

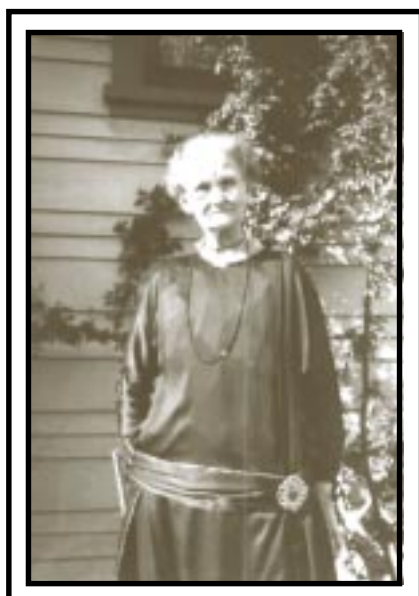
THE TURNING POINT

The death of his father G.W.B. Sadorus June 17, 1911 was, in Frank Sadorus's own words: "a turning point in our lives." It brought major changes to the family. When the estate was settled in 1917, the farm was sold. Elmer and Mary retired from farming and built a new house with their mother Phoebe. Frank moved alone into a two-room cottage on the edge of town and packed away his camera equipment.



Within three months, Frank had been committed by his family to the Kankakee Mental Asylum. At his trial, the court described him as "troubled with delusions and hallucinations and a pronounced tendency to worry," noting that he was "primarily concerned that someone was trying to harm him." The attending doctor described him as "well mannered with a kind disposition." At the time of his commitment, Frank Sadorus was thirty-seven years old. The commitment papers were signed by his brother Elmer, sister Mary, and mother Phoebe Sadorus.

The court proceedings also note that a "prior attack of two years ago," consisting of "dislike for his brothers and sister" was never treated. It is possible that discussions about selling the farm may have begun at least by 1915, and perhaps as early as 1912. His last year of actively photographing seems to be around 1912. After 1912, his photographic output becomes sporadic.



A group of late family photographs. (upper right) Frank's cottage. (middle left) Elmer Sadorus standing by Christmas tree. (middle right) Two family groups torn from an album. Images possibly taken on the grounds at Kankakee Mental Asylum.

(bottom left) Phoebe Sadorus, dated March 30, 1924. Images from the Collection of the Illinois State Museum, 1987.001.494, 1987.001.506, 1987.001.460, 1987.001.416.

MENTAL HEALTH FACILITIES OF THE DAY

The *Blue Book of the State of Illinois 1921–1922* states that in 1921, there were 27,514 inmates in institutions under the Department of Public Welfare. Of this number, 17,596 were classified as insane, 290 of whom were World War I veterans.

By 1920, Illinois institutions had introduced exercise programs, occupational therapy, and outdoor employment consisting of work in garden and farm areas. Physical and mechanical restraints such as the wooden Utica crib—something like a strong baby crib with a lid, straight jackets; camisoles, cuffs, muffs, straps and other restraints had been eliminated. These were replaced with new procedures such as "modern hydrotherapy" that "restored to health" cases of "acute mania" by the use of continuous baths and wet packs.