

Didaw's Book

James Howard Cloninger

Edited by Eric H. Cloninger

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Preface

James Howard Cloninger lived during a time of great changes. When he was born, many people had not seen an automobile. He lived through two World Wars, the Great Depression, and the rise and fall of Communism. He passed away only a few years before the Internet made its change. He saw the development of radio, television, the Atomic Bomb, and the personal computer. I watched him operate on the first two and I'm confident that, given a few reference books, he would've been capable of working on the last two.

Howard, known as *Didaw* to his grandchildren, began writing this book in the 1970's on a manual typewriter. He imagined that he was doing this for his own benefit—notes to himself while he could still remember. He told his children "no one is interested in the ramblings of an old man". He could not have been more wrong—he left his family a gift beyond value.

The book is written in a style that reflects Howard's thoughts at the time. He was interested in preserving his life experiences, although he occasionally inserted an editorial comment or two. These comments add to the understanding of the man who wrote them. You may find yourself reading these passages and thinking about your own life experiences in a new way, regardless of whether you agree with the opinions or not.

I resisted the temptation to edit the book beyond fixing some misspellings and moving a few paragraphs to stay consistent with the passing of time. Where appropriate, I've added footnotes to correct information that Howard may have missed or gives insight to the point he was trying to make. I did not add words or take them away—the words used are Howard's. In fact, many of the words that he spells as two separate words are commonly joined today, such as *week end* or *school house*.

Some of the language in this book is dated to a time prior to the civil rights movement. The words used to describe others changes over time—what is common in one generation may be considered inappropriate in later generations. There are words used in this book that some may find inappropriate, but they were not written with malice. I knew Howard for 25 years and I never knew him to hate someone simply because they were not white.

I spent hours with *Didaw* beside a pond with a fishing pole or on top of a house fixing a roof. Having his words in print brings me comfort and I hope it affects you in the same way. Perhaps you will find inspiration in its pages to record your own history for your family.

The credit for this book goes to Howard for putting these words onto paper. I can only lay claim to getting them into the computer. Those who helped bring this project to fruition are...

- My wife, Jackie Cloninger, who understood my need to finish this project through a lot of late nights.
- My children, Elijah and Ysabeau, for inspiring me to start this project in the first place.
- Arminta Branson for convincing Howard to let her make a copy of his book. Arminta filled in gaps where the story doesn't go into detail. She also rescued this project by saving files that I lost due to a computer crash.
- Bill Cloninger typed in many pages of the manuscript and sent me the pages I was missing from my copy of the book. He also provided information about the Owen Cloninger family.
- Calvin Saum of Kentucky and Jürgen Herzog of Saarbrucken, Germany. These gentlemen found locations mentioned in this book and sent photos to me. The actions of these people, whom I've never met or even spoken to, are proof that the world is better than we give credit for some times.
- Lee Yeary filled in missing pieces of the Yeary family history and told how the Cloningers came to Ewing, VA.
- Doy Cloninger and Darrell Carnahan for helping to sort out the genealogical data. These distant cousins have put their own family trees into order and they have graciously shared their knowledge with me.



Hydro, Oklahoma
November 2006

1800s to 1900

A Memorable Discovery

While looking around our cellar some time ago, I noted a small trunk in a corner. It has been almost thirty years since I had seen it. In fact, I did not recall moving it from the attic where we stored it shortly after we took possession of it in February 1935. I suppose it was moved to the cellar when we remodeled the house a few years ago. It was rusty and the hardware was tarnished. About one hundred years ago when it was new, it was much more attractive. It was made of light boards overlaid with sheets of thin iron. Some of the iron panels were smooth and others were embossed with a floral pattern.

Originally the smooth panels were gunmetal blue and the embossed ones were stained with a light reddish color. It has wood slats running across the arched top from end to end along the front and back. There were also slats across both ends. The slats had been finished with clear varnish. The latches and lock had been plated with polished brass. On each end there was a heavy loop of leather for handles. Inside there was a lift-out tray made of wood about one quarter inch thick and it had been covered with a paper that was printed with a small flowery pattern. You may have seen trunks of this kind in antique shops or someone's attic or cellar. This one is not so attractive now. The varnish is all gone, the iron is rusted, the brass plate is tarnished and the paper is yellowed with age and peeling.

I lifted the lid and looked inside. It was filled with treasures—the treasures of Virginia Ann Yeary Cloninger. The treasures consisted of the following items: there was a homespun woolen shawl, dyed black with a white yarn woven in about two inches from each edge. The outer ends of the yarn used in weaving were extended about an inch to form a fringe around it, three calico dresses, a few undergarments, a few handkerchiefs, a pair of spectacles, (small oval lenses, wire frames and straight wires to go over the ears). Very much like the ones worn by "Grandpa Jones" of the Nashville Country Music Programs.

There were some clippings from newspapers, including several quilt patterns, some letters dated seventy to eighty years ago, some knitting needles, a thimble (open at both ends), some snapshots of relatives, a scrap of brown taffeta (from my oldest sister's wedding dress), a bible, a hymn book (shaped notes). There were also two tintype photographs. One was of a young man, slender, with light wavy hair and a mustache. And, by the way, the younger man was rather good looking. The picture was mounted on a metal button with a pin on the back, like the campaign buttons used in some political campaigns. The picture is Virginia Ann's son, Joseph Henry, when he was about twenty-one years of age. The other tintype was mounted in a case having a hinged lid. The case showed signs of having been stained by muddy water and inside this notation was penciled in, "James Cloninger, 1868, Age 16."¹

The man in the picture looked more like a man of thirty years. He had a heavy, dark mustache, heavy, dark, close cropped hair and was holding a "cap and ball" pistol across his chest. He held the gun in his right hand but it appears to be in his left hand. The tintype shows every thing in reverse.

These were the worldly possessions and treasures of Virginia Ann when she passed away on February 6th, 1935, at the age of eighty years and one day.

Life in the Hills

Virginia Ann was the oldest of the children born to Henry and Rachel Daniels Yeary. She was born February 5th, 1855. Her sisters and brothers, in order of their birth, were Sarah, Joe, John, Harriet, Morgan and Surelda. Morgan died at the age of two years and Surelda died at age four. The rest of the family grew up and had families of their

¹ A photograph of this tintype is shown in Appendix B.

own. They always called Virginia Ann by the shorter name of Jenniean. I find it spelled this way in the letters found in her trunk. They were all born, and grew up, in the hills near Ewing, Virginia, in Lee County. This is the most southwesterly county in the state. It is very near Cumberland Gap, and just to the west of Wallens Ridge. A little farther east is Powell's Ridge and the Powell River.

Another "Hoot and Holler" and you will find the Clinch Mountain about which the country song "My Old Clinch Mountain Home" was written. Another landmark of some note in the area is what the local people call the "Buttes of The White Rocks". It was a cliff of white stone, which I believe was about one thousand feet of almost perpendicular rock. From what I have heard it is quite a sight to see. This was a rough country and produced some rugged, independent people.

Another family in that area was the Tom Cloninger family; they had spent some time in Missouri and then came back to Virginia. Tom Cloninger married Miranda Walker² and they had seven children. The first, a boy, was named James. His sisters and brothers, in order, were Sarah, Martha, Tom Jr., Sherman, Grant, and Angeline³. The elder Tom had two brothers and a sister, listed in my notes, John, Washington (called Wash) and Jane. He served some time in the Civil War. My notes do hot show which side he served but the names of his sons might indicate that he favored the Union.

He was injured in the war and came out crippled. Since he had difficulty walking, he rode a mule when he went anywhere. During the war there were groups of men who did not favor either side but took advantage of the unsettled conditions and more or less lived according to their own "laws." They were called "Bush-whackers" by the people there. One time Tom's mule came home rider-less and the family went back along the road and found Tom by the side of the road with bullet in his back. He was dead. By the evidence at the spot they decided that he had been shot by the Bush-whackers. It does not seem that robbery was the motive as there was a twenty-dollar bill in his pocket. I have the bill with my notes. It is a Confederate bill but at that time it was negotiable.

Miranda Cloninger and her family continued to live in that part of the country until her death. Some years later she developed a cancer and as it advanced she was not able to care for herself so Rachel Yeary and her family took her into their home and cared for her until the end.

When her son James grew he married Virginia Ann Yeary. Their first child was a girl born September 16th, 1871. This was three years after the date in the tintype picture so James would have been about nineteen years old then. They named the baby Rachel Miranda after her grandmothers Yeary and Cloninger. Their next child, a boy, was born October 26th, 1873. They named him Joseph Henry. As was the custom, they more or less stayed with the old family names. The grandfather and an Uncle shared their names with the baby boy. About two years later Jenniean was expecting her third child.

Shortly before the third child was born Jim decided to call it quits with the family. Rachel was old enough to recall some of the things about the last time she saw her father. She was playing by a rail fence when Jim came by, carrying his clothes and his fiddle. He picked her up and sat her on the fence and played the fiddle for her and told her goodbye. He picked up his clothes and walked out of sight around the bend in the road. He never returned. Rachel always felt that her mother could have been partly to blame for his leaving. However, that was according to the judgment of a child of five or six years. If Jenniean ever told anyone about the facts of the case I have never heard a hint of it. I never heard her ever make a derogatory comment about him. She always seemed to think that her men folks were about perfect. It is my judgment, based on her attitude and comments, that she loved Jim in spite of all that happened.

Shortly after he left the third child was born. It was another boy and she named him John Morgan. Little John lived only nine days and Jenniean had another sorrow to endure. They buried him in the Yeary family cemetery and Jenniean settled down to making a living for herself and her two children. They lived in a house on land that belonged to her father, Henry Yeary. Since Henry Yeary was totally blind, the son John was in charge of the farming.

² Many of the records spell her name 'Maranda' and some suggest that she was a 'Wilson' instead of a 'Walker'.

³ Some of my research suggests there was another child named Harman Cloninger.

James Howard Cloninger

As Rachel and Henry grew up they did their share of the work in the fields and gardens. Jenniean worked in the fields as well as taking care of her home and children.

Rachel and Henry always felt that Uncle John was somewhat of a hard taskmaster. Maybe he was and maybe that was the way it seemed to two young children. There is no doubt that people in those hills had to work hard if they had what they needed. That country was truly a land of *Milk and Honey* if one was willing to work for it. Even so, once in a while there would be a family that would not work hard enough to raise enough to feed their families. From the standpoint of money most everyone was poor. They lived a simple life and had plenty of plain, wholesome food. Those who survived the illnesses of childhood and the ones who did not "come down" with an illness that the doctors did not know how to treat lived to a ripe old age. Most of them had a strong loyalty to their family and relatives and respect for their elders. This loyalty to relatives is one factor, which helped to promote the famous feuds of which many of us have heard.

My notes show that Ben Yeary, Henry's brother, married a Hatfield woman who could have been related to the Hatfields around Harlan, Kentucky who were in the big feud for years. Harlan, Kentucky was just over a few *hills and valleys* to the west of Ewing, Virginia. Even with the hardships they had, in many ways they were richer than many millionaires. If you earned their friendship it lasted and it was the same way with enmity. I knew of a man who carried a fully loaded revolver all his adult life. He was looking for the man who waylaid him and put some buckshot in his back. The man stayed out of sight for the rest of his life so that was the end of that feud.

When Henry Cloninger was about three years of age he was troubled with stomach trouble. He threw up about every thing he ate. The old doctor told Jenniean to crumble dried tobacco leaves over his food, which she did. In time he got over his trouble. There is no proof that the tobacco brought about the cure, but one thing for sure it started the tobacco habit for Henry. He used it in one form or another for the rest of his life.

After Rachel and Henry were about eight or ten years old they called their mother Jan, another contraction of Jenniean. I never heard either of them call her anything but Jan. Once when Jan and the two children were picking beans to put up for winter use the children asked to go spend the night with cousins, Jan said, "You may go if you both will pick a bushel of beans this afternoon. So they both worked very hard to do it. The next morning when they came home Jan told them, "Now we know you can pick a bushel of beans in half a day and you will do it again." They learned lesson there that I did not learn for many years later. Sometimes it's better to not let everyone know all of your abilities.

In the same neighborhood there were several other families. The neighborhoods were divided by the bigger ridges or mountains. Where the hills were too rough the other side was almost like another country except where there was a pass that made travel easier. I have heard the following names mentioned as living in the *holler* where the Yeary and Cloninger families lived: Early, Ealy, Monday, Overton, Markham, Combs, Fugate, Bales, Cavin, Chance and others.

The Chance family played a part in this story. As far as my records cover, starts on April 18, 1803. That was the birth date of Levi Chance. He married Rachel Bartley who was born May 9, 1805. Their children, in order of their birth were, Pete Chance, John Chance, Sam Chance, Uriah B. Chance, Steve Chance, Sealie Chance, Nancy Chance, and Rachel Chance. Sealie Chance married a man named Combs, Nancy married an Eads. Somewhere in the family is a picture of Levi and Rachel Bartley Chance that was made at Cumberland Gap, Tennessee on February 20th, 1865. It is made in a frame like a book (like the one I found in Jan's trunk). The story is that it cost them five dollars in Confederate money. I have not had the good fortune to see it.

Uriah B. Chance was the head of the family that has a part in this story. He was first married to Eliza Hobbs on January 19th, 1860. She lived only a little over a year after they were married. She died on March 10th, 1861. They had no children. Uriah remained single until January 9th, 1868 when he married Martha Williams. They had one son, Levi G., born November 6th, 1869. Martha died soon after Levi was born.

On January 13th, 1870 he was married to Nancy Herd. Nine children were born to Uriah and Nancy. Their children's names and birth dates were as follows:

Rachel E., October 30th 1870

John M., October 29th, 1872

Leah, September 3rd, 1874

Mary, December 17th, 1876

Martha, August 20th, 1879

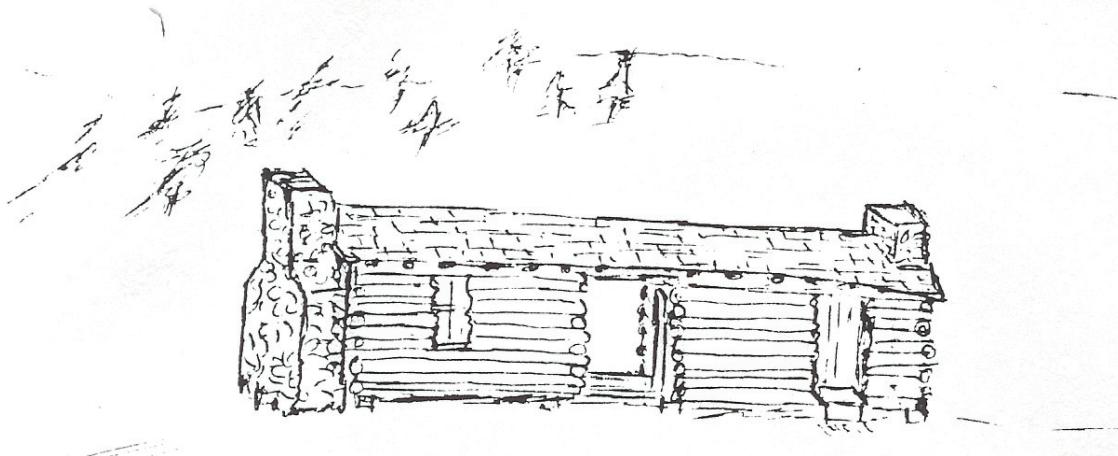
Rhoda, November 20th, 1881

Robert J., March 26th, 1884

Ira, October 30th, 1886

Nell H., March 15th, 1889

John died a few days before he was six years old. The others lived to raise families or their own. Nell was not quite eight years old her mother, Nancy, died on February 18th, 1897. Uriah never remarried.



The U. B. Chance Homestead

Uriah was the teacher of the neighborhood school part of the time and the Chance children attended the school. His hearing was not perfect. One ear was very bad. Occasionally some of the most mischievous students took advantage of his bad hearing. Rachel Cloninger, being one who liked fun, conspired with one of the boys in the geography class to give some funny answers to questions they knew would be asked. They were aware that the teacher had a little trouble with his hearing so when the question was asked "what is the name of the famous peak in the Alpine Mountains," the boy spoke up and said "Guts and Horns." The boy, being next to Uriah's bad ear, got by with that answer. When the question about the name of the mountain range to the west of the Hudson River came Rachel gave the answer as "The Catskin Mountains." She was less fortunate than the boy. She was next to Uriah's better ear and he knew what she had said. He gave her an openhanded slap on the face and said, "I'll give Catskin Mountains". She resented the boy getting by while she was slapped for her silly answer. I don't think she ever forgave Uriah for that slap.

Another funny incident I have heard Rachel and Henry tell about was the time a very large grasshopper landed in the middle of the schoolroom floor with a thump. All the students were studying and every thing was quiet. When the thump was heard everyone stared at the grasshopper. He would rise up on his legs as far as he could, then squat like he was going to jump. He repeated this performance several times and to a bunch of bored students this grew funnier by the minute. They were all laughing until they were out of breath and the teacher laughed along with them. I do not recall who was teaching, but am sure it was not Uriah at that time. After a while the laughter had died down and the teacher said, "Alright now, you have had your fun, let's get back to our lessons." Every thing was quiet again when one of the larger boys burst out with a loud guffaw. The teacher said, "Alright, Dal, you can carry the grasshopper outside." Since Dal was somewhat bashful he was very much embarrassed to have to do this. The rest of the students started laughing at him and he came back inside crying. He would rather have a whipping than to carry the grasshopper outside. A group of children can be very unkind as I can recall from my school days.

James Howard Cloninger

Many local landmarks were named from the owner of the land. There was one place called Bale's Meadow⁴. It must have been an outstanding meadow to be named after Mr. Bales. From what I have heard Mr. Bales was pretty well off. He had owned some slaves at the end of the Civil War. He had given them their freedom but some had remained and worked for him for a share of the crops. One of them went by the name of John Bales, taking the last name of his former master. John had a reputation of being honest. Everyone said he was as honest as the day is long. They called him *Honest John*. One winter Mr. Bales noticed that some one was taking corn from his crib so he decided to watch and find out who was doing it. A short time after dark he heard a noise at the crib and crept up to see who was there. To his surprise it was Honest John. But outside of the corn no one ever knew of Honest John taking anything that did not belong to him.

One other story about Mr. Bales and a renter had to do with a corn crop. Another of the freed slaves who farmed on shares with Mr. Bales was to get two-thirds and deliver one-third to the crib. He took two loads to his place and none to Mr. Bales. Mr. Bales asked him, "Where is my share of the corn, Sam?" Sam Said, "Massah Bales, they was only two loads, I didn't raise your load."

Uriah Chance owned two slaves when he first married. He received a pair of slaves as a wedding gift. I am not sure whether they were from his parents or the parents of his first wife. Since he was opposed to slavery he gave them their freedom before the war was over.

Like many others in the hills he made sorghum molasses for his family. A neighbor woman, who was colored, wanted to buy a gallon of the molasses. While Uriah was drawing it from barrel the colored woman, in a complaining tone, complained about it being too thick. Uriah, having a somewhat short temper, said, "Here, give me that bucket." He proceeded to pour it back into the barrel and handed the pail back to her. She giggled and said, "Well, I got what stuck to the bucket." He was more irritated by this but there was nothing he could do so he snorted, "Humph" and turned and walked away.

One day when Henry Cloninger was walking along one of the roads around a hill he came around a sharp bend and saw an elderly colored woman by the side of the road. She had her skirts gathered up around her waist and was looking at her stomach. When she saw him, she hastily put her skirts down and said, "Oh, you almost catched me a-flea-in." He laughed for years about almost catching her *a-flea-in*.

Another time he was walking along the road from Rose Hill to Ewing when a sudden rainstorm came up. He stopped at a cabin along the road to get out of the rain. It was the home of a colored man. In the conversation with the man he mentioned that he was from Ewing. The man told him that he knew a Mr. Markham from there and that he thought that was the meanest man he ever saw. He was berating Mr. Markham quite a bit so just as a joke Henry told him, "Yes, I know Mr. Markham, he is my uncle." The colored man swallowed and almost choked and said, "Yes Suh, but he shore a hansome man and a hard worker."

The conversation came around to the banjo hanging on the wall. The man asked if Henry could play it and he said he could. The man handed it to him and said, "Play some songs." So he started playing some of the old country tunes like *Black Eyed Susan*, *Soldiers Joy*, *The Irish Washer Woman* and *Sourwood Mountain*. The man was really enjoying those old tunes. Then Henry started to play *Cripple Creek* and the man interrupted and said, "I don't like that ole song." Henry asked him why he didn't like it and he said, "Cause it say knock a nigger down." The two lines, as sung by the hill people that disturbed him were:

*Goin' up Cripple Creek,
Goin' to town,
Goin' up Cripple Creek,
To knock a nigger down.*

⁴ It's possible that Bales Meadow was not named after Mr. Bales of the story. *Bailes Meadow* is in the Cumberland Gap about 5 miles west of the Yeary Cemetery. There is also a *Bales Chapel* and *Bales Cemetery* about 1 mile east of the Yeary Cemetery. It could be that there were two families by the name of Bales/Bailes in the area as those different named landmarks are about 6 miles apart. Phone records in 2003 only list the name Bales in the Ewing, VA area.

When Henry was about grown he took a wagon loaded with produce from the farm to peddle in the residential area in Middlesboro, Kentucky. He had various things, which he could sell, such as fresh fruit and berries, vegetables, fresh eggs live frying chickens and other things. After he had worked a few hours he began to feel the need of relieving himself of excess water. There was no place to get out of sight and as time passed he became more miserable. The idea came to him that he could stand at the rear of the wagon and pretend to be working on something in the wagon and no one would notice what he was doing. So he stood close to the coupling pole of the wagon (in case you don't know what the coupling pole is, it is a two by four inch oak timber that connects the front axle to the rear one—it usually projects out from the box a few inches) and was relieving himself by letting the water run onto the pole. While this was happening a lady came by on the sidewalk and said, "Say, Mister, you have something leaking in your wagon." Henry kept his face straight and told her, "Yes I know, the chickens have upset their water trough."

While working with a road crew in or near Cumberland Gap, Henry and another fellow were looking for a large rock to place in a waterway to keep it from washing and found one they thought was about right. They pried it up and discovered there was a hole going down under it. There was a cool breeze coming out of the hole. They did not give that much thought but they did not want to open the hole near the road. They replaced the rock and selected another.

Some few years later someone discovered a large cave near that spot. It was large enough to have a stream of water in it and a stream had fish in it. The fish had lived in the cave until their eyes were not developed. Nature had evolved sightless fish, as eyes were useless in the cave. This cave was later developed as a tourist attraction. I see on the map of Virginia a spot marked Cudjo's Cave⁵. Henry recalled the incident of the breeze under the rock and always wondered if they had almost found the cave.

Another cave of special interest to Henry was a small one near the Yeary home. It was not big enough to be famous but had one feature that Henry liked. In the center of the main room there was a big boulder that might have dropped from the roof of the cave ages ago. Water dripped from the roof and struck the boulder. Where the water struck it had worn away the limestone to form a cuplike depression. It held about a quart of very good, cold water. Henry would get a drink there when working in the nearby fields. It would refill in about an hour. In another cave called the Salt Petre cave, where early settlers had mined salt petre for making gunpowder, a group of men were exploring the deeper parts of the cave and came upon a human skeleton. Items they found along with the bones indicated the skeleton was of an Indian. One of the men, who was about six feet tall, measured one of the thigh bones by his own thigh. When he held it even with his hip it was about three inches longer than his own. It would seem there had been some rather large Indians there before the white man came to live in the hills.

Once when Henry told Pap Yeary he needed a second growth hickory to make an axe handle, 'Come along, I'll show you where to find it.' He led the way down through the field then turned up the hill into the timber. They climbed up some then came around to a bluff seventy or eighty feet high. Pap walked over within a few feet of the edge and took hold of a small tree and said, "I think this is what you need." The amazing thing to Henry was how Pap could find his way over the rough places and remember exactly where the hickory tree was as he had been totally blind for several years. A few mistaken steps and he could have fallen to his death but he lived to ninety-eight years old. His wife, Rachel, lived to be almost a hundred years of age.

Mam Yeary asked Henry Cloninger to go up into her attic to bring down her quilting frames so she could start a quilt one time. As he climbed up and removed the cover to the scuttle hole into the attic and found himself face to face with a large black snake. Like many of the young men in the hills, Henry carried a pistol in his pocket. Without hesitation, he grabbed the gun and blasted the snake's head off. Mam was very much upset by this. She said, "Henry, you have killed my pet snake. He was better than a bunch of cats to keep the mice out of the attic." Of course, the black snake was a harmless type but Henry's first reaction, as with almost everyone, was to kill it. He was not used to people considering a snake as a pet.

⁵ Cudjo's Cave is also referred to as the Gap Cave in the Cumberland Gap National Historic Park

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When Rachel Cloninger was about sixteen or seventeen years of age she was married to William Thomas Cavin. They set up housekeeping for themselves. They had one son named Garrett. Jan and Henry continued to help John with the work on the Yearly homestead until Henry was about eighteen years old. Henry felt that Uncle John was a little too hard to get along with. Perhaps this is the natural attitude of a teenager toward an older uncle who is his boss. Any way, Uncle John was not happy with some of Henry's work so he undertook to punish him. Henry had made up his mind that he had had enough so when John laid hands on him he gave Uncle John a rush and pushed him backward over the gatepost of the fence around the yard. John suffered an injury to his back so that he was not able to work for about two weeks. The last laugh was on Henry as he had to do the chores and cut fire wood for Aunt Liza, Johns wife, until Uncle John was able to work again.

Henry and Jan Move to Michigan

Henry wanted to find some place where it would be easier to get ahead than in the hills. He and Jan decided to go to Michigan to see how things would work out for them. For years I wondered why they decided on that state until I came across a note in Rachel Cavin's papers that Aunt Harriet and her husband, Andy Roy, had moved to Michigan. Harriet was Jan's younger sister so that probably suggested the move to her and Henry. They settled in the south part of the state in Hillsdale County, near a small town called Jerome. The latest census I have seen shows the population of Jerome to be two hundred after about seventy-five years. It does not seem to have grown much in that time. They lived a little farther from Hillsdale, the county seat town. It is a fair sized town now. That's the way it is with towns. Some grow, some stay about the same while others disappear completely.

Henry and Jan stayed in Michigan for about two years. He worked for farmers in that area. Grant Randolph is the name I heard him mention most as I suppose he worked more for him. Some of the farmers had several hired hands at times. Once when they were making hay for Mr. Randolph one of his ewes died. He wanted to save the fleece so asked the crew who was the best hand at shearing a sheep. The Irishman spoke up and said, "Begorrah, I'd say that's me." So Mr. Randolph told him to stay and shear the sheep after lunch. The rest of the men went to the hay field and started working. After about an hour Randolph began to wonder what had happened that The Irishman had not come to work in the hay. He fretted the rest of the afternoon but still no Irishman. By the time they were ready to call it a day he was mad enough to fire the Irishman. When they came into the barn lot the Irishman was just finishing the last cut on the fleece. He looked up with a grin and said, "Well, Grunt, I'm getting there by a large majority." Grunt was the way Grant came out when The Irishman said it. Randolph was very irritated and said, "What on earth do you mean, taking a whole afternoon to shear a dead sheep." To which he said, "Well, you asked who was a good hand at shearing a sheep and I think I'm the best. I won first prize at the county fair. You did not say you wanted a fast hand." He had sheared the sheep as smoothly as barber cutting hair. There was not a nick in it. Mr. Randolph must have had a good sense of humor, as he did not fire the Irishman. He just laughed and said "I learned something this time." The hired hands that stayed with the farmers had a feather bed to sleep on. The Irishman told them, "I don't like that damned goose-hair bed." Henry got quite a bit of amusement from the Irishman's way of talking. Although his grandma Yeary was of Irish descent she did not have so much of an Irish accent as the Irishman. When winter came there they used bob-sleds instead of wagons when they had anything to haul. The roads would be a solid, hard packed strip of ice after it had been used. They had calks on the horse's shoes and kept them filed sharp so the horses could get traction on the ice. One morning they had to haul a load of baled hay down the road a way. This time they forgot to sharpen the calks on the horse's shoes. When they came to the hill going down to the river, the sled started crowding the horses and the horses couldn't keep their footing. The team swerved to the side and the bob-sled upset spilling the hay into the read. The men hung onto a bale and rode it down across the bridge and a way up the other side before it came back and stopped on the bridge.

In the winter when they were not taking care of the livestock they worked some in the timber cutting fence rails and firewood. It was common practice there to cut the firewood a year ahead of the time to use it. Often times, after the snow had melted in the spring, the stumps where they had cut trees would be as much as six feet above the ground. They sometimes went to town with their sleighs and the snow was deep enough they could travel cross-country instead of following the roads. The lakes and bogs froze over in the fall and, as a rule did not thaw out until spring. Ice skating was one of their winter pass-times. One week end two good skaters worked up a contest to race about a mile across a local lake. The crowd of spectators made up a *pot* of fifty dollars to be given to the winner. Fifty dollars

was a very good prize those days as many of the workers were paid fifty cents and meal for a day's work. A day was ten or twelve hours also. So the race was set for Sunday and it was a bitter, cold day. The two skaters set out and stayed about even for about half way across and then one made a few fast strokes and gained about fifty yards on the other one. Suddenly, the skater in front disappeared for a few seconds. He had hit a soft spot in the ice and had fallen through. The skater behind leaned over and swerved around to miss the hole and instead of staying to see if he could help the man out of the icy water he returned to the starting point. The man in the water kept fighting the edge of the ice until it was solid enough to bear his weight and after quite a struggle he was back on top. He went ahead and skated to the finish. His clothing was frozen so stiff it took two or three men to pull him out and wrap him in dry coats from the crowd. He suffered no ill effect from the dip into the icy water and there was no question about who had earned the fifty dollars.

In the spring, when the weather warmed up enough, to shear the sheep the farmers would take them to a low bridge over the river and put up a gate at each end to hold the sheep so they could throw them into the river where the hired hands could wash them. They could get a better price for the wool if it was cleaned before shearing. The water in the river was almost waist deep. Once when Henry was working at washing the sheep they had washed several and the man on the bridge were having trouble getting an old ram over the edge of bridge. He was kicking and bleating. One of the boys in the water looked up and started saying, "Baa" like the sheep at about the same time the ram gave a big lunge. His foot slipped and a large glob of mud and sheep manure hit the fellow in the face. Henry never did say the recipient of the glob was not him. One other incident at the bridge was more tragic. It happened to another group of sheep washers. They were working for a while when one of the men in the group said, "Boys, I need some help" and went under the water. The others in the crowd thought he was joking as the water was only about three feet deep. When he did not come to the surface soon they became alarmed and started hunting for him. By the time they found him he was dead. He had an attack of cramps and drowned. Possibly, they could have revived him if anyone had first aid training.

The young men and boys went into town on Saturday nights where they had a kind of recreation hall. They had boxing and wrestling matches and games to pass the time. Occasionally, Henry boxed and wrestled with his group. One or the fellows challenged him to box with roller skates on. He had never worn roller skates but agreed to try it. He could hold his own as far as using the gloves was concerned. As soon as he stood up after putting on the skates the other fellow skated toward him with his arm cocked to throw a punch. As was natural, Henry threw up his guard to protect his face. This sudden movement caused his feet to fly up and the back of his head hit the floor. He said that was one fight he lost without a glove being laid on him.

The party broke up some time after midnight and Henry and one of his friends started home on horseback. A few miles down the road there was a farmhouse where two old maid sisters lived alone. The boys thought it would be fun to call the old maids out of bed at that time of the night. They rode up to the house and shouted, "Hello, Hello," until they saw a light come on and one of the ladies stuck her head out the window and asked what they wanted. Henry said, "You'd better take your chimney in, it looks like it's going to rain." Then they galloped away. They thought that was a very fine joke.

One of the fellows Henry rode around with had a buggy and team. He told Henry that he would bet fifty cents that he could sing his horses into a run and never touch the reins or whip. Henry told he was not a betting man but he would believe it when he saw it. The team was walking along and the reins were lying on the dashboard when the fellow started singing. Along about the third line of the lane; the horse's ears pricked up and a few words later they started to trot and another word or two—they broke into a full run. He had them trained to respond to some words in the song.

One time the owner of the trained horses was discussing the superstitions of the south with Henry. He was laughing about how many silly superstitions the people of the South believed, like bad luck to break a mirror, walking under a ladder, throwing salt over the shoulder and so on and on. All of a sudden he hauled back on the reins and started turning the buggy around in the middle of the road. Henry asked him what he was doing and he said, "Didn't you see that black cat cross the road down there. I would not go on down there for anything. That could mean all kinds of bad luck." So Henry said, "I see there is such a thing as Northern superstition as well as Southern." He said, "But

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that is not superstition, that is a fact." He drove three miles out of the way to avoid crossing the cat's path. I have often noted that it makes a lot of difference whose superstitions or prejudices are being criticized.

Henry was working for another farmer who was an elderly man. He had one cow that was rather cantankerous about being milked. She had a bad habit of kicking. The old gentleman said he had an idea how to keep her from kicking him. He tied her in a stall in the barn then put his head through a ladder about ten feet long. He figured that the ladder would block her kicks. However, it did not turn out the way he had planned. The old cow got her foot higher than he expected and hung it in the ladder and jerked the old gent down and really mauled him.

Another time they were making hay when a rain shower came up and they all went into the barn till the rain passed. The hay mow had some old hay in it. It had packed down until it was rather firm. Some of the young men and boys started turning handsprings on the hay. They were using their hands to make the turn. The old gentlemen spoke up and said, "If I could call back about twenty years, I'd show you boys how to really turn a handspring. You should do it without touching the ground with the hands." He walked out to the middle of the floor and I guess his ambition got the better of his judgment. He took a few running steps and jumped into the air to make his flip. He didn't quite make it. He came down with a loud thump, flat on his back. After he regained the breath that was knocked out of him by the hard packed hay he gave a short laugh. So all the fellows were relieved to see that he was not hurt badly so they laughed too. This irritated him so he said, "I guess you damn fools would laugh if a feller broke his neck."

There was one farmer there that was too proud of his accomplishments. Henry walked up to his barn where he was handling his stock and heard him talking to himself. Henry did not make his presence known and listened to what the man was saying. He said "who has the best farm in Hillsdale County"? He answered his own question "J.B. Weaver, by God." "Who has the best team in Hillsdale County?" "J.B. Weaver, by God". "Who has the prettiest girls in Hillsdale County?" "J.B. Weaver, by God". He was proud and wanted the world to know it.

This reminded me of another story Henry told about a fellow by the name of Britton in Virginia who made a practice of talking to himself. Henry and some of his friends asked Mr. Britton why he was always talking to himself and he said, "Well, boys, I'll tell you. I like to hear a smart man talk." I don't know how smart he was, but his wit was sharp.

I know that this trip to a new part of the country was a very interesting experience for Henry. I have heard him tell many stories about that part of his life. After about two years he and Jan decided to return to the hills of Virginia. I never heard him say why they did not stay in Michigan. Perhaps the winters were too rough or maybe he was not getting ahead fast enough or maybe, as often happens to people in a strange land, they became homesick for the old familiar places and people.

When Bill Yeary, Henry's second cousin, married Leah Chance Henry said, jokingly, "Maybe there is a Chance for me."

Country Roads, Take Me Home...

A short time after that he started courting Mary Chance. They were married on March 9th, 1895. Their first child was born December 23rd of the same year. They named her Lena Anthus. After they started a home of their own Jan went to live with Tom and Rachel Cavin and their son Garret. Henry worked at several jobs to make a living for his new family. He worked for a while at a saw mill and cut timber for tan bark. Some oak trees were cut for the bark to be used in tanning leather. You may have heard of *Oak Tanned Leather* which was the best leather used for shoe soles for many years. Modern chemistry has provided easier methods of producing tannic acid than peeling bark from trees to get it.

He worked for a while in a mill where all the hands slept in a big room. It was common practice to pull gags on anyone the men thought they could have some fun with. They started telling ghost stories. The story was that a man had been murdered in his sleep in that building years before. Sometimes his ghost would come back and lay his cold, icy hand on someone's face. All the while the story was being told, Henry was holding his hand near the window where the cold winter wind came in. At about the best time in the story he laid his cold hand on the face of his bedfellow who was slightly less sharp than the other fellows. The fellow jumped out of bed with a whoop and refused to go back to bed. He put on his clothes and went home. They had not expected the prank to be that bad.

At another mill where Henry worked they were having trouble keeping the pressure up in the boiler they were using to run the saw so the engineer tied a heavy wrench to the pop-off valve. He forgot about it when they stopped for lunch and the pressure went up too high. The boiler exploded and destroyed the engine room. The end plate of the boiler went several hundred feet into the air and came down edgewise on a large tree stump. It was embedded in the wood about six inches. The amazing thing was that no one was hurt in the explosion. About the time the commotion was over, an elderly man who had spent hours sitting on that stump and watching the men work came by and when they told him what had happened he fainted. That was the first time in weeks he had not been sitting on the stump. It just happened to not be his time.

After that job was finished Henry decided to go to work in a coal mine. For one dollar and eighty-five cents he could buy the equipment for the work from the company commissary lie bought his miner's lamp and cap and other tools and started walking into the mine. The entrance was a horizontal shaft that went straight into the mountain. After he had walked a considerable distance he turned and looked back. The spot of light at the mouth of the mine looked to him to be about three inches in diameter from that distance. His mining career ended then and there. He turned around retracing his steps and turned in his gear for a refund.

He was still thinking of trying to find a better place to make a living. He had talked with a neighbor who had moved to Texas for a while then became homesick and came back to the hills. They had liked Texas very well but could not forget the things they liked about the hills. When they left Texas they had an old dog they could not bring along on the train, or at least they felt it would be too much trouble. They left him with a neighbor in Texas. One evening about sundown, after they had been back in Virginia three or four months, one of the children ran into the house and said, "Old Shep is coming down the road." The mother could not believe it. Surely the old dog could not have found his way home but she came out to see if the child was mistaken. Sure enough, it was Old Shep so footsore and weary he could hardly walk but he was home to spend the rest of his life. They had driven a covered wagon to Texas and took the dog with them. The dog must have remembered the way back home.

Henry and Mary Move to Texas

After talking with the neighbors about the rich farm land in the east part of Texas, Henry decided to go to Texas. So they packed their belongings and took a train to McKinney, Texas. McKinney is in Collin County near the East Fork of Trinity River. Henry and Mary rented some land a few miles from McKinney and started farming. On April 3rd, 1898, their second daughter was born. They named her Edna.

In that area the people combined social activity with their work. They had what they called a *working*. They would all gather at one farm and do the work that needed to be done. Then they would have a supper where everyone could eat and visit with the neighbors. Most every one took part in both activities. There was one fellow, we will call him Mr. Hearn, who always made it a point to attend the feeds but somehow missed the work part. When the crowd finished hoeing the cotton crop Henry was raising, he and Mary decided to have a chili supper for their friends. Naturally, Mr. Hearn was there for the feed. Henry and Mary were serving the guests and Henry added a teaspoon of cayenne pepper to one bowl of chili and gave it to Mr. Hearn. In the meantime Henry had sat down at the table with his bowl. After a while Mr. Hearn said, "That chili sure is hot but it's good I think I'll have another bowl if you please." Henry wondered how he could manage to *doctor* another serving so he said, "Mary, bring me the dish cloth so I can wipe his dish." Mary got the message and concealed a spoon full of pepper in the dish towel and Henry dumped it into the second serving for Mr. Hearn. Mr. Hearn had a high-pitched voice with nasal tone like Washington Irving described Ichabod Crane in the *Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. The next day Henry was talking to Mr. Hearn. He said, "You know, that was just about the best chili I ever tasted but it sure was hot. I went out behind the barn today to do my dirty job and it was so hot I looked behind to see if the prairie was fire." Mr. Hearn was not the most popular man in that neighborhood.

Mary suspected someone's dog was sucking eggs in her chicken house and when she found some eggs missing from a setting hens nest she was sure of it. Henry took a rope and rigged a snare to catch the thief. The next morning he found a strangled dog in the noose. It was old Julie, Mr. Hearn's dog. He did not want to have any trouble about the dog so he carried it down into the timber along the river and left it there. Some few days later he met Mr. Hearn. He told Henry, "You know old Julie has been missing for several days. I found her down by the river, dead. I think those Bradbury boys did it and if I knew for sure they would lose a cow or maybe their barn would burn down. He was

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probably too stingy to feed Julie enough to keep her from stealing eggs in the first place, but once a dog develops a taste for raw eggs it's hard to break the habit.

Henry had experience at digging wells. He did that chore for neighbors who needed it done. He was down in one well to a depth of about thirty feet when he heard a hissing sound and realized it was gas coming in on him in wells but had not run into it before. He had heard of gas. It was called *damps* by local people and some well diggers had been killed by it. Henry was excited and asked the man who was operating the windlass, to hurry the bucket down as he had hit the *damps*. The man, in his haste, pulled the windlass out of the notch for the axle and by the time the bucket was lowered Henry had lost consciousness. The men who were there took a quilt from the bed and started pumping it up and down over the mouth of the well trying to force fresh air into the well. One man volunteered to go down and try to get Henry out. Before he could get a rope around Henry he also passed out. The men above continued to fan the well with the quilt and one man held to the rope to see if anyone took hold of it. He kept talking to the men in the well telling them to take hold of the rope. After a short time he said, "Some one has hold of the rope. They started bringing it up. When they got it up where they could see they saw Henry had hold of the hook with only one hand. They were afraid he might let go of the hook when they brought him into the fresh air he was less than half conscious. One of the men lay down and reached as far down as he could and grabbed Henry's wrist as soon as it was near. After they got him out into the fresh air and revived he noticed that John Hunnicut was not there. He asked where John was and they told him that John was down in the well where he had gone to try to get Henry out. Henry said, "I'm going after him." The men said he should not risk it again but Henry insisted. He tied an extra rope around his chest and told the men any time he did not answer to haul him out. Mr. Giles started saying, "Alright?" as soon as Henry started down and he answer, "alright." When he reached the bottom of the well he found John slumped against one side of the well. He passed the windlass rope around his chest and hooked it. This only took a few seconds. He was holding his breath to keep from breathing the poisonous gas. He heard Mr. Giles say, "Alright" two times then he said "Haul him out, boy." As they were bringing him out by hand he told them he had a rope on John. They started winding up the windlass. It was too late for Mr. Hunnicut. They could not revive him. When the situation first developed one neighbor had gone to town for the doctor. When the doctor was on the way he met a man, who was not very bright, and he told the doctor that he might as well go on back to town as one of the men was already dead and the other one soon would be too. It would seem that the doctor was not much smarter as he turned his buggy around and went back to town. John Hunnicut's wife, who was expecting a child, was there when they brought his body out of the well. That night her baby was stillborn. The tragedies of life seem to have a way of piling up at times.

The farmers there raised cotton. Henry had not had much experience at picking cotton. One time he was picking for a neighbor for hire. I think the wages were twenty-five cents per hundred pounds, with dinner. There was another man working in the field. He only had one arm. In spite of that, he could pick twice as much as Henry could. When the day was over one-armed man had earned one dollar and fifty cents. The farmer said he could not use him any longer. He said, "There is no man worth that much money for a day's work." Henry drew his pay and quit working for the man. He said he did not want to work for anyone that dumb.

Henry continued to farm there until their third child was born. It was a boy, born November 19th, 1900. They named him Owen.

Investigating Oklahoma Territory

Mr. Giles had possession of some land in western Oklahoma Territory and had it rented to someone. The stories of the corn crop raised there roused the interest of Henry. He decided to make a trip up into the territory and see what it was like. There were also rumors of Indian Land being opened for homesteading. Mr. Giles had said that he might be interested in selling some of the land. When summer came with nice weather Henry, along with a neighbor, Mart Rouse, outfitted a wagon with cover and a small two-hole stove (we always called them a *Monkey-Stove*) They were a small stove with four legs and a fire pot and either two or four *eyes* lids. The round iron parts that you remove to put in wood or to expose the pot or fry pan to more direct heat. They packed the wagon with feed for the horses and food for themselves along with a rifle and bedding and other things they might need for a trip into sparsely settled land. The round trip would be something like six hundred miles. Their trip was relatively uneventful until they were into Oklahoma Territory near what is now known as Rush Springs. There had been some heavy rains as they

came to a stream called Rush Creek. There were only meandering trails across the country then and settlers were few and far between. Some of the ranchers were what were called *Squaw Men* who had married Indian women. The territory had not been opened for white settlers in that area.

When Henry and Mart came to Rush Creek it was out of its banks and about a quarter of a mile wide. They stopped at the waters edge to size up the situation. Mart decided he would take a pole and wade out to see how deep it was. After he went out quite a way and the water was not too deep they decided to try to cross. They got back in the wagon and drove into the water. Before they had driven as far as Mart had waded the wagon lurched to one side and slid into deep water. It pulled the team in also. The wagon box, being fairly tight, did not take water very fast so it floated free of the running gear and started to float down stream. The team continued trying to go ahead. Henry told Mart to stay with the team and he would try to tie the box to a tree. The stove and some of the heavier items were in the front of the wagon so that end started to sink first. The opening in the cover was also in the front and it was going under the water. Henry grabbed the rope they used to tether the horses lit night and by this time the entrance hole in the canvas cover was submerged. Henry took out his pocket knife and cut a slit in the back of the cover and dived through it. All the while the box was floating downstream. When he was free of the box he swam alongside and tied the rope to one of the braces on the box. Then he took the other and swam for the nearest large tree. He took a hitch around the tree so he could bring the box to a gradual stop that would not snap the rope. After he got everything under control he looked across to see how Mart was faring and saw him and the team scrambling out of the water with the running gear of the wagon. As luck would have it, there was a ranch house on each side of the creek. By that time the people on Henrys side of the creek had come down to see how they had come out. The man told Henry that they had driven into water about eighteen feet deep and were lucky to come out as well as they did. He said the creek would be down to where they could cross in about two days if it did not rain again. There was nothing to do but wait. So Henry went to the house on his side and Mart put up with the people on the other side. After the water went down they brought the team and wheels back and loaded every thing to start again. All the feed they had for the horses was ruined by the water so Henry suggested they get some grain from the ranches he had stayed with but Mart said the people on the other side have plenty so why not get it from them. Henry asked the man what he owed for the accommodations and he said, "Not a thing. With the hard luck you boys have had I would not think of charging you any thing". They thanked the man and went over to the other ranch, owned by a *Squaw Man*, and asked him how much they owed and he said, "five dollars". They paid him and asked about buying some grain for their horses. He said, "No sir, I don't have any more grain than need for my stock and besides that, if I start letting every tramp that comes along have grain I'll soon be ruined." I suspect Henry had better control of his temper than I have when he didn't smack that fellow in the mouth.

They drove on along the trail until almost time to make camp. They came to a small general store beside the trail. They went in to buy some things they needed and to see if they could buy feed for the horses. The man told them he did not have any feed for them. Henry had noted two large stacks of bundled oats a short distance from the store. He asked the man who owned the oats and he said, "I do, but they are not for sale." So Henry said to him, "My team is hungry and I'm going to feed them some oats. You can sell them to me or not, as you like." He threw a half dollar on the counter, walked out to the wagon and pulled out his rifle and climbed the fence. He went up to the stack and picked out four bundles and with two under each arm and the rifle in his hand, he walked back and tossed them in the wagon. They drove on without incident. They drove along the trail for a mile or so and came to a small stream with grassy banks and wood for campfire. "Here's a good spot to camp," Henry said. Mart was not so sure they should not move on after the incident about the oats. They finally agreed on the camp spot. After they had their meal and had fed the horses Henry decided he should clean his gun since it had been submerged in the muddy water. Before he started to clean it he pulled the hammer back and the rusty mainspring snapped. When he went after the oats he was running a bigger bluff than he realized. He had a gun that would not have fired if he had tried it.

A day or two later they came to a fair sized town. They found the name of the town to be Chickasha. They found a shop there where they could get the gun repaired. There were lots of Indians there also. That was the first Indians they had seen who did not speak English. However, they knew how to ask for tobacco by sign language. Before Henry and Mart came to Chickasha they still did not have grain for the horses so they had taken turn about raiding corn fields along the trail to feed their horses. The last night out before Chickasha it was Henry's turn to get the feed. After dark he took a sack and started down the rows. He did not find an ear for some distance. After a while he

James Howard Cloninger

heard someone break off an ear of corn and he could hear some low voices. He eased up toward the sounds and squatted down to skylight whoever it was in the field. He could see two men with a stick. He was sure the owner would not be gathering corn at that time. So he said in a very loud voice, "What the devil are you doing in my cornfield." The men dropped the sack and left in a hurry. He could hear the commotion of their flight back toward the trail. He found all the corn he needed to feed their horses in the sack the men had dropped. The next morning they passed two men who were encamped a short distance up the trail.

After they restocked at Chickasha they traveled along the trail toward the northwest. When they were within a day or two's travel of their destination it came time to make camp. They found a small creek and a nice place to camp. They had heard stories of people being stranded along the trail when bands of roaming Indians had stolen their horses at night. Shortly after they had made camp and it was dark they heard voices and singing. The songs had a strange sound so they decided it must be Indians near by. They decided to take turns sleeping and watching the horses to be sure they were not stolen. Mart took the first watch and woke Henry up about midnight for his turn. Alone, about three in the morning Henry almost dozed off and came wide awake suddenly as he thought he saw a man stooping and swaying back and forth as if trying to skylight some thing. He slowly brought his gun up to firing position and was trying to line up the bead when the moon, low in the west, came from behind a cloud and Henry discovered that his crouching man was a willow bush swaying in the breeze. Under nervous strain ones imagination plays some funny tricks.

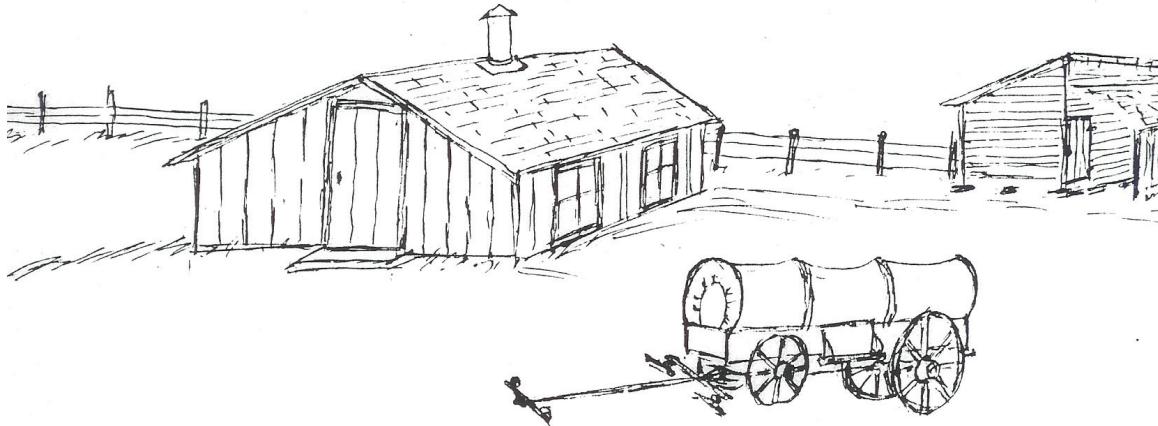
The next morning they pulled out early and about two hundred yards up the creek they drove through a large Indian camp. Many years later my brother in law, who grew up on Five Mile Creek, in Caddo County, said they found lots of Indian Artifacts on his father's farm and they were sure it had been a campground at one time. It is easily possible that it could have been the spot where Henry and Mart camped that night. They went on to the northwest until they reached what was called Roger Mills County after Oklahoma became a state. It was beautiful grassland but when they pulled up the grass the soil was too shallow for what they had in mind. They turned around and started back toward what later became Washita County. That was where Mr. Giles land was located. The cribs full of corn looked good to Henry so he made up his mind to deal for the Oklahoma land.

They headed back to Texas after they had looked at the Oklahoma country. Their trip back was rather uneventful compared to the trip into Oklahoma. They were driving along the open country where they had not seen any body or a house for miles. They met a hound walking along the trail. He was very thin and his feet were sore and bleeding. They gave him some food and water. It looked like he had become lost from some traveler's wagon. Henry and Mart decided to see who could guess the dog's name and whoever guessed it would own the hound. After calling about every name either had heard of for a dog Henry said "Here Lead!" The hound pricked up his ears, came over and licked Henry's hand. So he became Henry's dog. They put him in the wagon and let him ride until his sore feet were well again. After they were home they could point out the place where a chick, which they wanted for dinner had walked and Old Lead would bring it in. That winter Henry hunted raccoons and opossums with Old Lead and he was a very good trailer. I never did learn what became of Old Lead when Henry moved to Oklahoma the next spring.

1901 to 1912 – Washita County, OK

The Family Moves to Oklahoma

In the spring of 1901 Henry started to Oklahoma in the wagon. Mary and the three children were to follow via the train. There was a railroad to Weatherford at that time. The train turned around there and returned to El Reno. The place they had bought was eighteen miles south of Weatherford. Henry met the family at the train and they went to the new home. It was what was called a *half dugout*.



The Washita County, OK Homestead in 1901

The half-dugout was constructed by first digging a hole in the ground the size desired. It was dug to a depth of about four feet. The wall plate of two by six lumber was laid around the top of the excavation. On this plate was constructed a board wall about three feet high and a gabled roof of wood shingles was placed over that. The walls were made of one by twelve boards running vertically and the cracks between the boards were stripped with battens to keep out the wind, rain, and snow.

On August 6th, 1901 there was to be a drawing for disposal of surplus Indian land to be opened for white settlement. This is a nice way of saying that the Indian land was being stolen from the Indians. The lottery was to be held in El Reno and whoever was lucky enough to have the right numbers would get a section of land for a homestead. I suspect this drawing may have influenced Henry to move to Oklahoma territory. He, along with several neighbors went to El Reno on that date. A while before the drawing started, a man came by where Henry and his neighbors were standing in a group and said "Ten dollars will guarantee a lucky number". Most of the men were doubtful of the promise so they decided to trust to luck. Two men of the ten in the group decided to risk the ten dollars. When the drawing was over they were the only ones who had lucky numbers. We hear so much about corruptness of government officials now as if it were something that had just been invented. So Henry went back home and started the long struggle of trying to pay for the land he had bought.

On October 1st, 1903, their third daughter, Pearl Alice, was born. Doctor McQuaid delivered the baby and he was to be their family doctor for many years after that.

As far as the farming went, there were disappointments. They soon learned that there were lots of reasons that the country was not too good for corn. It was tight, heavy soil and subjected to droughts and hot winds that caused crop

failure as far as corn was concerned. About one year in seven the weather would be favorable to corn. They started planting wheat and oats and some cotton and did a little better. The place had a spring on it. This furnished water for the horses and cattle but was not fit for humans to drink. All the water there was so full of gypsum that a drink of it was like taking a big dose of Epsom salts. Everyone had a cistern where they caught and stored the rain water from the roof to use for drinking water. It sometimes was stained red from the cedar shingles and I have heard of people from other parts of the country mistaking it for tea and sweetening it. Now that country is not as bad as it seemed then. It has made some people wealthy by producing good wheat crops and they now have tank trucks to haul water for home use. There was not very much timber available and fuel was a problem at times. With all the disagreeable things, they were happy to be working toward independence.

One day when Mary was not feeling well, Henry asked Doc McQuaid what to do for her. After a few questions he gave Henry twelve pills for her and said he thought that would straighten out her stomach. Henry asked him how much he owed and Doc said "five dollars". Henry thought that was rather high for twelve little pills but Doc said "the five dollars is not for the pills, I'm charging that for what I know." A few months later, Doc asked Henry if he thought he could plaster a cistern so it would hold water. He had one that never would hold although several had tried to fix it. Henry told him he was sure he could fix it. When he had finished the work and it proved satisfactory, Doc asked him how much he owed for the job. Henry replied "five dollars". With wages very low in those times Doc was surprised and said, "That's pretty high isn't it". Henry said "Doc, I'm not charging you that much for the work. I'm charging for what I know." Doc just grinned and paid the five dollars.

An Indian man rode into Henry's yard one time and asked to borrow a knife. Henry wanted to know why he needed the knife and the Indian man said "Baker's mule dead, heap good meat". Henry loaned him a butcher knife and he went up to Baker's pasture and cut off several chunks of meat from the carcass of the mule. When the huge herds of buffalo were destroyed by the white hunters, the Indians were deprived of their main source of meat.

There was an Indian reservation and school at Darlington, about four miles north of El Reno at that time. There was some dissatisfaction among the Indians there and it developed into a riot. In a little settlement about eight miles from Henry's home there was a man who had a store and he had experience in dealing with Indians. His name was Seger and the village bore his name. He went to Darlington and talked with the wild Indians and with the supervisors of the reservation. They worked out an agreement to let him take the worst of the rioters to Seger where he would establish a school for them. The Indians agreed as they were unhappy at Darlington. So Mr. Seger established the Seger Indian School on the bank of Cobb Creek about two miles east and two miles south of Korn, Oklahoma. The creek was named after Fort Cobb, which was on the same creek about twenty miles downstream near where the creek empties into the Washita River. After the school was established and everything was going smoothly the name of the village was changed to Colony, Oklahoma. I have never heard why the name was changed from Seger to Colony.

After the opening of the land for white settlement certain quarter sections of each township were set aside as Indian Land and allotted to the Indians living in the area. The Indians did not like to farm, as a rule, so they moved to town and rented the land to white men. The rent did not provide them with very much income and they often lived very poorly.

A mile down the little stream from the spring on Henry's farm was the home of Russell Kutch and his family. They had a dog that often fought with Old Jim, Henry's dog. But their fights were never very serious. There was never a decision as to which was the better one. One time when the Cloninger and Kutch families were coming home from church the two dogs were trailing under the rear of the wagons. They were passing the home of a neighbor. Their family was made up of a very large woman, a small man, several sons and a daughter. The man was a pretty good neighbor but the rest of the family was inclined to be overbearing. Everyone called them *The Russians*. As the wagons passed the house the grownup sons were in the yard and they called their hounds, four of them, and said "sick him, sick him". The hounds came boiling out after Old Jim and Kutch's dog. There was one terrific fight with four on two but it was not very long until Old Jim and his neighbor had sent all the hounds yelping to their yard with their tails between their legs. I suppose the fights they had with each other were just for practice. When it came to the show down they stuck together.

James Howard Cloninger

Old Jim was a very intelligent and dependable dog. Henry could hold him up and show him the cows in the pasture and tell him to bring them in and he would do it gently. His mother was also very smart. One time one of the babies of Henry and Mary was sitting in the yard playing with a piece of broken glass the dog took the glass and came back with a stick.

One very cold day Henry and one of the neighbors were butchering some hogs and Jim and the neighbors dogs were there. It came lunch time and the neighbor said "You go ahead and eat and I will see to it that the dogs don't bother the meat." Henry told him that it would not be necessary to watch the dogs as Old Jim would take care of it. He told Jim to watch the meat and he did as he was told. None of the other dogs had nerve enough to contest Old Jim. They had three or four carcasses hung up to cool out that night and a real blizzard blew in. there was howling cold wind along with pellets of hard snow. When daylight came Old Jim was lying on the bare ground near the meat and his hair was matted with snow and ice. He had not left what he considered his duty.

One time when Henry and Mary's brother Bob were driving by the Russian neighbors place their dogs came out and started chasing a mule colt that was following its mother which was pulling the wagon. The colt was scared and ran into the barbed wire fence and was cut badly. The neighbor's boys were in the yard and made no effort to call off the dogs. In fact, they laughed and yelled, encouraging the dogs to more frenzy. There were already some hard feelings between Bob and the Russian family. The wife and mother had come out to the road one time and started a fuss with Bob and he told her he would not fight with her but if she sent out her Russian "sons of bitches" he would take care of them. They did not accept the challenge but there was bad blood there.

A short time later when Old Jim had gone by the neighbors place, following the wagon he suddenly went into convulsions and fell over dead. Henry told Owen to get the shovel and take Old Jim down behind the barn and bury him. In those days, as a rule, children very seldom refused to do as they were told but this time Owen refused to do it. Henry started to insist that he be obeyed. At that point Mary took part in the argument. She said "Now Henry, I don't think it is Owen's place to bury that dog. You and Bob take the shovel and do it." No one ever admitted trying to get even with the neighbors dogs but the evidence was that the scheme failed and Old Jim got some meat with strychnine in it. Too much anger can cloud a man's judgment and cause him to do foolish things, especially a younger man with less experience.

On April 5th, 1906 another baby girl was delivered to Henry and Mary by Dr. McQuaid. They named her Jewel. Judging from pictures I have seen she was a beautiful child. When she was very small her brother, Owen, was sitting on the bed near the stove and holding her in his lap. Mary was preparing breakfast. Owen turned to one side and set the baby on the bed. As he turned back Mary bumped the boiling coffee pot off the stove. It landed upside down in Owen's lap. He said, "Oh Ma, you've killed me." The inner and front sides of his thighs were so terribly burned that some of the muscle tissue was destroyed. They feared for some time that he would never be able to walk, even if he survived. There were no hospitals available in those days so it was up to the family to care for him. It would be hard to imagine the torture Mary endured in blaming herself for the accident. Owen's legs were so badly burned that they could not be bandaged. Henry made a mixture of lime-water and linseed oil and they applied it to the sores to prevent it from drying too much. He rigged some splints under the legs and attached cords through pulleys so Owen could move his legs a little way when he became tired of having them in one position too long. The healing was a very slow painful process. Owen was confined to his bed over a year before he was able to sit up. He eventually recovered and had full use of his legs again.

When Owen was about eight years old he decided to set a steel trap. Early one morning he went to look at his trap. It held a big skunk. He did not know much about handling a skunk and had the misfortune of getting a shot of skunk fluid in his eyes. This hurt so much that he was blinded. He felt his way to the fence and followed it back to the corn crib and on to the house where he could get help. After this ordeal he caught a large tomcat. It was wild with pain and terror so he had to have help getting it released. That experience caused Owen to lose his interest in trapping.

Henry had a mare named Belle. She was high strung and a nervous type. Owen got on Belle to ride from the field to the house. She had other ideas so she pitched him off. He landed on his right forearm and it was broken about four inches above the wrist. It was a very bad break and one bone came through the skin. Doc McQuaid came over and made some splints from shingles and pulled the arm back into place and bound it up. When the bandage came off

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the arm was quite crooked and it was twisted around about fifteen degrees. Several years later Owen was going to Normal School for Teachers at Weatherford the teacher was teaching penmanship tried to make him hold his pen toward his shoulder as prescribed in the book. After she took hold of his hand and tried to twist it into position he pulled up his sleeve and showed her why he did not aim the pen in the right direction. She apologized and he learned to write a very nice *hand*. The crooked arm was never a handicap for him.

Once when Henry was mowing hay he had a team of big mules hitched to the mower and had the lines tied together and looped around his waist so his hands were free. The blade of the mower cut through a bumblebee nest. They swarmed out onto the mules. The mules went wild and started running out of control. They ran into a barbed wire fence and broke off several posts and broke the tongue of the mower. All the commotion threw Henry off the seat but the lines looped around his wrist prevented his getting loose from the runaway team. They dragged him for about a quarter of a mile. He had a bad cut on his shin and was bruised and skinned in many places. He soon recovered and went ahead with his work.

As time passed several of Henry and Mary's relatives came to Oklahoma from Virginia. There was Tom Rachel and Garret Cavin and Jan Cloninger, Henry's relatives, and rest of Mary's sisters and brothers except Levi Chance. Leah and Martha did not stay in Oklahoma. They could not forget the good things about the hill country. The others stayed around for many years. Uriah B. Chance came to Oklahoma with his son Bob and stayed the rest of his life. Tom and Rachel Cavin rented a farm a few miles northeast of Henry's place and Jan made her home with them.

When Jan was middle-aged she was not well. Two doctors told her that she probably did not have more than a year to live. She never looked very strong and was a small woman. Her strength and vigor belied her looks. She fooled both those doctors. She lived many years longer than both of them and worked in the fields for forty years after that.

On September 18th, 1908 a second son arrived at the Cloninger home. Doc McQuaid was present for this event also. For a while the parents considered naming the new baby Eugene. Possibly a namesake for Eugene V. Debs, but finally decided on the name James Howard. This choice was never fully explained to me but the idea of Howard could have come from William Howard Taft's name as he was active in politics at this time. As for James, I wouldn't attempt to guess.

It was about three years after Howard's birth before my memory started to fill in parts of this story. I was the second son of Henry and Mary. I do not have any memory of my sister Jewel. I only know of her by the pictures I have seen and the stories told to me by my Mom.

When Jewel was about two years old she was playing in the yard and eating a fried chicken drumstick. Mom heard her screaming and went out to see what was wrong. She had walked into a den of red ants and had fallen down. She was covered with stinging red ants. Mom took off her clothing and picked off the ants. She had been stung thirty three times. I have read that some doctors have estimated that the venom from eighty red ant stings could be enough to kill a grown man. For several hours after Jewel's bout with the ants she had a high fever.

When I was about seven months old Jewel was stricken by what doctors then said was Infantile Paralysis. The common name for it is now Polio. On May 12th 1909 she died. She was buried at Pleasant View Church along with some of our cousins who had died after their folks came to Oklahoma.

Tornado Alley

My memory does not include the story that went though our part of the country when I was about three and a half years old but I have hard the stories well enough to relate it. The tornado came through our neighborhood on April 27th, 1913. It struck about a mile from our house at the home of Ausmus Hansen. Their house was demolished and the family was blown away with it. Mrs. Hansen and her baby were blown into a ravine. The baby was killed and Mrs. Hansen suffered a head injury and was unconscious for a long time. They had twin boys about four years old and they told later that they were blown over a tree and saw their calf going over with them. The boys received cuts and bruises but survived. I met one of the twins about fifty years after the storm and he still had the scars on his face that he received from the storm.

The storm went on in a northeasterly direction and demolished the house where Tom and Rachel Cavin and Jan lived. They were blown about a quarter of a mile before they escaped from the wind. Their possessions were

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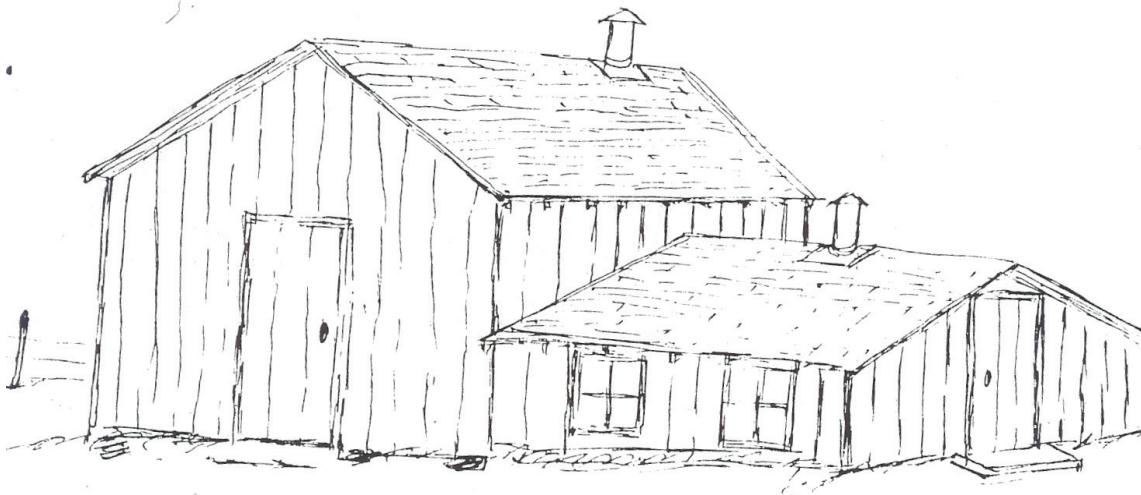
scattered over a quarter section of land. This storm was the cause of the muddy stains on the tintype of James Cloninger, which I found in Jan's trunk. Aunt Rachel had a wooden bench at her back door with a pail of water and a wash basin beside it so they could wash before coming into the house when they came from the fields. After the storm took their house, the bench was left standing, intact, with the pail and wash basin in place. I remember seeing an alarm clock years after the storm. It had been found in the pasture where the storm had blown it. It ran for years after that time but always on its face. It would stop if it was set in an upright position.

The storm went on about eight miles to the northeast and looked so bad at the Curnutt home that they decided they should go to the storm cave. Mrs. Curnutt was in bed with a three-day old daughter and did not think she could go to the cave but insisted that her husband take the rest of the children and go. That way there would be at least one parent to look after the family if the storm got the house. The storm had lost its fury by the time it reached their place so there was no damage there. I did not learn of this part of the storm story until about fifty years later when I was discussing Tom and Rachel's experience with my wife and found that she was the three-day old daughter who stayed in the bed with her mother as the storm passed their house.

The Home in Washita County

My earliest memory of the home in Washita County probably goes back to about 1911. I recall living in the half-dugout but at the time I recall we had the upstairs room. It had been built into the dugout some time before I was born.

The wall between the lower and upper rooms was made of two by fours with building paper nailed to the timbers I recall playing on a bed with other kids (I have no recollection as to who was there with me, possibly some cousins) and when I looked up my sister Pearl was looking over the paper and laughed at us.



The Washita County, OK Homestead in 1908

Another very early memory is of going up the road to a neighbor's house to borrow some matches. I had about twenty matches, with all the heads turned to the same end and I remember how important I felt to be depended upon to do that chore. It seemed to me that it was a long way up the road. About fifty years later I returned to the old home place and the size of things had changed a lot. The neighbor's house was, in fact, only about one eighth of a mile up the road. One time Pearl and I were playing in the shade of the house. It had rocks with spaces between for a foundation. There was a breeze blowing and we were looking under the house at the chicken feathers that were embedded in the dirt and waving in the breeze. Pearl jumped up suddenly and said, "Oh, it's a skunk." She ran around the corner of the house. I knew it was only chicken feathers but to keep up my part of the game I let out a whoop and followed around the house at a run. I stumbled over a rock or something and fell down. As I fell my chin landed on a cast iron wash boiler. I had my tongue hanging out like a panting dog when my chin hit the boiler and my teeth were driven together through my tongue. There was only a thin strip of flesh on either side holding my tongue together. I very nearly lost about three quarter inch of it. I had a real reason for crying for a while but

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remember exaggerating the crying in order to gain more sympathy. It is surprising how much more, even a three or four-year-old child knows than his parents suspect. I can vividly remember the taste of all that blood in my mouth.

The first fishing trip that I remember anything about was when I was about four years of age. I do not recall all the details. The one event that is clearest was wading in the river. My sister, Pearl, was leading me and cousin, Bessie Fleenor, who was about my age, into the water. I was on one side and Bessie on the other when she led us into water that was over our heads. She was about five years older and did not notice the water was too deep for us. There was no harm done but it was impressed on my memory so I did not forget it. That is about all I recall of the trip but Mom and Dad told us in later years that we caught lots of nice fish on that trip.

Another event I remember clearly is the first automobile I ever saw. As I remember it there was a top like the old surreys used to have, with fringe around it. There was a pipe up the back corner where the exhaust puffed out. It did not travel very fast. We heard it coming and ran down to the fence along the road and ran alongside it to the end of our field. I can't recall who was in the group with me but there were several of us. In all the pictures I have seen of antique cars I have not seen one like that one but I am sure my memory of it is vivid.

On April 8th, 1911, my younger brother, Hugh, was delivered by Doc McQuaid. I was two and a half years old at that time and my memory does not go back that far. However, there is one event that took place a short time later that I recall vividly. I was standing near Mom's rocker where she was rocking and nursing the baby, which was Hugh. In trying to get my share of attention I got too close and the rocker came down on my second toe. I yelled and Mom stopped rocking. The rocker had split my toenail down the center. I later lost half of the nail. Then the half grew back. I still have two toenails on that toe and at times one half of it will become loose and come on but it always grows back.

I recall going with the older brother and sisters to a farm we called the Clauson place. This name might have been spelled Klaassen. There are people of that name in the Weatherford area now. There was a canyon on the place with hackberry and chinaberry trees in it. We gathered the berries from both kinds of trees. The hackberries were good to eat but the only thing that I ever saw eating chinaberries was the opossum. The chinaberry has a shiny, black seed covered by a yellow, waxy substance. It is very bitter and no insect will eat it. My older sisters gathered the seeds and put them in boiling water until they were softened. Then they would push a needle through from end to end. When the seeds were strung on a thread they made a necklace of shiny black beads. I have always enjoyed eating hackberries although there is nothing to them except the seed and hull. Possibly about five per cent meat. They normally grow to be about one quarter inch in diameter; sometimes you will find a tree with larger ones on it. A neighbor woman and her little boy were at our house one time when we were eating hackberries. He was a sissy little mama's boy and knew nothing about things like hackberries. He wanted to try some so asked his mother if he could have some. She gave her consent but said, "Now, Chester, Honey, don't eat the hulls." For years after that when anyone in our family made a remark that sounded ridiculous the standard answer was, "Now, Chester, Honey, don't eat the hulls."

Another experience I never forgot was the time I swallowed a fence staple. My recollection of that was slightly different to the way my father remembered it. The way he thought it happened mother was home but the way it comes to my mind, and I am sure I recall it the way it happened, He was sitting in his chair reading his paper and I was lying on my stomach and elbows on the floor. As the staple, which I had in my mouth, started down my throat I gagged and tried to stop it but it was too far gone. He looked over his paper and said, "What is the matter with you." So I told him that I had swallowed a fence staple. It is my impression that it was Sunday and my mother had been to Sunday school and returned home about that time. My memory of the rest of that day is completely blank. My mother in telling her part of the story, in later years, said she gave me a big dose of castor oil. I surely should have remembered that but I do not recall it. In later years we read in *home remedy books* that no laxatives should be given in a case of this kind, but since we did not know any better, no harm was done. Naturally my mother was worried and asked me to take note if I got rid of the staple. The next day I was down by the corn crib and the castor oil was making itself known to me. There was a flat rock by the crib so I got in position over it and when the castor all had done its job the staple was there on the rock. So another event was finished in the life of a four-year-old boy.

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Another big event took place about this time. The grocery store at Korn, Oklahoma, about four miles from our home was putting on a sales promotion with punch cards. When a customer had punched out a certain amount in trade he was entitled to select prizes related to the amount of the purchase. My parents had traded out enough to get a nice prize. They decided on a phonograph and some records. The phonograph was a table model with a metal, *morning glory* horn. It must have had a rather tinny sound by today's standards, but to us it was beautiful. The records I remember were, *Has Anyone Here Seen Kelly*, *Red Wing*, *The Preacher and The Bear* and a monologue by Uncle Josh. That last record may have given Andy Griffith the inspiration to record the monologue about his first football game. I remember the old songs and part or the words as I used to *show off* by singing along with the phonograph. We also came into possession of a Jew's harp about this time and I played it too. About forty years later I tried another one and pinched my tongue with the reed. I had forgotten to hold my tongue away from it.

About three weeks after my fifth birthday my youngest sister was born. On October 4th, 1913, my older sisters took me and Hugh to our neighbor's place while this event transpired. As it seemed to me then, we went west down the creek to Kutch's place for the afternoon. Fifty years later, when I again returned to the old home, I found that the creek flowed south instead of west. Some one must have turned it round after we left. A while before suppertime that afternoon some of the older ones came and asked us if we wanted to go home and see our baby sister. She had big blue eyes and a very red face. She was named Virginia Lee and of course Doc McQuaid delivered her. After a few days her face was not so red we all thought she was a beautiful baby.

1912 to 1926 – Caddo County, OK

The Home in Caddo County

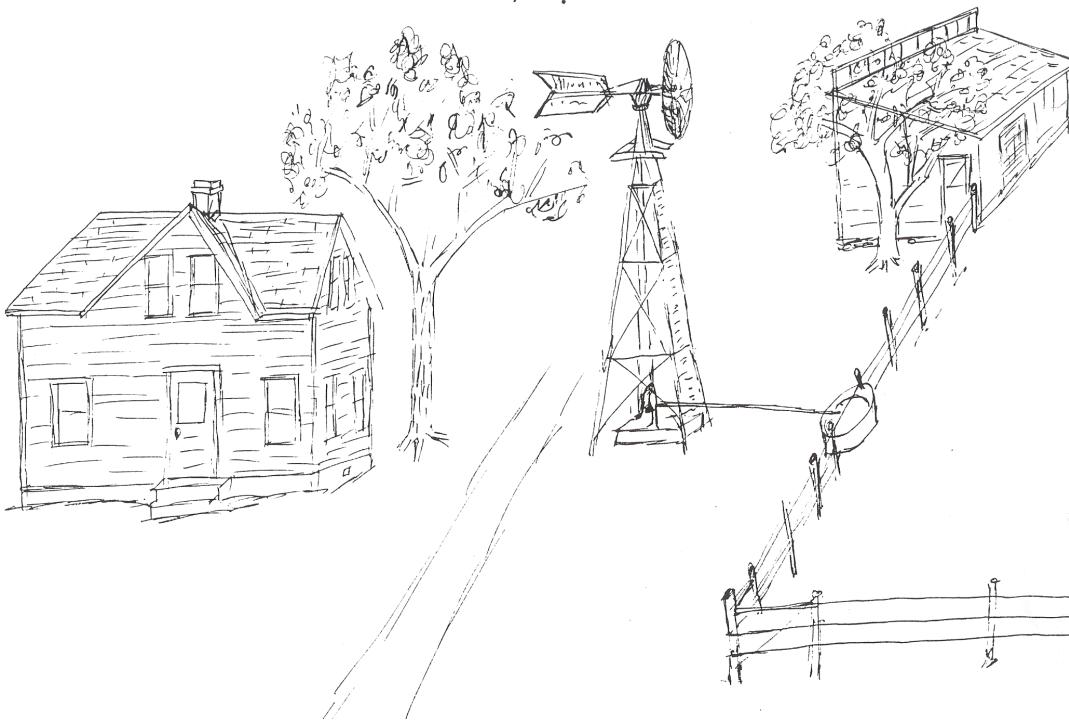
About four months after Virginia was born we moved to a farm in Caddo County. My father had traded our farm in Washita County to a German who wanted a wheat farm and he also wanted to get closer to a Mennonite Church. The Mennonites were congregating around Korn where they were building a church. We were looking for a place with good water and woods nearby and an orchard. You may not be able to find Korn on modern maps as some wise guy changed the spelling to Corn.

Dad was not exactly happy with our farm in Washita County so he decided to move to Caddo County where we could have better water and where firewood would be easier to get. He made a trade with Henry Kliever for a farm in Caddo County. It was located three miles north and thirteen miles east of where we lived in Washita County. Mr. Kliever wanted to move closer to Korn where the Mennonites were building a church. We started moving in January after Virginia was born in October. Hugh and I rode in the wagon with Dad. We were hauling our old cupboard. It was lying on its side. It was the tall type of cupboard of that had two drawers near the center for silverware and two upper doors and two lower doors. Some cupboards of this type had ornate glass in the doors but ours had wood panels in the doors. After we had been on the road quite some time the sun had set and the breezes were picking up. It was rather cold as darkness came on. Hugh was about three years old and I was about five and half. We decided it would be warmer in the cupboard. We opened the doors and crawled in between the shelves and closed the doors most of the way. It was snug in there.

We were starting down a hill and Dad said we will soon be to our new home. I learned later that the hill was about three quarter of a mile from our house. As we were going down the hill we heard a howling and yelping that made goose pimples on my skin. I had never heard anything like it so asked Dad what it was. He said it was coyotes. I had never heard them in Washita County but I am sure they must have been there as they are plentiful all over the plains country. I suppose I just had not been outside to hear them at night before.

When we arrived at the new place the house was dark but when we went inside it was warm and there was furniture in it and there was a fire in the stove. The people who had rented the farm the year before had not moved out as they were supposed to have done. After a while they came home and explained that they had been delayed in getting possession of the house they planned to move into so they would have to stay a day or two longer. Their name was Balzer. They were German people. Their family consisted only of the man, his wife, and three year old daughter. Her name was Marie. I do not recall anything about how the rest of our family got there but I knew Mom was there the first night. I suppose Owen brought them in another wagon. We made pallets on the floor for the night. I remember Hugh and I had a pallet under the stairs, because the next morning while we were playing on the pallet Hugh threw one of Marie's ABC blocks and hit her on the head with it. She sure let out some loud yells. For breakfast, Mom baked some soda biscuits and we had butter and syrup with them. Mom gave some to Marie and she kept coming back for more *brote und schmear*⁶. At least that's what it sounded like when she asked. The hot biscuits and butter and syrup sure made a hit with Marie. For lunch, Mrs. Balzer furnished the bread. It was the double biscuits, which I think they called zwieback or something like that. Although the Cloninger blood in our family was German we did not know much of the language.

