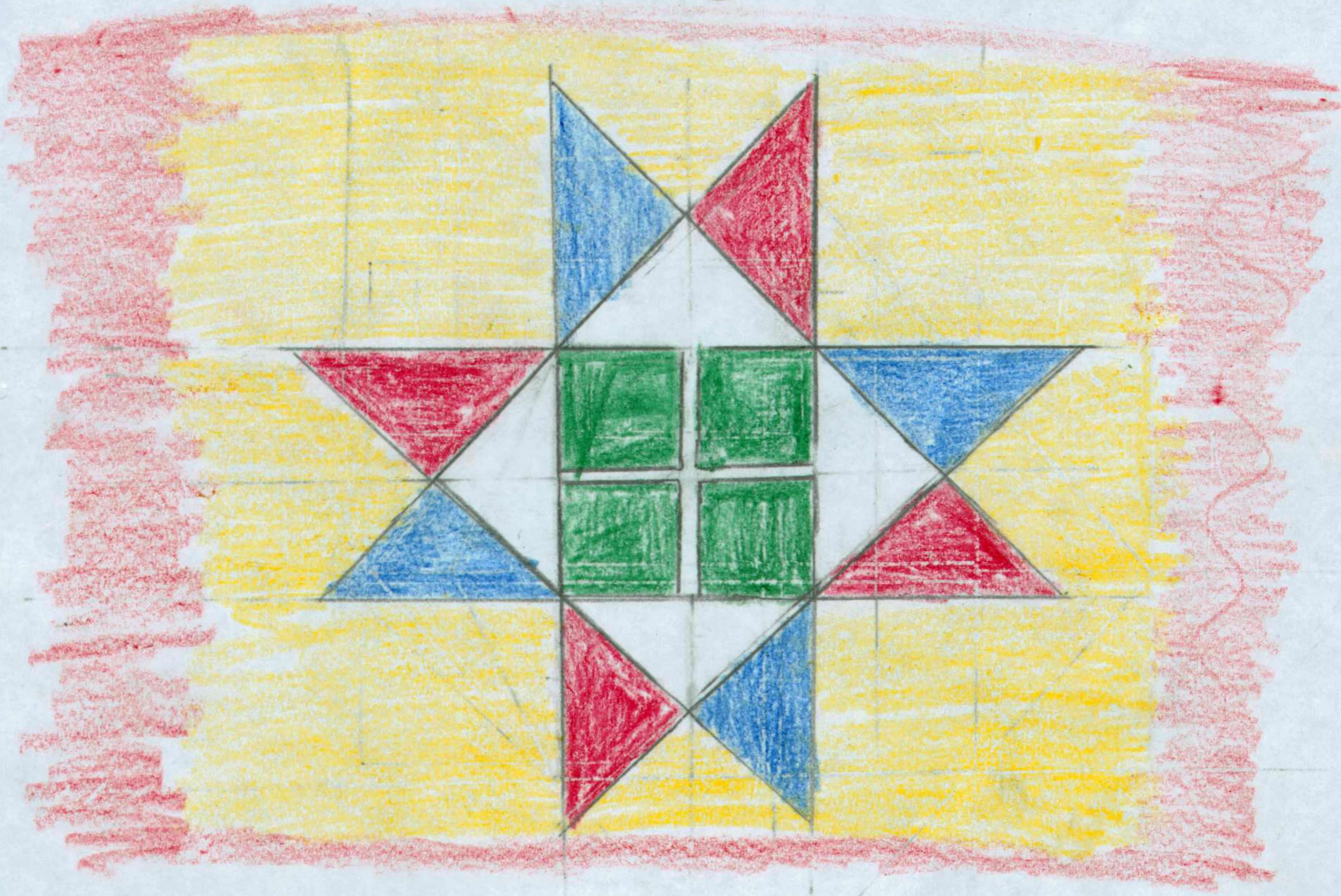


*When I Was Young
in Worthington: 1820s*



*written and illustrated by
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*This book is dedicated to
Miss Wood, Miss Swearingin, and Mrs.
Watson for helping us write this book and
making it possible for other kids to
learn about the 1820s*

Hello, my name is Sarah Cunningham. I live in Worthington, Ohio. I have two brothers and two sisters. I am 14 years old and I work as a serving girl for a wealthy family. My mother and father sent me to work to earn money for the family.

