



The Hart family home at 333 Center Street 2002

Betsy and Tacy lived on Hill Street which ran straight up into a green hill and stopped. The small yellow cottage where Betsy Ray lived was the last house on that side of the street, and the rambling white house opposite where Tacy Kelly lived was the last house on that side. They had the whole hill for a playground. And not just that one green slope. There were hills all around them. Hills like a half-opened fan rose in the east behind Betsy's house.

Betsy-Tacy Go Over The Big Hill

For the Ray house was small. But the sloping lawn was big, with maples and a butternut tree in front of the house, and behind it fruit trees and berry bushes and a garden, and Old Mag's barn, and the shed where the carriage was kept.

Betsy-Tacy

The back yard maple is gone – that tree in the branches of which Betsy used to keep her manuscripts in a cigar box. Mr. Ray planted the maples you now see in front of the house.

Maud Hart Lovelace, 1961

Maud Palmer Hart

Elizabeth 'Betsy' Ray

333 Center Street

Betsy was the middle-sized one. She had plump legs and short brown braids which stuck out behind her ears. Her smile showed teeth which were parted in the middle, and

Betsy was almost always smiling.

~ Betsy-Tacy and Tib ~



Maud Palmer Hart
1897

Maud Palmer Hart was born April 26, 1892, at the Hart home at 214 Center Street. Maud's birthday was always celebrated on April 25. It was not until she was 50 years old that she learned she was actually born on April 26. She had asked her mother about the hour of her birth, and her mother's response was "pretty near midnight, in fact it was a little after, but only a teeny bit." Maud replied, "You mean I was born on the 26th?" Her mother answered, "I suppose so. It was after midnight, a half hour or so." She went on to tell her the story that Maud's Uncle Jim Hart had become engaged in April 1892 to a widow named Maud Fowler Maloney while Stella was pregnant. Maud Maloney's birthday was April 25, and Stella had told her that if her baby was born on the 25th, she would be named Maud. Stella went into labor on the 25th, but the baby wasn't born before midnight. She explained that "they all liked Aunt Maud so well, I fudged on the date." All legal records show Maud's birth date as April 25!

Maud's mother often said that at the age of five, Maud followed her, asking, "How do you spell 'going down the street'?" Maud writes, "I cannot remember back to a year in which I did not consider myself to be a writer, and the younger I was the bigger the capital "W." Back in Mankato I wrote stories in notebooks and illustrated them with pictures cut from magazines. When I was ten my father, I hope at not too great expense, had printed a booklet of my earliest rhymes. Soon after I started bombarding the magazines and sold my first story when I was eighteen."

After graduation Maud underwent an appendectomy in Mankato in June 1910. She attended the University of Minnesota that fall. However, she did not adjust to college life and hadn't felt well since the appendectomy, so she withdrew from the university just before Thanksgiving. The following January her parents sent her to San Diego to stay with her grandmother Austin to recuperate. There she continued to write stories, and she received a great deal of support from her Uncle Frank Palmer. When she was preparing to return to Minnesota in June 1911, Maud picked up a copy of the *Los Angeles Times* Sunday magazine, and found that it had printed her first story, "Number Eight." Maud returned to Minneapolis, because her parents had moved there while she was in California.