⁶ The word schmear is used in the culinary world to describe a dab of something like mayonnaise, butter or cream cheese that's spread on a roll, bagel, etc.



The Caddo County, OK Homestead in 1912

When morning came, we got a look at our new home. The farm was almost level and there were trees and lilac bushes in two rows from the house to the road. The driveway came in between the house and the windmill. The windmill was on a tower thirty feet tall. The barn was a little beyond the windmill. The house was a two-story house with four gables. One facing each direction and each gable had a window in it except the one on the back of the house. It was left blank. The plan was to add a wing on the back making the floor plan in a T shape.

The downstairs was divided into two rooms and the upstairs was one big room with the chimney in the center and the stair going along the south side of the chimney. The stair went up from the back side toward the front. Dad later took down the stair and sawed off the lower four steps and reversed the remainder of the steps to go downward to the front. These met a landing on the west wall and the four-step section went downward to the south along the west wall. This made a more convenient place for the cook stove so it could be hooked to the chimney. The stove was partially under the stairs and this made more room in the kitchen. The walls were covered with *patent lath*. That was six-inch boards with four dovetailed grooves in each board to receive plaster. Dad bought plaster and finished the downstairs a few months after we moved there. The upstairs was never finished as long as we lived there.

When we had a hard blowing snow it would sift in between the shingles so we had to roll back the covers on the beds carefully so the snow would not fall in our faces when we arose in the morning. But it was pleasant to lie in bed and listen to the snow as it whispered to the roof. The hail and the rain talked out loud. My hearing is not good enough now to hear the snow whisper now-I can only hear it in memory.

The house was twelve feet longer than it was wide so that made two eaves six feet long on each side of the gable to the front and back. There was a valley running up to the chimney from the ends of the eaves. This style of farm home was very common before the advent of the bungalow. On each end of the downstairs part there were two windows. On the front there was a door in the center with a window on each side of it. Each of the downstairs rooms had a door opening to the rear of the house. The plan of the house, if it had been carried to completion, would have been a fine country home. However, that was never to be done.

In the back yard, straight out from the kitchen door was a large cottonwood tree. One large branch went almost horizontally to the north. It was an excellent place to attach a swing, which was done without much delay. The story of the tree started a few years before we moved there. A bad storm had passed by and blew the house a few feet out of place on the foundation and blew the tree over. Mr. Kliever had hitched his team to the tree and pulled it back

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upright and set it back in place. It was about twenty feet tall at the time. It grew and became firmly anchored and survived the storms that followed. The house had been jacked up and set on the foundation. That was the reason for the numerous cracks in the foundation. The storm had happened soon after the house was built and the concrete had not reached its full strength. When we had bad windstorms and could feel the old house shiver and quiver we would head for the storm cellar. We were not pikers but had seen what a storm can do.

The barn was built with the idea of adding more to it also. It had a roof that sloped one direction and on the high side the two by four frame projected above the roof about thirty inches. The plan was to build another section like it on the north side with a driveway between and a roof over the drive. This would have made a fine barn but like the plan for the house it was never to be finished. The house was set back from the road about one hundred and fifty feet and there were two rows of lilacs from the north corner of the house to the road. They eventually grew together and to a height of about twenty feet.

Our neighbors often told us in the spring when the lilacs bloomed that they could smell the flowers when they came over the hill six miles north of our place. The scent of lilacs still brings back many pleasant memories for me. The lilac has a very pleasant scent around the leaves even before the flowers begin to form. Along the south side of the driveway there was a mulberry hedge from the windmill to the road and also along the road to the north to the end of the orchard. The orchard was one eighth of a mile long and about ten rods wide. Along the east side of the orchard were three rows of grape vines. My sister Lena planted two rows of roses, all kinds and colors, from the house to the road. She also planted all kinds of annual flowers like cosmos, zinnias, hollyhocks, moss roses and *bouncing betties*. In fact, about every kind of seed she could find. She loved beautiful things and did fancy needle work and crocheting as well as painting of pictures. However, all her work of art was on paper instead of canvas and it was not durable enough to last. So none of it remains. What a contrast our new home was to the short grass country of Washita County where there were very few flowers or trees.

While on the subject of trees, there was a big mulberry tree near the barn. One branch grew out over the rest of the barn. This was very convenient for two boys and a small girl to climb onto the barn roof any time they desired. The orchard had many varieties of peaches. Along with the early white freestone peaches we had Elbertas one we called *Indian Peaches* because of the bright red meat they had and several varieties of seedling peaches, some white and freestone and some yellow freestones. The seedling peaches were excellent for drying in the sun and for peach butter. Mom always pickled the Indian Peaches. She added spices and sugar and cooked them until the juice was thick syrup. They were delicious with hot soda biscuits and Jersey butter. We canned the early white peaches and the Elbertas as well as having them fresh and sliced and sugared. Then served with sweet separated cream.

We had one tree that had been *double grafted* so it produced two different kinds of peaches. It forked at the ground and one branch had a white freestone peach on it and the other side had peaches similar to the Elberta but slightly smaller. The most interesting thing about the branch with the white peaches on it was that they ripened about ten days to two weeks before any other peaches were ripe. Hugh and I always kept close watch on that tree in the last week of May. One time we were in that tree testing the fruit on the upper branches where there was more sunshine and the fruit had ripened first.

We were enjoying the fresh peaches when we heard a crashing in the mulberry hedge near the tree. An Indian man on a horse had ridden through the hedge. He had long braids of hair with green string braided in with the hair. His braids almost reached his waist down either side of his chest. He did not try to talk. He just grunted and pointed at the peaches and then made motions with his mouth. We got the message and each gave him all we could hold in our hands. He grunted again and stuffed them in his clothes and rode back through the hedge. We wondered if perhaps he knew where the tree was as he came through the hedge at the right spot. By this time we were not so scared of Indians as we found they never did us any harm.

We also had several varieties of apples. One was a very dark red apple and the meat was so hard it was not very good even when it appeared to be ripe. We soon discovered that if we put them in the cellar and left them for several months they became mellow and very good about Christmas time. I think Dad said they were called *Arkansas Blacks*. We also had a yellow apple that matured early. It was a good cooking apple and some times we picked some before they were completely ripe and sliced them in rings and fried them. They were very good this way too.

One summer while playing in the orchard I saw what I thought was a dried pear that had stayed on the tree during the winter. I climbed up to get it and got a surprise. It was a mother bat with two suckling young hanging onto her side. It was the first bat I had caught so in my inexperience I got a good bite from it but I held onto it and took it to the house to find out more about it. After that Dad showed us kids how to toss up a pebble in front of flying bats about twilight and watch them dive and catch the pebbles. Some time after that I found a black bat, smaller than the brown one in the pear tree. The black one was hanging head down in a grape vine. I captured him without getting bitten. I took him to the house to show the rest of the family. Hugh was about three or four years old and wanted to play with the bat. He relaxed his hold a little and the bat reached round and sunk its teeth into his finger. He did not speak too plainly on some words then. He said "oh you little brack bitch, you've got pretty brack eyes".

One time when Hugh was about three years old, Dad gave him a spanking for some of his ornery tricks. After he had about finished his cry over the spanking he went over and crawled up into Dad's lap and said "You didn't mean it did you, Dad". But Dad did mean it. He could lay it on when he felt it was necessary. Hugh and I escaped punishment lots of times when we really deserved it.

I don't recall for sure if it was the first summer we lived there or if it was the second one that Hugh and I started exploring the windmill. We climbed the tower to the top and it worried Mom so much that she told Dad that he would have to fix the tower so we could not climb it. The ladder on it was made in two sections, so Dad took out the bolts and removed the bottom half. That was no problem for two experienced climbers. We merely took to the legs struts and brace rods and proceeded to climb it again. I don't recall getting a spanking and we spent as much time as ever on the tower. I think Dad decided it would be best if he ignored the situation.

Our kitchen was somewhat crowded with the table and the chairs, the bench behind where Hugh, Virginia, and I always sat to eat our meals and the old cupboard and other things needed in the kitchen so Mom set the sack of flour in the corner on the stair landing. The stairwell did not have a rail around it. Virginia was about two and half years old and playing upstairs. She came too near the stair well and tumbled into it at the highest place. As she fell to the landing, the back of her head struck the top of the flour sack where the flour was loosened by taking some out of the sack. She was knocked unconscious for several minutes. Mom thought she was killed. She put cold wet clothes on Virginia's face and after a while she opened her eyes and started crying. That was one time we were all glad to hear the baby cry. The soft flour in the top of the sack probably saved her that time.

Soon after we moved in, Dad decided to burn off the dead grass in the pasture so the stock could get at the new grass easier. As I recall it was in the fall. Possibly the first fall we lived there. He did it at night so we could all see the fire better. He started on the down wind side so he could keep it under control. It made a spectacular sight with the red flames leaping high as the trees. I later decided it was a mistake to burn off the pasture as we had less grass and more weeds after that. On southeast corner of the place we had twenty acres of grass, which we did not pasture. It was our hay meadow. We used the hay to feed the horses and cattle in the winter time.

Howard Starts School

The second summer there I was approaching school age. I would be six years old on the eighteenth of September but school opened the first of the month. The teacher argued that I would not be eligible for enrollment until the next year. So Dad went and talked to our neighbor to the south, Mr. Dick Kinder. He was a member of the board. He told Dad to go ahead and start me to school. However, the teacher won in the end. She ignored me and taught me nothing. That didn't really make too much difference though as my teacher the next year gave me a chance so I made two grades that year and caught up with the rest of the class.

We played several games at school. As regularly as the calendar, the season for different games came around, marbles, mumble-peg, spiking tops then back to marbles and mumble-peg as the weather warmed up in the spring. The older boys played baseball and a game they called *Shinny*. It was somewhat like hockey. For a puck they used a tin can or syrup pail. The stick, were selected from the trees. The mulberry sprout was a favorite. They selected one with a bend at the lower end that resembled the shape of a hockey stick and to make it more durable they sometimes wrapped the club end with balling wire. They chose sides and started knocking the can back and forth to see which team could score by crossing the goal line first. It was no game for the timid. One of the boys made a big swing at the can and missed just as Emil Schwartz ran in to knock it the other way. He took the swing just over his eyebrow. He

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was knocked cold for a while and had a big gash cut on his forehead so the teachers banned the game before I was old enough to play it, not that I regretted it. Owen got a few bruises from the game before it was outlawed.

I always liked to tinker with tools so I got hold of plans of a sort of flying machine. We cut out a piece of tin from a tin can to form a propeller about six inches long. In the center we made two holes about one half inch apart to fit over shingle nails. The nails were driven into a spool (from thread that had been used). The spool was mounted on a piece of broom stick about six inches long by driving a large nail through the spool into the end of the handle. By winding a heavy string around the spool and giving it a good pull the propeller would spin off and go a good distance into the air. I forgot to say that the heads of the shingle nails had to be cut off so the blade could rise.

I had made one of these and had it with me at school. Having no tin snips to cut the blade I had to use a cold chisel to shape it and that left the edges rather ragged. I was demonstrating it to the kids at school and as the blade came down it struck the bridge of a boy's nose and made a pretty bad cut. The blood ran and the boy yelled and my toy was confiscated by the teacher. I was quaking in my shoes for a while. I figured I'd surely get a whipping. That would have been a disgrace as none of us had ever been whipped at school. The boy was what we called a Dutch kid. He was from a German family as about half of the students were at that time.

Another time in my first year I thought I was really in trouble again and this time I was involved with another *Dutch* boy. During recess, for pastime, I was throwing rocks in the direction of the boy's toilet. About the time I heaved a good sized rock the boy came out of the toilet and the rock struck him on the arm. He went bawling to the teacher and told her I had hit him with the rock. I was called in to the teacher's desk for an explanation about the event. Being some what shy I was *shaking in my boots*. I could imagine the disgrace of getting a whipping at school before everyone. That had never happened to anyone in our family. I really tried to convince the teacher that it was an accident and I succeeded as she only suggested that I be more careful where I threw rocks in the future. One lesson I learned that day was the usefulness of a good alibi.

You may recall that I mentioned how unkind a bunch of children can be at times. As an example, when I was in the third grade the first grade class was on the *recitation bench* for their reading lesson. The teacher called on a little girl named Velma to read a page from her reader. She stood up, nervous and self conscious, and started to read. After she had read a few lines we noticed a trickle of water running down her stocking and forming a puddle on the floor near her feet. Most of the older ones noticed what was happening and started to giggle. To me her embarrassment was not funny. Velma started to cry and the teacher became aware of the situation. She said, "Velma, if you are not feeling well you can be excused and go home." So that helped Velma out of a very bad situation. I have since wondered why the teacher did not excuse Velma's older sister so she could go along with her as they lived about a mile and a half through the blackjack woods and Velma was only about six years old.

Uriah Comes for a Visit

One summer Grandpa Uriah was visiting us and it was late to be trimming fruit trees, but he thought our trees needed trimming so he took the saw and went to work in the orchard. Mom was sure he was ruining the trees but she hated to say anything, lest he take offense. She told Pearl to go and ask him to come and see the litter of new pigs we had. He went with her down to the pig pen and while she kept him interested I took the saw to the house where Mom could put it out of sight. Pearl kept him entertained until he forgot about trimming the orchard. Grandpa was very hard of hearing but almost always heard anything not meant for his ears. He could not hear well enough to tune Dad's fiddle but could play it when it was tuned.

He had not brought a change of clothes when he came to visit so he decided to wash his clothes. He was wearing summer underwear, the kind that had little round holes woven into it for ventilation. I don't know what that kind of cloth was called. It did not completely block the view, or at least Mom thought it not quite concealing enough. He was stripped down to his underwear and had his shirt and pants in the tub washing them when two of our neighbor women came calling on Mom. He was out under the trees/in the yard when they came and Mom was very much embarrassed. But not Grandpa, "My Fellers" (as his by-word was) that was nothing to fret about.

He was in his seventies then and stood *ramrod* straight and could jump into the air and kick his heels together three times before hitting the floor. I never was able to do that. Another trick he showed us was to lay the broom on the floor and sit by it with the legs across the handle. Then wrap your arms around the up drawn knees and without

touching the floor with hands or feet leap over the broom stick. He did it with no unusual strain. I tried it and came down on the broom stick and almost broke my tailbone. After his visit was over he went back to spend the rest of his life with Uncle Bob's family. I never saw him alive after that.

When Owen was about fifteen or sixteen years old he took the measles. When he thought he had recovered he went somewhere on horseback and was out in a rain. He took a backset and was very sick for a lone time. The rest of the family all had the measles at the same time. I don't recall Lena and Edna being at home then so they may have been away from home as they worked out some. We were all feeling bad and food tasted awful. We did not feel like climbing the stairs so we had beds all over the floor downstairs. Hugh was not as sick as the rest of us so he made it miserable for the rest of us. He did not want to be confined to bed. Jan came to our house to help care for us. Mom had some macaroni, which she asked Jan to prepare with tomatoes for our dinner. Jan had never seen any macaroni before so that dish did not turn out so well and with the taste of measles it did not go so good. It was a long time before I wanted any macaroni again.

Cooking on the Farm

Before we go farther with this story I will tell you the stories about the Cast iron wash kettle. It was the only one I ever saw like it. I have seen many of the round ones in various sizes but the one we had was oval shaped and would fit the top of a wood burning cook stove if you removed two *eyes* (or lids) as they were called and also the piece of the stove that was placed between the lids. This is the same kettle on which I fell when I almost bit my tongue in two. We used it not only for heating wash water and boiling the white clothes, but for rendering lard when we butchered. After the lard was drained out the *cracklings* remained. Mom would put some of these cracklings into corn bread dough and bake it. The cracklings had something of the taste of bacon that is not smoked.

The crackling bread was delicious. We took the undesirable fat from the hogs and used it mixed with lye to make soap. That was also prepared in the iron kettle. One time Mom had made a kettle of soap and had left it in the kettle over night to cool and harden so it could be cut into usable squares. We did most of these things outside the house. The kettle had four legs about an inch long. These would set on bricks or rocks and we could build a fire under the kettle in the yard. The night we left the kettle of soap in the yard someone's old hungry hound came along and ate the entire batch of soap. Mom was really irritated with the loss of all the work and the materials. When you hear that a hound will eat anything he can swallow you can believe it.

We also used the kettle for making hominy. We used white corn for that. The yellow corn always had a raw taste regardless of how long it was cooked. We would shell several gallons of white corn and put it into the kettle with water to more than cover the corn then add a can or two of lye to it and boil it until the dark part of the corn, where it is attached to the cob, started to come off. The water took a reddish color and some of the skins of the grain split. Then we would drain off the lye water and rinse the grain in several changes of fresh water then boil it some more in fresh water. Then drain again. The best way to fix it was in a skillet of grease where ham had been fried then put the hominy in and add a little salt and fry it in the ham grease. Of course, if you did not have ham grease bacon grease was a fair substitute.

In the summer when we had roasting ears in the field corn we often filled the old kettle with roasting ears and boiled them on the cob. Then Mom sliced the grain off (without scraping out the part that remained on the cob). Then we spread a clean bed sheet out on top of an outbuilding, usually the chicken house, and placed the boiled corn in a thin layer on the sheet. After a few days in the July sun the corn was completely dried and very hard. It would remain in good condition stored away in cloth bags. When we wanted to eat it we put it in water and boiled it. It has a flavor all its own. It is delicious in soups and I used to like to get a mouthful and chew on it till it was soft enough to eat. Yellow corn is best for this as well as for fried corn. Yellow corn has a richer flavor than white.

This old kettle was the *Jack of all trades* for many years at our house. I think Hugh and I were the only ones who ever had any trouble with it. As I said before, I fell on it biting my tongue but Hugh's trouble was more serious. Jan was at our house, helping Mom with the washing. It was winter so they had boiled some clothes on the stove. They lifted the kettle off and set it on the floor while they were getting ready to cook a meal. Hugh was about three years old and was playing with a small toy, which he was pulling along the floor with a string. He was walking backward and watching the toy when he bumped into the end of the kettle of hot water and clothes. He sat down into the hot

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water. Luckily for him it had cooled some but by the time Mom got his clothes off his legs and bottom were a mass of big blisters. The burns were only skin deep and healed without scars after a while.

Tom had that old kettle until about 1936. They were using it to water the cow that Dad brought to town when we quit farming. It was about half full of water one night when the weather turned bitter cold. The water froze solid and cracked the kettle. It was older than I was and I never knew if they brought it from Virginia or Texas or if they bought it after moving to Oklahoma Territory.

We always canned a lot of fruit, peaches of several kinds, Apples, grapes, tomatoes, beet pickles and pickled peaches. We had one peach tree that had red meated peaches on it and these were the ones, which Mom pickled. They were *cling*, one which does not come loose from the seed. Mom cooked them with sugar to make a fairly heavy syrup and added spices such as cinnamon bark and cloves and sometimes nutmeg and other spices. We called them Indian peaches because of the red color of the meat. We had one tree, which forked, at the ground and the trunk on the west side produced a light colored freestone peach. It was the earliest ripe peaches we had. The other trunk, to the east side, produced a yellow peach much later than the others. It was also a freestone but it was not an Elberta. It was not as good to eat fresh as the earlier ones but was very good for pies and peach cobbler. Peach cobbler with fresh separated cream over it is something to be remembered for a life time. We had several Elberta trees and they were more dependable than the earlier varieties because they did not bloom quite as early and that way were not killed by the late freezing weather in the spring. They made very good canned peaches and when fully ripened on the g tree they were very good sliced and sugared for a while to be served fresh with sweet cream poured over them. That was a dessert fit for a king. After we had canned all the peaches we wanted the *seedling* peaches were ripened. From these we made peach butter and dried peaches. To dry them we broke them open and removed the seeds then placed them on a roof, spread them out on a piece of cloth, usually a clean bed-sheet, and left in the sun to dry. We would turn them over once in a while so both sides would dry thoroughly. They had to be taken into the house at night as dew on them would spoil them. It was a lot of work but the reward was high. We also dried some of our apples in a similar manner. We cored the apples and sliced them crosswise in thin slices. Home dried fruit has a flavor all its own. The commercial does not begin to compare with the homemade kind we used to make. It was from these homemade dried apples that Mom made her *dried apple cake*. An imitation can be made using apple sauce and sugar but the real thing requires home made dried apples and sorghum molasses for sweetening the batter. The cake should have about seven layers of the sorghum-flavored cakes, baked thin, and a layer of cooked, dried apples between the layers. Dried apricots made very good pies too. Since the dried apricot was pretty strong it was best to cook them with some flour or cornstarch and water so the flavor and tartness would be reduced.

Mom usually made several jars of corn salad also. There is a commercially canned *corn salad* on the market now and it is fairly good but seems to lack something that Mom's had. That is not imagination on my part either. The commercial variety is too bland like Mom's would have been if most of the juice had been replaced by water. Although time may have dulled some of my faculties my appetite and appreciation of good food remains in good condition.

To make this corn salad the roasting ears were first boiled on the cob. Then the grains were cut off and placed in a kettle to which was added vinegar, water, sugar, chopped onion, red peppers, green peppers and cloves and spices. I do not recall the exact quantities. This was cooked until all the flavors were blended and placed in jars while boiling hot and sealed. This made a delicious relish to serve with meals in the wintertime when vegetables were not readily available.

When I was between six and seven years old I took my first ride in an automobile. A man came to our house to stay a few days while he held some meetings at the school house. I don't know if he was a Socialist Organizer or maybe it was The Farmer's Union he was promoting. I was much more interested in the car. It had two seats and a top like a buggy and *Presto Lights*. On the back of the front seat there were two latches like trunk latches. When these were unlatched the back of the front seat dropped to the back seat so it could be used for a bed. I know how it worked because I undid the latches and the whole seat fell down. But it was not much of a problem to get it back up and fastened before anyone caught me at it. The man wanted to go talk to a neighbor so he took Dad in the front seat and us kids in the back seat. I can't recall who else went along. About all I could think of was how much faster and smoother than the wagon the ride was. As we went up the hill (the same hill where Hugh and I came down as we

were in the old cupboard coming to the new place) there was a piece of a barrel hoop buried in the road with one end sticking up. I remember hearing it scrape along the bottom of the car and wondering if it would break something. The car continued as if nothing had happened.

The Kutch Family

Either the first summer or the second one after we moved to Caddo County we went to visit with our old neighbors the Kutch's. Their family was almost the counterpart of ours. They had nine children about the same age as me and my brothers and sisters but all except one was of opposite sex. Then they had their tenth child a girl. The funny thing was that none of us married into their family. We all grew up together and were more like cousins than neighbors. Grandpa Kutch had been a Texas Ranger before coming to Oklahoma and after fighting outlaws and Indians with no serious injuries. He died from a broken back when a wheel came off his wagon when he was hauling a load of firewood.

My memory of that trip is rather sketchy for some reason. I also remember going to visit the Boydston family but do not recall the trip there or home. Velma Boydston had married my cousin Garret Cavin and they had moved to Arapaho, Oklahoma. That was the county seat of Custer County, to the north of Washita. He worked on a section crew for the railroad there. While we were at Boydston's place all the younger ones were playing in the hay mow of the barn by the windmill. The barn was very near the road and the house set back farther from the road. Usually the farmsteads were laid out the other way around. As I recall that barn it was large and the hay mow about twelve feet high. However, when I revisited the place about fifty-five years later, it was not so. I could stand on the ground and reach up and touch the hay mow floor. That just shows what a small boy's imagination can do to his memory.

As I was going to say, we were playing in the barn and saw an Indian on a horse coming toward the windmill. We were all a little scared so we moved back into the shadows where he could not see us. He got off his horse at the well and took a butcher knife out of his belt. We were really holding our breath while he whetted the knife on the concrete around the well. With all the blood-curdling stories we had heard we were sure our time had come. After whetting the knife he got on his horse and rode away.

Some time after that, maybe the next summer the Kutch's came over to spend a few days with us. At the time, my Aunt Nell with her four girls were visiting us too and some of the cousins of the Kutch's were with them. We all had lots of fun playing and lots of fried chicken and gravy and sliced tomatoes, with onions and hot biscuits. When it was time to sleep that was something. There were twenty-eight children to bed down. The grown-ups got the beds and the rest of us slept on a pallet. That pallet was something to see. We laid bedding from one end to the other of our upstairs and started at one end with the biggest girl a then the smaller ones toward the center. On the other end were the bigger boys and so on down to the center. That is the most people I ever saw sleep in one bed. I suppose Mr. Kutch liked what he saw in that part of the country because he soon traded his place to a brother of the man he had traded with and became our neighbor to the east. So they lived on the adjoining farm with us until we were almost grown up.

Pearl Takes III

My sister, Pearl, was very studious. She loved to go to school. When she was a little past fourteen years old she contracted *German Measles*, now called Rubella. This was not considered to be a very bad childhood disease, as one usually recovered in three or four days. Pearl did not want to miss school so she insisted on going back in about three days when she felt well enough to go back. When school was out there was a drizzle of rain falling. Our house was only about a quarter of a mile from the school house but by the time she reached home her clothes were damp and she was shaking with chills. The next morning she had a high fever and it continued to get worse.

Doc McQuaid was called and he took her temperature and listened to her lungs and said she had pneumonia. In those days doctors were almost helpless in treating pneumonia as they were with many other diseases. Her condition had grown steadily worse until on the morning of February 26th, 1918 she complained that she felt as if there was a heavy weight on her chest. Her voice was so weak and raspy I could not understand what she said but Mom told me what she had said. Then she asked to have the baby (Virginia) to come to her bed. She reached out and pulled Virginia down across her breast and embraced her. After a few minutes Mom took Virginia away and told

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Pearl that the weight on her chest would make it harder for her to breathe. I did not realize it at that time, but did later, that Pearl knew she was not going to live and wanted to say goodbye to her baby sister.

She struggled for her breath a while and the doctor felt her pulse and listened to her heart. He straightened her up and said "she is gone". This was the first death of a loved one that I had witnessed as far as my memory went. When Jewel died I was too young to know about it. Dad sat by the head of the bed and closed her eyes and held them until they stayed closed. Mom was crying and my grief was almost more than I could bear. I went out the back door and cried into the cold north wind until I had some measure of control of my emotions.

Mauk's Hardware Store at Eakly had a hearse and furnished caskets for funerals. That was when they used a team of horses to pull the hearse. The automobile was not in use in small communities at that time. I recall Mauk's team as a pair of big black horses in fine harnesses when they came to take Pearl to the cemetery, called Poage Cemetery at the Fairview Church. Fairview Church was three miles west and a half-mile north of our north corner of the farm. This was the first burial I had witnessed. In the next thirty years I was to attend several more funerals of loved ones at that place. For several months, a year or so, I had vivid dreams that she was still alive. I did not know then that this is often the case after the loss of a loved one. The dreams were more vivid in this case, perhaps because it was my first experience and Pearl and I were very close.

Life during World War I

Owen was not old enough to be drafted for service in World War One but along toward the last Dad received his questionnaire to fill out to see if he would be called. He was still in the age group who would be called next. He had almost completed it when we got word that the Germans had surrendered. We found out later that it was a false alarm. Before the time for Dad to mail in the questionnaire we got the news that the armistice had been signed and this time it was for sure. Dad never mailed the questionnaire. I have often regretted that I did not preserve that historical document of our family.

A little while before the war was over, when the influenza epidemic was so bad Mom got word that her father, Uriah B. Chance had the flu and was seriously ill. She went to see him. He never recovered from the flu. They brought his body to The Fairview Church and he was buried in the lot with Pearl. I forgot to mention earlier, Jewel was buried at the Pleasant View Church six miles southwest of Colony along with some cousins who died while their folks lived near us there in Washita County. And Doc McQuaid was buried there some years later.⁷

During the war we were rationed on sugar and flour. And sometimes we had to get by with substitutes. At times we would run out of flour for biscuits at breakfast. We liked cornbread but not for breakfast. Mom had an idea we could have kaffir corn ground and make white bread from it⁸. We had popped it like popcorn and it was not too bad. But one batch of kaffir corn biscuits was enough. After it was cooked it had a bluish tint and was very gummy and the taste left much to be desired. We ran out of sugar also, at times, but that was easier to cope with. Dad ordered a fifty-pound can of honey from an ad in the farm paper or from the Kansas City Star, a weekly newspaper we received for so many years. It goes beyond my memory. Also we would get sorghum molasses. So we fared well for sweets. It was rumored that people with plenty of money fared better by hoarding the scarce items. I am not thoroughly convinced that the rumors were not facts. It is always, the poorer and more decent people who win the wars. It has been that way in the three wars I have witnessed.

One time during the war I was playing around the windmill when I heard a noise like a car, only louder, coming from the south toward Kinder's place. It did not seem to be the right direction to be in the road. I soon discovered it in the sky coming right over our house. That was my first time to see an aero plane. It was flying rather low and was about to disappear behind the trees in our orchard so I ran up the windmill so I could watch it until it went over the hill about a mile to the north. I had heard and read of aero planes before but had never seen one.

⁷ Uriah Chance and Pearl Cloninger are buried in unmarked graves at Poage Cemetery. In 2003, the graves are under a cedar tree near some *Lasley* and *Flowers* graves. Eric Cloninger marked the location as latitude north 35 degrees 22.315 minutes, longitude west 98 degrees 36.376 minutes. This reading is good to about six feet, so others may be able to find it.

⁸ Kaffir corn is a cereal grass, also known as *durra* or *Indian millet*.

Dad had an old rifle, which he kept upstairs. It was, as I recall, an army surplus from the Spanish-American War. It was a Springfield 45/70. I think the number seventy had something to do with the size of the cartridge or the weight of the bullet. It used an enormous cartridge. I never saw but one cartridge for it. Owen brought one home one time and took the gun outside to try it out. He fired it into a locust tree and the bullet ripped a slab of wood off the tree. The slab was about one and a half inches thick and about six inches wide. That old gun must have had plenty of killing power. Of course I was too small to handle any kind of a loaded gun but I enjoyed playing with the 45/70. The breach opened up by swinging to one side so the cartridge could be laid in place. The hammer was mounted on one side of the frame like the old muzzle loaders. It had a very strong spring. It was about all I could do to cock it. One day I folded some paper into a wad and laid it on the firing pin and pulled the trigger. I had my thumb too far over the pin and when the hammer came down I left my thumbnail on the firing pin. The old saying "we live and learn" sure held true that time.

A Horse Story (or Two)

To complete the story of the old rifle, we had a neighbor down the road about a half a mile. His name was Claude Lemmon. He was a kind of a horse-trader. He had a black mare that was not the prettiest horse you ever saw. She had a good head and front quarters, but the rear half was not so good. Her hind feet were *pigeon-toed*, that is, the point of the hooves turned inward instead of pointing straight ahead as they should. Her rump slanted downward a little too abruptly. She was not a cripple and could do field work. Claude asked twenty-five dollars for her. Dad told him he would give eighteen and the Springfield rifle for her. So they made the trade.

After we had her for a while we decided she was going to have a colt. One morning Dad said, "We have a new colt but it is too weak in the ankles to stand and suck." Hugh, Dad and I went down in the pasture to see it. Its hind feet were all right but when it tried to stand on its fore feet they folded backward under its legs and it could not stand. Dad said, "If you boys will take care of it and raise it you can have it." We got a bottle with a nipple on it and started feeding it on cow's milk several times a day. We would help it to its feet and while holding it up we would reach down and straighten its forefeet so the hoof of each foot was flat on the ground. After a week or so of this treatment its ankles were strong enough that it could stand alone and soon it learned to walk. It was a mare colt and black like its mother. It had a little resemblance to the mother in the hindquarters but not so bad. It grew up to be a fairly nice looking filly. The Hart boys who we visited and went swimming with in Lake Creek owned a donkey, Pete. They wanted to sell Pete for two dollars and fifty cents and Hugh said if I would buy Pete for him I could have his interest in the filly. I did the Janitor work at the school house and had a little money so I gave Hugh the money to buy the donkey.

Louie Hart, when my black filly was about two years old, said he would break her to ride so I let him take her home with him. After a few days he brought her back and she was gentle enough for me to ride. I did not have a saddle so I had to ride her bare back. She was rather fat and as round as a barrel. I put a bridle on her and led her up beside the wagon so I could mount without startling her. Everything went smoothly as I rode out into the road and turn south toward the school house. There was a hill south of the school house that went down to a little creek that crossed the road. It had a small wood bridge over it. The horse weeds, as we called them (another name I have heard was blood weeds, because of the red sap that flowed when the weeds were broken) were as high as the horse's head on both sides of the road. As I started down the hill, the filly wanted to go faster. I loosened the reins and she started to gallop then broke into a full run. I tried to slow her down but she had the bit in her teeth and did not pay any attention to a pull on the reins. We came to the little bridge and it surprised her. She was very agile and turned completely around in about two jumps. There was nothing for me to hold onto so I kept going south at about twenty miles per hour while she was heading back home. I landed in some deep soft sand so I was not hurt but I walked home. She was standing calmly in the yard. She was a lively little mare, but not wild.

Some time later, as usual, I had postponed doing the chores until it was nearly dark. I had to cut wood to use for cooking breakfast. We had dead blackjack limbs for that purpose. Dead blackjack is very hard brittle wood. I made a mis-flick with the axe and struck the wood between me and the chopping block. The piece broke off and struck me in the face. One sharp piece where a twig had broken off went through my lower lip and another made a hole through my lower left eyelid. The larger part of the piece of wood made a big knot on my forehead. This was the penalty for postponing my chores until after darkness.

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This event was a prelude to another riding adventure. While my face was only slightly healed Owen and I were taking a horseback ride along the road by H. G. William's orchard. He was riding his saddle mare, Bird, and I was riding my filly. He had a saddle but I was riding bare back. We were headed toward home and the filly was prancing and trying to gallop. She was hopping up and down like a rabbit when a covey of quail took flight almost under her feet. She jumped sideways about six feet very suddenly. She was very plump and round and I had nothing to hold onto except the reins. I tried to keep the reins so she could not dash off home and leave me walking. When I struck the grounds the reins jerked me off balance and I fell in front of her. Her forefeet of knees struck me in the small of my back and one of her hind feet struck my face. I was not hurt very much but the blow to my face opened the cut lip and there was quite a bit of blood on my face by the time I got home. Bloody kids were not such a shocking thing for Mom as she had seen quite a lot of that. Owen retrieved the reins for me and I did not have to walk home.

After Hugh had ridden Pete for a year or two he was losing interest in the donkey and traded it to a neighbor named Rexroat. For the donkey he got a beautiful, little, sorrel stallion with a white mane and tail. He was almost buckskin instead of sorrel. He was probably part Palomino as buckskins are called now that started using the Spanish word for horses of that color. The stallion was named Silver Bill. The name was suggested by the color of his mane and tail. I don't know where the Bill came from. The reason why Hugh got such a pretty horse for an old donkey was the fact that Silver Bill had been injured by barbed wire cuts on one fore leg. His left foreleg had been badly mangled by wire cuts that the knee was stiff and the foot was more like a club than a normal foot. Although he had to swing his left hoof in a circular motion when he galloped and he walked with a limp he was rideable. He was a gentle little stallion and ran in the pasture with our other horses. Hugh sometimes rode my filly as well as Silver Bill. Neither of us had a saddle so we rode bareback.

One day Dad ran out of tobacco so he told Hugh to go to Exendine store and get some for him. He rode my filly. It was two and a half miles to the store. That made the round trip five miles. He rode her at a run all the way there and back. When he returned she was dripping with sweat and breathing hard. He put her into the pasture and slipped the bridle off. She walked out about a hundred yards from the barn and lay down. We went out to see if she was all right and found that she was giving birth to a colt. We had never suspected that she was going to have a colt. The colt was brown horse colt and Silver Bill was the sire. We had underestimated the abilities of the crippled stallion. I later traded the black mare to Dad for a little two-year-old sorrel filly. She was a very pretty little horse. Her only defect was a little too much sag in her back line. I wanted a car as I had dismantled the old 1916 Ford. I traded the sorrel and twenty dollars cash for a 1917 Ford touring car. I agreed to deliver the horse and pick up the car. It was eleven miles.

Hugh and I put a halter on the filly and started up the road. For the first mile I led her by the halter rope and Hugh rode her. The next mile I rode and he led and so on until we reached our destination. By that time she was broken to ride. After a few more months I decided I wanted a car with a starter. I was more interested in having the battery than anything else as I wanted it for other experiments. Robert London, a neighbor about a mile north of our place had a 1919 Model Ford, which had a battery and starter. We worked up a trade. I gave him my car, the brown colt and a box of radio parts for his car. This was the end of my career as a horse owner. From then on it was cars. Since I have completed my horse stories I will drop back and pick up another thread now.

Aunt Nell

When I was about nine or ten years old or perhaps younger, Aunt Nell's husband, Harold Motley, had an attack of appendicitis. In those days many people were afraid of hospitals because operations were not as successful as they were later. Uncle Harold was afraid to go and stayed home until his condition became too bad. His appendix ruptured and he was taken to the hospital where he died. His death left Aunt Nell a widow with four little girls to care for. In those days there was no such thing as Aid for Dependent Children. Nell had to do laundry and house work to support her family. She had her share of bad luck, as she had lost her mother when she was ten years old and her husband when she was a young woman. Her oldest girl Irene was about my age. The next was Mabel about Hugh's age. Jessie was about the same age as Virginia. The youngest was Iris. Iris died with a kidney disorder when she was ten or eleven years of age. Through all this Aunt Nell kept her family together and made a home for them.

For a while she rented a farmhouse about three miles south of where we lived. The owner of the house had some grain stored in one of the rooms. There were no sashes in the window in that room and when we were visiting with

Didaw's Book

Nell and the girls we played in the grain. One day when we were there I jumped out of the window and landed on a board, which had an eight-penny nail through it. The nail went into my bare foot between the second and third toe. It almost went through my foot. The skin was bulged on the topside. My sister, Pearl helped me pull my foot loose from the board. Aunt Nell put some coal oil in a pan so I could soak my foot in it for a while. It was somewhat painful when I walked the three miles home but it healed without giving me very much trouble. We nearly always went barefoot as long as the weather permitted. There were two reasons for this. First, we liked the freedom of the feet and second, we sometimes did not have the money with which to buy the shoes. One spring day I was running through some weeds and stopped on the upturned corner of a piece of galvanized sheet iron. It went between my big toe and the second toe. The cut was about one inch long and half an inch deep next to the toe with the double nail. That same summer the same thing happened to my other foot except that this was done by a rusty piece of iron. So I have twin scars. The old remedy of coal oil and turpentine took care of those injuries like many others.

Shortly after this Aunt Nell moved to Weatherford. She did laundry and house work to support her family. It was a rather hard way to make a living for her and the four girls. The work was very hard and long hours and the pay was not very much. Aunt Nell had a lot of the *hillbilly grit* though, and managed to buy and pay for a small two room house. When Mabel was about eight years old she was playing on a porch rail at a house where her mother was working. A boy, who was playing with the children, pushed her off the porch rail. Her thigh bone was shattered so they had to take her to the hospital. The doctor cut open her thigh almost the entire length of it. They put some silver bands around the bone to hold it until it healed. He said that it would have to be removed as she grew larger. However, she never had to have that done. She used to show us the scar and called it her *centipede*. That is what it looked like, a red centipede about eight inches long.

Aunt Nell and her girls often came to visit us on the farm when the garden, the corn, frying chickens and fruit was ready to enjoy. That was the only time Aunt Nell had a chance to rest much. Her girls were more like sisters than cousins. We had lots of good times together. I remember one fight I had with Irene. We were building sand castles in the sandy road when one thing led to another and Irene jumped up and kicked over my sand castle. That was more than my temper would stand so I retaliated by hitting her. She proceeded to get a handful of my hair and I could not get away from her. While this was going on Mr. Flansburg drove by and laughed and said, "Stay right in there." This was so embarrassing, to let a girl get the best of me, I decided to quit trying to get loose. So when I quit struggling she let go of my hair. I could hold my own with boys my size but had never learned how to fight with a girl. Like most *kid fights* it was forgotten within an hour and I think Irene cares more for me than any other cousin that I have. She still says *blood is thicker than water* and she means it.

Mabel was the lively one and could not wait for the grapes to get ripe. The first thing she did upon arriving in the spring was to get a bucket and head for the vineyard. One time she came in with about three quarts of green grapes, too green for the seeds to be matured. Mom did not like to see any thing wasted so she sent us to the mulberry hedge where the berries were ripe. They were too mild to be good when cooked but Mom took about equal parts of mulberries and green grapes and made a cobbler that filled the biggest biscuit pan. Being the first fresh fruit of the season it was very good, especially with fresh cream on it.

Mabel was always active. She not only picked fruit and vegetables, she gathered all kinds of junk, zinc fruit jar lids, scraps of brass, gunny-sacks and rags. She knew an old man in Weatherford who bought all kinds of scrap. Also some times Mom's egg production would drop off. We learned later that Hugh and Mabel had raided the hens nest and took the eggs to Exendine Store and traded for candy and chewing gum. One time when she was riding Pete, Hugh's donkey, Hugh and I hid behind the lilac bush and as Pete came by we jumped out and scared him. We expected him to throw her off. That seemed like a funny trick. He was startled and swung sharply around throwing her off head first. She struck the ground rather hard and jumped up, holding her right arm with her left hand. She said, "Oh, you've broke my arm." She was not kidding. Her forearm was folded at a right angle half way between the wrist and elbow. Owen hitched up his buggy team and took Aunt Nell and Mabel to see Dr. Darnell at Colony. The doctor's bill was fifteen dollars. Through all the ordeal of the broken arm I do not recall hearing Mabel cry with the pain. She had lots of *spunk*. I suppose Dad helped pay the doctors bill. I never knew him to act stingy.

With all the troubles and heartaches these times are remembered as the best of our lives. We were never spoiled by having too much so our appreciation of what we got was not jaded.

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One time when Nell and the girls were ready to go home Dad decided we would hitch up the wagon and take them home. That way we could visit Uncle Bob and his family. They lived at Weatherford and he worked for the railroad as a section foreman. It had been years since I had seen them and had never seen the younger ones in the family. They had six daughters. The oldest one was Maurine, about the same age as me and Irene. We had played together when we lived in Washita County but my memory of Maurine was very indistinct. The next girl was Olive, about Hugh's age. When she was small she was stricken with polio and had spent most of her life in a wheel chair. She had had some operations and therapy at a clinic in Louisiana and could walk by using crutches. In later years she had more treatments and was able to walk without the crutches. The next girl was Myrtle, about Virginia's age. The three younger girls were Josephine, Margaret and Jean. For a week or so before we planned to leave for Weatherford we were all busy scrounging for junk such as zinc fruit-jar lids, scraps of brass and copper, gunny sacks and rags. Mabel knew the junk dealer in Weatherford and knew what would bring the most money. We could get a dime for a gunny sack without a hole, in it. Dad did not have any good sacks left in the barn after that trip.

Soon after we arrived in Weatherford we carried our sacks of junk downtown to the dealer and left with a hand full of coins. That way we had money to spend. We had a ball. We had to go down to the south end of town, across the railroad tracks to get to Uncle Bob's house. On the way we went by a lumber yard. Mabel showed us where the keg of ice water was in the driveway of the lumber yard and when there was no one around we stopped in and got a drink. When we were at Uncle Bob's house the girls suggested we go out to the old swimming pool. It did not have any water in it as the city had abandoned it. It was cracked and did not hold water very well anymore. Most of us were barefoot and started across the vacant lots at a run. I had taken only a few steps when I became acquainted with a new kind of burr. I was used to grass burrs, or sand burrs, but the new ones were much more painful than sand burrs. We named the new one *goat head burrs*. Their shape resembles a goat's head somewhat. Where they stuck into the sole of the foot the skin turned white like a blister looks and they hurt a lot more than anything I had ever stepped on, unless it was a dry joint of the cactus plant by our lilac hedge. The swimming pool was just a big hole in the ground, lined with concrete. There was a little water in one end and several toads around the water.

After a day or two we got ready to start back home. Uncle Bob kept a cow and she had a small calf. I don't know if he sold it or gave it to Dad. Anyway we put it in the wagon and tied it so it could not jump out and hauled it back home with us. It grew up to be Old Jersey. She was a member of our herd of milk cows till we quit farming.

Somewhere farther back in the dimmer parts of my memory I saw my first *moving* picture show. I had seen a show of still slides, but the *movies* were something new. A man came to our neighborhood and got permission to give the show at our school house, Hopewell, District No. 135. It was on our quarter section of land. Mom and Dad gave us the money to pay for our tickets to see the show. The main show was Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe. It was fascinating to see how real the movement was. I suppose that by today's standards it was not anything to brag about but we got our money's worth from it. There was also a short feature that showed a train coming straight at us with the smoke rolling from the engine and also a shot of a snarling bear coming right at us. Lots of the kids squealed and hid their faces. It was quite thrilling. The next day I went down to the school house to look around and found some cans that had held the fuel for the bright light in the picture machine. A few years later we had a more or less regular moving picture show at the school house. A man by the name of Ray Rosser had a movie projector and had a Delco light plant in his truck. The Delco plant consisted of a thirty-two volt battery and a gasoline-powered generator to charge the battery. He made the rounds of the schools in that area about every two weeks. His home was Binger, Oklahoma. It cost a dime to see the show. Since I had the job of doing the janitor work at school he gave me a free pass for sweeping up after the show. As the show was on Friday night I did not sweep after school and went back after the week end and cleaned up the mess so I saw all the shows for doing what I had already been paid to do.

Life on the Farm in Caddo County

We had a neighbor, Andy Brock, when we first moved to Caddo County. He only stayed there a year or two after we moved next to his place on the south. Dad always said you could tell how many cold spells we had during the winter by counting the overall suspenders on Andy in the spring. Dad said every time the weather turned cold Andy put on another pair of overalls and wore them till spring. Of course that was one of Dad's jokes but I have seen Andy with three pair of overalls on at one time. Andy and his family decided to move to Kansas so they had a sale and

loaded up their wagon and left before daylight. We never saw them again. Their house was about a quarter mile from ours. That evening when it was about dusk we heard a dog howling mournfully. He kept at it till almost midnight. The next morning he howled again so Dad went up to the Brock House to see what was going on. There was Brock's old dog, which they had left behind. He was getting rather old and I guess they thought he was not worth taking along. Dad took food to him for a few days but the old dog did not seem to have much appetite. After about a week Dad came back from taking the food to the old dog and said, "That chore is finished. I buried the old dog this morning."

No one moved into the Brock House for some time so Hugh and I went up there to explore and see what we could find. In an upstairs room I found a ten gauge muzzle loading shotgun and in a closet I found a box of caps for it but we did not have any shot or powder. We also found a lot of magazines. Since reading material was scarce we gathered up all the magazines and the shotgun and took them home with us. Mom always liked to read and often read stories to me, Hugh and Virginia. She would read a while every night until she had finished a book. And Mom and Dad both used to tell us bedtime stories if we were not reading a book. To complete the story of the magazines, shortly after we brought them home and took them upstairs where we slept we started finding insect bites on ourselves and we were sure there were no mosquitoes in the house. We started examining the beds and found some bedbugs. I would not say for sure they came from the magazines but they made themselves known soon after we got the papers. In that old house with all the cracks in the walls for the bugs to hide and no good insecticides we had a heck of a time getting rid of them. To finish what I know about the shotgun, Owen cut open a twelve-gauge shotgun shell and put the charge in the old muzzle loader and fired it. It was in good working order. I cannot tell what happened to it after that. It has disappeared from my memory as if it never existed.

When Hugh was about eight years old, he was picking cotton with me and Dad. He said, "Dad, it would be nice if we had some colored people to pick our cotton, wouldn't it?" Dad said, "No, it would not be right for someone else to have to do our work for us." Hugh picked on a way and then said, "Dad, preachers don't have to work, do they?" You would think that an eight year old doing that kind of thinking would have found an easy life's work. But he put in a life time working on a railroad section crew.

Man's Best Friend

Hugh liked to visit with the neighbors and was visiting with an old neighbor who was getting ready to move out of the country. I think they were moving to Tennessee. They had a dog they wanted to find a home for before they left. His name was Tip. He was a young dog but fully grown. He was a mixture of Shepherd and bulldog. He had the long hair and the coloring of the shepherd and looked more like the shepherd but his head was more square and broad. He was a mixture of light and dark brown with a bunch of white hair on the end of his tail, hence his name. He was a medium large dog and very sturdy. His owner was Taylor Mines, a neighbor who lived about a mile and a quarter east of us back a way from the road in the black-jack oak woods. We did not have a dog at that time so Hugh put a rope around Tip's neck and brought him home. We left him tied to a tree the first day and night and fed and watered him. Then the second day we turned him loose.

We thought he probably would adopt us by then. But as soon as he was free he struck out across the fields and woods toward Mines's place. Hugh went back after him and brought him home again. We kept him tied up for five days that time. His inactivity and change of food caused him to become very constipated, so Mom said we would have to let him get some exercise. We turned him loose again and he took his exercise by galloping toward his old home. Hugh, again, went after him so Mr. Mines said, "I think I can convince him to stay with you."

Mr. Mines was a gentle old man who was raising some orphaned great nieces and a great nephew and would not think of abusing the dog. He got a Number two and a half tomato can from the trash pile and put several pebbles in it and pushed the lid down so the pebbles could not fall out. With a piece of strong cord he tied this to Tip's tail and shook it, making the pebbles rattle. He turned Tip loose and he took off westward as hard as he could run. He came to our house ahead of Hugh and we took the can off his tail. There was never any doubt as to whose dog he was after that. That one insult to his dignity let him know who his friends were.

The farm that lay to the southeast corner of our place was known as the *Mattie Stover Place*. It was mostly wooded land and had an old abandoned house on it. The house had no windows or doors and the walls had settled into a

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slant of about twenty degrees. Most of the floor was gone. It had been a two-room house of vertical one by twelve's and not ceiled inside. This was typical of early day houses and also the type first built on Indian Allotments by white renters. Mr. Oglesby, one of our neighbors to the south, rented the place as long as I knew about it. He had a herd of Angora goats that he let run in the woods. They kept the weeds and brush grazed down in most of the woods. There was very little farm land so he used it for pasture. Hugh and I spent many week ends prowling and hunting in the Black Jack woods. There were squirrels, rabbits and possums there.

One Thanksgiving day we took old Tip and went to the woods. Tip treed a squirrel and as we did not have a gun, all we could do was throw sticks at the squirrel. There were no rocks in that sandy soil on the farm. We continued to chase that squirrel for hours until he was finally about exhausted. He jumped out of the tree and started to run on the ground. Tip made short work of catching him. We dressed him and took him to the old house. It was mid-afternoon by that time and we had not had anything to eat since breakfast. We decided to roast and eat the squirrel. We made a fire in the old house where the floor was gone and proceeded to cook the squirrel by holding it on a green stick and turning it over the coals. We had gone prepared by taking some salt along. We had tried to roast and eat a possum without salt and that was a failure so we took salt on this trip. I would not say that this meal was a complete success either but somewhat better than the experience with the possum. I think that with the experience I have had with cooking in later years that I could do a much better job of roasting meat now. As hungry as we were then, we could hardly say that it was good but we ate some of it and gave the rest to Tip.

One other cold drizzly day in November we were prowling the woods as we often did on week ends. We were in a dense wooded area and heard a pitiful, weak crying sound. We started trying to find the direction of the sound so we started moving first one way then another until we could find where the crying became louder. After a while we found the cries were coming from a clump of brush that was overgrown with greenbrier vines. We worked our way into briars and found a very young kid tangled in the briars. I mean a young goat not a child as our slang English is used these days. It was so weak and cold it could not stand. Its long hair was entwined so much in the briars that we had to use our pocket knives to cut it out. Its mother had given up trying to get out of the brush and had abandoned it. We put it under our coattails and took it to Oglesby's house so they could feed and warm it up. I never did know how it made out but possibly that incident is the reason Mr. Oglesby never objected to our hunting on his land. We had a few (very few) neighbors who objected to our hunting on their land. Most were very reasonable about hunting and we tried to never abuse our privileges.

We had not had Tip very long before we found out he was a very good stock dog. We had several hogs in a pen out east of the barn. One very large sow rooted a hole through the fence and got out. Dad and Mom and we three youngest kids were trying to drive her back through the hole. There is nothing as blind as a hog when you try to drive them back into a pen after they have come out. That old sow was whirling and darting about but always away from the hole in the fence and every time Dad turned around he stumbled over Tip. In his exasperation he said, "I'm going to kill that dog if he don't stay from under my feet." Mom said, "Henry, I think Tip wants to help. Why don't you tell him to go ahead?" So Dad gave the word, "Get 'er, Tip." The word was no sooner given than Tip lunged in and nipped the sow on the fleshy part of her foreleg. She opened her mouth to squeal and Tip grabbed her by the snout. She reared back on her haunches and squealed and Tip dug in his feet and pulled the other direction. Dad got a rope and tied it around the sow's hind leg and we led her into the pen with no more trouble.

Tip always reverted back to the bulldog tactics of going for the head or throat. He never a *heeler* like most shepherd and collies, but he was rough enough to make the stock know that he meant business. One trait he had often made Dad so irritated he wanted to whip him, but be never struck the dog. His only bad trait was his refusal to attack a small animal. He ate with the calves and pigs and would pretend he did not see them when we tried to get him to chase the young stock. He showed no mercy to the older animals.

We had a large roan bull, which we had got from Kutch's after they had moved to the farm adjoining us on the east. We had named the bull calf after Kutch's youngest son, Coy. Coy, the bull, grew up to be a big raw-boned bull without horns. He came to have a high disregard for barbed wire fences. One time when he had walked through the fence into the fields I found him and set Tip after him. He started to run and Tip grabbed him by the nose and hung on. Old Coy felt the safest place was the pasture so he headed back for the fence with Tip still swinging from his

nose. He gave a big leap and broke the two top wires of the fence but landed in the pasture. Tip was still hanging on when they hit the ground. As soon as they were well into the pasture Tip let go and came back to me.

That winter Hugh and I took Tip along to the woods that mostly covered the quarter of land that joined us on the southeast corner. We discovered that Tip was a pretty good *tree* dog on squirrels, but we did not have a gun so about all we could do was chase the squirrels. Tip found two opossums that day and he captured them. One was in a hollow tree and the other was bedded down in a brush pile. Their skins would bring from fifty to seventy-five cents. So we took them home and skinned them and stretched the hides on a thin board from an apple crate. Dad promised to take the .22 rifle that belonged to Owen and help us get a mess of squirrels and rabbits.

The next week end we had about three inches of snow on the ground and we three headed for the woods. Dad shot one cotton tail rabbit before we left our fencerow. When we got to the woods Tip put a squirrel up a tree very soon but when we approached it ran from one tree to another until it reached a big one with a hole up on the side of it. Dad gathered some small twigs and built a fire at a crack near the bottom of the tree, trying to smoke him out, but it did not seem to work. However we took the coldness out of our toes by the fire. When Dad saw that the smoke trick would not work he climbed the tree up to the hole. We handed sticks with glowing coals on them up to him and he started knocking the coals down into the tree. Pretty soon the squirrel had more than he could take so he started out. Dad had both hands in a ring around the hole. When the squirrel stuck his head out Dad grabbed him and rapped his head against the tree. That was a lot of work for one squirrel but it was too cold to sit and wait him out. We got a mess of rabbits and squirrels that day and it was the first time Hugh and I had helped to get any game. We spent many hours in those woods in later years.

Another Horse Story (or Two)

When I was about ten years old Dad was plowing with the *lister*. That is a plow that opens up a furrow making ridges between the furrows and plants seeds of whatever kind it is set to plant. He had a four-horse team hitched to do the work. On the right, outside he had Old Belle working. The same Belle that threw Owen and broke his arm several years earlier. Belle was a tough mare and inclined to be a little mean. Her ears were a little smaller than normal. She had a slight *Roman Nose* and held her ears tensely upright. She was not really mean but was somewhat high strung. Dad drove up to the end of the field and turned round for the next row in the shade of a locust tree by the chicken house. He stopped to let the horses cool a little and Old Belle lay down in the harness. Dad got off the plow and took hold of her bridle and tried to make her get up but she would not even try to get to her feet. While Dad was trying to figure what to do with her she gave birth to a male mule colt. Dad had lost count of her due date and had not intended to work her so long. However, the work did not do any harm to her or the colt. The colt we named Jack and he had his part in lots of events in our lives before our ways parted.

Another of our mares had a horse colt a little older than Jack. We had named him Barney. He was a pretty colt and we played with him. He was gentle. One day he was getting his dinner from his mother and was showing his pleasure by thumping his tail up and down in rhythm with his swallowing. I thought it would be fun to see how he would react if I gave his tail a jerk. His reaction was swift and to the point. He put both hind feet in my stomach with such force that I sat down on the ground about six feet away with the breath knocked out of me. I had no idea that colt was so strong. Barney grew up to be a fair sized horse and we had broken him to work by driving him with a gentle companion hitched to the wagon.

One Sunday we visited with a neighbor and came home late in the afternoon to find several of the horses out of the pasture and roaming around the orchard. Then we saw Barney. He was limping badly. He had become entangled in the barbed wire and cut his left fore leg very badly in several places. The worst cut was the large muscle on the side of the leg just below the point of the shoulder. It was cut from the top downward until there was a piece of muscle about five inches wide and about three inches thick hanging down.

Dad had worked lots with sick and injured livestock. The neighbors often called on him when they had trouble with stock or if the stock needed operations. So when he saw Barney's problem he ripped open a cotton sack to get enough canvas to make a strong bandage to go around Barney's body so we could keep a bandage on his shoulder. The cut was so high that we could not go around the leg and hold it in place. He had a home remedy for cuts on horses that he said would make it heal over with hair so the scar would not show badly. It was a mixture of lime

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water, linseed oil, and pine tar. He got the main bandage sewed on until it fit snugly and then using an old bed sheet, torn in strips, he went around the inner side of the leg and crossed over the worst wound and lifted the loose flesh back into its normal position after applying his *medicine*. He made several thicknesses of the bandage and sewed and pinned it to the girdle of canvas, saturating it with the medicine he had prepared. On the lower part of the leg where he could wrap around he bound up the cuts and also doped them. Barney had to sleep standing up for about two weeks but when the bandages came off his leg was not disfigured too much. The muscle that had been cut so badly had not been all pulled back into place and it left a sort of a hollow where it should have bulged outward. He was not left lame and was able to do his share of the work.

It almost seems that some animals, like some people, are prone to bad luck. A few years later, Barney developed *blind staggers*. That's a disease that affects the brain and spinal cord of horses and causes them to stagger and stumble over things. It sometimes kills them. Dad studied his book about diseases of stock and treated Barney. One thing he used was ammonia, which he held to Barney's nostrils. I got a few whiffs of it and did not wonder that Barney didn't like it. After a while Barney showed signs of improving and recovered. Well, he did not quite recover-he was always a little less alert and somewhat slower after his bout with the blind staggers but he could still do a good days work. I do not recall Barney dying so we must have sold him at our sale when we sold the farm and got ready to move.

One other ailment Barney had to suffer through was Fistula of the Shoulder. That is caused by a bruise to the bone by an ill-fitter collar and it is like a big carbuncle on a human. It has to open up and drain before the horse can heal. It is very painful. Barney came through that and could still earn his keep. He surely had his share of trouble.

Old Jack grew up to be a good work mule. Not a prize winner for looks, but he was intelligent and a little ornery and a strong worker. His head was too heavy to belong in the good looking class. His ears were big enough but they did not swing back and forth in the tradition of the best working mules when they walk. Like his mother, he was slightly *roman nosed* and tough-a good worker most of the time and inclined to some mischief now and then.

When a car would pass him on the road, if it was a good smooth stretch, he would be terribly frightened and try very hard to run away. But, if the road was rough and he had ditches near his side where he might get into trouble he would be as calm as an old plow horse. You had to keep your lines under control. I was always convinced his skittish ways were a big put-on.

I was driving him and Owen's saddle mare, Old Bird, as a team hitched to the buggy one time when I was about thirteen years old. I had been to Exendine Store to get some things we needed and, like most boys that age, I became a little careless in my daydreaming and dropped one of the lines. I called "whoa" to the team but they realized I did not have control of them so they started to trot instead of stopping. The more I said "whoa" the faster they trotted. I was afraid of what would happen if I did not get them under control but was afraid to try to stop them with one line as there were borrow ditches (called *bar ditches* now) on the side of the road that could upset the buggy. I held onto the one line and climbed the dashboard onto the tongue of the buggy. By this time the team was in a full run and the buggy tongue, being rather slender, was bouncing up and down like a diving board. I held onto the harness until I reached the ring on the back band that guides the line that I had dropped. My biggest concern was that the tongue would break and throw me under the wheels. I finally got a line in each hand and started sawing back and forth on them. After a while, I convinced Bird and Jack that I was master again. Years later when I saw movies of the Roman Chariot Races, I was reminded of my ride on the buggy tongue.

Bird and Jack were two you could never trust if you let them have any advantage. One time before the buggy ride I rode Bird to the store to get some tobacco for Dad and a collar pad for one of the horses, which had a neck to small for any collar we had, and fifty cents worth of sugar. I had a saddle on Bird but my legs were too short to reach the stirrups. I tucked my toes into the stirrup straps so I could stay on. I made the trip without trouble going to the store. I had a flour sack along to put the smaller items in and I tied the collar pad on with the leather thongs on the saddle. About a mile up the road on the way home I noticed that the saddle blanket was slipping from beneath the saddle so I took hold of it and started trying to work it forward while still riding along. Bird was a little high strung and did not understand the foolishness about the blanket so she took the bit in her teeth and started to run. I had about all I could do to hang on and try to hold the blanket. The collar pad and the flour sack were bouncing and flapping and all I could do was hang on. After about a mile and a half we arrived in our yard. There was very little damage. The

sugar sack was busted and there was a little tobacco mixed with it and both of my shins had blisters where they had rubbed the stirrup straps but I did not lose any of my cargo. A story Mom read to us from the eighth grade reader brought this ride to my mind. It was the story of Ichabod Crane's ride through the Sleepy Hollow after his encounter with the Headless Horseman.

Bird was Owen's saddle horse before he became interested in girls enough to feel that he had to have a buggy. She was kind of high spirited and had been teased as well as trained. You could leave her standing with saddle and bridle by dropping the reins to the grounds. She would usually stay put very well. When she was standing if you pointed your finger at her and hissed through your teeth at her, she would come at you with her ears back, her nose forward, and her teeth bared. I only tried it one time and she almost got me before I got out of the way. I never had enough nerve to try it again.

Dad had hopes of raising some good mules so he kept several mares and bred them to jacks. He never seemed to get the right combination. He had two bay mares, Dolly and Daisy. Dolly was the smaller one and the mother of the little sway backed filly I had traded the black one for. The next time those two mares had colts, they were mules. One was a female and one was a male. We named them Kate and Pete. They were well formed but never grew much bigger than a good-sized donkey. They were just about as ornery as well as they were small. They were always crawling through the fences and getting in the neighbors pasture. So Dad took a trace chain and two leather collars and hitched Pete and Kate by the neck. A trace chain was made for the purpose of making a trace for chain harness. Perhaps the work trace needs explaining too. It was used to go from the horse's collar to the vehicle or plow and was about five feet long. In a few days we found them in the neighbors pasture. As usual, our dog Tip was with us so we set him after the mules. They were in a big hurry to get back where they belonged. They came to the fence at a hard run. Pete, being the most active, jumped the fence but Kate dived under. They weighed about eight hundred pounds each so when the sixteen hundred pounds of mule came against the three barbed wires things happened fast. The two mules landed on their heads and somersaulted, all three wires broke and staples were pulled out of fifty yards of posts. It took us half a day to rebuild the fence.

Dad broke those little devils to work and had them hitched to the two-row cultivator. He had one mule in each of the outside positions and two full sized horses in the middle. It was a four-horse job to pull that machine through the loose soil. When he came in from the field that evening the mules were dripping sweat and their heads were drooping. They looked about all in. When Dad walked around behind Pete to unhitch the traces he let fly with a kick that barely missed Dad's knee. That was one of the few times I ever saw Dad lose his temper. He snatched up the neck yoke of the wagon and gave Pete a pretty hard wallop with it. I never saw Pete try to kick anyone else.

Kutch's had an old horse they called George. He was a good work horse but had been broken to work in the cotton fields of Texas where many people worked with walking implements and chain harness. Since the harness had very little leather about it the farmers would unbuckle the harness and throw it back onto the cultivator and the horse was free to go to the house. Old George could not forget his Texas ways so you had to be sure everything was loose before you took the hames off of George because regardless of everything he went to the barn when the hames were loosened.

Another interesting animal they had was Old Pop. He was a medium to small mule. He was about as old as the oldest son of the Kutch family. Old Pop was also a good worker with a few characteristics all his own. When he decided he had been in one pasture long enough he would lie down with his back against the barbed wire fence. Then while still lying down he would start clawing with his front feet and kicking with the rear feet until he had pivoted around on his side and ended up on the other side of the fence. There would be no harm to him or the fence, but very often lots better picking for him. In all his years, there had been no one who had been able to ride Old Pop.

The year he was twenty-nine years of age there was a group of men and boys working at Kutch's and the subject of riding Old Pop came up. Louie Hart, who had broken my little black mare to ride, said he was sure he could ride that mule. We all stopped work and went to the barn. Some of the fellows held Old Pop's head down by his ears while others put a saddle on him. He humped up his back and stomped the ground to show he did not like the idea. They put a halter on him and handed the rope to Louie as he mounted the saddle. He squirmed a little to settle into the saddle and said, "Turn him loose". As soon as he was loose, Old Pop exploded into action. He made four or five

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really good pitches, enough to show that he knew how but old age had got the best of him. He saw that he was to be outdone so he broke into a dead run toward the back side of the pasture where there were some blackjack trees. If he had not played out before he got to the trees he might have brushed Louie off, but his spirit failed before he had run that far.

Soon after that Kutch's decided to move and had a public auction of the farm tools and livestock. Old Pop was sold to a man who lived over on Lake Creek. In rainy spells that creek sometimes developed boggy places. One of those bogs finished Old Pop. He got into a bog and drowned before the owner found him. He was only thirty-two years old and might have lived to a ripe old age if he had been wise to quicksand.

How to Fix a Windmill

Our old windmill was a Monarch and had many mechanical defects. The hub of the wheel was mounted on the shaft and fastened with only a three-eighth inch bolt passed through the hub and the shaft. With a very little wear the hub and shaft rocked back and forth wearing the bolt rapidly. Another bad feature was that it was out of gear when the control wire was tight. In other words, it ran with the control wire loose. And to make matters worse the wire came down alongside the rod that did the pumping. This put undue wear on the control wire.

One March night when the wind was very strong the control wire broke and if that mill had a brake on it I never saw it. The wheel swung round into the wind and started running, it was really flying. After a while it sheared the bolt that held the wheel on. As soon as the wind slackened below the speed of the wheel, the wheel acted as a propeller and flew off the shaft. On its way down it struck one corner of the platform at the top of the tower and took it off. The wheel was pretty well badly damaged, but we unbolted the six sections and using a hammer and sledge for an anvil we hammered it back in shape. With ropes and pulleys we hauled it back up a section at a time and reassembled it. We got it back to pumping water again.

Some time later, when Dad had gone away from home to work in wheat harvest I looked up and saw the big wheel wobbling and was sure the bolt was broken again. I called to Owen and he grabbed his lariat rope and came running. We were afraid to shut down the mill because the change of direction would probably cause the wheel to fly off. We never stopped to think how much risk there would be to climb the tower with that big wheel about ready to fall. Owen went up the tower and started trying to slow the wheel to a stop with his hands.

After a while he brought it to a stop. It was teetering on the edge of the shaft so all he could do was wrap his arms around the tower and part of the wheel. He was afraid to try to put the rope on it for fear it would lose control. So I went up and doubled the rope through the wheel and around the tower so I could take up any slack we could gain. After we got the rope tight Owen started rocking the wheel slightly until we got it moving back onto the shaft. We finally got it all the way and tied it securely until we could find another bolt. After every thing was under control and we had time to think what could have happened I doubt that we would have taken the risk for the sake of an old, bent-up windmill wheel.

That old mill never was a very good one. It took a very strong wind to make it run and it did not respond to direction change very well either. The pipes were old and leaky too. We did not have a very big storage tank and it is amazing how much water twelve cows and fourteen horses can drink in the summer time. When the wind was light in July and August we had a problem. Hugh, Virginia and I were called on to help solve the problem. About three P.M. when the shade from the big locust trees about reached the well, we started pumping. The well was about one hundred feet deep and it took a good push on the handle of the pump to bring up the water. We had the bright idea of driving a piece of pipe onto the end of the handle for a counter balance to the load. It helped. I see the oilfields stole our idea to use on the pumps they use but at that time I had never seen an oil well. We took turns at the pump. Hugh and I made one hundred strokes and Virginia, being smaller, and a girl, only made fifty strokes. We would still be pumping when the cows came in and with the tank full we continued to pump. After the horses had drunk, the older cows came to drink and the tank would be almost empty so the cows drank slowly and sucked up the water as fast as we could pump it. By drinking the good cold water slowly, those old cows drank till their bellies were twice normal size. Some times it seemed they would never get all the water they wanted.

One time I had a big boil, or carbuncle, on my hand between the thumb and the fore finger. It swelled up until I could not get my thumb and finger together. It was on my right hand but I was not excused from my share of the

pumping. Another experience with a boil happened while we were having to pump water. I had noticed a kind of pimple just below and a little to the side of my tailbone.

Within a day or so it was becoming painful. It developed into a full-grown boil. I continued to do my share of the pumping even though I had to stand for my meals and sleep on my stomach. It took that thing several days to come to a head as the old timers say. Thing it was several more days until I could sit. In my lifetime I can recall four bouts with a boil and believe me it's no fun.

One time before we got a new tank we were using a wood barrel for extra storage of water for the stock. We had bent a pipe in a U shape to siphon the water to the other tank so the cows could reach the water. I guess I was about ten years old at the time. It was a hot summer day and all the folks were up in the orchard picking fruit. I decided it would be nice to cool off so I pulled off my shirt and kicked out of my overalls and jumped into the water barrel. It was fairly fresh and kind of took my breath at first. I soon got used to it and was enjoying the cool bath when I heard a car coming up the drive. The drive went within a few feet of the windmill and the barrel was close. I ducked down out of sight. There were two men and two women in the car. I was stuck, naked, in the barrel. One of the men went to the house and knocked on the door for a while then came back to the car and said "no one answers. Maybe they are in the orchard". The two men told the two women to stay in the car in the shade and they would go see if anyone was in the orchard. I had been in the cold water until I was turning blue and my teeth were chattering but I could not jump out and go streaking for the barn even though the idea crossed my mind. It probably was only ten or fifteen minutes, although it seemed like hours before I heard voices from the direction of the orchard. I could hear Mom's voice talking to the men so I had hopes of being rescued. The people were from Washita County and had come to buy some fruit so they were not leaving right away. I suppose Mom saw my clothes beside the barrel and came to see if I was drowned or something.

When she looked in the barrel I told her my predicament so she went to the car and asked the people to look the other way while I put on my clothing. After I was dressed I stole a look at the people. Their shoulders were shaking but they were looking the other way. I beat a retreat to the barn and stayed until they were gone.

After fighting that poor old windmill and pump for a few years Dad decided something must be done. He had just come home from harvest and had some money. He hitched up the wagon and went to Mauk's Hardware in Eakly. He came home with new pipe and cylinder for the well and a new Monitor Windmill and a good size galvanized stock tank. We started in on the work by taking down the old mill then Dad took off the wagon tongue and took it up on the tower. He tied a block and tackle, which he had borrowed from Mr. Mauk, to the upper end of the tongue then we worked it up the side of the tower until it projected about six feet above the top of the tower. This was to make a boom for lifting the gearbox high enough to get it into the top of the tower. It worked out very well and we had the heavy part installed.

We could send up the vane and hold it until it could be bolted to the main case. Then we started taking the sections of the wheel until all were bolted in place. It had a wire for control that had to be pulled tight to put the mill in running position and it had a heavy spring to turn the wheel out of running position any time the wire was loose. It also had an automatic brake that came against the hub of the wheel if the speed became excessive. For its time it was a good machine. In fact, there are some of those old mills working that I know have been in use for over sixty years. Dad had also borrowed well tools from the hardware store. He pulled out the old pipe using the block and tackle attached to the tower after we brought the wagon tongue down.

There was a gadget to hold the pipe while the upper section of pipe was unscrewed. It was a heavy piece of iron bolted to a piece of timber about two feet long. In the side there was a notch formed like a V and on the other side was a pawl that could be lifted to go around the pipe. It had grooves cut cross wise to help grip the pipe then dropped into place. It was shaped so the downward pull of the pipe tightened the grip. We took up the first joint of pipe and set the *Pipe Dog* that was the common name for holding device, in preparation for removing the first section of pipe, including the pump head, which was still on the pipe.

We had unhooked the tackle and Dad thought he would make the *dog* a little more secure. He stooped over and tapped the pawl with his hammer and before he could straighten up the pipe that was up in the tower came whizzing down. The rim of the pump head hit his hat brim and knocked off his hat. Another three inches and it

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would have been his head. When the pump head hit the concrete it snapped the pipe off at the threads up inside the pump head. The pipe continued on down into the well about twenty feet. We went into the house and got a mirror so we could get the sunlight down inside to look the situation over. The pipe was about an inch from the side of the casing so we figured we might be able to grapple it. The pump head was ruined too.

Part of the flange had broken off and the broken pipe was impossible to remove with any tools we had. We took our stock to the school house pump and watered them in wash tubs that evening. Dad went back to the hardware store and bought a new pump head and borrowed the grappling tool. It was a ring made of square steel hinged to one side of the ring. One end of the bar had a loop for attaching rope. The other projected slightly into the ring but had a stop on it to keep it from going past center. The ring was only slightly larger than the pipe used in wells like ours. The whole thing had to be less than six inches as that was the size of most drilled wells around that country.

Putting that contraption over the end of a pipe twenty feet down a six-inch hole and keeping the spot of sunlight where you can see is a job for a patient man. We took turns at *fishing* and were finally rewarded by seeing it firmly in place. We had a timber laid across the struts of the tower to support the tackle used to lift the pipe. When we tightened up the ropes to pull up the pipe, the pipe seemed to be hung. The struts started bending instead of the pipe moving. We put braces under the struts and tried again. Still nothing moved. We were afraid we would break the rope and lose the grappling tool.

There was not any way we could see to get it other than dig down to it and that was a lot more work than we needed. After thinking about it a while Dad said, "Let's give it one more try." We tightened up the ropes and slowly increased the pull. After a few squeaks and shudders of the gear the rope in the well started up. When that hundred feet of pipe dropped about forty feet it had driven the bottom pipe into the bottom of the well and it took quite a pull to work it loose. It did not take long to finish the job and I don't recall having to pump water after that.

How to Fix an Iron Wagon Wheel

Our old wagon had seen a lot of miles and the tires had become loose. We would have to drive the tires back on sometimes. We did this by tapping the wood felloes or felly as some older books spell the word, until they were in line with the iron tire. In real bad cases we wrapped them with wire. One time Dad borrowed a *wheel vat* from someone. That was a crescent shaped vat that could put under the edge of a jacked-up wagon wheel and by rotating the wheel you could treat all the rim of the wheel to anything in the vat. He got a few gallons of linseed oil and we put the vat under a wheel with a block of wood under the axle so the wheel could rotate. Then we filled the vat with linseed oil and kindled a small fire around the vat. Note or warning: If you ever decide to oil your wheels be sure to keep the fire small. We heard of a neighbor burning his wheel off that way! We gave each wheel several minutes of the boiling linseed oil treatment and we had no more trouble with slipping tires for a while.

But eventually one rear wheel started slipping the tire. We did not have tools for setting wagon tires so Dad decided to let Mr. Lacy at Eakly do it for us. They take the tire off and put it in the forge. When a section about a foot long is white hot they have a large clamp that grips the tire on both sides of the hot spot. Then by pulling a big lever the clamps are moved closer together. Then this reduces the size of the tire so it will be tight when replaced. The tire is then heated all around to make it expand so it can be put in place around the felloes. As it cools and shrinks, if every thing is done right you have a wheel that is as good as new.

The trick is to get every thing just right. Mr. Lacy miscalculated a little and when the tire cooled the tire was too tight and Dad had a *dished* wheel. In other words the wheel had the general shape of a dinner plate. He was put out about that and said, "I can make a better wheel in the yard." He took the Sears and Roebuck Catalog and made out an order for the spokes and felloes for a new wheel. He also ordered what they called a *Hollow Auger*. In fact it was a tenon cutter. It had a faceplate with various sized holes that could be selected and it had one blade that could be adjusted in or out to match the hole selected. It could be placed in a bit brace to be turned until the tenon was the length needed.

There was also a depth stop to keep from cutting deeper than desired. We soon had the materials we needed. Believe it or not, mail order service was faster then than now with all our fast jets and computers. We set the axle on a chunk of wood and removed the wheel except the hub (I say "*we*" because if there was anything to be done with tools I was there if possible). The next step was to fit the spokes to the hub. They were already shaped close to a fit. We had to

dress them only a little so they would be a drive fit in the hub. Then we measured them so they would reach from one side of the tire to the other. Then we cut them to length. Using a drawing knife and a rasp we dressed each spoke to a cone shape on the end until we could start the tenon cutter over the point. We were careful to keep the cone as near the center as possible.

After we had the tenons cut we drilled holes through the felloes so they would line up with the spokes. Then we sprang the spokes toward each other, in pairs, until we could start the tenons in the holes in the felloes. After all eight were in place, we checked the size against the tire. It was a little too large. By running a sharp saw between the ends of the felloes we slowly reduced the size to about three sixteenths of an inch more diameter than the tire. The next step was to get the tire expanded so it would go over the wood easily. We already had our heater ready. We had several rocks laid out in a circle that would hold the tire evenly while it heated.

For fuel we had gone around the pasture and gathered several sacks of *cow chips* (the early settlers of the prairies used *buffalo chips* to heat their homes when coal or wood was not available. In case you have never heard of this fuel, I'll explain what it is. It is chunks of dried manure. With a good draft or a breeze, it makes a very hot and lasting fire. That was the best thing available to get the tire to a bright red heat.

We also had some more rocks laid out to hold the wheel and placed it so the tire would be in the right position on the wheel while it cooled. It took an hour or so to get the tire as hot as we wanted it to be. Then with some tongs in one hand and a hay hook in the other hand Dad and I picked up the hot tire and placed it over the wheel. We had to jiggle it a little then it slid into place. We sprinkled a little water around on it to cool it. When everything was cooled we had a very good-looking solid wheel. Up until then I did not know that I was a wheelwright. Dad's knowledge of how much the tire would stretch was the critical information.

Mary Rules the Roost

During the summer when we had lots of cream and eggs to sell Mom would take the wagon and drive to Exendine store, a distance of two and a half miles, and sell the produce and get the groceries we needed. She made the trip on Wednesdays and Saturdays. We did not have any way to keep the produce cool so it had to be disposed of before too long. If we were not busy in the fields we went along and dropped off the wagon at the bridge over Lake Creek, near the store. Just before the creek went under the bridge it made a sharp bend and where the bend was the high water made a deep hole. Hugh and I would stop under the bridge and shed our clothes and go swimming. If we heard anyone coming we would stay in the water up to our necks till they had crossed the bridge. On Saturdays there were often several boys in the swimming hole. The Hart boys, who lived up the creek about a quarter mile, and the Tucker boys from about three miles up the creek along with others. We spent many happy hours in and around Lake Creek. Like most of the creeks in Oklahoma now the creek is nothing but a lot of sand and a trickle or water most of the summer. In fact, with little rain there is no water. We can give modern farming the credit for ruining the creeks. So that is an era that is gone forever until man releases his hold on the land.

