunder shower last evening. Willie and Marjory are with me now came yesterday on morning train. Sent a letter to Roy when postman come. The morning lessons read. Am the only one that's up. May we like the apostle glory in opportunities to suffer as Christians.*

May 3 – *This morning it is quite cold. Am all alone. Willie and Marjory went home on evening train. Sister Sadie called yesterday. I run the lawn mower for the first this spring yesterday. Morning lessons read and have breakfasted.*

May 4 – *This morning it is frosty out but the sun is shining brightly. The farmer is already in the field with two teams. The morning lessons read. We may appear all right before men but God searches the heart.*

May 5 – *Another bright and beautiful morning. Mr. Clewell done some mason work here yesterday. Had a letter from Lelia when postman come. The lessons read.*

May 6 – *It is now almost noon. Went up to Stillwater last night stayed at Mosie's did not come home till morning train come up. Had a letter from Roy. The farmer is ploughing field below house today. Morning lessons read.*

May 7 – *This is a perfect morning. Donald is with me came up yesterday on his bike. Morning lessons read but now we must have our breakfast so as to be ready for Bible School. Preaching is this afternoon.*

May 8 – *This morning is lovely. Mrs. Simonson went to the preaching service with me yesterday. Mr. McMurtry from Philadelphia was to church. Donald is with me but has not made his appearance yet this morning. It is quite early. The lessons read. Faith without works is dead. If we have the right faith we will work.*

May 9 – *Again we have a lovely morning. Donald went home in the afternoon yesterday. It is quite early have fed chickens. Morning lessons read but too early for breakfast. Wrote to Roy yesterday.*

May 10 – *This is indeed a lovely morning. The farmer finished sowing oats yesterday morning. The early train has not gone down yet. Morning lessons read.*

May 11 – *This morning is most beautiful. Rained last night and everything has put on new beauty. My heart goes out in praise to God for all things that are so lovely and good. Rec'd a letter from Lelia last night. Morning lessons read.*

May 12 – *This morning is more beautiful than heretofore if that be possible. Went up last night to Sister Mary's just came home and it is after nine o'clock. O.D. came home last night from the South. Morning lessons read.*

May 13 – *This is again a lovely morning. The early train is just going down.*

May 14 – *This morning is perfectly lovely. Marjory and Lelia are with me now. I am not lonely. They came yesterday. Was up to Sister Mary's yesterday for dinner. Mrs. Wright was there too. Morning lessons read and now we are going to have our little breakfast.*

May 15 – *This morning it is some cloudy. Lelia and Marjory went home last night on evening train went to station with them. We did not get to any of the church services yesterday as Marjory was not strong enough to stand the walk. Had my letter from Roy Saturday. Morning lessons read.*

May 16 – *Cloudy this morning and warm. Wrote to Roy yesterday. Morning lessons read. I fear we do often forget that we are a peculiar people. O that we may ever remember to separate our selves from the world. We dare not do as the world does but it appears to one that the line separating the Church from the world is fast fading from view and those that should be glorifying God with their bodies and souls are running the wild race for pleasures.*

May 17 – *The sun is not shining. This morning had a glorious rain last night. Willie came yesterday so I am not alone. Lessons read but it is not six yet. We will have breakfast later on.*

May 18 – *This morning we are having a lovely shower. Willie went home last night. Morning lessons read. Mr. Vanhouten bought 31 three-bushel pecks of oats yesterday. Am now going to eat my breakfast. Mrs. Richie gave me some good cream.*

May 19 – *This is a lovely morning. Am going to hoe in garden. Was up to Stillwater yesterday took dinner with Sister Mary. Called to see Sister Elizabeth and Sadie. Morning lessons read but have not had my breakfast. Am baking bread this morning.*

May 20 – *I did not get to write in this book this morning. Went to Stillwater last night stayed with Sister Mary. Had a letter from Roy this morning. Convention is over to St. James this afternoon. Newman and Burrell went in auto. Lessons read.*

May 21 – *This is a lovely morning. Am going to Bible School and preaching. Morning lessons read. May we study God's word daily that we may better know what he would have us do.*

May 22 – *This is another perfect morning. Am going to work in garden and iron. Received a letter from Lelia and Donald last night. Was up calling on Mrs. Simonson last we talked to May on the phone. Lessons read. We should serve God not so much through fear but from love.*

May 23 – *This morning is warm. Am going to be working in garden. Morning lessons read.*

May 24 – *This morning it is cloudy. Am going to Bloomsburg on morning train. We had a nice rain last night. Everything looks fresh and green.*

May 25 – *This morning finds me at Bloomsburg and just now we are at the breakfast table. Sister Sadie is here too. Also Sister Mira spent the day with us yesterday, went to Berwick last night. Morning lessons read.*

May 26 – *This is a lovely morning. Sister Sadie went home last night. Marjory and Edgar are eating their breakfast. Donald has gone to school. Morning lessons read.*

May 27 – *I am writing very early this morning. Edgar and I are the only ones that are up and he has gone to carry his papers. Yesterday afternoon Mrs. Al McHenry was sewing for me. Mr. and Mrs. Creasy called here last night. Lessons read. Hope I will profit by and see the good that is in all people.*

May 28 – *This is a beautiful morning and if I was a bird would fly to the church at home on the hill. Received my weekly letter from Roy yesterday. Morning lessons read. We are journeying to that land which God has said I will give unto you and we are not walking as in a mist for Jesus has taught us the way and will lead us if we ask him and keep close to him.*

May 29 – *This morning finds us all well and it is lovely. Lelia and I were to church last night. Lelia is going to wash. Lessons read.*

May 30 – *This is decoration day. We had a shower in the afternoon yesterday. Last evening Lelia and I called on Mrs. Black. Her daughter was there too come from the hospital in the morning. Was feeling better but quite weak. Lelia is baking this morning. I am ironing. Lessons read.*

May 31 – *This morning looks like showers. I am at home come yesterday on the afternoon train. Donald is with me. Am going to work on garden today. Lessons read. Now will soon have breakfast.*

#### The McHenry-Edgar Family Tree

James Deemer and Rachel Colley McHenry, parents

Cecilia Alice McHenry, 7/26/1848-9/28/1934

Married 12/26/1867

Thomas Hardy Edgar, 2/15/1845-12/20/1902, son of James Edgar and Sarah McHenry

Thomas and Cecilia's children:

Harry Edgar, 4/6/1869-2/18/1888

Lelia Edgar, 6/11/1871-7/20/1920

Orvis Roy Edgar, 2/9/1886-11/30-1918

Lelia married 1/24/1889 William L. McHenry, 2/18/1864-1/8/1919, s/o Cyrus Barton and Priscilla Covenhoven McHenry. They had:

Donald, Hardy, and Marjorie