

## News from Nan

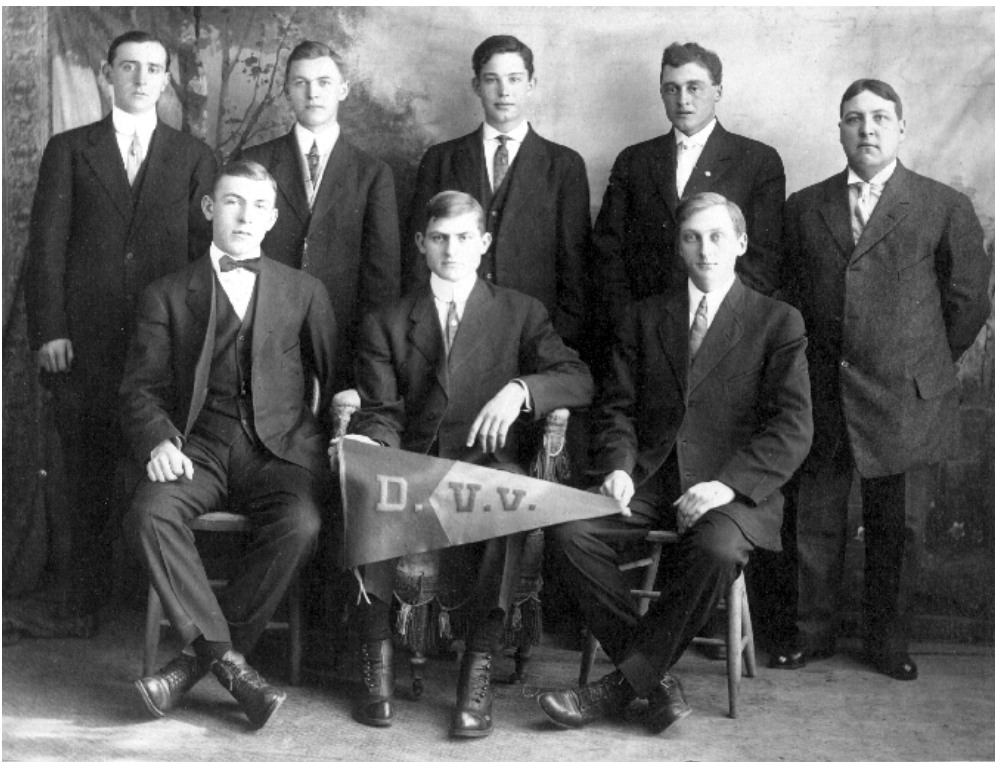
### NAN'S WRITINGS

# NAN'S REMINISCENCES: HALLOWEEN

OCTOBER 9, 2018 | NAN

*This post is part of a series of reminiscences that Nan (born 1906) wrote about her childhood in Minden City, Michigan. Most of the pieces were written sometime between 1990 and 1995.*

*In this piece Nan talks about how she and her family celebrated Halloween.*



*Albert Louis Riedel and his brother Louis Albert Riedel (seated, on the left and middle, respectively) and other members of their D.V.V. club*

The wild stories of Halloween antics are mostly hearsay for me. It was the big boys who went out and did the mischief, if you believe their tales. There was a lot of moving of big items from one place to another. If you went out the day after Halloween, you might see a buggy (the kind a horse drew) on someone's roof. Almost surely there would be outdoor toilets pushed over.

My brothers belonged to a club, called D.V.V. It meant Dum Vivimus, Vivamus: Latin for "While we live, let's live!" When I heard that it was Latin, I asked my brothers where they had come upon a motto of such erudition. They would have been in high school if Minden had had a high school, which at that time it did not. No high school, no Latin. However, Norman Wahla attended parochial school and hence the Latin motto.

One of the high jinks that I heard the D.V.V. members laughing over was the theft of a freezer of ice cream that the girls had made for a party of their own. "The girls" would have been our sister Sal, Bertie and Josie De Rosia, Minnie and Martha Seaman, and others their age. The occasion might or might not have been a Halloween party, though that would give a good excuse, if the boys needed one, which they wouldn't have: Girls were to be teased and badgered, and boys were there to do it.