After Mom had finished her shopping we would go back home. She always bought ten cents worth of candy to be divided among us three youngest ones. And she being a good and steady customer of Mr. John Zerger and his brother in law, George Kaufman, always got a very generous amount of candy for a dime. One time when we took the cream to the store George said, "Mrs. Cloninger, we found this tablespoon in your cream can the last time you were here." Mom was very embarrassed by that and apologized for it. George said, "Don't feel bad about that. You should see some of the other things we find in other cream cans. You wouldn't want to eat any creamy butter if you did. In fact, we know your cream is clean and take some of it to make our butter." Mom felt better after that.

We had some Black Lang Shang chickens as well as Rhode Island Reds and Plymouth Rocks, which we called *Domineckers*, (I have no idea where that name originated but that's what they were as I can remember)⁹. The Black Lang Shang originated in China¹⁰. They were heavy chickens with lots of feathers and had feathers down the side of

⁹ The Dominique has been widely recognized as a part of American folklore and is an excellent farm chicken. Dominique chickens are known for their hardiness and ability to produce eggs in marginal conditions. The *rose comb barred* chicken became recognized under the name *Dominique*. The name Dominique is often corrupted with the result that this chicken is frequently referred to as the *Dominecker*.

¹⁰ The proper name for the bird is *Langshan*.

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their legs to their feet. They could stand the cold weather better than the light feathered birds. We were at the store in February one time and had a big bucket of eggs to sell.

There was a lady there from up the creek about four miles. She had a big flock of White Leghorns. She asked Mom what kind of chickens we had and when Mom told her we had the Black Lang Shangs she exploded, "Oh, I wouldn't have those things, with all the black pinfeathers, you can't dress them." George spoke up and said, "Well, Mrs. Lemon, Mrs. Cloninger brings in lots of eggs when no one else has any to sell." It was true about the pin feathers but when it came to fried chicken the two best kinds I ever ate were the *Black Lang Shang* or the *Dominecker*. It was a toss up between them.

One time we were getting ready to go to the store. I had a dime I planned to spend. I was helping harness and hitch up and dropped my dime in the puddle of water that formed by the mulberry tree by the barn after a rain. I spent an hour digging a ditch to drain the puddle. I never found the dime. Another little tragedy for me. As far as I know the dime is still there, although the tree, the barn and the house are long gone.

Meet the McQuaids

After the Breck's moved away from the farm north of ours the George B. McQuaid family lived there for a year or two. I think it was owned by Ed Smith and they rented it. Mr. McQuaid was a son of Doc McQuaid. He had a brother who lived about ten miles northwest of us. George B. had eight children, five boys and three girls.

Their youngest son, Robert was a little older than I was but we found lots of things we liked to do together. We prowled the woods and caught as many different kinds of lizards that we could find. The most interesting one was a black one with a white belly and a brilliant blue stripe along the sides. He was the aggressive one. Any kind we put in a bucket with him he attacked, even one of his own kind. After a year or two on the Brock or Ed Smith place, as it became known to us, McQuaids moved to the Bergthold place. That was the farm across the road west from us. The house was just across the road from the corner of our orchard so Robert and I were together more often. There was a gully across their pasture. In the soft bank we dug a cave. We also had a shelter built in another gully where the soil had washed away from a big tree. We thatched the roofs with kaffir corn stalks and threw dirt on top. We built a fireplace in the bank with a hole to let the smoke out.

One rainy day we went in and built a fire and were enjoying our cozy hideout when I discovered our roof was burning. The smoke was getting thick but we managed to get it put out before we lost the roof. It had rained pretty hard and there was a good stream of floodwater in the gullies. We decided to go to our cave to see if the water had gotten into the cave. When we were a few yards down the gully from the cave we heard a loud heavy "whoompf". When we arrived at the cave the wet earth had let go and fallen in on the cave. If we had been five minutes sooner there would have been an end to the story of Robert and Howard. Fate seems to have a way of making close decisions some times.

Our idea of collecting different things continued. We started collecting crickets. We had well over a hundred, which we put, in a ten-gallon cream can. It had the bottom rusted out so we put the lid in place and half buried it with the bottom up and filled it to within a few inches of the top with dirt. We put our crickets in that. We studied their eating habits and found they liked grasshoppers when they were free so we caught grasshoppers to feed them. They were also fond of mulberry leaves. The most unusual one was orange colored. I don't know if he was a freak or another specie. I never saw another one like that.

Robert and I were always together as long as they lived next to us. After they moved to a farm near Colony and Robert went to another school I saw him once after that. His school came over to play base ball with Hopewell. When he came to our school yard I was glad to see an old friend so I spoke to him and he stared straight ahead and never so much as looked at me. I had my first taste of the fickleness of friends. I never saw him again.

Ed Smith Moves in Next Door

After McQuaids moved from the Brock place to the farm across the road to the west of our orchard Ed Smith moved onto the Brock farm. It consisted of two quarter-sections of land. There was a considerable amount of black-jack oak timber on it. Mr. Smith wanted to clear some of the timber off the land and we needed wood for fuel so dad worked at clearing the land for the wood. This arrangement was followed for many years.

Ed was a very good neighbor although somewhat eccentric. He was never in a hurry and talked with a slow drawl but spoke with very precise, distinct diction. One of the stories that gives some insight to his way of living was told by a man who was baling hay for him. After supper the man sat in the living room while Ed went to the cow-lot to do his milking. After a while the man dozed off to sleep and when he awoke it was past midnight and Ed had not returned to the house. The man went out toward the barn to see what was keeping Ed and found him sitting on the ground and leaning against the wagon tongue. He was sound asleep. The man awakened him and said, "Ed, are you feeling all right." Ed said, "Yea, I'm just waiting for Old Speck to come in so I can go get my cows and do the milking." *Old Speck* was a roan mare he owned.

In later years I worked on the farm for Ed for a few days. The first day I worked we came to the house for lunch at noon. After lunch we rested until about one o'clock. When I got up from my chair and started to go to the barn to take the team out to start harrowing the corn. I was working Old Speck with another mare hitched to the harrow. Ed said, "Oh, let's just let Old Speck rest a while longer." He just leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes and was soon asleep. I had nothing interesting to do so I went out to the lot east of the house where Ed kept his old Billy goat. The goat had two very big horns and was very belligerent. I did not go into the pen but took a stick and rattled it on the woven wire fence around the lot. The old goat would sling his head from side to side and snort, then charge toward the stick and try to break it between his horns. It was quite entertaining to tease him. After a little more teasing he would rear up on his hind feet, bow his neck and come down stiff legged on his forelegs with a "Baa-a-a-a-h". Then he would urinate on his forefeet and chin whiskers. He was trying his best to show me how tough he was. I did not ever go into the pen to find out if he was bluffing because I was sure he was not.

About three O'clock Ed came out of the house and said, "I guess it has cooled off enough to go to work now." We went to the field and worked until it was almost too dark to see. I don't know if that was being eccentric or not but it definitely was not conventional. Ed seemed to believe in doing what he wanted to do, when he wanted to do it. Maybe that was not such a bad philosophy after all.

Ed was a large, raw-boned man and you would never think that he had artistic ability. He made some carvings of gyp-rock, using his pocket knife to cut the soft stone. One piece was a wreath of flowers. The wreath was about two and a half inches across. Even with this small size, the flowers, leaves and stems were and complete in detail. Another item was a book about three inches long. The covers were carved to look like it was being opened slightly and the pages were starting to come apart. This took some very delicate carving to keep from breaking the thin layers of stone that formed the pages. Across the front he carved *Holy Bible*.

The Socialist Political Party was popular with many people in that area at that time. Eugene V. Debs was something of a hero to Ed Smith, as well as my Dad, about that time. One other carving of stone that Ed did was a figure of Debs shaking hands with Christ. It was excellent work. Maybe if Debs had been born forty years later he might have been a hero instead of being sent to Federal Prison. Who knows?

Another story shows another side of Mr. Smith. As a rule he was a slow, easygoing, gentle man. However, he also had another side. A neighbor who had bought some pop-corn from Ed had not paid him for it. One time Ed said, "Fred, when are you going to pay me for that pop-corn." Fred replied, "Well, I don't have any money so I guess you will have to take it out of my hide." He made a bad judgment of Ed's nature. Ed slowly removed his overcoat, laid it down and drawled very slowly, "Well, if that's the only way to settle the account this is as good a time as any." He proceeded to collect enough "hide" to settle the bill. I learned a long time ago that a man's temper and fists don't always match his style of speech. Owen had worked for Ed before I did and he said Ed's comment about fighting was, "I always hate to hit a man because it sounds so awful when I pull my fist out of the broken bones and mangled flesh." He was not an aggressive man but he just did not think he should be pushed around.

In the woods he kept his livestock for pasture. One time Dad was going into the timber to cut wood. He was carrying his ax and a gallon jug, wrapped with wet burlap, for drinking water. Soon after he reached the edge of the woods he saw Ed's big bull coming toward him, snorting and pawing the ground. He yelled at the bull and waved his arms. The bull kept coming and increased his speed. Dad decided it meant business so he dropped the jug and ax and scrambled up a small tree. The bull bellowed and rolled the jug around and butted the tree for a long time. Dad stayed in the tree for about an hour before the bull and the cattle gave up and moved away out of sight. That was the

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first time we knew that the bull was dangerous. Some few years later Dad wanted me to go to the woods to cut a load of wood. It was in the spring but we needed wood so it could dry to use for cooking and canning. Mom decided to go with me and she planned to cook our lunch on a camp fire. She took some bacon and eggs and cornbread as well as a skillet and coffeepot.

We drove the wagon to the north end of the woods where Ed wanted the land cleared. By noon I had about half a load cut. I gave the team their grain while they were tied to the side of the wagon. Mom found some *poke* plants just right for greens so she fried the greens in the bacon grease as she had done the eggs. After chopping wood for half a day that was a meal to be remembered. I had taken the twelve-gauge shotgun along. I had not had very much experience with a shotgun and my judgment of the use of it was not very good. I soon discovered a cotton tail rabbit sitting in a brush pile. I took aim with the shotgun and blasted him. I thought we would have fried rabbit for supper. When I went to pick up the rabbit I found that I had been much to close while using a twelve gauge. The rabbit was completely pulverized, nothing but a mess of hair and meat.

One other event remotely concerned with Ed Smith which he probably never knew about happened one Sunday afternoon. We had a boar pig, which kept getting out of his pen. He would go up to Ed's orchard where Ed pastured his hogs. We had gone after the pig several times and Dad's patience was wearing thin. This Sunday afternoon when we went after the pig Ed was not home. When we were on the way home Dad said, "If you'll hold that pig I'll fix him so he'll stay home." I threw the pig down on his back in the sandy rut of the road and got on his forefeet and held his hind feet. While Dad used his pocket knife and made a barrow of the pig. The pig never roamed again.

Henry's Odd Jobs

For many years Dad did all the repair work at the school house and anything that needed to be built he got the job. From the time I was about eleven years old I helped him with building and painting. I was paid half as much as a man's wages. About every two years we painted the outside and on the alternate years we painted the inside and oiled the floors with hot linseed oil. Once when we were going to paint the inside a brother of one of the school board wanted to work but it was illegal for a relative of the board to do the work. So they worked it out as a contract and Dad could hire Sam to help. Sam was a bachelor and kind of easy going and talked with a very slow drawl. Dad asked him if he had any experience at painting and he said he had. Dad stirred up some paint for Sam and handed it to him. He told Sam he could start work on the window in the corner. Then he fixed a bucket for me.

When he looked around to see how Sam was getting along he got a surprise. Sam was using a well loaded, four inch brush and each of the panes of glass were completely covered with paint except for about four inch square in the center. He said, "Sam, I think you'd better start on the ceiling." The rooms were ceiled with beaded ceiling boards. They have little grooves and a bead running lengthwise on each board. Sam went up on the scaffold and put his brush into the paint, up to the ferrule and brought it up without cutting the paint on the edge of the bucket. He started swiping across the boards instead of lengthwise. He had paint on the floor, the scaffold and the wall in a few minutes. A few more strokes and he had paint dripping off his elbow. Dad stopped him and asked him about his experience at painting. Sam drawled, "Well, me and my uncle painted a barn one time. It took us a half a day. We sawed the handles off some brooms to use for brushes." Dad did not fire him but showed him how to handle the brush and after a while he got the hang of it and made a pretty good hand.

One other time in late July we were painting the outside of the house and had two sides covered with wet paint. Suddenly the wind started to blow very hard and with all the ground dry, within half an hour the paint job looked like red sandpaper. There was nothing to do but wait until it was dry and go over it again. That sandy surface sure *ate up* the brushes fast. It was very unusual to have a wind like that in late July or August. We often did not have enough wind to pump water for the big bunch of livestock we had. We often had to pump by hand to water them. This illustrates that you cannot depend on the weather in Oklahoma.

During the Christmas Holidays in the year about 1921 at a school house called Babbs Switch School, in Kiowa County, the community was gathered for a Christmas program. They had lighted candles on a cedar tree, which was a common way of decorating Christmas Trees those days. One of the candles was too near the branches and the tree caught fire. The cedar tree is very flammable so fire spread rapidly. On the windows were heavy guard screens and they were fastened solidly. The people panicked and raced for the single door to try to get out. There was such a

press of people at the door that it could not be opened and everyone in the school house perished in the fire. If my memory serves me right there were one hundred and twenty eight lives lost in that fire. After such a tragedy as the Babbs Switch Fire our state legislature passed a law that all public buildings must have swinging doors so people could not be trapped that way again.

Our school had to have the doors hung so they would open outward so Dad got the job of changing them. Then it was decided the doors would have to be protected from wind and weather. Dad got that job too and let me and Sam help build an entry porch over the doors. He had borrowed a handsaw from another neighbor so we would have plenty of tools for the three of us. One day Sam was not around the job for a while and Dad was wondering what he was doing. About the time he commented on Sam's whereabouts Sam came around the corner with the borrowed saw in his hand. He drawled in that slow way of his, "I've been wanting to sharpen my saw so thought I would practice on this one." That was another time I saw Dad almost lose his temper. That was about the worst job of saw filing I had ever seen and it was the saw Dad had borrowed. Going through that and remaining calm proved to me that Dad had a lot better control of his temper than I was ever able to accomplish.

One problem of building that neither Dad nor I had mastered was cutting hip rafters. I later set to work to find out how to do it but for that job none of us knew exactly how to do the job. After we discussed it some we decided to set up the main part of the roof and then fit the hip and jack rafters in place, cutting them by guess and by gosh. Sam disappeared again. He had a book on carpentry and he had taken his book, saw and square around to the shady side of the school house. After a while he came back to the work with a conglomeration of two by fours cut at angles and nailed together. He said, "Wel-l-l, I think I've got it figured out." Then he looked up to see us nailing the last rafter in place. The eaves did not come out exactly even between the front and the two ends because we had not made both the ends with exactly the same pitch. That gave me a clue as to how it should be done but it was too late to do anything about it. However, when the job was done it looked very well and served the purpose as long as the old house was used. After the job was done Dad had to go over the neighbor's saw two times with a file to get the teeth back in shape. But believe it or not, after we moved away Sam kept working at carpentry and became a fair workman.

We had only one accident on the job and I felt very sorry it happened. While Dad was cutting the long rafters: I was nailing them in place. There was a little stray, hungry kitten meowing around on the ground and one rafter slipped off the wall and one end dropped. It fell directly onto the kitten and its misery was gone almost instantly. It was bad to see it killed that way but better than starving to death around an empty school house. It is a rather heartless thing to dump small animals out where they can't find food for themselves. Our school house was located on the brow of a hill. During hard rains there would be a lot of water coming down the road and very often washed the road so badly it was hard to travel over it. In those days we had what was called a Poll Tax. Each legal voter had to pay this tax or work it out on the roads in his township. Dad very often served as the *Overseer* of that work. He decided to get some blasting powder and fuse and blast out some ditches in the sand rock alongside the road. They had tried plowing it out with the county rock plow but it would not penetrate the sand rock. Dad had done quite a bit of blasting so he was getting some ditches big enough to carry the water away from the grade.

When it came time for dinner I took a large K-C baking powder can and filled it with powder from the keg, I was curious to see what I could do with it. I guess that was more or less natural for a boy of eleven years without enough to do to keep him out of mischief. One of my experiments almost turned out bad. At least it could have been serious. I was playing in the sand in the road in the front of our house. I thought I would see how high I could blow the sand with some of the powder. I dug a shallow hole and put good-sized pile of the powder in it and then laid a small trail of powder out a way from it. Then I heaped the sand over it and left the end of the trail uncovered so I could light it with a match. I had not learned about fuses at that time. I struck a match and touched the powder trail. The whole mess went up instantly and there was a cloud of smoke and dust all around. The end of my thumbnail was scorched until it turned yellow and I lost most of my eye brows and lashes. Then it was clear to me why they used fuses on the blasting.

One other experiment taught me a few lessons from the powder and its proper uses. Leo Kinder, a neighbor boy who was a little older than I. We were out in our pasture and I had come into, possession of a twenty-two rifle. We wanted to compare the blasting powder to that used in the cartridges for the rifle. We pried out the bullet and

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emptied the shell. The blasting powder was very large grains so we could get only one grain into the shell. We replaced the bullet and I fired the rifle. It did not crack as was normal. It said "splat" and I did not see any dirt kick up from the bullet. We opened the breach and took out the empty shell but could not see through the barrel. We took a rib from an old implement umbrella and put it into the barrel. It stopped about six inches from the breach of the gun. We tried to push out the bullet but it only wedged tighter. We were at a loss as to how to get the bullet out so we consulted with Dad. He had lots of good answers for things. To our suggestion that we might be able to shoot it out he said we would probably swell the barrel and ruin it. He suggested that we put the umbrella rib in the fire until it was as hot as we could get it and melt the bullet out. It took a while but we got it done with no damage to the gun.

I knew some boys at a later time that got a wad at cloth jammed in their rifle when they were cleaning the barrel. They tried shooting it out and swelled the barrel of a good rifle until it was ruined. Some good fatherly advice could have helped them.

A Fourth of July Celebration

With the stories about the horses I have owned I have dropped a few events that happened at an earlier time. Going back a few I will pick up the loose ends. When I was about seven or eight years old we went to Colony for an all day celebration of the Fourth of July. The celebration was promoted by the business men of Colony. Dad and Mom loaded the younger ones into the wagon with a basket lunch of fried chicken, potato salad and other goodies. We started fairly early for the eight mile drive. With a wagon pulled by a team of work horses it took over two hours to make the drive. We arrived at the Park where the celebration was happening some time between nine and ten o'clock in the morning. The three most interesting things to me were the band stand where the brass band played, the big galvanized stock tank half full of lemonade with big chunks of ice floating in it (all free for anyone who was thirsty) and the stands that sold fire crackers, sparklers, Crackerjacks and ice cream and red soda pop. Of course I did not have enough money to buy everything I wanted but we surely enjoyed nickels that Dad provided, off and on, during the day. As I recall that was my first soda pop and ice cream in a cone. We had made homemade ice cream a few times before that. That was the first time I had heard a brass band play and I really enjoyed it. George B. McQuaid, Doc's son, played one of the horns. I had not learned the name of the horns then but was fascinated by the trombone and the way the notes were made. I learned what that horn was called that day.

I rode the merry-go-round one time but that was enough for me. I was always troubled with motion sickness and could not ride facing the back of the vehicle without feeling sick and I could never sit in a swing and *let the old cat die* due to my crazy stomach. *Letting the old cat die* was what the kids called staying in the swing until all motion stopped. We had a very enjoyable picnic and when the sights had bored me slightly I decided to go down to Cobb Creek that flowed by the east side of the park. As I went down the road toward the bridge two laughing young men came running from the direction of the bridge. They were looking back over their shoulders at an Indian woman who was following them, jabbering and throwing every thing she could pick up after them. One thing she threw was a thighbone of a horse. She was very angry but never hit the men.

There were many things to remember about that trip but one thing developed a few days later. It was some time before I connected the event with the picnic. A day or two later I developed an itching spot on part of my anatomy that was hard to scratch and more I scratched it the worse it itched. I had never had a chigger before so did not know what was wrong with me. If I had told Dad about it he could have told me what it was as he had seen lots of chiggers in south Texas. That was something I did not feel like talking about with Dad so I just scratched in silence till it went away. Years later when I got some chiggers again I remembered the symptoms.

There was usually a celebration on the Sixth of August in the black jack grove at the east end of the main street of Eakly. It was held to commemorate the opening of that part of Oklahoma for white settlement. It was sponsored by the Eakly business men and usually had a few stands and side shows by a carnival company and a few by local people. Mr. Parks, who lived about three miles west of our farm, had a merry-go-round that he set up and operated the two days the celebration lasted. He did not get any of my nickels because I did not enjoy the results of the ride. I spent my money for fireworks, pop, ice cream cones and things I could enjoy.

One evening after we came home from the picnic, as we called it, it was getting late and we were at the cow lot getting ready to do the milking. We milked about ten cows. Hugh, Dad, Mom and I milked three of four apiece. I had a box of sparklers that I had bought at Eakly and could not wait till dark to fire them up. I bent the wire handle like a crank so I could whirl it around after it was lit. I held a match to it until it started giving of sparks and started whirling it around my head. The wire slipped out of my hand and the lighted sparkler flew up onto the wood-shingled barn roof. I ran as fast as I could to the big mulberry tree by the barn and climbed out on the limb over the roof.

By the time I arrived the shingles were burning at a fair rate. I snatched the sparkler up and threw it off the roof. Then I beat the fire out of the shingles with my bare hands. I got a few blisters but I saved the barn. I would never have arrived in time if I had gone for a bucket of water or a ladder. It is amazing how fast a shingle roof can go up in flames. So the old tree not only gave us lots of pleasure and shade but it helped save our barn. Many years later I was reminded of my silly stunt when a neighbor boy tossed a large fire cracker onto their house roof. It ignited the shingles and the house and completely destroyed by fire before they could put it out.

One Fourth of July Dad was going to cultivate some of the crops and told me and Hugh that we should take our hoes and go to the corn field and cut the weeds that had grown up after the corn was too big to be worked with the cultivator. We did not think much of the idea of working on the Fourth of July so we decided on the way to the field that we would declare our independence. In the middle of the lane to the field, where Dad would have to drive the cultivator in going to work, we set our water jug down and placed a hoe on each side with the handles crossed over the jug. Then we proceeded on in an easterly direction into the woods and through two miles of pastures full of sand burrs to Lake Creek. We were bare footed but we could cope with the sand burrs and hot sand. Our feet were almost as tough as our old dog's feet were. We stayed in the creek, without anything to eat. We just swam and explored a half a mile of the creek. A little before sundown we arrived home. Already our backs were turning to start with sunburn. We expected to get a good switching for our rebellion. But, you know what; we never so much as got a reprimand. Dad went about his business as if nothing had happened. He was fair enough to know that we should have had the day off, so he let it go at that. That does not indicate that he could not dish out the punishment when it was deserved.

One nice late summer day he told me and Hugh to go down the fence east of the barn and repair it in a few places. We took the tools and went about a quarter mile and worked a while. We found a nice sandy spot and decided we would wrestle some. We were having a lot of fun when I glanced up and saw Dad walking fast toward us as he stripped the leaves off of what we called 'iron weed'. A very tough weed with some of the characteristics of a buggy whip. As he approached us I relaxed and turned Hugh loose and stood up about the time Dad grabbed me by the arm. He rapped my behind two or three times and it was pretty hot. Hugh's nerve failed him and he started to run. That brought my ordeal to an end. Dad did not want Hugh to go free so he turned me loose to go after Hugh. He got a few more stripes than I did. We went back to our work and finished it before milking time.

Memories of the Caddo County Home

We had an old organ, the reed type. It had pedals that pumped air out of a bellows and that, in turn, sounded the reeds when the keys were depressed, opening the valve under the reed. The older sisters and Owen played it and sang with it. Dad wrote numbers on the keys and then wrote numbers that matched the notes of several tunes that I knew. With a little practice I could figure out the timing and get it to sound like the tune. Before long I had memorized the notes and could *one finger* the tunes. After a while I learned to make chords. That must have taken the patience of Job for Mom to endure all the disagreeable noises I made in learning what I did that way, but she never complained. She always liked to sing and I suppose she hoped to have music in our house so she endured it all. We had Sunday school at the school house and sometimes during the week the neighbors would gather at someone's house for singing. The singing was at our house one night when Aunt Nell and her girls were there.

Aunt Nell liked to sing. Everyone was singing *The Flight is On, O Christian Soldiers* when all of a sudden Aunt Nell noticed that Mabel was up to something she did not like. So, she started flogging Mabel with her song book. Everyone thought how funny the action was following those words so everyone had a big laugh out of that. I never did know what Mabel did to bring that on but Aunt Nell was probably a little too tense at times.

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Although we always had plenty to eat, not always what we would have preferred, but plenty of good wholesome food. Money was nearly always a problem. If we made a good crop the bottom dropped out of prices and if the price was good there would be a drought that would about cause a crop failure. We had got a loan to help pay for the land and had mortgage payments and interest to pay so we could not hold our crops for better market conditions. So, between the bankers and the market manipulators, we were hard pressed for money quite often. I remember my Mom's irritation at having to sit at a banker's desk while Dad negotiated a loan after we had a crop failure and having him blow stale cigar smoke in her face while the papers were being made out and signed.

Christmas on the Farm

One year we had a pretty bad year and it was November before we had enough money to buy shoes for the younger three of us. I was going to school barefooted. Edna was working away from home. I do not remember whether she was a Weatherford or at El Reno. Anyway, it looked like a pretty slim Christmas for us. The folks always managed some candy, apples, oranges, and nuts for Christmas but not always any toys. A few days before Christmas the mailman brought a big package to our mailbox. We did not see what was in it until Christmas morning. It was a big doll for Virginia, and if my life depended on it, I could not tell you what Hugh's present was. For me was a big book, about the size of a Sears and Roebuck catalog. It had large print and pictures. The main story was *Gulliver's Travels* and there were funny verses with drawings. One of the jingles went as follows:

*There was a man in our town
And he was wondrous wise
He jumped into a bramble bush
And scratched out both his eyes.
When he saw his eyes were out
With all his might and main
He jumped into the bramble bush
And scratched them in again.*

Edna had remembered us that Christmas. She was the one who usually looked after the younger ones if Mom had other things to do.

Another Christmas in my younger years comes vividly to my mind. It had been another year when money was short. We three younger ones were not expecting much but we hung our stockings behind the stove as was our custom on Christmas Eve. The next morning we woke early and hurried downstairs to see how it had worked out. The stockings had some bulges so we took them down and pulled out the contents, wrapped in newspaper. When we unwrapped it we found inside some dried horse manure. I guess Dad had heard the story about the boy who found horse manure in his stocking and said, "I had a horse but he got away" and thought he would try that prank on us. It did not work out that way for us. We all started bawling so Dad got up out of his chair with a grin and opened the dresser drawer and brought out several sacks of presents.

One Christmas when I was seven or eight years old I received as a gift from Edna, a box of sixteen glass marbles. They were called *immies* because they were made to look alike agate (*aggies*), which were the ultimate in quality marbles. They were the most beautiful marbles any boy could ever hope to own. If my memory is right the price as marked on the box was eighty-nine cents. As soon as all the packages were opened and the candy, apple, nuts and other treats were taken out of our stockings, Dad, Owen and I went out into the yard to play a game of marbles. They had played enough to be good players. The weather, as often happens at Christmas time was nice and not too cold. The game did not last very long. When it came time for Dad to shoot he drew a bead on the center marble and hit it with plenty of force to drive it outside the square. He always shot with lots of force. When the two glass marbles came together a big piece flew from each of them. The damage to the marbles was too much of a disaster to me and I was not too big to cry. I know that Dad felt badly about my tears but that ended the marbles game.

I've had not had the dog, Tip very long when Dad decided to take me and Hugh along with Tip on a hunt at night to see how good Tip would work on the trail. We took a lantern and went through our pasture toward the southeast and into the woods which we called Mattie Stover's Woods. She was the owner of the quarter to our southeast corner. She lived away from there and rented her farm to neighbors. There was an old house back in the woods. It

had about seen its last days. It leaned at about a fifteen-degree angle, the doors and windows were gone and about half the floor was gone. No one had lived in it for years. The story was that it had been used as a way station for horse thieves from Texas and Kansas in earlier times. The story was that the Texas thieves would meet the Kansas thieves there and exchange their horses and ride back home, I don't know how much of that was fiction but it made a good story. And I never heard if that was before Mattie's time or not.

One story about Mattie that I heard concerned a widow in the community being married to a new husband and when Mattie heard it she said, "It looks like everyone but me can get married." The person she was talking to thought that was a joke as she had then been married three times. Well, back to the hunting trip. We went around over most of that farm and did not find anything. We crossed the road to another patch of woods and were getting tired so Dad said, "Lets sit down and wait for old Tip to hunt a while." We sat and talked and once in a while Dad would say, "Listen, lets see if we can hear Tip." But we heard not a sound. After Dad had said, "Listen" a few more times we decided to move on. We rounded a clump of brush and there sat Tip. He would first cock his head one way and then the other with his ears pricked up. He was obeying Dad's orders. He was listening. We decided his talents did not run toward trailing so the hunt ended there.

Hugh, oh Hugh!

When Hugh was about ten years old he liked to play with matches. One time he was playing on the stairs and the wall alongside the stairs was unfinished so there were openings down between the studding of the wall. Some paper and trash had accumulated down under the stair. It was enclosed underneath so there was no way it could be cleaned out. Ruth was striking matches and trying to look down under the stairs. He dropped a lighted match down into the hole. The trash caught fire and Hugh was frightened so he ran upstairs and hid behind the bed. Mom was working in the kitchen and heard the flames roaring but thought it was a car coming up the road at first. Then she realized it sounded like a fire. She noted it was louder near the stair so she opened the door and saw the flames leaping almost to the ceiling. We had a large bucket, which we called the slop bucket. We put the dish water and waste from the table in it and saved it for the pigs. Mom grabbed the bucket and ran up the stairs and poured the contents down into the fire then she took the water bucket and that into the wall too. As luck would have it, that was enough to put out the fire. That was the nearest we ever came to being burned out.

One time May Kutch was visiting Lena and they were making a dress for May. We had owned an old Davis Sewing Machine and it was about past repair. A Singer Sewing machine agent came along and was trying to sell Mom a new machine. She was afraid we could not raise the money to make the payments, although she wanted it very much, she still refused to make the trade. Lena had been working some at the Indian School at Colony so she said she would help with the payments. They made the deal and the man left the new machine and took the old Davis with him. The new machine did a very fine job of anything you wanted to sew from four thicknesses of eight-ounce duck to silk taffeta.

May had come over to our house to use the new machine. She was sitting at the machine sewing when there was a terrible loud bang upstairs and a few birdshot rattled on the floor near the machine. They ran upstairs to see what had happened and found Hugh on one of the beds. Beside him lay a shotgun and he was trying to put cut a fire coming from a hole in the mattress. He had been playing with the gun when it went off and shot a hole through the bed. Some of the shot still had force enough to go through the floor and ceiling below. The gun was so close to the mattress that the cotton in it caught fire. Dad never brought a loaded gun in the house. So Hugh must have found a shell and tried it out. The next fire was kindled on the seat of his pants.

Hugh was always restless and got into many escapades, some not so good. One time he and I were on top of the windmill when Owen drove into the yard. As a joke, he said, "Hugh, I'll jump off of there if you will". Hugh was never one to take a dare but Owen never dreamed he might try that. Hugh slid down to the next girt around the tower, about twenty-two feet up, and jumped. There was an old buggy top bow where he landed. He struck it with one foot and fell over and said, "Oh, Maw, I'm killed." Mom was there in the yard. She surely had her bad ordeals in raising us kids. Hugh had a sprained ankle and a very hard jolt but did not lose consciousness. Owen picked him up and carried him to the bed. The next day his entire right side from his waist down was black and blue. He had had a very close call.

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One other time when he was about ten years old he told Mom he was dying proved to be not so serious. The older brother and sisters were giving a party for their friends. The parties were very similar to square dances but since lots of parents did not approve of dancing it was called a party. They did not have musicians but sang to make their music and went through maneuvers like square dancing. Some of the songs they sang were, *Skip to my Lou, my darling, Fly in the buttermilk, Two by two* and lots more silly words but the tunes were lively and had a good rhythm and everyone sang and swung their partners around. It was a happy time. It was always a funny thing to me that people would object to square dancing but tolerate the party games. We had no such false scruples. Of course, some square dances were not supervised very well and drunks would cause some trouble. I think that was why parents objected to the idea of a square dance. At the party Owen, Edna, and Lena were having there were some boy who were a little too young to fit into the games and still old enough to think they should take part. They stayed outside and some had a bottle of wine and a few bottles of lemon extract with a high percentage of alcohol. They were trying to show their manhood by drinking. Of course Hugh was outside with them and they thought it fun to see a kid his size drink the wine. After a while he came inside and we noticed he was a little more rambunctious than normal, and that is a mouthful.

After the party broke up and Owen had taken his girl friend home, we got ready for bed and Hugh had already gone upstairs. He was not in our bed but was in Mom and Dad's bed and he was groaning and *taking on* as if in great misery. Pretty soon he started vomiting all over the place and said, "Come over here Maw, I'm dyin'." Mom was so worried she was about out of her mind and was talking to Dad about going for a Doctor. Owen came home about that time and he knew by the smell of the wine and lemon extract what had made Hugh so sick he told Mom there was no need to worry. Hugh was just drunk and would be all right after he threw up the mess he had drunk. So that ended that escapade.

At another party at our house it was winter and very cold outside. We had taken down the heating stove from the *front room* so there would be plenty of room to play the games. We were stuffing oak wood in the kitchen stove until the top was red. All at once everyone in the house started sneezing and coughing and eyes were watering until no one could see. They opened doors and windows and went outside to get fresh air. We finally learned that Hugh had put a spoonful of cayenne pepper on the hot stove. We never did learn who gave him the idea. A few days later the same thing happened at school. The teacher never knew who or what was responsible for that fit of sneezing and coughing.

Another event at school was less fortunate for Hugh. Two older boys, in the next age group older than I, had a twelve-gauge shotgun shell. They told Hugh they would give him a nickel if he would put it in the stove. When he approached the stove his nerve failed him so he dropped it in the coal bucket. The coal bucket had a bunch of waste paper on top of the coal so the shell disappeared under the paper. As soon as school took up the room was cooled by the doors being open while we marched in. Marching into the school room was the custom then. As soon as everyone was seated, the teacher came to the stove and dumped the bucket of coal into the stove. Just as she reached her desk there was a terrific explosion. About fifteen feet of stovepipe came tumbling down, the top lid of the pot-bellied stove flew into the air and both doors of the stove blew open and soot and ashes filled the air. It was one grand commotion. The teacher immediately started an inquisition to find the perpetrator. I never did know how she pinned the guilt onto Hugh. Whether he confessed or if some of the little *tattle tales* knew who was guilty but Hugh received the honor of being the first and only one in our family to be whipped at school.

It became a common thing for him to get a whipping. Sometimes deserved and some times unjustly. One prudish, narrow minded teacher whipped him for saying "bull" one time and we always were taught at home that a bull was a bull the same as a horse was a horse. We always thought it was stupid to call a bull a *boy cow* or a steer. We knew what a steer was and had helped to make steers of bull calves. That teacher almost got a whipping for that one herself. Lena was so mad she was going down to the school house and even the score but Dad's calm nature prevailed and it cooled down.

One other time Hugh got in trouble with the teacher when his actions could almost have been justified. We both had worn new *Stocking Caps* also called hockey caps to school. Two little girls about Hugh's age thought it was funny to hear them called hockey caps so they started pestering Hugh about what kind of a cap he was wearing. He told them it was a hockey cap. They giggled and repeated the question. After seven or eight times Hugh's patience wore thin

and he said. "It's a shit cap." That was just what they were looking for. They went straight to the teacher and told her what he had said. So with only one side of the story, Hugh got another switching. He did not seem to mind the whippings, as he never changed his ways. When he came down to breakfast wearing two pairs of overalls Mom asked why and he calmly said, "I'm going to get a whipping at school today."

One deal the two older boys made about Hugh backfired. There was a program at the school house one night and the older boys thought it would be funny to see some one beat Hugh up. They gave a quarter to a half brother of one of them if he would wait at the door and *plaster* Hugh as he came out. The boy was a little older than Hugh and a little heavier. But they misjudged Hugh's abilities a little. The first lick was about all the boy landed. As Hugh stepped out the door that boy hit him in the face and if you ever saw someone take a beating, that boy got it. As a rule it was hard to get Hugh riled enough to defend himself. We had enough *brother* fights that he knew how but he just did not get mad easy enough. That boy really earned his quarter that time. He never tried it again.

Uncle Tom and Aunt Rachel

Some time after the tornado blew Uncle Tom, Aunt Rachel and Jan across the field on the farm west of Colony they moved to farm about three miles north and a mile east of Colony. The house was on the bank of a small creek called *Spring Creek*. This place was eight miles from our home in Caddo County. When Jan wanted to come to visit us she would roll a few extra clothes into a bundle and walk the eight miles. Although she was a small and frail looking woman she could match the younger ones when it came to walking or working in the fields.

Once when she had completed her visit with us Hugh and I decided to go home with her. That is the first time I have any recollection of going to Tom and Rachel's house. In fact, I can't seem to remember of seeing them before that, but I'm sure that is just a lapse of my memory. Anyway that trip was an experience I did not forget. Aunt Rachel was a jolly person and made us welcome as if we were her own kids. At that time she smoked a corn cob pipe filled with Granger's Twist tobacco. That was pure dried tobacco and full strength. Dad also used to smoke it before he changed to *Old Hillside* granulated tobacco, which was about as strong. One time he thought he would *cure* me and Hugh of wanting to smoke so he let us have his pipe that was loaded with Old Hillside. By the time we had finished it I was so sick I could hardly stand. I went to the cellar to get a jar of grape juice to relieve the sickness and was so sick and dizzy that I had to drink some of the juice before I could go out of the cellar. In spite of this Hugh and I continued to use tobacco until we could tolerate it. I quit smoking cigarettes when I was fourteen years old and have smoked only one since that.

I have strayed from my story here so will go back and pick it up again. You have heard the old song, *Sleeping at the Foot of the Bed*. Well we had that experience at Aunt Rachel's house. They had only two beds. Jan slept in one and Tom and Rach, as Tom and Jan called her, slept in the other one. Instead of making a pallet down on the floor, as another old folk song has it, Hugh and I slept at the foot of the bed with Tom and Rachel.

We stayed two nights and had a lot of fun exploring the little creek and the woods along the bank. There were no deep holes in the creek. There were lots of minnows in the shallow pools and we tried to see how many we could catch with a gunny-sack for a seine. While we were there Uncle Tom went in to Colony and came home with a four-pound catfish that he bought from a man who had been to the Washita River. We really enjoyed the fresh fish. That was a treat those days before we were old enough to catch our own catfish. The morning of the second day we started home soon after breakfast. Jan went along with us up to the top of the hill, about a quarter of a mile. We told her goodbye and told her that we were going to run all the way home. She did not seem surprised or doubtful.

We set off down the road at a good jogging trot. About three miles down the road we came to Klein's place. The Klein boys saw us running down the road so they came out to the road to see what was happening. We told them that we were going to run all the way home. They laughed and said they didn't think we could do it. Without slowing down or stopping we told them that we were sure we could do it. We finished the seven and a half miles as we had started. We were used to running. I had often run all the way to and from the Exendine Store, a round-trip distance of five miles, with a short stop to buy whatever I was sent after. If Dad ran out of tobacco or if we needed sugar, baking powder or some other item of groceries we did not bother to catch a horse to ride every time.

After a few more years of living on Spring Creek Tom and Rachel decided to go to Arkansas and look at some of the cheap farms they saw advertised in the farm papers. They had a Public Sale and sold everything except a wagon and

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a team and personal possessions they could take along in the covered wagon. He fitted the wagon with an *over-jet*. That was a means of making the box wider. One by twelve boards were fitted horizontally to each side of the regular wagon box. Thus it was five feet wide. Over this they used top bows and a large wagon sheet of canvas to make a large covered wagon for the trip. Jan came to live with us while they made the trip and Edna went along with them just for the fun of the trip. They did not like what they saw at the end of trip so they came back. A round-trip of over six hundred miles in a covered wagon. I do not recall how long it took to make the trip but I'm sure Jan was glad to see them return as I'm sure she was about fed-up with the antics of me and Hugh. They rented a farm about four miles north and two miles east of our home and Jan went back to live with them.

At Tom's sale Dad bought a brown horse. Tom had named him after the man from whom he had bought him. He was named Hadley. Hadley was a character in his own right. He was block-headed and stubborn. If it suited his fancy he would balk and he had a little mean streak in his nature. But with all his faults he made a fairly good work horse and earned his keep. He was broken to ride but sometimes it took a lot of determination to get him to go where you wanted him to go. One time I put Owen's saddle on him and started to go to the store. When I came to the north end of our orchard Hadley stopped and turned around toward home. I pulled, hard on one of the reins and he responded but made a complete turn and ended up headed toward home. I kicked him and hit him with the reins but to no avail. He always stopped headed the wrong direction. I could see that I was not doing any good that way so I gave him a smart slap across the hips with the end of the reins. We went back to our yard at a gallop. He thought he had won but I did not give up. I continued to use the reins on his hips and flanks so we started up the road again at a hard gallop. This time he passed the end of the orchard without looking to either side. I kept pushing him for over a mile and by that time he had decided to follow orders. I think he just wanted to show me that he could do as he pleased sometimes.

One day when I went down to the pasture to drive the horses into the lot to get them ready to work Tip went along, as he usually did. When I got the herd near the lot gate Hadley snorted and swung around and headed back to the pasture at a run, the other horses followed him. I was rather angry and told Tip to "get him." Tip made a run for Hadley's head to grab his nose. That clumsy looking old horse was faster than he looked. He lunged at Tip and brought both front feet right down on Tip's back. Tip rolled over on the ground with a yelp. He tried to get up but his hind quarters were paralyzed. He got up with his front feet, and dragging his hips, he barked and tried to chase the horse. I told him it was alright to let him go. I picked Tip up and took him to the barn and made him a bed in one corner with gunny sacks. I gave him a pan of water and he drank some. He did not seem to be hurt too badly but he still could not stand with his hind legs. That evening we took his food to him and he ate it. We had hope that he would be all right. The next morning he had regained the use of his legs and in a few days seemed as good as ever.

Howard Finds a Life-long Hobby

When I was about twelve years old I saw an ad in the farm magazine that caught my interest. It showed the parts with which to build a one-tube radio, or *wireless set* as it was called those days. The main parts were priced for twenty-four dollars and the headphones, batteries, tube and cabinet would cost another twenty-four dollars. I had heard of wireless before and was interested in learning more about it. Although that was a lot of money to get together I decided that maybe I could buy one or two parts at a time and finally get it together. I had noticed that the Sears Roebuck Catalog showed some parts. I was doing the janitor work at school and making four dollars per month. I first ordered a book about radio so I would know more about what was needed. I also found that the government bulletins had some devoted to wireless and electricity. These were free for the asking.

As I got hold of enough money I would order a part to add to my collection. That fall I ordered six steel traps and started setting them in a canyon about a mile and a half west of the school house. I got up early and headed for the trap line before daylight and ran the traps and reset them as soon as it was light enough to see. On the way back I stopped at the school house and kindled the fires then went home to skin the catch, if any. Sometimes nothing but badger hair or a jack-rabbit's foot where something had eaten him. Sometimes a skunk or a civet-cat was my reward. I always tried to wash off the scent before going back to school but feel sure that I often did not completely get rid of all of it but I had a teacher who always tolerated whatever I smelled like. In spite of all my efforts I was not making much headway with the parts for the radio.

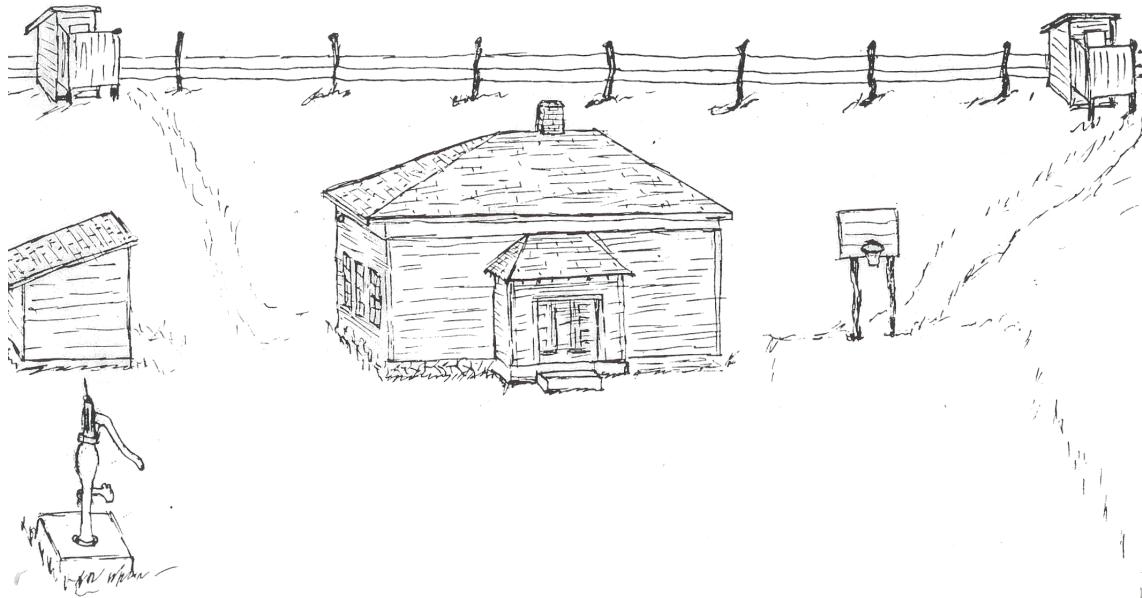
Didaw's Book

In the spring Dad had to go to Eakly for something and I wanted to take my furs to see what I could get for them. I had heard that Mr. Yearwood, who lived a mile and a half south of the church at Eakly, would pay as much or more than the mail order fur buyers. Beside that I was anxious to see how much my hunting trapping had netted me. I put all the furs in a gunny-sack and rode to the church with dad. There I slung the sack over my shoulder and walked on to Yearwood's house. He was a nice, friendly man. He spread the furs out and looked them over and started pricing them. The prices sounded fair enough and when it was totaled it came to twelve dollars and seventy-five cents. That was more than I made as janitor in three months. So it was not bad. School would soon end for the summer and I still did not have all the parts I needed. It would have to wait till fall.

Hopewell School

April first was coming up so a bunch of the older kids started planning to play *hooky*. We always felt that it was our duty to play hooky if we had nerve enough to face the punishment. That could be a little severe, depending on the teacher's mood. On the morning of April First the gang of older pupils gathered before Miss Freida Klein, the teacher, arrived. I felt it was time I joined in the fun. About fourteen of the older boys and girls headed for the little creek that ran through the farms that belonged to Mr. Kinder and Mr. Oglesby and went on to form a good sized pond where it had been dammed on Dave Smith's farm. We stayed at the creek and pond all day or until almost four o'clock I should say. The ones who had to take books home would have to go back to the school house for them and wanted to wait until Miss Klein had gone home.

When we went by to pick up our books Miss Klein was putting her desk in order before leaving. She did not so much as look up when we all went into the school house. She drove a buggy from her home when the weather was nice. The next morning when she arrived she reached under the seat and withdrew a big bundle of switches. They were locust sprouts with the thorns stripped off. Maybe she didn't know it but locust sprouts were very brittle. We all figured we were going to catch it, and misery likes company they say. We were ganged up by the front window, outside the room. I had heard Freida say she did not believe in whipping kids at school so I was trying to take comfort from that and said to the others, "I don't think she is going to whip us." Then she stuck her head out of the window and said, "That's what you think."



Hopewell School

All that morning till the first recess I could almost feel these switches. When she started to dismiss for recess she first called a roll of those who played hooky and said she wanted us to stay in. After all the others had left the room she closed the door and walked back to her desk and started to tell us all about it. However, by that time her temper had cooled a little and she said she had decided to give us a choice of punishment. We could stay-in for a week or we could take a whipping and have it over with. All decided to stay in rather than take a whipping, except Arnold Kutch. He said, "I'll take the whipping and have it done" He was almost as big as the teacher and was wearing a

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new pair of overalls. She said, "All right, come up to my desk." Arnold walked up with a big grin on his face and Freida took hold of his upper arm and picked up a switch and swung it down across Arnold's overalls. He leaned backward a little until there was slack in his overalls. There was a loud pop as the switch met the overalls but very little pain and the stick broke about a foot above the teacher's hand. Arnold just stood and grinned at her. She struck him two more times while he grinned. She broke into tears and said, "Get on out of here". I think, probably, she was the best or one of the best teachers we ever had at Hopewell. Staying in with a whole bunch really was not such bad punishment.

A few weeks later it was a very warm spring day and the door, which faced the pond, was open. My desk was directly in line with the door. As usual I was gazing out of the door. I had a good memory so did not have to study much to make a passing grade. An old spotted hound came into view. I suppose he had an itch that needed scratching. He sat down on the grass, and started dragging his bottom along on the grass. I giggled and the other kids in my row all saw the show and they started laughing. This continued until about every student had seen the show and Freida was really confused about what was causing the commotion. No one would tell her. I don't know if any of the girls ever told her or not.

I'll drop back in time a little here. Lena was married to Oscar R. Robertson the day after her twenty-fourth birthday, December 24th, 1919. She was away from home at the time and it had left little impression on my memory. We discovered later that her husband's oldest brother had married May Roush and she was the daughter of Mart Roush who had made the trip to Oklahoma with our Dad. We had lost contact with the Roushes and did not know they had moved to Oklahoma and settled near Hydro. As far as I knew Mart Roush died and he and Dad never met again.

Hydro was known as Caddo until 1901 when it was learned through the postal department that Oklahoma already had a post office named Caddo and requested the people to submit a new name to end the confusion, so the name Hydro was chosen.

Raising Chickens

We had what was called a *dirt cellar*. That was merely a cellar dug into the ground and it had the dirt for walls. Over the top we put heavy timbers and boards and the doorway had boards around it so the dirt would not cave in. It served for storage of vegetables and potatoes as well as shelves for canned fruit. We also used it to hide in when the storm clouds came up and the old two-story house started to quiver. In the spring we also used it to house the incubator with which we hatched our supply of young chickens for frying and to renew the flock as some of the hens became too old to pay for their keep. Every year or so some buyer would move a poultry car in on the railroad at Hydro or Lookeba and we took the older hens into town and sold them. Hydro was fourteen miles from our place and Lookeba was ten miles east on a very sandy road. When we had a load of corn or cotton to haul to Lookeba we usually attached a timber to the center of the wagon projecting out far enough that we could attach a singletree and hitch the third horse to help pull through the sand. It was a long day's trip there and back.

Getting back to the incubator. We had just taken off a hatch of most of it. There were still a few of the slower ones hatching. We had put the new chicks in a washtub and spread a blanket over it to keep them warm. We set it on the floor of the cellar in the evening. When we went down to see about them the next morning the tub was completely empty where we had left one hundred and seventeen baby chicks. We were at a loss to understand what could have happened to them until we looked up at the ledge of dirt next to the roof. There we saw the chicks. Every one of them had the top of its head bitten off and the brains had been eaten. We knew it was the work of rats. So we declared war on the rats. I started by setting steel traps near the entrance to burrows they had around the barn. I made my bed in the yard, under the trees so I could hear the traps spring. By the time it was good dark I had caught several but as they squeaked they warned the others and the catch grew to a trickle and stopped.

Rats are pretty smart. The next day Dad borrowed a wire cage type of trap and that night we caught seven in that trap. We took the trap away from the barn and to see what Tip would do. We released them one at a time. Tip was delighted and had a big time catching and killing the rats. There were two bins in the barn and both were floored with shiplap. Dad decided we could take up the floor and the dog could kill the rats much faster than we could get them with traps. About the time we were ready to start taking up the floor Lena and Oscar, or Buddy as everyone called him, drove into the yard. Buddy had a dog that was too big to be a terrier and too small to be like his father.

Didaw's Book

He had the *ratting* instinct so we were all set for a big day. We started pulling up the floor boards at one side and the farther we went the more rats jumped out. Tip and Buddy's dog, I forget his name, were snapping rats right and left and the pile of dead rats was growing. If several rats came out at the same time the dogs would snap one and sling it and grab another. Finally we were almost at the last board and so many rats came out that the dogs let two get away. One ran into a burrow in the ground and the other escaped to the chicken house. But that was one real good job done by two dogs. When it was all over we counted the dead rats. Those two dogs had killed one hundred and twenty seven rats and only let two escape. We had no idea there were that many rats in that barn. They probably ate more grain than our horses.

Buddy and Lena farmed on shares with Grandpa Williams one year. Grandpa Williams lived about a mile and a half from our place. He was not related to us but was the father of two neighbors so we called him grandpa to distinguish between him and his sons.

Howard Starts Seventh Grade

That September I would be thirteen years old and starting in the seventh grade. The teacher who started the term was a substitute teacher. The girl the board had hired would not be eighteen years old until about six weeks after school opened. She could not legally hold the job until she was eighteen. She had a friend who agreed to hold the school until she became of age. The substitute teacher was Miss Alva Stalder. She was a school teacher out of the book. She was middle aged, wore her hair in a big bun on top of her head, wore *pince-nez* glasses pinned by a chain to her blouse, stood ram-rod straight and I never saw her smile in the six weeks she taught our school. I don't know if she wore a bustle or if it was for real. She could have carried a bucket of water on her back without holding it with her hands. She was strictly a teacher but one generation out of date. The new teacher was a nice looking girl who wore a middy blouse (like a sailor's blouse) and a black tie and skirt, very neat and friendly. She made a hit with most of the students. Her name was Marian Yoho. And the entire term I never heard any student try to make a joke about her name. Along toward spring she told me that I should try the eighth grade examination.

The only subject I had not studied was Oklahoma History. She brought me a copy of the text' book and I started studying. She coached me on it a while every day in between the regular classes. By the time the date was set for the exams I felt that I knew enough to pass it. It was being held at Eakly School, the district to the south of Hopewell. Mom fixed me a lunch and put it in a half-gallon syrup pail. I saddled old Dolly and tied my lunch to the saddle and headed to Eakly School. By noon we were about halfway through the subjects and I felt that I had done all right so far. I went out to the fence where I had tied old Dolly and noticed she had done a lot of pawing and moving around. When I took my lunch pail off the saddle I noticed she had rubbed against the post and loosened the lid. Inside the bucket and on most of my lunch were a bunch of horse lice. I did not know she was so lousy. That was the reason she was so restless. There was very little of the lunch that I wanted to eat so I threw it away. It was a while after four when we took our last set of questions. Miss Yoho had come down to see how it was going for me. She went and talked to the man who was in charge then came to my desk and said, "You've made a hundred in arithmetic." and I replied, "Yes, I know it." There was a girl there from the district west of Hopewell and she laughed about that remark for years. I meant just what I said. I knew I had the problems worked correctly. On some other subjects like English and History I did not do so well but had a passing grade, even in Oklahoma History. On the average I was two and three quarters percent above what was required. Not too bad for some one who never studied very hard.

Games Boys Play

The next year I could not make it to high school so rather than stay around home and maybe get tangled with more work went back and studied the eighth grade, which I had passed. One day that year while playing *Black Man* a boy had made a grab to catch me and got a good hold on the side of my overalls. They were nearly new but the pull ripped them about six inches right along the fly where they button in front. I had made temporary repairs with some shingle nails. The rip did not show when I stood but when I sat down it gaped some.

And believe it or not, that day my former teacher, Marian Yoho came by to see me and sat with me all morning. I was embarrassed for fear she would notice my torn overalls. But if she did I could not tell it. She came by to try to talk me into going to high school. I decided to wait a while.

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My fourteenth birthday was on September 18th, about the beginning of the school term. There was no school that day. I do not recall why we were not in school, maybe it was Saturday. Anyway, I recall Hugh and a neighbor boy and I went over to Lake Creek. There was always a good swimming hole at a bend in the creek down in front of Hart's place. We had had a good bit of rain and the creek was rather muddy. We always had a kind of contest to see who could get out of his clothes and into the water first. I made it that time. I made a run and dived into the hole. To my surprise the hole had filled in with sand instead of washing out. I half buried my head in the sand while my legs waved around in the air. It was quite a jolt but I did not do any serious damage. It is a wonder that more kids are not hurt with all the crazy things they do.

One time a bunch of us boys were exploring the different holes on the creek. We always investigated for snags and sand bars before diving. This time there were three strange boys from farther up the creek than where the Tucker boys lived. The water was murky and you could not tell what it was like but those crazy boys would make a big run and dive into any hole without checking for depth or sunken snags. They were very good divers and swimmers. I expected all the time to see them come out with a broken neck or a snag run through their belly. There is an old saying that The Lord looks out for drunks and fools. They were not drunk but The Lord was surely looking out for them that day.

Getting a Start in Radio

At that time I still had not got all the parts for my *wireless* set yet. I guess Dad felt sorry for me so he told me and Hugh that we could have twenty rows of cotton a piece along the north side of the field. The rows were half way across the farm so that was two acres for each of us. It was on the poorest ground but it did pretty good. The first picking on my part, when we took it to the gin at Lookeba, came to something over forty-two dollars. We started home and I had the cash in my pocket. I could hardly wait to get home and make out an order for everything I needed. On the way home we stopped at Exendine Store. I was talking to George about what I needed, he had been working on a set too and I found that he had the tube, headphones, batteries etc. that I needed to make mine complete, and the prices he had on the parts compared favorably with Sear's prices. So I gave him about forty dollars and took the *goodies* home with me. I got it all wired and put on the headphones. I started tuning but did not hear much. After a while I heard voices but it sounded like a telephone conversation. I soon recognized some neighbor's voices and when I listened on the phone there they were. Instead of a radio receiver I had an audio amplifier. With little experience I was at a loss to know what to do. The people who wrote the books I had read left a lot to be explained. Our neighbor Freemont Williams had already built some wireless sets so I went to see him and told him my problem. He said, "It sounds like you have the connections to the *tickler* coil reversed. Try changing that around." I hurried home and made the change. Pretty soon, while turning the tuner knob, I heard a squeal and as I slowly turned the knob so the squeal went down in tone, a voice appeared. Then I heard music. I had tuned in a station in Hastings, Nebraska. I had already put up my antenna (it was called *aerial* then). It was a piece of copper plated wire a hundred feet long. I had climbed up on the house and wired a piece of pipe to the chimney. Our old ladder was barely long enough to get me up to the eaves and the roof was steep, but by getting in the valley I made it up to the chimney and back down without incident. For weeks later I dreamed of having trouble getting onto the ladder to get down. At the other end I put up a cottonwood pole about thirty feet out of the ground and about five feet in the ground. That took some help. We rigged a *gin* pole and a rope to raise it. We placed the bottom of the pole over the hole in the ground and put a board in the hole for the pole to hold it from slipping past the hole. We set the *gin* pole about half way up the big pole and passed the rope over the *gin* pole and tied it a little over half way up on the big pole. We lifted the pole on the small end and got a saw horse under it. We had guy wires and the antenna wire already attached. We hitched a horse to the rope. While Dad and I held onto the guy wires to guide the pole straight up Hugh led the horse away from the hole. The big pole went up very well and slid down into the hole. My calculations of wire length were right and the aerial was up. I got a lot of enjoyment out of that project.

There was a program at the school house one night and every one, except I, went to it. I stayed home to listen to the wireless. While I was making a change of the battery wire, the battery slipped out of my hand and fell on the **B** battery connection. That applied twenty-two and a half volts to the filament of my tube. It gave one blue flash and went out. It had cost me six dollars and seventy-five cents. When the folks came Mom said, "Howard, what's the matter with you? Are you sick?" She could not have guessed closer to the truth. After a while I found an ad in the

Kansas City Star from a company in St. Louis that would repair radio tubes for three dollars. I had that much money so I mailed the money and tube to them. I watched the mail box for several weeks. Still no tube arrived. I decided I should write about it. I got a prompt reply stating the tube had been mailed to me two days after they received it and if I would check with the Post Office and let them know they would try to trace it. In the meantime I had ordered another tube. The next day I waited at the mail box to see Mr. Tom Clancy, our mail carrier. He said there is a package at the Post Office from which the address label was lost. He asked what was in the package and said he would check the contents. If it was mine he would bring it to me. I met him the next day and he had my tube. Now I had two tubes and all I needed to add an amplifier was another block of **B** battery and a transformer.

I took my cotton sack and went over my twenty rows again. That time I got about eight dollars worth. I ordered the parts to make it a two-tube set. I could hold the phones in front of a metal dish pan and several people could hear it at a time. I used to lie in bed and listen till midnight while the rest of the family slept. I remember one night I was listening when Aunt Nell and her four girls arrived. There was no more listening after they arrived. When we seven got together there was so much noise it's a wonder our parents were not driven out of their minds. But they were patient and tolerant people and let us enjoy our selves, which we did.

Mom was not as calm as Dad always was. She was more high strung and ambitious. She used to say she had a tiger inside. She used to get a little annoyed with Dad's calmness but he never got ruffled. He would not argue with her. He would just grin and go ahead with whatever he planned to do. In my whole lifetime I never heard him say a cross word to her. I never heard him say one *cuss* word not even "darn". If he ever complained about any thing I never knew of it. Mom liked to read and sing and loved flowers and knew all the different kinds of trees and birds. When I look back at all the things that happened to them and theirs they show up as two remarkable people.

On the farm east of Kutch's place was the Kardokus family. We called the head of the family Grandpa Kardokus. All his children were boys. The mother had died long before we knew them. He had one married son, Joe who was our neighbor about a mile south. Joe and his wife, Florence, had five sons and no girls. The eldest son Jimmie was about the same age as Virginia. There were four of the elder Kardokus boys at home and another away from home and one died with the flu in World War One. They *batched*, as we called doing their own housekeeping. Grandpa Kardokus stuttered until it was nearly impossible to understand what he was trying to say. Every summer the boys gave a birthday party for their father. It was an all day open house for the neighborhood. They always had candy for the kids and cigars for the men. We boys wanted to be men. We not only ate some candy but always smoked one of Grandpa's cigars. It usually was not too long before we did not feel like men. We always got sick from smoking but never gave up trying it. When we started getting sick we headed for the orchard and ate a few green peaches. That always gave a little relief from nicotine poisoning.

One time Hugh and I had been down to the creek and had caught several sun perch and bull heads. While we had them staked out on the stringer a turtle had eaten the bellies off a few of them. As we were coming up the little hill toward Kardokus' house we saw Grandpa coming to the road with a half-gallon syrup pail in his hand. He met us and started trying to talk. We could not make out what he wanted, the more he tried the worse he stuttered. He had the pail full of ears of pop corn. He held it out toward us and pointed at the fish. He wanted to trade so we traded with him and he was very pleased to have the fresh fish. So many people do without things they want when all they need to do is change their habits a little. The old man could have had a mess of fish about any time he wanted by walking a little over a mile and fishing a while. But he probably thought he could not do it.

Picnics and "Suppers"

Some other pleasant memories came out of the *ice cream suppers* we had. The neighbors took turns at giving the parties. Every one contributed by bringing a cake or makings for a freezer full of ice cream of whatever flavor they chose. I remember one time we went to Kinder's for ice cream and the last freezer to be made was my favorite, chocolate. Mr. Kinder was helping freeze it and said he had heard it would freeze faster if the drain hole was stopped up. He plugged it a while. When it was frozen I got the first dish. It was ruined by salt water getting into it. That was disappointing but I had already had all I needed. The Sunday school also had picnics and *dinner on the ground* as it was called. Everyone brought something good to eat and there were some very good cooks around too. One time the picnic was held over on Lake Creek under the big trees and there were good swimming holes nearby. We had ice cream and lemonade. The boys my age had a lot of fun that day dropping ice down the neck of the girl's

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blouses and listening to them squeal. I think they enjoyed the attention. I never saw any of them get really mad. It was things like that which help us forget all the hard work in the cotton fields and broomcorn fields.

Broomcorn

We used to plant about twenty acres of broomcorn every year. We planted the dwarf variety. Instead of cutting off the *head* we pulled it. It grew about as high as a man's shoulder. In pulling it you grasped the head with one hand and the "boot leaf" with the other hand and pulled the head sharply away and upward from the rest of the stalk. If done properly the head of straw and seeds would snap off at the first joint. This was repeated until you had all the hand would hold. Then it was laid in a *cradle* made by breaking over a few stalks from two directions to form an X. Then the heads were placed in the X with the stems on the ground and the straw supported by the stalks. This permitted the heads to dry out. The rows containing the X's we called the *down* rows. We usually made the down rows every fifth row so we could drive the wagons down through the field and pick up the heads after they cured out. Then we loaded it, in orderly rows with the stems inward, onto the wagon from both sides. It was then put in *ricks*, two heads wide, with the seed on the outside. When the stack was as high as we could conveniently reach from the ground we would lay a few bundles lengthwise in the center. Then we thatched the stack with more of the heads with the seed at the center. This kept the rain water out of the straw until we could get the *seeder* to come and thresh off the seed and bale the straw. If we were unlucky and had rain while the straw was in the field we had to go back and keep turning the straw in the cradles until it was dry enough to stack. This caused the straw to bleach out and the poor color gave the buyer a chance to cut the price. If it rained too much as the straw ripened on the stalk the straw would turn red and stain. This was another down grading factor.

Another disagreeable thing about broomcorn was that the dust from it gave us a bad case of itch. When it got into your clothes it was very irritating where the clothing rubbed. Also, if there had been some rain, the boot leaf and the stem were covered with slime. After a few hours in the field our overalls were stiff with the slime and at night they would almost stand alone from the stiffness. But it was a crop that we could sell for cash in late summer when money was hard to raise. The stalks that remained in the field also made good forage for the stock after the heads were removed. So we took down the pasture fence and put it around the field so the old cows and horses could eat the fodder when the grass in the pasture was getting short.

The neighbors all got together and swapped work in the pulling. We went from one field to another until it was ready to *seed*. Very little money changed hands on the pulling but when seeding time came the kids were paid five cents per bale for carrying the straw to the *table* of the seeder. The men smoothed out the heads on the table and saw to it that they were spread evenly with all stems against a guide board on the table. This was all moved steadily to the feed end of the seeder where it was picked up by two feed chains, one above and one below. They had *teeth* projecting to engage with the straw and feed it into two whirling cylinders that were covered with spikes. These spikes stripped off the seeds without breaking the straw. There was a fan built in to blow the seed out of a pipe from the rear. The stripped straw came out on a short table and was picked up by the younger, more active men and carried to the baler. When the baler was full and while the bale was being compressed and tied with five wires, the straw continued to come out and was laid on the ground until the baler was ready to use again. It required some one who could move to keep up at the baler end of the job. So the young men got that job. The worst thing about the seeding was the drier the dust was, the worse the itch. But we kids liked the money we could make so we endured the work and enjoyed it.

Another pleasant thing was the good dinners prepared for the hands. We had fried chicken, salmon cakes, mashed potatoes, butter (real Jersey butter, like nothing available today) hot biscuits, chicken gravy, beet pickles, fresh peaches with cream and cake for desert. Grandpa Jones' menus on *Hee Haw* bring memories but don't equal the meals that we had then.

There used to be an old gentleman who wandered around the country. He was, I suppose, a little off his *rocker* but he had a good education. His speech was that of an educated man and he imagined himself to be a lecturer. He was a very nice and proper old gentleman. We could nearly always expect him during broomcorn season so maybe he had more sense than we thought. One time he was having dinner with our crew and the conversation came around to neighbors we had had in Washita County. The old gentleman had made that neighborhood in his travels. He started to talk of Mr. Baker, the man who had the dead mule, and he was telling how stingy Mr. Baker was. Mom

remembered the story of the colored man and Mr. Markhum in Virginia so she nudged one of the men at the table and whispered, "He's talking about my brother". The man spoke up and interrupted the old fellow and said, "Say, Dad, you're talking about the lady's brother". The old man's embarrassment was pitiful to see. He stammered out an apology and tried to smooth it over by saying what an honest, hard working man Mr. Baker was. Almost an exact reenactment of the story Dad had told of embarrassing the colored man years before. Mr. Baker was no akin to us, Mom just wanted to see how the old man would react.

Before I was old enough to reach the broomcorn heads my job was to carry fresh water to the men in the field. Joe Kardokus and his brothers Alex and Mart were helping us. Joe had a Model T Ford touring car, which was parked in our yard. I was about eleven years old and was always studying about cars and watched people drive so I could see how it was done. In those days the switch was mounted on the coil box. It had a round hole in the middle to guide the key and a square hole on each side that turned on the switch. In checking how the switch worked I discovered you could turn it on with a fence staple inserted into the square holes. I set the spark and gas levers as I had seen it done before and went around front and gave the crank a few pulls. The engine started. I got inside and pushed in the clutch pedal as I had seen others do. I circled the drive in the yard and went out to the road and headed it toward our mailbox a quarter mile up the road. When I was squared away in the road I gave it more gas and dropped the *high* lever down and the car went up the road at a good clip.

By the time I reached the corner where our mailbox was the excitement had wiped my mind clear of all idea how to stop. I knew I wanted to stop and turn around but my mind went blank. While I was thinking what to do I forgot to steer. I came to a sudden stop when the front wheels ran into the ditch left by the road grader. I had held the speed down so no damage was done. I got out and picked up the mail and set the car to start again. I got it going back and by that time had again recalled how to make it go. I made the trip back and stopped in the yard with no more trouble. When the men came in from the field Joe knew what I had done. He did not say anything but I could tell he was pretty sore about it. That's one time Dad should have *tanned my britches* but he did not do it.

One time we were pulling broomcorn for Joe when I was about fourteen years old. At that age we boys took our row and stayed up with the men. Fred Burns, about sixteen years old, was a nephew of Joe's wife, Florence. There were other boys about Fred's age in the crowd and, being at the smart aleck age, they were having a big time pulling gags on some of the older men. They especially picked on Joe's younger brother Alex. Alex talked rather slow and the boys thought it was lots of fun to pick on him. Dad, said, "Say, Fred, if you will help me, we'll pull a good joke on Alex." At that Alex' face fell and Fred was all for it. He said, "What do you want me to do." Dad grinned and replied, "Well I'll hold up his shirt tail and you can kiss his behind." Alex and the rest of the crew laughed 'til tears ran down their faces. For some reason Fred was very quiet the rest of the day.

Tip Gets in a Fight (or Two)

Alex and Mart Kardokus came by our place one time. Their dog was following the wagon. They stopped to visit a while. Their dog was a heavy built dog about the same size as Tip. He showed more of the bulldog characteristics. He began to walk stiff-legged around Tip and was growling. Pretty soon he lunged at Tip. Tip met him halfway and they went around and around. It looked like a pretty good match until Tip found what he was looking for, the other dog's throat. The other dog went down with Tip at his throat and his tongue was turning blue. We tried to pull Tip off but he would not let go. We grabbed a stick and hit him across the nose. He just closed his eyes and hung on. By that time the other dog had quit struggling. We ran to the house and got the water bucket and dashed the water in Tip's face. That surprised him so much he loosed his hold and we got them separated. A few more minutes and the other dog would not have made it.

In all the time we had Tip I saw him fight only two times. The fight with the Kardokus' dog and one time with old Mooser. Mooser was Kutch's dog. He had a reputation and I think the Kutch kids thought he could take Tip. We were working in the field near the east side of the place and the Kutch kids were just across the fence. We were resting and visiting when old Mooser and Tip started having words. We tried to make Tip shut up. It did no good. All at once they were at it and the dirt and fur was flying. Tip used the same tactic as before and Mooser ended up in the furrow with Tip on his throat. We knew how to break it up that time. We had drinking water in a half-gallon fruit jar, wrapped with wet burlap to keep it cool. We took off the lid and dashed the water into Tip's face and we

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got him under control again. As far as I know there were no hard feelings over the dog fight. I have heard of men killing each other over a dog fight. A man's dog is sometimes pretty much like a member of the family.

Hoy Hoy

I think I was about ten or eleven years old when we got our first telephone. My Uncle Sam and Aunt Rhoda had moved to Eakly. Uncle Sam was a jeweler and repaired watches. He also worked at other jobs. He did some photography, worked on telephones and always was tinkering. He took charge of the telephone switch board at Eakly. While there he bought an old discarded switchboard and salvaged the contact points, which were made of platinum and sold the scrap at a profit of ninety dollars. Later switchboards used cheaper metals for the contacts.

Our community wanted a phone system so they all got together and worked out a company that would serve. They put up a line to Exendine store for party use. There was a switchboard there that could be connected by a trunk line to Lookeba. That gave a long distance connection to other places. Long distance calls were sometimes very difficult to make due to poor lines and bad connections but compared to nothing they were quite an improvement. When we got ready for our phone Uncle Sam said he could build one from junk parts that would not cost us much. Dad took an old wooden bedstead, made of gum wood and made the box like the factory phones were made and Uncle Sam put the works in it. The mouthpiece was mounted directly to the wood. They did not have the arm that was usually used to mount it. And they could not find an extra hard rubber cup that screws into the mouthpiece. We hooked it to the line and it worked perfectly. We found that we could ring people on the line when they could not get through when the line was in bad shape. Uncle Sam had put in a good ringing generator.

Where the line came to the house we made a slip connection that could be easily knocked apart with a stick when a thunderstorm approached. One time when we had a storm there was a sharp crack of thunder and there was an odor like something burning. We looked out the window where the wire was hanging down the pole and most if the loose wire was gone. After the rain was gone we went out to look at the wire. The lightning had vaporized it and there were several little balls of steel, like fine birdshot, scattered around on the ground. If we had not disconnected the phone Uncle Sam would have had a job to do over. Dad ordered a book on phone repair and we got the job of taking care of the lines. I don't know if we got paid or it was a labor of love. We rigged a reel horizontally across the wagon box that would hold a hundred pound coil or twelve gauge galvanized wire. While one drove the team another watched the wire for a foul-up. That did not happen very often. We could string the wire pretty fast that way. The big trick with some of the patrons was to watch when we took hold or the wire they would give the phone a big ring. Sometimes they caught us and gave us a big shock.

One time Owen and I were replacing broken insulators, the large green glass kind that screws onto an oak bracket about a foot long. These were then nailed to the side of the poles. As we were driving along looking for bad ones I saw a cotton tail rabbit setting in the grass beside the road. I had an insulator and bracket in my hand so I threw it at the rabbit. It traveled in an end-to-end motion and covered a wide swath. I knocked the rabbit for a loop and we had him for supper. Cottontail and gravy and hot biscuits makes a fine meal.

On another repair trip we were working the trunk line to Lookeba. About half way to Lookeba we were working near a house when a very irate woman came out and started giving us a tongue lashing for the poor service she was having with her phone. Owen tried to explain that we were not working on her line but she would not believe it. He finally got a bright idea and told her that we had another man who did that kind of work and we would tell him of her troubles. That was the easiest way out. At another place, as we approached a house and started to take hold of the line, we saw a man hurry into the house and stay a while he came to the door and looked out with a grin on his face. That was one joke that did not come off. He was not on our line but he thought he had connected.

On the way home there was a big bank of black clouds coming from the northwest. We spanked the horses into a trot and came to Exendine Store as it started to rain. We tied the team and ran inside. By now the clouds had taken on a green color and we could hear hail roaring. After a while it started to hail at the store. There were several men there and one of them ran out into the road to pick up a large hailstone that fell. It was about the size of an egg. As he stooped over to pick it up another one about the same size struck him behind his ear. It was a rather rough storm at the store but did not last very long and the damage was not too great. After the storm passed we went home. The next day we had news that farther north and east the damage was great. Everything in the way of crops was

destroyed. And the twigs under and inch in diameter were cut off the trees. This storm came on the 20th day of June. Our neighbor, Charlie Green, and Owen took our wagon and went to the storm area and found pile of hail stones that had collected in a small gully and had been covered with leaves and twigs washed in by the rain that followed the hail. They loaded the wagon with old quilts and brought it home. We shoveled it into our old *dirt cellar* and covered it with quilts and oat straw. On the Fourth of July we used it to freeze ice cream for all who came to our house that day. So even anything as bad as a hailstorm can have a few good points.

How Not to Start a Fire

Along about this time, I can never be sure of my age in relation to events, Dad had to go to Hydro. Perhaps we had a load of corn to sell. When we sold a load of corn to the elevators they first put it through the sheller and caught the cobs in a bin so we could dump them back into the wagon to be hauled home for kindling and fuel if nothing better was available. They made a very hot fire that quickly burned itself out but mixed with green Black Jack wood it made a fine fuel. One thing we had to be careful about was filling the fire box full of cobs on a live bed of coals. That would generate a cloud of white smoke until it became very thick then a spark of flame would ignite the smoke, which had become an explosive gas. If permitted to smolder until it exploded the door of the stove might fly open and fill the house with sparks and ashes. Let this be a warning if you ever heat with corncobs. We made the trip to Hydro and there was a freight train on the tracks by the elevator. It was a monster to me. It was the first one I had seen as far as my memory goes. At times we had heard the whistle of the train on a very cold, still, frosty morning and we lived thirteen miles south of the railroad tracks. Sound will carry a remarkable distance at times. While we were in Hydro we stopped to see a second cousin of Mom and had dinner with her.

Her name was Etta Brown. She had first been married to a man named Campbell and had two sons before Campbell died. Her maiden name was Lamar. I don't know how the relationship came about. An odd development in my later life, about twenty years later in fact, I built my home on the lots adjoining the house where I had my first meal in Hydro. Events have an odd way of making a big circle and returning sometimes.

Making Sorghum

Another happening about this time, Dad got some cane seed called Blue Ribbon Sugar Cane. It was supposed to be a great improvement in cane for making sorghum molasses. We planted a few acres and when it was matured Dad made some *paddles* for us kids to use in stripping the leaves off the stalks. If you swing the paddle just right you could knock off all the leaves with two strokes. We eventually got pretty good at that job. Then we took a sharp butcher knife and cut off the tops with the seed and put it in piles around the field. Next operation we did with a corn knife. We cut the stalks with the knife until we had an armful then we placed it on the wagon that was following through the field.

When we had a good load on the wagon Dad took it to a neighbor who had a *sorghum mill*. We gave a share of the resulting syrup for having it processed. The syrup was of a fair quality but Dad thought it could be made better by slower cooking and more skimming. So the next year, in the summer, he started looking for a mill he could buy. He found one, which the owner was willing to trade for syrup. I don't recall how much Dad agreed to make but we planted more cane that year. The evaporating pan was about four feet wide and ten feet long. It was mounted on a pair of *rockers* of angle iron. This made it easy to level so the sap and syrup would not run over at either end and would flow slowly from the entrance to the outlet. The pan had dividers across it every six inches with gates on alternate ends. This made the juice flow about eighty feet before it reached the outlet and there were little metal gates that could be put in to stop the movement anywhere desired. We had stirring sticks, made of wood and shaped something like a hoe. These were almost as wide as the space between the dividers and by moving them along on the bottom of the pan you could keep the syrup from becoming too thick and sticking where it might scorch.

Then there were some skimmers. They also had a wood handle and shaped somewhat like the stirring sticks but around the bottom and the two sides there was a piece of tin formed to make a scoop. It was perforated with many small nail holes. When the juice starts to get hot there is a foamy scum comes to the top. This is what has to be removed completely and at the right time in the cooking process if you want top quality sorghum. I have seen Dad fighting the skimmers with both hands to keep up with the skimming when the pan was really boiling. Sometimes

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he hollered for help with the stirring as the syrup reached the final pan. Then we would pull out the stopper and draw off the syrup that was ready. We had five-gallon pails for the finished product.

