A Blair Family

The stories of a big family and their friends
This book is dedicated to Mrs Strohm, Mrs. Kobs, all the people who taught me how to use iBooks Author, all my friends and family, and Elena and Emma.
Introduction

This is a fictional story of the life of a settler family in the plains. The pictures and information are real but the events and the characters in the story are not (with the exception of the Crowells who were a real family in Blair). I would like to thank you in advance for reading my story!
Characters

Here are the characters who write diary entries in the story.

Mary Greenberg

Mary is the youngest in the family. She is seven years old and is very cheerful. She doesn’t understand friendship quite yet, but she would make an excellent friend.

Beth Greenberg

Beth is the eight year old sister in the family. She desires friends but doesn’t know where to find them. Later she realizes that friends are right in front of her.

Sally Greenberg

Sally is the oldest girl in the family. At age twelve she is starting to look for some friends.

John Greenberg

John is a fifteen year old boy who helps his dad out on the farm. He wants to get out of the farming business and explore the real world someday.

George Greenberg

George is the oldest of the Greenbergs. He goes off to the woods and hunts to make money for the family.

Carrie (Ma) Greenberg

Carrie is the mother of the family. Sally started calling her Ma one day so she likes being called Ma now. She desires to go back to her home in Georgia but tries to hide it.

Amelia Baluelea

Amelia is a girl who has lived in Blair her whole life. Although she knows a lot of people in the town, she doesn’t have any real friends her age.

Lucy River

Lucy is a nurse who lives in Blair. She has Sally Greenberg clean her house. She seems mean but she’s really nice on the inside.
Mary Greenberg
September 23, 1889

Dear Diary,

Today Ma gave me this thick book full of blank pages. She told me to write my thoughts in it. Beth, John, Sally and George got one too. Why is she spending her money on white blank books? I know we’re poor. Why do they keep so many secrets from me?

Beth Greenberg
September 24, 1889

Dear Diary,

Today at school we had to write a story. I wrote about a little girl who was eight like me. She just moved here and was really homesick. She had no friends, and she tried to make some but nobody liked her but her family. She never found out why.

Miss Emily told me I should read my story to the class. In fact, she made me. I’m very shy and having to read my story in front of the whole class was really scary. What if I messed up? Would people laugh? What if anything I said offended people? When I read my story out loud I noticed a lot of mistakes.
“Good job, Beth.” Miss Emily told me.

That was the only compliment I got. Nobody clapped. Nobody even smiled at me.

John Greenberg
September 25, 1889

Dear Journal,

Today I helped Pa milk the cows. We took it off to the market to sell. Lucy River was also selling milk. More people bought her milk because they hear she owns healthier cows. We didn’t earn much. Only twenty cents. We need the money badly. Mary and Beth always complain about how they are so hungry. We haven’t told them how low we are on money. They are too young to let stuff like money go to their heads. I wish it was sweet corn season again. We all love the taste of our family-grown juicy sweet corn.

Sally Greenberg
September 26, 1889

Dear Diary,

Another ordinary day for me. Laundry, swept the floors, made the beds. Doing chores all day gets really boring. I wish I could hunt with George. It sounds so exciting! I could use more excitement in my life. Sadly, Ma needs me cleaning Lucy River’s house. She pays us a lot of money. Besides, Pa would never agree to let “his little girl” go hunting. Goodbye for now my dear diary. Ma needs me to wash the clothes.
George Greenberg

September 27, 1889

Dear Journal,

I feel today was very successful in terms of hunting. I killed enough animals for dinner for a week, and I earned two dollars! Mary hasn’t been feeling well lately. I hope she is okay. We can’t afford for a child to get sick. Even though Lucy River is a nurse, she wouldn’t be kind enough to help us. She never is and never will be.