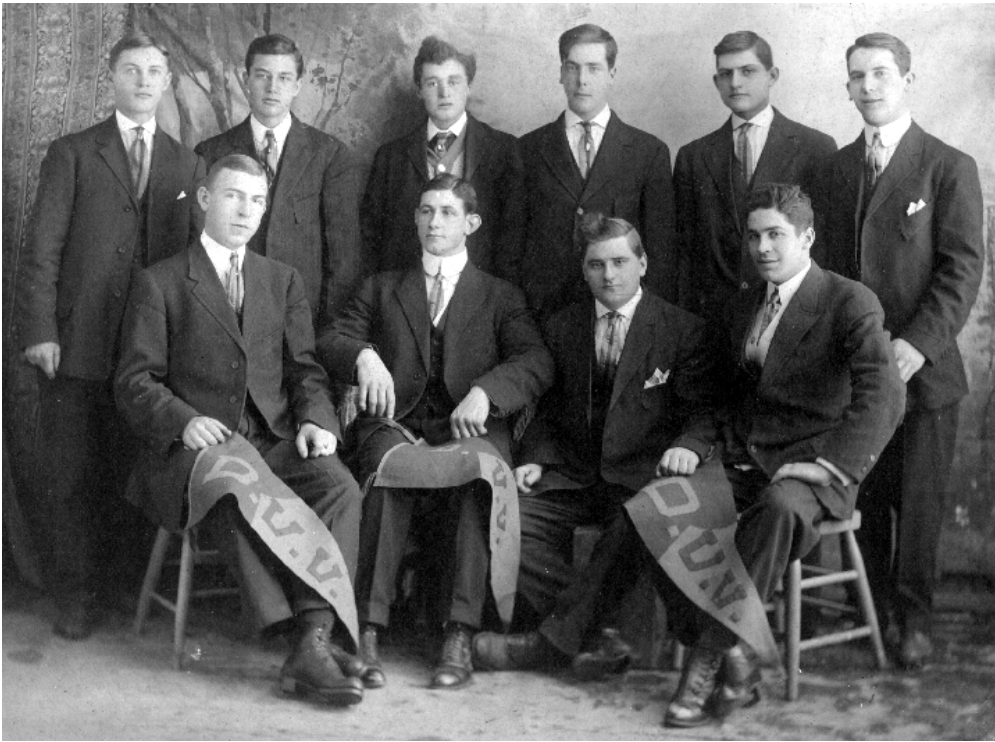
I do remember my first — and perhaps last — Halloween "out." I don't think we had costumes, other than hobo type. I was small, so I just went "out" with no clear idea of what it entailed.

(The fact that I could be out in the dark, blindly following, indicates the innocence of our time. Everybody in town knew everybody else, and even though it was dark, we didn't need to be afraid.)

Seeing a couple of big boys, I just sort of latched on, and when they went upstairs over the drug store, I followed. At the turn in the stairs I heard a loud rattling sound against a window, and as I trailed to the top landing, Mrs. Coyne (if I remember her, after all these years) pounced out of her door. What I had heard was a "tick, tack, toe." Rolled against a window it made a fearsome racket, and it made Mrs. Coyne mad as a hornet! The perpetrator was already on his way downstairs, but if Mrs. Coyne saw me and realized that it could not have been I who operated the noise maker, she gave no sign. She was wound up tight, and she went on the end of her tirade, pouring it over my shrinking frame without mercy.

I went home. I probably considered Halloween much overrated as a holiday. I know I was always afraid of Mrs. Coyne after that. She was not a big woman, but she had a lot of fire — and brimstone!

It was not until I was teaching — in Lake Odessa, I think — that I heard about "trick-or-treating." They kept three nights: (1) Doorbell Night, (2) Beggar's Night, and (3) Halloween. It made some sense, at least: If you were stingy with the beggars, you got the "tricks" on Halloween — garbage on the porch, soap on the windows, and such unpleasantness. Before that, it was all tricks and no reprieve.



*Albert Louis Riedel (seated, left) and Louis Albert Riedel (standing, second from right), with other members of their D.V.V. club*

◀ 2018    ◀ ALBERT RIEDEL    ◀ DVV CLUB    ◀ HALLOWEEN    ◀ HOLIDAYS    ◀ LOUIS RIEDEL    ◀ MICHIGAN    ◀ MINDEN CITY  
◀ RIEDEL    ◀ SCHREITER