In setting up the pan we worked with it till water in it would stand the same depth all ever. Then we placed the cast iron door, with dampers on it, at the front end and we enclosed the area around the sides and other end with whatever we could find that would not burn. This made the fire box. At the back end there was an outlet for the smoke. On this we mounted a smokestack of metal about twelve inches in diameter and about ten feet high. We had prepared a bunch of dry Blackjack wood so we could keep the pot boiling just right. We used the bowl of an old cream separator for supplying and controlling the flow or the juice to the pan. Since it already had a spigot built into it, it was a very good device for that purpose. To extract the juice from the stalks we had a machine consisting of two metal rollers about six inches in diameter and another about ten inches in diameter. They were about twelve inches long and mounted vertically. There was a heavy shaft coming up through the frame and on top pf that was a long pole attached by U bolts. This pole had a singletree on the end for hitching on a horse or mule for power to turn the rollers. There was a smaller pole fastened where the horse's head would be to load him in a circle around the press. Imagine having to go round and round like that for a ten- or twelve-hour day, those poor old horses really earned their ears of corn and some hay. The two smaller rollers could be adjusted in or out from the big one. At the bottom the frame was formed so there was a kind of trough coming out the side. Under this we set a fifty-gallon barrel to catch the juice as it was pressed from the stalks. The press was mounted on three big posts and high enough that the pole would clear our heads when we were in position to feed the stalks into the rollers. There was something for the whole family to do to keep every thing going smoothly. Even with all the work it brings back pleasant memories, the smell of the cooking syrup mingled with the oak wood smoke and the cool fall air.

Hallowe'en Memories

I especially recall one Hallowe'en night. I was late taking the slop and skimmed milk to the pigs. I had to go by the mill on the way and the full moon, almost as big as a washtub was up a ways and was just above the smoke stack from which trailed a wisp of white smoke, the sky was a soft dark grey with a slight orange tint. A picture I'll never forget. On the way back to the house, as I neared the clothes line I saw a movement of something white to one side. I was not really scared but somewhat excited. I figured it was Owen out trying to scare me and I was waiting for him to make a big noise and come toward me. But nothing happened. I decided to let him know I saw him so I started talking and walking toward what I thought was someone trying to scare me. The silence and no response added to my tension. When I got somewhat closer I could see more clearly. It was a suit of Dad's long underwear hanging on the line. Then I recalled the story of the willow bush that Dad was about ready to shoot on his first trip to Oklahoma.

While on the subject of Hallowe'en, I recall a trick Owen worked out time. He and some of his friends rode horseback. Mr. Kutch had completed cutting and binding his field of *Red Top* cane and had it in shocks waiting to find time to cut off the heads for the seed. Then the *butts* were fed to the stock for forage in the winter. Owen suggested to his friends that they take lariat ropes between each two horses and go down through Kutch's field and upset the shocks as a prank. That sounded like a good prank to the gang so they proceeded to do it. They were very happy with themselves and so was Mr. Kutch. The fodder had been shocked before it was thoroughly dry. It was spoiling in the shocks and needed to be scattered so it could dry more. Owen knew the situation and tricked the boys into doing several hours work as a prank. If they had known the truth his popularity would have hit a new low.

One morning following Hallowe'en we awoke to the voice of a jackass braying. It was a while before we found out where he was. The closer we got to the school house the louder the braying was. When we opened the door there was Jack in the primary room. Some boys had brought him from Claude Lemon's place and put him in the school house. I never took part in many Hallowe'en stunts.

Boys Will Be Boys

When I was about ten years of age I learned to swim a short distance but by the next year I seemed to have forgotten how. A bunch of the neighborhood boys were at Dave Smith's pond. Some swimming and some wading. I was out in the deep water in the boat Dave had at the pond. We were all naked, as was the custom because none of us had suits, and we saw no need for suits anyway. All at once we heard women's voices so one of the boys said, "Here comes a bunch of women". I could not take time to row the boat to the edge, so I jumped overboard. I went way

under but held my breath and came back up. I still could not swim a stroke but fortunately was near enough to grab the end of the boat. Right there I made up my mind to really learn to swim. Before that summer was over I was a good swimmer.

One spring after, Dad had planted the corn and it was coming through the ground, we had a big rain. It washed the sandy soil from the ridges down onto the young plants and covered them up. There was nothing to do but replant it. Dad was busy with the lister planting other crops so he could not see how he could find time to list the corn again. He borrowed a one-row planter from a neighbor and set me and Hugh to replanting the corn. The planter had the same planting mechanism as the lister but only opened up a small furrow, dropped in the seed then plowed the soil over the seed. One of us would drive the single horse down the big furrow left by the lister and the other held the planter in an upright position. This was not the most interesting job for two small boys so we set about devising something to break up the monotony. We took a good portion of the seed corn we had with us and poured it into an open gopher hole. That way we would run out sooner and have an excuse to go to the house for more. Now that was some real brilliant thinking. I don't know if Dad ever knew what we had been doing or not but we got by with it. Eventually we finished the field. It took several days because about six acres is a pretty good day's work with a one-row implement.

We used to have what was called a *go-devil*. Some people called it a disc sled. It had two *runners* like the runners of a sled. They were spaced to fit in the furrows and there were footboards on each side to place your feet on while using it. Toward the rear the runners were held in place by an arched piece of steel. On the highest part of the arch was the metal seat, and on each projecting end of the arched steel were attached three discs that could be adjusted for depth into the ground and to pull the soil toward the plants or away from them. It was a versatile cultivator that did good work when set properly. We used a team to pull it. With a gentle team a small boy could do the work. The worst drawback was that it would tip over if you turned too sharply.

I was working near the back side of the place one time. It was about eleven o'clock and the team was getting anxious to go home and eat and drink. They would walk considerably faster when headed toward the house. Horses are pretty smart. I started to make a turn toward home and had the lines tied together and around my waist so I did not have to hang onto them all the time. That was contrary to what my Dad had told me. He said, "Always put the lines under one arm and over the other shoulder. That way, if anything goes wrong, you can shuck them off." He knew he was talking about, because he had the lines around his waist when the mules ran away with the mowing machine and he was dragged about a quarter of a mile. But that word of advice had slipped my mind.

Since we were turning toward home the horses swung around a little too sharply and the *go-devil* tipped over on its side and I did not get clear of it. The horses ignored my command to stop and even my weight on the lines did not stop them. They were walking fast and I was entangled in the lines with one leg under the metal arch and the turning disc was cutting into the inside edge of my foot and there did not seem to be anything I could do. I twisted and squirmed until I got my lower arm from under my body and after about fifty yards got a line in each hand and started sawing on the bits to try to get the team to stop. I was putting all of my fifty or sixty pounds on the lines.

After a while they decided that I wanted them to stop. I worked the lines over my head and squirmed from under the go-devil. As luck would have it my foot had not been close enough to the disc to make a serious cut and I had some skin rubbed off my elbow and hip on one side. The cut on the side of my foot was about an inch long but not very deep. I was always inclined to heal fast so it was not long until a scar was about all I had to show for that experience. I never put a pair of tied lines around my waist again.

We sometimes fed the work horses in the wagon, under the trees, when it was hot in the barn. I was working Jack and a mare and tied one on each side of the wagon. I was barefoot, as usual. I started to work on the mare's harness and she set her big foot on top of mine. I tried to push her off and she thought I was trying to crowd her away from her feed so she leaned toward me and put more weight on my bare foot. I punched her in the ribs and hit her with my fist to no avail. She just leaned toward me with more weight on the foot. I was desperate, it was hurting something awful. I leaned toward her shoulder and got a mouthful of the skin on the muscle of her lower shoulder. I bit down on it as hard as I could. I got a mouthful of horse hair but I also got loose. That may be the first time a boy bit a horse.

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I was to blame for some of the things that happened to me. I was hooking Jack to the wagon one time and I noticed the Bott Flies buzzing around Jack's neck and chest. He would sling his head and snort as the flies deposited their nits on his hair. I thought it might be fun to see if I could fool him by making a buzz like the flies and touch the long hair on his lower jaws. I made an imitation of the buzz and touched the hairs under his neck. His reaction was swift and to the point. That is I the point of my nose. The side of his head struck me squarely on the nose and the blood spurted.

We had some horses that were kind of high-spirited and liked to dart around and go back to the pasture when we were driving them to the lot. I thought I would take the easy way and ride one of the gentle mares and drive the others into the lot. I had a piece of rope, which I thought would scare them when swung at them. When I came up to the herd Jack ignored me and continued to graze. I rode up close and swung the rope. He came up with both hind feet and one hoof hit my shin about three inches below the knee. It hurt so badly I could barely keep from crying. When I got to the barn lot I could not stand to put my foot to the ground. I don't know if the bone was cracked but I hopped to the house and it was several days before I could stand any weight on my leg.

One year it looked like we were going to need all the hay and fodder we could put up. Dad decided to cut some of the corn for fodder. We did not have a corn binder so Dad rigged a big sled with a V-shaped notch in the center. To one edge he attached a heavy sharp blade. It was bolted to one side of the V. Behind that was a seat for the operator to sit on. To use it, we held one arm in a semicircle above the notch slightly to the rear of the notch. As the team that pulled it walked between the rows, the blade sliced through the stalks near the ground. When we had all we could hold in our arm we dropped it in a bunch on the ground. That was faster and easier than cutting it with a corn knife. I was running the sled when I saw a stalk start to fold over instead of being sliced off. Without thinking I made a grab for the stalk and before I could turn it loose my hand was jerked down against the blade. The flesh on my little finger, starting at the first joint, was sliced off the bone and through the fingernail. There was only a very thin piece of skin and flesh holding the rest of the flesh onto the finger. It was a nasty cut. Dad told me to go to the house and let Mom fix it up. I gripped the finger with my right hand and kept it upright to slow the bleeding and walked the half-mile to the house. Mom tore some strips of clean white cloth from an old worn sheet, and put a teaspoon of sugar on one end of the strip, then saturated the sugar with turpentine. She had it lying on the kitchen table. She had me lay my finger on the mound of sugar and push it till the flesh was back in place. Then she brought the edge of the cloth over the finger and started wrapping the cloth around the finger. The pain eased and I did my share of the milking that evening. We never unwrapped the finger for eleven days. Most of the soreness was gone so I cut the stitches she had made to hold the bandage in place. When the bandage came off the finger looked as good as new except for a neat scar running from the back of the nail, down to the joint and back up the inside to the top of the nail. The only bad effect was numbness in the part that had been cut and for years that finger would get cold and ache before the others did. But as the years passed the feeling and circulation improved until it's about normal.

Although Mom was a little high strung and nervous, when there was an emergency she functioned calmly and did what needed to be done. And with two rowdy boys like me and Hugh she had plenty of practice. Jan used to tell me and Hugh that one boy was a boy, two boys were half a boy and three boys were no boy at all. Luckily, Mom had only two about the same age.

Like all boys, Hugh and I liked to show off. Once when Edna, Lena and Owen had friends visiting one Sunday afternoon, Hugh and I were in the front yard where the young people were standing around talking. Hugh had on overalls and no shirt. One of the boys reached down and picked a sprig of stinging nettle that grew in a cluster in the yard. He pretended to switch it across the bare arm of one of the girls. She squealed and jumped out of his reach. To get attention Hugh said, "I'm not afraid of that stuff." They told him he'd better be afraid of it, so to prove his nerve, laid down on it and rolled on it with his bare back and shoulders. He was about five or six years old at the time. In a few minutes his back and shoulders were a mass of red welts. It had to be very painful but Hugh took it like a man. He never even had a tear in his eye. But when Mom saw his back she rubbed him down with a greasy bacon skin. Possibly soda water would have been better.

Most times when I tried to show off things had a way of backfiring. Like the time when I was about eight years old we had a rope swing tied in the big cotton wood tree in our back yard. It was rather high so we could swing a long way up. We had company and I wanted to show off a little so I made a run toward the swing and placed my elbows

in the seat board. It was held in place by a notch cut in each end. When I took up the slack in the ropes my feet came high off the ground. When the swing reached the stopping point my body and legs continued until my feet were higher than my head. Then the board flipped out and I came down on the side of my face. I thought I was going to suffocate before I was able to breathe again.

Another time I was showing how good I was as a trapeze performer. We had a piece of pipe laid in the crotches of two maple trees at the south end of the orchard. It was probably about six feet off the ground but to a small boy it seemed much higher. I recall I had to shinny up the tree to get hold of the pipe. Some of our old neighbors from Washita County were there so I wanted some attention and climbed on the bar. I could *skin a cat*, hang by my toes and one knee and chin myself several times. I was getting through my routine when I started to do the one knee hang. I failed to get my leg far enough over the bar and slipped. Another breath-taking stop on the side of my head and neck. I got attention and laughter that time. I should have been a clown! They say experience is the best teacher but perhaps, I was not the best pupil. My crazy escapades continued.

One Sunday afternoon, when I was about fourteen years old, a group of boys and girls were at Kinder's place. I had ridden a barebacked horse down there. I thought I would show the gang my ability as a cowboy. I made a run at the horse, intending to jump on him. I misjudged how high I could jump and instead of landing astride the horse I struck his side with my knees and was catapulted onto my face in the sand on the other side. I just could not keep my enthusiasm from out-stripping my abilities.

Once when I was smaller than the other boys in the crowd, I was trying to do anything they could do. We were down in our pasture, behind the school house. There was a small, steep hill there. We had the steel tire from the rear wheel of a wagon. When it was held upright it was somewhat higher than my head. The older boys would start rolling it toward the hill and jump a-straddle of it and ride over the top as it went down the hill. As they went over they would turn loose of it and jump to one side and let the tire roll on down the hill. I thought if they could do that I could do it also. I gave it a try but did not have enough speed and fell over to one side. The next try I got up more speed and did not jump on until it had started down hill. That time I went over the top without any trouble. However, that was not the only trick to learn. I did not release my hold soon enough and fell flat on my face while the tire rolled up my back and over my shoulder, almost tearing off my ear as it went by. It seemed to me I always had to learn the hard way.

Owen Gets a Ford

The first car in our family was a model T Ford that Owen bought from some one. I can't remember who he bought it from but there is a hint of a memory of seeing him give a hundred dollar bill and eighty mere dollars to the man. It seems to me that was the first hundred dollar bill I had ever seen. The Ford had been *stripped down*. The fenders and running boards had been removed and a home made body built on, making it look more like a *racer*. It would almost make a mile in a minute and for a Model T that was good. It seemed to me that we were literally flying when we looked at the ground over the side of the car.

Owen used to have very little patience with anything that did not do what he thought it should do. Either horses or machinery. A favorite expression going around those days was, *kick a lung out*. One cold morning the old car refused to start and Owen was about exhausted from cranking. He was talking pretty rough to the car and said, "Damn you, I'm going to kick a lung out of you." I have heard Dad say he said he was going to kick a fender off. Possibly, he said that too but I did not hear it.

I know the frustration of trying to start a Model T Ford on a cold morning. I drove one to school almost two terms. However, I missed only two days due to the weather. One time I had a frozen needle valve in the carburetor that took me most of the morning to decipher the trouble and one time the bridge across Lake Creek was washed out. We eventually got two three by twelve bridge planks laid on the approach to the bridge and could cross. But by that time it was too late to go to school. I eventually learned all the tricks to starting a Model T Ford and seldom failed to get where I wanted to go. But it took a lot of learning and some blistered hands on the crank.

In later years we were at, a Sunday school singing at Walnut Springs School house. It came a big rain and we waited to leave until most everyone had gone. There were two girls and the mother of one there. They were driving a late model Ford with a starter. The son of the family had removed the crank as the car had a starter. He had been

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involved in an accident and had hit a little girl and the crank had gone through her thigh so he took it off. A little late for precautions, but that's often the way with reckless drivers.

Back to the story, the girl who was driving had run the battery down trying to start the car. I checked it and found the coil box so wet that the sparks were shorting to the frame of the car. I wiped it as dry as I could then made a torch of rolled-up paper and held it to the box to finish drying it out. Then I put the jack under a rear wheel and chocked the other wheel with rocks so it would not jump off the jack. By putting the car in high gear I could turn the engine by rotating the wheel. The battery still had enough charge to make a good spark. After I gave the wheel a turn or two the engine took off and the damsel in distress was ready to go back to Lookeba where they lived. Believe it or not my Mom and Dad had been at Lookeba the day that car hit the little girl and saw the accident and saw the people pull the girls thigh off the car crank. One reckless moment can sometimes cause a tragedy. As far as I know the little girl survived but I never heard if she was crippled or not. We lived ten miles away and that was a long way then.

There were many events in our school days but none quite so bad as the accident at Lookeba. One time a bunch of bees occupied a hole near the eave of the school house. They took over a hole made by a Yellow Bellied Flicker who used to hammer away at the siding. Speaking of boys trying to show off and coming out the loser, one evening at recess Coy Kutch, about Virginia's age, was throwing rocks at the woodpecker hole. The more he threw the more agitated the bees became. All of a sudden the bees discovered Coy and one came down and planted its stinger squarely between his eyes. About that time the bell rang for the end of the recess. Within a few minutes, Coy's eyes had swollen shut. When school was out he could not see to walk so his sisters Sarah and Hazel led him home.

Hopewell Hijinks

One morning when we arrived at school, before the teacher, we found a live woodpecker in the room. He had bored a hole through the beaded coiling boards with which the school house was lined. We closed the door and started chasing the bird. In his excitement he forgot how he came in. He flew frantically from one place to another and batted his head against the windows until he fell on the floor where some of the larger boys caught him. They wrapped him in a red bandana and put him in the drawer of the teacher's desk. After she *took up* school she sat down at her desk and pulled open the drawer the bird jumped out of the handkerchief and flew up into her face. She almost fainted. Teachers sure needed a lot of nerve and self control to teach in those days.

This little stunt turned out to be amusing so the boys tried another one. There was a snake in the school yard one morning. Fred Burns, Cecil Kinder and Arnold Kutch killed it by smashing its head with a rock. It was about two feet long. They laid it in the drawer of the teacher's desk and coiled it up until it looked very natural then closed the drawer and waited. Again, the teacher did not open the drawer until school was in session. When she opened the drawer she turned pale and gasped a time or two. I thought for sure she was going to faint. After the scare from the woodpecker flying out of the bandana and then flying a snake coiled up in the drawer she must have had pretty good nerves. But you know something; she never so much as scolded anyone for the pranks. When you consider everything that happened at that school in the ten years I spent there you would have to admit that most of the teachers we had were the best in the world. Of course, like the barrel of apples, not all were good.

A Ford of His Own

After I went back to school and studied the eighth grade after passing the examination Dad said he would get me a car to drive to Colony to attend High School. Lena and Buddy were living north of El Reno at a place called Kerfoot. It was only a siding for the railroad out of El Reno. They had a tool house for section crew and two box cars converted for section crew to live in. Buddy, I, and Lena lived in one and two Mexican men lived in the other. I went home with them and we would go into El Reno to look for a car after Buddy got off work on the section.

We found a *stripped down* 1916 Ford about four miles out in the country that seemed to be about in our price class. The owner was a young man who had just got out of the hospital from an accident with the car he wanted to sell. The car had been put back in running condition after his accident and he was asking twenty dollars for it. We decided to take it and told him we would come after it the next day at five p.m. Buddy gave him the twenty dollars. I had never driven much so Buddy got a friend to take us after the car so he could drive it to his place. We made it without incident.

Didaw's Book

Before we left with it we noticed it had only one license plate. At that time the law required one in front and one in the rear. We asked the man about it and he said he had lost it and we could get another by writing to the state capitol. It would cost only a dollar and a half. Buddy, who considered himself a *Horse Trader*, started to haggle about the tag and the man finally gave us the dollar and a half. So my first car cost us eighteen and a half dollars.

I was staying with Lena and Buddy waiting for the week end so Buddy could go home with me to make sure I made it home. While I was there, one of his Mexican friends decided he had made enough money he could go back to Mexico and retire. His name was Chico and he spoke no English. Chico had a violin and we often heard him playing it about sun-up in the morning before he went to work. His bed was a pile of straw in the corner or the room. It was covered with a piece of canvas then his bedding on top of that. They fried their frijoles on top of the wood-burning stove.

The day Chico got ready to leave he carried out the straw of his bed and burned it. Then he spread the canvas on the floor and placed all his possessions in the middle and pulled up the four corners and tied them together as tightly as he could. Everything he owned in the bundle with the exception of his violin. He had it in a case he could carry in one hand. Buddy was going to take him in to El Reno to catch the passenger train going south. We put his bundle into the back seat of Buddy's Ford touring car (with the top down). There was room beside Chico's bundle for his room-mate *Slim* and with me and Buddy in the front seat, Chico climbed up and sat atop the bundle. He was not very tall and a little chubby. It was a somewhat comical sight to see him up there so Buddy said, "Chico, you look just like a damned big frog up there." Chico had a puzzled look on his face until Slim told him what Buddy said. Then he had a big laugh and slapped his thighs. He was very happy anyway, he was going to his Señora and family he had not seen for a few years.

Once when Buddy and the Mexicans were riding the motor car a freight train, which they did not expect, came at them. The Mexicans jumped off saying what Buddy thought was "Bominos". He did not know what they meant but after I studied Spanish in school I realized that they were saying, "Vaminos" which means, literally, "Let us go". They managed to get the car stopped and off the tracks so the train could pass without any bad results. Slim called Buddy by his real name, Oscar. After the close call Slim told Buddy, "Oscar, if you were to die I would cry a week." Although his English was not too good he knew how to express his feelings better than many educated people.

One day while Buddy was at work Lena need some wood to use for cooking supper. I knew where there were some discarded railroad ties up the public road a way and back near the tracks. I cranked up my Ford and drove to get the ties. When I came to the corner by the road I turned the steering wheel and it seemed to hang and did not come back to center. Before I could think what to do I went through a barbed wire fence. All but the top wire, that is. It was against the steering wheel when I got the car stopped. When it went out of control my horse driving instincts took over and I hollered, "Whoa." That did not have any effect on the Ford. I had two cross ties, on the back of the car tied to the frame so they stayed put. I cranked it up and backed into the road. I set off down the sandy road toward Lena's house.

I was letting it out at a pretty good clip when one of the front wheels caught in the sandy rut and I lost control again. This time I was in front of a farmhouse. It had a fence around the yard and a mail box by the front gate. It had the appearance of being the home of a well-to-do farmer. Everything was well painted and very neat. The first thing I hit was the mail box. Then I hit the front gate and pushed it past the posts so it would not open. The crank on the car was so badly bent that I could not start the car. I got my pliers and removed the cotter pin from the pin that held the ratchet of the crank in place. That permitted me to remove the crank. I walked the quarter mile to Lena's house and got a sledge hammer from the tool house and placed the crank across the track of the rail road and beat it into shape again. Then I went back and got the car together and going again. In all this time I never saw anyone around the farmhouse.

The next morning I met Mr. Cupp. He was the farmer. He was very nice. He said, "I want you to come up and see what you did to my gate and mail box." I told him I knew what I did and would pay the damages. He said, "I don't want to be hard on you, so if you will pay for a new mail box and help me get the gate open we will call it square." Lena called a hardware store in El Reno and found the price of a rural mail box was a dollar and a half. We gave Mr. Cupp the money and went up the road with him to help fix the gate. He had a heavy crowbar and while I pried with

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it he pushed on the gate. After a few tries we got the gate on the outside of the post where it belonged and everything was in order again. I never saw Mr. Cupp again as we started home the next morning. Several years later, when I was visiting Edna, who was making her home in El Reno, I met one of her neighbors who was married to a man named Cupp. For the sake of satisfying my curiosity as to whether her husband might be the son of the Mr. Cupp of my experience or not, I have always regretted not finding out about that.

I did not know it then, but I had a car that very few people could keep in the road. I found out the hard way. Having never driven very much I did not know they should be easier to drive than this one. We started home that day and I was in the lead so if anything went wrong Buddy would come along to help me with it. We were a few miles west of El Reno and came to the road that went north to Calumet. There were no highways then, just dirt roads, with some graveled places. We were driving along by a borrow ditch about six feet deep and grown up with *horse weeds*. That crazy car took a notion to do a fast right turn there. The sudden swerve pulled one front tire off and blew a hole in the inner tube. We had to get down in the weeds in the ditch and remove the tire and patch the hole and pump up the tire. Buddy got on the old Ford and backed it up onto the road and we started again.

We over took two young men who were hitch-hiking. One of them said he had driven a lot so Buddy thought we could make better time if we let him drive. He got under the wheel while the other got in the car with Buddy and Lena. Just as we shifted into high gear my car started darting first to the right then to the left. The fellow doing the driving said, "That's the worst one I ever tried". After a little practice he got it under control. We went through Geary and had come to the road that ran along the north bank of the Canadian River. We came to a spot of loose gravel and the driver had relaxed a little. All of a sudden the car made a sharp left turn and went straight for the river. The driver's reflexes were faster than mine and he got it stopped as the front wheels started down the bank. We made it all right to the fork in the road south of Hydro. However, I had cranked that car so much half the skin was gone from my palm and it was getting sore.

Buddy wanted to take the road to Weatherford to go visit his folks so I told him I could make it alone. He took the hitch-hikers and went west. I took the road south toward our home, about thirteen miles away. When I got to the corner where our mail box was placed my car was very hot and the engine was making more noise than normal. As I turned the corner the engine stopped. I got off to try to crank it. The engine was hard to turn and my hand was so sore I decided to walk the last quarter mile and got a team to drag it home. Dad had just come in from the field so we got a chain and a double tree and went up and hauled it home. That was not to be the last time the team brought me and the car home.

After all the noise in the engine I decided to take off the oil pan and see what was wrong. I found all the babbitt out of one of the connecting rods so my mechanical training began. R. G. Williams, the father of Fremont, who helped me with the radio did some repair work on cars (he also repaired watches) had a supply of most needed parts for Model T Fords. I got a connecting rod from him and took off the head of the engine and replaced the burned out rod. My first job on a car. I soon discovered that if the oil level dropped a little I lost another rod.

I was ignorant of some of the workings of the engine so I was discussing my problem with Robert (Bob, by all the boys around) London. He was very much interested in cars and would have been a good mechanic if he had a little training and encouragement from his parents. He told me the oil line was stopped up and that prevented the oil getting to the rod bearings. He said he would be glad to help me fix it. He came down to our house the next day and we put the car under the big trees in the yard and started taking things apart. Bob had brought his wrenches along. With no more than I had it would have been nearly impossible. We lifted the engine out and put it on some sheets of corrugated iron. We scraped off all the dirt we could remove and took the engine apart. Quite fascinating to me as I had never seen very much of the guts of an engine before. We took the cover off the timing gear and put a piece of baling wire in the oil line. It would not make the bend the pipe had so we decided we would have to remove it to clean it. We took off the transmission and could then remove the bolt that held the oil line against the field coil of the magneto.

After we had it out Bob put it to his mouth to try to blow through it. His face got redder than usual but no air would go through. By way of explanation about the red face, Bob had red hair, white eyebrows and a very ruddy complexion. Lots of the neighbors thought he was all outlaw but when you knew him and gave him a chance he was

a pretty good guy. He got lots of cussing and some beatings at home. In the bend of the oil pipe there was a lot of sediment that was packed almost as hard as rock. We got it all out and oil would flow freely through it. That was my last burned-out bearing, but by no means the last of my troubles.

Howard Starts High School

Now let's get back to my high schooling. I went to Colony to see Mr. George B. McQuaid who was on the school board. I was to make arrangements with him to be transferred to Colony school rolls so our county would pay my tuition. He was running a cream station. That was a place that bought cream from farmers. There was no one at the station. I stayed around a while and thought about going to school at Colony and I decided I did not want to go. I drove back home. School started at Hopewell soon and I got acquainted with the teacher of the upper grades. His name was Bill Geddes. We were talking about high school and he said he thought he could arrange with his home school at Alfalfa to let me take the semi-final and final exams and study at home and get my credits. So we got that arranged. When I found the going too rough I would go to the school and let him help me over the worst spots.

It came time for the mid-term exams and it was bitter cold and everything covered with ice. It was thirteen miles to Alfalfa and I did not have a thing on the car but a cushion to sit on. The gas tank had been moved back to make the front seat larger. I got the Ford started and headed for Alfalfa about daylight. I was less than a quarter of a mile from home when the car sputtered and died like it was out of gas. I tried to crank it but no go. I thought maybe some one had stolen my gas so I started to take off the cap of the tank and it was covered with ice about a quarter inch thick. Then it dawned on me that the little air hole in the cap was sealed with ice and that created a vacuum in the tank that prevented the flow in the line. I chipped off the ice and unscrewed the cap. I held it in my hand without my glove until the ice melted out of the breather hole. I was on my way again and was within a mile or two by my reckoning, of the school house. I had never been to Alfalfa. The car started to steam and got so hot it would not run. I had never seen a frozen car before. There was nothing to do but leave it and walk.

I made it to school in time to introduce myself to the teacher and get ready to take the test. My percentage on algebra was 100, and a passing grade on the other subjects. I don't recall much of the trip home, I must have walked the thirteen miles as I can't recall any one giving me a ride. And that was after 4 p.m. in December on a road covered with ice. I recall Dad and I went in the wagon the next day and towed the car home. Until the final exams the next spring the old Ford and I got along fairly well. I was learning a little more about its peculiarities and kept it under control most of the time.

The rest of that winter I continued to study and report to Mr. Geddes for help and assignments until spring. The date of the final examination at Alfalfa School came at last and I had the car ready for the trip. It was a nice spring day and I made the trip without incident. I made out very well with the test except for one problem in Algebra about Quadratic Equations. I had just started to study that part of my book when time ran out on me. That was the only question on algebra that I missed so this time my grade was ninety-five percent.

I completed the papers of the examination about three p.m. and started home. I came to a downgrade stretch of road. It was freshly graded and here and there was a clump of weeds and dirt that had slipped off the grader blade. They were near the right hand lane of the road. I was breezing right along and got a little careless and let the right wheel hit one of the clumps. The almost instant result was a sharp right turn into the grader ditch. The car came to rest on its side with the engine roaring and the upper rear wheel spinning. This car did not have a switch on the box. It had been wired directly and to kill it I closed the throttle and let it into gear. I did not have time to think what to do so I went to the coil box and held the coil points open till the engine quit. When I looked around I saw a farmer coming down the field at a high lope. When he got to me he said, "Are you hurt?" I told him I was all right. He said, "When I first saw you upset the car I thought you were my nephew. He's about as big a fool as you are."

I looked at the damage. Another smashed front wheel, and the radius rods rolled over the axle and the gas tank was lying in the ditch spurting gas where the line had broken. It was about five miles from Eakly then another four miles on to our house. There was not much I could do but start walking. I first carried the gas tank, containing about five gallons, over to the fence behind some weeds and propped it up so it would not leak. I was just starting to walk when two young men I knew who I knew lived at Eakly, came down the road and gave me a lift into Eakly. I walked the rest of the way.

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Malcolm and Arnold Kutch each had a 1922 model touring car. I went to Kutch's place to see if Malcolm would drive back after my car with parts to repair it. He said he would be glad to help me but he was about out of gas. He thought he had only about a gallon. I told him that was no problem as I had about five gallons in my tank. We went to Eakly to the garage and I bought the parts I would need to fix the car so we could tow it in.

When we got to the site of the wreck I noticed that the bulbs were gone from the head lamps, so I took a look at the gas tank and it was bone dry. Some had helped himself while I was gone. The only thing that was loose that they did not get was a quart of oil I always carried in case I needed it. I had hidden the can in a clump of weeds. We rolled the car over on its wheels and jacked it up and put on the new wheel and pumped up the tire. We tied it to Malcolm's car and dragged it up onto the road. After replacing the bent radius rods and replacing the gas tank we had no gasoline for driving it. We tied it behind Malcolm's car and towed it home. He did not run out of gasoline as we had expected. I gave him a dollar for gasoline, which would make up for what he had used with some to spare.

One Sunday a boy by the name of Rexroat, I think he was a nephew of the man from whom Hugh had gotten *Silver Bill* was at our house visiting. He wanted to drive my Ford. I told him it was hard to drive and I didn't think he could handle it. He insisted and said he drove his brother's car all the time so I slid over and let him under the wheel. He had just shifted into high gear and was picking up speed when the front wheel caught in the sand and we were in the grader ditch with a smashed front wheel. I found a wheel at one of our neighbors and bought it for a dollar and a half.

There was a revival meeting at the Fairview Church so for pastime I drove the Ford over there. I was about sixteen years old and being sixteen and alone I stayed outside the church to see what was going on. Shortly after I arrived a touring car pulled alongside my car and stopped. In it were a man, a woman and a girl about fourteen years old. She was rather good looking. As I was about sixteen years old at that time most teen age girls were good looking to me. The man and the woman got out of the car and started for the church house and the girl dilly-dallied around the car. The woman turned around and said, "Come on, Pauline." After they were inside Pauline sat by the window and watched the boys who were outside the church with me. I suppose we were more interesting to her than the sermon the preacher was making. I had never seen those people before and wondered for a long time what their name was put never did ask any one.

The School Board rehired Mr. Geddes to teach the next year. He would teach the higher grades. They also hired Jewell Coker to teach the primary grades. She had beautiful, dark red hair, light brown eyes and a few freckles the same color as her eyes. She was rather good looking. I do not know if she was Mr. Gedde's girl friend before she came to teach or it happened afterward. Anyway it was not long before they were married. Her older sister had taught the Hopewell School one year. That was the year I did not go to school. Her name was Ethel. The odd thing about the two sisters was the color of their hair. Ethel's hair was very black while Jewell's was deep red.

Before the school term started Mr. Geddes arranged to teach the first two years of high school in addition to the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades. This was somewhat of a different attitude for a teacher to volunteer to do that much extra work just to help a bunch of kids get a start in high school. When school started there were about a dozen boys and girls who wanted to attend the classes. I was the only one who had completed the first year. In order to cut down the number of classes I studied some of the same subject they had for the freshmen but I had to take second year English. Mr. Geddes could not find time for that one so Miss Coker had me come to the primary room for that class. The high school classes worked out all right and we all had our start. Late in the spring, after Mr. Geddes and Miss Coker were married in the fall, some times she would turn sick at her stomach and rush out of the room. She finished the term and heard my second year English recitation and we all made passing grades.

A Dog's Life

Several months after Hadley had hurt Tip's back we had decided that he was recovered from the injury. He seemed to be as strong as he ever had been and normal in every way. Then one day he had a seizure like an epileptic fit. He fell over on his side and started shivering and jerking. His eyes rolled back till the white part showed and his mouth and tongue were frothy. After several minutes he lay still, breathing hard. After a while he opened his eyes and staggered to his feet. He was very weak for a while but regained his strength and seemed normal again. It was several months before he was troubled again. Probably no more than once a year he had one of the spells. But as time

went on the attacks came on him more often and we suspected the trouble was a result of his injury. After two or three years the spells came on him more often until he sometimes had one every day and there was nothing we could do for him.

One morning when we kids came downstairs for breakfast Dad said, "Old Tip died this morning and I took him down in the pasture." Although we all felt bad that Tip had to go we did not cry as we knew he was better off dead than to have to endure the fits he had been having. Several months later I happened to be at the back side of the pasture where we disposed of dead animals and discovered Tip's bones. In the center of his skull was a round hole exactly the size of the head of Dad's hammer. I knew how Tip died then and know what a task it was for Dad, a gentle man who loved his animals almost as much as his family. But he could do what needed to be done.

Another dog we owned about the same time we had Old Tip we called King. King was a little larger than a terrier and of a stocky build. He was just an ordinary sort of dog with no extraordinary characteristics nor special accomplishments. I suppose that is the reason I cannot recall what became of him. About the only thing I recall clearly about King was the time I ran over him with my first Model T Ford. One Sunday morning Hugh and I, along with several neighbor boys were riding down the sandy road by Kutch's place and King was running alongside the car and enjoying the run. He got a little way ahead of the car and for some reason decided to cross over ahead of us. As he started to cross the right rut he stumbled and I felt both wheels go over him with a *bump-bump*. The wheels went right across his neck. We expected him to be dead but he jumped up and ran after the car with no hesitation at all. He was a rather sturdy dog and the deep sand saved his neck. As far as we could tell he was not even sore after the ordeal. It is odd how much we can remember about some dogs and how little about others and it's the same way with our memory of people. Some *ring the bell* while others don't make a sound.

Before we lost Tip we had obtained another dog. Possibly after King was gone. I don't think King died. I'm sure I would have remembered that. We probably gave him to someone. The new dog was one of a kind. He had some of the characteristics of the German Shepherd but was much smaller. He would not have weighed more than twenty-five pounds. He was smart and lively and somewhat of a nut. He was nervous and high strung and excitable. He had some very outstanding abilities and some disabilities. For instance, he could and would climb a tree if there was a toe-hold he could reach but he never could learn to swim and he was afraid of deep water. We got him as a pup from a neighbor named Johnnie Penner. We called him Bingo. Bingo had a *litter-mate brother* who was adopted by Aunt Rachel. She named him Johnnie, after his first owner. He was as smart as Bingo but not such a *screwball*. Aunt Rachel would say to him, "Johnnie you sure are a pretty dog." He would swing his head from side to side and snort and curl up his lips in a grin, showing most of his teeth. He was really pleased to be noticed.

While swimming in the creek one time Hugh and I discovered that Bingo could not swim. While we romped and played in the water Bingo ran around the hole, barking in excitement. We tried to call him into the water but he would not come in. Hugh got out and picked him up and tossed him out into the deep water. Instead of swimming he stuck his nose as high as he could and started to try to climb straight out of the water. We could see the panic in his eyes. He fought the water and air until he was about exhausted and started to sink. We pulled him out and after a while tried again to see if he would learn to swim. He never overcame his fear of the water to swim.

He liked to play with our old cat. Once when the cat came home after being gone for about a week Bingo was very happy to have the cat home again. That night, after we had all gone upstairs to bed, Dad awoke to the sound of the starter on my old Ford that was parked at the south side of the house. The starter would come on then stop and Dad thought perhaps some one was trying to steal the car. He slipped quietly downstairs and looked out of the kitchen window. It was a bright moonlit, winter night. He did not see anyone around the car but he found what was causing the starter to turn on and off. The floor board had bounced up and was resting on the starter switch. Bingo was there at the car and also the old cat. Bingo was picking the cat up by the scruff of his neck and trying to jump into the car with him but every time he started to jump he would relax his hold on the cat's neck and drop him. When he jumped onto the floor board it would turn on the starter. When he found he did not have the cat he would jump out for another try. Dad went out and moved the floor board from the starter and put the cat on the seat of the car so Bingo had his pal to sleep with. I doubt if Ripley would have put that story in his *Believe it or Not* but that's the way it was.

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After we moved to the farm near Hydro there was an oak tree by the barn. It grew on the side of the creek bank and grew at a slant. I heard Bingo barking *treed* and the sound came from the direction of the barn. I went down to see what was going on. I did not see him for a while until I looked up in the oak tree. He was about twelve feet up the tree with his nose to a knothole and barking excitedly. I took a twig and climbed up to the hole. I could feel something alive about a foot up the hollow limb. I took the ax from the woodpile and chopped a hole about where I had felt something in the log. When I had chopped into the hollow I could see a squirrel's back. All the while Bingo was up the tree becoming more excited by the minute. I prodded the squirrel with the ax handle and he darted out of the hole. He made a flying leap down the creek bank about fifty feet down to the base of a big cottonwood tree where he caught hold and ran up that tree. Not knowing his limitations, Bingo tried to imitate the squirrel. Instead of reaching the cottonwood he landed rather hard on the ground and tumbled end over end and stopped in the creek. By that time the squirrel had made good his escape.

One day, after we had left the farm and moved to Hydro, Dad and I were hauling something in the wagon and Bingo was trotting along the street ahead of the wagon. A large dog came out of a yard and started toward Bingo at a fast trot. I knew that Bingo had noticed the dog but he pretended that he was not aware that the other dog was coming after him. You could tell by the way he walked that he would much rather be running but it seemed that he did not want anyone to know that he was scared. He was walking stiff legged and stretching his steps but he did not run. It was a funny sight to see a dog acting just like a scared boy who wanted to run but still held his ground. All of Bingo's worries were for nothing as the big dog only wanted to sniff around. Bingo died in the early thirties of an ailment called *black-tongue*. This disease, according to the books on animal disease, is caused by too little protein in the diet. He was a casualty of The Depression. We could not feed him properly.

A Cat's Life

In the time we lived on the farm in Caddo County we had two cats that were noteworthy enough to stick in my memory. The first was a yellow and white tom cat. The reason I remember him was his obsession to get our *Dickey* bird. Lena had come into possession of a canary and a cage. We called him Dickey. He was a very good singer and we all enjoyed his music. The old yellow tom cat kept his eye on the bird. One time he knocked the cage off the sewing machine, where we some times set it. The bottom came off but Dickey escaped and flew around the room till we discovered what had happened. It was several days before he sang again.

The old cat did not give up. He watched his chance and eventually got hold of Dickey. We rescued him but we were sure, by the way he hung his head that he was hurt. That evening when his bowels moved there was blood on the droppings. The next morning Dickey was dead. We put his body in a match box and buried him in the orchard. Just before dark that evening Hugh and I saw the cat out near the chicken house. We caught him and Hugh hit him across the head with a piece of three-eighth inch pump rod. That knocked him out and I picked him up by the hind legs and wallop him against a locust tree two or three times as hard as I could. He seemed to be dead but to be sure Hugh picked up a stove lid that was near and slammed it down on the cat's head. He did not move so we thought we had executed him. I guess we did not kill him nine times, because he was gone the next morning. We never saw him again.

The other cat I remember was a dark blue-gray cat. It was a pussy cat. I think she was a Persian. She was a very intelligent cat and Mom liked her because she had only one litter each year and never more than three at a time. So population control was not much of a problem. At that time we used a wood burning cook stove. It was not a range, just a four-hole stove with a fire box up front and a single door oven. The door swung round to the right. On cold days, as soon as Mom took the bread out of the oven she left the door open to get more heat in the kitchen. One very cold morning, Dad got up and went downstairs and started fires in the stoves. He closed the oven door so it would heat for the breakfast biscuits. Mom went down to the kitchen soon and while getting the ingredients for biscuits she heard a noise of some kind. It seemed to be coming from the stove. The noise got louder and she recognized it as a cat's voice mixed with the scratching. She opened the oven door and old Puss scrambled out in a hurry. She had been taking advantage of the warm oven for a place to sleep and Dad closed the door on her. A few minutes more and we would have had a cremated cat.

That cat liked to go to the cow lot at milking time. When I was milking she would come sit by the cow and wait for me to squirt milk in her face while she drank all she could catch. When I was milking Old Jersey the milk flowed very freely and I could almost drown the cat but she never gave up.

She became smarter as time went on and would open the screen door and come into the house any time she wanted to do so. Sometimes that annoyed Mom so I rigged a Ford coil to shock her. In a short time she discovered that it would not shock her unless I was there so I rigged a switch to the door that would turn it on as soon as the door started to open. That had her stymied. One time before the automatic switch, Hugh and I found her in the kitchen. Hugh ran to the door and held it shut. I yelled, "Scat," and turned on the coil. When she hit the wire at the bottom of the door she went berserk, yowling screaming, squirming and clawing the door. She could not get out and in her excitement she did not leave the wire. In her agony from the hot wire she involuntarily messed the floor. Under normal conditions she never did this. After that Hugh opened the door and let her out. We had to clean up the mess so it was not all fun. Two boys can be very thoughtless and cruel at times. That Ford coil puts enough voltage to make a man sweat, and was pretty rough on old Puss.

Old Tip and Buddy's rat catching dog found Old Puss in some *stink Brush* down in the pasture one time. At the house they never bothered her. Down there they felt that she was fair game. They treed her in the bushes. The bushes were not very high. They were only about two feet high so there was no refuge for her and she had to fight. And that was after she had lost the toes of a hind foot in a steel trap. She first jumped on the shoulders of Buddy's dog and gave him a few rakes across the face with her claws. Then she jumped on old Tip for more of the same. It did not hurt him quite so much as his longer hair kept the claws from sinking in so deep. But there was plenty of howling and barking along with her squalling. I'm sure they would have eventually killed her if Hugh and I had not arrived in time to make the dogs leave her alone.

Now about the time she lost her toes. She had disappeared from the house. None of us had seen her for nine days. We supposed some dogs had caught and killed her. She did lots of hunting for moles, gophers and once in a young jack-rabbit. One the ninth day she came home. She was so thin and weak she could barely walk. She was staggering and limping. We gave her a pan of milk and looked at her mangled hind foot. It was really a mess and two bare bones projected where her toes should be. She had been caught in a steel trap and stayed there until the flesh rotted away. We nursed her back to health and her foot healed.

The two toe bones always were bare and when she walked on the floor they made a clicking sound that always got on Mom's nerve. She did not want to be reminded of the old cat's suffering. I never set a steel trap after that. I had not realized what a cruel contraption the steel trap was until then.

Lena Comes for a Visit

That spring I did not have enough money to buy a license tag for my first Model T Ford so I dismantled it and studied its parts. After school was finished and there was more work, I earned enough to buy my second Ford. It was a 1917 Model T Touring car. That was the one I traded to Robert London for the 1919 Model with a starter.

I should drop back here and pick up a few more loose ends. A few weeks before my fourteenth birthday Lena came home to stay a while. She was expecting a visit from *the Stork* and came home so Mom could help her. People did not go to a hospital for delivery of babies in those days. Late in the afternoon of September Fourth Mom told Virginia, Hugh and me that we would sleep in the wagon in the yard that night. That was alright with us as we usually slept outdoors in nice weather anyway, during summer, that is. Out door sleeping is much more pleasant than in a stuffy house if one does not live too close to a creek where mosquitoes are bad. We were about a mile from any creeks and were not bothered by mosquitoes very often. On clear summer nights, lying on our backs and looking up at the sky made us feel that we could almost touch the stars.

That evening as soon as it was dark we decided to go across the road and get a watermelon from Martin Lee's patch. We had melons of our own but thought it would be more fun and closer to Lee's patch. There were too many things to think about to be sleepy so we got the melon and ate it. This was to be our first niece or nephew and we were anxious to hear the news. After a while, and no news, we fell asleep and did not wake up until sun-up.

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When we went into the house we were taken into the living room where Mom had set up an extra bed and we met our new niece. She was named Juanita. When the doctor made out the birth certificate the name was spelled Juneita, perhaps no one knew how to spell it. She just missed my birthday by two weeks.

A short time before Juneita was born Owen decided to go to the Normal Teacher's College at Weatherford. A few weeks of study and a passing grade would permit one to teach school, up to the eighth grade at that time. Owen had sold the car that he once owned and had a nice team and buggy. He was courting a girl named Hattie Belle Wyatt who lived in the second school district north of our place. They had both decided to go to school and become teachers.

Lena's second child was a boy, which they named Raymond. He was born with a deformity on his back. He did not live very long and we buried him beside Pearl and Grandpa Chance at the cemetery near The Fairview Church.

Owen Goes to College

When Owen got ready to go to Weatherford I was to go along and return the team and buggy while he would stay with Aunt Nell until he finished his schooling. His team was high-spirited and he had taught them to make a *jackrabbit start* at a signal. We were driving along about halfway to Weatherford with the buggy- top half down and I was leaning back in the seat with my hands behind my head. I brought my hands down rather suddenly and I suppose the mares thought I was going for the whip. They jumped against the harness at full power. Pet, the more nervous of the team broke the hamestring of her harness. That let her out of all the harness except the lines and bridle. Owen was alert and kept control of the lines or reins, if properly spoken, but we always called them lines if on a driven horse. He brought them under control and we wired the broken strap together and finished the trip to Aunt Nell's house.

We spent the night there and after breakfast the next morning I decided to make a better repair job on the hamestring. I had a sharp pocketknife and was using it to make a hole in the strap so I could attach the buckle. I was little careless of how I held the knife and it suddenly folded over on my second finger of the right hand. The blade came down on the first joint of the finger. It cut almost half way through the finger. Before the blood started I could plainly see the joint in the bones and the tendons. It was a nasty cut and I turned sick at my stomach and ran outside and lost my breakfast. I have often heard people blame this condition on the sight of blood but it is not necessarily so. It is caused by a shock. Aunt Nell used Mom's remedy of bandaging with sugar saturated with turpentine. After the first sickness left I felt all right except for a little dizziness.

I had always been troubled with upset stomach. Almost anything would make me sick at my stomach. If I missed a meal or got injured and sometimes for no reason at all that I could be sure about. I often had a bad spell during the summer and at times would be delirious. When I started recovering to the point I wanted something to eat about the only thing that sounded good and didn't make my stomach do a *flip-flop* was some bologna or a can of *store-bought* tomatoes. Don't ask me to explain that choice of food but it made my stomach feel lots better.

That little sick spell did not last and I went ahead and repaired the harness and got ready to head for home. Owen and Aunt Nell were concerned about me starting home alone but I told them I would be all right. I took a zigzag direction to the southeast toward home until I came to Five Mile Creek and headed south past the Ghost Mound School house. This place enters into my life at a later date but I had no idea of it that day. The creek and the road merged for about a mile and a half after I passed the school house. The creek seemed unable to make up its mind as to which side of the road was the right one. It meandered back and forth and had no bridges. At one crossing the water had spread out to a sizeable hole and there seemed to be quite a bit of mud. I drove slowly into it and the horses seemed to have trouble keeping their footing and the water and mud came up to their bellies. They floundered around and the buggy lurched from side to side but we came out after a while. The water came above the axles of the buggy in places. On down the road about a mile I came to the Fairview Church where Pearl and Grandpa Chance were buried. I had to cross Five Mile Creek one more time but this was on the road that was our mail route and there was a bridge across the creek there. About three miles more and I was home again. Soon after Owen and Hattie finished their school work they were married, on November third, shortly before his twenty-second birthday. They never taught school. Before they found a teaching job a brother in law of Hattie became ill and had to quit his job in an oilfield near Enid. Owen went to work there and the brother in law died.

Every Picture Tells a Story

After the batteries for my radio had run down my interest in it had abated somewhat and my interests took another slant. Dad had told me of making some photographs when he was a young man and I had seen some supplies listed in the Sears, Roebuck & Company catalog. I made up an order for developer, hypo fixing solution and some printing paper. Dad had told me that he set his print paper and negative under a glass and exposed it to the sunlight for a few minutes then went to the darkroom and developed it.

The best place I could find for a darkroom during sunlight time was our cellar. I set up a table for the trays and hung a heavy blanket across the doorway. For a *red-light* I took kerosene burning tail lamp from a Model T Ford and covered the clear glass on the side with cardboard so only the red light showed through. I had already obtained a photo print frame. I do not recall how this had come about. I was all set to try printing from some negatives I had that were already developed. I loaded the print frame with a negative and a sheet of paper by the light in the cellar. I took it outside and set it in the direct rays of the sun for a few minutes and then went into the darkroom to develop it. I dipped the exposed paper into the developer and the image appeared almost instantly but for only a few seconds and the paper turned solid black before I could put it into the fixing bath. If my head had been working I would have known that the trouble was over-exposure in the extreme. But I had to study about it for a while and before I reached the solution my Uncle Sam came for a visit. He had worked at photography quite a while and when I told him my troubles he explained how to do it with modern supplies.

He told me that the paper was much faster than it had been when Dad had made photos and the best way to get the proper exposure was to hold the frame facing a north window with a heavy light proof curtain on it. A quick opening and closing of the curtain was all the exposure needed to print a good picture. I could still use the cellar but only in the afternoons as the door was in the east. That way I could have indirect light that was not too bright. After a few more experiments I improved my processing until I could turn out some pretty nice prints.

I had come into possession of an Eastman Brownie camera. It was a box-camera that made two and a fourth by three and a fourth inch pictures. I ordered the paper for printing in a five by seven inch size. I could cut it into four parts of the right size and it was a little cheaper that way. In thinking about the way a camera works I decided that if I had the right kind of light that I could control I could put a negative in the camera and project an enlargement onto the paper and make bigger pictures. The best light I could think of was a headlight from a car. I took one off my car and built a box to hold it and made it to fit the camera case. I put a negative in the holder I had rigged for it and with a little adjusting for focus and size I got a sharp, clear image on the sheet of white paper I had placed in the print frame. Now to try it with print paper. I had it adjusted to make a five by seven inch enlargement. The first one needed more exposure as it made only a faint image of part of the picture. After a few more tries I got the exposure about right but I was never able to whip all the problems with my home made enlarger. The unequal intensity of the light coming from the reflector caused the picture to develop in concentric rings of dark and light. The idea and principles were good but I had no way at that time of diffusing the light for an even exposure. It was several years later that I perfected a home made enlarger that would do work that was satisfactory but by that time the process of making projected enlargement was being done commercially. When I started this process it was my invention. I had never seen or heard of enlargements by projection but like most of my ideas, it came too late.

After Uncle Tom, Aunt Rachel and Edna returned from the trip to Arkansas, Edna went to El Reno to work. She worked as a waitress in a restaurant and met her future husband there. His name was Roy Lee Tomlins. He worked for the Rock Island Line as a fireman. They were married July 12th, 1923. They made their home at El Reno most of the time after that.

Road Trip!

By the spring of 1926 I had finished the second year of high school. I had the Ford touring car which I had got in the trade with Bob London. I had bought a new battery for it and ground the valves and had it running very well. The tires were not too good. One on the front had a hole in the side. The cut was about two inches long and had been laced with leather belt lacing and had a *boot* inside.

Dad had been reading the ads in the papers about the cheap land in Arkansas and had an idea of selling our place and paying off the debt and maybe have enough to buy a farm in Arkansas. So we planned to go there when the crop

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was laid-by in the summer. I bolted two boards to the left fenders of the Ford to provide space to carry our bedding and camp gear. Dad and I made a trip to Hydro and bought two second-hand tires for the rear of the car. We gave six dollars for the two tires. They looked pretty good.

Sometime in July Owen got his vacation from the oilfield work and came home to look after the stock and do the milking while we were gone. By that time we had two nieces and one nephew. Edna and Roy had a daughter, Ailene, and Owen and Hattie had a son, Eugene. Lena and Buddy and Juneita were there to see us off. I had a Brownie Box Camera so made some pictures of the kids and a shot of the Ford before we left.

We started out in the morning. Mom and Dad, Hugh, Virginia and I were going. Dad and I rode the front seat and Mom, Hugh and Virginia in the rear. We turned north at Calumet, with the idea of avoiding the traffic In Oklahoma City. Highways were not very good and very poorly marked those days. A few miles north of Calumet one of the rear tires blew out. I had some tire patch and extra *boots*. We made repairs and went on until we came to a good road going east and turned. We drove east until we passed a town called Luther. It was a Negro town. In those days many towns were segregated. About sundown we pulled off the road and made camp. We all had a bad headache from breathing the fumes from the car.

The next morning, I wrapped a patch around the exhaust pipe and tied it with some baling wire. The patch was cut from a tin can. We stopped at Sapulpa to see a Frank Cloninger and family and stayed all night with them. Dad had been corresponding with Frank for some time but they could not connect up the relationship. Frank said he was pretty sure they were cousins. We have a photo of Frank and it has a striking resemblance to the tin-type picture of Jim which I found in Jan's trunk. There was also some resemblance between Lena and Frank's oldest daughter. After we left the next morning we never saw or heard from Frank again.

We made it through Tulsa and past Siloam Springs, Arkansas that day. But first I will tell you our experience at Perkins, Oklahoma before we reached Sapulpa. We stopped at a service station there to fill up with gas and while there I got a new can of tire patch. The roads out of Perkins were not marked as to where they went.

We took a graveled road east from the service station. The farther we went, the worse the road looked. After a while it was just a trail through the grass and weeds. We came to another road running north and south. I figured the better road was to the north so we turned that way. We were alongside the Cimarron River and the country was rough. Up the road a way we saw a colored woman coming down the road. She was carrying two pails of water and was barefooted. I decided we were really in the backwoods. The woman stepped out of the road and waited for us to pass. About a mile up the road we came to a cliff and the road meandered up it. It was very steep and rough. I felt uneasy about the old Fords ability to make it and trying to back down would be a problem. I decided to try it. The old car groaned and staggered but we topped the hill and it was just as rough going down but I held it in low gear and came down all right. As we reached the bottom of the hill we were near the bridge and the main road to Drumright, Okla.

Now back to our first camp in Arkansas. We made camp on a river. We did not know its name but thought maybe it was the Illinois we had heard about. There was a farm house a short distance up the road so Dad said he would go to the house and try to buy some tomatoes for supper. The lady said he could pick what he wanted. He filled a peck paper bag and asked what he owed for them. He was pleasantly surprised when she said, "About a dime I reckon." They were about the best tomatoes I had ever tasted and those from Kinder's garden on the little creek back home were hard to beat. We kids went swimming in the river and enjoyed it very much but the sharp rocks in the bottom was something we had never seen before. The lady at the farm house told us it was the White River.

A little while after dark we heard a buggy on the road. We expected to see it come around the bend any minute. We continued to hear it for fifteen or twenty minutes before it came into sight. Those iron tires on the rocks made a sound that surely carried a long way in the still evening air on the river. We were amazed to see tomatoes and strawberries growing in fields that showed no soil at all. The people we talked to said the soil showed after plowing but as soon as it rained the soil went back down among the rocks. Dad may have seen land like that but we kids never had seen anything like it.

Didaw's Book

The next day we drove toward Fayetteville. Along the road we saw small farms with signs *For Sale* but none of them seemed to be what Dad had in mind. One sign said "This Forty Acres for sale." I told Dad that it looked like eighty acres to me. The side next to the road was forty acres straight up and down so there must be forty more acres going down the other side of the hill. I guess Dad's affection for the hills had faded in about thirty years. There was one ad that had roused his interest. It was in regard to a farm about twelve miles southeast of Fayetteville. We arrived at Fayetteville about ten in the morning. We found a road leading to the southeast and drove about five miles. Dad said, "Let's turn around and head back. I've seen enough" He wanted to return via Gravette so we traveled in a northwesterly direction. We stopped at a small town; I think it was Walnut Springs or some name like that¹¹. We filled the car with gas and asked the young man, which was the best road to Gravette. He started to tell us and an old gentleman who was standing near said "I know a better road. I have lived around here over fifty years and I can tell you all the best roads." And he proceeded to tell us. I would not attempt to repeat his directions, but Dad thought perhaps we should follow his advice. We found the landmarks he described and followed the road as he described it. The farther we went the worse we found the road. About the only things that could have made it were a Billy goat, a donkey or a Model T Ford. We made it and finally came back to a fairly decent road. I made up my mind that perhaps the last time the old gent had seen that road was fifty years ago. Gravette was out more on the high plateau country and the farms looked pretty good but the prices were as high or higher than Caddo County land. There was no point in looking farther.

That night we made camp under some nice trees and there were no grass burrs like we had at home. It looked like we were set for a good night's rest. But that was not to be. Soon after dark we rolled our beds out on the grass and had just about gone to sleep when we heard a noise like rain falling on the leaves on the ground. The sky was clear and it could not be rain. In a few minutes we found out what we were hearing. There were hundreds of long-legged black ants dropping from the trees. They were almost as big as our red ants. They did not sting but every now and then they would stop their racing and bite us to see if we were good to eat. They went at a full run and when they came to the end of the tree limbs they dropped off and started running again. They were the craziest ants I have ever seen. We moved our beds out in the open and finished the night.

We started back home the next morning and Dad said he wanted to take a different road on the way home. Most of the mountain roads that we used going were on the south side of the mountains. That way Dad sat where he could look over the edge of the roads. He did not mention that but I knew he would have felt better if we had the inside lane on the roads.

We headed for different towns on the way back and, would you believe it, most of the higher hill roads were on the north side going home so Dad had to look over the hill side of the road again. In the hills I drove like I did at home. I passed lots of cars that were going slower than I liked. I did not realize it at the time but the people were driving slowly out of mercy for their tires. At higher speeds those rocks murdered the old high pressure fabric tires we had then. Cord tires had not come along then. We stopped at a small town, named Locust Grove, to fill up the car. We were few miles east of Tulsa. At the service station there was a parrot sitting by his cage in the shade of a tree. He looked us over and cocked his head to one side and said "Awrrrk ha ha ha cotton cotton cotton Awrrrk." I suppose some one had taught him to think we were cotton pickers. We he was right. We did pick cotton but we were not professionals. The pounding the tires had taken started telling on them. It seemed like I patched and pumped up a tire every two miles the rest of the way home. I used some of the tire patch material from Perkins and drove about ten miles. The same tire went flat again. When I checked for a hole I found it was the one I had just patched. The Perkins patch had slid about six inches from the hole. So as soon as I could get a new can I threw away the rest of the Perkins patches.

One other event that happened before Locust Grove, I would like to relate. We came to a road that ran along the Verdigris River. We found a shady pull-out spot and parked to cool off. We went to the edge of the river and found a big spring of cold water bubbling out of the rocks. We sampled it and found it very good. We filled all our water jugs and went on down the road. As we approached Claremore we noticed signs saying *Free Radium Water-Fill Your Jugs Free*. We stopped at the service station and dumped our good spring water and refilled with the water at the service

¹¹ Elm Springs perhaps.

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station. Looking back it is hard to understand why we did that. After we went down the road a few miles we needed a drink. When we took the stopper out of the jug the water had an awful odor and tasted no better. I think what we got was sulfur water and it has very much the odor of rotten eggs. Ever since that event when I see the *free* sign I back up and take a good look at the deal.¹²

We went through Tulsa in the late afternoon but our camp spot that night has slipped my mind. It must have been very ordinary. I remember going through Bristow and getting off the main road and ending up in the blackjack woods and sand and some oil wells. Eventually we got back on a good road and had a flat tire. I got it jacked up and patched. While I was pumping it up I heard a hissing noise and the tire on the other side went flat while standing still. I patched it and we drove on. Later we came to Arcadia and just at the north side of town we had a flat. The tube looked so bad we thought we should try to get a new one. Dad walked into town to a kind of a shop and the man sold him a new tube for one dollar and a half. It had been on the shelf so long it was rotten and would not hold air. Dad took it back but could not get a refund. While we were patching the one we already had we heard a commotion down the road. We saw a good-sized colored woman coming up the road at a fast walk. She had half a brick in her right hand and was talking to herself and what she was saying she did not learn at Sunday school. I always wondered if it was her husband or someone who was trying to steal from him that she was going to see. I'll bet there were some sore heads when she arrived.

We went on from Arcadia and through Edmond and continued past Piedmont. Then we came to the road that led to El Reno. When I pulled in to the curb my brake bands were gone and the reverse band was almost gone. I hit the curb pretty hard but did not blow a tire. We stopped at Edna's apartment for lunch then started for home. At that time there was a toll bridge across the Canadian River at Bridgeport. The toll for a car was one dollar. Dad had a one-dollar bill and some change. When we came to the bridge he had the dollar in his hand. The man dropped the chain and we crossed over.

Uncle Bob had moved from Weatherford and taken charge of the Bridgeport section of the railroad. We stopped by his house and Dad borrowed some money from him. Before we started home we bought a new inner tube for the car. One tire had a hole in it and the boot was bulging alarmingly. I had a leather strap with a buckle on it. In fact, it was a hamestring. It would reach twice around the tire. I buckled it tightly around the bulge and pumped up the tire. We started on the last leg of our journey. It was about twenty-five miles to our home from Bridgeport. We made it without having to pump up another tire. And the amazing thing about the tires was that the tire which had the belt lacing patch when we started was the only one that made the entire trip with the same air it had when we started. So, you see, tires are like people in some ways. The one that looks best is sometimes the one that lets you down. The scroungy looking one proved to be the best.

A Year at Sickles School

The time for school to open was approaching and I planned to drive to Sickles School to take my third year of high school. Sickles was a school district six miles east of Hopewell. I removed the rear seat from the old touring car and added a flat bed of boards on the back half and remodeled the top to cover only the front seat. This converted it to a *roadster* as one-seated cars were called in 1926. Sickles had originally been set aside, in survey of the territory, for a town site. At first there were several businesses, a Post Office, grocery and general merchandise store, drugstore, a doctor's office, and a cotton gin to name a few. For some reason the town did not survive. First one thing then another closed out and moved away. When I started to school there the only thing left was the school house (the original that is) and the drugstore where the old doctor still made a pretense of keeping his office. The school was being consolidated with five or six other districts that year and a new building was being built. We started school in the crowded, old building and it was after Christmas before the new building was ready for use. I got some better tires to replace the ones we had after the trip to Arkansas, which were about beat to shreds by the rocks of the Ozarks.

¹² Claremore was noted for the high concentration of radon in the water. People would travel there to bathe in the radioactive waters and drink the waters, with the belief that it would cure their ailments. One of the attributes of radium water is its high sulfur content.

I started to school with a bunch of strangers for the first time since I was six years old. It took me somewhat longer to get acquainted than it did the *natives*. I had to learn the names of fifty or more while they only had to learn the names of two or three new students like me. It did not take long and I enjoyed making new friends. We had an outdoor basket ball court which we enjoyed using. The new building would have an indoor court with electric lights. We were really coming up in the world. The electric lights were powered by a power plant driven by a gasoline engine. When the lights were turned on a battery started the dynamo and it ran until the switches were turned off. That was a few years before the rural electrification was started. The school was planning a program for Christmas and some of the students volunteered to do something for the entertainment. I had promised that Virginia and I would do a number. The program was planned for the afternoon. A while before the program I had planned to drive home and take Virginia back to the program. She planned to sing a Christmas Carol or two, if the first one met with approval, and I would accompany her with Dad's fiddle. We had practiced two songs in case we needed an encore.

I went out and started the car and started to back away from the school house. When I turned the wheel to turn nothing happened. The car continued in a straight line and the steering wheel turned too freely. I looked under the car and saw that the steering arm had dropped off the shaft. I looked all around for the nut that should hold the parts together but it evidently had dropped off along the road somewhere. Luckily the woodruff key that kept the arm from turning was still in the slot in the shaft. I drove the arm back over the key until it was snug then took the bail out of the syrup pail I used for lunch. I put the wire through the cotter pin hole on the shaft and wound it tightly back against the arm then twisted the ends together so the arm had to stay in place. That would do until I had time to find another nut. I suppose someone had failed to put a cotter pin in the nut to keep it from coming off. Lucky for me it had not fallen off while the car was moving.

I arrived home with plenty of time to pick up Virginia and the fiddle and make it back before the program was due to start. When our turn came on the program we first played and sang, *O Little Town of Bethlehem* and it seemed to please the crowd. They gave us a second round of applause so we did, *It Came upon the Midnight Clear*. I know the performance was not as good as the applause but kids appetite for music were not jaded as the blare of noise produced by radio and television as it is now. Homespun music has long been enjoyed. We both felt good that our efforts were appreciated.

A Bit about Tires

My old tire with the belt lacing patch, that survived the trip to Arkansas and back gave up the ghost on a cold, rainy day in November. The front wheel dropped into a chug hole full of muddy water and yielded up its spirit. Perhaps there was a rock in the hole. Anyway it was beyond repair. I drove on home on the flat tire. I put on another old tire that was about past going and went to Eakly the next morning, a Saturday, so I missed no school, to look for a tire. I found a 30x3 Firestone Buckeye tire. That was the size I needed. The tires in those days were not very good. They were made of fabric cemented together with rubber instead of the "cord" type of tires developed a short time later. I gave seven dollars for the tire and I think it lasted a week. I think it was like the inner-tube we had bought in Arcadia. It had hung in the hot summer air until it had rotted. I do not recall ever buying another Firestone tire. I patched up the old tire and used it until I could get one from Montgomery Ward and Co. It usually took from three to five days to get an order from them. That was before our Postal Service was "Modernized." Nowadays it only takes from ten to fourteen days. In those days Montgomery had the best tires for the money. In later years they "Modernized" also and I started buying tires from Sears. Back in the twenties the best tires available, but not the cheapest, were made by Fisk Rubber Co. They were made of red rubber with white sidewalls and were called "Red Tops". The red rubber was very strong and tough as well as durable. I once saw a pair of them on the rear of a truck and the owner said he had used them for twenty years. I had asked him how long he had them because they had not been on the market for years. Even though Fisk made the best tire they went out of business.

I had learned about the better quality of red rubber or light reddish brown, years earlier when making what is incorrectly called a slingshot. We called it a *nigger-shooter*. It was made with two strips of rubber about fourteen inches long. Attached to one end was a leather *pocket* made of soft leather like the tongue of an old shoe. It was cut about one and a half inches wide and about three inches long. In each end a slit was cut crosswise for the rubber bands to be inserted, folded over and tied. The other end of the rubber bands were over the ends of a stock made from a crotch of a limb from a bush or a tree. The favorite wood that I knew was from a lilac bush and second best

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was from a mulberry tree. They had the most perfectly formed crotches with just the right amount of space between the branches. A slingshot like David used was made of two leather thongs about three feet long with a pocket similar to the one on our device. The stone was propelled by swinging it around over the head and releasing one of the strings at the right time. That is a slingshot. The name, as we used it, to describe the device we used had no racial connotation as far as we were concerned. As there were no colored people anywhere near us, with the exception of George Price and we considered him as a neighbor and he was as respected by the people around there as anyone else. Anyway the red rubber had the most *snap* for slinging the missiles and the brown was next best. Black rubber would work but often broke and did not have the *zip* of the others. With practice we became pretty good marksmen.

The Family Moves toward Hydro

In the spring, before I started to school at Sickles, Dad sold the farm to a neighbor, Mr. Tosh. Then he rented it for the coming farming season. He took what money he got and paid up all the debts and he ended up with the machinery and livestock and eight kids, more or less raised and partially educated, to show for almost a lifetime of hard work. There were really only six of us living by that time, two had been buried. However, if Dad ever believed that he had been mistreated by life he never showed it in any way. He was one of the most calm and unruffled men I ever saw. I never heard him say one derogatory word about any thing we had to eat and if any of us kids grumbled a little we were told to leave the table until we were hungry. That does not mean we had to eat something we did not like but we were not to say any thing about it, just pass it up.

That year the crops did not make very much money and Dad rented a farm near Hydro and in December we had a public sale and sold off the surplus cattle and horses and some of the farm tools we did not need. I did not want to change schools during the term so I worked out a deal with Clyde Woodward, who owned the Exendine Store. Clyde was a single man at that time and his mother and father along with a younger sister and brother lived in the store building. It had a large room on the side which they used for a kitchen and dining area and there were two large bedrooms upstairs. He did not want to drive every day to take his brother and sister to school. He said if I would let them ride to school with me he would give me room and board. This also shortened the round trip about five miles. When the rest of my family moved I went to stay with the Woodwards'.

The sister Edna was about six or seven years old so she had to go to the local school, Walnut Grove. It was one of the schools that had consolidated with Sickles but the new school did not teach any grades below the seventh grade. That was no problem though as the road to Sickles passed Walnut Grove. The brother was about fourteen years old and was named Oliver. Oliver was in the eighth grade so he would go to Sickles. Shortly after I started taking the Woodward kids to school a boy by the name of *Punk* Stacy who lived a mile up Lake Creek from the store wanted to make a deal about riding to school. His name was really Eldred but everyone called him *Punk*. This was not intended to be a belittling name. I asked him where he got that name and the story was this. When his Uncle Carl saw him for the first time after he was born he said, "He had a head just like a pumpkin." The nickname *punk* in stuck to him and as he grew older and started to school it was shortened to *Punk*. Well *Punk* was driving an old Overland 90 to school and figured we might as well team up and drive only one car so he said if I wanted to we would alternate driving my car one week and his car the next week. We agreed and got by the rest of the year with half as much expense. For several years after the end of that school term I never saw or heard of *Punk* again. Then one day I looked up from my desk at the lumber yard and saw a handsome slender Sailor in dress uniform. The wide grin on his face looked familiar but I could not think of the name. He stuck out his hand and said, "I'm Eldred Stacy." I said, "Oh, you mean *Punk*." He said, "No more *Punk* after I joined the Navy." We had a nice visit rehashing the events at Sickles. I never would have believed the chubby, red faced Irish kid I hauled to school would have made such a good looking man. Our first impressions are often misleading.

After my family moved to the new place I would go home over the week end and pick up some clean clothes and go back to Woodward's early Monday morning in time to take the kids to school. If we did not have a basket ball game to play I went home as soon as I delivered my passengers and if we had a game I took them home and returned to the school house for the game. I had also picked up another passenger, Fred Horweddle. He paid fifty cents a week for the ride as I remember. When we had a game to play I drove to our new home after the game. One Friday night while we were having a game a *norter* blew in. Blizzard might be a better name for what happened that night. My car did not have side curtains and my driving gloves had been stolen from my clothes at a previous game we had

played away from our school. I had to drive into the storm for about twenty miles to get home. After I took off my basket ball suit and put on all my other clothes including my jacket I pulled my heavy flannel sweat-suit pants on. Then I put my hands in the sleeves of the sweat-jacket with the back of the jacket across my chest and started home.

Due to the poor lights on a Model T Ford and the swirling snow I had to drive slowly. It took a long time to make the trip. About six miles from home I noticed steam coming from the radiator. I knew it was frozen. I had an old quilt on the seat for extra padding so I folded it and laid it across the radiator and back onto the hood and let it stand for a while with the steam escaping around under the quilt. After a while the radiator felt warm all over so I knew I had thawed. The water had boiled away until I needed more so it would cool the engine so I fastened the quilt so it would not blow off and pulled into the next farm house and the man who lived there gave me a bucket of water for the car and I was on my way again. The rest of the trip was uneventful but when I got home and started to drain the car so it would not freeze up again I was shivering so much I could hardly get the pliers on the drain petcock. It was about midnight when I got to bed that night. The old Model T was not much of a car by today's standards but even with the poor roads those days if a Model T couldn't make it nothing but a team and wagon or walking would get there.

Another time in late winter I was on my way home after a game. It was about eleven o'clock at night. The battery cable was bad and my lights were very poor. I was having some trouble with the coil points sticking. I was driving on a road about three miles north of our old home on a road that was grown up with locust sprouts that made a one lane road most of the way. I was leaning over, flipping the coil points and driving with one hand. In the dim lights from the car something white loomed up very near the car. I swerved to the right as fast as I could and there was a grinding crunch and the car came to a sudden stop. I looked around to see what I had collided with. It was a wagon driven by one of our old neighbors, George Robbins. He had about a ton of coal on his wagon and he was driving one dark horse and one white one. When he saw me coming he had swung his team out of the ruts but his wagon was still in the road and when my front wheel tangled with his rear wheel the rear of the car swung over until the other wheels were also tangled. That was a problem because he was an elderly man and both of us would not be able to move the car or the wagon.

While we were trying to decide what to do we saw a car coming over the hill about a mile to the south. I had taken that road because of light traffic. But that was one time I was looking forward to no traffic. The car, as luck would be, did not turn off at the corner. When it came to our point of collision there were four strong young men in the car. They were a welcome sight for sure. With four strong men to help me it was no problem to lift the front end of the car and disentangle the wheels. Then the same to the rear end and we were all on our way again with no harm done. George never lost his temper and neither did I. It would have been useless to try to place the blame. He had held my half of the road and I was driving with lights that were not up to safe standards.

A Storm and a Flood

One spring evening as school was dismissed there was a very angry looking cloud in the west. We did not waste any time heading for Exendine. As we pulled into the yard of the store the rain started coming down in very large drops. The cellar door opened and Clyde told us to come into the cellar, the rest of the family was already there. Shortly after the rain was really pouring and we heard a noise at the door. Clyde eased up on the rope and the door opened. One of Clyde's brother's in law had arrived. His name was Deward Jamieson. At that time he was teaching the Five Mile School. His wife was visiting her folks and was in the cellar. The cellar had a vat built into the floor where spring water came in and they put the cream cans in it to keep it cool until it could be shipped to the creamery. There was a tile drain laid to the creek to keep the water at the right level. After a while the water started backing out onto the floor. The water had reached two feet in the cellar. The rain had eased up and the wind had calmed down so we decided to go back to the store.

When we came out of the cellar we noted some damage. Clyde's nearly new Ford touring car was in a garage next to the building that housed the cream station. The garage had collapsed and came down on the car. I don't know how it happened but there was very little damage to the car. My car was blown across the road and against Horwedell's garden fence. I had parked it in high gear too.

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Although Deward was teaching school, he was still a boy at heart so we went down to the creek to watch the water come up. The old dog went along. We were throwing hollow logs into the creek, which was bank full, and once in a while a pack rat would come out of a log and start swimming for land. The old dog would jump in and grab them. It was pretty good sport. Clyde had walked across the bridge and up the road opposite to us. He started yelling and pointed up the creek and ran for the bridge. By the time Deward and I saw the high water coming across the field we were already cut off from the store by a gully full of water. We went to the highest ground near and the water kept rising. Soon we were standing on drift wood to keep our feet dry. All at once something bit me in the groin. I pulled down my pants and found a brown spider was to blame. I was lucky that it was not very poisonous. It hurt about like a wasp sting. There is one variety of brown spider on our creeks that can make a man violently sick. However I have only seen one person bitten by one of those.

The water continued to rise until there was no dry spot except the trees. So we climbed a tree apiece. Deward sang, *Shall We Gather at The River*. We were having fun but it was growing dark and the water came on up. We were about two hundred yards from land and the water was making quite a bit of noise. When it was dark we saw Deward's in-laws come down to the water with a lantern. We could see them but they could not see us. His new bride was worried sick. Deward yelled at them and told them to bring us a blanket and they could not make out what he was saying so that added to their worry. They kept the vigil on the shore and we stayed in the trees until almost eleven 'clock. By that time the water had receded some. By the way the land laid I thought we could follow the ridge to the north a few hundred yards and then turn east and get around the gully. We decided to try it. We took off our shoes and tied them in the trees. Then we took off all our clothes, except our underwear, and rolled them into a tight bundle so we would not lose our watches and other items in the pockets. We started wading. Soon the water was up to our armpits and very cold. We were wading into a field that had been kaffir corn and the heads had been cut off leaving a sharp point to the stalks and the water caused them all to point toward our bellies. We had to go very slowly. It looked like we were far enough to avoid the deep water. We turned east and we came to water deep enough that we had to tiptoe to keep our mouths above water. We held our bundles of clothes above our heads to keep them dry. After a while we started emerging from the water.

We reached the land and removed our wet underwear and put on our dry clothes and quietly walked up behind the Woodwards'. Some one was wondering if we were alright and said "I don't hear them any more". Deward laughed and said "Yeah, we're alright". We were standing close behind them. They scolded him for yelling when they could not make out what he was saying but you could hear the relief in their voices. My groin was very sore the next day from the spider bite and I went to school without underwear the next day because I did not have a clean suit. It was Friday and I would be heading for home after school. When I got back to the store after school Mrs. Woodward had washed my muddy underwear. She treated me just like one of the family.

Fresh Fish

There was a grocer in Lookeba who sometimes hit the bottle too hard and there was no way of knowing what he would order for his store when he was feeling good. Clyde was at the store in Lookeba when one of these wild orders came in. He had ordered a hundred pounds of fresh fish and without refrigerators they had to be sold pretty soon. He cut the price quite a bit lower than he had paid so Clyde brought home several pounds of fresh fish. Mrs. Woodward was a very good cook and she cooked all those fish and invited company. We had a very good fish supper and kept them from spoiling.

One evening when we got home from school Mrs. Woodward was nervous and disturbed. She had received a phone call from her daughter who lived near Eakly. Her grandson had followed his father to the garage. His father did not know that the little boy, who was about three years old, had followed and when he backed the car out it ran over the little boy's head and face. Their name was Smalley. Mrs. Woodward had no way to go see how badly the little boy was hurt, as Clyde was not home when it happened. I told her I would take her to Smalleys'. We arrived and found that the boy had a broken cheek bone and lower jaw but otherwise seemed to be alright. It is hard to imagine the agony of the father, Earl, when he realized that he had driven the car over his son's head. He was in tears when we arrived and said "Oh, my God, I drove that car right over his head. I did not know he had followed me. I thought he was with his mother." I guess the little boy's time just had not come as he recovered without any complications and his face was only very slightly scarred after he was grown.

Basketball Diaries

The school year at Sickles was a new experience for me. It was the first time I had ever gone to school where everyone knew me and I knew very few of the kids. We played basket ball and lost every game except two. We went to Colony to play the Indian boys. They only taught to the eighth grade in the Indian School, but many of the boys were as much as twenty years old. They played basketball in an old corrugated iron building with a dirt floor. The floor had many uneven spots and when we tried to dribble it was like trying to dribble a football. You never could tell which way the ball would bounce. At the end of the regular game time we were tied. We played another quarter and both teams had scored two points. We played another quarter and were still tied. It was past eleven o'clock so the coaches decided to call it a draw and scheduled a rematch to be played on our indoor court in the new school house. We won that game without any trouble. That game and the draw were the only two games that we did not lose. But we had lots of fun trying.