Mary Greenberg

September 28, 1889

Dear Diary,

Today Ma told me I was sick. She seemed very worried. I overheard John and George talking. They said I might die. YES DIE. They said they couldn’t afford medicine for me. I read George’s diary, and he said Lucy wasn’t nice enough to help me. I’m getting even more confused with every word I write. Ma’s calling me. Goodbye for now.

Beth Greenberg

September 30, 1889

Dear Diary,

Two days have passed and Mary still is very sick. I hope she is okay for her birthday. It would be miserable if instead of celebrating she would be complaining over how much her head hurts and how she feels dizzy. I think I will ask Lucy River if she will be kind enough to help Mary. She says I am her favorite out of all of my family. She also said she doesn’t like anybody else in this family.

Lucy Rivers

September 30, 1889

Dear Diary,

Today Beth Greenberg came over to my cottage and asked if she could come in. I didn’t have a reason not to let her in, so I did. She is a very sweet girl. She started to talk about how Mary’s birthday was coming up. Then she told me Mary was very ill. Mary is also very sweet, and I was afraid she might die. Because I was a nurse, I asked if I could come to their home and try to cure her. Beth said she would bring her over here. That makes sense because the rest of the Greenbergs don’t really like me. I have been trying to get on their good side. I have been very lonely since Charley died and the more
company I get the happier I will be. Oh my! Beth just came running to my cottage crying help, help! I have to go.

Ma Greenberg

September 30, 1889

Dear Diary,

I don’t know where Beth’s mind is at today. First she went to Lucy River’s cottage. Lucy is a very mean woman. She always is coming over here and giving us hurtful remarks about how our home is so messy. I don’t think I should let Sally clean Lucy’s house anymore. Anyway, then she took poor little Mary over there. I let it go because Lucy is a nurse and maybe she’s curing her. I decided to follow them just to be safe. They were almost there when Mary passed out. I ran up and told Beth to get Lucy. Lucy came running out. She tried to wake up Mary, but she couldn’t. We are in the hospital right now. Lucy says she will pay for it. The doctor just woke Mary up. I am so glad she is ok.
John Greenberg
September 30, 1889

Dear Journal,

After checking to see if there were any ripe crops I went to check on Mary. She was gone! I searched everywhere but I couldn’t find her. I noticed that Beth and Ma are missing. I can’t find anybody! Pa is at the market. I also don’t know where Sally is. I feel so lost and afraid even though I’m fifteen. I should stop writhing in this book and go find my family. Wait, where’s George? Why don’t people tell me when they are leaving? I’m so mad right now.

Mary Greenberg
September 31, 1889

Dear Diary,

After I got home from the hospital, Ma yelled at Beth for taking her sick child (me) on a walk without her permission. After that, John ran up and started hugging us. He said he couldn’t find anyone, and he thought we got kidnapped or we were dead. Then he said Sally and George are missing. Beth pointed out that a note was left in the table.
I Must Find My Children
Sally Greenberg

September 30, 1889

Dear Diary,

My heart is pounding right now. I’m writing in secret so if my family finds me dead they’ll know what happened to me. While George and I were at home, a man came barging into our door. We thought it was Pa coming back from the market, but it was a robber. He took all our food and money and took us off to the Crowell Mansion while the Crowells were visiting their aunt. While the man was stealing, I had time to write a note to my family. He took us through the back routes of Blair and hid us in the Crowell Mansion. He put us in a tiny room under the stairs and locked the door so we couldn’t get out. I hope he isn’t planning to do anything to us. I just want to live a happy life and get married and have kids like a normal person.

Ma Greenberg

September 30, 1889

Dear Diary,

They are at the Crowell Mansion! I know it! I don’t know why, I have a feeling they are in trouble. I am sending Pa and John to find them. I must find my children!

Amelia Baluelea

September 30, 1889

Dear Diary,

Today I was wandering by Crowell Mansion, and I heard a soft noise as I was walking by. There must be something wrong, because I could hear it from all the way out where I was standing. The door was wide open, so I went inside. The noise was coming from under the stairs. It sounded like a human yelling! The door was locked, so I unlocked it and opened the door. A girl my age and a older boy fell out!