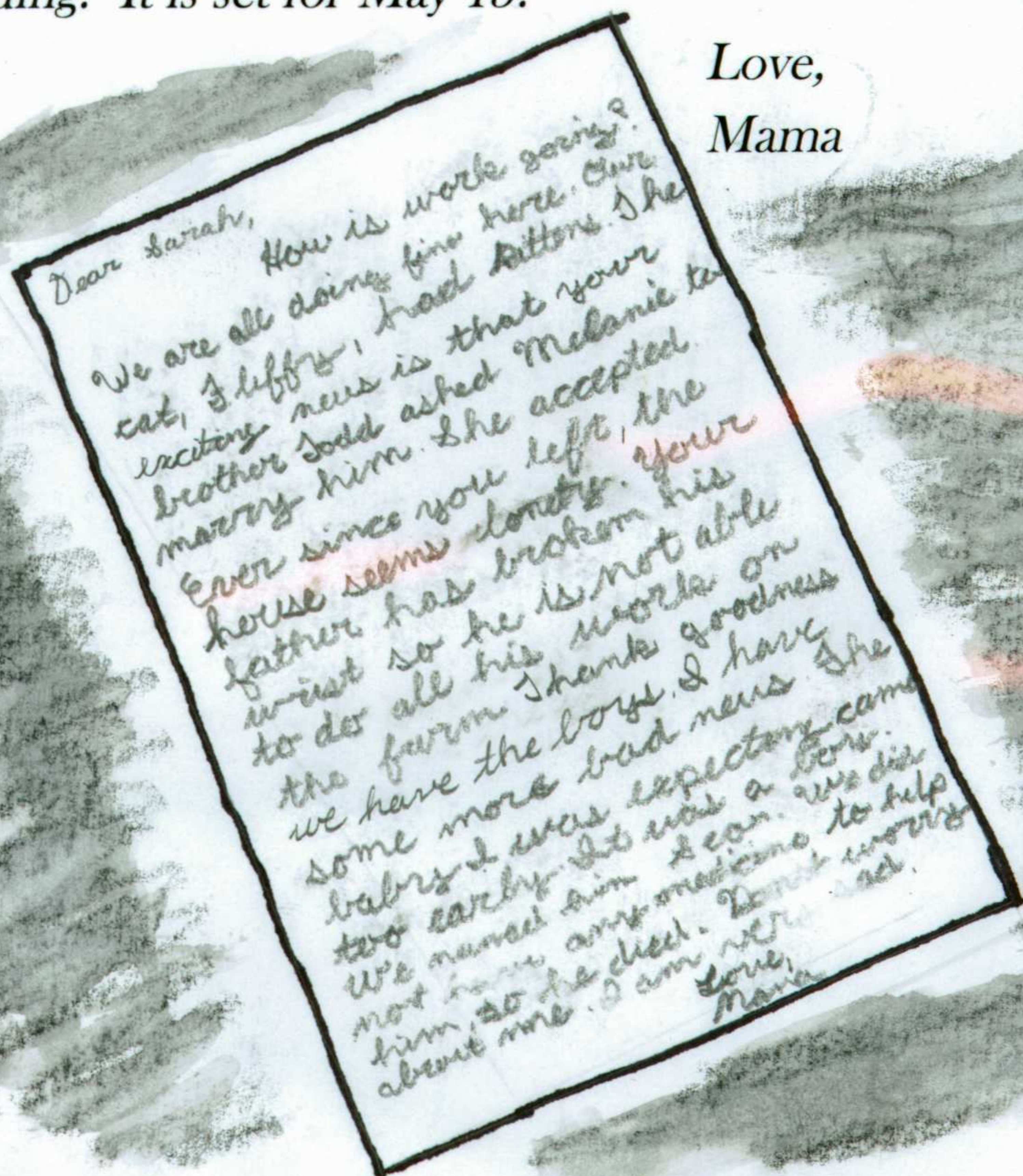


One day, after I had been at my position for several weeks, I received a letter from Mama. As I read my letter I could almost hear Mama's voice:

Dear Sarah,

How is your work going? We are all doing fine here. Our cat, Fluffy, had kittens. The exciting news is that your brother Todd asked Melanie to marry him. She accepted. Ever since you left, the house seems lonely. Your father has broken his wrist so he is not able to do all his work on the farm. Thank goodness we have the boys. I have some more bad news. The baby I was expecting came too early. It was a boy. We named him Sean. We did not have any medicine to help him, so he died. Don't worry about me. I am very sad, but I think I will survive. Virginia is just like you, but not as quick a worker. Violet has been doing well at school. She has gotten the highest marks in her class. We are hoping you can come home for the wedding. It is set for May 15.

Love,
Mama



A wedding! How exciting! I was so happy for my brother. I went to ask Mrs. Watson if I could travel home next month to attend my brother's wedding. She agreed, as long as I returned shortly afterward.

I returned to my room and took out a piece of paper. I started to write:

Dear Mama,

I am doing well. My mistress raised my week's salary five cents because I was doing such a good job. I really miss you and I am very excited to be coming home to you. I am really looking forward to the wedding. Mrs. Watson said I could come home for it. How is the new railroad depot?

*Love,
Sarah*



The next month passed slowly. I couldn't wait to travel home. Finally the day arrived. By sundown I would be home! I ran down the dirt road with my luggage in hand, trying to catch the stagecoach before it left without me.

While I was waiting for the stagecoach I imagined I was waiting for a luxurious steamboat ride instead. I envisioned a very fancy steamboat, carrying passengers around, rolling down the Olentangy River. I always wanted to ride one but we did not have enough money to pay for it. I wished I had enough money to ride a steamboat with its red paddle, paddling the water and spraying the people.



The stagecoach ride was uneventful. I kept thinking of Sean and eventually quietly cried myself to sleep. Just before suppertime I arrived in Worthington. I crossed the public square and saw the flagstaff erected by the Worthington Manufacturing Company in 1821. As I neared our home, I started running. What a joy it was to walk into our house again!

My homecoming was full of joy! Mama hugged me, Papa gave me a big kiss, and my brothers and sisters and Melanie joined me in a hug. We swapped stories over our supper of bread, vegetables, milk, and meat. Mama had made a cake for the occasion.

The next morning everyone dressed for church. I put on my Sunday dress and we all walked to the Methodist church, which had been built in 1823, the same year my sister Virginia was born.