When it came time for the County Tournament we had to go to Anadarko where it was being held. Our coach had a Ford coupe 1926, nearly new. It would not haul the entire team so four of us rode the running board to Binger, about six miles from Sickles, and boarded a passenger train for Anadarko. That was my first train ride. At Gracemont, after the train pulled away from the depot, we came to a stop and the engineer pulled the whistle for several sharp blasts. We looked out the windows to see what was happening and saw the brakeman out driving a bunch of cows off the tracks. Then we were on our way again.

When we arrived at Anadarko our coach was there to meet us. He told us that we would have room and board with the C. W. Rasure family. That name was familiar to me as I had several school certificates signed by Mr. Rasure when he was County Superintendent. Our stay with the Razures was very pleasant. They were very fine people. They had a big ten-room house so they took five of us for the duration of the tournament. For breakfast Mrs. Rasure set the table and put her electric waffle iron on the table. She had a pitcher that would hold about three quarts of waffle dough. She started baking waffles and we started eating. These were another first for me. I had never eaten waffles before. We had our choice of milk or coffee. I had had my share of milk for supper all my life so I had coffee. That was another meal to remember. I'll bet if Mrs. Rasure had never cooked for a bunch of teen-age basket ball players before she was amazed at how much they could eat. But there was never a hint of any such thoughts from her. She insisted that we have another even after we had eaten so much.

After he was no longer the County Superintendent Mr. Rasure worked at photography. They had an enlargement of a photograph enlarged to about twenty by twenty four inches and hand tinted. It was framed and hung on the wall. It was the picture of a buck deer standing on a big boulder, broadside to the camera with his head turned to face the camera. It was about as near a perfect pose as could be imagined. Mrs. Rasure had snapped the picture in the woods in Colorado. They had been offered a lot of money for the negative but refused. She said it was the only one and she wanted to keep it that way.

Mr. Rasure had a phonograph and hundreds of records. They were arranged in a rack, which he had made, and were indexed so he could find any one that he wanted. I'll bet those records would be worth a fortune now since *Antique* collecting has become the favorite pass time for so many people.

The Razures had a son and a daughter. The son was away from home and we did not see him but the daughter was at home. She was twenty-four years old and only about three feet tall. Or, perhaps long would be the better description. She was paralyzed from her shoulders down. She lay on the floor on her elbows.

She could use her hands so she read lots and did some embroidering and crocheted and tatted lace. When her mother was telling us about her affliction her eyes filled with tears.

One event happened to mar an almost perfect stay with them. All my life we made no pretense about our behavior. We played the fiddle and we played all kinds of card games. To us Pitch or Poker was just a game, the same as Rook, Flinch or Old Maid. There was a new fad in games going around Sickles and Lookeba called Nosey Poker. The winner would take a number of cards equal to the points lost by his opponent and slap: his nose with the cards the same number of times. The loser could protect his eye with some cards while being slapped. There were some very red noses and watery eyes as a result. One of the boys and I were in the living room with the Razures and the others were in their room upstairs. Mr. Rasure said, "I wonder where the other boys are." Without thinking, I said,

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"Probably in their room playing Nosey Poker." He became very upset and jumped out of his chair and said. "Oh, my goodness, I have never had a deck of cards in my house before and I just cannot have that now." He rushed upstairs and I guess he *laid down the law* to the boys. They never did say anything about what happened and I did not confess my part in the escapade. If I had realized how Mr. Razure felt I would have kept my big mouth shut.

These were the highlights of my time at Sickles.

1927 to 1929 – Hydro, OK

The Farm at Hydro

In the spring of 1927 after the school term was finished, I was back home again. Dad had moved everything from our old home to the new one except our old cultivator. It was a long trip to go after it with a team and wagon so I decided to go in the Ford and trail it home. I took some ropes and an oil can along so I could tie it behind the car and oil the wheel bearings when they needed it. I used some baling wire to tie the levers that controlled the gangs of shovels so they could not drop to the ground while I was towing it. By driving about as slow as I could, in high gear, I took the old cultivator the twelve miles without incident.

We had rented the farm from George Taylor. We had known the Taylor's many years. We had dinner with them when they lived on a branch of Lake Creek. I was then about eight or nine years old and Hugh, I and the Taylor boys fished in a little hole in the creek. We caught some small perch. That was the first fish I had ever caught as far as I can recall. Dad was to pay three hundred dollars cash rent for the farm. On the twelfth day of July we had a severe hail storm. It stripped the cotton until there was nothing left but the stalks. And the corn, which was in the *roasting-ear stage* was damaged a lot. Dad decided to leave the cotton and take a chance that it would leaf out and make a crop. And he planted another field to broom corn after the storm. Broom corn requires less time to mature than many crops. George Taylor came to our house the next day after the storm and asked Dad to give him a note and a mortgage on the team of mules to secure the debt of the rent. He did not know it but he had no need to worry, Dad was an honest man and would have paid his debts even if he had to go hungry to do it. I suppose that concept of things is impossible for some people to understand. It all depends on their own character and experiences.

George had a 1922 Model T Ford Roadster that I wanted so I could combine with the one I had and repair it so I could drive it to school the next term. It seemed to be in pretty good condition although it did not have a top on it and had set idle for some time. He said he would sell it to me for twenty dollars and a jersey bull calf that Dad had. Dad let me have the calf to trade and I gave George the twenty dollars. When I got the car home and checked it over I found it to be much better than my older one so I took the tires and battery from the old car and ground the valves on the newer one and it was in good running order. All I needed now was a top to keep out the rain. Soon after that I took Mom to Weatherford to do some shopping and to visit her sister, Nell. While we were there I went down to the city dump to see if I could find some top bows that I could use on my Ford. All I could find were on a touring car but I knew I could remodel them so they would fit a roadster. I took my pliers, hammer and wrenches down in the canyon where the old car body was and went to work on detaching the bows. Just as I got them loose I heard something buzz by my ear and almost immediately I felt something on my bare forearm. It felt just like a live coal had been stuck to my skin. I had roused a swarm of wasps that had a nest in that old car body. I started up the pile of tin cans on the bank as fast as I could go. The footing was very insecure in all the empty cans and was *spinning my wheels*. I finally made my way to the top and I hung onto my bows. I came out with a few stings but had some good top bows that I could make work on my car. I made an order to Montgomery Ward for a new top cover and after I got it and installed it I had a decent looking Ford Roadster to drive to school.

I took the rear axle and wheels from the old Ford and made a two-wheeled trailer to use for hauling things that we needed to move. One of the first things I had to haul was a big calf that Dad had bought at a farm sale. I rigged some sideboards of slats for the trailer and we went after the calf. He would weigh about three hundred pounds and we were afraid he might jump around and wreck the sideboards. We put a rope around his neck and snubbed him down so he could not get his head up very high. We almost made it home without trouble. As we were going down the long hill near our house the hitch pin came out of the trailer tongue. We were traveling about twenty miles per

hour. The trailer tongue dropped to the ground and skidded along a little way then stuck into the ground. The trailer continued onward until it had made a complete flip and landed upside down on the calf. I stopped as soon as I could and we ran back to get the calf out of the mess. The rope was so tight on his neck that he was choking and his tongue was hanging out about six inches. Dad took his pocket knife and cut the rope loose from the trailer and then we rolled the trailer over onto its side and Dad got hold of the rope before the calf got up. After the calf got his breath back he seemed to be all right so Dad led him to the barn lot and put him with the other cattle. He was not hurt. From then on I always put a cotter pin in the hitch pin and had no more accidents like that.

We still had our herd of milk cows and our chickens. The cream and eggs that we had for sale would buy the groceries and the farm had a good pasture for the livestock. It also had a canyon that forked as it went across the pasture. As long as I could remember I had wanted to live on a farm that had a creek on it. At last my childhood dream had come true. Each of the canyons had a small creek in them and they flowed together a short distance south of our house. When I was not working in the fields I spent most of my time exploring the creeks, hunting and swimming. Even with all the bad luck that year, it still had its times of pleasure that stick in my memory. Our crop was almost a failure as the frost came too early and the cotton was just blooming and made no cotton. The corn had a lot of damage to the ears but still enough grain to feed the cows, horses and pigs. We harvested and sold fifty-seven dollars worth of broom corn and that was all the cash we got from that years work. Dad sold enough of the surplus livestock to pay the three hundred dollar note for the rent.

Bill the Dog

During the summer that year the only dog we had was Bingo. Buddy and Lena had been living at Seminole while Buddy worked in the oil fields there. His job had played out and Lena was sick. The Doctor said she had pellagra. That is a disease brought on by malnutrition and lack of vitamins. They had decided to come back to the Hydro or Weatherford area and try farming again. Buddy had a female bulldog and one of her pups. The female was not of the English Bulldog breed. She looked more like a Boxer. The pup looked more like the English Bull but not quite as ugly. Buddy had cropped his ears and tail but the ears were cut straight across and hardly long enough to cover the inner ears. He told us we could have the pup if we wanted him. So we named him Bill and I started taking him and Bingo to the creeks to hunt.

Bill, as he grew up, really enjoyed hunting. When he was small he first discovered terrapins which frustrated him because he could not get them out of the shell so he would bark *treed* until we would tell him to come on. From that he went to trying to catch the frogs along the creek. When they jumped into the deep water he would go after them and try to trail them in the water. He would come out snorting the water out of his nose and slinging his head to get the water out of his ears. He was not afraid of the water like Bingo was and he was developing into a natural born hunter. He was in *Dog Heaven* when hunting along the creek. He soon discovered the scent of muskrats but never learned how they could get away. He also learned about squirrels in the trees along the creeks.

One time I had the two dogs with me at the back side of the pasture at the fence that divided our farm from the neighbor to the south. Where the fence came down the bank of the creek a gully had started to form and someone had put a pile of brush in it to stop the washing of the soil. Bill went into the pile of brush from the low side. As he worked his way in he started to get excited and when he found too much brush in his way he started barking and tearing at the brush. I went around to the upper side and started poking into the brush with a willow pole I was carrying. Bill almost went berserk when he thought I was helping him. As I prodded the brush he lunged in as far as he could go. As I gave the pole another push Bill gave an angry bark that had something of a yelp mixed with it. He was not yet a full-grown dog. He backed out of the brush snarling and there was a big skunk hanging onto his upper lip. By that time I had already smelled the skunk and knew what he had. Bingo was there to and he was as excited as Bill. When Bill was clear of the brush where he had room he gave the skunk a sling and got loose from him. When the skunk hit the ground both Bingo and Bill were on him. They made short work of the skunk. They had been pretty well sprayed so as soon as the skunk was dead they ran to the creek and rolled in the water then onto the grassy bank and rubbed faces and backs on the grass. They went back to the skunk and picked him up. One would pull one way while the other pulled the other way. They would not come away until the skunk was torn to shreds. This showed something about Bill's nature. If anything hurt him it could expect retaliation. Bill was a gentle dog until he was riled then he tried his best to kill whatever had hurt him.

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Bill developed into a first class hunting dog. In hunting squirrels he not only trailed them, he would cock his head to one side and listen for the rattle of the leaves as they ran along. He never barked on the trail. All the sound he made on the trail was his snorts as he blew his nose to get a better scent. When he barked you could be sure he had something up a tree or in a hole. In the several years I hunted with him I never saw him fooled about a tree more than two of three times. When he would find the scent of a muskrat along the creek he would dive into the water and try to trail under the water. He would come up snorting to blow the water out of his nose and shaking his head to get it out of his ears. They were cropped so short he could not close them to keep the water out. I don't believe I ever saw a dog that enjoyed hunting more than Bill did.

Gene Comes for a Visit

Down behind the barn on the bank of the creek I found a fair sized spring by the side of the creek. I dug a hole into the spring and sank a nail-keg with a hole about three inches from the top and tamped the sand in around the keg. We put the cream that we wanted to churn for butter into a fruit jar and kept it in the cold water of the spring. This made the butter much better during the hot summer months. I had a lid to cover the keg and laid a rock on it to hold the lid down. We lost only one jar of cream when a sudden shower caused the creek to overflow the spring before anyone thought of going for the cream. The lid washed off and the jar of cream disappeared down the creek.

While we lived there Owen and Hattie were expecting their second child so they brought Eugene, a little less than three years old, to stay with us while that event took place. The first time we went to town and took him along we started down the hill toward home he started jumping up and down on the seat between me and Mom and said, "Oh Boy, I smell peaches. I can smell the fuzz on them." I don't recall if we had any ripe peaches at the time but something about the scent of the farm and the trees tickled his imagination I suppose. We had a large sow in a pen by the barn and I would go up to the cornfield and get an armful of green corn with the roasting ears on it and feed it to the sow. She always showed her appreciation with some loud grunts. Eugene liked to tag along. He was about half scared of the sow and nervous but he got a thrill out of his fear. Eugene got the word sow and cow mixed up with something else and when the old sow came up to the fence with her loud grunts Gene started jumping up and down and said, "There's that damned old sour cow again, damn ole humna bit." His talk was not too plain but I knew what he thought he was saying. He was a rather lively little boy and somewhat excitable. One afternoon Mom was sitting on the door step shelling green peas for supper. Gene was watching and the chickens were near to catch any peas that Mom dropped. Gene tried to beat the chicken to the pea that was rolling on the step but the chicken won. Gene's comment was, "Damn that chicken. Hot damn that old White Chicken." I don't know where he got that vocabulary but surely not from his uncles.

One day when I came in from the field and was hot and dirty I decided to go to the creek for a bath. That was much easier than using the wash tub. I took Gene, a towel and a bar of soap and went down the creek, across the road, where there was a rock bottom to the creek. The water in the pool went to a depth of my waist at the deepest part. I took off Gene's clothes then mine and waded out to a depth that came up to Gene's crotch and told him he could stay there while I went to the deeper part to bathe. After I had rubbed on some soap I heard a splash from Gene's direction. When I looked around all I could see of Gene were his buttocks sticking out of the water. He was still on his feet but in looking into the moving water he had become dizzy and kept leaning over until his head was under the water. I ran and picked him up and held him face downward while he snorted and coughed out the water. I said, "Hey, guy, what are you trying to do?" Between coughs he said, "I got 'trangled.'" But he never cried. He went back home after his new brother, Warren Dean, was born.

Sand Plums and Ring-Tail Hawks

One rainy day in early summer Dad wanted me to go to the woods on the place to the north of us to cut some small oak trees for fence posts. After a short while my shirt and overall were wet and sticking to my body until it was hard to swing the ax. Since no one lived on the farm and there was not much chance of anyone coming along I took off all my clothing except my shoes and finished up the post job.

That year about the middle of July the sand plums were ripe. There was a good crop of them that year. Some were full of worms. There is a moth that lays its eggs in the bloom and the worm develops about the time the fruit gets ripe. While I was prowling one of the hills a little way from the canyon I found a plum thicket that was loaded with

nice big plums and not a worm to be found. I suppose the wind had kept the moths from scenting the blooms and they had not found the thicket. We took our buckets and the washtub and of course Bill, the dog went along. He was as busy as we were but all he picked was what he wanted to eat. I noted that he stayed away from one bush that was loaded with ripe fruit. I eased up to get a closer look and saw he left it alone. In the middle of the bush was a nest of yellow wasps. It was about as big as a large saucer and had hundreds of wasps on it. I agreed with Bill's judgment and did not try to get the plums.

Along the creek there was another kind or plum. It grew to be small tree and the fruit did not get ripe until very late summer or early fall. It was very dark colored and not particularly good to eat fresh, but it made a very delicious jelly almost as purple as that made from concord grapes.

Up the east fork of the creek a pair of Ring-Tailed Hawks made a nest in a tall cottonwood tree. One day Dad saw one of them catch one of our chickens. As a rule the ring-tails do not bother chickens very often. Dad decided he would eliminate the hawks to protect our chickens. He took the shot gun and went along the rim of the canyon to the tree. That put him where he could see the bird on the nest. He shot the bird and thought that would break up the family of hawks. The next day when he passed by the tree he noted there was another bird on the nest. The male bird seemed to have assumed the duty of setting on the nest. Dad took the gun again and shot that bird. When the bird fell from the nest Dad could see that there were two young birds in the nest when they raised their heads. He felt badly about the young birds left in the nest but there was nothing he could do about it. The next day when he came by the tree there was a third grown hawk on the nest. He said, "If they are that determined to raise their young, I won't bother them again".

One time we were exploring the west fork after we had had some high water from a rain. The water had washed away some soil at a bend in the creek. It had uncovered a strip of blue clay. It was very fine grained and not like any I had ever seen in this part of the country. It seemed to have good modeling qualities. I took some of it and worked with it and the results looked good but as it dried it started cracking and eventually fell apart. I did not pursue that project any farther. However, in looking farther at the clay bank we found what appeared to be a chunk of wood about four and a half inches in diameter and twenty inches long. That seemed to be an odd place for drift wood. We took it to the water in the creek and washed the mud off so we could get a good look at it. In the center at one end there was a cone shaped hole about four inches deep. We had never seen a hole like that in any tree. I took my knife and made a cut along one edge and it was a pinkish white color and showed a kind of grain like wood but much finer and more regular. It finally dawned on me that this was a piece of ivory and not wood. We took it to the house and I made measurements of it and found that if the taper continued evenly until it reached a point the tusk from which the piece came would have been about nine feet long. We kept it until the next time we went to town. We planned to show it to the editor of the Hydro Review. After we had driven about a mile and a half on the rough road I stopped to see how my *Ivory* was faring and it was falling apart. I took it out of the back of the car and laid it by a post in the fence to be picked up on the return trip. After a week or so of drying out it gradually turned to dust and very small particles. I have often wished that I could have turned it over to someone interested in such things who would have known how to preserve it. I am convinced that it was a tusk of a Mastodon.

We some times found pieces of huge bones and large teeth, in the sand pits around here when we were getting sand for concrete work. I have seen a molar tooth that was two inches wide by three inches long. One man I had talked to about things we found in the pits had found a turtle shell that was three feet wide. Like the tusk I had found, it crumbled to dust when it dried out. These canyons had lots of bones of a later age. There were many buffalo skulls along the creeks. Flood waters of the last few years have either washed them away or covered them with silt. They are a rare thing to see now. There has been a lot of history recorded in the clay banks and the sand pits.

When the time came for school to begin in September Virginia and I went to the Hydro High school to enroll. I was a senior and Virginia as a freshman. Hugh had dropped out of school when we moved away from the Hopewell District. On the Wednesday before Thanksgiving when we got home from school Tom Deal was visiting with Hugh. Tom was about my age and the son of our neighbors across the canyon to the west. They had been prowling in the canyon down north of our place. That was a farm on which no one lived at that time. They had found a gallon of wild grape wine hidden in the canyon. We suspected that it belonged to Tom's older brother. We were sure Tom's dad would not have permitted anyone to have the wine on his place with his knowledge. Whoever made it knew

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what they were doing as it was very good. I was not feeling very well I had a headache and felt like I had a fever but I had a few glasses of the wine. It was delicious and I felt better for the dizziness from the wine. We played catch with a base ball for a while then went into the kitchen. I sat down for a while and when I stood up to go into the front room I could see two doors about a foot apart where I knew there was only one. I sat back down and waited a while until the two doors merged into one. That is the only time I ever saw double.

The next morning Tom came over and wanted to go down the creek to see if we could find some wild ducks. We took our old twelve gauges and slipped from one bend to the next until we had gone a little over a quarter mile. Tom had the gun and was in the lead. He stopped suddenly and I bumped into him. He gave me the quiet sign and eased around a cedar tree and raised the gun and fired. He took a *pot-shot* at a bunch of mallards on a pool in the creek. There were three dead ducks and one cripple. I ran and caught the cripple and killed it then gathered up the three on the water. We went on down around the next bend and a drake flew up very close ahead. Tom brought the gun up fast and fired. The shot almost tore a wing off that bird. We decided to go back home with the five birds. I was feeling bad and felt feverish. Those birds surely felt heavy by the time I got back to the house. I never ate any of the ducks when Mom cooked them. I was too sick. In fact, I never knew when Friday came or left. I had such a high fever that day and night was a complete blank for me. However, by Monday I was able to go back to school. After a while my palms and the soles of my feet started peeling. All the skin came off my hands and feet. We later decided that I had a round of scarlet fever but at the time no one realized how sick I had been.

The Family Moves Off the Farm

In December of that year Dad decided to move to Hydro. He figured we could do as well working for wages as we had done by farming. He found a house we could trade for and pay for it with some of our cows. While he was making the trade he found that he could also trade for a small house on adjoining lots for some more cows if he would assume the rest of the payments due on the little house. The payment was only ten dollars per month. He traded for both places. And on December twenty seventh we moved to town. During the week off from school for Christmas I helped unload two carloads of coal for the school. We had to scoop it onto wagons then scoop it into the basement of the school house. That was one of the worst things I ever tried to scoop but it provided me with some money and I could always use money.

The man who had sold the small house continued to rent it and paid Dad seven and a half dollars every month. Dad added two dollars and a half to it and paid it out. In the meantime the man had sold the cattle and spent the money. One day he said ruefully, "I'm just a damn fool; I could have paid this house out by now."

One other, more or less, memorable event took place in the spring of 1928. I cannot find any recording of it in any of my reference materials so I suppose it was not really memorable. As I recall the event, it was promoted by a man named Pyle. It was a foot race across the United States from the west coast to New York City. It was run in laps of about thirty miles per day and records of time kept to determine who made the run in the least amount of time. It seems odd to me that there is no mention of it in the sports records, which I have, but for some reason it did not win the fame the promoter had hoped for.

The morning that the runners were due to come by Hydro, Oklahoma on Highway 66 our school was dismissed so all the students who wanted to see the race could go out to the highway and watch the runners go by. About ten o'clock in the morning the first ones came by. They were jogging along mostly. Occasionally there would be one who was sprinting. I suppose he had learned that others had taken the lead and he was trying to get back in the race. Later in the day there were a few stragglers, some limping and just walking at a normal walking pace. By the time they had reached Oklahoma some had already dropped out of the race. Some of them surely looked bedraggled as they went by here.

As I recall the winner was to receive a prize of ten thousand dollars. The winner was an Oklahoman by the name of Andy Payne¹³. I do not recall what became of Andy Payne but for several years the name Payne was a big help in

¹³ Andy Payne, an Oklahoma Cherokee, was twenty years old when he decided to enter the 1928 Trans-Continental Foot Race. When asked why Andy said "I just thought I could do it". Andy finished in first place after the 84-day ordeal. His prize was \$25,000. Andy was elected to be Clerk to the Oklahoma State Supreme Court in 1934 and held that post until he retired in 1971. Andy Payne passed away in 1977, leaving a sizeable estate.

Didaw's Book

getting elected to office in Oklahoma. One fellow even went so far as having his name legally changed to Andy Payne. He won the office he was seeking and was active in politics for many years. The "magic" of names works.

Since Will Rogers became so well known there have been few Rogers or Rodgers who have lost an election in which they ran. When voters base their choice of officials on such *sound reasoning* it seems remarkable that our system of government functions as well as it does. And, believe it or not, after two hundred years of experience the voters still fall for the same old *lines*.



Hydro High School, class of 1928

Visiting Edna in El Reno

School was over for me in May of 1928, as I never quite made up my mind to go to college. Soon after school closed in May I went to El Reno as Edna and Roy wanted a back porch and closet added to their house. While I was doing this work Roy, brought out two quart vinegar bottles of wine which he had made from wild grapes we had picked before we moved from the old home near Eakly. He had made the wine using a process by which the air was kept from the fermenting grapes. He let the grapes ferment in a stone crock which had a sealed cover on it and the gas from the mixture was permitted to escape through a rubber hose with the end submerged in water. I don't know if this method was superior to the open air method or not but will say that I never tasted better wine. In those days we did not have refrigerators so Roy put the two bottles in the Ice Box, which was on the back porch. Any time we wanted a sip of the wine we helped ourselves. One day at lunch time Roy noted that the second bottle had been opened and sampled. As he knew he had not opened it he asked why we had started on the second bottle. This was the first time Edna and I knew of that so we told him neither of us had done it. We came to the conclusion that the iceman had to be the culprit so we took measures to see that he could not get any more of it. The time and labor of producing a fine wine like that was too much to have it wasted on an iceman.

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While I was working there I was *discovered* by a neighbor's daughter. I was almost nineteen-years-old and she was thirteen. I could tell that she wanted to attract my attention, but being more grown-up myself made her attitude seem a little silly to me. However, I remembered how I had felt about a few older girls when I was that age. She had a pet cat which she was very fond of and if she had known what I did to her cat, my popularity would have dropped. Edna had a bag of pecans on the back porch and every now and then a squirrel that lived in the trees around their home, would come and get a pecan and run back to the trees to eat it. One day while I was reading by the window I saw the squirrel run up the tree between the houses. When he started to shell the pecan he dropped it to the ground. His attention was completely occupied with getting the pecan and he did not notice the cat sneaking up on him. I slipped out the door and picked up a rock. I had pitched baseball at school and had good control of my throwing arm. As the cat crouched for the spring I threw the rock! It caught the cat in the middle and doubled her up! She let out a squall and ran around the corner of the house. The commotion scared the squirrel so badly that he forgot the pecan and took off through the tree branches. I'm sure my new found *girlfriend* would have been disillusioned with me if she had known what I had done to her cat.

A day before I was ready to go home a man who lived across the street asked me to build a woodshed and a storage room for him. He wanted me to contract the job. He was very cautious and seemed to be afraid he might be cheated. I was not used to dealing with people who felt that way. I was sure I could make wages by doing the work for ten dollars and had decided on that figure if he insisted on a fixed price. I finally convinced him that I could do it at a reasonable price by an hourly wage. One dollar per hour was a fair price for that kind of work, so we agreed on the job. I finished it in eight and one half hours so it cost him eight and one half dollars. As I drove the last nail a piece of concrete from the lumber which had been used to form concrete struck me in the eye. I had trouble with my eye for several days. I suppose the rough concrete had cut the surface of my eyeball.

A Job in Hydro

I returned to Hydro the next day and soon heard there was a chance of a job at a local garage in Hydro. I went to see the owner of the garage. He said that he had more work than he could do and would like to have some help. He said he would furnish all the tools and shop equipment and give me half of all the work that I did. That seemed fair so I reported for work the next morning. My very first job was removing and replacing the broken bolts, which had held the flywheel onto the crankshaft of a Nash automobile. I drilled holes in the broken bolts and used an *Easy-Out* to remove the broken pieces and put it back together that day without any trouble.

The next day when I lay down on the creeper to go under another car I found a lot of sore spots caused from lying on the creeper the previous day. However like all soreness from something new the sore spots became accustomed to the pressure and the third day was not so bad. It was a month or more before I learned to control my hands so I did not have so many skinned knuckles. The owner of the garage, Fred Vandenberg, was one of the best mechanics I have ever known. I learned a great deal from working with him. We never gave up on a job until we completed it and we did not install any unnecessary parts Fred bought the first reborning machine to be used in Hydro. He also bought a valve grinding and re-seating machine. This was the beginning of modern overhauling and restoring engines.

One of the oldest cars I worked on was a four cylinder Buick.. It was very much like the Chevrolet four cylinders from the twenties. In fact we used a Chevrolet head gasket on the engine. I removed the head and removed the valves. I ground them and reseated them. The fee for this type of work was \$2.50 of which I would receive \$1.25. This job usually took about one hour, so that was pretty good pay in those days. However I broke off seven head bolts as I tried to tighten the blots. I worked on this valve job from 1 p.m. until seven thirty p.m. For six and one half hours I received \$1.50 wages. We never slighted on a job regardless of how long it took. By charging a flat rate we could normally make pretty good wages. Once in a while we got a *stinker!* For example we had to replace a universal joint on a Chevrolet where someone had cross-threaded a bolt. The working space was very close which made it very difficult to repair. In spite of a few jobs that didn't go so well I enjoyed the work and in retrospect, perhaps I should have stayed in that line of work. However, how does one ever know what would have been best? Looking backward or forward, it is hard to decide if we made the right choices in life.

In the garage where I worked was a battered touring car. It had been *rolled* and the body was a mess. I had never seen one like it before. It was a *Stevens Straight Eight* engine. Fred told me that he had lost control while driving and

had rolled it. He said he had to take his leg off to get out of the car. That wasn't as bad as it sounds as Fred had an artificial leg.

The engine in the wrecked Stevens car was in good condition, so Fred decided to put it in a Buick Roadster, which he was driving. After completing the engine installation a fellow offer to swap Fred a Buick four cylinder and give him three hundred dollars to boot. Fred made the trade for the Buick, which had a good body, but needed to be overhauled. We overhauled it and gave it a two-tone paint job. It was a sporty looking little roadster and it caught the eye of two young men, who were brothers and owned a 1927 Chevrolet touring car. It was almost like new. They swapped it even for the old Buick Roadster. They were happy and Fred had a nearly new car and the three hundred dollars from his first trade. Car dealing, like horse trading can be a profitable occupation.

Get Your Motor Running, Head Out on the Highway

Another thing of interest to me, in the shop was the parts of a motorcycle engine. It appeared to be complete except for one piston. Ever since I had stopped looking at Sears& Roebucks catalog and wanting a tricycle I had hoped to own a motorcycle.

When I was about thirteen I answered an add of Harley-Davidson and found that a single cylinder bike sold for about three hundred and fifty dollars.[A bigger twin cylinder bike was about seven hundred dollars]. That was the *Impossible Dream* for a kid earning four dollars per month as a school janitor. However, the desire never died.

Fred told me that the engine belonged to a neighbor of his who had the rest of the cycle out in the country about eleven miles from town. He said he was sure the owner would sell the cycle. A few days later the fellow came into the shop, and said that he had heard that I was interested in buying the motorcycle. He said that he would take seventy dollars for it. I replied, "I have a ten dollar bill in my pocket that I'll give for it." I was not lying; I had about ten of them in my pocket! He said, "Well, I might take sixty for it." I stuck to my first offer of ten dollars. After much haggling he finally agreed to take the ten dollars. I said "It's a deal if you will bring the rest of the parts in to me." With that Fred said "If that's all that's holding up the deal, I'll haul the frame for you." I paid the man and that week end Fred hauled in the frame and wheels. I sent an order to the Indian Motorcycle Co. for the broken piston. When I received the piston I begin to assemble the fulfillment of my dream.

When I had the engine assembled I found an article in one of the shop books that detailed how to time the engine by matching the timing marks on the gears. I had not noticed the marks before and I discovered that some of the marks did not show due to the fact that the gears could be installed with either side showing. When I set up the gears with the marks showing each one was exactly as it was marked. The lessons that Fred had taught me on how to time an engine were correct.

After a few days of spare time, work on the Indian bike I had it ready to start the engine for the first time. I turned the spark control to what appeared to be the retarded position and set the choke. Nothing happened on the first kick of the starter but on the second kick it fired and lifted me about tree feet in the air, when it backfired. I reset the cable control to retard it farther. This time the results were the same. I decided to have a look inside the magneto and discovered that there were gears inside the magneto that reversed the direction and I had been advancing the spark instead of retarding it. Luckily for me I did not receive a broken leg when it back-fired as a friend of mine had done when he tried to start one with the spark set too fast.

After a little adjusting on the carburetor the engine ran fine, so I was ready to ride. I had never ridden a bicycle except to coast down a hill by R.G. William's place down in the Hopewell neighborhood. I wheeled it out of the shop, as I wanted plenty of room for my first ride. It was rather heavy and tricky to lead until I learned by the feel when it was leaning a bit too far. I got it out into the street and headed down hill. I cranked it and straddled it and let out the clutch. It took off smoothly and I relaxed slightly. I went about two blocks before it let me know who was boss. Before I knew what was happening or why it turned to the right and headed straight for the porch of Russell's Hotel. The porch was about six feet above the street and supported by posts. I went between the posts and collided with the bank of earth under the porch! I was still in low gear and not going fast enough to do any damage. The engine conked out and I picked myself and the cycle up and went back into the street. Another two blocks down the hill I came to the corner where I had to turn east to go home. There was a wood culvert at the corner and as usual, the earth had worn away from the culvert forming a chug-hole. When the front wheel of the bike hit the hole my foot

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slipped off of the floorboard and I received a painful bruise to part of my anatomy that about took my breath away. When this happed I forgot to steer the bike and ended up against the fence on the south side of the road. I still didn't have any serious trouble. I rode the remaining block to our yard and walked back to the shop and got my car. I let the cycle set in the yard until the week end when I would have time to break it to ride!

The week end came in with a cold spell. All Saturday night the sleet came down. Sunday morning there was coat of ice on the ground. I was so anxious to learn to ride the Indian bike that I took it into the street and cranked it up regardless of the slippery condition of the road. I took off toward the road out of town. I was still riding it in low gear and made it around the curve and over the bridge out of town without any difficulty. After I crossed the bridge and came to a straight portion of the road, I decided to shift into high gear. Everything went well until I let the clutch out and shifted into high. That gave the rear wheel a slight jerk and it started sideways on the ice and I landed on my hands and knees and slid about fifty feet in that position! After I came to a stop I got back onto my feet and went back and held down until the engine stopped roaring. I cranked it again after setting it on the wheels again. This time I only shifted into second gear and made it to Highway 66, without any more spills. When I hit the highway the road was smooth so I shifted into high gear again. I did it more gently this time and the cycle stayed upright. I found it easier to handle at the higher speed. I rode about two miles and crossed a bridge and rode up a hill that went to Frank Branson's farm. He had several dogs some of which were hounds. They became very excited by the motorcycle and came out after me. They were trying to grab my leg and I was trying to kick them. This slightly upset my balance and the cycle began to waver back and forth. By this time I had become more familiar with the feel of it and managed to keep it upright until the dogs gave up. I was learning how to ride. I decided to turn around and head for home. I went back past the Branson's fast enough that the dogs couldn't catch me. When I came to the bridge I slowed down for the rough floor. When I started up the hill at the low speed the rear wheel lost traction. I got off and tried to *handlebar* it, but found this impossible. I pushed the cycle into the highway ditch and discovered that the cycle would break through the ice and get traction. Highway 66 was not paved at this time; it was only graded and graveled lightly. I cranked the engine and took off up the ditch. This was not the last time that me and the Indian cycle were in the ditch!

Several years later I rode other motorcycles and became aware that the one I had was very hard to handle. Just like my first Model T Ford. After learning on those first two machines the ones that followed were easy to handle. In checking into the history of my Indian cycle I found that two young men were riding it and met a Model T Ford head on. The Ford had sustained quite a bit of damage and one of the two men was unconscious for some time. I suppose the front wheel alignment of the bike was disturbed as I had to keep firm control of the handlebars or the thing would go into a spin. I rode a small Harley-Davidson later and could turn loose of the handlebars and steer it by holding onto the gas tank and leaning. That could not be done with mine.

One winter day I rode the bike to work. By nine o'clock it was snowing very hard. Big *goose feather* flakes fell until nearly noon. My Ford car was at home. I took the cycle out of the shop. The wet, loose snow came up almost to the hubs of the wheels. I cranked up and straddled the bike. When I let out the clutch the rear wheel started going sideways and the front wheel did not move. I walked home for lunch and drove the car back. I never tried to ride the bike in the snow again.

Another very cold day I started to work on the bike. The ground was frozen solid and I had a storage battery, which needed recharging. I had used it on a radio that I had built. I tied it on a luggage rack, which I had built over the rear wheel. This changed the gravity on the bike considerably. When I came to a sharp rut in the frozen road the bike *sidestepped* and before I could do anything about it the cycle came down on my left leg. The air intake of the carburetor had a hood over it and this bored into the calf of my leg against the frozen ground. It hurt so much that for a while I thought my leg was broken. I was only a short distance from home and managed to push the bike back to the house. I still could not stand any weight on the left leg so I drove the car to work that day. I worked that day standing on one leg.

When Christmas came that year I rode out to see my friend Herman Spor. We had become friends during our last year of school. We often hunted, fished, and went swimming together. He lived about four miles out in the country. That morning we decided to go for a ride on my motorcycle as we often did. We came back to town and rode up toward the school. As we approached the corner going east out of town some fellows in a Chevrolet sedan model

1927 pulled alongside. They gave me the impression that they wanted to race, so I goosed the Indian and left them in a cloud of dust. As we topped the hill east of Strange's house there was a sudden loud clatter in the engine. I stepped on the clutch and the engine stopped with a *thunk*. We had pretty good speed and coasted about another quarter mile before we came to a stop. The engine was locked up so there was nothing to do but push it home. Luckily it was only about a mile and a quarter home. When I later tore the engine down it was another broken piston. I sent another order for a new piston and used the Old Ford Roadster until I repaired the bike again.

In the spring when the weather was pleasant I rode the bike except when it rained and the road became a river of mud. The Indian bike had a generator and a box for a battery so it would have lights. I found that Sears & Roebuck had batteries for that model bike so I ordered one. The day the battery arrived was Saturday. I installed the battery into the box and found the generator was working properly. I put a new bulb in all the lights and they worked fine. I ask Herman to go to El Reno and stay with Roy and Edna overnight. I filled the tank with gas and picked up Herman and set out for El Reno. We crossed the Canadian River at Bridgeport on the old suspension bridge and paid fifty cents toll. The fee for cars was one dollar. All along Highway 66 there were work projects and lots of detours and loose sand. Very often, when I would see a bunch of loose sand I would tense up and lose control and spill us onto the road. After it got dark where I could not see the hazards we seldom lost control of the bike. When it became dark and I needed the lights I found the headlight to be like a spotlight due to an earlier accident that damaged the headlight. The headlight was too high and only good for *possum-hunting*. We were feeling our way along the road when some fellows in car ask if they could help us. They offered to drive behind us and let us see by their lights. We thanked them and made good time until we came to a detour to Fort Reno. We made a wrong turn and lost our escort. We got back on the road, located our escorts and made it to El Reno. We never learned who the Good Samaritans were. However in this day and time I would suspect their motives, and this attitude is more the voice of experience than cynicism of old age.

On our return trip to Hydro, we spilled two or three times, overheated, and had our share of thrills. One fellow was standing by the right side of his car. When he saw us approaching he ran around to the other side of the car, I thought he might throw something at us, but as it turned out he was throwing a pint bottle of whiskey away. He thought we were cops riding a motorcycle so he was more scared than we were. With Prohibition in effect he did not want to be found *in possession*. I'll bet he went hunting in the field after we were gone.

One spring day while I was out at Herman's place a big rain cloud boiled up out of the west. After a heavy rain I started home. The mile of country road was not too bad. After I got to the highway it was not so good. The traffic had churned the road into a loblolly of mud about three inches deep. After fighting that for about a mile, I decided to get on the grass along the side of the road.

This was some improvement until I came to a ditch that drained the roadbed. It was washed out too deep to cross, so I attempted to get back on the road. I put the bike in low gear and started back across the barrow ditch, which did not appear to be very deep at this point. When the front wheel left the bank instead of staying on top of the mud in the ditch it plunged out of sight into the silt and the only thing showing was the rear fender. When it suddenly pitched forward it took me along with it. I got to my feet, set the bike upright and was wondering what to do. A man in a car offered to pull the bike, however neither of us had a rope. I lifted the front back onto the bank, and then I strained and got the back wheel on the bank. I kicked dirt into the ditch and covered it with grass and big weeds until I felt it would hold the bike. I cranked it up and it had a muffled sound until the exhaust blew the thin mud out of the muffler. I put it in low gear and gunned the engine. When I let the clutch out the rear wheel was clawing the ground. It gained speed so it crossed the pile of weeds without sinking. The last mile into town was not so bad as there had been little traffic and the sand was firm. This is only a sketch of the trials and tribulations of bike riding but memories of that Old Indian Bike still give me pleasure.

You Bought A Chevrolet?

When I started working at the garage I still owned the 1922 Ford Roadster, which I had driven to school my last year. I had tuned it up and ground the valves at the shop so it ran very well. Ezra Pugh, who was married to Buddy Robertson's sister, had bought a Chevrolet touring car from some boys from Pennsylvania who had gotten this far on their way to California and went broke. It was a 1922 model with side glasses added to enclose it like a sedan. These

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were called *Kozy-Klosures*. You might have to do a lot of research to find out more about these things. The glasses cost about eighty or ninety dollars. They made the touring car almost like a sedan in cold weather.

Ezra hit me up to trade and I made an even trade, my Ford for his Chevrolet. He did not have a legal Oklahoma title for the car, just a bill of sale. It ran good as a new one. I traded for it without a title. It had a leather-cone clutch and when you let it out the car jump about two feet. There was just no way to keep the clutch from *grabbing*. After some practice and getting the feel of the car, I often went from low to high simply by feeling the pressure go off the gears and slipping it to neutral and waiting for the gears and engine speed to match. I never stripped the gears or broke an axle.

Winter slipped into spring and it was time to buy a license for the car and I did not have the proper papers to get a title. I solved that problem by looking around for a junked Chevrolet with a title. I found a 1923 Tudor out in the country. What was left of one, that is. It had belonged to an Indian and they were famous for the abuse they put on their cars. This one did not have the head on the engine and the top of the body was about rotted off. I bought it for twenty dollars and hauled it to the shop. After looking it over I decided to take some parts from the one I had and rebuild the 1923. It was called the *Superior* Model. I have my doubts that it lived up to that name. It also had the leather-cone clutch and the characteristics of a frog. I took a set of oversized pistons, which we had removed from a later model Chevrolet while overhauling it. I honed out the cylinders in my car until they would fit and put in new rings and that old car came alive again.

Soon after I finished the work on the reclaimed Chevrolet, Dad saw that three lots to the north of our house were advertised for sale because the taxes had not been paid. He thought that they would be a good addition to our place. I took off from work and we went to the county seat in Anadarko, where the auction of tax delinquent property would be sold to the highest bidder. Dad got a Tax Deed to the lots for the back taxes. That was only a few dollars.

The drive of fifty miles down through the country roads and to take care of the business transactions and the return trip home took the better part of that day. The Chevrolet performed very well with one exception. On the way home I noted that the generator was not working. I opened it up and jiggled the brushes and using the pliers while the engine was running I connected the battery wire directly to the generator connection. That excited it to start working and I never had any more trouble with it.

Adventures with Herman Spor

A few weeks later I decided to make the car lighter by doing away with the Tudor body. I stripped everything from the running boards and the bucket seats. Then I made a flat bed of boards to the back of the frame. That made it much lighter and more fun to drive. Herman was with me at the shop on a Sunday morning when we finished the work except for bolting down the seats. We planned to do this as soon as we got home where I had the materials to bolt the seats in place. We drove out the back door of the shop and down the alley and turned into the street just north of the Baptist Church. As I made the left turn into the street I made a remark to Herman and when he did not answer me I looked back and saw him walking and carrying the seat. When I turned I had a little too much speed and had rolled him and the seat out of the car! He was grinning so I knew that he was not hurt.

One Saturday night Herman was in town and we went to the movie. After the show I took him home. There was a big black bank of clouds coming up in the southwest so I did not waste any time getting started home. When I was about two miles on the way home the wheels of the car stopped turning. The engine was running but the car would not move. I thought it was a broken axle so I pushed it to the side of the road, and started walking home. Before I reached home a few big drops of rain started to come down, however I reached home before getting too wet. The next morning I went back after the car and after looking it over I found that the trouble was the loss of six bolts that held the clutch and transmission shaft together. I walked back on the road and after searching a while found two of the bolts. I screwed them into opposite holes and drove the car home. Someone had worked on it and had not laced the retaining wire through the bolt holes. Little oversights like that can cause a lot trouble. Like the differential on my first old Model T that went out because someone failed to lace the bolts.

One spring day when we had been having a lot of rain Herman and I were wearing rubber boots. We were prowling around the Ghost Mound area. We drove over to the mound and decided to climb it. The story that went around was that it could be climbed from only one spot on the north side. Of course that would not be true for anyone equipped

for mountain climbing. Anyway, that was a challenge for us. We went around to the southwest side of the outcropping rocks near the top. There we found a crevice in the rock. It was just wide enough that we could place our feet against one side and with our shoulders on the other side we could inch our way upward. We found two places that were almost too wide to maintain the pressure so our feet would not slip. We finally scrambled out of the crevice onto the top. Now that I have had time to think about that stunt I can see how foolish it was to risk a bad fall just for the sake of learning if it could be done.

During the spring and summer of 1929 we often loaded the old stripped down car and went to the *swimming hole* on the creek southwest of where Herman lived. This was the same hole I swam in when we lived on the last farm we rented. It was formed by water pouring over a sand rock ledge and in places it was from six to eight feet deep. The water came from a spring and was very clear. It was a fine natural pool. I was a quarter mile from Herman's house, and when I wanted to go swimming, I would drive to the road across the canyon from Herman's home. By clasping my hands together to form a hollow and blowing between my thumbs I could produce a whistle that Herman could hear. He would answer the same way and soon I would see him heading for the swimming hole. Incidentally, I learned to make that whistle while in the Agriculture Class. For as long as I could remember, I had wanted to learn to whistle. Owen could do it but up until that time in class I had not been able to make the sound. While Mr. Sherman was talking to the class I intertwined my fingers, formed a cavity in the palms of my hands and blew between my thumbs. There was a very loud, mournful whistle like I had tried for years to do. It was quite embarrassing at that time, but I discovered how it was done!

At the Old Swimmin' Hole

Getting back to the swimming story. When I said we, that meant Hugh, Virginia and sometimes Mom went along also. Some of the neighbor kids also went at times. Whoever happened to be there when we decided to go swimming went along. One of the neighbors was the Curnutt family. They had moved into a house about a block southeast of us. Virginia had become friends with the two girls while at school. Nellie, the older sister of the two was a little older than Virginia and Ester was a little younger than Virginia. The Curnutts were not exactly strangers to us. They had lived in the Ghost Mound School District before moving to Hydro. Dad knew Mr. Curnutt then and their oldest son had married a girl from our neighborhood. Owen had been to the *chivalry* when the boys did the honors for Carl Curnutt. Owen was telling Mom about dunking Carl in the livestock tank with his best clothes on. Mom said, "You should be ashamed, that may be the last good suit that boy ever owns." Owen laughed and said, "Well, I didn't help put him in, I just sang, *Shall We Gather at the River?*"

We had many enjoyable swimming parties that summer and the old car had boys and girls hanging all over it on many trips. On one trip we had a load and Hugh was standing on the running board and holding on to the windshield post. We came to a sudden swerve in the rutty road just as he started to change hands on the post. He was facing backward and the sudden lurch sent him onto the grass by the ruts. He slid several feet on his shoulders with his feet in the air. It was purely an accident but I doubt that he ever stopped thinking that I did it deliberately. When I stopped the car he jumped up and said, "You damn fool, what are you trying to do, kill someone?" Anyway no one was hurt much. We had spent a lot of very happy hours together that summer.

One other incident could have had serious consequences. Virginia had not learned to swim yet but she was getting over her fear of deep water. There was one place where the deep part narrowed down about ten or twelve feet. On the deep side there was a rock bluff with a few cedar roots hanging down to the water. She would shove off from the shallows and glide to the bluff and grab a cedar root. She then would brace her feet against the rock and shove back to the shallows. She was enjoying this very much when all at once she missed the roots and sank into the water. When she came up instead of grabbing the roots again she panicked and screamed. I saw she was in trouble and went to help her. When I got hold of her swim suit she tried to climb over me. I had had a lot of swimming experience and was able to hold her at arms length while swimming to shallow water. It is so easy for a swimming party to turn into tragedy before anyone knows what is happening. She did not give up and learned to swim very well before the summer ended.

1929 to 1936 – The Depression Years

Howard Notices Someone

Nellie and her sister Ester visited Virginia quite often and she visited back with them. One day When Nellie was at our house she spoke to me when I came on the scene. Something in the tone of her voice made me take a second look at her! From then on I decided I that I liked to be with her. For some reason, I decided I should buy a better car. I talked to Fred at the garage about which cars he considered the best to buy as a used car. He named several that he thought to be the better ones including Buick, Chrysler etc. I had over two hundred dollars in my bank account so I started planning to go to Oklahoma City and shop for a used car.

My brother-in-law Buddy Robertson knew his way around in Oklahoma City. His sister, Florence and Ezra Pugh lived in a house just north of Thirty-Ninth Street. That was a cotton field in 1929. Buddy said he would take me down there so I could drive back a car if I found one that I liked.

Buddy had a Chevrolet Coupe. We started to the city in the late afternoon. Before we reached El Reno the oil pressure on his car stopped. It was almost dark and we checked the oil level and Instead of oil on the dip stick we found a frothy- looking grease. It was about as thick as axle grease. All indications were that the water was leaking from the radiator into the crankcase. The Chevrolet four was notorious for cracking the cylinder head if cold water was poured into the overheated engine. All the exhaust came out of the head at one point and the thin casting between the water jacket and the exhaust port sometimes cracked. We had to get the mess out of the engine. We pulled into a wheat field and dropped the oil pan and cleaned out the mess. All this was done with a flashlight, but I had been a shade-tree mechanic before the job at the garage. Buddy carried extra oil so we had enough to make it to El Reno. He checked around the filling stations and found a used cylinder head for three dollars. The man at the station assured him that it was okay. We decided that by adding oil we could make it to Ezra Pugh's house, and work on the car in the daylight. The following day we repaired the car and begin to visit car lots to car shop. After looking at several cars, I found a Chrysler Roadster. It was a beauty, painted maroon with buff colored fenders. It had leather upholstery, A fancy spotlight, windshield wings, good side curtains, and the engine sounded very good. The only thing wrong was the price. The salesman said that the price was three hundred dollars. I told him that was more than I had planned to spend. He said that he would see if the boss would take less. He came back and said his boss would let it go for two-fifty. I told him that I only had two hundred cash. The boss said if you have two hundred we can fix a note for you to pay forty dollars at ten a month. I bought the car and Buddy and I started home the next morning after we had passed El Reno Buddy's cars oil pressure failed again! We had replaced the cracked head with another cracked head. We kept adding oil all the way home, and when we got home I gave Buddy the head off of my Superior Chevrolet and relegated the rest of the old car to the scrap pile. I made a four-wheeled trailer from the chassis and later sold it for twenty dollars. The Chrysler was one of the easiest cars to drive that I had ever had my hands on. It was one of the first cars with four-wheel brakes.

In the later part of the summer of 1929 I begin to drive my new Chrysler Roadster. We continued to go swimming with Nellie, Ester, Virginia, myself and sometimes other neighbor's kids. It was only a few week ends until the weather was turning too cold to swim. Several evenings per week I would take Virginia down to Curnutt's house and pick up Nellie and Ester. Ester and Virginia went along for the ride and I let myself believe that Nellie went because she wanted to be with me as well as to ride in my sporty roadster. We drove around an hour or two in the evenings and on week ends we drove farther and took in the sights.

Along about October there was a revival meeting held in a big tent at the Pentecostal Church. The preachers were both women and they were very effective preachers who made many converts. Nellie, Ester, Virginia and I attended

Didaw's Book

every night. The meeting lasted several weeks and they had some very good spiritual singing and some of the converts became very happy. We were not making fun of them, but we did enjoy watching them!

By the time the revival meetings ended Nellie and I had established a habit of going together. Most of the time, Ester and Virginia went along. I have heard a lot of jokes about younger brother and sisters interfering with a courtship, but I never felt that way and if Nellie had any objections she never mentioned them.

I still rode the motorcycle and went hunting and fishing when Nellie and I had no place to go. My hunting and fishing partner was Herman Spor, who had been my friend from school. Roy Tomlins had ordered a .22 repeating rifle from Montgomery Ward. He soon decided that it was not what he wanted so I purchased the rifle for fourteen dollars. Herman had a single shot .22 and we would take old Bill, *The Old Bull Dog* down in the canyon and hunt rabbits and squirrels. That dog was the best hunter I've ever seen. He would run along the trail and snort dust from his nose but never bark until he knew something was in a hole or tree. He had a great sense of smell and was hard to fool. He would not bother any cats around the house but if he caught one in the woods it's doom was sealed! Herman, old Bill and I had many pleasant hours in the woods.

Nellie and I and our two sisters continued to ride around even though we had some very cold and snowy weather. I had side curtains and a good heater so it was comfortable in the car. When we came home we dropped Virginia first and then Ester at their house, so that we had some privacy for talking without any eavesdroppers. In December we had a very cold spell and Deer Creek froze over solidly. In those days when Deer Creek flowed a much larger stream and seldom froze over. There was a red-headed girl who lived in Dad's little rental house and Hugh was somewhat interested in her. Her name was Gertrude Smart. They would go along with the Curnutt girls, Virginia and me to skate on Deer Creek on Sundays. The creek stayed frozen for six weeks and we skated every week end. We had to take a broom and shovel and clean off the snow one week end before we could skate.

One Christmas Day, Herman and I went out to the Canadian River to the north east of Hydro. We stopped at Herman's farm and picked up Gene Zimmerman to go down to the river to hunt squirrels. I previously became interested in photography again and had ordered an Eastman Hawkeye Brownie camera. That was a 120 size that had bellows and folded so it was easy to carry. I had it in my pocket on this trip. We hunted for a while along the south bank of the river and not finding any squirrels we decided to cross the river and hunt on the north side. The river was about fifty feet wide at that time. It was frozen solid so we had no trouble crossing. The sun was shining and it was a very nice day. We hunted three or four hours and it was past noon so we decided to go home for something to eat.



When we got to the river the ice showed signs of thawing. The top was mushy and some water was trickling around on it. As there were no bridges within fifteen or twenty miles we had to cross there. I decided to go first. I took about a dozen steps when the ice snapped and I dropped into the water about crotch deep. Each time I stepped onto the ice it would hold until I put all my weight on it and then it would drop me into the water. I hurried on across as fast as I could go! I was soaked from the waist down with ice cold water, so the sooner I could get across the better.

Herman and Gene did not waste any time following my path through the ice. When we got out and into the woods we built a big fire and took off all our clothes except our underwear and hung them on the bushes until they were dry. Gene took my camera and took a picture of us drying our pants by the campfire. Being in good physical condition and used to being out in all kinds of weather, we suffered no ill effects.

After dinner we got on the Motorcycle and started northeast of the school house.

This is the location which I mentioned before where we raced some boys in a Chevrolet and broke the piston in the motorcycle engine. We had to push the motorcycle about one mile to Herman's home. In the mean time I had bought a photo developing set at the local drugstore and was finishing my own films and printing the pictures. Often times

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Nellie, Ester, and Virginia would go into the darkroom to see the pictures developed. The pictures were all that developed in the darkroom.

After Christmas the weather turned bad again and we had lots of snow. The east and west roads were mostly blocked by snow drifts. One Sunday evening Nellie decided we should go for a ride, in spite of the bad roads. I don't recall why, but Ester and Virginia stayed home that time. I drove up to the school house, thinking that I would go east along that road. When we arrived at the corner the snow was about three feet deep on the road to the east. It didn't look very deep on the school playground so I decided it would be easier to drive across the playground rather than trying to turn around on the street. As I started across the playground the car started loosing speed. About halfway across it came to a stop! The wheels were spinning and I could neither go forward nor backward. I got out to look the situation over and found that the front bumper was pushing snow until it was as high as the radiator. I was wearing a pair of low cut shoes and my dress clothes. I did not have a shovel so all I could do was put the car in reverse gear with the engine idling and get into the snow drift and push the car to get it started moving. I waded through the waist deep snow and put my back against the car to get it to move away from the snow drift. I ran alongside and got back into the seat. Nellie had never driven a car so I had to get in the car to stop it! We made it back into the ruts and onto the road and for the rest of the evening we traveled streets that had been traveled.

One spring week end after we had had a lot of rain, we took a drive over to Bridgeport by way of Highway 66. At that time it was not paved. It had a light coat of gravel on it and sometimes when the drainage wasn't too good there would be a mud hole. Due to heavy traffic some of the holes would get pretty deep. I went through a bad hole on the way, which was pretty rough. On the way back home I decided too slow down or risk braking a spring. That proved to be a bad decision. When we reached the deepest part of the hole, the mud and water came up onto the running-boards and the car stalled. All it would do was spin the wheels. I had on my best clothes and was stalled in the middle of a mud hole about sixty feet long. Many cars came by and gunned their engines and went around us without offering to help! After a while a Buick roadster came by with three young men who pulled along side and offered to help. The driver said that he had a tow chain in his trunk if I would get it and hitch the cars together that he would pull us out. He backed up until our rear fenders almost touched. I stood on my bumper and got the tow chain out and hooked our bumpers together. The driver raced his engine, and I had my car in reverse with the engine running. He took up he slack with quite a jolt, and my car came up out of the hole and onto solid ground. I removed the cable and placed it back in his trunk. I did not get too muddy except on my hands. I asked the man what I owed him and he said, "Not a thing" I thanked him and told him how much I appreciated his help. I noted that he had a Texas license plate on his car. That led me to believe that there are some nice people in Texas. Cars from several states, including Oklahoma, whizzed by us and all they gave us was a glance. A short time later we came to a second mud hole. I backed up in the ruts until I could get my speed up to about twenty miles per hour going forward. The car slithered and bucked like a bronco but we crossed the muddy place with nothing broken. We can still remember the enjoyment we had driving around that winter and spring in spite of all our predicaments.

Lena and Buddy had rented a farm north of Weatherford in the Cottonwood School District. Lena was in poor health and she didn't feel good most of the time. They had two children, Juneita and David. David was born soon after we buried Lena's first little boy, Raymond. Around the middle of March in 1930 Lena's health became worse. She was confined to her bed and the doctor said, "She has ureic poisoning." There was very little most doctors could do for kidney failure in those days. On March 20th, 1930 she passed away and we buried her in the same cemetery where Pearl, Grandpa Chance and Little were buried. David was just three days past his third birthday, and Juneita, was not quite six years old. They came to live with Mom and Dad. So Mom and Dad started raising their second family. Buddy was a free man again and went to Oklahoma City to work. He came back to see the kids once in a while and took them to live with his new wife for a while. This did not work out very well and they soon came back to live with my Mom and Dad whom they called *Ma* and *Pa*. Buddy contributed very little towards their upkeep.

In the Spring, a Young Man's Fancy

As the poet said about a young man's thoughts in the spring, the same thing happened to me. I had asked Nellie to be my wife and she had agreed. She had set a date to be soon after her eighteenth birthday, which was the twenty-fourth of April. I had made a start at building a small, two-room house on one of the three lots north of Dad's little rental house. I had it about finished except for the finishing of the walls inside.

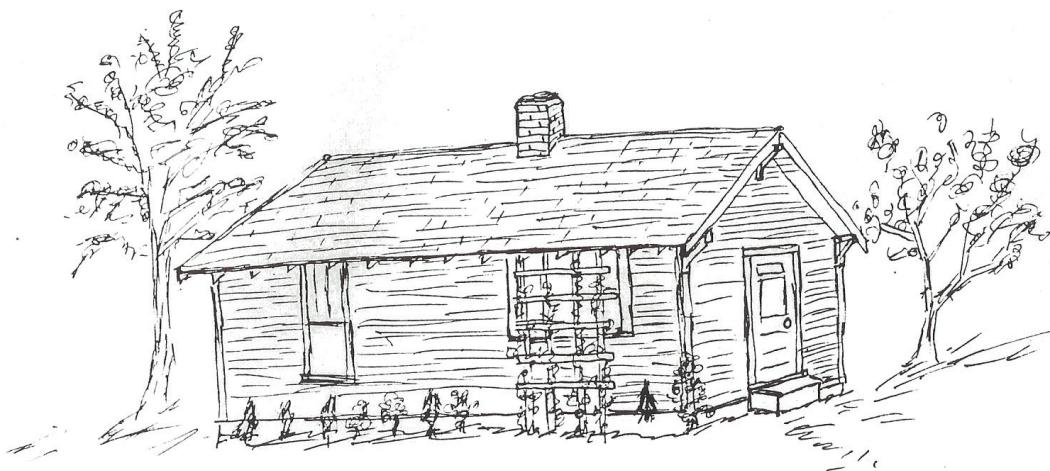
Didaw's Book

About a week before Nellie's birthday we were talking about our plans and Nellie said, "Why don't we go ahead and get married instead of waiting for my birthday?" That was all right, a far as I was concerned, so we decided to go to El Reno and get the *knot tied* the next Saturday.

When Saturday morning came we drove to Edna and Roy's home in El Reno. Roy went with me to the court house for the license and recommended that we go to a preacher for the ceremony. He said when anyone was married at the court house that all the employees came to watch and very often did a lot of *kidding* of the bride and groom. We took his advice and went too see the preacher who lived next door to Roy's mother. A little before noon that day we became Mr. and Mrs.

We spent the night with Edna and Roy. The next morning when we were making-up the bed we found a peeled banana. Roy got quite a *kick* out of that event. I wondered for a while if he had anything to do with it being there but Edna was sure that Betty, who was Edna's second girl, had taken it to bed when she took a nap. Anyway, Roy thought it was a big joke. The next morning Nellie wanted to be home to have dinner with her family. They were getting together at a new house, which John and May Payne had built on their farm. May was Nellie's older sister. We came back to my folk's house for supper. We stayed there for the next few days until I finished the work on our new home.

I almost shudder to think of the problems we were to face in the years to come, but at that time I had no way to anticipate the future. Optimism, enthusiasm, and perhaps ignorance of youth kept us from worrying at that time. There I was, newly married, very little money, in debt for the material for the house and no steady job. Still we were very happy in our new home just as if we had good sense. We did not have a thing in the way of furniture, but I had ordered what Sears called a *Day-bed*. It was made like an iron cot but had two sections. The mattress could fold down the center lengthwise and one section of the frame could be used as a bed or raised up to make a sofa. In our little two-room house that was an advantage. My lumber bill amounted to Three Hundred Fifty Seven Dollars!!

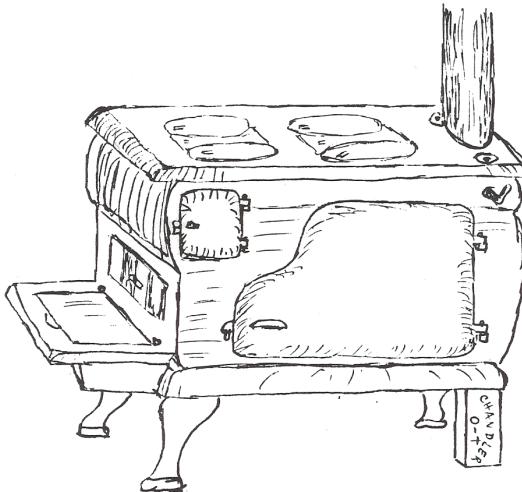


The Hydro, OK Home in 1930

We gathered up any discarded furniture we could find from relatives, but one thing we still needed was a cook stove. Buddy had given up housekeeping after Lena died and he said we could have his cook stove. Roy Payne, Nellie's brother, took us to the farm north of Weatherford to get the stove. After we loaded the stove and started home Roy said we should drive along the creek and make a shortcut on the way home rather than follow the road along the section line. The road along the creek was one that meandered from one house to the next of an Indian Settlement. I had never traveled that road but I knew there were several Indian families living on the farms along the creek. As we came to a little knoll and into the yard of an Indian home we saw an elderly woman standing by an outbuilding with her skirt pulled up. She was yielding to the call of nature and never so much as looked in our direction. Apparently she had such a low opinion of white people that she did not care what we saw. Maybe she was right.

James Howard Cloninger

We finished the trip uneventfully and set the stove in our new kitchen. It was a four hole stove with an oven like the first stove that Mom had used for as long as I could remember. It had only three legs. One had been lost or broken but that problem was fixed quickly. One brick, set on end, was exactly the right height to make it set steady. Now we were all set for housekeeping.



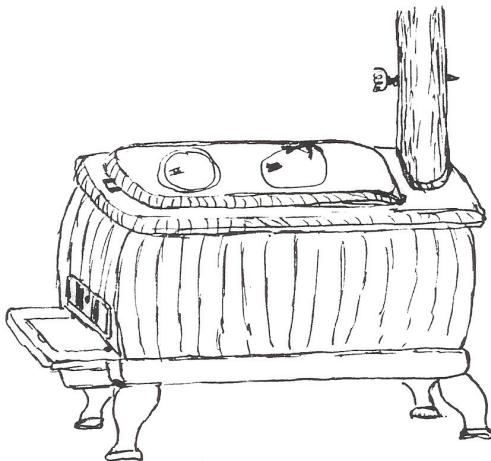
The Cook Stove used in the Hydro, OK Home

I had watched Mom making soda and sour milk biscuits until I could do that job. I wasted no time in showing Nellie how to make the biscuits. In all of my experiences I have never seen better bread than those biscuits baked on a wood burning stove! We were not using the stove one day when Buddy came by and said he wanted to get the stove, as he had sold it. This came as a shock to me because he had given us the stove.

We had to have another stove so we picked up a two-burner oil stove with a *dinky* little oven that would bake a small pan of biscuits. It could never compare with the wood stove for making biscuits. I am not sure where we got it but it seems I remember it had belonged to Nellie's mother. It used kerosene and the biscuits and the sometimes had a faint scent of kerosene.

Soon after we got married and set up housekeeping, the Public Service Company that provided electricity for Hydro decided to build to build a new office, ice storage, and dock. They had recently bought out the city-owned power and ice plant. I was lucky enough to land a job as a laborer and stayed on until the job was finished. I was off from work for a while with a sprained ankle. As I stepped down from a scaffold with a bucket full of mortar, my right foot came down on a brick, which was lying on the floor. The brick flipped over and with all my weight plus the bucket of mortar my ankle was badly sprained. I thought it was broken. The boss sent me to Dr. Henke's office where he wrapped it and told me to soak it in hot water at home. He loaned me a set of crutches. When I had been home for a while I needed to go to the toilet. It was an outhouse in the alley. We did not have sewers at that time. I hobbled out to the *little house in the alley* and with the exertion and shaking of the sore ankle I began to feel dizzy. I thought I was going to faint so I sat down on the ground and leaned against the little house until my dizziness past. While off from work I received seventy percent of my wages as a compensation but I would have much rather worked. I never minded hard work; in fact I enjoyed the construction job.

It was mid-summer and although we had read and heard about The Depression we had not felt the effects of it very much. We had noticed that the trains were loaded with men hitching rides on the empty freight cars. They were going both ways so it looked like jobs were scarce whichever way anyone went to look for work. Jobs seemed to be harder to find here at home also. Lots of hungry men stopped by Dad's house, which was only one block from the railroad tracks. I never saw Mom turn away any man without something to eat even if she only had some cold milk and cornbread. They always acted like they appreciated it. We had cows and chickens and by cutting Johnson Grass by hand, using a scythe we put up enough hay for the mules and cows. We always had enough to eat. Sometimes all that we had was cornmeal mush and milk.



The Heat Stove used in the Hydro, OK Home

Uncle Tom was still living on the farm at Lake Creek and worked for the county with the bridge repair crew. He was a neighbor and lodge brother of the County Commissioner, which helped him get the job. He was getting well along in years and knew that he would have to retire in a few years. He wanted a home in Hydro when he retired so he bought some lots in the block north of our place. It had a barn on it. The house had burned down a few years before. He wanted someone to tear down the barn, salvage the lumber, and build a two room house a little larger than ours. I told him that I would do the labor on the house for ninety dollars if he would pay me by the hour to tear down the barn. We agreed on that so I started on the job. I used all of the lumber from the barn and he bought the rest of the material to finish the house. I completed the house in October and collected my money. Uncle Tom was not ready to quit his job, so he rented out the house.

Nellie and I had been to see Dr. Henke in August and knew what his fee would be to deliver a baby. When I got my money from Uncle Tom I *rat-holed* twenty-five dollars to pay Dr. Henke. I used some of the money to put some wire and two lights in our house. The rest went for living expenses. I could not get money ahead to pay the lumber bill at the lumber yard.

One day Mr. Cecil, manager of the lumber yard sent word that he needed to see me. I knew what he wanted; however there was nothing I could do about it. I went to see Mr. Cecil and told him that I would give them a deed to the house if they wanted it. He said "No they did not want the deed they wanted the money." He said if I would if I would sign a note for the amount due and give them a mortgage they would let me pay it out as I could and he would give me any work that they needed done. That seemed to be the best I could hope for. Dad had not given me a deed to the lot, so we got that fixed up and recorded. It took me eight years too pay the mortgage.

Some time before we were married Nellie's dad had invested money from the sale of their farm in a grocery store. He took the manager in as a partner. He put up the money and the manager ran the store. Sometimes on the week ends I helped with deliveries and clerked in the store. My wages there helped pay for our groceries.

One time a colored lady came in and wanted to buy a nickels worth of onions. The onions were up front of the store and the scales were in the back. I knew that the large onions would be about a nickel. I selected one about the right size and laid it on the scales, which had a computing chart on it for items of different prices. The marker was just a hair's breadth below the five cent, but not enough to going back for a larger one. I dropped it into the sack and started to hand it to her. She said "That wuzent a nickel's wuth." I replied, "Yes it is!" Her answer was, "No suh, I could tell by lookin' at yore eyes that wuz not a nickel's wuth." I could not admit that she was right, even if it was less than a twentieth of a cent. That experience showed me that I would never make a very good poker player. She was a good judge of people. From that time on I always made it a practice to be sure to give a full measure of any thing that I put on the scales after that embarrassing experience.

The weather was getting colder and we needed a heating stove. It seems odd that I can remember all the details of the first heater except from whom we got it and whether or not we bought it. One thing I do know we didn't steal it!

James Howard Cloninger

The stove was made of cast iron and had four short legs to keep it up off the floor. We always called that type of stove a *chunk heater* because the top was fixed so it would swing to one side leaving the entire stove open at the top. This allowed you to put a large chunk of wood down into the stove. One nice thing about this type stove it didn't require as much wood chopping. It had a small door in the front, which allowed you to put smaller pieces in the stove as well as too remove the ashes. On the top it had two nine-inch *eyes* like a cook stove. We sometimes cooked a pot of beans on the top, which let us get double duty from the heating stove. When every thing is considered, it was a satisfactory heat system. We used it for about eight years. At time the hardware stores had stoves made on the same principle for only two dollars and eighty-five cents. However, they were made of thin stovepipe iron and the hole for putting in the fuel was not as big as they would burn out in about two years. But even those would make a room comfortable.

The winter that year was pretty nasty for most of the time. We had a pretty good supply of firewood, which I had gathered from driftwood along the creek. We also had enough money to buy our groceries. I had even got enough money to make a five-dollar deposit so we could have electric lights. In December Nellie's sister-in-law, Gladys had her fourth daughter. Gladys was married to Nellie's older brother, Carl. The new baby was named Wanda. Doc Henke delivered her as he did most other babies around Hydro for many years. He was sure ours would be born in December but Nellie told him that could not be as we had not been married long enough! Doc just grinned and said, "You don't have to be married." He was an ornery old devil, but always came when he was needed regardless of the weather.

Lloyd Arrives

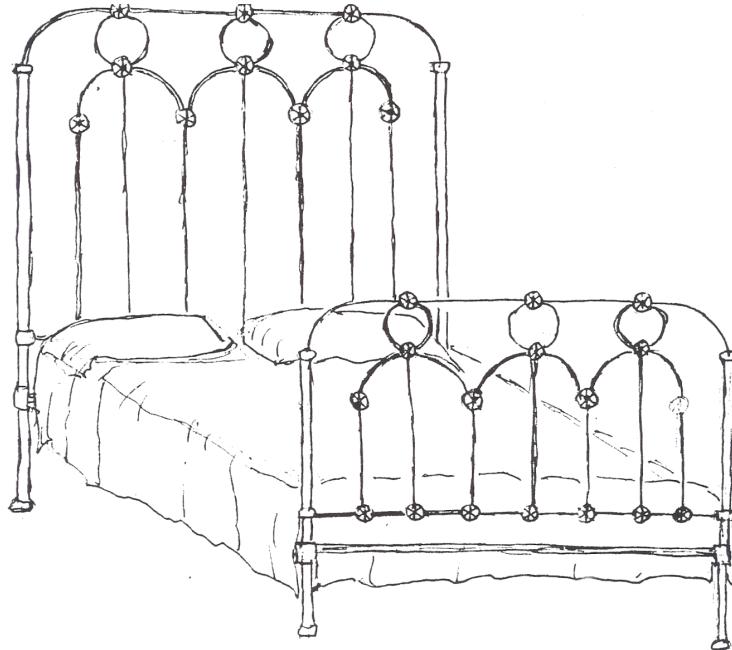
On the nineteenth of January Nellie did our washing using tub and washboard even though she had to stand sideways to the tub and board. The weather was nasty and the ground was wet from a lot of rain. The wind had changed to the north and it had turned very cold. About the time we finished supper Nellie started having some pains. After the second or third one we decided we should call the doctor. We did not have a phone so I got in the car and drove to the doctor's house in the north part of town. His wife answered the door and told me that the doctor had been called out too the country to Harry Rowland's place. She said that she would send him over as soon as he returned. I came home by way of Carl Curnutt's home. Gladys, Nellie's older sister came home with me in case we needed her help. It was about ten p.m. when Doc arrived and Doc was not in the best of moods. On the way to the Rowland's house he had slide into a ditch and had to be pulled out. He told us that he almost missed the party at Rowland's and he just got there in time for the *shouting*. He said "I don't know why these women always have to have their babies on such cold nights."

He told us that our baby would make seven babies in six nights that he had delivered and he was worn out from lack of sleep. He decided that he would not be needed for about four hours, so I made him a bed on the day bed. He said "Wake me if you need me." Within three minutes he was snoring. About four in the morning Nellie told me that I had better awaken the doctor. I thought that I would never arouse him. He was still snoring and had not moved. Nellie was right about needing him and after a while we had an eight-pound boy. We had already decided to name him Kenneth Lloyd. In checking records later I found that Lloyd was born on his great, great grandpa Yeary's birthday, exactly a century later. Doc examined him and said, "It looks like you have a fine baby boy here!" He asked how long we had been married and when I told him he chuckled and said, "Well, you sure fooled the Old Hens this time." I thought to myself, we fooled the doctor too!

In anticipation of having a baby sleep with us we decided to replace the daybed with a full size bed. We secured a bed, which some relatives had discarded. It was the kind that had brass balls on top of the corner posts and the rest was made of scroll work of round iron rods. Where they came together, they were held in place by a rosette of cast iron. The original paint had chipped and peeled off and there were rusty spots. I had a little white paint left from painting the house, but it looked too white. I thought it would look better if we had some pink and blue included with the white. I put some paint in a can and started mixing red cake color until I had the pink color I was looking for. The only blue I could find was Nellie's ball bluing, which she used in her laundering. I put some of the bluing in a cloth and beat it into a fine powder. I stirred the powder into some white paint until it was the shade I wanted. After sanding the bed I gave the main part a coat of pink paint and then painted the rosettes with the blue. It made a

much better looking bed than it was when we got it. We had previously decided to have it set up for the big event and being pink and blue it would work for a boy or girl. We did not know at the time which one we had ordered.

With the bigger bed in the northwest corner and the daybed along the south wall there wasn't much room for the stove, dresser, and two chairs. Neither of us had been used anything better so we were happy with what we had.



The Bed in the Hydro Home. Both Lloyd and Arminta were born in this bed.

The doctor had told Nellie to take some castor oil when she had her first pain, which she did. The baby was affected by the laxative and used a lot of diapers. With so much cleaning and changing his little bottom was sore and almost raw. When the doctor came by to see if everything was alright he told me to go to the drugstore and get some bismuth and dust the sore places when changing his diaper. Lloyd had not yet passed any water. The doctor said he would look to see if there was something wrong that he couldn't pass his water. While doc was making the examination he said, "You know that I delivered a baby one time without a head." That remark really upset Nellie. It was a heck of a thing to say to a young worried mother. But he never stopped to think how it sounded to Nellie. Doc would use old home remedies if the patient did not suggest it but if they did he would always say, "That's no good, I'll give you a prescription." He asked Nellie if Lloyd was nursing and getting fluids. She assured him that was alright, so he told her to get some watermelon seed, steep them in hot water until the water turned dark and then give him a teaspoonful every hour. The doctor said that might start his kidneys working. After a while his diaper was wet and that was one wet diaper that we didn't mind.

Ester and Virginia came by on the way to school that morning and stopped to see the new baby. Virginia called him *Worry Wart* after a character in a comic strip and the name Wart stuck with him for many years. The night after Lloyd was born Nellie needed me during the night and could not get me to wake up. I was sleeping on the daybed across the room. On the chair by her bed were things she had to use, so she picked something up and threw it at me. She hit the target and awakened me. I was almost as the doctor had been. I did not have a job at this time so I played nursemaid and washed all the dirty clothing.

Soon after Lloyd was born my old hunting and fishing buddy, Herman came by with a gift for the baby. It was a silver spoon. When we first moved into our new house he brought us a set of silverware and some rose bushes from his mother's garden. The roses still bloom after more than forty-six years.

Herman and I still hunted and we had squirrels and rabbits to add to our meals. Nellie had not been raised to eat wild game and could not bear the idea of eating squirrels; however she would eat cottontail rabbit's back saddle but not the legs. Of all the food I have tasted I do not think anything is better than fried cottontail with hot biscuits and gravy with sand plum jelly and biscuits for desert.

James Howard Cloninger

One time previously Herman had asked me if I thought he could learn to play the fiddle. I had been playing Dad's fiddle and Hugh had a guitar he had ordered from Sears. Our music was nothing to brag about but home-made music had some appeal to many people. I told Herman a fiddle was for someone who had a good ear for music so they would know where to place their fingers. I had almost forgotten that conversation when Herman asked me if I was interested in trading my .22 rifle for a good fiddle. I told him I would take a look at the fiddle so he brought it by the house. It was about the nicest one I had ever had my hands on, and it had a nice case to store it in. I was very glad to trade although I really liked my gun. I now had a fiddle that I thought I could learn to play.

Visiting Glen and Mary Lasley

One nice day in early March, 1930, Nellie and I decided to go visit her sister Mary. She was married to Glen Lasley. I had known some of the Lasley boys but had never met Glen. They lived on a farm about three miles south of Eakly. After dinner Mary and Glen took their three kids and Nellie and I over to back side of the farm where there was an outcropping of rocks. We had a sort of picnic in the warn sun on the rocks. Mary was sure that Nellie and I were married and kept asking us but we told her that we were not married. Glen spoke up and said "Well, one thing for sure, you are not going to sleep unless you show me a marriage certificate." Then he laughed till the rocks echoed. Glen always enjoyed himself. We had not intended to stay all night with them but Mary was not convinced yet that we were married.

Glen had told me that there were a lot of squirrels along Cobb Creek. I had my .22 rifle along because Glen was a man of the woods and creeks and enjoyed hunting and fishing as much as I did. This was the beginning of many years of happy times together for Glen and me.

When we got ready for bed that night our bed was in the same room with Mary and Glen. Many houses in those days did not have separate bedrooms. Glen had just blown out the lamp and I undressed and got into bed where Nellie had already laid down. As soon as I stretched out on the bed the slates under the springs fell out! When Glen heard the commotion he started laughing until he was out of breath. I have never been sure if that was an accident or if it was rigged! It could have been either, however all of the Lasley boys always enjoyed practical jokes.

Early the next morning we took our rifles and went to the big cottonwoods along the creek. We hunted for several hours and never saw a squirrel. There were plenty of signs but that was all. We came to a fence that crossed the creek and for pastime we sat on the bank and shot at some of the wires that held the fence down in low places. We soon found out that we had used up all of the cartridges and decided to go back to the car. The first big tree we came to was alive with squirrels and we had no ammunition. Glen said we would go to Eakly and get some cartridges as he knew the man who ran the store. Imagine getting a man to open a store on Sunday morning to sell us two boxes of .22 shells at twenty-five cents per box. The man was very pleasant about doing us a favor. We had both known him for years and had swam and fished on his family's farm on Lake Creek. In those days people were neighbors for miles around. We returned to the tree where we had seen all the squirrels and found five were still there. We had five young squirrels for dinner. I don't think Nellie enjoyed the meat too much but Mary could make gravy that was just about the best I ever tasted and with hot biscuits it was a feast.

We made several trips to visit Glen and Mary before they moved away from that farm and back to the Ghost Mound community where Nellie grew up. One other funny event that happened there concerned a crock of wild-grape wine Glen made in the cellar. He had taken a tin cup down to sample it to see if it was ready to strain and bottle. He had a tea towel over the crock. One day Mary looked out the window and saw Junior, who was about six years old, crawling out the window of the cellar. He could not standup and they found that he had gone into the cellar and had used the tin cup until he had too much wine. From the time the wine was set and drunk we did not visit, so all this story is hearsay. I never even tasted a sample of it so don't know if Glen's wine making compared with Roy Tomlin's or not.