“Thank you! Thank you!” the girl exclaimed.

“My name is Sally! My brother George and I were kidnapped and taken here! We were stuffed under the stairs for almost two hours. What’s your name?”

“Amelia,” I replied. She kept explaining how her family is poor and they sell most of their food. I took her to my house and I gave her some of our spare food for her family. She thanked me and took me to her tiny house. I will tell the rest of the story later. Mama is calling me.
Dear Journal,

Pa and I dashed to Crowell. Through the brick roads, past the shops on main street, faster than lightning. We were afraid they were in trouble. When we arrived, we searched the mansion for any sign of them. Upstairs, downstairs, until I found the little room under the stairs. The doors were open, and Sally’s pink ribbon was in it. I knew she had been there, and she got out. I think she could’ve been locked under there. But where is she now?
Amelia, My Hero
Ma Greenberg

October 1, 1889

Dear Diary,

Yesterday after I sent Pa and John out to find Sally and George, Sally came back with George and a girl about her age. She had butternut colored hair and deep ocean blue eyes. Her name was Amelia. She told me how she saved Sally and George and gave us food. I hesitated to take the food, but we need every tiny bit we can get in order to keep our family alive. I regret buying these diaries. I may have wasted my money. Anyway, after Amelia came here the girls went for a walk across town. They told me about the train depot and what it looks like. I’m glad Sally has made a friend! Now it’s time for Mary and Beth to make friends.

Sally Greenberg

October 1, 1889

Dear Diary,

Sunday was very exciting, but the scariest thing I’ve ever experienced at the same time. I wish I knew who kidnapped us so I could turn him into the sheriff, but I can’t remember what he looks like. I know he was going around town raiding houses including the Crowell Mansion. I’m pretty sure we were the only ones to get kidnapped. Anyway, I hope I get to see Amelia again. She’s the only friend I have, and she saved my life. On another topic, it’s Mary’s birthday today! I should find her a gift! She likes peaches. So does Amelia! Maybe I should get her a peach, too!

Beth Greenberg

October 2, 1889

Dear Diary,

Yesterday, I decided to go out and make some friends. Sally has Amelia, so why shouldn’t I have friends? It can’t be that hard, right? I tried not to step on the cracks on the brick road, so Ma won’t break her back. I wondered down Washington Street, past the dried goods store, to the farmers market, and there I saw Sally and Amelia looking at some peaches smiling their little faces off. They’re starting to annoy me. All they ever care about is each other and peaches. Peaches, peaches, peaches! What ever happened to me, her little sister? Can’t we be friends? We’ve known each other longer than anybody else. Then they let me join in on their conversation.
“Beth! Beth! Look, it’s Beth!” Amelia shouted with excitement.

“Beth, over here! We’re picking out the ripest peaches we can find for Mary!” Sally yelled.

I shuffled over to her because I don’t want her telling Ma I was out on my own without her permission.

“How are you paying for them?” I asked.

“With money that I earned from cleaning Lucy’s house,” Sally responded with hesitation.

The thing was, Sally only cleans Lucy’s house on Mondays and Thursdays. I saw her at the market on a Monday, so that means she “cleaned” Lucy’s house on a Sunday. She also should’ve been cleaning when I saw her! Has she been lying to me? No, no. Sally wouldn’t do that. Maybe Lucy moved the dates Sally came. I think I’ll go ask her what’s going on.

Sally Greenberg

October 3, 1889

Dear Diary,

Yesterday Beth asked me why I wasn’t cleaning Lucy River’s house on Monday. I told her Lucy changed my days to clean, because I didn’t want her finding out the truth. Now when I’m lying, it’s pretty obvious that I’m lying. When I told Beth my days were changed, she didn’t believe me for a second. She asked me what was really going on, and it all flowed out of me like a river.

“Lucy fired me,” I told Beth.