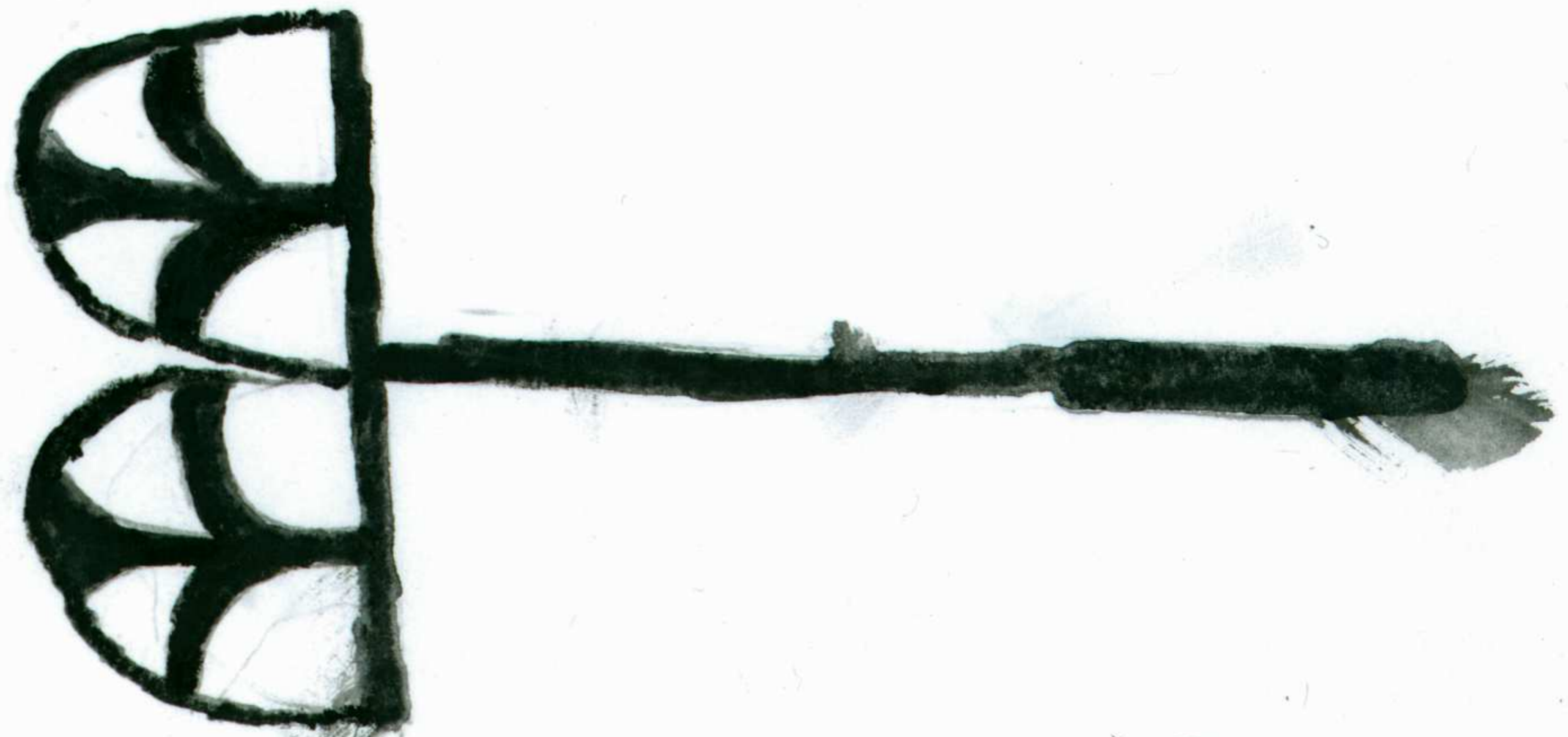
The day of the wedding drew near. Mother finished sewing the wedding dress. The girls and I cooked food for the wedding feast, while the men continued their daily chores. Melanie and Todd were to live near our home in a small log cabin Todd and my brothers and father had built.

On the morning of the wedding we were all looking fine in our best clothes. Melanie looked so beautiful in her wedding dress! She carried a bouquet picked by Violet. As the wedding ceremony took place, Melanie and Todd made their wedding vows and were married.