A Trip to El Reno

In March of 1931 Roy Tomlins and Edna came to Hydro to visit and suggested that Nellie, Wart and I go home with them for a visit. He had been bumped from his job as fireman for the Rock Island Railroad. He was driving a gasoline delivery truck for a friend who was wholesaling gasoline. He had use of the truck and said he would bring

us home when we wanted to come. The weather had warmed up and was nice. There was still a little snow in the shady spots where it had been deepest. His friend's name was Bob Archer.

We all liked to fish and Bob knew a farmer a few miles out in the country from El Reno who had a farm pond. He gave permission to fish so we went out to the pond. Bob had some extra fishing gear and loaned me a rod and reel. That was my first experience with a reel. The first cast seemed all right but I did not know about *backlash* and had let the reel overrun. On the second cast, when the line came to the overrun spot the reel stopped and all the gear on the line kept going and ended up in the middle of the lake. The line was completely stripped. I learned pretty fast and did better the rest of the day. The fish were not biting much as the water was still very cold. We had caught only a few very small bullhead catfish when Mr. Schwaab, the owner, came down to see how we were doing. When he saw our luck he said he had a sixty-foot seine we could use if we would give him a mess of fish from our catch. He brought the seine from his barn and Roy and Bob took off their clothes and took a big nip from the bottle they had in the tackle box. That was to keep them from taking a cold from wading that icy pond. The first drag they made with the seine they had nineteen nice catfish, about two pounds each, and two black bass about the same size. They were wading that icy water up to their armpits and had to go slowly. We saw several black bass jump over the net. They decided to make one more drag. That time they had only two more catfish and since they were turning blue with the cold they decided that was plenty. They let Mr. Schwaab take what he wanted and we took the rest home with us and had a nice fish-fry.

The next morning the wind was blowing from the north about thirty miles per hour and it was full of swirling snow with about three inches on the ground. Bob called and asked if we would like to go rabbit hunting and we agreed to try it. We went out along the North Canadian River and walked about a half mile looking for rabbits but saw none. With the blowing snow and my watery eyes I could not have seen a rabbit at twenty feet. We soon gave up and went back where it was warm. The thermometer on Roy's porch showed ten above. We were about frozen stiff by the time we got home.

Betty was about two and a half or three years old at that time and was very interested in our new baby who was about two months old. One morning when he was asleep in the bed room we were in the kitchen, Betty came through the bathroom door and said "Looky here Mama." She had Lloyd in her arms and her arms were around his neck from the back side. He was turning blue in the face. Edna grabbed the baby out of her arms and handed him to Nellie and spanked Betty. I told her to take it easy, as Betty was too small to know she had done anything wrong. I don't think she ever tried to take the baby off the bed again.

One day Roy came home from work with one eye all black and blue and swelled almost shut. Edna asked him what happened and he said his foot slipped on a wet spot on the floor and he ran into a fist. It seemed that a man at one of the service stations which he served with the tank truck accused him of shorting him on the delivery and was going to make him measure it with a five gallon can to be sure he was getting what he paid for. Roy's nick name at the roundhouse was not *Tuffy* for nothing. When you went to the roundhouse looking for Roy you had to ask for Tuffy. So he had a fight with the man at the station. I don't know if he quit the job or if he was asked to quit but anyway he would not stand for being accused of dishonesty. He put a raw steak on his eye but it was very black the next day.

Edna was doing some sewing and needed some more thread and ric-rac braid to match what she was using and asked Roy to go up town and get it for her. He about exploded at that. He said, "It's a helluva note, I can lay around here a month and never have to go to town, but with this black eye I have to go to town". When he got that out of his system he said, "Give me that sample". That was the end of that episode.

A few days later it was Edna's birthday and she made an angel food cake. Edna was one of the best cooks I have ever known but even the best ones have things go wrong some times. I don't know what happened but the cake *fell*. It was very tough and rubbery. After our meal, Roy picked up the cake to cut it for dessert. Very soberly he said "Where is the cold-chisel?" With Edna already upset about the way the cake had turned out that was the wrong thing for him to say. I think it was two days before she spoke to him again.

We were ready to go home soon after that but Roy did not have the truck to drive so we took the train to Hydro. That was my second ride on a train.

Stirrings of Progress

Along about the late Twenties and early Thirties there were stirrings of progress. The town of Hydro had voted bonds to put in a water and sewage system. The State Highway Department had let a contract for grading and drainage of Highway 66 from Hydro to El Reno. The water works and sewage system had been completed by 1930. The work on the bridges and culverts was still under way in the spring of 1931. A contract had been let for concrete paving on Highway 66 from the Canadian River Bridge to Weatherford. We, who did not have a job, were hopeful of getting work on that job. Rent houses were scarce for the men who came in on the construction work. We rented our house, furnished, to a man and wife, with two boys about eleven and twelve years of age. We moved in with Mom and Dad. Nellie, Lloyd and I slept on the floor on a pallet. We rented the house with our furniture and kitchen utensils for fifteen dollars per month. The man was working with a bridge crew and stayed three months and ten days. That gave us fifty dollars for living expenses until we could find some work.

When the paving crew moved in on the job they started on the west side of Little Deer Creek Bridge and worked toward Weatherford. I knew when they were going to start so I was there fairly early to see if I might get a job. When I arrived there was a line of about two hundred men already lined up to try to get a job. The contractors had hired all the men they needed long before I had a chance to ask for a job. I stayed around for a while to watch the work, as I had never seen how that kind of job was done. It was interesting to me to see all the machinery and the techniques of forming and finishing the concrete. They were very careful and did a very good job for those days. After a few hours of watching the work I decided there was nothing to be gained by staying longer so I came home.

Some few days after that they started *ponding* and *jetting* the fills. This was a process of soaking the fills and approaches to bridges by pumping water through a hose and a piece of pipe to get the water down into the fills so the earth would settle. The *sheep's foot packer* had not come into use then, so every fill had to have jets of water pumped into it until it stopped settling. After that, dikes were build on top of the fills to hold about a foot of water on top for several days for a final settling. That involved quite a number of men to do the work. The paving company installed pumps along the small creeks and pumped water through pipelines to the work sites. They used three-inch line to the concrete mixer and two inch lines to the fills. Dad got a job running a pump when they set up at the small creek west of Hydro. He took a bedroll and camping utensils and stayed at the job. He had inside information on when they would need more pumbers so Hugh and I got a job pumping when they started pumping from the creeks east of town. The pumps were kept going twenty-four hours a day and we had the nighttime shift. We went to work at eight p.m. and the truck came by and picked us up about four a.m. it was not a very bad job. Just a little bit boring to sit and listen to the motor run at a steady hum for eight hours. That job paid a nickel more per hour than the work on the hoses. We received twenty-five cents per hour and the boys manning the hose and wading in the mud received twenty cents per hour.

As a rule most every one stopped for lunch at midnight, but they did not close every spigot at the same time. We ran a pressure of about 125 pounds. One night I was dozing by the pump when I heard the motor slow down and start groaning with a load. I jumped up to switch it off when it started racing and running light. The governor cut the speed back but the pressure was only about fifty pounds. I took my lantern and went up to the road to see if I could find the trouble. About one length of pipe from my line I found a joint of pipe that had split from end to end. The *pop valve* on my pump had been leaking and some one had screwed it down tight to keep it from leaking. When all the spigots were closed at the same time the pressure went up fast until it was more than the pipe could stand. No one got fired so that was the best part.

The boss got the idea that some of the boys on the lines were sleeping on the job so he gave George Cox a job as *pusher* to go around and see that all of them were on the job. One night we were having a slow drizzle of rain. In order to stay dry I laid two railroad grain doors up against the hood over the motor of the pump and sat under them. It was cozy and warm by the motor and I dozed off to sleep. That would do no harm because if the engine changed I would wake up at once. I was dreaming that I had overslept and was about to miss my ride home. I could feel the hot sun on my face. I opened my eyes and found George holding his gas lantern close to my face. He just grinned and went on about his business.

The business of working at night and going to sleep in a hot house during the day and with the trucks roaring by and a few hundred flies crawling on my face made it impossible. Since I could not sleep much I decided I might as

well be working so I got on one of the *jetting* crews and worked eight hours on that job making a total of sixteen hours on the job. One of the *straw bosses*, a brother-in-law of one of the contractors, was our boss. He was somewhat of a *dude*. He wore a white shirt and was impressed with his importance. He would come to toward the job at night with his car lights off, trying to slip up on the boys to catch them loafing. The boys farther up the road from my work liked to sit around the lantern and play poker while the ponds on the road filled. That was not really bad as there was nothing to do except watch the water run into the ponds until they were filled. With his sneaky ways we conspired to beat him at his own game. One night I was looking down the road and saw the flicker of the warning flares on his white shirt as he walked the dike in the center of the fill. So, as pre-arranged, I started whistling *Golden Slippers* as loud as I could. When *white shirt* arrived all the boys were as busy as beavers.

We had moved east to the deep fills at the bridges across the deep canyons west of Bridgeport. Those fills had already been *jetted* and we were filling the ponds. The ponds were about ten by twenty feet and about a foot deep so each one held a large amount of water. I started filling at the bridge and was working my way up the hill. I was approaching the upper end and as it was nearing four in the morning I was getting drowsy. To help stay awake I walked down the dike to the bridge, while the pond filled. There was no harm in that if I had not decided to lie down for a minute. I stretched out on my back on the concrete bridge and a minute is all it took for me to be sound asleep. It seemed only an instant until I awoke with an uneasy feeling that something was wrong. I ran up the dike to where I had left the hose. That pond was overflowing into the one below and it was already filled. My shovel was back on the bridge. I threw the hose into the next empty pond and raced for the shovel. When I got back I had three ponds overflowing and the more I fought the breaks the faster the water ran. I was helpless to control all that water and to make matters worse I saw *White Shirt* coming down the hill. He hurried down and said, "Cut the dike on the side and get that water off or we will lose the whole damn fill." I suppose he had seen this problem before and knew how to cope with it, but I decided that the proper way to do a job like that was to start on the high end then there would always be an empty pond to catch any breaks. I was surely glad he did not know that I had taken one sneaky four-minute nap.

The ponding and jetting was about finished on our section and they were setting up the storage and weighing yard alongside the railroad at a switch four miles east of Hydro. This was *McCool Siding*. There was a grain elevator there and at one time, in early days, a grocery store. The elevator was all that was left there at that time. I went to work on the three-inch pipe line that had been laid to the mixer as they paved between Hydro and Weatherford. We were taking up the pipe to be moved to the next section of work. Our crew consisted of five men. One to lift the free end of the pipe while another set the *jack* under it to hold it off the ground so the tongs could get hold of it to unscrew it. One man had what was called the *back-up tongs*. This held the line from twisting while two other men using four-foot tongs unscrewed the length of pipe.

A man on a stripped-down Model A Ford Truck with a pole trailer drove along in low gear as we tossed the pipe onto the truck until it was loaded. Then we *broke-out* more while he was gone. I was running the jack, a 2x4 timber about four feet long with three short pieces nailed at an upward angle near the lower end. These angled pieces formed a crotch in which to lay the pipe to hold it off the ground so the tong-men could work. My partner on the lifting and handling the jack was Andy Isaman. We were loading pipe on the truck, which was driving on the new pavement. Andy was on the rear end near the trailer wheel and I was near the rear wheel of the truck. I noticed that Andy was limping so asked him what was the matter. In a very calm, matter of fact voice, he said, "That trailer ran over my foot." I told the driver and he said for him to take off his shoe. Andy's big toenail was completely removed and his shoe was full of blood. So the driver of the truck took him home. It was about three hours until quitting time so I finished the day lifting that heavy pipe with one hand and placing the jack under it with the other hand. That evening when I got home I felt like I had done a days work but my night-time job had ended so I had a good night of sleep.

There was a large crack in one corner of Dad's old house where we slept on the floor. Lloyd was only a few months old and slept between us. One night he woke us up with his crying. He was crying like he was really hurt so we lit the lamp to see what was wrong. We found some bloody teeth marks on his fingers where a rat had bitten his hand. There were lots of rats around the grain elevator about a block away. We nailed some boards over the crack the next day.

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The man who had rented our house told us he was leaving the next day and would pay us the five dollars he owed the next day. We told him we might not be home the next day so if it was all the same to him we would rather have all the money that evening. So he paid us. The next morning he was gone. He had left in the night. When we came up to look at the house we found the ceiling stained from *wild* homebrew that had spewed when he opened the bottle. Some lye or something had run down the front of the cupboard and removed the enamel and our skillet and some kettles were gone. And to make bad matters worse, our day-bed mattress was full of bed bugs. I had about a half gallon of nails (mixed sizes) in a little building out back. His boys had driven nails by the handful into the walls, doorstep and trees. So the fifty dollars I got from him was not all profit. We made a bon-fire of the mattress and doped the bedstead with gasoline. Then after it aired out we took a pound of sulfur and placed it on the floor in a can and set fire to it. We closed up the house and spent the day with Nellie's sister May. We never saw a sign of bed-bugs after that treatment.

Another Trip to Arkansas

The work on the paving job was about at a standstill while they moved over to the east end of the project and Nellie's Dad wanted to go to Arkansas to see if he would like to buy some land there. Nellie and I decided to go and do the driving for him. It turned out to be a very enjoyable experience for us.

During that summer, Mr. Curnutt received notice from the wholesale grocery companies that they were starting legal action to collect what the store owed them. This was the first hint he had that anything was wrong. In checking into the affairs of the store he found that his partner, instead of paying the invoices, he had been paying for some shortages that had come up from his former employer. Since the partner had nothing there was nothing for Mr. Curnutt to do but declare bankruptcy and let the store go to settle the account. So most everything he had worked most of his life to accumulate was wiped out in a few months.

In August of that year he decided that he would like to look at some farm land that was for sale near Rogers, Arkansas. He had a 1926 Model T Ford and wanted me to drive to Arkansas to let him see the country. We loaded up and started. Nellie and the baby went along. We took bedding and camping supplies. The service stations along the highways had free tourist camp grounds those days. Motels had not caught on so many places then. I can't recall our first camp spot but do remember re-lining the clutch bands on the big hill east of Checotah, Oklahoma. I pulled off the road into some woods and used a hickory stump for an anvil to clinch the rivets in the bands. I did not recall dropping a good pair of Klein Lineman Pliers under the car until we were back home. One place along the road I told Nellie I could smell sorghum cooking. As we rounded the little hill in the road I saw the *mill* to the right of the road. It was a picture that Norman Rockwell should have done. The press for extracting the juice was pulled by a scroungy, old white mule. There was a teen-aged colored boy feeding the stalks in to the rollers with his left hand while he held a Western Story magazine in his right hand. He never took his eyes off the magazine as he poked in the stalks. The man who was tending the evaporating was an old looking colored man. He had white hair and beard. His clothing was worn and ragged. It looked almost as old as he did. But the odor coming from the boiling syrup was as pleasant as I remembered it from our old mill. If I could handle a brush as well as Rockwell I would put that picture on canvas. One nice thing about traveling in a Model T is that you have time to see the interesting things along the road that you miss in the faster cars. I suppose covered wagon travel is even better that way.

The second day we arrived at Fort Smith and turned north to Van Buren. We started northeast out of Van Buren then decided we wanted to take the north road. Before we turned back Nellie wrote a post card to her mother to let her know we were all right. Going north out of Van Buren was a hill so steep it was about all the old Ford would do in low gear to make it. At the top of the hill we stopped at a grocery store to get some things we needed and to fill our water jugs. There was a dug well with a rope and bucket. It was only about fifteen feet to the water. I always wondered what kept the water at that high elevation. It looked to me like the water would have drained out through the rocks to run away down the hill. After we got out into the hilly part of the country the car started slowing down and would not pull n high gear and it started getting hot. I had put in a quart of oil shortly before and I was wondering if I had put in so much as to make the engine run sluggish. I stopped to check the level of the oil. When I stepped out of the car and looked back I realized what the trouble was. We had been going up a grade for a long time but the way it was graded and with nothing but hill to look at I had not realized that we were going uphill so much. At last we came to a downgrade and the old car acted normal again. We drove a long way and saw almost no

houses. It was almost time to stop and fix something to eat. We stopped by the side of the road and I discovered there was a nice clear pool of water a few yards down from the road. It was a stream bed but the water mostly ran under the rocks and formed pools here and there. The weather was very warm and we were tired and dirty. We had not seen anybody for miles along the road so I decided to take a bath in the creek while Nellie fixed lunch. I first took Lloyd to the creek and took off his diaper and bathed him. That was his first time in a creek. I was really enjoying the cool water when I heard voices coming through the trees. I hastily put on my clothes and went back to the car. Nobody showed up along the creek. We ate our lunch and started again. When we went a few yards around the curve in the road we saw a house by the creek. I had taken a bath almost in their back yard.

That evening at camp time we were on a road running east and west that was only a few miles from Rogers, our destination. We made camp under some trees near a service station. Soon after we went to bed we heard something dropping onto the leaves on the ground. It sounded like a shower starting but there were no clouds. We soon found out what it was that was dropping. Our beds were full of long-legged black ants that dropped from the trees. They did not sting but now and then they would stop and take a bite to see if we would be good to eat. Then I remembered that we had the same experience when we had come to Arkansas in 1926. We moved our beds away from the trees and had a good night's sleep.

Just as it was getting good daylight and Nellie was frying the eggs and bacon for breakfast we heard tires squealing on the blacktop road. After a while we saw a man walking down the road. I should say *staggering* as he was reeling from one side of the road to the other. Apparently he had spent the night at Rogers and was on his way home. When he was about even with our camp he turned and said "Which way you going?" Mr. Curnutt pointed back to the east and said "That way." The man's voice was heavy and slurred as he said "Hell I just came from that way. What do I wanna go that way for?" He started to walk toward our car and got his feet tangled together and fell into the borrow ditch. Instead of trying to get up he started singing, *Where the crab-apples grow*. When he got to the second *grow* his voice trailed off and he was asleep. About the time he passed out, I saw a car with a spotlight and a siren on it stop at the service station. The man at the service station came out and pointed toward the man in the ditch. The Sheriff came down and got the man into his car and drove to the west. I suppose he was taking him home before someone ran him down on the highway.

After breakfast and everything was packed Mr. Curnutt said, "You know, Mom may be needing help. Let's head for home." Like my Dad, he had seen enough already without reaching his destination. So instead of going east we headed west. Our first night on the way home we camped near a creek by a service station in eastern Oklahoma. We went to bed as soon as it was dark. We had little more than laid down when swarms of hungry mosquitoes came to dinner. We tried covering our heads but it was too hot and steamy for that. I think that was one of the most miserable night I ever spent. We were sure glad to see the sky turn grey and we wasted no time heading west that morning.

Along toward sundown we were a few miles east of Oklahoma City and there was a service station that had a good camp ground. They had a *free camping* sign out front. After we pulled into the camp ground, we saw a small sign that said *Camping - 50¢ per night*. We had not started unpacking when a man from the service station came out to our car and said, "If you folks are worrying about that sign don't pay any attention to it. We just use it to get rid of gypsies and tramps. We just tell them they will have to pay and they move on." He was an elderly man and told us that he and his brother owned the place. He liked to talk so he stayed around for a while and visited. He told us that neither had a wife.

After breakfast the next morning we pulled into the driveway and filled the car with gas and bought a few things to snack on before we got home. While one of the men was putting the gas in the car he nodded toward Lloyd and said "Joe, why don't you give her a sucker?" Lloyd did not look like a girl but those old guys did not know the difference I suppose. Probably Joe did not have a sucker because he came out with a peanut patty about as big as a saucer to give to a seven-month-old baby. We accepted it and thanked him. At least his heart was in the right place. We got in home a while after noon and another *wild goose chase* was over but we had enjoyed almost all of the trip. We did not have any tire trouble like we did when I took Dad to see the Ozarks.

Back to Work on the Road

After we returned from the trip to Arkansas the paving crew was set up and paving on the strip of road between Bridgeport and the McCool Road. This would complete that contract. I found a man who wanted someone to drive his dump-truck hauling the batches of rock, sand and cement to the mixer on the job. He agreed to pay all expenses and give me half of the receipts. That sounded like a fair deal so I started driving the truck. It was a Model A Ford with a two-speed rear axle. We hauled a load of fifty seven hundred pounds and that load on a high dump-bed on a light truck felt a little unstable but we never had an upset. We all drove the trucks as hard as they could be driven. It was either do that or lose a turn and the more trips the more money. We were paid by the load. There were twice as many trucks as were needed, so it was *dog eat dog*. We spent lots of time waiting our turn to dump into the hopper of the mixer. My first back-up to the hopper made me a little unsure of myself so I was taking it easy until I got used to handling the truck. The man in charge of the dumping yelled at me "Get that damn truck in here and get out of the way." I let in the clutch and slammed into the hopper and when the dump-box went up the wood frame we had on top to make the box hold a load that big struck something on the mixer. I had to pullout of the line and repair my side boards. Another time when I got to the weigh station to take on a load I discovered that my tail-gate was gone. The hinge pins had worn until they had bounced out of the slots. I had gone about a mile down the road, looking for the lost part, when one of the other drivers flagged me down. He had my tail-gate. I was surprised that any of them would have shown that much consideration for a competitor.

The old Model A with the two-speed axle had an advantage over the other trucks, which had a *compound* low gear. When my truck started losing speed in first gear on the hills I could shift the axle gear down and go quite a way before I had to go to second gear. Where the Chevrolet trucks had to shift down from first to second on the hills I could pass them and get one step closer to the dump. There was one young man named Smith who was the wildest driver on the job. He wore nothing but a pair of *Levi's* and a pair of shoes and drove his *cabless* Chevrolet as fast as it go and usually he was standing on the running board and steering with one hand while the wind whistled through his curly black hair. He was a happy-go-lucky guy and his main interest seemed to be getting to the waiting line of trucks so he could jump out and shoot *craps* until it was his turn to dump. He helped break up the monotony of the wait at the mixer. Everyone seemed to like the guy and it was he who had picked up my tail-gate and returned it to me.

The brake on my truck had become greasy by a leak from the rear end and they were hardly sufficient to hold the load on a steep grade. We were working down a hill on one of the steeper grades west of Bridgeport. There were several trucks ahead of me and we would move up as the trucks were dumped. In front of me was Mr. Franklin who was my boss when I was on the pumping job. We had moved up about three truck lengths and he stopped. My engine was switched off to save gasoline while waiting. When I stepped on the brake the truck slowed down but kept moving very slowly. I shifted it into reverse gear and the engine started spinning but the truck slowly moved on. There was nothing I could do to stop it. It eased gently into the rear of Mr. Franklin's truck. He felt the gentle bump and looked around and grinned at me. It was a very gentle collision but the sill of his truck had caught the right headlamp on my truck and demolished it. Then it had caught the corner of the radiator and tore a hole in it. It took me about a half a day to take off the radiator and solder up the hole. I usually worked sixteen hours a day and never made more than two dollars and forty-five cents. I don't see how the owner made anything after buying the gas and oil. There was just too much competition and the money was divided too many times.

One morning it was my turn to load first. As soon as we loaded we jumped out on the running board and rolled our canvas cover over the load to keep the cement from being blown off by the wind. While I was rolling my canvas two other trucks passed me and took my turn. I found that they did not roll the cover when it was too dark for the inspector to see if it was done. I never resorted to that little trick to gain two places in a line of about forty trucks.

Another morning in the scramble to get the first load one driver forgot that he had a ten-gallon cream can of motor oil in his box when he took on his first load. In the dark it went unnoticed and was dumped into the mixer. When the oil started coming out in the concrete the boss saw it. They had to remove all that batch and dig the beat-up can out of the mixer. That driver was sent home with his final pay.

I did not work very long at that job. I do not recall whether it was I or the owner of the truck who decided it was not worth the effort but the job ended with no regrets.

Harvest Time

In June of 1932, a neighbor, Mr. Amos Cope was organizing a threshing crew. He had operated a threshing machine for several years. The combine harvester and threshers were not in use in our part of the wheat country then. The wheat was cut and bound by a binder then it was put in *shocks* of about twenty bundles each. After it was thoroughly dried it was loaded onto *bundle-wagons* and hauled to the threshing machine where it was threshed. The crew consisted of four or six bundle-wagons with a driver on each and two bundle pitchers in the field. At the machine were usually two men to operate and tend the thresher and the engine to furnish the power for the thresher. Sometimes on a big machine they had two *spike-pitchers*. They were used in addition to the drivers to put the bundles onto the feeder of the thresher. Usually the farm owner took care of hauling the grain to his bins. The machine that Mr. Cope had could keep three bundle pitchers busy loading the wagons. I heard he needed some bundle pitchers so I asked him for a job and I got one. The pay was two dollars per day. The days were from daylight to dark and in July that was about sixteen hours. This was my first and only experience as a bundle pitcher. As far back as I could remember Dad had gone away to wheat harvest while Owen, Hugh, and I took care of the farming. He had lots of experience with threshers so that was the job he had in the harvest field.

The work was not so bad because I was always used to hard work but the long hours between meals almost did me in. When you have breakfast by lamplight in July and lunch at fifteen after twelve then go back to the field and work until it's too dark to see very well that makes about eight hours between meals. My biggest trouble was holding enough food to last until the next meal and still having enough room to breathe. The wives of the farmers fed the harvest crew and we had steak or ham and fried potatoes three times a day along with the trimmings. At only two places where we worked did we fail to get first-rate food. One place near town we started working on Saturday afternoon and when it came time to eat the word was passed along that we could go home for supper. No one offered us anything to eat. One man who was there with a bundle wagon and almost forty miles from home, when no one offered to feed him nor his team, loaded up and went home. As I look back it seems to me we should all have refused to work at that place. I had never seen a farmer refuse to feed men who were working on his farm before. We all needed the money so all returned Monday morning to finish the threshing, except the one bundle wagon. We wound up that job at eleven forty-five. It was almost time to eat again but we were told that the next farmer was fixing dinner for us. So we had to drive about four miles before lunch. By the time we were ready to eat it was about one o'clock and I was about to faint from hunger. When we finished for that man it was eleven o'clock in the morning and we had plenty of time to move to the next field, about a mile, before dinner but that old gentleman insisted that we stay and eat with them. His wife and daughters knew how to make a real meal. That is just how much difference there is in people we run into in that line of work.

The other place where the food was not as good as the average was not due to stinginess.

They had plenty of everything and were very nice people but the women simply did not know how to cook as well as most women can. Perhaps I had been *spoiled* a little because Mom, Edna, Lena and Aunt Rachel were all good cooks. Even when we were short on groceries Mom could fix something good to eat from practically nothing. She knew all the tricks.

For years I had had a crazy stomach and anything that upset my normal routine would often make me sick. After I had been with the crew for a few weeks getting tired of so much fried food. I felt like I was starving for fresh fruit. One day we were moving from one farm to the next and I and another bundle-pitcher were in the bundle wagon. Along the side of the road was a thicket of sand plums loaded with ripe fruit. We jumped out and started eating the plums. After we had eaten a lot of them one of the fellows said, "Say those things are full of worms". I decided I had enough but I told him at least they tasted good until we saw the worms.

We stayed overnight at the next farm where we had a job to do. When we came in from the field at dusk we were sweaty and covered with dust from the fields. I, along with the other pitchers, went to the stock watering tank and were washing our arms and faces to rid ourselves of the dust and sweat. The owner of the farm came over to us and said he did not want us to use the water that way as he did not want it dirty for his stock. After we had supper and it was dark, I suggested that we take a complete bath in his tank. We all had a very refreshing bath and as far as I know his livestock never complained. It's a funny thing how some people feel toward anyone who works for them. I could have told him that my opinion of him was a bad or worse than his opinion of me.

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As a rule, we unrolled our bedroll on the grass around the farmyards. This time there was a partial load of wheat near the barn so we thought that would make a better bed than the ground. For the first few minutes on the grain the bed was very comfortable. I had just dozed off to sleep when I awoke with pains in all the softer parts of my body, the small of my back and all around my rib cage. I was tired all over. The other fellow in that wagon groaned and turned over so I decided he was awake. I asked him how he felt and he said he could not stand any more of that bed. We got up and took our beds to a patch of grass. That slippery grain just floated up in to the softer places and continued to press until the pressure was equalized. I still like a firm mattress.

The last farmer we threshed for was a large man. He had black hair and eyes and the high cheek bones of an Indian. I think, perhaps, he was about one fourth Indian. He had a small horse, which he rode bareback. His feet almost touched the ground as the little horse was also slightly sway-backed. He came galloping across the fields and the rider held his elbows akimbo at a high angle. It was a comical sight to see the elderly man with his slouchy black hat flopping in the breeze. I knew that old man for many years afterward and found him to be a real gentleman.

While we were threshing his wheat the weather was very hot. The humidity was high and the field was down near the creek where it made a big oxbow loop to the south. There was heavy timber along the creek and not a breath of air was stirring. One of the pitchers had been working without his shirt. About the middle of the afternoon he turned pale and started vomiting. He was so sick he had to quit work and go to the house. I suppose some one took him home. It was left up to me and one other pitcher to keep the machine supplied with bundles to thresh. After a while there was no wagon to be loaded and we found that the machine had become *slugged* with some damp straw. They had to shut it down and pull out the wet straw that had clogged the machine. One of the spike pitchers told us later that he had deliberately threw in some bundles cross-wise so we could get a break. I don't know if he was telling the truth or just trying to be a hero, but it was a welcome break. I and the other pitcher went down to the creek and went swimming in a hole about neck deep. That cooled us off or I might have joined the sick fellow. It was not too uncommon for men who were not in top-notch physical condition to fold up in the harvest fields.

Over in Washita County, in the German neighborhood, the standard practice was to serve a light snack in the mid-morning and afternoon but that practice never caught on around Hydro. I rather imagine that the lunches paid off because the refreshment would make it possible for a man to do more work. Starvation hurt me much more than the work but I kept up my part of the work. One thing we had plentifully was drinking water, sometimes lukewarm and some times fresh from the well.

One of the men who drove a team on the bundle wagons loved horses. I think perhaps more than he loved his wife. They were a beautiful black team with a good set of harness with brass knobs on the hames and some white celluloid rings for ornamentation. When he came after a load of bundles, if there was any soft plowed ground he avoided it, even if we had to pitch the bundles against the wind. In looking back at this situation I think I should have refused to pitch into the wind as we had to work steadily while the drivers and horses usually got a break while other wagons were being unloaded. That old man did his hardest work at the dinner table. His shirt would be wet with sweat while he ate but I never saw a drop of sweat on him in the fields.

Odd Jobs

When we finished that job, Mr. Cope had only a few small jobs to wind up the season and the man who ran the lumber yard had some work he wanted me to do so I begged off the harvest job and went to work on the lumber yard. The coping on the front wall had to be replaced and several squares of the roof had been damaged by hail and it had to be replaced. I made a pretty good payment on my note with that work. That black tar roof was almost too hot to stand on but my feet did not blister. At times I was sure that they were. There surely was no sitting around on that job.

Aunt Nell and her family often came over on a week end and we all took a picnic lunch to the creek and played around most of the day. We had a quilt to put the baby on. We suspected that some insect had bitten him because his face was very badly swollen along the lower side of his jaw the next morning but we never found any sign of a bite of any kind. It could have been some kind of infection of his salivary glands.

Jobs were harder to find as time went on but we managed to get enough to buy the things we had to have. I had traded my old motorcycle to a boy about a block north of our house. He gave me a 1925 Model Ford touring car for it

and I sold the car for twenty-seven dollars. That would buy groceries for a while. Nellie and I had gone out to Mary and Glen's place for a while in January of 1932. We did not have any money so we went to town and got the five-dollar deposit we had made on our electric service. We went back to the kerosene lamps. Nellie bought a pair of stiff soled shoes for Lloyd, his first, and on his first birthday he stood alone for the first time. Glen and I liked to hunt and fish and we sure had plenty of time for it. We helped provide meat and gravy with the squirrels and rabbits we killed.

It was coming time to buy licenses for cars and I did not have any money. A farmer out in the country was planning to tear down his old barn and rebuild it larger. I happened to know that he had a bid of one hundred dollars for the labor on the job. What I did was not exactly ethical and I knew it was worth every cent of the hundred to do the work. But I was really in a bind. I had to have some money so I gave him a bid of ninety dollars for the job and got it. I hired Dad and Hugh to help me with part of it. I paid them two dollars per day. When it was finished, I had thirty dollars for my part. I had put in thirty days at that job. At least I had enough to get the license for the car, pay the taxes on my house, and to buy some groceries.

It was along about this time that Uncle Tom decided to quit farming and working for the county. His friend had lost the election for County Commissioner too. Maybe that hastened his decision. He bought a service station out on Highway 66 a few miles east of Hydro. He was not quite ready to leave the farm as he had some crops to gather. He made a deal with a young man to run the station on shares until he could take over. After the young man had run it for a while I was at the station doing some work that Uncle Tom wanted done. While he was there he wanted to go over the books to see how things were going. It seemed that a considerable amount of gas was gone but there was practically no money. The young man was fumbling around trying to make everything seem right but he was not approaching checking the gas on hand and the sales. Uncle Tom was not having much luck pinning him down to the facts. I spoke up and said it was easy to check how much gas was short. Just take the total sales and add it to the readings of the tanks then subtract that figure from the total sales. At that the young man started getting very angry and nasty. He started telling how many things he had to buy out of pocket and he had it figured to be several dollars that Uncle Tom owed him. Uncle Tom pulled that amount out of his pocket and handed it to him and said, "It's worth that much to get rid of you. Give me the keys and you can go."

After the man left he asked me if I would keep the station open for a week or so until he could get ready to move. I took over the station and there was not much work nor very much money but it was better than loafing. At least I could buy groceries while I worked.

Early one morning when I had just opened the station a Model A Ford Coupe with three young men in it drove into the pump and stopped. I went out to see what they wanted and two of them jumped out of the car. One ran out behind the car and pointed toward the creek. "There it is, right down there." Both of the men started running toward the creek. I was wondering if they had flipped their lids when the driver explained. The night before, about one a.m., they were driving pretty fast along that stretch of highway and the rear wheel had come loose from the studs in the hub. It had passed the car and went out of the range of the headlights. They hunted for it about an hour and gave up. They lived at Hinton, about twelve or fourteen miles away. They had come back to look for it in daylight. It was in plain sight from the highway but I had not noticed it because it was across the creek laying on a sand bar. I suppose it had hit something that made it bounce across the creek. Otherwise it would have been under the water and they would never have found it.

By that time there were lots of people on the highway with all their possessions piled on old jalopies headed west. The Joads of Steinbeck's story were on the way. But, of course, I didn't know who they were until he wrote the story and I read it. There were some pitiful sights to see. Nothing anyone could do about it but I never had a one of them try to pull any tricks on me. They were just plain honest people who had been dealt from a *stacked deck*. Some of those people and their offspring are now the backbone of California.

When Uncle Tom finished gathering his crops and came to take over the service station Jan came to live with Dad and Mom. Lloyd had four grandparents and a great grandma living within two blocks of our home. One time when he was about two and a half years old he was tipping over the water troughs in Dad's chicken pen. Dad was telling him he should not do that. Jan was there near by and she loved little boys. She said, "Aw, Hon. he don't know any

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better." The next morning Dad and I were by the pen again and Lloyd reached through the wire and upset the trough. He looked up at Dad and said, "I don't know any better." Dad tried to hide his grin but had to turn his back. We very often underestimate the mental capacity of little kids. They learn fast how to get by with their pranks. He had a remarkable memory for details. Mom had a patch-work quilt made of dozens of pieces and Lloyd could tell whose dress the scrap came from if it was any of the family. A fellow by the name of Newt Graham often drove by Dad's place. He had a 1926 Ford Coupe. I had not noticed that it sounded differently from other Fords but when he was coming by Lloyd would look up and say, "I hear Newt Grahams car." And he was always right.

My Chrysler had become an oil guzzler and a young man up the street wanted to trade for it. He used to live in the Hopewell area and we went to school together. He had a 1927 Chevy roadster that he wanted to trade and he also owned a Jersey heifer almost two years old at his grandpa's farm near where we used to live. I traded the Chrysler for the Chevy and the heifer if he would bring her in to my place. We had chains about thirty feet long with which we staked the cows along the grassy places on the creek and sometimes along the railroad right of way. That way we did not have to pay rent for pasture. It was not too long until my heifer had a calf. We gave the calf part of the milk and we used the rest of it. That was a big help with the food. As soon as the calf was big enough I put it on a chain so it could graze. It was a dark red heifer calf and grew pretty fast. Dad had two cows and we had plenty of milk, butter and cottage cheese.

Hugh had worked and had enough money to buy a nice guitar from Sears. It cost fifteen dollars and that was enough to get a real nice guitar with money as scarce as it was. It had a light brown back and a spruce top. It was a beautiful guitar and had the sweetest tone I had ever heard. He really got to be good at accompanying me on the fiddle and we were getting to the point where we could play the old dance tunes. Then his guitar opened a crack from the sound hole to the fingerboard. I suppose the wood was not seasoned quite enough. He sent it back to Sears and they sent him another. The new one looked perfect but it would not note as true as the first one and Hugh had a sharp ear for tuning. I decided to try to make a new fingerboard with corrections of the spacing to get the right tone. I made it from a piece of black walnut wood and filed the frets from pieces of wire and cut slots in a wedge shape and fitted the frets. That was a lot of work but I had more time than anything else. The steel frets were not as pretty as the silver ones but it noted true and sounded real good. We had many pleasant hours playing *country music* in the cool of the evenings in summer and by the warm stove in the winter time.

Harvesting Cotton

In the winter of 1931, Virginia was dating Arthur Mathews, a man who lived at Weatherford. He was helping his brother in law, Golden Wilks, on his farm and was to have the crop from eighteen acres of cotton for his pay. Virginia and Arthur planned to get married sometime soon. One evening when Arthur was, on his way to his date he had an accident involving another car in Weatherford. At the trial it was decided that Arthur was at fault and would have to pay the damages. He did not have any money so his brother-in-law paid it for him. Arthur agreed to let Golden have the cotton crop to repay him.

On January 31, 1932 they went to El Reno to be married. Nellie went along with them. When they returned they went to live with his sister, Della, and her husband, so Arthur could help with the farm work and take care of the cotton field. They stayed there until after the wheat harvest was completed then moved to Hydro and started housekeeping in Dad's little rent house next door to me and Nellie.

Dad, Hugh, Arthur and I did hay cutting and baling for Mr. Bell who had some farms along the creek. He raised some alfalfa and we four baled it for him. He paid us five cents per bale. He had a horse-power baler and it took four to keep it going. Dad tied the bales and stacked them as they came out of the baler. My job was feeding the baler. This was done with a short tined fork with a D like a shovel handle. I raked the hay from a platform and shoved it down into the baler where the plunger pushed it and compressed it to make the bales. Each bale was separated from the one preceding it with a wooden block with grooves to let the wire through for tying the bales. The feeding process was very tiring to the shoulder and very monotonous. One day, to relieve the monotony I decided to use my foot to push the hay down and let my arm rest. It worked very well for a while until Mr. Bell decided to speed things up. As the mule that was pulling the beam around started to step over rod that actuated the press Mr. Bell hit him with a piece of baling wire. The mule jumped ahead and brought up the plunger so fast that I almost did not get my

foot out of the baler. The plunger came up and crumpled my shoe as I scrambled to get out in time. I never tried that method again. And I never did lose a fork in the baler.

Arthur pitched the hay onto the platform of the baler and Hugh brought the hay to the baler with a *buck-rake*. On our best days we could bale around two hundred bales and if my memory is right we baled two hundred and forty bales one day. A day in the hay field was usually fourteen to sixteen hours. That paid us around two dollars apiece as long as the hay lasted. It gave us a little money for things we had to buy. We had some cows, chicken and a pig or two as well as the team we used to work at hauling jobs.

Before the haying time came it was time to buy a license for my Model T Ford Roadster. I had traded down from the Chrysler to the Model T and a Jersey heifer about ready to have her first calf. There was no work and no money so I decided to sell the Ford. Herman Spor wanted it so I sold it to him for twenty dollars. I was not home when he came after it. Although Lloyd was only a few months past two years of age he had a sense of possession. When Herman drove away with the car Lloyd started crying and ran into the house. When Nellie asked him what he was crying for he said, "That man is taking our car." For the first time in several years I was without a car.

About the first week of August, Golden Wilks told Arthur the crabgrass was about to take the cotton. Since Arthur had agreed to take care of it, Nellie and I decided we would go and help him and Virginia hoe the grass out of it. We borrowed Nellie's Dad's Ford and went to the field. The weather was very hot and dry and the grass almost hid the cotton plants. The leaves of the cotton looked wilted during the heat of the day. I would not have given much for the chance of a crop judging from the look of the field. In a few days we had the grass all chopped out and Mr. Wilks went over the field with a cultivator and we went back home. There was some rain soon after that. In September the cotton was beginning to get ready to be picked. Mr. Wilks was going to pay us for *snapping* it. Along about this time the gins had been improved and could gin the snapped cotton about as well as picked cotton. In picking cotton the cotton is pulled out of the hull of the bolls but in snapping the entire boll is snapped off of the stem. This method is much faster than picking it.

Arthur had been promised the use of a camp trailer to use so we could be near the field and not waste time driving to work. Across the road from the center of the field there was another farmer, named Newman. Arthur had told him that we would snap his cotton also. We took our bedding and camping gear in a hay-frame wagon and drove to the field, a distance of about nine miles. After we arrived we learned that Arthur's friend had got a job with the state highway department and was using his camp trailer on the job. Wilks did not have room for us and Newman's sister in law was expecting a baby and was coming to stay with her sister so they did not have room for any of us.

We spent the night sleeping in the wagon. As is often the case in early October, the wind blew very hard all night. The wagon rocked around most of the night but we managed to get some sleep. I had three dollars and Arthur had sixty cents. We could buy 8 ounces of cotton ducking for fifteen cents per yard. Ducking is a light canvas used for cotton sacks. Arthur took the money and walked into Weatherford, about five miles, and bought twelve yards of ducking, a spool of thread (5¢) and a pound of coffee (15¢) and came back to our campsite. I took the thread and canvas over to Newman's house and asked Mrs. Newman if I could use her machine to sew the canvas into a tarp. She said she would do it for me if I wanted her to but I told her I knew how to run a sewing machine if she didn't mind me using it. She said that would be OK and I made a tarp twelve feet square. We borrowed a shovel and excavated a hole seven by twelve feet and about two and a half feet deep. We found a piece of pipe long enough for a ridge pole over the dugout. We supported it at each end with two forked poles from the locust sprouts along the fence. We found a bunch lettuce crates and apple boxes in Newman's junk pile and boarded up the ends after it was braced diagonally along each side of the sloped part we stretched the canvas over the ridge like a tent. We made a door in the east end of the part above ground. It was not an original idea but a version of the half-dugout where I was born and lived my first five years. That night we moved our beds into the dugout. As we did not have any furniture we made a pallet on the floor. I was to the rear end then Nellie and Virginia and Arthur next to the door. Of course, Lloyd slept between me and Nellie as he had always done thus far. Sometime about midnight I was awakened by a shower of loose dirt falling in my face. My pillow was half covered with dirt. I lifted the lamp and discovered that we had dug through a gopher's den when we made our *house* and he was repairing the damage. We cleaned up the mess and finished the night. The next morning we stowed all our gear in the dugout and Nellie and I made a trip back home to pick up other things we would need. We took our day bed and two boards so we could roll

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one half under the other during the day. Nellie's folks had a two-hole Monkey stove and some pipe and we borrowed that and also borrowed Mr. Curnutt's Ford Touring car. While we were gone Arthur and Virginia had started snapping cotton for Newman. Mrs. Newman told them that she had a bed on the front porch that they could use if they wanted to do so. We set up the day bed in the rear of the dugout and put the stove to one side of the door. Now we were all set to go to work. We had almost picked the first bale for Mr. Newman when Mr. Wilks told Arthur that he wanted his work done as soon as possible so he could sow that field to wheat for the next year. He asked that we go to work on his field and we had to tell Mr. Newman that we would not be able to do his work. I hated to do that but there was no choice. We started work for Mr. Wilks. He was paying us forty-five cents per hundred pounds.

When he returned from the gin after the first bale he said, "I have some bad news for you folks. They will not pay me more eight cents a pound for the cotton and I can't pay you more than forty cent per hundred or I won't have anything left." We knew he was not lying and we needed the work so we told him that was fair enough. The most I picked in a day was six hundred and twenty five pounds. At the same time I weighed and emptied what Nellie and Virginia picked, about nine hundred pounds. That was a good day's work. Arthur was helping with the haymaking that day. All together we harvested thirteen bales from that field and one for Mr. Newman. Nellie left Lloyd at the wagon in the middle of the field and on the fence next to camp we hung a pot of brown beans, on the barbed wire and built a fire of dead locust brush under it while we picked a *round*. Each time we came to the fence we stoked the fire and at the wagon we checked to see if Lloyd was OK. Usually he was. One time when we arrived at the wagon he was in such a mess that Nellie almost cried. He had taken a stick and dug the axle-grease out of the wagon wheel and was smeared from head to foot with the black grease and if that was not bad enough he had fouled his pants and that had run down to his shoes.

One time Mr. Wilks came by with the loaded wagon and told us a story and was laughing all the time he was telling us. He had asked Lloyd what he did down there all day. To which Lloyd replied, "Oh, we just eat apples and drink beer." The funny thing was that we had never had any beer and could not afford apples. Lloyd always had a very active imagination.

One other event that was a little exciting at the time, but amusing afterward, happened in November. It was just a while after dark and a big black cloud was coming up in the northwest. Arthur and Virginia had gone to Newman's porch when it started to rain. It was raining very hard and we were in a low corner of the field. I was a little uneasy. In case the gopher hole opened our dugout would be flooded. At first the water came through the canvas in a light mist. After it was thoroughly wet the expansion of the threads stopped the spray but each place the canvas touched the brace wires it dripped. We had a tub and a *Post Toastie* shipping carton. Nellie put Lloyd on the bed and held the cardboard box over him while I held the inverted tub over the kerosene lamp so the cold water would not break the chimney. Everything held until the storm ended and we were lucky that water did not come under the sides of our tent and the gopher was a good engineer. Our bed was not wet enough to bother so after it was over it was fun. The next day it was too wet to work so we all came home and did a big washing and bought groceries to take back. Nellie's Dad decided he did not need a car so he sold me the Ford Touring car for twenty-five dollars and I had enough money to pay for it.

One Saturday Mr. Wilkes told us that he was going to sow the field to wheat the next Monday. There was a little cotton left but he was in a hurry to get it sowed. We came home over the week end and went back Monday morning to pick up our belongings. When we arrived we noted that the field was not planted so Arthur asked Mr. Wilks what he was going to do with it and he said if we wanted the cotton we could have whatever we could get. We all donned our sacks and took about six row apiece and went over the field in a few hours. We loaded the sacks onto the old car and took it to the gin at Hydro. We had earned seven dollars and eighty-five cents by gleaning the field.

One other little incident worthy of mention before we end this story. Nellie and Virginia had come home to do laundry and Arthur and I *batched* that night. I was going to make pancakes for breakfast and did not have flour so decided to make corn-cake a like Mother used to make. I did not know all I should have known and when I poured the dough into the hot skillet it started popping almost like pop-corn and the cakes flew apart. I went on with the frying until it was browned and we poured syrup over it and ate it with a spoon. Not very dainty but it tasted good. I learned later that good cooks add a little flour to hold it together in the form of a cake. The brown beans which we

cooked on the fence had a flavor of locust smoke but after lugging a big sack of cotton five or six hours they tasted very good. With all the hard times and worry I still have fond memories of this time.

Working for Mr. Bell

Dad, Hugh, Arthur and I continued to do the haying jobs for Mr. Bell for two or three years and also other odd jobs that he wanted us to do. Once, when he owed me about twenty dollars, I asked for my pay and he said, "Do you have a blank check." I did not have one so I had to wait to get my pay. The next time I was prepared. I said, "Yes, which bank do you use." I had blank checks from all the local banks. When I told him that he said, "Let me see, I think I have that much cash." He pulled a big roll of bills out of his pocket and peeled off two tens and paid me. But with all his reluctance to part with money I could borrow money from him and he never asked for interest. Sometimes Dad would let his wages ride for several months before he would ask for it and I never heard Mr. Bell question Dad's bookkeeping.

One winter, Mr. Bell was working at West's Elevator. He was *nubbing* seed corn. This job was chopping the ends off of ears of corn so that only the perfectly shaped grains remained. Then this was shelled and sacked to be sold to farmers for seed. There was a popular hybrid variety of corn that had been developed to mature early before our dry weather came along and caused ordinary corn to fail. Mr. Bell had done this work the previous year. We all wondered why a man who did not have to work would spend days on end nubbing corn for ten cents per bushel. I decided later that, in addition to the little money he made, he had nothing more interesting to do.

That year Mr. West had a lot of corn and he was shipping it by truck to Chickasha and Mr. Bell asked me if I would help him as he did not think he could get it all done in time. He told me I would be paid ten cents per bushel so I agreed to help him. I worked for several days and we had a huge pile of corn on the warehouse floor. I used my shingling hatchet, which had a good balance and sharp blade. We used a chunk sawed off of an elm log for a chopping block. It did not take too long to chop a bushel. After we had it all ready to be shelled I learned that we had to help shell it too. I was not told about this in the original deal and I was somewhat upset.

The sheller that was used in the elevator was too rough on the grains for seed corn so Mr. West had a farmer from around Korn (or Corn, as it is now spelled) Oklahoma bring his *custom* sheller to the warehouse and do the job. I learned that Mr. Bell and I had to scoop the ear corn into the sheller as part of the ten cent a bushel contract. Mr. Bell, being an elderly man and not used to heavy work, I did about two-thirds of the scooping. As I recall, we were working at the shelling part of two days. When it was finished we had shelled thirteen hundred bushels. My part of the money was sixty-five dollars and with money almost impossible to get I felt much better about the *deal*. That was enough money to buy a lot of groceries and a license for the Ford.

Building a Saw from Scratch

Mr. West, who owned the Elevator and Grain Co., also owned several farms around Hydro and many of them had timber of different kinds on them. He made a deal with Dad to clear some of the land. Dad could have all the wood except that suitable for making fence posts. The oak and walnut trees would yield one cut off the lower end for post and the rest could be used for making firewood. After I had finished with the corn job Dad, Arthur and I took our cross-cut saw and axes to the woods and made posts and firewood. We could sell what we had left after our own needs were met. We could get a dollar and a quarter per *rick* for it. A rick was four feet high and eight feet long of wood cut to sixteen-inch length. That may not sound like much wood but it took a lot of hard work to do it by hand and we had to clean up and burn the brush so we earned our money for what we sold. About two times we found that some one had stolen a rick or two. There are thieves now and also then and no doubt there always will be some.

I took the cushions out of the back seat of the old touring car and bolted some slats along the running board on the left side and I could haul a rick of wood that way when we needed to bring it home or deliver it to a customer. One place where we were working was a mile and a half up the railroad track from town. We often walked and took our lunch and water jug and stayed all day. It was nearing spring and a warm day. I removed my jacket and laid it on the ground while we worked at cutting wood and burning brush. At quitting time I went to get my jacket and could not find it. I was sure where I had laid it but when I looked more closely I found a pile of ashes with five little round piles that looked just like buttons. The fire had followed the leaves to where my coat laid in the leaves. The best thing

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about that was that spring was about to arrive, but it was good enough for another winter's use before the fire got to it.

I decided to build a power saw for cutting fire wood. I planned to drive it with a Model T Ford engine mounted on a trailer made from a Model T chassis so it would be easy to move to the job. I had the trailer frame but no engine that would do the job. I made a mail-order to Sears for a twenty eight inch Cord Wood Saw blade. I borrowed the use of a metal cutting lathe and made a mandrel for the saw blade and fixed one end so it would mate with the universal joint connection on a Ford engine. I attached a swinging table made of scrap-iron and the running board from a Ford car to carry the logs into the saw. It had a coil spring to return it for moving the log forward for the next cut. I did all the cutting and drilling of the parts with hand tools. The drilling of the holes was the most difficult part as I had to use an ordinary bit brace. Electric drills were not very plentiful in those days and I had more time than money. In fact, I did not have any money with which to buy the engine. The rest of the parts came from junk piles around the country.

We had been visiting with Glen and Mary and Glen had borrowed a shotgun from a neighbor, Lake Oliver, and when we returned the gun to him I saw a complete Model T engine laying by his barn. I asked Lake if he would sell it and he said he had planned to replace the engine in his truck with it but if I wanted it I could have it for ten dollars. I felt of the crank to check the compression and it seemed to be in good shape. I told him I would go home and get my trailer and come back and get it. What I did not tell him was that I would also have to see if I could borrow enough money to pay for it. When I got home I went to see Mr. Bell about the ten-dollar loan. I had a hitch built onto the trailer with the saw frame so I went after the engine and brought it home. I was soon set up for making firewood faster than by hand.

It took four men to keep everything going. I fed the logs into the saw and we had to have one man to *off-bear* the wood and toss it into a pile away from the saw and we needed one man to *tail* the long logs until I could balance them on the swinging table. We could make faster work by having the fourth hand to bring the logs to the saw. The worst draw-back was that I was so busy cutting wood for others that I barely had time to cut any for myself. However, I could earn a little money, which was always welcome.

One job that I did failed to give me any return for the time involved. Ralph Noel, who lived near the creek east of town, had a big pile of wood, which he wanted sawed into firewood. I told him I would do the sawing for him for two dollars per hour for me and the saw and he could furnish the other labor. That should have given me pretty good wages if everything went well. I was about to the last of the pile and was sawing a large Coffee-Bean log when the saw started kicking the log back each time I tried to push it through. We took the log off the table and took an axe and split off the piece that was partially cut. When we split it off we found a railroad spike that had been driven into the tree years before and had grown under the wood. In reviewing the history of that area an old timer said there had been a blacksmith shop in that area when Hydro was first settled. I had worked for Ralph two hours, which paid me four dollars, but I worked six hours getting the teeth filed properly on the saw. Four dollars was four dollars even if it did take eight hours to earn it. One dollar a day was about the best one could do and that was not always available in those days.

One sawing job worked out much better than that one. Glen's dad had a farm on which there were lots of willow and cottonwood timber. The trees were about six to eight inches across and about twenty feet tall. This did not make the best kind of firewood but it took very little labor to cut a lot of it. He wanted me to saw it for him. He had lots of help with Glen and his brother, I think, altogether there were about six to help us. I set the saw up in the woods and advanced the homemade governor to a rather fast speed and locked it there. Its normal response was a little slow for top speed. Glen took the position of off-bearing and his brother Allen tailed the logs. He was really good at it and we never cramped the blade during the whole operation. In a few hours we had a stack of wood that was more than enough for the winter. Before we finished with the sawing for Glen's dad his elder brother, Frank, asked me if I would saw some for him if he would cut it down before we finished. I told him I would so he and his brother-in-law and the other Lasley boys who were not needed at the saw grabbed axes and started slashing the trees and trimmed them where they fell. By the time we had finished with the sawing for Mr. Lasley, Frank had quite a number of trees cut and trimmed. With all the help we had they could untangle the logs and bring them to the saw fast enough to keep it busy. It was a hectic, hilarious wood-cutting party and we ended up with a very nice pile of wood for Frank.

One time when we were cutting wood for Mr. West on a farm southeast of Hydro we were cutting black-jack and post oak trees. This makes very good firewood. There were several fellows working in that area. One was Arthur Bradley. He asked me to saw the logs he had cut. It was a cold cloudy day. We came home and got the power saw and went back. When we were about half finished it started snowing and we were rushing around from one pile of logs to another to finish before the snow got too bad. At the last pile we had to pull the trailer across a little gully to get to the pile of logs. I cranked the saw and started to push the first log into the saw and it would not go so I backed up and tried again. This time I saw sparks flying from the blade. I took a good look and discovered that the metal arch around the blade was misaligned until the blade was cutting the iron instead of going the space between the sides of the arch. In crossing the little ditch the framework of the table had hooked over a stump and that had broken the braces and let the table swing backward about two inches. I had cut about an inch and a half *bed-rail* iron with the saw so that ended the sawing until I could bring it home and repair it. I eventually sold the saw rig to Art. He sat it up at home and used it for several years.

One little funny story concerning the saw before we close the chapter of the saw. Art was sawing wood for himself one time and his oldest boy was about seven was helping some and he had a bag of *red-hot* candy. While Art was busy with the saw his boy would ask him to open his mouth and he would toss some of the candy into Art's mouth. Art had some rabbit hutches near the saw and one time when the boy asked him to open his mouth he tossed in a few *rabbit droppings*. I'm sure this happened because Art told me about it but he did not tell me if the boy got a spanking. I'm inclined to think that Art took it as a joke. Although he made his boys work pretty hard he always seemed to think a lot of them.

Exploring Ghost Mound with Glen Lasley

During the winter of 1932 and 1933 Mary and Glen moved from the old Curnutt home place to the *Ghost Mound Place*. Nellie, Lloyd and I were visiting with them and Glen and I hunted rabbits and a few wild ducks to help out with the meals. Mary was an expert when it came to making good rabbit gravy. When we had finished our visit and were ready to start home a blizzard blew in from the north. I tied a quilt over the windshield frame then tucked it under us on the seat. Nellie had wrapped Lloyd in a blanket and we started for home. When we turned north at the corner east of their house the wind caused the quilt to billow out and the drag of the wind was so great that the old Model T would not run in high gear. There was nothing to do but remove the quilt. Nellie wrapped the quilt around herself and the baby so they would not get too cold. I had to face the wind for the ten or twelve miles to Hydro. I did not suffer too much as I was used to working in all kinds of weather. We arrived home without any more trouble and I built a good fire in the old wood stove and we were soon thawed out.

Another time we were out to their place the weather was nicer. We always went hunting when we were there. After we came in from our hunt Glen decided we would butcher a pig he had in the old corncrib. He had put the pig in the slat crib and nailed some boards across the door. He had confined it in the crib so he could fatten it better. I took aim at the pig's head with Glen's rifle and pulled the trigger. The pig fell to the floor and Glen knocked the boards off the doorway and went in to *stick* the pig so it would bleed well. After he had cut the skin on its neck and was getting ready to stick it the pig started to revive and kicked the knife out of his hand. I guess my bullet had not hit the brain and the pig got to its feet and escaped through the open doorway. It was a little groggy but able to run into the barnyard. Glen grabbed his axe and followed the pig and brought him down after a couple of blows with the head of the axe. We finished the butchering without any more mishaps.

This event reminded me of the calf we butchered before they moved from the old home place. We had neither butchered an animal before so we were a little awkward. We had both helped many times but had never actually butchered a large animal ourselves. The calf Glen wanted to butcher was past a yearling. He said, "I'll hold it's head while you hit it with the axe." He held it by the ears so it could not dodge. I took a fairly good swing with the poll-axe and hit it squarely between the eyes. It fell to the ground and Glen took his butcher knife and started to cut the skin on it's neck so he could stick it. His knife was not very sharp and while he was sawing away at it's neck the calf started to revive from the blow and was trying to get up. Glen jumped up and said, "Here give me that axe." I grabbed hold of the calf and Glen had to hit it two times before it went down again. I don't think we did a very good job of bleeding it but we finally finished the job. It always looked so easy to see someone who knew how but that is true of most jobs. The next beef I butchered was done much easier and neatly.

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One wintry day Glen and I had gone down behind Ghost Mound to a slough along the creek. Five Mile Creek did not have much banks along the channel and in the fall shallow ponds or sloughs formed along the creek. Willows and Cottonwoods grew in the water and occasionally we could find some ducks on the water. As we came to this slough we saw some ducks about fifty or sixty yards out in the water. Glen said, "I think I'll take a shot at them." Thinking they were out of range I said, "If you kill any I'll go get them." He raised his old double-barrel and blasted at them. All except one flew away. He laughed and said, "Alright, go get it." The joke was there was a thin skim of ice on the water most of the way and he thought I would back out on the promise. I sat down and pulled off my shoes and socks and started wading. The water was not over knee-deep and I could wade without getting my pants wet. By the time I had made a few steps there was no feeling in my feet but I retrieved the duck and it was a little Teal, hardly worth going after, but I had to uphold my honor.

One day in the spring we went out to visit with Glen and Mary and do a little hunting as usual. This was a very regular pastime when there was not much work to do. This time I had a .22 pistol and Glen had a single-shot .22 rifle. The pistol was an Iver-Johnson with an eight-inch barrel. I had made the hammer for it to replace the one made at the factory as the firing pin and hammer were one piece and the pin was broken off. When I made the hammer I left the top smooth instead of checkering it as they had done at the factory. I found later that this was a mistake. The cylinder on the Iver-Johnson did not have a positive lock on the cylinder like the better guns and some one had worked on the ratchet at the rear of the cylinder and it was not always perfectly aligned with the barrel. It would sometimes throw a sliver of load out the side. We took our guns and went into the field north of the house to a sand-plum thicket, a good place for rabbits. On the way, we jumped a jack-rabbit and I thought I would try to hit him on the run. I held the revolver around the barrel and cylinder as I cocked it with the right hand. As I had it almost cocked my thumb slipped off of the hammer and it came down and fired the shell. The bullet was in line with the frame instead of the hole in the barrel. The bullet was pulverized into fine powder and sprayed out into the palm of my left hand from the end of my thumb to the end of my third finger. As soon as Glen learned that I was not hurt much he started laughing and said, "I thought you were going to shoot the rabbit instead of your self." The skin was not broken on my hand but that lead dust was about the hottest thing I had held onto for a while.

When spring was near we were talking of making a garden and Glen said we could build a fence across the southwest corner of the place and plow it up for a garden. This would be *new* ground. It had always been grass land like when the Indians had it. We took the posthole diggers, the axe and some barbed wire and put up a fence across about an acre of the corner. We cut willow trees for the posts because they were handy not because they made good posts but they were all right for a year or two. When we dug holes, along the low side water came up in the holes until we could not tamp in the dirt. It turned to thin mud but in time it would settle solidly enough. We took Glen's team and a plow and *broke the sod* as the early settlers would say. After harrowing it smooth we had a beautiful patch of black soil for a garden.

We planted a big variety of things, Irish Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes, and about every thing a good garden should have. When that was done we still had about half of the plot left. I got some Tennessee Red peanut seed and planted the rest of the land. We would drive out there and work at tending the garden and every thing was growing very fine. We had high hopes of having something to help out with the groceries.

Along about this time Glen, Hugh and I had started *fiddling* for some community square dances. Glen played the fiddle and Hugh played the guitar and I played the mandolin. Since the dances were near Glen's place I would drive out to the garden and work till about time to go to the dances and that way I got double service from the gas I used in the car.

To finish the story or the garden, that year we had a drought. The creek went dry and the black land baked as hard as a rock. We dug the Irish potatoes but decided to leave the sweet potatoes hoping to get some rain so they would grow some more. There were a few mature peanuts and we decided against digging them. On the last day of August we had a two-inch rain. Every thing in the garden started growing and looking fine. When Fall was approaching we took a look at the peanuts. They were loaded with immature nuts but all the mature ones had sprouted and were ruined. The sweet potatoes were as large as gallon buckets but every one had split their skins when the took the second growth. We know they would not keep with broken skins so all we would get from them was what we could use in a short time. The tomato vines were loaded with nice big tomatoes about ready to turn ripe. If the frost would

just be late in coming we would have plenty of tomatoes. You guessed it, the frost came early and we had a wagonload of green tomatoes. There were no peanuts, not even as much as I had planted. So it goes with a fellow who is down on his luck, he gets kicked in the teeth, even by the weather. In spite of that we still enjoyed ourselves.

While the creek was dry that summer Glen had about twenty-five head of cattle on the Johnson grass pasture along the creek and with no water for them to drink and he had a problem. He borrowed a tractor with dirt moving equipment on it from one of his brothers. With this he scooped out a trench about fifteen feet deep south of the mound and water came up in it to a depth of about four feet. The ground was soft and he was afraid the cattle would bog down so he got a little pitcher pump and set it on a bridge timber across the pit. In case you don't know what a pitcher pump is I will explain. They were made for shallow lift of water. There was a rather large cylinder at the top with a handle for operating the plunger and it had a large pitcher-like spout for discharging the water. These pumps would not lift water more than about twenty-eight feet but for a distance of fifteen feet they would deliver a very good flow of water without too much strain on the operator. They were originally made to pump water from a cistern to a kitchen sink or laundry tub. Glen made a trough of boards to carry the water outside the fence he had built around the pit. We all took turns at the pump until the stock was watered and with a full tank for the stragglers we could do other things for a while.

Earlier in the summer before the creek went dry Glen and I often fished in the creek. There were only bullhead catfish and sun perch in it but fishing is fishing and as long as you catch one larger than you expect it is fun and fried perch and bullhead catfish taste good after you have prowled a mile or so on the creek. One time we were down the creek on Mr. Weyhmuller's farm. There was a long pool there with a clay bank on one side. We decided to try our luck at hand-fishing or *noodling* as it's sometimes called. We took off our clothes and went into the water and started feeling along the clay bank. When I came to the deeper part of the pool, about neck deep to me, I found a hole in the bank near the bottom. I had to go under the water to get my hand into the hole. It seemed to be a hole dug by a muskrat. It was round and smooth. When I felt around I could feel some fish so as I came up for air I put my foot over the hole to keep the fish from leaving. I told Glen to bring the gunny sack, which we had with us. A wet gunny sack is good for keeping fish alive until you get home with them. I started reaching into the hole and catching the fish. If you go gently as you feel them and stroke their sides until you locate their heads they don't get excited. When you get your hand in position to grasp their heads so the sharp spine on their back is between the first and second finger and your thumb and forefinger is in front of the spines on the sides you clamp their gills shut and they won't struggle. This may sound complicated but it can be done much faster than I can write about it. We took nineteen catfish out of that hole so we had a good mess for all of us. Hand fishing has been made illegal but to me it's just as much sport as doing it with a hook and line.

One day when Glen was feeling a little ornery he asked me if I knew how to set off a charge of dynamite. I told him I knew how to blast rock with it but had never tried dynamiting fish. I had heard of it but never saw it done. He had one stick of dynamite along with a cap and some fuse. We decided to try it on a pool down by the mound. I attached the fuse to the cap and inserted it into the end of the stick of dynamite. Then I cut a long slender limb from a willow sprout and tied the dynamite about four feet from the small end of the limb. We lit the fuse and shoved the end of the pole into the mud in the bottom of the pool. We moved away to a safe distance and waited for the blast. When it went off there was a cloud of spray higher than the trees. It looked at if all the water had turned to steam. We went back to see how many fish we had killed. There was no water nor fish where the pool had been. As the water started to flow back into the pool there was one dead minnow about three inches long floating on the water. That was a surprise, as I felt sure there were fish in that hole. That was my first and last time to dynamite a hole in the creek. That style of fishing is one of the most damaging of all unless it is the use of poisoning so we decided to never try it again. That summer, before the drought there were lots of sand-plums around that part of the country. One evening we packed the car with food we could cook on a campfire and drove down to Glen and Mary's place and told them we were going to camp out by the mound and pick plums early in the morning before it was too hot. Mom enjoyed such things so she went along with me, Nellie and Lloyd. In the evening, before we cooked supper we decided to climb the mound. When we reached the ledge where the rock were almost vertical Mom said she was too dizzy to go farther. She always felt dizzy when looking from very high places. She said she would wait on the ledge and keep Lloyd while Nellie and I went on to the top. We crawled through the hole that was the only way for most people to

make the top. Nellie was expecting a visit from the stork in about two months but she made it to the top all right. I am not sure but this may have been her last trip to the top of Ghost Mound.

That fall, after Arminta was born in August, we were visiting Glen and Mary again, that was a very regular practice for years, and we were having a warm drizzle. This is something that happens some times in September or October. At that time I was using a Stevens Crack-Shot rifle of .25 caliber. It was a gun that Nellie's folks had brought with them in the covered wagon when they moved to Oklahoma from Kansas. Nellie's mother had killed a coyote with it soon after they arrived at the new place. I had to make a firing pin and extractor for it before I could use it. Glen and I went into the black-jack timber to the south and west of their house to look for rabbits. We found that a warm drizzle was an asset to hunting cotton tails. They were out in the brush foraging and playing and the dampness of the sticks on the ground deadened the sound of our footsteps. It was easy to get within good range to get a mess for our meals. Fried cotton tails, gravy and hot biscuits makes a meal fit for a king. Nellie is a little squeamish about wild meat but says she enjoys eating the backs of a rabbit but can't enjoy the legs. Mom always said she would cook anything that we thought we could eat. But I think she would have drawn the line at a rattle snake. She hated snakes as much as Nellie did. But that was one thing she need not worry about. I never bring myself to believe I would try to eat a rattlesnake steak. I never did care for possum after Hugh and I tried to broil one on an open fire and to eat it without salt. I hope I am never hungry enough to do that.

Fishing the Washita River

One fishing trip that we made along about this time sticks in my memory. Nellie's brother, Roy, Glen and I decided to go down to the Washita river to fish. We had in mind to stay two or three days. There was no point in hurrying back as there was nothing to do anyway. We piled our gear and bedding into the back seat of the car while Mary and Nellie packed our grub box. We had been to the butcher shop where Nellie's brother, Frankie, was the butcher and he gave us two pounds of liver that we planned to use for bait. Liver was rather cheap and he did not sell it readily. We had planned to seine minnows with which to bait our trotlines. When we reached the river it was getting along into the afternoon. We started looking for minnows but found very few. We strung out the lines then, as it was getting dark we started hunting grasshoppers to bait the lines. We caught them by stalking them on the weeds by use of a flashlight. It was a slow method but the best we could do. By the time we were ready to cook supper it was after dark. We unpacked the grub box and found everything we needed except a skillet and knives, forks and spoons. We had some good pocket knives and a gallon syrup pail. I put the bottom end of the pail in the fire until the solder melted then knocked it off. I did the same to the rim around the top. Next, using my *jack of all blade* of my knife, I split the bucket down the seam on the side. When this was flattened it gave us a piece of tin about eight by sixteen inches. With the pair of ten-inch pliers I carried in the car I folded up about an inch all the way around the tin. Where the folds came together at the corners I crimped it tightly together then brought the folded piece around (like Mom's old bread pans were formed) and we had a nice little pan to fry things in. I used the pliers for a handle so I could control the heat while cooking. The next decision was what to cook. It needed to be something we could cook fast as we were famished. I noticed that the liver was in good condition so I decided to fry it for supper. While I sliced the liver Glen peeled and sliced some onions and Roy took another pail we had and put on a pot of coffee. There is where I learned how to cook liver. The fire was so hot I could stand to hold the pan over it for a few seconds at a time. The pliers handle was so short my hand would get too hot by the time the meat started to sizzle. After a while it was cooked and browned thoroughly. I truly believe it was the best fried liver I had ever tasted. Of course, the late hour of the meal made it taste better but liver should be fried very slowly to taste the best.

After we ate we ran the lines and found a lot of the bait gone and a few small bullheads on the lines. We worked all night at gathering grasshoppers and baiting the lines and never caught a fish worth keeping. The next morning we took our cane poles and started fishing up the river. We were disgusted with the small fish we were catching so when we got a bite we would heave hard on the pole to see how high we could throw those little catfish. We came around a bend and there was a *dude* fisherman with a rod and reel and a bag like a creel hung on his shoulder. He was saving every little fish he caught and looked at us like he thought we were crazy. Glen laughed about the look on that fellow's face as he watched our wild fishing.

After we had our lunch we tried to take a nap. It was hot and I was sweaty and I could never sleep with gnats and flies crawling on my face. Glen was luckier than I in that respect. He took a good nap in spite of the flies and gnats.

When he woke up he said, "There's some good fishing water four miles up the river." "It couldn't be any worse than here, so let's go." I replied. We gathered in the lines and drove up river four miles to the road that went west out of Corn. There was a gate in the fence near the river. We opened it and followed the winding road through the timber until we were near the riverbank. We could see it had been used for camping. It was unusual to find a farmer who objected to people fishing along the river those days.

We went down along the bank to look things over before unpacking. We found two young men lying on the bank in the shade of a big cottonwood tree. They did not have any poles set nor any other sign of fishing gear. They talked a while then started telling us about the *Dutchman*¹⁴ who owned that place. According to their story he was the meanest man who ever lived. He carried a .45 and would just as soon use it as not. He had had a row with a neighbor whose bull had gotten into his field. He had shot the bull and had shot the dirt at the neighbor's feet as he ran for home. I looked at Glen and he was grinning and I told the guys, "Well, we have driven fifty miles to fish (really about thirty) and we are not going to leave until he comes down and tells us to get out." They soon got up and started upriver as they said, "We are leaving because we sure would not like for him to catch us here." They went around a clump of bushes and we moved over so we could watch them. Under the brush they had hidden some trammel nets and fish traps. They went on up the river to the other side of the bridge. Their story sounded a little too wild and we had suspected they were only trying to scare us out of the place they wanted to string their illegal nets.

A while before sundown we had our lines set and had our lines set with grasshoppers and sand toads. There had been a small rise in the water the night before but at this point it had dropped back to normal. While we were setting our lines we would occasionally step on some clumps of drifted material in the bed of the river and sometimes we would feel a fish wiggle out of it. We had started catching some nice channel cats before dark. By about midnight we were still taking fish but two nights in a row without sleep was too much for me and Roy so we spread some quilts and lay down for a nap. Glen said he would make one more round before coming to bed. I faintly remember his coming to bed and asking if the mosquitoes were bad. I told him they were not too bad. The next morning he said he had turned the light on us and our backs were black with mosquitoes. I guess I was too sleepy to notice but I had a scratching good time the next day.

For supper the evening before we peeled some potatoes and fried some bacon. Before that Glen had said his uncle had a field of corn there and he was sure he would not care if we had some for supper. He went to the corn field and came back with an armful of nice yellow roasting ears. He didn't have an uncle within forty miles of there. I sliced the corn off the cob and scraped the cobs and fried it in the bacon grease and we had another delicious meal. Such antics as raiding a man's cornfields could have been part of the cause for NO TRESPASSING signs in later years.

We ran the lines again about daylight and were still catching some nice fish. We found one bullhead catfish about fourteen inches long on one line and he had been swallowed up to his fins and there were the marks of catfish teeth along both sides almost his entire length. As often happens *the big one got away*.

Back in the early Thirties the Washita ran about three feet deep at normal level and there were some very large catfish in it. Thirty-five years later when I went back to the same spot the river was about half as wide as it used to be and if the bottom had been firm the water would not have run into a pair of oxfords. So much for conservation of our natural assets.

After we had our breakfast we decided we had enough fish and we were tired and miserable with our mosquito bites we decided to head home. We arrived a little after noon and after dinner we dressed the fish we had. We dumped them into Mary's wash tub, a No. 3 tub, and it was over three-fourths full. We had a fish fry that made all the troubles seem insignificant.

Life during The Depression

When the depression was getting into full swing in this area in the earliest part of 1931, one of the effects was the low prices farmers were receiving for their products. Cotton prices were so low that it was hardly worthwhile to harvest it and cattle and hogs were sold at a loss. For now we will not go into the living conditions of the laboring people. I

¹⁴ *Dutchman* is somewhat derogatory name for German Mennonites who settled in Western Oklahoma.

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just want to show how the brains in our Federal Government react to a problem. I don't know if the decisions came from President Roosevelt or our intelligent Congressmen, perhaps both. They decided that the low prices were due to overproduction. They had heard of the law of supply and demand so they decided to do something about the supply. They put into force a regulation whereby a farmer could be paid for destroying some of his surplus cotton and livestock. The cotton had to be burned or plowed under and not harvested. The cattle and hogs had to be killed and destroyed. None of it could be given to anyone who might be able to use it. Their theory was that scarcity would make prices better therefore, the farmers would be better off and that would restore prosperity. This was very good logic if it had come from a four-year old mind but to come from *leaders* of our country they should be blushing until the end of time. While all this useful material was being destroyed there were twelve million men who could not feed or clothe their families through no fault of their own. After ten or twelve years they were still trying to bring back prosperity with little success. What started the economy forward was the money that was borrowed to get ready for World War Two. We still have historians tell what great leadership we had that brought us out of The Depression. We are inclined to blame the administration in power for recessions of any-thing that goes wrong with the economy but very often it is caused by free spending of former administrations.

The Depression continued on through the early thirties with no improvement in respect to making a living. In fact it was gradually becoming harder to find enough work to keep three square meals on the table. Some times we all pooled our groceries so all our families could eat. Mom had always had the know-how to make a meal with a very minimum of things to use. It was no problem to keep a supply of cornmeal as we could take corn for pay on some of the jobs we did and West's elevator had installed a *hammer-mill* for grinding feed for livestock. With it we could have the corn ground into meal for a very small charge. The mill ground it a little too fine for the best cornmeal but it was inexpensive and available. We had three good cows among the family. Dad had I kept two of his best cows when we moved to town and I had the little Jersey cow I had got in the car trade. Nellie and I had about three dozen hens and Dad had a good sized flock. That supplied butter, eggs and milk and occasionally a baked hen. With our hunting and fishing we could usually make a meal. We raised a garden, sometimes along the creek near the town sewage disposal plant, but not where the waste was dumped, and one or two years Mr. Bell let us have about an acre of ground on his farm near the *Frog pond*. We usually managed to have flour enough that we could have biscuits for breakfast. When we had bacon or salt pork which made good gravy and sand plums for jelly with hot biscuits and home-churned butter we did all right.

Another delicious meal could be put together with hot biscuits, gravy and fried cottontail rabbits. This was a wintertime treat of course. Another dish Mom cooked up was what was called "tamale pie". It was made with a kettle of cornmeal mush with some hamburger meat cooked with it. It was seasoned with "Mexene Chili Powder", the best brand ever made. A few times when we did not have the meat it was just the mush and chili powder with perhaps a little butter or lard stirred into it. This was a poor man's Tamale Pie, but it was better than standing in a soup line. In fact, if you were hungry it tasted pretty good.

We often had a big pot of mush which we ate with milk for supper. This was not a product of the depression as we had often eaten this for supper on the farm as a matter of choice. One of the better *spin-offs* from this was the fried mush for breakfast. After the mush was cold and had solidified we sliced it raw in a bowl. This, when fried in a skillet with bacon makes a very good meal. We never failed to find enough to eat but some times it was rather plain grub.

One time when we had all run out of money at the same time that Mom ran out of baking powder it looked like we would have to eat cornbread for breakfast. We were having one of the windstorms that were common in late winter. I was walking down the road to Mom's house when I saw a dime in the road. The *Ill Wind* blew somebody good. It uncovered the dime and I took it to town and bought a can of *Clabber Girl* baking powder. This was a new kind that was quite an improvement over the *K-C Baking Powder*, which had been Mom's brand for more years than I could remember.

Part of the summers we put a thirty-foot chain on the cows and tied them to the fences along the railroad right of way so they could graze the Johnson grass that grew there. Some times we put them in the pasture on the place south of town. It was a good Johnson grass pasture and only cost a few dollars a month. Mr. Bell told us we could have all the Johnson grass we wanted to cut for hay along the creek on his place where we had the garden. We got

two scythes and Dad and I used them to cut the grass and when it dried we put it in stacks until we could find time to haul it home with the wagon. Dad had a team of mules to feed as well as our cows. It took a lot of hay. Arthur helped us cut and haul it and we had enough to feed the stock until spring. Some times Dad would take part of his wages for baling hay for Mr. Bell and buy some of the baled alfalfa hay. I have seen the cows walk away from the alfalfa and eat the Johnson grass hay first.

One year I had helped Glen pick and thresh some black-eyed peas he had raised. To thresh them we put them in a large washtub and walked on them until the pods were broken then we would winnow the hulls out with the breezes that blew. It was a lot of work but we had nothing else to do. I brought my share and put them in an oil drum where the mice could not get into them. I got a small bottle of formaldehyde at the drug store and removed the cork and replaced it with a rolled up rag so the vapor could come out. I pushed the bottle down into the peas to a depth of about a foot and after a year there was never a weevil in the peas. We had more peas than we would ever eat and I did not have any grain for the cow. I took the peas and about five bushels of redtop cane seed that elevators would not buy and had them ground and mixed at West's mill. I fed this to my cow until the spring grass was big enough for grazing.