“Umm... well...you see... I broke her her fifty dollar vase,” I sputtered.

“Please tell me you don’t have to pay for this,” Beth pleaded.

“No, no. I don’t have to pay for it, but I don’t get paid at all anymore,” I remarked.

“So... how did you pay for the peaches at the farmer’s market?” she asked.

“Well, now that Lucy has nobody to clean her house, she hired Amelia. She was buying peaches with her own money,” I explained.

“Then how are you making money for our family?”

“I clean stables at a farm across town.”

“What do you know about cleaning stables?”

“I don’t know much, but I know the basics, enough to make me some money.”

“How much money do you make?”
“Seven cents an hour.”

“Wow! Peaches are two cents each! You could get a lot of peaches.”

“I know. Please don’t tell Ma or Pa.”

“I wouldn’t dare. Does Amelia know about this?”

“Yes, but I trust her. She saved my life.”

The memories buzzed through my head like bees on a **scorching** summer day. I’ll never forget that time when she saved my life.

**GALLERY 3.1 Downtown**

This is the inside of the dry goods store.

**REVIEW 3.1** Here’s your Chapter three review

**Question 1 of 5**

**Why did Lucy fire Sally?**

- **A.** Sally broke her fifty-dollar vase
- **B.** Lucy didn’t need Sally anymore
- **C.** Sally forgot to come one day
- **D.** She never was fired
Stupid Letter

So sorry,

Sally Greenberg
Ma Greenberg

October 4, 1889

Dear Diary,

I am so proud of Sally. She works so hard, she is an angel around the house, and she has a friend! She’s the perfect child. But when I tell her how proud I am of her, she just walks away like she’s mad. I hope nothing’s wrong. I’ve been noticing she’s been going to work at different times. Maybe Lucy changed the dates. Sometimes she comes in all filthy. I don’t think Lucy would make her do anything to get her very dirty. I’m starting to think she got a different job. I could be fine with it as long as she has a good reason for it. I just hope she makes a lot of money.

Sally Greenberg

October 4, 1889

Dear Diary,

I am in my room right now, and I am supposed to be writing an apology letter to Lucy River saying I’m sorry I broke her vase. But instead I’m writing in here. My parents found out about the vase. Ma approached me quietly and asked me why I was going to work at different times. I told you I am not very good at lying, so Ma knew something was going on. I couldn’t hold on any longer. I told her everything I told Beth.

“I’m very disappointed in you,” Ma told me.

“Are you mad?” I asked her.

“No, but I am glad you got another job. This one even pays more than Lucy’s did. The problem is you get your clothes so dirty. We need to get you some rags,” Ma remarked.

“So are we good here?” I asked her hoping to get out of a consequence.

“Yes.”

I innocently started to skip away. Then she stopped me.

“But I want you to write a letter to Lucy saying you’re sorry. You won’t get dinner until it’s done.”

I can’t believe my own mother went from being disappointed in me to being happy for me, and then taking away food sources until I finish a stupid letter in a span of almost five minutes. Well I better go write that letter, because I’m starving!
What was Sally’s punishment?

A. She had to sweep all the floors
B. She had to clean stables across town
C. She had to write a sorry letter to Lucy River
D. She had to watch her sisters
E. She couldn’t see Amelia anymore
F. She couldn’t eat peaches for seven weeks
Dear Diary,

Yesterday I received a letter from Sally Greenberg saying she was sorry for breaking my vase. That letter made me cry. The last time I cried, was when Charley died. When she broke my vase, I wanted her to feel ashamed of herself so I told her it was worth fifty dollars. Really I got it at our local antique store for twenty-one cents. I fired her because I wanted Amelia. I’ve been to her house for dinner once and her room is spotless! Sally does a good job at cleaning, but Amelia is way better.

After a little while I felt really guilty. I just couldn’t handle it anymore. I went to their house and apologized in person.

“I wanted Amelia,” I told Sally and her mom.