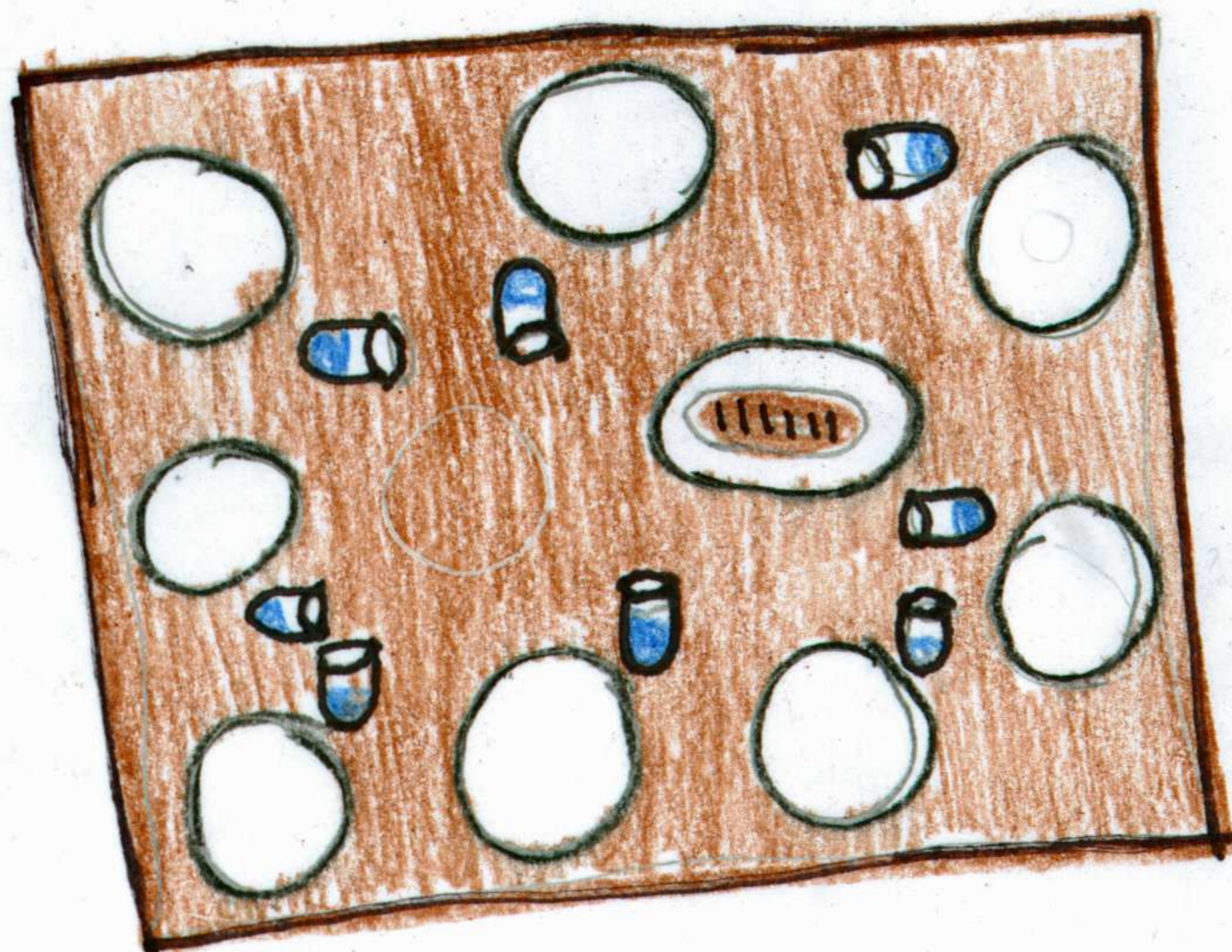


We all were very happy for them and we greeted them with flowers and hand-made gifts. I couldn't help but wonder if I would be the next to marry. However, I didn't have much time to worry about that as the celebration was about to begin. Dancing, singing, feasting and laughing were the order of the evening.

The next day I was in the kitchen mixing dough and making breakfast. I used our newfangled toaster to make toast. I simply had to kick the toaster for it to work!



When everyone was awake we enjoyed a meal together like we used to. The rest of the day went as usual. The boys and Papa went out to work on the farm while the women stayed in the house cooking and cleaning. We cooked corn and made corn bread. We also made a meat stew (especially for Papa), green beans, and mashed potatoes. It was so wonderful to be home again.



I did not end up going back to my job as a serving girl; instead, I helped Mama and later, Melanie, with their households. Melanie and Todd went on to have several little ones of their own. I, too, married and raised a family. My husband was Thomas Mack, a somewhat wild but endearing young man. Just like our family, Worthington, too, continued to grow. In 1829 our first public school was built on the southeast corner of what is now Oxford and Short Streets. In that same year the Ohio Asylum for Educating the Deaf was incorporated in Columbus, and the Ohio Reformed Medical College (located in the former buildings of the Worthington College) received the first charter given to a medical school in Ohio.

Now that I am all grown up I look back at these times and think what a great life it was to live in Worthington when I was young.