One winter It looked like we would have trouble getting enough feed for the stock. Cane bundles were selling for one cent per bundle after the grain was cut off and saved for seed. A good cow would not bring more than twelve dollars. I propositioned Mr. Bell's son, Harvey, to trade my cow for some cane bundles so we could feed Dad's cows and mules. He offered me twelve hundred cane bundles for the cow and I stalled around a little to try to make a better deal. He said, "I have a good nickel-plated Smith & Weston .38 I'll give you to boot." I told him to bring me the gun so I could see what it looked like. It had a few rust spots on it but showed no sign of wear so I traded.

Hunting Squirrels with Old Bill

I later traded the .38 to Uncle Tom. He had taken a Winchester .22 Special Model 1897¹⁵ as a payment for a tank of gas at his station on Old 66. I put a timing chain in a Nash that had broken down and the fellow sold it to Tom for enough money to get home. I wanted the rifle so I did the work and gave him the revolver for the rifle. The gun worked perfectly but some novice had attempted to work over the sights. It took me a while to get them lined up but after I was through with it I started shooting squirrels in the head and seldom missed. The only thing wrong was the price of cartridges. They cost sixty-five cents per box, where regular .22 long rifles were only twenty-five cents per box. Forty cents in those days was a considerable amount of money.

During the early years of The Depression Hugh worked for Red West. He was the son of the man who owned the elevator. Hugh worked on Wednesdays and Saturdays in the produce department of the grocery store. He tested the cream and counted and candled the eggs. In case you don't know about candling eggs, they were held up to a light to see if there was a shadow that indicated if they were not good. The device for examining the eggs was a box with a light inside which turned on when you pressed the egg against the ring around the hole where you looked at the eggs. There were two holes in order to look at two eggs at a time. Sometimes I helped out with putting the egg crates together. They were shipped unassembled and we had a jig, which held the ends and center sections while we applied the sides and bottoms. A crate could be assembled very fast. It did not pay much per crate, but when work was available it helped to buy the groceries. There were lots of cream and eggs sold by the farmers in those days. That was the source of groceries for many people. As long as I could remember we bought our groceries that way for years, before we lived on the farm. I helped out in the cream testing when they were rushed by beyond what the regular crew could handle.

One of Red's hobbies was coon hunting. He kept some hounds and like all good dog men he thought his dogs were the best. He had a large male dog named *Bottle* and a female named *Queenie*. One day when Hugh had been up the creek hunting with our bulldog named *Bill*, he stopped at the store on the way home and Bill trotted on along the street toward home. Bottle started after him and Hugh said, "Red, you'd better call your dog back." As Bottle was somewhat larger than Bill, Red thought he could take care of himself. Bill was trotting toward and Red said, "Why, that dog is afraid. Watch him run." Bill never looked back as Bottle overtook him and bowled him over with his

¹⁵ Most likely this gun was a Model 1873 Special, which was produced in .22 caliber and took non-standard cartridges. The Model 1897 is a famous Winchester shotgun.

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shoulder. When Bill came up to his feet he had Bottle by the throat. By the time Hugh and Red reached the dogs Bottle's tongue had turned purple. It took them both to break his grip on Bottle's neck. Bill was not an aggressive dog, but he always accommodated any dog that wanted to fight.

One night Hugh and I decided to go opossum hunting and Red told Hugh to take his two dogs along. We took Bottle, Queenie and Bill down by the creek. By this time Bottle had learned his place so we had no trouble with the dogs. Bill had a peculiar way of trailing. He never barked on a trail. You could hear him snort to blow dust out of his nose but when he barked he had the animal up a tree. He was very fast on the trail. We would hear Bottle and Queenie baying on the trail while Bill would be away ahead of them barking *treed*. Of the seven 'possums we caught that night Bill got five of them.

Bill was elated when he could go hunting. I would take my .22 and start up the creek and Bill would quickly run past most of the trees to a clump of oak trees on a little gully to the side of the main timber. We had killed many squirrels there and he remembered that it was a good spot. One warm, late winter day Mom was at our house helping Nellie do her washing. Bill was in the yard with us. Having nothing to do I remarked that I thought I would go hunting. It was really idle talk as I had not really intended to go. But for the next two hours Bill never left my heels. He did not do this at all as a rule. His odd behavior finally came to my attention and I realized that he understood what I had said and was waiting for me to get the gun and go to the creek. I took the gun and started to the creek and Bill's spirits soared. We hunted about an hour and he was happy to lay down in Dad's yard and take a nap.

Lots of people hunted with Bill and one fellow who lived about two miles out on Highway 66 wanted to keep Bill at his place to mate with his bulldog. They lived at a service station and did some bootlegging as many others before and after them did. This proved to be the end of Bill. On his way home he was struck by a car on the highway and killed. One of the fellows who lived at the service station said he saw it happen and it was no accident! The driver swerved his car to hit the dog that was in the opposite lane. The people who had our dog were mad. We were mad but there was nothing we could do as no one knew who the driver was. To think that a louse would do something like that to a friendly dog like Bill was almost beyond belief. Several months later we had a cousin and her husband visiting and I was telling them how we had lost Bill. I have very good peripheral vision and I saw them glance toward each other with a surprised look on their faces. It may not have been what it seemed to me but I will always wonder. Poisoning or running down an animal is one of the meanest tricks a person can do. There are those who will do it!

Keeping Chickens

Nellie and I kept some hens in a little house about four feet square. We had the back yard fenced and fed them commercial laying pellet feed along with kaffir corn. We had twenty-seven hens and were getting twenty eggs one day and twenty-one the next. That was a good average but we decided to cull out the non-layers as some of them were old. Before letting them out of the house we caught them and felt the pelvic bone spacing. The ones that did not feel like layers, we put in a gunny sack. We took them to the produce house and sold them. We did a good job of culling them, because we continued to get the same number of eggs as before. Hitting 100% on culling was much better than average.

We had bought fifty baby chicks to raise for fryers and to select to keep for laying hens. We had made a low pen by their coop so they could be out in the sun. Nellie was hanging clothes on the line when she heard a commotion in the pen. As she approached the pen a cat jumped out with a chicken in its mouth. I ran to the house and grabbed my rifle and pumped a shell into the barrel. When I got back the cat had disappeared down the alley. I was going down the alley slowly looking in the weeds for the chicken thief, I looked down and there was the cat laying flat on the ground. I took aim at its head and fired. Due to it being so close I did not hit where I thought I would. The cat let out a squawk and ran up a fence post. When it got to the top it continued to claw the air and then hit the ground running. It disappeared down the alley in the next block. A neighbor woman called to me and said "What are you shooting at?" I was a little angry and answered her shortly, "A cat," She wanted to know what color it was and said, "I sure would not want you to shoot my cat, he is a very good cat." I told her it was a gray one and it was killing my chickens and any cat that did that could expect to get shot! I knew her cat it was black and white, a big Tom.

Some weeks later we found her cat in Dad's barn killing some of Mom's young chickens. We shut the door so he could not get out and went in and caught him. I put a doubled cotton cord around his neck and took him in the car. I went down into the woods along the creek where I could execute him without being seen. No need to create trouble but that well-fed cat that killed chickens just had to go! I tied him close to a bush and was trying to get him lined up in my sights on the rifle. He was clawing at the cord and jumping until I could not get him in my sights.

He was very strong and broke the cord. He ran about fifty yards and stopped and looked back to see if I was following him. That was his undoing. I heard some folks talking down by the creek and did not want any witness to my actions. I drew a bead between his eyes. He jumped about three feet in the air and never moved again. I hastily got in the car and left the scene. If she had known about that cat, she would have felt the same way we did about Bill. However the circumstances were altogether different. Her cat had become an outlaw.

We had a bunch of Rhode Island Red chickens because they were pretty good layers and made better fryers than Leghorns and were easier penned. They did not fly as well as Leghorns. We had one old rooster. He had never been challenged so he knew that he was *cock of the walk*. We had saved one new rooster from fryers as the old one was getting too old. He pecked the young rooster all the time until he had about reached maturity. One day the younger rooster decided he had enough. He met the old rooster face to face. They fought until their wings dragged the ground. Then after a minute's rest they flogged each other again. About sundown the older rooster dropped his head and as the other one pecked him he turned around and put his beak to the ground. In a way it was sad. He had fought a good fight but age had brought him down. He never fought again. The young one crowed as loud as he could although his wings were dragging the ground.

Arminta Arrives

When August rolled around in 1934 the weather was very hot and dry. The temperature would go above a hundred degrees during the day. On the evening of the fourteenth Nellie decided we had better call Dr. Henke to deliver our second baby. Edna was visiting with the folks so I gave her the honor of helping. As before it was about eight o'clock the next morning before Arminta arrived. About the first time I changed her diaper I told Nellie, "This sure looks like a poor prospect for a wife for some one." Nellie did not think much of my little joke. Naturally she thought it was a beautiful baby and before long nature proved she was right. After a few months she had ringlets of golden hair on her head and big blue eyes.

Her full name was Katheryn Arminta Cloninger. Nellie picked the name Arminta because she had had a friend in school by that name and I selected the name Katheryn because I thought it sounded like a pretty name for a pretty little girl. I guess it was a lucky choice as two women of that name, but different spelling, brought gifts to the baby.

I had a little work where I could earn some money and in anticipation of the *blessed event*. I had put away twenty-five dollars for Dr. Henke. On Arminta's fourth day in this world our Oklahoma weather set a record high temperature for that date. It registered one hundred-eleven degrees in Oklahoma City that day. It stayed above one hundred degrees most of the time Nellie was in bed after Arminta was born. We did not have electricity and we did not have so much as a fan. I ripped open four gunny sacks made of burlap and sewed them together to form a curtain a little larger than a bed sheet. I tacked this to the rafters above the south window by the bed and let it hang alongside the wall. I attached a three-gallon bucket with nail holes in the sides to the roof. When I filled the bucket with water it trickled down and wet the burlap. Anytime we had a breeze from the south Nellie's part of the room was cooled by the evaporation on the curtain.

That may have been the first air conditioning attempted in Hydro. It was crude but it made the room bearable. I pulled the water from the well with a factory water bucket attached to a pulley and rope. We did not have a pump at this time. The bucket was about four feet long and four inches in diameter with a valve at the bottom. The valve would automatically open when it was placed in the carrying pail. One draw would fill a three-gallon water bucket. Our well was about forty feet deep and so it did not take very long to draw the water. I was kept busy with tending the *air conditioning*, cooking the meals, changing diapers and washing them. But I did not have anything else to do so it was not too bad. Nellie fed the babies the natural way so there were no bottles to wash nor any formulas to mix. After about eleven days Nellie was out of bed and started taking care of some of the jobs.

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Late September arrived and Nellie and Virginia, who lived next door, were busy canning vegetables. Virginia was expecting the stork about any time. On October the fourth they had a bunch of black-eyed peas on the stove at our house. It was about dark when Arthur came over to our house and said Virginia wanted Nellie to come over to their house. Nellie left me to tend the canning and to take them off the stove at the right time. While I canned peas Nellie and Dr. Henke delivered Virginia's first child. She was a very pretty little girl, whom they named Gaylene. She was born on Virginia's birthday, a very nice birthday gift.

Making Music with the Goldsmiths

A few months after Arminta was born Hugh met up with a couple of *drifter* musicians. Drifting people were very common in those days. These two fellows were cousins named Goldsmith. Raleigh played the fiddle, or maybe I should say the violin, as he was as good as I ever heard. He had an education in music. His cousin named Charlie was learning to play the guitar. I say learning because Raleigh would some times stop in the middle of a tune and say "You made a mistake. Go back and do it right or you will do it wrong again." I thought it sounded perfect but Raleigh knew better. He did not have a fiddle, but Charlie had a guitar that they had salvaged and put back together. It had fallen out of a truck and had belonged to some fellows who had played on WHAP Radio in Fort Worth Texas. Charlie said the Texans had been drinking too much. They had given it to Charlie and he had repaired it.

When Raleigh played my fiddle I realized it was much better than I thought it was. Raleigh had to have something to steady his nerves as he had had family troubles and tried to drown his troubles with the bottle. He blamed playing the fiddle for his wife divorcing him. She did not like for him to stay out all night playing for dances. His hands shook so badly he could not handle the fiddle like he wanted to. We could make a pot of strong black coffee for him and he could play for a while. It seemed a shame that a musician as good as that would let drinking bring him to that condition.

Raleigh showed us his left thumb, which had a scar running completely around it behind the second joint. He had been playing for a dance, which lasted all night. The next morning he was chopping wood for a fire to cook breakfast, when he chopped his thumb off. His wife had followed him out into the yard so she could continue their quarrel. She said something, which angered him, and as he looked up to answer her he chopped off his thumb. He said that having to turn his thumb while the doctor hooked up the tendons was one of his most painful experiences. The doctor done a remarkable job, because he regained full use of his thumb and the scar was hardly noticeable.

They stayed around for several days, eating with Mom and Dad and sleeping in the train depot. We all enjoyed the music and learned a few tricks from them. There was a family out east of town who wanted us to play for a dance. We took Charlie and Raleigh along and gave the bunch such a good time that they wanted us to come back the next night. Raleigh told me that he would go if I would go along to take care of the fiddle, as he was sure to get drunk and maybe ruin it. I agreed to *chaperone* the fiddle. Every now and then some of the fellows would take them outside for a drink. The strings on Charlie's guitar were old and had been spliced on the tuning end. After he had played for a while he had broken three of the strings.

Raleigh was so cross-eyed drunk that he tried to sit down in the window, thinking it was his chair, but he still made good music. He was *chewing* out Charlie for breaking the strings. He said, "You're just so drunk you don't know what you're doing or you wouldn't have broken the strings." Raleigh's tongue was so thick he could speak very clearly. Charlie was more sober than he was.

When most everyone had all the dancing they wanted, Charlie and Raleigh each picked a girl for a partner. With two couples they formed a ring on the floor and put their arms around each other and started to sing. *Corrine, Corrine, Where'd You Stay Last Night*. They kept this up until I wondered if we would ever get home that night.

About one o'clock a.m. they were ready to go home. Someone who was driving a Model A Ford was going to drive us back to town. There was a driver and his girlfriend in the front seat and another couple in the back seat. Charlie was helping Raleigh to walk to the car, when Raleigh stumbled as he started to get into the car. He was lying on the floor of the car and Charlie just doubled his legs up, sat on the seat and closed the door. I got in the front seat and we were on our way. I never did know how four people and a guitar fit in the back seat of a Model A but we made it. We drove to the depot first and Charlie got Raleigh out of the car and into the waiting room at the depot. I went home from there.

The next day Charlie told us the Town Marshall stuck his head into the depot that night and said, "Hey, what are you guys doing in there?" Raleigh roused up and answered, "We're just making a little music." The Marshall laughed and went on his rounds. Raleigh told us he would never teach anyone to play the fiddle because it had ruined his life. I doubt that the fiddle was to blame for his problems.

Somewhere Lloyd had heard the name *Puddin' Head Charlie* and hearing us call the guitar player Charlie. He began calling Arminta *Puddin' Head Charlie*. That was eventually shortened to *Charlie* and for several years she was called Charlie. Her aunt Ester still calls her Charlie at times. Most of the rest of the family had dropped Charlie by the time she was five years old.

Arminta Gets Sick

On December 23rd after Arminta's first birthday she became very ill. She had a high fever and kept getting sicker. We called Dr. Ward from Weatherford. He was making calls in Hydro to treat Phyllis Browne, the daughter of W.C. Browne who was the manager of Garvey Bros. Dry goods Store. Nellie had asked Mrs. Browne to send the doctor to our house when he made his call that day. Dr. Ward came to our house where he examined Arminta and came to the conclusion that she had some kind of kidney infection. He said that her symptoms were very much like the Browne girl. She had a very high fever and was very sick. The doctor wanted a record of all the food and liquid she had and also all the body waste weights recorded. We had to give her steam baths for several days. We filled a large tub half full of hot water and laid a board across it. A folded blanket went on top of the board, which held the baby. She was kept covered all of the time with a large Turkish towel. The steam from the hot water would make her sweat. This was necessary because her kidneys were not working to remove her water and waste.

She did not improve for several days, in fact she seemed to be sicker. For several days she ran a high fever and just stared blankly at the ceiling. She would not even blink when we passed our hand in front of her eyes. The doctor came every day for a week or ten days. We thought for sure we might lose her. It was some time in January that she showed signs of improving. Nellie showed her a toy and her eyes brightened as she looked at it. That was a joyful occasion for all of us. Dr. Wood knew we were not well off for money so he said he would charge us only for a house call as he was already in Hydro to treat other patients. I had heard people accuse him of being *money hungry* but I think it was only because he insisted on being paid. I think he treated us fairly and possibly without his know-how we would have lost our baby. I don't recall where I had earned the money but I paid him every time he presented his bill.

On Lloyd's birthday, January 20th she ate her first solid food. As she recovered all her curly hair came out. She was completely bald and her hands and feet looked like a bird's claws. It was not too long before she was strong enough to stand up and she began to put on some weight, but it took quite some time for her hair to grow back.

The next summer Nellie and Virginia wanted to go to town to buy groceries so they left Arminta and Gaylene with us to baby-sit. I had a project of some kind that I was working on in the little shanty I used for my workshop. The girls were playing in the yard and I became interested in my work and did not check on their activities. They had been playing in the dirt and were somewhat bedraggled. Suddenly the shop door flew open and Nellie started scolding me and said, "I thought you were looking after the kids." I answered, "I am." "In a pig's eye, you are! We found them up on Main Street looking into the shop windows and in the mess they are in," she snorted. They were not yet three years old but they had walked the four blocks to town and I did not even know they had left the yard.

Work during the Depression

Work was still hard to find. We would get a car of lumber, shingles, brick or cement to unload for the lumber yards once in a while but not as often as we used to do as there was not much building being done. What I did for Davidson & Case Lumber Co. I applied to the note I had given for my lumber bill. Once when Dad and I had unloaded a car for the Standard Lumber Co. the manager, Alva Taylor, asked if we would haul away some rubbish that had accumulated and we agreed. Behind the shed was a gasoline engine. A one-cylinder engine with two large flywheels. These were more the standard for power supply in those days. This one seemed to be all there except some of the parts that controlled the ignition. Instead of taking it to the dump I brought it home. I took it apart and cleaned and adjusted it. Then I designed and made the parts it needed. It did not use a spark plug but some contacts inside the cylinder and these could be actuated from the outside by a bar that forked from the valve push rod. By

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hooking an inductance coil and battery across the points it would ignite the charge in the engine. I soon had it running as good as it ever did. I used it to do tool grinding and turned out a mandrel for a grinding wheel by hand from a shaft and bearings I had taken from an old discarded threshing machine. I did not have taps and dies so I had to make the threads by hand. It was more for pass time than anything else. I had lots of time on my hands. Some time later Uncle Tom wanted an engine to run an air compressor for his service station. I sold him the engine and set it up for two dollars and fifty cents. Later after the old gas engine got too hard for him to crank I set up a four-cylinder Chevrolet engine with a starter to pump up his air tank.

When he first moved to the station his house had only two rooms and he was using it for the station and living quarters also. He wanted me to build another room across the front to be used for an office and sales room for the station. I worked up a material list to get an estimate from the lumber yards as to the cost. Davidson & Case Yard was the low bidder. Their bid was one hundred fifty two dollars. We bought it from them and built it. Everything worked out as I had figured it and Uncle Tom went in to pay the bill and it was one hundred seventy five dollars. He paid it and I could not find the estimate copy we had from the lumberyard. About a week after he had paid the bill I was cleaning out my car and found the copy of the bid between the cushions in the front seat of my car. Tom took it to the manager and showed him. He said, "Well, it looks like you have a rebate coming." He handed Tom twenty-three dollars in cash. I often wondered if he was operating that way for the company or perhaps running a double set of books. It made me wonder how much I really paid before I finished paying for my house. I had not kept any records up to that time but did afterward. I was gradually learning to be careful about trusting everyone. I hate to indict the human race, in fact, I don't, but I began to appreciate a comment I had heard Dad make many times. "It does not hurt to keep an eye on an honest man and it does a crook good."

The Federal Government was beginning to take note of the miserable condition of the economy and were trying to make some jobs. The first of the *make work* here was under the Public Works Administration or P.W.A. as it was commonly called. The first project in Hydro was a swimming pool. Dad along with a lot of others worked on it. I had still managed to keep groceries with the small odd jobs I could find so I did not apply for work on that project.

Later there was a project worked up to build a Community Building. It was handled by a building contractor who used mostly local labor. I got on that job at the beginning working as a laborer when they got ready to do more carpenter work I went to work as a carpenter. After one day they called me into the office and asked if I was qualified to do that kind of work. I told the contractor to ask the foreman. I knew what *beef* was but pretended to be ignorant. I did not have a union card and there were union carpenters on the job and they had objected. The foreman took me aside after the contractor said he could not use me and told me that he could use me as an apprentice carpenter if I would leave my tools at home. The pay was seventy cents per hour instead of one dollar five so it was still pretty good money considering what other choice I had. I did as much or more work than the other carpenters but received only two thirds as much. That was the first and only time I was ever *fired* on a job. Not because I was incompetent but because I did not have the little piece of cardboard. Since it was tax money that was being spent I feel my *civil rights* were violated but politicians have been bought and paid for by labor unions for years and I see no escape from it.

There was one day that I drew three different pay scales in only eight hours. I worked a while at common labor for which I received fifty cents per hour. Then they set up a *Treadle Saw*. It was a circular saw that could be swung across the table by stepping on a treadle while holding the timbers with both hands. This was a forebear of the radial arm saw in use now. It was powered by an old one cylindered gasoline engine, which failed to respond to its governor. I looked it over and told the foreman I could fix it by taking the part off and reshaping it where it was worn. He told me to go ahead and fix it. I took the part off and took it home to my grinder and ground the end squarely across so it would engage the exhaust valve rod and keep the engine from firing until the speed dropped to normal again. After we hooked it to the saw it did not run *wild* again so they were ready to start sawing floor joists and parts for the roof trusses. After that was finished the foreman put me to work nailing the trusses together. For the time I worked on the engine he paid mechanics wages and for the nailing I received apprentice wages as well as common labor wages for the first two hours work that morning.

The foreman was a crank about how every thing should be done. Like they used to say in the navy, "Your way, my way and the Navy way". With him it was "the carpenters way, his way and the right way". It was not really that bad

but he was a better carpenter than a foreman. He tried to do too much work himself while trying to keep the crew working and it was too hard on his nerves. One day he told one of the carpenters how to make the fire-cut on the floor joists. The carpenter had most of them cut when the foreman came by and exploded that he was doing it wrong. The carpenter said "Hold it Mr. Smith, I'm cutting these exactly the way you said to do it." He was right, I heard what he had said. I was helping to handle and mark the timber so Mr. Smith realized that he could not ride roughshod over that carpenter and I never heard him try to chew him out again.

Most of his loud talk was for exhibition, when there was no one on the job except one or two with him he was a fairly decent sort. I heard that on another job later that a carpenter had laid his hammer alongside Mr. Smith's head and sent him to the hospital for his way of talking to the help. I never heard him swear, he was a preacher I heard, but he could take a plain innocent word and make it sound worse than swearing. I think he realized that the men wanted the work worse than normal and thought he could be a little rougher and get by with it.

One day we were putting boards on the roof . I was sawing and handing them to my partner. He reached for the board and missed as I turned it loose. It slid a ways down the rafter and dropped to the ground underneath. *Smitty* saw what happened and said, "Watch that kind of crap. You'll get somebody killed. Less than five minutes later he dropped his hammer among the guys standing around below. He yelled "You people get out from under there before you get hurt." It made a big difference whose *dog was being kicked*.

After that job was finished we went back to scrounging what kind of work we could find and it was not much. A few days in the hay field two or three times during the summer and a little cotton picking in the fall. Then the Works Progress Administration, or W.P.A., was started. The first project here was building sanitary outdoor toilets to be delivered to the country. They had a concrete base four feet square with a riser and seat on it. It had a hinged lid to cover the hole. The building was attached to the slab and was made of car siding boards. It was a neat outdoor toilet. I did not sign up for that work for several months. Eventually I had to sell my hens because I could not buy feed for them and when that money was gone I joined *The Outhouse Brigade*. My first work on that job was making the seats and covers for it and so on through the whole operation. We were also used for digging holes for septic tanks for anyone who was putting in a sewage system.

We had a digging job to do down in the country about fourteen miles so I drove my car and four men rode with me. On the way to work I noticed two dogs in a pasture near the road. They were acting excited as they hunted in the grass so I stopped the car to see what they would do. We had plenty of time before work time. One of the dogs was a big Collie and the other was a small white terrier. The Collie had his nose to the ground as his tail wavered back and forth. The little dog was jumping up and down to see over the grass and weeds. A jackrabbit jumped out of the grass and ran and the Collie took after it as fast as he could run. The little dog could not keep up but every time the rabbit tried to turn he would cut across the rabbit's path and turn him toward a plowed field. Within a few minutes the dogs herded the rabbit into a field of lyster ridges and before he had gone a dozen jumps, the Collie grabbed him and the dogs had their breakfast. In all of my observations of dogs I had never seen better teamwork even with trained dogs. Don't let anyone try to tell you that dogs can't think and act only by instinct. That little dog knew they could catch the rabbit in the ridges so he helped drive it there. We all had seen a show worth the money.

When the demand for outdoor toilets had slacked off the city council worked up a project to pave two blocks of Main Street. It was paved with concrete and all the work, except for the mixing of the concrete, was done with hand labor. I set most of the forms and built the *drag board* for leveling it and the long handled floats and did a lot of the *fine-grading*. Anything that required more than average skill was my part of the work. The work was divided into three classes, *Skilled*, *Semi-Skilled* and *Laborer*. The pay for eleven days was \$52.80, for Semi-Skilled \$38.60 and Laborer \$24.40. That was enough to do a fair job of taking care of a family's needs as prices were low. I worked it that kind of work from the summer of 1935 until May 1937.

Shortly before the paving job was finished the School District of Bridgeport started a project to add two class rooms to the school house. Hugh and I went to work there until it was finished. There was a young negro man on the job. He was very bright and talented in some ways. He furnished some entertainment to keep the job from being boring. One day I was working in the basement setting screeds to pour the floor. The boss, Mr. Davis, was around the corner of the stair along with an Inspector who was checking the work. Jonas, the colored man, came down the stairs. He

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said to me, "Did you ever hear a freight train starting up with a heavy load." He stepped up onto the first step and started a *soft-shoe* dance. He was doing a perfect imitation of the sound of a train pulling out. When he had worked up a few steps Mr. Davis spoke to the inspector. Jonas recognized the voice and took the rest of the stairs three steps at a time. At noon when we were eating our lunch I asked him what his hurry was to get out of the basement. He gave me a wide-eyed, innocent stare and said, "Why, I didn't hurry."

One morning when I was troweling the back doorstep, Jonas came by and started telling me about a coon dog he owned one time. While he talked I worked. When he did not answer one of my remarks, I looked up to see what had happened to him and he was walking briskly around the opposite corner of the building. I thought this was odd behavior until I looked down the hall from the door and saw Mr. Davis standing there sharpening his pencil. Jonas had seen him before I did.

Some days after we ate our lunch we had a few minutes before work time. We had seen some baseball gear in a closet and were batting flies and playing catch. The superintendent of the school was Mr. Cox. He was a little irritated at us for using the equipment and was gathering it up to put it away. Jonas sauntered up to him and said, "Mr. Cox, have you been eating bahb-wiah dumplins? The boys tell me you kinda got a wiah edge on this mawnin." Mr. Cox was so mad he could hardly speak as he said, "If you were responsible for all this you would have a wire edge on too."

There was another colored man working there too but he was a good worker. He was tall and slender so he was called *Slim*. Slim missed three of four days of work and Mr. Davis said, "Slim why haven't you been at work?" Slim answered, "Mr. Davis, I've been sick". Mr. Davis said, in a sympathetic tone, "You have, what was wrong?" To this Slim replied, "I found a case of homebrew and I could not carry it all so I tried to drink it and it made me sick." Mr. Davis did not appreciate this remark and snorted, "Humph!" and turned on his heel and walked away. I thought it was a funny little joke but it rubbed Mr. Davis the wrong way.

We finished that job around the first of August and the weather had turned hot and dry. It was as hot as it had been when Arminta was born two years before. The next project was on a county road about three miles south of Bridgeport. We were to build some concrete culverts and do some grading and drainage work. When I arrived on the job they were ready to start putting in the forms for the culvert. It was level with a little creek bed and was down in a cut about eighteen feet from the road level. There was hardly a breath of air and the temperature went to one hundred fourteen degrees, a record that has stood for fifty years. The tools were so hot that I could barely stand to hold the square long enough to mark the boards. I had worked most of that summer inside the school house and was not used to the heat. It was rough. I wore a pith helmet, like the British wear in Africa, and had plenty of cool well water so none of us passed out with the heat.

We had to blast out about twenty feet of sandstone to make the water drain where it should go. There was a man on the job who said he was a dynamite man so he drew skilled wages to do the blasting. They drilled seven holes about twenty feet deep and put in some heavy charges of dynamite. They moved all the men and teams out onto the hill while the man lit the fuses. He thought he heard only six explosions but *Old Dynamite* said there were two blasts almost together. The boss put us all back to work. A man who was driving a team hooked to a Fresno for moving the broken rock out stopped his team and said, "Hey, what is this?" The boss looked where he pointed at some yellow material mixed with the broken rock and saw that it was dynamite. They unhooked the team and we all went back up on the hill except for the dynamite man. He carefully removed the dirt and broken rock from the Fresno until he found a piece of the fuse. One of the other explosions had ripped the fuse before it fired. The cap was still attached. If the blade of the Fresno had hit that cap a lot of us would have been killed or badly injured. They set the cap back into the dynamite in the hole and lit the fuse. It was long enough to give them time to reach safety before it went off. If I had been the boss the dynamiter would have lost his job for his carelessness.

One day while I was working on the road job two young men came on the job and told me they had heard that I had a .22 special Winchester rifle. I told them that I had one. They had a Model 29 Savage Repeating .22 rifle that they wanted to trade for the Special. They were moving back to eastern Oklahoma and said they wanted a more powerful gun with which to hunt deer. I did not think the special was much of a deer gun but I did not tell them that. The gun they had was exactly what I wanted. It was a much newer gun than mine and I wanted a regular .22. The gun they

had was a little dirty but did not show any signs of wear. They had some *short* cartridges and let me fire a few rounds. I could hit a spot on a fencepost I used for a target. Once in a while it would throw a cartridge cross wise and jam but I felt that I could correct this fault. I suppose Glen had told them about my rifle as they did not even ask to see it. They said they would trade even. I told them to go to my house and tell my wife about the trade and tell her to get the box of shells I had in the cupboard to give to them. I kept the Savage rifle on the job and took it home that evening. When I had time I cleaned and oiled it. It was just like new, not a blemish, so I was very well pleased with the trade. I never liked to shoot shorts in a gun chambered for Long Rifles. I got a box of Long Rifle Cartridges and have never had the gun jam with the longer cartridges. The gun is still a good one after almost forty years.

Benny Yeary Comes for a Visit

In late fall or early winter of 1934 we had a visitor. Benny Yeary, Aunt Leah's son, came to stay with us a while. His father was Bill Yeary who was Dad's second or third cousin. So he was related to us on both sides of our family. His folks owned and lived on the old Uriah B. Chance homestead in Virginia. Benny was about the same age as I was, maybe a year or so younger. He liked to hunt and fish and make country music so we found a lot in common. He had a mandolin, which he had made from wood grown on the old homestead. I never heard one with a sweeter tone and Bennie was very smooth player. He taught me and Hugh some new tunes and we had lots of fun playing the fiddle, mandolin and guitar that winter when we were not prowling in the woods.

When the weather got cold enough that meat would not spoil I decided to butcher the yearling that my little Jersey Cow had the year before. This time I used the rifle instead of an axe to kill it and my knife was very sharp so this butchering went more smoothly than mine and Glens'. I did not have a tree big enough to string up the carcass so Benny and I dressed it on the ground. This was a little awkward but not too hard to do. We skinned the upper side. Then we spread out the hide and rolled it over and skinned the other side. We took a wash tub and Benny held it against the belly while I removed the entrails and lungs. Just like dressing a rabbit but on a bigger scale. The hardest part was sawing the spine in the center while it was laying on the ground. We got that job done and cut each side into quarters. I had a little shanty in the back yard so we hung the meat in it so it could chill out. That meat lasted most of the winter and the amazing thing was that we never lost any from spoilage. When we butchered we usually ate the heart and liver first so that's what we had for the next few meals while the other meat cooled.

One night Hugh and Benny were out prowling around and stopped by the bootleggers place on the creek about a mile east of Hydro. When they came home they were feeling pretty good but I doubt that Benny could see so well. His eyes did not seem to both be focused on the same spot. He sat down on the floor and played marbles with Lloyd and had as much fun as Lloyd did.

That winter and spring we were having the dust storms, which gave Oklahoma and Kansas the name of *The Dust Bowl*. Most of the dirt that blew around here originated some other place as it was grey in color while our soil is more of a red color. One of those dusty mornings Benny left the house alone and when noon came he did not come in for dinner. Mom was worried and wondered if perhaps some of us had said something that offended him. When supper-time came still no Benny. Mom said, "You don't suppose he decided to go home?" As he had left his mandolin and clothes I was sure he had not left for home. About nine o'clock that night he came in with a string of small fish. He was grey all over with dust, even his eyebrows and the red hair that came from under his cap. He said, "If it hadn't got too dark to find bait I could have caught a real mess. They were just starting to bite when it got too dark to find bait." I could say that was the proof of a real fisherman to sit in that dust storm all that time and stay until they started biting.

As the water in the creek became warmer Nellie's brother, Roy, and I got a chance to show Benny what Oklahoma fishing was really like. We started setting trot lines in the creek and about the middle of May the channel cats started biting. We often had a stringer full of fish that would weigh about two pounds each. Benny was always the last one to get ready to go home even after the fish stopped biting. On the tenth of May, before we were having much luck in the creek here, Roy, Benny and I decided to go to the Washita River to see if we could catch some big ones. We had just finished planting part of the garden we were making on Mr. Bell's place west of *The Frog Pond*, about two miles west of Hydro. We put some grub and bedding in the old topless touring car. We also took along the tent I had made from the tarp we had used while picking Wilkses cotton. I had sewn in some ends and made seven by seven wall tent. When we got to the river and set our lines and set up the tent it started to drizzle. We built up a big fire of drift

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logs and the fire was hot enough to evaporate the drizzle that was falling. As long as we stayed by the fire we stayed dry but when we went to *run* the lines we got wet.

Benny was good at imitating animal and bird sounds. He stood in a drooping stance with his arms hanging down like the wings of a wet chicken and put his head under a wet bush and chirped plaintively like a lost little chicken. His comical performance relieved our misery somewhat. Roy and I laughed at his antics until our sides were sore. We were not catching any fish so we decided to go to bed. We rolled out our bedding in the tent and slept a while. The only wet spots on the bedding was from the water that came in around the edges or the tent. By the next morning the drizzle was very cold. It seemed to be getting colder. We decided to take in the lines and head for home. It was becoming more uncomfortable all the time. We had only two fish on the lines. They were bullheads but large ones. They each weighed two pounds and for bullheads that is big.

We loaded our gear and started home. We were southwest of Corn, Oklahoma and if you have ever been on those dirt roads when they are wet you will know something of our troubles. That gumbo mud is so slick when wet that my old Model T would get stuck going downhill if one wheel dropped into a little hole. Roy and Benny pushed that car a good bit of the eight miles to the graveled road from Corn to Weatherford. By this time we were all wet and the wind had turned so cold that a few pieces of sleet fell with drizzle. On a hill about three miles southwest of Weatherford, I felt a rear tire go flat. I dug out the jack and stepped to the road. The mud was just about ankle deep. I set the jack up under the rear axle and tried to insert the handle. Every time I started put in the handle I was shivering so violently I knocked over the jack. I decided that I was not about to crawl in the mud to get the jack under that wheel. I threw it into the back seat and started for home. As we drove down the street in Weatherford a man on the sidewalk said, "Hey, you've got a flat." I waved at him and said, "Yeah, I know." We went right on toward home. That man probably thought we were a bunch of drunks but I was too cold to worry about a flat tire or what a by-stander thought. After we got home and stood around the stove for over half an hour my teeth were still chattering. None of us suffered any ill effects from that exposure.

Later in the late spring when the weather had warmed up Roy, Benny and I were up the creek just south of the Frog Pond. We had some trot lines set and some poles to hold in our hands. We had pretty good luck and as I had some work to do the next day, I lay down in the front seat of the car about eleven o'clock so I would feel more like working the next day. About four a.m. I dreamed that Benny was imitating a hoot-owl. He was doing a perfect job of it too. About this time I awakened completely and found that it was really a hoot-aw1 that I heard. It was in the cottonwood under which the car was parked. I knew by the stars that daylight was not far away so I started down the creek to where Roy and Benny were fishing. I heard Benny say, "Boy, I've got a good one." And then Roy's voice, "What kind is it." Benny again, "I don't—It's a damn snake." By that time I was where I could see the in the lantern light and Roy was laughing until he had trouble telling Benny that he had caught an eel. I suppose Benny had never seen an eel. When Deer Creek had more grassy banks eels were common but they usually twisted themselves off the hook. As a rule, if they could not get loose the fought till they died on the hook.

Later in the summer Benny decided to go back home and marry his girl friend. Hugh wanted to go down to south Texas to see a girl who had moved down there from near Weatherford. Hugh had been going to see her before they moved and still wrote back and forth. So he and Benny decided to hitchhike by way of Texas back to Virginia. I don't know if the trip disillusioned Hugh or the girl but that seemed to be the end of that romance. On the way from Texas to Virginia they stopped in Arkansas and played music at a dance. They, being new boys to the girls and musicians, attracted too much attention to suit the local boys. They noticed the boys had their heads together and were not looking very happy so they decided to leave before their welcome was worn out. They made a fast trip to the railroad tracks where a freight train was pulling out. It was headed east so they boarded an empty boxcar and went to sleep. They woke up about daylight and looked out. The first thing they saw was the sign on the depot. It said, *Shreveport*. The eastbound train in Arkansas had pulled around the hill and headed south. Hitch hiking was a very poor pastime in Louisiana according to Hugh's report.

They were not having any luck getting a ride so they went to a cafe to see about getting something to eat. They played a few tunes and the man in the cafe told them he would give them their dinner if they would play a few more tunes. There was a young man there who took a liking to their music and invited them to come home with him for the night and then he would take them in his car out to the highway where it would be easier to hitch a ride. On the

way to his home the man told them that he lived with his brother and his wife. He told them to tell her that they were old school friends otherwise she would run them out.

They were passed off as friends from his school and were treated like company. That seemed funny to us as we always treated visitor as company and Hugh sometimes brought home some scrungy looking ones. The next morning the fellow took them out to the main highway and they were on the way to Virginia. It was on this trip that Hugh got his guitar full of rain water and that was beginning of the end of a beautiful sounding guitar.

About the time Benny came to visit us *Mamma Tomlins*, Roy's mother, bought a new Plymouth Coupe. She had a 1928 Essex Coupe when she bought the new one. The Essex was just like new, only eighteen thousand miles on it, not a scratch except a worn spot on the door lining under the handle on the driver's side. Possibly, she had never driven it more than a few miles out of El Reno. She gave it to Roy and Edna. At that time they were driving a Model T, 1926 Tudor. Edna often drove down to Hydro and brought the Hutchinson girls, her neighbors, along. I can't recall whether I bought the Tudor or if they gave it to me. I know that I was a *two-car man* when Benny was here.

One bitter cold Saturday near Christmas Hugh and Benny wanted to go to Weatherford for a little night life. I let them drive the old touring car. They did not come home until afternoon Sunday and they had hitched a ride and left the car. They said the radiator had frozen and the car was too hot to run as they went up the hill at the underpass west of Hydro. They said they had opened the petcock to drain the radiator and walked on into Weatherford. At that time there was a colored woman who lived in Weatherford and she made her living making and selling *Home Brew*. Her place was a kind of poor man's nightclub. I suspected that Hugh and Benny had spent the night there but they never told me where they stayed. We loaded a tow chain into my Tudor and went out to get the car they had left on the highway. When I looked it over I found that the water had not drained out of the engine. It had frozen and the cylinder head had cracked open. The radiator had a few split tubes also. We towed it home and I let it set in the yard until warmer weather when I could repair it.

A Little Accident

Every once in a while I visited the city dump to pick up repair parts for my car. Lots of the parts for Ford cars that the garages hauled away were still usable so I gathered up what I could use and brought them home. One nice warm day when Nellie was doing her washing I decided to check the dump. Lloyd wanted to go along but for some reason I decided to make him stay home. I usually let him go with me but this time, in spite of his crying to go, I refused. When I got to the dump I parked the car on the hill that went down to the bridge across the canyon. The bridge was about forty feet above the bottom of the canyon and the banks on the approach to the bridge were several feet more. I was poking around in the junk when I heard a noise from the direction of the car. I looked that direction and saw that the car was starting to lurch forward as the compression in the engine failed to hold it. I had crossed the fence from the rear and by the time I crossed it the car was moving more smoothly and faster as it approached the bridge. There was an abrupt left turn to get onto the bridge. I could see that I would never be able to reach the car in time to keep it from going into the canyon. Just before it came to turn onto the bridge the left wheel caught on something and the car swung to the left and went off the fill on the approach to the bridge. It went off the fill and turned upside down after a drop of about twenty feet. It landed on the fence along the side of the canyon. One large post went through the top and held against the right door post of the body. That kept it from going another forty feet to the bottom of the canyon. If Lloyd had gone with me he would most likely have been in the car.

I walked back home and got a shovel with which to dig a level spot on the upper side of the car and to cut a ramp along the fill so I could get it hauled back onto the road. The body of the car was a complete loss but a funny thing, there was not even a crack in any of the glass. I took every thing loose that connected the body to the frame then went up to Ed Wilson's house, about five blocks from the dump. This was the same Ed Wilson whom I had worked with in the wheat harvest. He still owned the big team of horses. I asked him if he would bring his team down and help me get the car back up on the road. We took some ropes and chains and the team to the site of the wreck. By wrapping the chain around the car so a pull would roll it over onto the wheels it was not too hard for the team to get it upright on the ledge I had shoveled out on the fill. Then we hooked the team to the rear of the chassis and pulled it backward onto the road. On that model Ford the gas tank was under the front seat so it came out with the chassis and very little of the gasoline had leaked out. Some of the acid had drained out of the battery and some oil had drained out of the engine. But after checking every thing it seemed to be in running order. The steering wheel was

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somewhat shaky as it had to be cut loose from the firewall of the body. I turned on the switch and stepped on the starter and it started normally. I paid Ed for helping me out and drove the stripped down Ford home.

Rudolph Ewy, who lived on a farm about two miles west on Highway 66 had done mechanic work when I worked in the garage in 1929. He made a little money selling salvage parts and he had a Fordor body for a Ford¹⁶. It was a 1925 model but in good condition. He said I could have it for two dollars and fifty cents. I drove what was left of my car out there and set the used body on and bolted it down. I salvaged all the glass from the wrecked body so that accident did not cost me more than five dollars in money but several hours of work. At that time labor was a very cheap item.

As spring and warm weather came along I started repairing the touring car. I don't recall how it happened but I had to repair a broken piston on it. I found a piston at the dump that did not show much wear. The only thing wrong was that it was .040 inch oversize and my engine had never been rebored, I very carefully dressed down the piston until it would go into the cylinder. I had no micrometer or gauges so I had to guess at how much clearance it had. I got the engine assembled and cranked it up. It sounded pretty good so I took it down the road to the highway Y and back for a trial run. I noticed that the engine was laboring a little as I drove into the yard. As I cut the switch the engine stopped with a thud. I could not turn the crank so I decided that the piston was swollen with heat and would loosen up when it cooled. When it cooled off it still would not turn. I took off the cylinder head and pan. I took a short piece of two by four lumber and set it on top of the piston. I tapped on it with a hammer while pulling on the crank. After a while it started to move and I was able to turn it into position to remove the connecting rod. I got the piston out and could see where the heat had fused the piston to cylinder wall. I dressed it down some more and smoothed the cylinder as much as I could by hand. The spot of melted metal on the piston was too hard to file so I had to work it down with a whet stone. At ten cents per hour it would have been much cheaper to buy a new one but I did not have the price nor a job that would pay ten cents per hour. So, I did it the hard way.

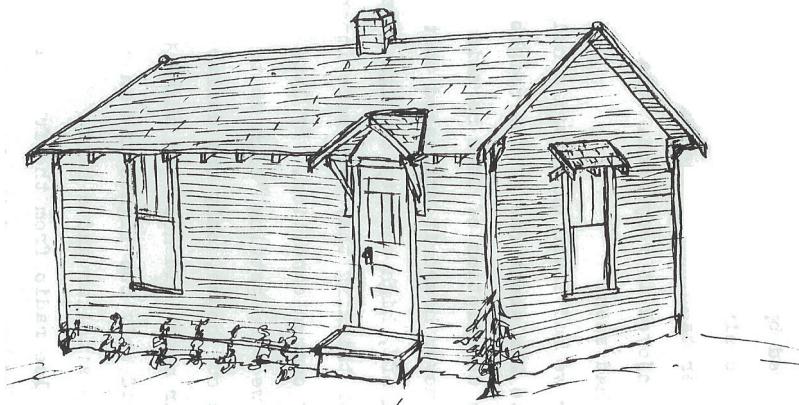
At that time Glen was driving an older model Ford touring car without a top. He wanted to buy my Fordor and Sid Motley wanted to buy his old car. Sid was the youngest brother of Harold Motley who was married to Aunt Nell a long time ago. I think this was the first and only time I ever met him. He came up to our house with Glen. Glen took my car and Sid took his and I had only one car again but I had twenty-five dollars in cash.

Remodeling the House

In the spring of 1936 we could see our way to clear up the balance due on the house. With the front door in the west end and no porch we had trouble keeping the water out of the house when there was a blowing rain. We decided to build a better frame. I had learned more about door frames by that time, and moved it to the north side where the window was located. Then I move the window to the west end of the house. The eaves were low and crowded the swing of the screen door so we put a little *eye-brow* porch over the door and an awning over the window. We still felt prosperous so we bought enough white paint to paint the outside of the house. It had only a prime coat when first built and that was all gone by that time. We had a small cedar tree at the northwest corner and some shrubs planted along the foundation. The shrubs came from the woods along the creek. They were what is called *Buck Brush* by my parents. I never did check any books for the real name of the shrub. It does not grow over two feet high and does well in shade or sun. In the fall it has little red berries and dainty round leaves. It makes a good foundation planting. With the new paint job and the shrubs and flowers our house looked like someone lived there.

When July 4th came that year the Kiwanis Club was putting on a rodeo. They had done this for several years but we had never felt that we could afford to go. The advertised price was \$1.50 for adults. Since Lloyd was under five and Arminta not quite two years old we figured we could afford three dollars. We left Arminta with Nellie's mother and took Lloyd along. We still had the old 1936 Ford with the 1935 body on it so we loaded into it and drove to the Rodeo Grounds on the hill north of Hinton. There was a mob of people there. When we paid to get into the grounds the fee was three as advertised but when we went to the grandstands we found that we had to pay again. Altogether it cost us \$5.80. As luck would have it, I had enough to pay it and was not embarrassed by not having it as might have been the case very often in the six years since the depression started. In spite of the *sucker tactics* of the admission price we saw a very good show and enjoyed it very much. That was the first rodeo either of us had seen.

¹⁶ At first, the reader may think this is misspelled. Ford created a car called a *Fordor*, not a "four door".



The Hydro, OK Home in 1936

By late 1935 or early 1936 you might say that we were getting *high up to do*. We had electric service restored to our house, only one dollar and fifty cents per month as long as our meter did not read above the minimum amount of kilowatts. We had only two lights and an electric iron so we never paid more than a dollar and a half. Nellie had bought a table model used Philco radio from the furniture store. It cost only seven dollars and was one of the best sounding radios ever heard before or since. When I came home and heard it for the first time it sounded so natural that I wondered who the man was that was speaking in the other room. We used it for years and got our money's worth of entertainment from it.

I had some time to spare and my interest in amateur radio revived. I did not have a set of headphones. I had asked for a catalog advertised in a magazine by Allied Radio in Chicago. Their catalog showed a fair set of headphones for \$1.75 and I ordered them. With junk parts from my accumulation, I put together a short-wave receiver and listened to amateurs on the twenty-meter band. I did not have any high voltage batteries so I decided to make a power supply that would operate on the house current and deliver about twenty volts for the *plate* voltage. I used two 25-watt light bulbs for limiting the power into it and two old triode tubes for rectifiers with a ten-volt bell ringing transformer to heat them. The hum filter was an old audio transformer for a choke and two condensers taken from two Model T spark coils. The amazing thing about it was that it produced very little hum. For heating the filament of the receiver tube I ran two wires through the window to the car and hooked to the battery in the car. It worked very well and I listened quite often.

There was one thing about that set-up that almost caused a tragedy before I was aware of the booby-trap I had set up. One Day after we had a shower and the ground was damp I had the receiver turned on when I heard a scream outside the window. I yanked the plug from the wall and ran out the front door. Arminta, who was a little past two years of age, had taken hold of the car crank and could not let go of it until I pulled the plug. Then I studied the circuit and discovered that with the plug in one way there was 110 volts A.C. connected to the frame of the car and the ground. We were lucky that she did not have wet hands. That did not *curl her hair*. After her sick spell, when she lost about all her hair, it had come back in ringlets again. I never hooked the radio to the car again. If I used it I went to the trouble of taking the battery out of the car and into the house where I could be sure no one would touch it.

Nellie's folks had a big radio that operated on house current. It was one of the first that came on the market. It gave up the ghost and it seemed that the power transformer was burned out. I decided to try to rewind the transformer. The high voltage winding was on the outside so I carefully took it off the core and unwound the coil. I kept a count of the turns. There were 1750 turns on each side of the center-tap. I found where the wire had burned in two. The nearest thing I had to the wire required was the secondary of the Model T spark coils,. It took a long time to rewind thirty-five hundred turns of that fine wire. Each layer has a piece of waxed paper between the next. Since my time was not valuable and I wanted to see if I could do it, I did not worry about how long it took. When I had it finished and installed the set would receive the stations but there was too much hum. I found a pretty good table receiver in the Allied catalog for twelve dollars so Mr. Curnutt told me to order it and could have the old set for parts. I found another set like the old one and the power supply was in working order but I had already taken the old set apart. But I later made a code practice set and ran it with the power supply.

1936 to 1947 – Work, War, and Fishing

A Full-Time Job

The next job we had was doing some work on a culvert along the north side of the city park in Hydro. We were blasting some rock from a hill east of town and then using it to lay up wing walls for a culvert at the park. We were drilling with hand drill bars about eighteen feet long. They had a drill point on each end and three of us would churn the drills up and down by hand as we rotated them. My buddies one day were two elderly men and it seemed to me that my part of the work would have been easier if they would loosen their grip. Without a hint I stopped the drill in the bottom of the hole and both of them slid their hands up the drill about a length of a normal stroke. They looked kind of sheepish and I just grinned at them. After that I had a little help on lifting the drill. We had the culvert about finished and had gone back to get a little more rock to finish the job. Mr. Alva Taylor, who was manager of the Standard Lumber Company yard came out on the job to talk to me about working for them. I had been doing some building and he was trying to get my goodwill. He had told me about a good WPA project about to start in the Eakly neighborhood. He said that I could get the job as foreman if I would go after it. I did not care for that job and let it go by. He told me the job at the yard would not pay much to start with but it would be more likely to be permanent. He told me to come to the Office that evening about seven o'clock and be interviewed by the president of the company. My face was sunburned and peeling so as far as looks were concerned I was not a prize winner. I met Mr. Munn that evening and answered his questions. He asked to see a sample of my handwriting. When he looked at it he said, "That's better than I was ever able to do." He said if I wanted to start work the next day I could do so. The pay would be ten dollars a week to start with and a promise of a raise as I got more experience. I had just received my new Social Security Card. I went to work the next morning, May 12, 1937.

When I walked to work I passed by Dugan Bowen's garage. In the lot behind was a Model A Roadster with orange colored wheels and no top. It looked pretty good to me so I stopped in and asked Duge if it was for sale and he said it was. He wanted thirty-five dollars for it. This sounded reasonable as it had fair tires and the license paid up. The cylinder head was cracked and leaked a little but the engine sounded pretty good. I bought it and now we could drive down to Mary and Glen's place on week ends. They had moved from the *Ghost Mound* place to an Indian allotment that laid to the east of the Fairview Church and west of Glen's dad's place. Five Mile Creek ran through the farm and they could raise a good garden. It was also convenient to some excellent cotton-tail country.

When they first moved there Glen wanted a chicken house. At that time I was still driving the old Model T touring car. That was before I went to work in the lumber yard. I went to the Davidson & Case Yard with Nellie and Lloyd in the car and loaded the material for the chicken house on the fenders and into the back seat. I tied it on with bailing wire which all lumber yards used those days. I am jumping backward in time. That is the reason Arminta had no part in this story. We had not ever thought of her at this time. Glen had been in Cordell a few days before that and had bought a new double-barreled twenty-gauge shotgun. It was a beauty. After we got the chicken house finished, about the middle of the afternoon he suggested we go down to the creek to see if we could shoot some crows. The crows had a flight path along the creek. We sat down against the shady side of a big cottonwood tree trunk so the crows would not notice us. Glen handed me the gun and said, "Let's see if you can hit one" I had never tried a shotgun on crows before. When I fired the crow wheeled off to one side and flew on. I missed the second one before Glen said, "Here let me show you how to do it." When the crows came over he fired and then swung the gun around and fired again. Two crows came tumbling down. I realized why I had missed. I had not waited until they were in range. The big black birds were much farther away than they appeared. I killed seven before I missed another shot.

Within a few months after I started to work for the Standard Lumber Co. Mr. Munn, the president of the company was having some trouble with a bruise on one of his legs. He had bumped it on the corner of his desk and instead of the bruise getting better it became more sore. He went to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota and they told him that he should start winding up his affairs. He was developing a type of cancer that would spread fast and they knew nothing that could be done for him. He returned home and started making arrangements to close his businesses. At that time he owned several yards around Western Oklahoma. One of the first things he did was to tell Alva Taylor to raise my wages to twelve dollars per week. He said, "If the yard is sold it will be a year at least before Howard would get a raise so go ahead and give it to him now." In spite of the things he had on his mind he had some consideration for a new employee whom he hardly knew. I will always remember this and cannot believe that all wealthy men are greedy and selfish as they are pictured by so many radical people. He died a few weeks after that and an Administrator took charge of selling the yards.

The T. J. Hughes Lumber Co. of Cushing, Oklahoma had decided to expand into the west part of the state. They had been in business in the oilfield country around Cushing and Drumright for many years. They bought the yards at Hydro and Weatherford. Alva Taylor stayed as manager but only for a short while. The first thing they did was remodel the yard at Hydro. They tore down the old corrugated iron office and warehouse and replaced it with a nice office and sales room.

We had a big Open House Day to help start the business off for the new company. I don't know if they expected too much or if they did not like the *country style* of doing business but they were not happy and I could tell that Mr. Taylor did not like the new set-up. I think the main thing of disagreement was the way credit was handled. Around here our customers were our neighbors and friends and perhaps credit was too easy. However, we seldom had an account that we did not collect. Perhaps a little too slow to suit the new owners. I gathered from what I heard that Alva would not get rough and demand payment the first of every month and in this area to suddenly do that would have been business suicide.

He decided to take another job at Yukon. He would manage a yard there and would be an equal partner with the man who was owner of the yard. It looked like a good proposition so he resigned. The manager of the Weatherford yard asked me if I thought I would get the job but I told him I was pretty sure I would not. I had not had much experience and knew that I had not made a very good impression with the Hughes people. They decided to bring a fellow who had worked in their Drumright yard to Hydro as the new manager. He was ambitious to get ahead but not particularly ambitious to work. He wanted to get ahead by scheming, I did most of the work including a good part of the bookkeeping. I could seldom balance the cash. Some times it would be several dollars long and then several dollars short. When I asked the manager about it he would say, "Yes, I put some of my money in the drawer to make change" or, "I have some of the company money in my billfold." There was nothing I could do but report a balance when he was not on the job when I checked the cash at the end of the day. He had not had the bank book balanced in over a year. That worried me because Mr. Taylor had been a stickler for accurate bookkeeping and I believed that was the only way to do it. I had no idea that the General Office had suspicions that something was amiss until the manager got a letter telling him to come to the general office. I noted that he seemed disturbed. When he came on the job the next morning he said, "It looks like you and I are going to be let out by the company. If you want to take my car and go looking for another job you are welcome to it." I said, "You're my boss. Does this mean I'm fired." "No, but it looks like the girls at the office have made some mistakes and the company is unhappy and may let us both out," he replied. "Until you tell me that I'm fired I'll stay," was my answer.

In a day or two we had customers coming in with letters asking for confirmation of the correctness of their balances. Most of them had never seen anything like that so they came in to see what it was all about. The manager told them to not worry about it and that it was due to a foul-up by the bookkeepers at the main office. One fellow came in with a letter asking about a balance of something over eighty dollars. He said that he had paid for the material before he got it. He had met the new manager at church and wanted to help him off to a good start. He had planned to build a shed on his barn so had paid in advance for the material and came after it later. He said, "I have a receipt for it." He showed it to me and I checked our receipt book and found that the carbon copy had been torn out. I recalled noticing that when it happened but assumed that the manager, being new to our set of books, had made an error and just tore

out both receipts and destroyed them. After that I began to understand some of the funny things I had noticed. The company told him they wanted his resignation as soon as he could leave.

T.J. Hughes Jr. came down to Hydro and asked me if I wanted to try the job of managing the yard. I told him I would try it. One requirement was that I have a car, which I did not have at that time. They would pay me eighty-five dollars a month with a car expense allowance of fifteen dollars per month.

Nellie had been talking to a used car salesman at Weatherford about a Model A Ford. I was interested in buying one as I'd sold the little Model A Roadster to Kenneth Johnson who was courting one of Nellie's nieces. A few days after Mr. Hughes was here the car salesman brought a 1929 Model A Tudor over for me to see. He said he wanted seventy-five dollars for it. It seemed to be in pretty good condition. I decided to buy it. When we started to start it the starter would not turn it over. He said he had put a new battery in it but after a while it would not start. He did not know why but said he would take off two dollars and fifty cents. He was anxious to trade so I bought it.

When I went to Russell's service station the next day he had a nearly new battery that he would trade for mine for three dollars so I traded. The meter on my car showed that the generator was charging but not quite the normal amount. This fact did not impress me much until the new battery went dead in a few days. At that time Hugh owned a Model A Coupe and for a test on the battery we exchanged my battery for his. The battery performed perfectly in his car and I realized that the fault was in my generator and I had swapped a new battery and three dollars for a good used battery. I had repaired hundreds of generators with all kinds of problems but had never fixed one before that would show a charging rate on the meter without building up the battery. I suspected that the generator had a rewound armature, which did not have quite enough turns to produce the required voltage. Hugh went to see Rudolph Ewy, who had moved to Weatherford, and got a used armature for me. It cost only two dollars and fifty cents. That solved the problem. I drove that car with that generator for the next nine years and it performed perfectly.

The front right corner of the top fabric had come loose on the car and it seemed that the wood to which it had been tacked was rotten. Montgomery Ward Catalog showed they had 54-inch top fabric for sale. I ordered enough to make a new top for the Ford. The first week end after it arrived I stripped off the old top. Using a two by six, I cut out a piece of lumber to match the rotted frame on the top along the right side. I fastened the lumber and the padding and poultry wire, which used for support of the fabric. After I put on the new fabric and replaced the metal moldings and rain gutters it looked as good as new.

I got a set of top bows somewhere but can't recall where. I took some of the *White Duck*, which is 8 ounce canvas used for cotton sacks, and made a top for the car. Then I painted it three coats of asphalt base paint until it was black and shiny just like a new top. We did not have side curtains but we were used to being out in all kinds of weather so a snow storm did not keep us home on week ends.

One Saturday night we had, about six inches of snow but Sunday morning was clear and calm. It looked like an ideal day for rabbit hunting. We bundled the kids up in blankets and put them between us in the car and started for the Lasley's on Five Mile Creek. We had to drive about a quarter of a mile through the field to reach their house. The snow had drifted some there. When we were about halfway down the hill the car started slowing down and finally came to a stop. The wheels would still turn but the car did not move. I got out to see what had happened. I found that the front bumpers had started pushing the snow and it had built up until the little light car would not push it any farther. I did not have a shovel so we got out and carried the kids the rest of the way after I drained the radiator so it would not freeze. I had never completely stopped the cracked head from leaking so I could not use anti-freeze.

We did not waste any time, as I was anxious to hunt rabbits. We killed several within a few yards of their house. We dressed them and threw them in the snow on top of the chicken house to chill out before we cooked them. After dinner some of the snow had melted and we took a piece of board to use for a shovel and raked the snow from in front and underneath the car and drove it down to the house. After supper we filled the car with water and went back home. A trip like that might be considered a hardship now but we really enjoyed outings like that when we and the kids were younger.

Mary and Glen had bought a battery radio as very few country homes had electricity then. Only those with Delco Power Plants, which used batteries, and that was not very good except for lights.

In the spring of 1938, after the T. J. Hughes Lumber Co. had bought the yard, we started tearing down the old office and warehouse building in preparation of building a new one. There was a small building on the west corner of the lots of the lumber yard. A few years before it had been used by B. B. Laswell. He operated a grist mill and ground cornmeal for the public. By 1937 that occupation had become unprofitable. We moved our office gear into that little building and used the other part for our paint and building supplies while the new building was being built.

A Late Storm

In April we were pouring the concrete for the foundation. It was a beautiful spring day. The red ants were busy working and the grass was about three inches high. The trees were all leafed out. As it had been nice and warm for several weeks I did not worry that I had no fuel at home. It was summer and we were using the two burner oil stove for cooking. Along about three-thirty in the afternoon a heavy black cloud came up in the northwest. As the clouds came overhead the wind started blowing from the north. It was very cold so we decided to stop pouring concrete as it might be damaged by freezing. We had about half of it poured. We shoveled dirt onto what we had poured to protect it from frost damage. By the time we had everything ready to quit the wind had become very cold and rain had started falling.

When I got home Nellie and the kids were shivering by the cook stove. In our back yard there was the lower six feet, including the stump, of a mulberry tree that had been *grubbed* out of the ground. It was about eighteen inches thick and much too large to go into our old *chunk* heater. I rolled it to the south side of the house where I would have some shelter from the wind and took the one-man crosscut saw and the axe and went to work reducing it to sizes that would go into our heater. After a while I had enough cut and split off to get a fire going in the stove. It took hours to reduce the curly stump to pieces that go into the stove. At last we had fuel for a few hours at least. By dark the rain had turned to snow and the wind was howling. It stormed all night and the temperature had fallen very low. The snow was swirling so much I could hardly see but I went to work that morning. I knew Nellie and the kids could keep warm with the dry mulberry wood in the old heater. It makes a very good fire, almost as good as black-jack oak.

We had a kerosene heating stove in the temporary office. I arrived at the office with my nostril clogged with ice and with ice frozen to my eyelashes. That was as bad as I had ever seen in this country. I got the office warmed up and worked on the books to pass the time. About ten thirty that morning Ross Walker, who was doing some painting at Red West's Store, came in and bought one gallon of turpentine. That was the nearest we ever came to having a *No Sale* day. He was our only customer that day. About noon Mr. Taylor came to work. There were three of his cronies with him. He told me that he would mind the shop the rest of the day if I wanted to stay home it would be all right.

The next morning it had stopped snowing but there were drifts of snow from four to fifteen feet deep in places. Traffic was stopped into and out of town. The school busses had been stranded at farm homes. Some phone lines were still in working order so the word was passed around. People on Highway 66 had to take shelter wherever they could. When I arrived at the office the next morning the floor showed signs of the party the men had the day before. There were dozens of cigarette butts on the floor around the card table they had set up. They all like to play poker and to take a nip from the bottle now and then so they had an enjoyable evening while the storm raged outside. I swept up the rubbish from the floor and found eighty some cents on it. I knew the money did not belong in the cash drawer so I decided it was fair pay for cleaning up the mess. When Mr. Taylor came to work that morning I was discussing my fuel situation with him. He told me that I could take all the older books and ledgers home with me and use them for fuel. There were also a good quantity of out of date door and window trim such as plinth blocks, rosettes, and corner blocks that I could have if I had some way of getting them home. I made several trips and had fuel for a few more days.

In our old office we had a cast iron *round oak* stove. It was a very good pot-bellied stove for wood or coal. Mr. Taylor told me I could have it as soon as I found someone that could haul it for me. It was only a day or so before Russell King drove his wagon up town and I asked him if he could deliver the stove to my house and haul about half a ton of coal from the elevator. The drifts were not too bad on our streets so he did this for me. We set up the pot-bellied

stove in our kitchen and built a fire with the coal and we had heat in both of our rooms. That was real luxury! Within a few days the snow had melted except for the big drifts and the grass was still green. The ants went back to work and the birds started building nests. It was like a bad dream. The storm came and went so quickly. It was several days before the roads were open and people walked, rode horses and tractors through fields to get to town to get food. We had cows and chickens and baked our own bread so we were not in a bind but many had trouble finding enough to eat.

The school made a new rule on running the busses. They take the students home now at the first sign of snow. They don't take any more chances of having a lot of children stranded. The night it started snowing, Claude Glidewell started home across the canyon from up-town. When he started up the hill on the west side his car skidded into the borrow ditch so he got out and walked the remaining three blocks to where he lived. The next morning his car was completely covered with snow. It was several days before any of it was visible. I had a pair of binoculars at the yard and noticed something black on the snowdrift. When I looked through the glasses I could see it was the top of a car. For a few days Art Bradley's two little boys walked over the top of Claude's car. If he ever found scratches on it I could have told him how it happened. I never heard him mention it if he did.

We finished the new building and held *open house* with drawings for prizes and free door prizes. There was a very big crowd and everyone seemed to enjoy it. It was something like a fair. It boosted our business for a while but times were still hard and very few people had very much money with which to build. Things were changing and many lines of business were changing along with the way of living.

Nellie has Health Problems

About a year or less after I started to work at the lumber yard Nellie's health started failing. She did not feel well and had some terrible headaches. I saw her with headaches so severe that her eyes looked like they were floating in blood. There was a new doctor here. His name was Berry. I had made his acquaintance when I had cut my arm with a piece of glass and had to have it sewed up. So when Nellie had to have a doctor I called him. I don't know if he did not know what her trouble was or not. He gave her shots of pain killer which relieved the pain but her trouble was not helped. As she began to have the spells more often the doctor decided she should go to the hospital and have an operation. We were worried and inexperienced so we took her in the doctors' car to the Anadarko Hospital. They prepared her for the operation and she told the surgeon that she did not want anything removed unless it was really necessary.

They decided to give her a spinal block for the operation. They permitted me to go into the room for the operation. After they gave her the injection in the spine the doctor kept looking at the clock. When the time was up he picked up the scalpel and made a little cut. Nellie flinched and he looked at the clock and shook his head. I could tell that he was not happy with the effect of the spinal block. He took another look at the clock and started making the incision. Each time he made a cut Nellie moaned. The block was not completely effective. With all that and the normal amount of strain I thought for a while that I was going to pass out. I went into a little entry hall and removed my surgical mask so I could breathe. That was one of my most stressful moments up to that time. They had given her other anesthetic when the block did not work so she did not know anything more of the operation for about an hour after it was finished. They had removed some cysts and cauterized some spots that showed infection. After a while she had recovered from the anesthetic and seemed to be getting along alright. Nellie's friend and neighbor, Nettie Barber had gone with us to the hospital. They lived next door where Virginia and Arthur had lived before they moved to Missouri. We had gone in the car with the doctor. He was not ready to come back to Hydro when we wanted to leave. Henry Entz, whose wife was having an operation said we could ride home with him. He lived about two miles out in the country from Hydro. He brought us back home.

After work the next day I decided to go visit Nellie and see how she was feeling. I ate a hasty snack and drove the Ford Roadster the fifty-two miles and stayed until visiting hours were over. Nellie did not like the drinking water at Anadarko so from then on when I went to see her I took a gallon jug of Hydro water to her. Anyone who is addicted to Hydro water hates to give it up.

One evening after my visit I started home and a few blocks from the hospital a rear tire went flat. As a rule I fixed my flats myself in those days but this time I was wearing my best clothes so I stopped at a service station and had it

fixed. It cost fifty cents. That seems like an insignificant sum but at wages of twelve dollars per week and doctor's bills to pay it was something to consider. It was getting late and I was in a hurry. I was driving pretty fast, you know those Model A Fords would do "sixty-five miles per hour with ease." I drove down the hill north of Lookeba. The road was paved and I was making time. I heard a small *clink* of sound and looked at the dashboard and saw that my key ring with all my keys had dropped out of the car switch. The floorboards did not fit very well and of course the keys fell through to the pavement. By the time I stopped the car I was almost a quarter mile from where they had dropped out. I put the car in reverse and started scanning the road. I had passed the spot where I was sure they had fallen and had not seen a thing on road. I decided to head for home so I could get some sleep. Just as I shifted from second gear to first gear I saw a shadow on the road. I stopped and backed up again and, would you believe it, there were the keys.

The first Sunday after Nellie went to the hospital I scrubbed the kids and put on their best clothes and loaded them into the car and took them to see mama. When Lloyd was small and rode in a car he would get sick. As we approached the road near Lookeba that day he became sick and threw up before I could get the car stopped. I cleaned up his mess and went on. He did not have any more trouble that trip. After about ten days the hospital called and said that I could come and get Nellie the next day. Mr. Taylor had bought a used 1936 Chevrolet Two Door Sedan. It ran just like a new one and was a closed car. He suggested that I take his car because it would be more comfortable. So I did that. It was much easier riding than my little Model A. When Nellie got home her incision lacked a lot of being healed. It looked like they had used less than half as many stitches as they should have used so she had some rather deep places that were not healed. It took a long time and I played nurse, cleaning and dressing her incision. I could look after her needs and take care of the kids except when on the job. Then Mom or Nettie stayed with her. It is nice to have good neighbors even if only one or two.

After she was healed she felt fairly well for a few months. Then she started having pain in her side along with backache and headache again. After a while her kidneys stopped draining so the doctor said we would have to take her back to the hospital so they could drain her kidneys. So we took her back. They treated her and said she should stay a few days so they could be sure that she would be all right.

The first bill had come to two hundred and forty dollars. I had been sending them all the money I could spare and had paid about half of it. I had been short of cash and had not paid anything for a few weeks. When they called to tell me that they were ready to release her they would have to have the whole amount of the last bill in cash before they would release her in view of the fact that I was behind on the other bill. I scraped up the ninety dollars for the latest bill and mailed them a money order from the Post Office. I took Mr. Taylor's car and went after her. Lloyd was in school but Arminta went along. As we came through Hinton a little dog ran in front of the car and we ran over him. I could see him in the rearview mirror lying in the street. I felt badly but there was nothing I could do. I needed to get Nellie home and to get back to the yard so Mr. Taylor could go to lunch. I never paid any more of the bill at the hospital. I did not feel that they deserved any more pay for what they had done.

With all the doctor and hospital bills I had found it necessary to charge most of my groceries. The bill had grown to more than a hundred dollars. I went to the bank to see if I could borrow enough money to get all my bills covered with one payment by the month. Mr. Felton at the bank would not consider making the loan. Bankers those days wanted only a loan that was secured with ten times the amount in collateral. They were not taking any chances. That fact helped to prolong the Depression. A shortage of money was the real cause of the Depression in the first place.

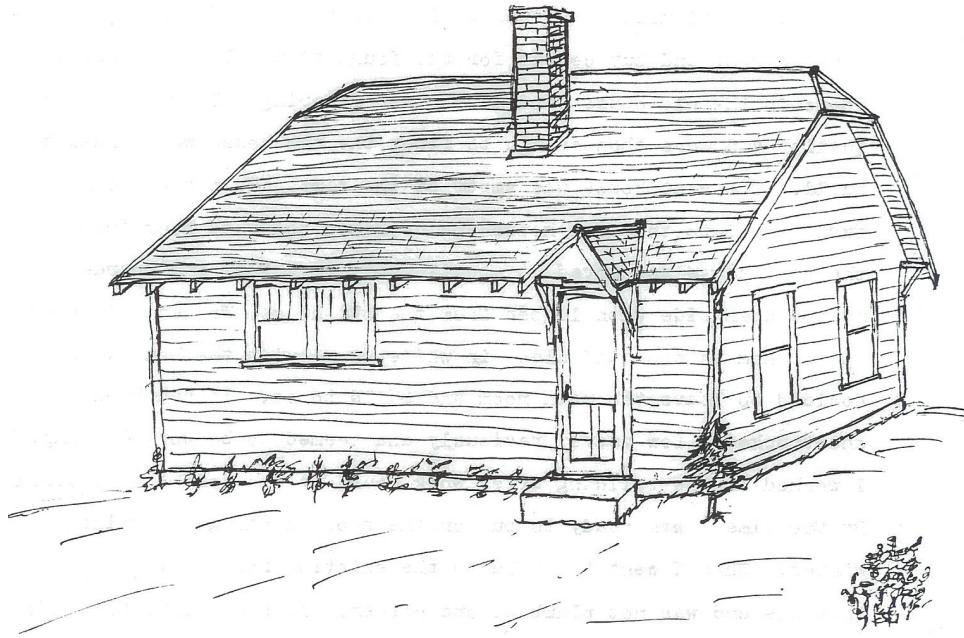
Another Remodeling

A few months before Nellie became sick I had planned to add another little bedroom. We were beginning to be crowded. I had made the foundation for it when the medical expenses stopped that plan. The Federal Government had made a new loan plan under the Federal Housing Authority whereby one could get a loan for remodeling a house if you owned it. The time limit was three years.

Mr. Taylor knew something of my financial problems so he suggested that I go ahead and add two rooms across the back side of my house and use the new loan that was available. I figured that I could do what I wanted to do with a three hundred dollar loan. The monthly payments would run only nine dollars and ninety cents. I was sure I could

handle that. In the spring of 1940 we made the application for the loan and got approval. In my spare time I built the two rooms and got it all ready for a new roof over all the house.

Dad, Hugh, and two neighbor boys helped us with the shingling so we could finish it before it rained. The only labor I paid was for the help by the two boys on the roof. Dad and Hugh donated their time. The roof was on and I had boarded up the walls afterward in order to get the roof on as soon as possible. We had not put up the ceiling in the new rooms. The weather looked funny. There were solid clouds that had a brassy color. The wind was calm. I was preparing to take a bath. We bathed in our washtub those days. Nellie was nervous about the looks of the clouds and decided to go to the storm cave with the neighbors across the alley. We did not have a cellar of our own then. She took the kids and went to the neighbor's place.



The Hydro, OK Home in 1940

I decided to stay home and take my bath as the water was warmer by that time. Everything was quiet and no wind as I started to bathe. I heard a thump on the ground a short distance from the house and while I was wondering what could have made a noise like that I heard another one closer to the house. I still had not decided what was causing the thump when something hit the roof in the unfinished room where I had set my tub. When the second thump came on the roof I realized that it was hail balls falling that were causing the noise. I had never heard anything like the noise they made so I went to the window and looked out. I saw hail balls somewhat larger than a baseball in the yard. They were solid hard ice and the largest I have ever seen. They made so much noise on the roof that I expected to see them come crashing through our new roof. The fact that the shingles were new was the reason they did not come through. I learned later that there were some holes knocked through some of the older roofs.

The only good thing about that storm was that the hail did not fall in any great quantity. At our house they were eight to ten feet apart. We had to take out an Insurance Policy to meet the requirements for the loan so we collected a little money for the damage. The insurance adjuster came to look at the damage while the shingles were still wet so the damage did not appear to be as bad as it was in fact. I had no experience with the way insurance adjusters work so I let him talk me into accepting a payment of only seven dollars and eighty five cents for the damage to a new roof that cost me over fifty dollars besides the labor putting it on. Insurance companies often take advantage of those who do not know and stand up for their rights.

I learned this later when I heard Mr. L.L. West arguing with them about the damage to the Baptist Church roof. The adjuster said, "You know that roof was worn out and depreciated until it was not worth 10% of a new one." Mr. West told him, "That has nothing to do with what you are going to pay us. You did not discount your premium when you issued this policy. You collected 100%. You are going to pay us \$125 if we have to fight you in court." The

adjuster did not argue much after that. He just made out the claim papers. I learned that they rob those who do not know how to fight and give in to the tough ones.

After that when we had the next rain I noticed a wet spot on the living room ceiling. I went into the attic and put medium sized soup bowls where the water had dripped onto the plasterboard. Twenty-eight years later when we remodeled again, the bowl was still there and showed signs of having water within a half inch of the top but we never had another wet ceiling. I guess the shattered shingles were not as bad as they looked. Twenty-eight years is an average lifetime for good wood shingles in this country anyway.

I used the money we had figured for labor on the load to take care of my bill at the grocery store and had all my remodeling finished except the base boards and the money was all spent. When I went to settle the bill at the lumber yard, Mr. Taylor said "You have an employee discount coming on this bill. The company allows a ten percent discount to employees." My discount amounted to about twenty dollars and I could get what lumber and varnish that I needed to finish the inside of the house. My wages had been raised to fifteen dollars per week and I could make the payment on the loan and could buy a gallon of outside paint once in a while until I had the outside painted. It was a nice looking little four-room home. It was the best house either of us had lived in.

Remodeling Ma and Pa's House

A while before I took over the management of the yard Dad was thinking of taking the lumber from his house where he lived and combining it with part of his rent house and make a better house. When he could get a little extra money he paid it to the lumberyard and established a credit balance to be applied on material we would need for the remodeling. A few months after I took over the yard he had a balance of seventy dollars for the roof and buy cement for the foundation. Two good-sized rooms in the old house were lined with flooring. It was of good quality and more than enough to floor the new house we planned to build. The rent house was empty at the time. We moved their furniture into the rent house, detached the shed room from the rent house, moved it about twenty-five feet and boarded up the open side with lumber from the old house. We set this room up for Mom to cook and sleep in while we rebuilt the house. We decided to leave the main room and build on to it. It had been sheet rocked a few years previously and seemed to be worth saving. I worked on the building after work hours at the yard and on Sundays. By the time I was ready to put on the roof it was getting into winter. When I went to build to the existing room I discovered that one end was not plumb at one corner. In checking I found that the builder had made a mistake that careless carpenters sometimes make. The wall was three and a half inches wider at the top than it was at the bottom. Very likely they had measured to the wrong side of the wall plate.

There was nothing to do other than take that corner loose and cut it to a vertical line and fasten it together again. When we took up the floor in the old house we found that two rooms had been built from old bridge timbers that had been split into two by sixes with an axe. We were disappointed about this as we would be short on the floor joists. We used all that were good enough and had to buy a few new pieces. I selected some from the cull pile as I knew I could force them into place and level the floor. I later regretted that we had not torn the rent house completely down. We could have done a better job with very little more work. We had to buy a few long two by fours for rafters also as the old house did not have many long ones. I again went to the cull pile for savings. I used lumber that I could not sell because of crookedness. I got the roof on so it looked straight and had torn the old roof off of the old part of the little house. I had put the shingles on the south half to give some protection to the room that was finished.

The next morning a *norther* had come in during the night. It looked a lot like it would start snowing and that would blow in the ceiling and would ruin it. I frantically started shingling the northeast half of the roof. That would protect the ceiling. My hands were so cold I could hardly hold the shingle nails so I put on a pair of canvas gloves. That was surely an awkward way to work. Trying to hold a 3 penny nail to start it without nailing the glove to the roof made the work go slow. Occasionally, I put the nail through glove and soon my finger was out of the end of the glove. When I was within two feet of the top the snow started. Within a few minutes it was coming down fast. Luckily, there was no wind to cause more trouble. It was a little tricky to keep my footing in the wet snow but I had to finish the roof. By the time I had the last row of shingles on the snow was about three inches deep on the roof. When the last of the shingles were on that end of the roof I brought the building project to a halt and went home. It continued to snow until it almost reached the top of a bee hive, with a six inch super on it that Dad had setting under the locust

tree in our front yard. After went home I made a few pictures with my cameras and did some experimenting using enlarging paper for negatives. That was a good pastime for a snowy week end.

