

sandstones to build a general store (which still stands, along with Kaiser's own house) , and settled down to live the rest of his life there. He was a kind of "centerpole" in the community, a cryptic and sometimes crotchety old guy, who lived exactly as he wanted to live, a man who knew everyone in the community , who to trust and who to mistrust, and other things as well. He knew who was most likely to be responsible for Hazel Jackman's pregnancy; and about the pious Sunday School superintendent, who couldn't conduct a Sunday School class without weeping over the sins of two thousand years ago, but who pinched the pretty girls who worked in his bank; and the way Henry Whetstine's wife Jane had to lock Henry upstairs with a tub of water for two days before he would take a bath. He knew who stole the oats out of Ed Dudgeon's livery stable and how Ed found it out; and why it was better that the Alderman's only son was drowned at Rice's Ford instead of living to grow up.... But about all of these things he wisely kept his counsel.

As to method of handling and point of view; I have thought some of telling the story in first person, perhaps from the point of view of the Pennsylvania Dutchman's nephew who works in the store. No particular reason, except to give more of a feeling of authenticity and to facilitate the task of presenting a whole picture of the Dutchman himself.

There would be a gradual change in custom and time to some extent of course, but not much change in people. Those who remain alive are still unchanged, and their children do not differ much. Mabel Muller, at 42, is expecting her seventeenth child; and old Becky Livingston, at 101, still has ~~as~~ her goal a fiendish determination to outlive all of her children. She'll probably do it, too. There is only one left; poor simple Jessie, whose "soft spot" never healed over. Becky used to tell the neighborhood children that, in warning. Whereupon they would chase poor Jessie and take turns feeling her "spot".

I don't know what the premise would be, if there were one. "A simple life is a good life." Or, "Take it easy and you won't have ulcers." Or, to quote Ernest Boyd: "There is a hidden reality which is the essence of things."

Sincerely,

Hazel

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