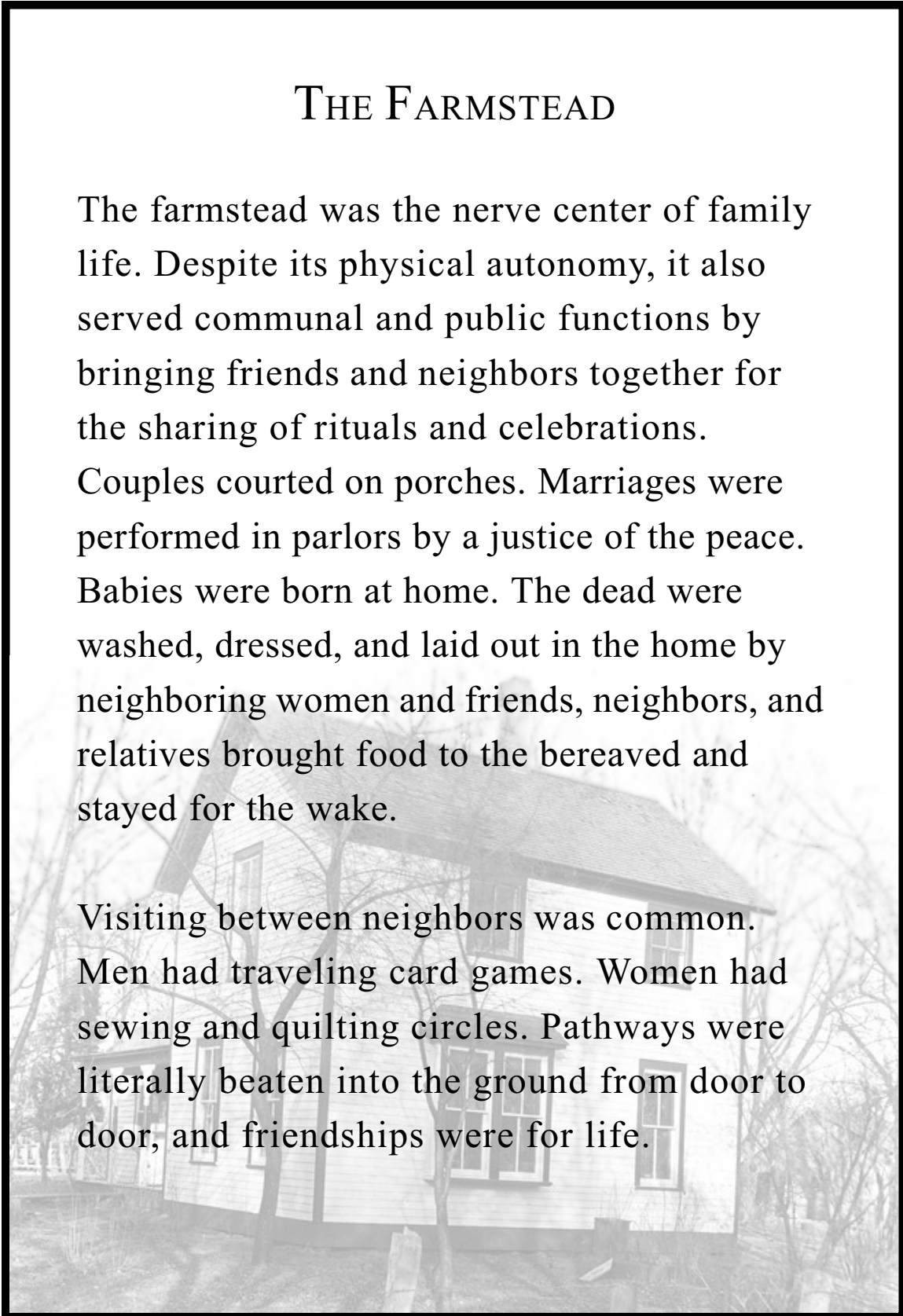


THE FARMSTEAD

The farmstead was the nerve center of family life. Despite its physical autonomy, it also served communal and public functions by bringing friends and neighbors together for the sharing of rituals and celebrations.

Couples courted on porches. Marriages were performed in parlors by a justice of the peace. Babies were born at home. The dead were washed, dressed, and laid out in the home by neighboring women and friends, neighbors, and relatives brought food to the bereaved and stayed for the wake.

Visiting between neighbors was common. Men had traveling card games. Women had sewing and quilting circles. Pathways were literally beaten into the ground from door to door, and friendships were for life.



MULES AND HORSES

Mules *are* contrary. They have a built-in instinct for self-preservation that makes it almost impossible to force them do something harmful to themselves. They are also tough. The combination made them the perfect work animal for farmers whose hired hands didn't understand horses. Horses can be pushed until they drop dead; mules will quit. They seem to have a built in sense of danger. If a hitched team of mules gets scared and runs away, they will never straddle a tree. They both go on the same side of every tree and hole.