“I understand. She keeps her house spotless!” she replied.

“I feel terrible. If you want your job back, I will give it to you.”

“No, I don’t need it. I got another job. Besides, you’ll just have to pay more money.”
“Thank you for understanding. No hard feelings?”

“No hard feelings.”

And just like that we made up. It wasn’t as hard as I thought it would be. She is a very understanding girl. I see why Amelia likes her so much. She doesn’t stop talking about how nice Sally is. Speaking of Amelia, she should be here any minute. I have to go!

Sally Greenberg

October 18, 1889

Dear Diary,

I’m sorry I haven’t written in here for a while. I’ve been spending a lot of time with Amelia. The other day we went to the park to talk.

“I know you weren’t born in Blair like me, so where are you from?” she asked me.

“Well, my family moved here from Georgia in 1882 when I was four. We lived on a peach farm, and when we heard about the “golden soil” in Nebraska Pa wanted to move here and try to grow corn,” I explained.

“You lived on a peach farm?” she asked with excitement.

“Yes. It was amazing! It was an all-you-can-eat peach buffet, that is, you could make peach pastries, peach pies, peach cobblers, that is, if you could make them yourself.”

“And could you?”

“Oh, yes! My grandmother was the best baker in town! She had many peach recipes, and she taught me all of them. I was wondering, how did you know about this?”

“Beth told me.”

“Beth talked to you? I thought she was super annoyed by us always giggling and talking!”

“I guess not.”

At that moment it hit me that Beth probably is really lonely and wants some friends, friends that will respect her forever. The next day that’s what we gave her. She loved it! I haven’t ever seen her happier! And to be honest, being best friends with your sister is delightful because if you want to talk or play with her, she’s already at your house. I know our friendship will last forever, and this diary will always live to tell our stories.
Blair’s land was purchased on May 10, 1869 by John I Blair. A town was needed when Sioux City and Pacific Railroad decided to cross the Missouri River at that location. The route missed the existing towns of Desoto and Cuming City, so a new town needed to be founded.

Front Street was developed quickly. Many businesses and churches started to appear. Soon after, a bank, a hardware store, a dry goods store, a hotel, and a newspaper came to Blair. A town board was formed in August. Soon before the year ended, the town requested an election to relocate the county seat, which was in Fort Calhoun at the time. Blair won, and a brick courthouse was built at 16th and Grant.

The rail line was starting to take shape, too. Before the bridge across the Missouri River was built, freight cars were pulled across the river in barges. Because the engines couldn’t cross the river, a roundhouse was created to service them north of town. When the bridge was finished in 1882, the building was dismantled.

John Insley Blair is the wealthy railroad builder who bought Blair’s land and named it Blair. He was born on August 22, 1802 near Belvidere, New Jersey. He was the fourth of ten children. Even though John never set foot in Blair, it was still John’s town. In 1869, Blair’s agents platted the city and started to sell lots. Blair died in 1899. At one point in his life, Blair owned two million acres of land. He platted 12 towns in his life including Missouri Valley, Iowa, Woodbine, Iowa, and Ames, Iowa.
Crowell Mansion

The Crowell Mansion was constructed by Christopher C. Crowell in 1884. He also founded Crowell Lumber and Grain Co. and Crowell Elevator Co.

The Crowell Mansion was built on an eleven acre lot at the end of Grant and Lincoln Streets. The mansion was a three-story, twenty-two room building. Features included fourteen foot ceilings, beautiful oak stairways, painted walls and ceilings, ten marble fireplaces, and much more.

It was **demolished** in 1971.

The Train Depot

This is the inside of the Train Depot. The first depot was built in February, 1869. It was located next to Walker Avenue, which nowadays is 16th Street. It was also a hotel with wood frames and three stories.

The second depot was built in 1880 (This is the depot that the story takes place in.) It wasn’t a hotel like the last depot. Again, it was a wood frame building.

The third depot was built in 1910. Unlike the other depots, this one was made of bricks. The last passenger train to leave the depot departed on June 3, 1950. The depot stayed empty on the lot until October 19, 1987.
Photo Gallery

GALLERY 5.1 This is a photo gallery of Blair

This in the post office. The location has been moved across town.

INTERACTIVE 5.1 Bird’s eye view of Blair

- Congregation Church
- Old Courthouse
- Baptist Church
- Methodist Church
- Railroad depot and hotel
- Old Farmers Hotel
- Elan Clark & Son’s Mill
- City Mills
Hello, I’m Morgan Thompson. I am 11 years old, and I am in 5th grade at Arbor Park in Mrs. Kobs’ class. I love to read, write, draw, dance, make crafts, and play my flute. I grew up in Blair and don’t plan on going anywhere else until I go to college. I have one younger sister and a seven year old cat named Lucy. My favorite color is purple (I bet you’ve figured that out by the background of this page), my favorite fruit is peaches (again, also obvious), and my favorite animals are cats and monkeys (I really want a monkey!) I would like to be either an author, a professional dancer, a meteorologist, an engineer, or a computer designer when I grow up.
Credits

Book cover photo was taken at Washington County Historical Museum

No Sick Children photo: http://www.flickr.com/photos/benhosking/4880198009/

Amelia My Hero photo: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Assorted_Peaches_2816px.jpg

The Truth photo: Creative Commons Search

Blair Historic Preservation Alliance

Souvenir Edition Blair Democrat

Map on Interactive 5.1: BHPA

Historic Photos: BHPA and WCHA

Links

History of Blair: http://www.blairhistory.com/default.htm

Historic Blair pictures: http://www.blairhistory.com/archive/photo_archive/default.asp

Washington County Historical Museum: http://wchamuseum.com/
Thanks for reading!

~Morgan
Barging

Verb

To move forcefully or roughly

Definition from: Apple Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index

Chapter 2 - I Must Find My Children!
Blank

Adjective

Bare, empty, plain

Definition from: Apple Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Chapter 1 - No Sick Children
Butternut

Noun

A North American walnut tree that bears oblong sticky fruits

Definition from: Apple Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here
Complain

Verb

Express dissatisfaction or annoyance about a state of affairs or an event

Definition from: Apple Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Find Term

Chapter 1 - No Sick Children
Demolished

Verb

To pull or knock down a building

Definition from: Apple Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms
Drag related terms here

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Chapter 5 - History of Blair
Departed

Verb

Leave, typically in order to start a journey

Definition from: Apple Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Find Term

Chapter 5 - History of Blair
Depot

Noun

A railroad or bus station

Definition from: Apple Dictionary App
Hesitated

Verb

The act of pausing before saying or doing something

Definition from: Apple Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms
Drag related terms here

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Chapter 3 - Amelia, My Hero
Innocently

Adverb

Not guilty of a crime or offense

Definition from: Apple Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Chapter 4 - Stupid Letter
Laundry

Noun

Clothes and linens that need to be washed

Definition from: Apple Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms
Drag related terms here
Miserable

Adjective

A situation or environment causing someone to feel wretchedly unhappy or uncomfortable

Definition from: Apple Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index

Find Term

Chapter 1 - No Sick Children
Offended

Adjective
Cause to feel upset, annoyed

Definition from: Apple Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms
Drag related terms here

Index  Find Term
Chapter 1 - No Sick Children
Poor

Adjective

Lacking sufficient money to live at a standard considered comfortable or normal in a society

Definition from: Apple Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Chapter 1 - No Sick Children
Remarks

Verb

To say something as a comment

Definition from: Apple Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index

Chapter 1 - No Sick Children
Robber

Noun

A person who steals

Definition from: Apple Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Chapter 2 - I Must Find My Children!
Scorching

Adjective

Very hot

Definition from: Apple Dictionary App

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index

Find Term

Chapter 3 - Amelia, My Hero