By cutting corners and using second grade shingles and cull lumber we got Dad's house enclosed, except for the windows, for about seventy dollars. We covered the outside with fifteen pound asphalt felt and stripped it with used plaster lath from the two plastered rooms in the old house. He planned to cover it with native stone veneer later. We had enough flooring left with which finished the walls of one bedroom. I covered this with deadening felt, pasted and tacked, then put wallpaper on it. We bought plasterboard for the ceilings. On the living room and front bedroom we put on the used lath and plastered the wall. I had practiced a little plastering and watched men who knew how and did a fair job at very little cost. Later, when Dad got some more money I made all new window frames and we used all new windows. It was two or three years before we got around to putting on the stone veneering. But we had it completed, with built in cabinets and running water and stone on by the time of their Golden Wedding Anniversary. That was the best house that Mom had ever owned in her lifetime. It was nothing fancy but she was very happy to have it.



Joseph Henry and Mary Cloninger on their 50th Wedding Anniversary. Hydro, OK. 1945.

Overhauling a Model A Ford

The old Model A was starting to show need of an overhaul of the engine. It was not falling apart but not as *peppy* as it had been. I drove it under the locust tree in the back yard and took off the oil pan and the cylinder head. It had been re-bored to fifty-thousandths oversize. I ordered a set of piston and ring sixty-thousandths oversize. While the car was disabled I walked to and from work. It was only about six blocks. While I was waiting for the new pistons I adjusted the bearings and ground the valves. When I started to check to see if the new pistons would fit I found that the cylinders had not worn much below where the rings rubbed and for a short distance above the travel of the rings the cylinder still only fifty-thousandths oversize. I got a piece of a file and broke it to a length of about five inches. Then I ground it smooth on all four sides. I ground one edge to a bevel of about sixty degrees, similar to a plane bit but with a more blunt edge. I sawed a slot in one of the old pistons as wide as the blade's thickness. Then, by putting a stove bolt through the flat sides near the wristpin bosses, I could clamp the blade so it would scrape off a little metal where the cylinder was too small. After I removed the ridges from the top of the cylinder the pistons would go down about half way before they were too tight. I had a connecting rod attached to the boring tool and a piece of broomstick through it for a handle. I worked from the top as I bored out the cylinders until the new pistons would travel freely from top to bottom. Then I polished the cylinder walls with fine emery cloth wrapped around my fist. This may sound like a crude job but it worked out almost as well as those done by a machine. After I got it put together again it sounded very good and ran almost as well as a new one.

Another unorthodox repair job on the Model A that I did eventually led to trouble. The radiator never held all the water that was put into it. I had soldered all the leaks in the upper and lower tanks but there were some seepage leaks in the core caused from being frozen. Without the use of a solder tank in which to dip the entire radiator that is hard to fix. My solution was much easier. When Nellie did a washing I took the rinse water and filled the radiator with the slightly soapy water. The solids in the water would accumulate around the *seeps* and as it dried the leaks would stop. They even held well enough that I could use alcohol in the winter and not have to worry about a freeze-up as long as I replaced what evaporated from the heat of the engine. I did not feel like risking Prestone at a price of seven dollars and fifty cents per gallon so I stayed with denatured alcohol. Eventually all the various chemicals started to clog the radiator and the engine ran hot. I decided to see if kerosene would clean it out. It cost only ten cents per gallon then. I filled up with kerosene instead of water and drove around the section. When I drove into the yard the radiator was gurgling. It was starting to boil. After it cooled I drained it and using a wire I pushed it through one of the tubes in the core of the radiator. What came out on the wire looked like raw rubber. I had almost invented *Synthetic Rubber*. All the stuff in the radiator had reacted with the hot kerosene and it looked like the best solution was a new radiator. Montgomery Ward showed one in their catalog for a little less than twenty dollars and with the shipping charges it was less than twenty-two dollars. Other than tires I think that was the most expensive thing I put on that car in the ten or eleven years I drove it.

Visiting Glen and Mary

On December 7th, 1941, Nellie, the kids and I were visiting with Mary, Glen and family, as we often did on week ends. Glen and I went down the creek that morning hunting rabbits and squirrels. That area was very good rabbit country, both cotton tails and jacks. In fact, they were somewhat of a pest as far as gardens and young orchard trees were concerned. There was lots of plum thickets and blackjack timber as well as tall grass and weeds along the creek. At that time I would have found the idea of scarcity of game hard to believe. However, only a few years of adverse conditions almost eliminated the rabbit population. Cutting timber, stripping the land of vegetation by over-grazing and using poison sprays almost wiped out the rabbits within a few years. The last time I went hunting in that part of the country we covered many acres and saw only one cotton tail rabbit. Since they were so hard to find I decided to let him go. I never went back to hunt rabbits there. It makes me feel bad to see what has happened, not only to the game population but also to the natural beauty of the land. But, I still have my memories.

When we came to the house for dinner we were listening to the news on the radio that Glen had recently bought and heard the news about the bombing of Pearl Harbor. We knew that we would be in the war before long.

A few months before that time Glen had found a nest of young squirrels and took them home. He made a cave for them with a revolving drum of hail screen and other things for them to play with. They had grown up and seemed to be happy. We enjoyed watching them at play. Some way the cage door was opened one time and the squirrels escaped and went to the creek. Glen followed after them but only found one, which came to him. The others had made good their escape. After the rest were gone Mary let the lonely one stay in the house. He was always getting into things around the house. They had only two rooms and Mary had hung a bag on one aide of the door. She kept the family's clean socks in it and that was where the squirrel made himself at home. He slept in the sock-bag and when he felt he should hide he would scamper up the door edge and jump into the bag.

His antics were amusing but once in a while they were not funny. Mary was setting the table for a meal and had set a bowl of gravy on the table and the squirrel was investigating the table when Mary was not watching. He stuck his front paws into the warm gravy then when he felt the heat he ran across the table and up the door into the bag. Then he stuck his head and fore feet out of the bag and calmly licked the gravy off his feet. When Mary saw what it had done she said, "I'm going to kill that darned squirrel." But, she never did kill him, even after he got into their radio and cut the wires off of the tuning coil. He was as much her pet as he was to the kids. In the spring when *a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love* the same thing happened to the squirrel. He got outside and left for the creek in search of company. A short time after he left they heard the crack of a .22 rifle down by the creek and they never saw the squirrel again. They never knew for sure but always suspected that he had become an easy target for a hunter since he thought people were his friends.

A Bit about Hugh

In the spring of 1942 Hugh was working with the section crew on the railroad. He had a Model A Coupe, which he bought for twenty dollars. I made a set of floorboards for it and put a glass in one of the doors to replace the one that had been broken. We did not have a piece big enough so I joined two pieces together with a strip of sheet iron with alternate tabs bent right and left on both sides of the glass to hold the pieces in line. We sold and installed auto glass at the lumber yard but it cost a dollar and a half to fix one door glass. Dollars were still scarce so we patched one together that served as well as a new one. I had noticed that one of the lumber yard keys would fit the keyway in my car door but it would not turn. When I tried it on Hugh's Ford—it worked perfectly. I traded locks with him and now I could lock my car when it was parked along the woods and creeks, not that I had anything anyone wanted to steal, but I felt better having it locked.

There had been some kind of a squabble on the section crew. I think the foreman had fired two young men for not reporting for work and they had protested through the union to be reinstated. Anyway, Hugh and another worker had to go to the investigation that was being held at El Reno. Along about the middle of the afternoon *Little Doc* Henke (a son of our old doctor who had taken over the practice after his father died) phoned me at the lumberyard and told me that he thought I should come to his office and take Hugh home. He had been in an accident. I asked him if he was hurt badly and he said, "No, he's just a little woozy and needs some help to get home." Dad was at the yard so I left him to look after the yard 'til I got back.

When I got to the doctor's office the men were bandaged in several places. Hugh's forehead had a big cut and most of the skin had been rubbed off his left elbow. They were all "pretty woosey" as doc said but not altogether from the injuries. They had a few too many drinks also. Doc laughed and said they have had a few too many but they will be alright after it wears off. Hugh knew enough to ask me to get some one to go bring his car home. It was beyond driving. We knew it would be "stripped" if left on Highway 66 overnight. I called the Ford Garage to see if they would send a wrecker for it. They refused. They probably figured the car was not worth the price of wrecker service and they might not get paid. I contacted a man who had a flat-bed truck and did some lumber hauling for us and he said he would haul it in if I would help him load it.

We went over east of Bridgeport where the wreck had occurred. What was left of the car, as luck would have it, had skidded about fifty feet on the pavement then across the borrow ditch and up onto the bank outside the ditch. This made it much easier to load. We backed the truck to the ditch until the end of the bed was about level with the rear wheels, which were still intact. One of the front wheels was completely demolished and the tire on the other had blown. The top part of the body was demolished. From the appearance of the car it looked like a miracle that they came out alive. We loaded it onto the truck much easier than I expected and picked up all the pieces that had come off. We brought it to the lot behind Dad's house and it sat there until it was sold for scrap. After Hugh's head cleared he said the wreck was caused when one of the men with him protested that they were going too fast and took hold of the steering wheel. However it happened it was evident that they were going too fast. When the car had swerved to the right the spokes pulled out of the rim of the wheel and the wire wheels on the Model A Ford were pretty strong ones. Hugh got his notice to go for processing into the army while he was recuperating from the accident and Mr. Adkins, a member of the draft board, brought the papers for him to sign while he was in bed.

Another Hospital Stay for Nellie

Nellie's health had grown worse after her trips to the hospital at Anadarko. She was having bad pain in her side and was still having severe headaches. We decided to take her to Dr. Wood at Weatherford. By that time he had established a private hospital. After he examined her he said she had adhesion from the other operation along with other complications and said he thought she would have to have an operation. He said if she did not improve within a few days he would have to operate. By way of gossip we had heard that he was *hard boiled* about wanting his money. We remembered he had been more than fair with us when Arminta was so sick and we did not blame him for demanding his pay. How else could he get the things he needed for his hospital. He told us the operation would be two hundred dollars. He did not beat around the bush about the cost. A few days later Nellie was feeling so bad we decided to take her to his hospital to see what should be done. After he examined her he said we should leave her there and he would operate at eight o'clock the next morning. I went back early the next morning and they already had Nellie prepared for the operation. They let me go into the operating room to watch, not that I would know

anything about it, but their rules were not as strict as some places. The nurse said, jokingly, "We'll let you go in if you promise to not pass out. We'll be too busy to look after you if you do." I told her I didn't think I would cause them any trouble and she said, "You know, it has happened." When the doctor started to take out the scar tissue he said, "That was a sloppy job." While he was concentrating on the operating a bead of sweat started to run down his nose. He felt it and swung his head to one side and bawled out the young nurse who was helping and asked her why she did not sponge his face. She said, "I didn't notice it." He said, very sharply, "It's your job to notice." I saw her wiping tears from her eyes for a while after that. Once or twice I thought I would have to leave the room. With the stuffiness of the room, the surgical mask and the nervous strain I thought I would suffocate. But I stayed and did not pass out.

When they took Nellie to her room the doctor came in and asked me for his money. I thought that was rather abrupt and I told him I would have to borrow it and the bank had been closed when I left home. I would have to go to the bank when I got home. He did not seem too worried about that. He said he just wanted to know he was going to be paid. I stayed there until Nellie came out from under the anesthetic to see how she was doing. Then I came home and after lunch I went to the bank. Mr. Felton, who had refused to lend me one hundred twenty five dollars a few months previously, was at the teller window and asked me what he could do for me. I did not ask him if he would loan me the money. I said, "I have to have two hundred dollars to pay my wife's hospital bill." He wanted to know about collateral and I told him I could give a mortgage on my house. He wanted to know if it had a clear title. My deed to the lots was a tax deed. He said the law would not permit the bank to take a mortgage on that kind of a title. Banking laws had been tightened up after failure of some banks at the start of the Depression. He and Mr. Pope handled some loans on a personal basis and said they could let me have the money. He wanted to know how I would repay it and I told him I would pay twenty-five dollars per month. With salary at eighty-five and fifteen dollars for car expense I could do it.

When I went back to see Nellie that evening after work I gave the doctor a check for the bill I owed and we never were asked about money by him again. He merely wanted to find out who would pay and who would not. Before he operated on Nellie he was talking to her about doing the operation. He said, "I'm sure you should have it, you know, Doctor Wood likes to operate." He had heard the comments some people had made. I had heard people say he was *knife-happy*. After he made the little joke about liking to operate he said, "Truthfully, I do like to operate. If I did not I would not be a good surgeon." When he closed the incision he used a needle until he came to closing the skin then he used some little metal clamps that he closed with pliers as they were slid off a pair of wires that kept them in an even row. When it was finished it resembled a zipper. One time after Nellie was feeling better and he was putting a new dressing on he told her that she had so many operations that he decided to put on a zipper so it would be easier the next time. After about ten days Nellie was able to come home and she felt a lot better for some time.

Lloyd Starts School

When Lloyd was about five years old a stray dog came to our place looking for something to eat and a home. It was a medium sized nondescript dog that showed signs of Collie ancestry. We did not want to keep the dog as we felt that we did not need another mouth to feed and furthermore the dog had a *worm fit* once in a while. Nellie had a fear of rabies and wanted to get rid of the dog. She called the town office and told them there was a stray dog that we would like to have them come and get. The street commissioner had to take care of getting rid of them. When he came after the dog he brought his .410 shotgun.

Instead of catching the dog and taking it away to destroy it, he shot it in our yard while Lloyd watched. When he shot the dog, Lloyd ran into the house crying and swearing and called the man a dirty name and sobbed, "He killed my dog." We never had the slightest idea that the dog would be shot in our yard and especially with a five-year-old little boy watching. We had not realized that Lloyd considered it to be his dog. We had not felt that way about it. Unthinking grown-ups can give a little child some pretty hard emotional jolts sometimes.

When he was about six and a half years old he started to school. That was not so rough for him as Juneita and David Robertson were going and they could show him the way around at school. He never showed any sign of not wanting to go to school as some little boys. Another thing that made it easy for beginners was the primary teacher, Mrs. Lucille Finley. She taught the primary grade at Hydro School so long that she appeared to be a permanent fixture. She had a way with the kids and could make studying seem like fun. All the kids seemed to like Miss Finley. If she

had written down all the funny stories of what she heard them say it would have been like the book Art Linkletter wrote—*Kids Say The Darnedest Things*.

Arminta started to school when she was a little past six years old. Her first teacher was also Miss Finley. Her first day at school was made easier by being accompanied by Juneita and her friend Zelta Barnard who lived across the street from Dad's house when Juneita and David came to live with Mom and Dad. Arminta liked school from the start and enjoyed going until she finished High School at Hydro. One of her teachers for several years was one of my classmates the year I graduated. She was Opal Glidewell and later her daughter was a teacher of Lloyd's kids. I'm getting ahead of my story again.

Red Rock Canyon

The summer that Arminta was almost old enough for school Nellie met a woman at Clinton that we had known when her husband worked as a garage mechanic in Hydro a few years before. Nellie invited them to come for a visit some week end. My memory plays tricks sometimes, I can't recall their names and I have several snapshot of them in the album but no names. They came over to our house one Sunday and we all decided to go to the Kiwanis Park near Hinton. It is known now as the Red Rock State Park. The Kiwanis club had used the profits from their rodeos and other activities and bought the land in the canyon and improved it. We had heard that it was a very nice park and wanted to see it. We drove over to the park and spent the evening seeing the sights. It was a nice park with a small pond made by damming a little creek and there was a rustic bridge across the pond. It had lots of nice big shade trees, a spring of cool water for drinking, and steep walls of red sandstone. They had cemented a piece of pipe into the spring to make a drinking fountain but it was rather low to the ground. As we came by there were two boys in army uniform with their girlfriends standing by the spring. One of the girls said, "How do you get a drink out of that pipe?" Her escort picked her up in his arms and said, "Just like this." as he held her feet up and head down as the water ran over her face. She kicked and squealed until he set her right side up again.

We had a very pleasant evening exploring the new territory and taking pictures. The road into the canyon had been cut out of the side of the canyon and was about all my old Model A could handle to come out. Several years later the Kiwanis Club donated it to the State of Oklahoma. They managed it and added a swimming pool and lots of people use it. They take their camp trailers in and stay a few days. There are some hard maple trees there and it is worth the trip to see the maples when the leaves turn red in the fall¹⁷. The willow leaves turn to gold and with Red Rock Canyon it's very pretty.

Lloyd Breaks an Arm

When Lloyd was about ten or eleven and at school I got a phone call from Dr. Joe Henke (*Little Doc*). He told me that Lloyd was at his office with a broken arm and he wanted me to come see it before he set it. When I went into his examining room, he showed me the arm. It was broken about two inches below the elbow and twisted around about ninety degrees from the natural position and there was a large lump on the backside of the upper arm. It was such a shocking sight I almost fainted. Everything in the room seemed to be whirling around. I sat down in a chair and lowered my head until the dizziness left me. Doc felt of the lump and said "That is the knuckle end of the bone broken off of the lower arm." It was not only broken off but the joint was dislocated. I helped hold Lloyd on the table while Doc pulled and pushed to get the bones back into place. After a while he decided everything was in place but he said he would feel better if he had an X-ray picture to be sure it was right. I told him to do whatever he thought was best. He put us in his car and took us to the hospital at Clinton to get the picture and everything was in place. He put a cast on it and in a few weeks it was as good as new. The total bill was thirty-five dollars.

After it was all fixed up we asked how it happened. He was sitting on a teeter-totter facing away from the other end when a boy jumped off a shed roof of a nearby shed onto the other end of the teeter and flipped Lloyd backward onto his left arm. He tried to catch his weight on his arm and the force of the fall broke both bones and drove the broken piece out of the socket and into the upper arm. It was remarkable that it healed as well as it did with that much damage. The kids made it through the rest of their school life with no more serious accidents.

¹⁷ These are called *Caddo Maples* and they are common around Red Rock. They are not common 15 miles away in Hydro.

The Itch

Once there was a scare of *itch* breaking out in school and we noticed that Lloyd seemed to be scratching his fingers more than a normal amount. Nellie took a look at his hands and noticed some little blisters between his fingers. She had never seen anyone with *the itch* but this looked like the symptoms she had heard of so she subjected him to the old home remedy of sulfur and grease. He protested but was greased from head to foot every evening after school and had to wash it off and put on clean clothes before school every morning. This treatment lasted three days and his hands looked somewhat better. The blisters had dried up and the itching had eased. In about a week his symptoms came back and after a little more careful research we found that he had a cigarette lighter and was experimenting with smoking. Every time he put lighter fluid in the lighter his hands would break out in blisters. He was allergic to the fluid and did not have *the itch*.

Speaking of *the itch* reminds me of a dirty trick I pulled on a traveling salesman at the lumber yard one time. He was an obnoxious character and when he used our rest room, he left it a mess. The floor, the walls and the lavatory were splattered with water and he did not flush the toilet. A few days before he was there I had done some work on the roof and to remove the roofing tar from my hands I held them under the spigot of the turpentine barrel and used that to dissolve the tar so I could wash it off. My fingers, like Lloyds, showed a sign of irritation and blisters. They looked like I had heard *itch* described. When the salesman came in and warmly shook hands with me, I placed my elbows on the desk and started examining my hands and said, "You know, I believe I have *the itch*." I held a sober face like I really meant what I said. That salesman almost fell all over himself making a hasty exit. I did not watch him after he left but I would bet he made his next stop at the drug store. He never came to see me again.

Indoor Plumbing

After we had done the work on Dad's house there was a front porch seven by twelve feet that we had removed intact from the little rent house. I had built it a few years before that and it had the same roof pitch as my house. It was not built that way with forethought but it would work nicely for a back porch on my house. Dad gave it to me and I put it on our house. As Lloyd and Arminta were growing bigger we needed another bed room. There was almost six feet of headroom in our attic. I put in a floor almost ten feet wide in one end of the attic and put in a double window in the east end. By putting in a four foot wall on the sides and finishing the rafters for four feet with insulation board there was a two-foot level ceiling. It was rather low but Lloyd was not very tall and it made him a place to sleep. I built a bunk bed to fit a three quarter size mattress. It had three large drawers underneath and a desk built in next to the window made the headboard. This gave him a place to study and read also a place to entertain his company. One of his friends was over six feet tall so he was never able to stand completely upright in that room. I suspect that Lloyd did a lot more reading than studying in that room. He had a passion for *comic books*. There was a woman who lived a block north of our house who also liked to read them. When she was finished with them she sold them to Lloyd three for a dime. He read them and resold them for a nickel a piece to his classmates. I suppose he had a reputation at school about his dealing in funny books. One evening when we had gone to the theater to see the movie the school superintendent, Mr. Quay Smith, came down the aisle and when he saw Lloyd in the seat he said in a voice, like a carnival barker "Pop Corn, Peanuts and Funny Books. Five Cents." Most of the audience laughed at his joke.

I built a kitchen cabinet for Edna and Roy for their house in El Reno and took it down there on a week end. I had to make two or three trips to install it as we had to take out a long window and replace it with a shorter one. The day I replaced the window the weather turned cold and by the time I was finishing the work it was snowing pretty hard. I was driving the Model A Ford. The Model A would negotiate snowy or muddy roads much better than heavier cars so it was no problem to get home. The next week end I went back to work again. As I was reaching the top of the big hill east of the river bridge the car started to shake like it was falling apart and there was a terrible noise. My heart felt like it had come up into my throat and I almost choked. I thought the car was disintegrating under me. By the time I started to breathe again I saw one of the twin-engined trainer planes going down the road a few feet off the ground. The army was training pilots at hedge-hopping and they got a kick out of buzzing people on the ground.

I often worked late and drove home after dark. One night as I came around a curve I saw something dark on the pavement and swerved into the other lane to avoid hitting it and discovered it was a cow walking toward me. Then I met another. By that time I had slowed the car so I could see what was happening. After I crossed the small bridge I

saw another cow trying to get up from the pavement but her legs were broken. A semi-trailer truck was on its side in the ditch. It had jack-knifed and dumped a load of cattle onto Highway 66 about ten o'clock at night. I could see the driver was not hurt so I kept going as it was late and I could not help him. After I finished that job Edna gave me her old wall type sink. I decided to put in the sewer line to the alley and rough-in the plumbing for a bathroom. I felt that we could not afford to build the room and complete the plumbing at one time so I decided to do it *piece meal*.

I went ahead with the bathroom building. I took the back porch apart and reassembled it on a wall in line with the north wall of the house and then joined a roof with it and extended it to the south under the upstairs windows for a distance of about eight feet from the bathroom wall to form a back porch. I did not have tools for working the cast iron sewer pipe nor dies for threading the water and gas pipes so I hired Mr. Virgil Taylor, Hydro's plumber, to do the rough-in work. That way I could go ahead with the building. Plumbing supplies were controlled by government order and sold only by a priority order. About the time I finished my building Mr. Taylor told me they had found a lavatory and stool that could be sold without the priority order. There had been a fire in a wholesale plumbing supply in Oklahoma City and all the supplies that had been smoked could be sold without the red tape. I wondered about that fire. The little smoke was really no damage. It wiped off with a damp cloth. I bought what I needed and told the plumber I would wait for the hot water tank until I had enough money to pay for it. His wife, who was the bookkeeper and handled most of his sales, told me she would advise me to go ahead and complete the job and enjoy the use of the hot water. They would be glad to give credit until I could pay for it and they had a tank on hand that could be sold without any government order. So I let them install the tank to complete the bathroom. I had built a shower stall. Less than two months after I bought the tank I received a Christmas Bonus from the lumber company in the amount of one hundred thirty dollars. So we got a good break coming our way at last.

Fido

Fido came to live with Dad when he was a young adult dog. He was a small, white woolly dog. In fact it was hard to tell which end was the head and which was the tail until you saw it wiggle. He weighed about fifteen pounds. Hugh brought him home with him when he came on leave from the army. Fido was what you might call a *one-man dog*. He did not make friends very easily. He was highly intelligent. Maybe that's the reason he was so selective about his friends. He knew that not all people were to be trusted. He also had more courage than his size would support, which led him into trouble once in a while.

The first evening Hugh was home he decided to go up town to the pool hall to visit with his old cronies. He left Fido at home. We were all strangers to Fido and all the while Hugh was gone Fido laid on the floor with his nose in one of Hugh's shoes. He would not respond to our talking to him and we knew that he might bite anyone who crowded him. We talked to him but did not try to rush him into becoming acquainted. It was only a few days until he accepted us as friends. He learned the meaning of lots of words. We could say, "Fido, do you want a cigarette?" and he would snarl his lip up, snort and run for the back door to go outside. When we would ask if he wanted a bath he would run out of the house if the door was open. He liked to go into the creek but he hated to have a bath.

Nellie was helping me at the lumberyard. Help was hard to find as many young men had been drafted into the army and others had gone away to work in defense work. As it was difficult for her to come home and fix our lunch Mom told us to bring our groceries over to their house and she would do the cooking. She did not have much to do then as Juneita and David were living in Oklahoma City with their father at that time. Mom said the house seemed too empty with all the kids gone and she would welcome having something to do. So Nellie and I ate dinner with Mom and Dad.

Dad liked to play with Fido and see him do his little things that showed he was smart. He would say, "Fido, the birds are in the garden again." Fido would let out a few yips and slam into the back screen door and out into the garden south of house. He would run up and down the rows, barking until the sparrows were all gone. One day, just to see if he knew the words or perhaps just the tone of voice, while I was telling something that happened at the yard I said the words and went ahead talking in my normal voice. Fido let out a screech and ran barking into the garden. He definitely understood the words. He learned very fast. One day I held my hands out toward him and snapped my fingers and said "Come on". The second time he jumped into my arms held at waist level. I had him do it a few times and did not think to reward him. The next time I tried it to show Nellie how smart he was he turned up his

nose and walked away as if to say, "What kind of a chump do you think I am." I was never able to get him to do that trick again.

I have read that dogs do not have emotions but I know that to be a mistaken idea. I have seen Fido show about all the emotions shown by the average human. He liked to play ball with me and the kids. One of his favorite games was *keep-away* as the kids used to play at school. We would roll the ball from one to another on the ground while Fido tried to get it. Once in a while we would go through the motions of rolling it but hang onto it and he would rush to get it and it was not there. One time when I did that I laughed at his frustration. That made him very angry and he ran at my hands, barking angrily and I could appreciate how he felt. He did not want to be ridiculed. A year or so later, when Juneita came back to Hydro, she was doing the bookkeeping for me at the lumberyard. Dad always went to the yard where he did small repair jobs and filed saws. He, Juneita and Fido usually rode with me in the Model A. One day, at noon when we were going to lunch we stopped by the help-yourself laundry to pick up Mom's baskets of wet clothes that she had washed. That did not leave much room in the car so Dad decided to make Fido walk. He put him out of the car and closed the door. The next morning when we went to work Fido did not come to get in the car to go. About nine o'clock I glanced out the window at the office and saw Fido walking up the street on the opposite side by the Hydro Review Office. He kept his head turned away from the lumberyard and it was several days before he came back to the yard. He was insulted by the treatment he had received.

In a little shanty by the alley where Dad kept his garden tools, axe, saw and junk his old pussy-cat had a litter of kittens. She thought she was doing the right thing when she came out and attacked Fido as he passed by the shed. It was a case of bad judgment on her part. He meant no harm to her kittens. With his long wooly hair she could not hurt him much but he was not one to run from a fight. Before we realized what was happening he had killed the old cat. Dad loved his cats but he did not blame Fido because he was fighting in self-defense.

I was building the bathroom building on the back of the house and had taken the kitchen door off so I could build a little hallway out past the doorway into the bathroom. I had the floor joists in and the dirt below was excavated to about two feet. When we went in and out through the back door we walked on the joists. Our town Marshall owned a Great Dane dog, which he kept chained. This had made him mean tempered. One day the big dog slipped his chain and came into Dad's yard. Fido thought it was his duty to protect his territory so he tackled the huge dog. The fight was too one-sided and Fido's shoulder was crushed and the big dog was trying to kill him. Nellie ran out to rescue Fido and got a bite on her arm. When I came home from work Nellie told me she thought Fido was dying. She had brought him into our house, blood and all.

He had dragged himself into the northwest corner of our living room and laid down. The hair was brushed back from his eyes and we could see they had taken of a misty look. He appeared to be on the verge of dying. We were sure he would be gone before morning. When we got up the next morning we saw that he had come to the back doorway trying to go outside but he could not negotiate the floor joists and he had messed the floor. That was the only time I ever knew him to do that. He even went to the neighbors flower beds or yards instead of making a mess around our house or Dad's house. He was really *house broke* if he could possibly get outside. With all his grave injuries he recovered and was as good as new but Nellie had to take rabies shots, which were very painful and cost us twenty-eight dollars.

World War II: Draft Board and Rationing

After the war had been going full blast for a few years the draft boards were looking for more men. They had started calling men with children. T. J. Hughes came down to Hydro one day and said, "How do you stand with the Draft Board" "One-A," I answered. He asked, "Since when?" He jumped up excitedly when I said, "Ten days ago." He looked at the card and said that the ten-day limit for appeal was from the time the notice was received instead of the date it was made out. He took the card and went to see the Draft Board at Hinton. He told them that I was in essential work and serving farmers and had no help so they issued a Four-F card for me. That is how near I came to being a G. I. I assumed that the Board knew what they were doing and I did not intend to argue with them.

When the war was getting started there was a certain amount of panic in lots of ways. No one knew how things would work out or what would be scarce and what would be available. One of the first things for officials to worry about was rubber for tires. They put new tires under the control of the rationing boards and issued orders for every

one to turn in any extra tires, used or otherwise, except for a spare. As it turned out later, the disgusting thing about that was that the used tires, a mountain of them, laid in a pile at Oklahoma City until after the end of the war. They were never used or reclaimed. I turned in two fairly good tires from which I could have gotten many miles use on my Model A.

After a while my tires were ready to give up the ghost. One day when I was coming home to dinner after a heavy rain I drove into a hole by a culvert and when the rear wheel went into the hole it struck a rock and cut a big hole in the tire. I was about down to the rim so I made application to the ration board for two tires. In a few days I received permission to buy one tire. After talking to others who had experience I learned that the board always allowed half as much as you asked for. I sent another application for two tires, and sure enough, in a few days I got a permit to buy one. I mailed an order to Montgomery Ward for the two tires and made it the rest of the way through the war without having to buy more tires.

Tires for the heavier cars became a problem for some and I had many offers of latter model and better cars for that reason. Another thing the Model A got pretty good gas mileage and that too was rationed. I never had any problem getting by with the amount they allotted to me. I did not have nerve enough to trade for the better cars, I stuck with my old faithful Model A for several years after the war was over.

The Old Model A

One hot July day the old Model A let us down. Nellie had a badly infected ear. She never had a good defense against infection. Where I could cut my hand and it would heal up within a few days, a cut on her hand would turn red and angry looking and take a long time to heal. Her ear was giving her so much pain she decided to see an ear specialist at Clinton who was recommended by friends. I left Dad and Juneita to take care of the business while I took Nellie to the doctor. On the way home the car sputtered and died about two miles west of Weatherford. I checked the timing of the distributor and could see it was out of time. That would have to a stripped timing gear or distributor gear. Not a job for roadside repair. There was a service station about an eighth of a mile up the road. It was very hot and Nellie was suffering quite a bit, but there was nothing to do but go to the nearest phone and call for help. I used the phone at the service station and call Dad at the lumberyard and asked him to send some one who could tow my car in so I could fix it. He asked me where I was, and I, being a little up in the air and not thinking clearly, said, "Over here by Weatherford." After I calmed down and realized how silly the answer was I told him I was about a quarter mile west of Sawatzky's service station. I can't recall who came after me. We got the car and Nellie home without too much more delay.

After I got the car home I decided to check the timing gear first as it seemed to me that the gear felt like it moved when I put the feeler bolt into the hole to check the timing. When I removed the timing gear cover I discovered that the hub had twisted out of the fiber gear. It was an off brand of gear and the way it was made had caused the failure. That would not have happened had it been a gear made by Ford.

I had to repair various things on that car but I could do the work myself and the parts were reasonable in price so I had economical transportation. During the war some parts were hard to find sometimes. Once the gear in the rear end went out and I had to walk to work. Hugh took me out on Highway 66 to the bootlegger's station. The bootlegger also did a little black-market dealing also. He said he had a ring gear and pinion for a Model A that he would sell to me for seven eighty-five. That was about what I expected it to cost so I bought it.

One evening after work I jacked up the car and set a nail keg under each running board and removed the rear end and took it apart. When I went to put on the new gear it was perhaps only a few thousandths of an inch too small but it would not go on. I took a flat file and very carefully filed the body of the differential case until the new gear went on. I worked as fast as I could trying to complete the job before dark. It's quite a job to take the rear spring loose from the car or to put it back as the spring was made short so it had to be put under tension to make it ride smoother. The Ford garages had a special tool for that job but all I had was a block of 2x4 for one side to set against the housing on one end and the spring on the other. Then by using a small car jack on the other side I could expand the spring until I could slip in the spring shackle to hold it together. When I got it put together it was about too dark to see what I was doing. I went around to the driver's side to start the car and check it out. When I set my foot on the running board my foot struck something and I found that I had left out the front half of the bell housing of the universal joint.

Now I had to take the joint loose, disconnect the brake rods and take the spring loose so I could put in the part I had forgotten the first time. I had to dig out my extension cord and trouble light and it was almost ten o'clock before the job was completed.

Visiting Arthur and Virginia

About this time Arthur and Virginia moved back to Oklahoma with three kids beside Gaylene. There was Hugh then Mary Alice and Annie. Annie was small and had not learned to speak some words distinctly so she called her older sister *Sally*. That was her name for some time. Arthur had gone to school while they lived in Missouri and had become a minister. When they first came to Dad's place the kids were pale compared to kids around this part of Oklahoma. They almost looked as if they had been sick. It seems odd that the slight difference in the climate of western Oklahoma and central Missouri would make that much difference but people here were about two shades more tanned here. Gaylene and Arminta were considerably larger than when they ran away and went up-town but they had one more experience together. I parked my Model A in the driveway east of our house and it sloped to the south where there was locust tree about two and a half inches thick through the trunk. They were playing in the car one day when we heard a commotion in the yard and looked out to see what was happening. There were two scared little girls in a Model A that had come to rest completely astride the locust tree. The car had struck with enough force to bend the tree over but fortunately it stopped on the tree instead of going on down the hill. They had pulled the shift lever out of reverse into neutral and the car took off. It was wedged on the tree until I had to take a saw under the car and saw the tree into small pieces so I could return the car to its usual parking spot.

They were not here very long until Arthur went to Sparks, Oklahoma to take charge of a church. Sparks, like many small towns is not shown on some maps today. Changes in transportation and communication along with other things had made the distances between towns greater. For several years it reduced the size and the number of businesses in Hydro. Sparks was a little way north and about four miles east of Chandler, where many bricks used in early days of Oklahoma were manufactured. Some of the bricks bearing the words *Chandler O-T* have been sought by collectors.

There were lots of new regulations put out by the Price Control Board and Mr. Hughes decided the best way to enlighten us about what we could and could not do was to have all the managers come to Cushing for a meeting. We decided it would be nice to drive to Sparks and visit Arthur and Virginia and the kids. Mom and Arminta went along with me and Nellie. We drove through Oklahoma City to Meeker then north through Chandler. When we thought we were far enough north we turned east on a county road. We came to a *Country store*. There was a man sitting on a bench out front and we asked him if he could tell us where Sparks was. He drawled, "Well I think you go over there to the next corner and go north about two or four miles to the big oil tanks and it's near there." I did not think that was very good directions and the road to the east did not look very good. The man looked like he might be more familiar with a bottle than the countryside, so Nellie went into the store to get better directions. The storekeeper told her we should go back to the highway and we would find a big sign at the corner and Sparks was four miles east of the sign.

We watched for the sign but did not see it. I knew we had gone more than four miles so when we came to a service station Nellie went in and asked where it was. The man told her to go back to the first road to the east and we would find it. I guess the sign had blown down or it had been a long time since the storekeeper had traveled that road. On that road we saw a log house with a *lean-to* shed of boards on one side. It looked like someone lived in it. That was less than sixty miles from modern Oklahoma City. It was hard to believe.

We found Sparks. It was a small community but they had a school and a fair church. After we rested a while I dressed in my suit and started on to Cushing alone, leaving Nellie, Arminta and Mom until I returned from the meeting. As I drove north from where Sparks Road joined the highway I was going down a grade to the bottom of a little valley. On the left side of the road was a new woven wire fence with a barb wire above. I noticed on the other side of the valley there was a medium sized dog hanging by one hind leg at the top of the fence. His struggles looked like he was about exhausted. He had tried to jump the fence and one leg had caught between the barbed wire and the top of the woven and his weight had pulled the wires tightly around his foot. He was in real trouble. I was slowing down so I could stop and help him get loose when the Highway Truck with a work crew came over the hill and stopped and rescued the dog before I reached him.

I had never driven from Chandler to the highway west of Cushing. It was only about twenty miles but seemed like it was fifty. I had no one to talk to and the road was as straight as a bee-line and no hills. There was one town to break the monotony. A little town called Agra. It's odd how long an unfamiliar road can seem the first time you travel it. When I reached the highway going east it was five miles east to Cushing.

I still had plenty of time before the meeting was to start so I decided to locate the Hughes Lumber Co. General Office. I was unfamiliar with the town but passed an office with the door open to the street. There were two men talking together. I looked in and asked them if they could direct me to Hughes Co. Office. They told where it was so I went there and Mr. McClure, manager of the Weatherford yard was there. I had never met any of the other managers before.

After it was time to close the office we all went to the Cushing Hotel where they were going to have dinner and the meeting afterward. When we were all seated at the table the waitress started bringing in the food. She looked like she might be about forty years old. She was rather good looking. Mac McClure was telling a story about some kind of a deal that had him worried. He said, "I was just as nervous as an old maid". That was a harmless enough expression but I happened to be looking at the waitress and the way her head whirled around and the expression on her face led me to believe he had touched a nerve for her.

One other little event is worth mentioning. It was a pretty swanky dining room and everything looked spotless. The waitress was coming through the door from the kitchen and out of the corner of my eye it looked like she had stumbled slightly so I took a good look and she was kicking at a cock-roach about as big as I had ever seen. She was trying to keep him from getting into the dining room. That reminded me of Robert Burns *Ode to a Louse on a Lady's Bonnet* Read it some day and you will know what I was thinking.

For dinner we had a baked potato and a round steak as big as a platter and about an inch thick. Ice cream and cake for desert. Some of the men ate all of that. I don't see how anyone could eat that much and I always had a healthy appetite and enjoyed good food. I ate about a third of my steak and pushed the platter away. The waitress came by and leaned over and asked me if there was something wrong with my steak and I told her it was fine but I had all I cared for.

When the meeting was over and we went outside it was starting to rain. I went to my car and started back to Sparks. The rain poured all the way. I met several cars and not one of them would dim their lights to me. It surely is odd how people of different areas have different practices. We think dirty words about people around Hydro who don't dim their lights, not that they all do. With the rain on my windshield and lights in my eyes, I had to stop a few times because I could not even see the edge of the pavement or guard rails of the bridges. It was pretty late when I got back to Virginia's house. I had noticed that there was a kerosene light in the log house as I drove by. The next morning the little creek that ran by Sparks was almost bank full of what looked like red barn paint. All that country around there is made up of red clay or red shale. I thought I had seen some red soil around Hydro but nothing to compare with that. We drove home that morning and had a very enjoyable trip and the old Model A clucked merrily along at twenty-two miles per gallon. The speedometer showed 72,000 miles when I had bought it and I don't know how long it had been since it had reached that mileage.

Needng Glasses

Nellie and I decided we needed glasses so we went to see Doc Berry. He had a set of adjustable frames and a boxful of lenses, which he could insert into the frames until we found the lens that gave us the best vision with either eye. Then we tried both eyes together and he wrote a prescription for the glasses we needed. He first brought me a catalog to choose the frames.

I had decided on a frame that looked all right to me when he discovered he had brought me the one in which he had penciled in his costs. I had noted that the one I had chosen had the notation 6/50 written beside it. He said, "wait a minute, I have the wrong book here." He returned with another book exactly like the first but showing no prices. It did not make any difference to me that I had seen his cost price. I did not expect him to sell them without a profit. I was in business myself and knew that profit is essential to any business. There are people who think no one but themselves should take a profit. If they find out the cost of any thing you have to sell they expect to buy it at or below your cost. He told us the glasses would cost us ten dollars and eighty-five cents, not an unreasonable profit

considering the time it took to fit us with the correct lenses. The next glasses which I bought about seven years later cost eighteen dollars but the Optometrist had more elaborate test equipment. A similar pair now, about thirty years later cost one hundred and twenty dollars. This is an example or what inflation had done to good old American Dollar.

Fishing on Deer Creek

As far back as the first fish I ever recall catching when we were visiting at Taylor's place on the branch of Lake Creek I have enjoyed fishing. It took Nellie a little longer to learn the thrills of fishing. When she had the two small children to look after she often told me she could not see what was the reason for the thrill of doing it. After Lloyd and Arminta were older and she could concentrate on fishing, she found out what it was all about. I had made some dough-balls of cottonseed meal mixed with flour and sweet milk to a stiff dough that would stay on a treble hook in the water. We went up the creek a few miles west of Hydro to a spot where a tornado had blown some large trees into the creek. This formed some pretty good holes for the fish to hide in. Also, Little Deer Creek joined the main creek about a quarter mile downstream. The silt brought down by the Little Deer acted somewhat as a dam and caused the main creek to back up to a depth of about four feet and to flow sluggishly. It made an ideal spot for Carp as well as Channel Cats. We went especially to see if we could catch some of the big Carp we had seen in that part of the creek. We had not graduated to rods and reels at that time. We used Cane Poles.

Nellie decided to try her luck where the stream went under the first big log. Above the drift the water was shallow but it became deeper under the log. I told her if she hooked a fish to work him up into the shallow water so she could get hold of him. The bottom of the creek was sandy and if you got near a deep place it became *Quickey* and you would sink down to your knees or deeper. I moved downstream a ways and noticed a good-sized carp lying in the shadow below a willow that was growing in the edge of the water. I had not fished much for carp and knew little of their habits or intelligence. I gently lowered my dough ball into the water a few feet in front of him. He started to slowly turn toward the bait. My pulse quickened and I braced myself to set the hook. He swam directly at the bait until he was a few inches from it and insolently started into a very slow dive to deeper water and out of sight. It was there that I learned that carp are not as stupid as many people think they are. He had seen me long before I had seen him.

I heard a commotion from where Nellie was fishing so went to see what was happening. She was standing in the shallow water and was pretty well splattered with mud and water but she had her *catch* in her arms. She had hooked a carp, that would weigh about three pounds and when she stepped into the quicksand near the log she bogged down. She was afraid her fish would escape so she gathered him up in her arms and waited for help to get out of the mud. In spite of that experience she said, "Now I see what it is all about." We often went fishing in that area after that.

I bought a rod and reel for each of us soon after that time. Nellie wanted one of the telescoping, steel rods and I got a four and a half foot steel casting rod. We went back to try our luck again. Nellie stopped at a hole we had not tried before and I went on up to the spot where she had caught her first carp. I had caught two that would weigh about two pounds each so I went back to where Nellie was fishing to show off my catch. I said, "I've caught two pretty nice ones." Nellie was rather calm and said, "I have one on the stringer there." I pulled up the stringer and found she had caught a five pounder. One section of her steel rod was bent until it never did telescope smoothly again. It was a long time before I was able to beat the size of her largest fish so she always had a good story to tell until that time. We did not try to eat the carp as they are a very bony fish and we could catch all the channel cats that we wanted to eat.

After the big flood in 1948 there were some very good deep holes and drifts a little over a mile up the creek where we caught lots of catfish. One time I was wading in the shallow end of one of the big holes and I stepped on something that felt like flesh. It gave me a funny feeling as we knew there were some people drowned in the flood. I felt around with my bare feet and determined that I had stepped on a cow that had drowned. There was a place near the regular channel of the creek where the swift flood water had scooped out a big hole. It was about fifty yards wide and a hundred long and was separated from the stream. We cast our baited hooks out into the deeper parts and caught several catfish that had been trapped in the hole when the flood water went back down. It was time to go home so we planned to come back later and get the rest of the fish in that hole.

Soon afterward I discovered that the front cross-member of the frame on the Model A was broken. This put a strain on the bottom of the radiator so I decided I should fix it as soon as I could. I got another cross-member from a junked car and replaced the broken one in my spare time. By the time I got the car ready to drive again we went to see how the fishing hole was doing and found that it had dried up. There were the remains of dozens of nice channel cats laying side by side in a ring around the edge of the pool as it dried up. We had been away too long.

About the time Lloyd came home on leave after the Flood Nellie and I had set some trot lines in the big holes up the creek. He went with us one morning to *run* the lines. As soon as we got to the creek where the weeds and Johnson Grass were in bloom his eyes started watering and he started sneezing. That was the first time we knew he was troubled with hay-fever. That made fishing very uninteresting for him.

We were using grasshoppers for baiting the lines. We would take a flashlight at night and walk around through the shoulder-high Johnson grass and pick off the grasshoppers until we had enough to bait our lines. While we were doing this one night Nellie stepped into a hole about four feet deep where the water had washed it out. The hole was about four feet deep and the same across with the sides straight up and down. It knocked the breath out of her and I had to help her out. We made the rounds of baiting the lines and she grunted now and then. When we completed the baiting she said, "I think we should go home. I believe I have some broken ribs." We took her to see the doctor the next day and he said she had broken two ribs. He taped and bandaged her to hold the ribs together and it was a while before she was ready to go fishing again.

A widow, named Verna Gibson, liked to fish and she started going with us sometimes. She had three daughters, Lillian, Vera and Mary. Vera and Mary went fishing with us but I don't recall that Lillian ever went. Later Verna married a man that she had known ever since she was a young woman. He had never married before. His name was Walt Talkington. He was one who liked to hunt and fish. He and I were hunting and fishing partners for many years. He became my fishing and hunting companion to fill the void left when Glen and Mary moved to California.

Walt liked to joke and pull gags and was telling me that we should go up around Pawhuska, his old *stomping grounds*, if we wanted to see some real fishing. We had done a little early spring fishing and the channel cats had not become active so we had caught only a few bullheads and perch. He said, "I don't believe you have any good fishing around here." One Sunday morning Nellie and Verna packed a picnic lunch and we drove up the creek to Dead Woman Crossing. We fished up and down the creek until noon and had caught only two or three small bullheads. After we ate our lunch we tried again. No better luck. He was getting a kick out of *ribbing* me about the poor fishing. About four p.m. I put a minnow on my hook and let it down into a narrow channel where the water ran swift. Before the slack was all out of the line I caught a channel that would weigh about two pounds and while I was taking it off the hook Verna caught another. In a short while we had a nice mess of channels. We came back a few nights later and set some trotlines and caught about twenty-five nice ones. That pretty well put a stop to the kidding about the poor fishing around Deer Creek.

While I was still driving the old Model A, the Army Engineers were constructing a dam across the North Canadian River near Canton, Oklahoma. Canton is located thirty-six miles north of Hydro. In order to get there from Hydro one had to either go east to Bridgeport or northwest to a bridge a few miles northeast of Thomas, Oklahoma. Those are the only bridges near Hydro that cross the South Canadian River. The way the roads went it was fifty-seven miles. That was not too much of a trip for a Model A that was running good. So one Sunday morning Nellie and I packed a lunch and along with Arminta and one of her classmates, we drove to the dam site to see what it looked like. The job was getting well along but they were still forming and pouring concrete for the spillway and gates. It was the biggest construction work I had seen and we could walk out onto the top and look down into forms that went down about sixty feet. We knew it would be some time before it would provide any fishing but we found the trip interesting and we were looking forward to some good fishing trips.

I made another trip to Canton in the Model A. The road north from the intersection of the North West Highway¹⁸ was not yet paved. On that trip I took along my friend, Archie Sutton. He was a carpenter who worked around Hydro and other places and he had said he would like to see the lake so I invited him to go with us. We did not catch

¹⁸ SH-3 running northwest out of Oklahoma City is called *The Northwest Passage*.

any fish but enjoyed the trip. There was only one disagreeable incident. About seven or eight miles south of Canton a rear tire went flat. My spare was not very good and I did not trust it to make the rest of the trip home. I looked at the flat tire and found I had picked up a nail on the dirt road. The only service station other than at Thomas was one at the intersection of the two highways, about seven miles down the road. I pulled into the station and asked the old man who ran it if I could get a flat plugged. He grudgingly said he would patch it if I would do the rest of the work. I agreed to do that but I never stopped there again. I did not mind changing a tire as I had had lot of experience at that job but his attitude rubbed me the wrong way and I made sure that I never bothered him again.

Another Ford in the Family

A short time later we decided to get a better car. We had a little cash reserve. The lumber company had given me a few raises and Nellie had not had any serious sickness and we did not have any doctor's bills to pay. Earl Moore, one of the town's Barbers, had bought a new car and wanted to sell his old one. It was a 1937 Ford V8 Tudor with good tires and a good body with the exception of the left rear fender. It was mangled. There was a funny little story about the mangled fender. When Earl got the car new he drove it down to the elevators near the railroad tracks to try it out. He had his little girl, Joanne, in the back seat. She was about three or four years old. He told her to watch and tell him if he was about to hit anything when he backed up. All of a sudden there was a crunch and Joanne said, "Whoa, daddy you hit a tree." The fender did not rub the wheel so Earl drove it that way for thirteen or fourteen years until I bought the car from him.

After I bought it I took a hammer and flat iron to the dents and creases and hammered it back into the shape of a fender. I gave the whole car a coat of black enamel. I did the paint job with a brush in the driveway of the lumber yard. I did a very good job. When I told a fellow it was a brush job he laughed and almost called me a liar. He thought I was kidding. The only sign of a brush mark was where I had to stop and bring the paint around the other side of the windshield. That took a little too long and the paint would not blend and smooth out.

A year or so later we heard that they had opened the Canton Lake for fishing. Jess Bryan and Juneita and Hank and Jane Poore were at our house one Sunday afternoon. Hank was my new assistant at the lumber yard and also liked to hunt and fish as did Jess and I. We often got together and played six-handed Canasta. The subject of fishing at the new lake came up and someone said, "Let's go up there and see what is happening. We loaded up and drove to the dam. There were a few people fishing in the basin below the dam. We went down there to see how it was going. There was not much happening. One man there said he had heard they were catching Crappie in the neck by the first boat ramp up the lake on the south side. We knew the spot from previous trips so we drove over there.

When we arrived there was not even standing room along the water's edge and every one was catching nice Crappie. Incidentally, that was the first Crappie I had ever seen so my knowledge of how to catch them was limited. We had our rods and some tackle but no bait. We had not expected to do much fishing but after seeing so many being caught our *fever* started to rise. After a while a man in front of us said, "I'll have to quit. I have my limit." The fellow next to him said, "I'd sell my place." "It looks like a bargain to me," I said. They gave us the minnows they had left and as others had to quit we all moved in. I had large hooks, heavy sinkers and big floats and was not catching many. I noted that Hank used a small hook, a split-shot sinker and a *pencil* float. He had all his tackle in a small sack, which he carried in a pocket. He had fished for Crappie before. By the time I had caught seven he had thirteen. I don't think anyone in the party failed to catch a few. When we had used all the minnows and it was time to go home we had thirty-five nice sized Crappie. That was the first of many "fish-fries" from that lake. I made sure that I had different tackle along on the next trip. That fantastic Crappie fishing continued for three or four years, then it started to fade.

One winter, for twelve weeks in a row, the weather was lousy on week ends and perfect from Monday through Friday, when I had to be on the job. I began to have a persecution complex. One Monday evening Albert Kimbro, who ran the pool hall and lived across the street from the lumber yard, came into the office and said, "Did you guys ever see a 'tub full' of fish". I told him I had heard of it all my life but had never seen it. He said, "Come over to my back porch and see it." He was telling the truth. They had a Number 3 washtub filled with big Crappie. His wife and her brother and his wife had their knives and were sitting down around the tub to start dressing the fish. The limit had been removed at that time and they had over ninety fish to clean. I did not envy that part of it but it was frustrating to know such things were happening on work days.

One Saturday evening after work Jess and I went out to a little creek to seine some minnows which we would put in my minnow pond so we could leave early the next morning and have our bait ready. We took the seine and flashlight out before daylight next morning when we were about ready to leave. When we dipped into the pond we got one minnow. That was all. Dad's cats had discovered the easy fishing when the minnows swam around the edge of the pond and had eaten all but one. That time we had to stop at the bait house and buy our minnows.

On another minnow seining trip our luck was even worse. We had plenty of minnows but on the way home the engine in my car started knocking very badly. We were about a mile from home so I drove slowly the rest of the way. I kept expecting the engine to fall apart but we made it home. We postponed that trip. Across the center of my garage roof was a 2x10 timber. We figured that it would lift a V8 engine. Jess borrowed a chain-hoist and took out the engine and we took it apart and found that a valve head broken off and then went through the piston. I went to a parts store in Weatherford and bought a new set of pistons and rings and new bearing inserts and a new valve and guides. It's quite a job to overhaul a Ford V8 engine on a sawhorse work bench but over the next week end we had it done and installed and ready for another fishing trip.

We had, by this time, started catching some black bass on plugs and wanted to go early to get a good spot worked before we were crowded out. Hank, Jess, and I went before daylight that Sunday. We found a likely looking spot. Jess was on my left and Hank on the right. On my second cast I let my lure a little too low on the back cast and hung on a root. I did not notice it and when I made the forward cast I built a real *bird's nest* of my line. While I was trying to untangle my line a fellow who was wearing four buckle overshoes waded in front of me and made a cast and came up with a two-pound bass. I was so mad I could hardly see. Perhaps, I said something I should not have said. Hank looked at Jess and Jess looked at Hank. Then they started throwing their plugs where the line would be across the man's neck. As they reeled in, the plugs were coming toward his face. He looked around with a little anger in his eye but it faded when they looked him in the eye and drew back their rods for another cast. He decided the best thing for him was to move. At that lake I had my first experience with *fish-hungry* fishermen. Up to that time I had believed that all fishermen were sports and respected other people's rights. Now after a few thousand experiences I know that is true only in the imaginations of the writers for *Field and Stream* and *Outdoor Life*, etc.

If you have listened to country music that came out of the hills of Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee you have probably heard the old song, *Bile Them Cabbage Down*. Like most of the country music it was inspired by the experiences of the composers. Perhaps, if we look for the experience that caused the song the words make more sense. The words of this song remind me of a little bone of contention between my parents. Of course it never was allowed to become anything serious. Dad simply would not make an issue of any disagreement with Mom. In all the years I lived with or near them I never heard him say a harsh word to Mom. Dad always liked his cabbage *biled down* until they took on a reddish tint. The flavor was stronger that way and I am inclined to agree that they taste better. Mom always said that over-cooked cabbage was too hard on the digestion so as a rule we had lightly cooked cabbage. Sometimes when she accidentally forgot and left them cooking longer than normal Dad would say "Now that's the way I like cabbage cooked." It was only by accident that he got them *biled down*. For years Mom had trouble with an upset stomach and she was right about the lighter cooking being more digestible.

Another peculiar thing about Dad's likes and dislikes in eating was hard to understand. He loved parsnips and hated carrots. As a rule he liked all kinds of vegetables but carrots and celery were two that he would not eat. The odd thing was that parsnips are more pungent and stronger flavored than carrots but he would not eat a piece of carrot. If he was served soup containing carrots he carefully ate every thing but the carrots. These he left in the bowl. I could see very little difference between the two but I cannot question his judgment of eating habits. In all my memory I never saw him go to see a doctor until he was well into his seventies. When he felt ill he stopped eating until he felt better. When he sat down at the table but did not eat Mom would ask him what was wrong and he would say, "I'm not very hungry." He very seldom missed more than one meal at a time.

The next building we did on our house was the summer after Lloyd was fourteen years old in January. We wanted a good storm cellar and decided to make one of concrete. We found where one had been dug to the south of our back door a few feet away. It had been filled in with rubbish and dirt. Since a lot of our lots were underlaid with a soft sandstone we thought that old digging would take less work to clean out than digging a new one. The location was satisfactory too. When I dug it all out I found that the walls were not dug vertically but tapered into what Dad had

described as a *duck's nest*. That was well digger's talk. In digging tough rock if this happens it takes a lot of work to get the hole back in shape. I was not getting along very fast working after hours and on week ends so I hired a neighbor, Mr. Hodges to work on it. He was getting considerably along in years but was still a good worker as far as his strength would permit. One evening when I came home he said, "I hate to give up on a job but I'm just not strong enough to pick that rock loose and I'm not earning what you are paying me." I told him that I thought it was deep enough so I paid him and let him go. It was hard work for a man in his upper seventies. I went ahead and dug out the corners and leveled the floor. I made some forms of ship lap boards and got ready to mix and pour the concrete on the next week end. I had the rock and sand delivered by Mr. Tindel who washed sand and gravel on his farm six miles east of Hydro.

I had planned to use a mixer that belonged to a carpenter friend of mine but when I was ready to do the work his mixer was being used away from Hydro. I decided to do it by hand. Lloyd had a friend about his age who had promised to help us. Neither had much experience at heavy work. We set up our mixing platform and started early on Sunday morning. We worked hard all day and when it was almost too dark to see what we were doing Lloyd and his friend, L. D. Sweeney were too exhausted to mix another batch, which would finish the walls and steps. I told them they could quit and I would mix and place the last batch. We mixed and placed the concrete for the top the next week end and our cellar was finished except for removing the forms and putting on a door.

One other event of that year happened in March. It was the Fiftieth Anniversary of Mom and Dad's wedding. All the family were here to help with the celebration. There were only five of their eight children living to see that day. Edna, Owen, Hugh, Virginia and I were all that were left of their children. Hugh had got out of the army three years, ten months and twenty-six days after he reported for duty at Fort Sill, Oklahoma and was home in time for that get-together. After I removed the forms from the cellar I had enough lumber to enlarge our back porch across the east end of the house. I then put in windows between the studs and enclosed the porch. It was eight feet wide and big enough to accommodate two twin beds with room to walk between them. Nellie started sleeping on the back porch. It was a very nice place to sleep in the summer time. With two sides all windows and on the southeast corner it was almost always cool at night. Sometimes in winter it was a little too cool. I have often seen a beautiful design of frost on the panes of glass but we slept there for many years before we remodeled the house for the last time.

Now that we did not need one of the bedrooms we had before, I decided to remove the wall between the living room and the west bedroom. This would give us a living room twenty-four feet long. I put in a beam to carry the weight of the ceiling which had been supported by the wall and that made a nice living room.

Underneath the stairway I built in a darkroom for photographic work. It was three feet square. I made a shelf around the sides and built a homemade enlarger and a printer along one side with trays for chemical solutions on the other wall. I had some small storage shelves above for the papers I used. There was just room to stand but every thing was in its place and easy to reach except when I had to adjust the paper under the enlarger for focusing and setting it up for enlarging. There was not enough room to stoop so I had to squat to see what went on below the work space. But even at that it was better than setting up the stuff in the shower stall or the bathroom. I eventually became able to make prints that compared with what the professionals made. I started developing and printing for neighbors to make enough money to supply the materials for the work I wanted to do. The only thing wrong with that was that my hobby became work and it was no-longer fun. The best way to kill a hobby is to turn it into a job. My little darkroom had one fault. It had no ventilation or air conditioning. A few hours in there and one had no need of a *sauna bath*.

It may sound like I worked every week end but we still found many week ends to go to the country to hunt or fish or just to prowl the woods and streams. We often used squirrel hunting as an excuse to go to the woods before sun up where we could smell the damp *woodsy* smell that is there before the sun comes up. Thousands of people sleep too late to know anything about the pleasures of the predawn peacefulness of the world at that time.

Soon after we built our back porch we made a trellis and planted a pink climber rose by it. Nellie watered it often and with the damp ground as well as the shade it was an ideal place for a smart little white dog to lie. Fido knew that. Nellie often scolded him for digging behind the bush and he knew it was taboo. I went out the back door one day and saw Fido going toward Dad's house with a *hang-dog* expression and for a while I wondered what was

bothering him. Then I noticed the pile of fresh diggings under the rose bush. He had escaped before I saw what he was doing but his guilty actions betrayed him. He tried very hard to be a good dog but that was just too much temptation.

Mom could leave her cabinet door open on the bottom of the cabinet with all kinds of tempting things there and we never knew of him even so much as looking in at them. He was very conscientious about staying in his place. There was one other temptation he could not resist. However we never caught him *red-handed*. Dad's favorite chair was a big chair made of willow twigs bent and curved to shape and nailed together to form a rocking chair with a high fan shaped back and arm rests. It was designed perfectly for a man the size of Dad. He had bought it from a man who was working his way, along with his family, during the worst of the Depression. I imagine the man ended up in California like thousands of other *Okies*. One time Mom got tired of looking at that old chair and suggested that they throw it in the dump but Dad said that was the most comfortable chair in the house. So, it stayed as long as he did. Fido was one of the family, so he slept in the living room. Many times on winter mornings when Dad rolled over on the bed to get up the springs creaked and Dad would hear a thump on the floor in the living room and when he went in to light the gas heater the chair would be rocking gently and the seat would be warm. Fido would be lying on his blanket as innocent as a baby. Dad never let him know that he knew his secret.

I did two things to Fido that I will always wish I had not done. They were thoughtless but wrong. For years I had worn light colored shirts to work at the Yard. One day when I had received a dark blue shirt for Christmas I wore it to work. When I came home to lunch and started down the steps between our place and Dad's Fido saw someone in a dark shirt heading for Dad's back door. I suppose his vision through all that hair was not too good and he thought I was a stranger. He charged me with murder in his heart. A few years previously I had been rather badly bitten by a sneaky German Shepherd and I reacted by instinct. I kicked Fido several feet. I think I broke some of his ribs judging by the way he acted. He started for me again then discovered his mistake. I felt badly about what I had done but it was too late. Fido forgave me and was still my friend.

The other event had it's funny aspects but was a little too rough I can see in retrospect. We had noticed that the leaves on the cedar tree at the corner of the house were dying and turning brown. We had also noted that many dogs stopped at the tree. I put two and two together and decided the dogs were guilty. I decided to booby trap the tree. I found which was the *hot* side of the electric outlet by the west window. I attached a wire to it and took it through the window and two turns of bare wire around the lower branches of the tree. Soon after that I was looking out of the front door and saw Fido head for the tree. He had barely raised his hind leg when he said "Yip" and took off up the street at a run. He was still running when he went out of sight a block away. The next day I saw him head for the tree again. This time he remembered and yipped before he ever lifted his leg. A day or two later I examined the tree more closely and discovered that there were some mite-like insects that were killing the tree and I realized what a painful thing I had done to Fido for something he did not do. So it goes, when we set ourselves up to be judge and jury, even of our animal friends, we can very often be guilty of poor judgment.

As I said before Fido did not make very many friends. Maybe he was wrong in this and yet maybe right. He had nipped a few people when they crowded him too much and possibly he had some enemies. When I took a course of public relations based on Dale Carnegie's teachings one idea they put to us was, if you want to get along with people don't fight back. To quote part of statement, "No one ever kicks a dead dog." That is true, no doubt, but why should anyone want to be a dead dog. I can sympathize with his not wanting to be pushed around. I don't like it myself and I was not built to enjoy groveling. Perhaps this has nothing to do with the way Fido ended his time on this earth. Possibly it was just the evil in the soul of the man responsible for it. One day a woman who lived a few blocks from us called and said "There is a little white dog at our place that is dead. I think he has been shot. He looks just like the one your folks has." I told her I was sure it was not our dog as he was here. I was not sure of that but I was not going to go dispose of the dog, which I strongly suspected, had been killed by her outlaw son. He had served time in prison and perhaps should have done so again. I could see no reason why I should go get the body and bury it after Fido's spirit was gone. It was much better to remember him as he was when he was happy and gay and full of life, not as he would look after he had been shot.

In regard to who was guilty I am forming conclusions with very little evidence just like I did in regard to who killed the boy under the bridge out on the highway. I will always wonder about these things as I have about the man who

apparently burned to death in his car along a deserted street and another who appeared to have been run over by a freight train at the southeast side of town one night about two a.m. With a little imagination I could write a *whale* of a detective story based on these events.

One time when I was working on the street uptown there was a small dog standing on the edge of the sidewalk, minding his own business. An old grey-headed man walked over, and for no reason at all, kicked the dog. I was always taught to respect my elders but there is where I *went back on my raising*. I held my temper in check but have always regretted it. I wonder what that old man had to say to his Maker when he arrived.

Soon after we finished with the work on our house we started making a bathroom and porch for Mom like we had done for ourselves. Howard Roush, Edna's son in law, was a plumber. He worked for his father in El Reno and had worked at the trade in Oklahoma City. He came down to help with that. I had not put in the foundation but he said to show him where the door would be and where we wanted to put the water heater and other fixtures and he would rough it in and come back later and finish it up. I laid it out on the ground and he put in the pipes. I went ahead and built it and put in a concrete floor. We had already put cold water and drain to the kitchen sink. Howard came back and in a few hours had everything ready to use. Plumbing looked easy after watching someone who knew how to do it. Everything was just where it should be and no trouble to connect it up. That is the way it is watching a good mechanic work. He makes the work look so easy.

Now Mom had a decent house with hot and cold water after so many years. It sometimes seems regrettable that anyone has to wait most of a lifetime to get some of the things they want but maybe the battle is sweeter than the victory.

1948 to 1955 – Flood, Fish, and Family

Lloyd Joins the Navy

In the winter and spring of 1948 Lloyd started becoming disenchanted with going to school. Being about the middle of teen-age could have been a contributing factor. Not that I have any criticism of being a teen-ager. I remember and sometimes I think I would like to try it again but it can be a little hard to decide whether one is a man or a boy. He had a little run-in with the school superintendent. From the beginning I felt that from his point of view he was right. I can admit it now but at the time I thought it best to not take sides. I told him he should go ahead to school and forget the commotion. He flatly refused to go back and said he was joining the Navy. Nellie finally agreed to sign the papers of consent. On the 24th of May he went to Oklahoma City and was inducted into the Navy. On May 25th he came through Hydro on the passenger train on his way to San Diego for Boot Camp Training. I thought at the time he was making a bad mistake but perhaps my judgment was no better than his.

The Flood of '48

There were several things to remember that year. On June 20th about fifteen minutes 'til four in the afternoon a narrow bank of clouds started building in the northwest part of the sky. They did not look too ominous but they were building very high at an unusually fast pace. As they built up they swung around to the southwest direction. I had never seen such a narrow pile of clouds and within a few minutes they were directly overhead. Then they built outward and came very low to the ground. It was just a few minutes until quitting time. We were a little more modern now—we worked from eight to five. It looked like we would get a pretty heavy rain. The clouds were heavy and dark and were boiling from winds in them. It was almost calm on the ground. There was an almost steady flash of lightning and we could hear the thunder. It grew louder rather fast. It soon started to rain and the wind increased. We expected the storm to move on by as rapidly as it had come but instead of that it increased in intensity.

By five o'clock the rain was coming down in sheets and the wind was so strong that the office walls vibrated and the water on the plate glass windows in front laid in ridges along the glass instead of running down. There was a fine spray of water that came in between the door and the doorframe on the west side of the office. It took a terrific wind to do those things. We began to realize that we were about to have a tornado. We learned later that some trees were broken and uprooted along the creek and some farm buildings badly damaged on farms north of town. At the moment we were concerned whether or not to close the yard and try to go home as it was after five o'clock and that was our quitting time. We decided that it would be better to wait as the storm would surely end after while. About half past five the rain eased up a little and I went out front to my old Model A and started it and backed it up near the front door- so we could get in quickly when we were ready to leave.

By the time I had closed and locked the driveway gates the storm started again. This time we had some hail about the size of quail eggs along with the strong wind and heavy rain. A little after seven we decided we might as well brave the storm and go home. It did not show any sign of clearing up. Juneita, Dad and I dashed out and got into the car. I was sure that I would not be able to cross the bridge to the west of our house because it was sometimes flooded or washed out during hard rains and this one surely would qualify as a hard one.

I did not realize it had rained so much until I started east on Main Street. Arapaho Avenue at the Post Office is not in a low place. In fact it only drains a few blocks from the north. When I came to the corner the water in the middle of the street was up to the running boards of the Model A and before that time I had never seen the gutters full before. I drove on to the east on main Street and as we started into the little valley east of the main part of town we saw a 3x12 bridge plank floating across the street. It was raining so hard I did not want to get out and try to move it so I drove

over it and continued on toward the low spot. Everything was under water. After I reached the end of the pavement (the east end of the street had not been paved at that time) the front end of the car went into water so deep that it went into the air intake of carburetor and killed the engine in the car. I knew there was no use trying to start the car so we got out and waded on through the deep water. It was about waist deep on the roadway. When we reached the corner by the Church of Christ, Dad started to cut across the corner, which was all under water. I caught his sleeve and told him we should stay in the road. After the rain was over and I went back to get my car I saw that he would have stepped into water about six feet deep where the ditch had washed out.

By the time we had walked the remaining three blocks in the rain we could not have been wetter. Juneita had taken off her shoes so they would not be ruined by the mud. There was a waste basket in Dad's back yard when we arrived home. It was filled to over flowing and it was fifteen inches deep. It continued to rain hard until after eight thirty. I was soaked to the skin when I went into our house. Nellie and Arminta were not in the house so I was sure they were in the cellar. I stripped off my wet clothes on the concrete floor of the back porch and put on dry ones. I could not gain anything by going to the cellar that late in the game so I lay down across the bed on the back porch and watched the rain come down. It had rained and blown so hard that there were lots of wet spots all around the windows and doors. The wind simply drove the water through the crack in the siding until the wall paper was wet.

About ten o'clock the rain had become only a drizzle and I went out and lifted the cellar door. I went in to see how Nellie and Arminta were getting along. Nellie had been worrying for several hours. She is the worrying type and can't keep from doing it. We did not come to the house until after eleven o'clock, as there were a few more showers.

The next morning the flood waters had subsided from the up-town streets but Deer Creek extended from the Depot far up into the woods on the south side of the creek. I had seen water two feet deep on the bridge but this time it was to the top of banisters. It was the highest I had ever seen.

I took a shovel and went up to Main Street to see if I could get my car out of the mud. It was still cloudy and a light drizzle was falling. The first thing I did was slope the bank down in front of the front wheels. Then I drained the water out of the sediment bulb on the gas line and wiped the water off the ignition system. As I finished that a mechanic, Jim Hamilton, who worked in a garage came by and said, "I'll bet it won't start." "I'll bet it will," was my answer while I thought perhaps it would not start for him but for me it would. I had never seen one that I could not start unless there was something broken. I stepped on the starter and one cylinder fired. It coughed and sputtered for a while then the second one started firing. I suppose there was some water that had been sucked into the firing chambers when it died the day before. When I had three cylinders firing I revved it up, put it in low gear and it crawled out of the hole. I left the engine idling while I smoothed the bank on the other side. Then I turned the car around and drove across to the other side and on to the lumberyard to open up for business. By the time I got to the yard it was firing on all four. It took a lot to disable a Model A.

When I opened the office Albert Kimbro who lived across the street came in and wanted to borrow a yard stick. He said, "I want to see how much it rained." The evening before the storm came up he had been running a concrete curb around his front yard. When it started to rain he and another fellow had gone out and dumped the water out of an oil drum they had used to put water near the mixer. We put the yardstick into the water and it measured eighteen and three quarter inches. We learned later that there were measurements of up to twenty three and a half inches in some areas around Hydro. Since the closest official reporting station of the weather bureau was located at Weatherford, the weathermen on the TV News said Hydro probably received about nine inches of rain and were flooded. They would not accept the word, even with several witnesses, of a bunch of yokels. Later I heard them reporting that Hydro had two inches of rain and we did not have as much as a sprinkle. Their reporter lived twelve miles south and in this county a few miles can make a large difference in the amount of rain.

The water reached a depth of fifteen feet on Highway 66 east of Hydro and I had never seen the creek so much as reach the pavement before. After the water went down there was debris from the flood water hanging on the telephone wires alongside of the highway. One entire family of seven people were drowned in one car when it stalled in the water. If they had been familiar with the country and left the car they could have crossed a fence and reached higher ground within a few hundred yards. But in the darkness and the hard rain they had not realized their danger until it was too late. The body of a baby was not in the car was not found until several days later when the

water had gone down. Relatives of the family knew there was a baby in the group. It's body was found in a drift several hundred yards from the car in little branch of the creek where the back water had carried it.

A bus driver drove his bus into the deep water on the east end of the flood water and some people were drowned there. There was a Negro man whose body they could not find for a while. After the water subsided they found him where he had lodged in a pile of driftwood. As I recall there were eleven people drowned, but my memory is not completely clear on this. There was a truck driver who was drowned and his body was not recovered until October of that year. He was last seen on top of his van. A business man who was overweight and his secretary were stalled in their car and decided to wade out. The water was so swift they lost their footing and were swept into some trees. The woman was more agile and she climbed out of the water. The man was not strong enough to climb so all he could do was hang onto the branches. They were in the tree and water for hours before some men in a boat found them. It was starting to turn gray in the east when the rescuers found them. The woman said that two or three times the man said he could not hang on any longer and she begged him to try a little harder and through her encouragement he hung on and finally made it 'til he was rescued. It surely was not his time to go because he had some heart trouble before that but when he needed it his heart performed as it should.

They told of seeing the truck driver climb onto his cab when the lightning flashed. Another flash and they saw him on the roof of the van. Then there was a flash that showed no one on the truck. I think he was driving for the Mayflower Company and the company offered a thousand dollars for the recovery of his body. If I remember correctly he had a wife and two children.¹⁹

Hugh was working on the railroad section at the time and all the road from where the tracks come to Little Deer Creek almost to Bridgeport was washed out. The telegraph and phone lines were out, the power lines and gas lines broken, some water mains broken and some parts of the highways washed away. Hydro was completely isolated. Hugh was driving a Model A that had been a coupe but he had cut off the top, which was no good anyway. He had cut off the posts at the sides even with the windshield. It looked like a wreck but it had guts and Hugh could make it go anywhere a donkey could have traveled. He was busy running up and down the right of way to get some idea of what to do about getting started on repairing the railroad. He drove to the corner two miles east of Hydro and there was a Highway Patrolman there who stopped him and told him he could not go through there. Hugh told him that he had been through there and was working on the railroad and was going back. I guess the patrolman did not listen to what he had said so he said, "I told you that you can't go through." Hugh was a little irritated so he answered, "Hell, man, I told you that I had just come through there and I'm going back. We have about twenty miles of railroad track to rebuild and I don't have time to fool around talking to you." With that he goosed the old car and went on to work.

About supper time that evening I was out by our well with a campfire built in preparation for cooking our meal. I looked toward the street and saw T. J. Hughes, my boss walking down the driveway. He said, "What in the Hell is going on down here?" I replied, "We had a little rain." He said that was not hard to believe after seeing the whole street washed out a block west of our house. Broadway west of our house was washed out full width to a depth of about ten or twelve feet. He had heard of the storm on the news that morning and tried to call by phone. When he could not get through he decided to come to see if we needed help. He had been driving about all day to find a way to drive into Hydro.

The road to the east was washed out and the one to the north had a fill washed out for about a hundred and fifty feet and a depth of about twenty feet was gone. By coming in from the south on Highway 58 then taking a country road over one mile to the west he could come into town from the south after the flood water dropped below the bridge. It took him most of the day to find that route. It was a good thing he came down too. As soon as the insurance adjusters could get to work people started putting on new roofs. I was too busy to do much checking on my house but the insurance agent and adjuster came by and wanted to know how much damage I had. I told them that perhaps two rooms of wallpaper would have to be replaced but I did not think my roof was damaged. I knew they did not usually pay for water damage unless the roof was damaged. They asked how much it would cost to paper

¹⁹ From the *small world* department. The truck driver in this story was the grandfather of a man that Eric Cloninger met while in college. The man's name was Bates and he was a driver for the Yellow Freight company, not the Mayflower company.

the two rooms and I told them about twenty dollars. The adjuster started to write up the report and claim and the agent said, "Why don't we make that forty dollars." So that is the amount they allowed. That's a far cry from the way insurance people work nowadays. They have become greedy. I never did anything to my house and it did not leak. I feel sure there were many good roofs replaced that were not required. That was a most unusual storm and the water was blown in through many good roofs'.

We cooked on a campfire for a few days until the utilities were restored. When things calmed down I took a look at my car top. I found twenty-seven holes that the hail had made in the fabric. I did not want to bother with replacing it and I doubt that the material was easy to find by that time. I took some asphalt roof coating, the kind with asbestos fibers in it, and applied some around the holes. Then I tore some patches from a worn out bed sheet. I made the patches about three inches square and applied them to coating around the hole. I brushed the patches down with another coat of the tar and smoothed it out evenly. After this dried it did not leak. We sold a black paint that was supposed to be compatible with asphalt so I gave the top a coat of paint all over. It looked like a new top but a few months exposure to our summer sun and the paint turned dull and started chalking off. I gave the top a coat of aluminum paint and let it dry. Then I put on another coat of the black paint. That did the job. A year later the top was still black and shiny.

Before the big hole was filled in down on Broadway Lloyd came home on leave from the Navy. He arrived at night on a *through* bus that did not make the run from the highway into town. They stopped and let him off at the *wye*. It was a dark night and he got quite a surprise when he walked into the washed out street a block west of our house. But he did not break any bones.

The Lumber Yard Changes Hands

During that summer we were not making enough money to make Hughes happy. The population around the country was steadily decreasing as more people left the farms and farms grew bigger. *Big* farmers did not buy very much more building material than *small* farmers and as there were fewer sales were less. This is explained in more detail by John Steinbeck in *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Anyway, Hughes wanted out of the lumber business in west Oklahoma. He sold the Hydro and Weatherford Yards to the T. J. Stewart Lumber Company, a line yard concern that had yards around Oklahoma from the first days. A lot of money had been made when the country was new and everyone needed buildings but times were changing. Buildings were being torn down. I still wonder why Stewarts bought those two yards as they kept them only about nineteen months and I believe they quit the lumber business shortly after that.

When they came to take charge of the yard they sat up an *Open House* affair like the one Hughes held to introduce the company to the public. At this one the main attraction was the antique cars, which were the hobby of W. H. Stewart, president of the company. His collection was noteworthy. He brought thirty-two of them to Hydro. They ranged all the way from a 1902 two-cylindered Buick to a 1919 Packard Limousine. The 1902 Buick was driven by a chain, like a bicycle, and there was a Haynes that had a friction drive instead of a transmission. A cone-shaped friction wheel ran against the face of a wheel. As it was moved farther from the center the car ran faster. He did not have a car with the *tiller lever* instead of a steering wheel.

Another car of special interest was a 1913 Stutz Bearcat. It was the car that Mr. Stewart drove when he was courting the girl that became his wife. It was painted bright red and had a polished brass gas tank mounted behind the two bucket seats. It had no doors, only *cut away* sides, and no top. It was a four cylinder and had to be cranked by hand. There was a hand pump to put pressure on the gas so it would flow to the carburetor. The pressure gauge showed a maximum pressure or four pounds. No fuel pump trouble there. He also had a later model Stutz. It had windshield and top and a starter. It was a six-cylinder job. It was a more modern car, 1918. The hood was high and long and the wheels were large compared to modern cars.

When they were getting ready to bring the cars to Hydro from Shawnee, Bill Jr. drove the 1918 Stutz to Hydro. When he arrived it was frothing at the mouth you might say. The radiator was boiling and blowing steam and hot water onto the hood. Bill looked at his watch and said he had averaged a little over sixty miles per hour from Shawnee. That was moving along on highways that went through the cities and towns as well as being only two lanes wide.

The Packard Limousine was lined with quilted silk in a diamond design and the upholstery was soft black leather. On each door post of the passenger compartment was a cut-glass vase in a metal bracket so flowers could be put in them. There was a sliding glass panel separating the driver's seat from the rest of the car. The radiator and hood were small like they used to be before 1917 but it had the distinctive shape that was the Packard Trade-mark for years. Mr. Stewart and his son Bill spent a good part of the day treating the kids and young women to rides around town in the older cars. It was a treat long remembered. He prided himself on his collection in keeping them all in running order. He told he had never paid more than one hundred dollars for any car he had in his collection except the 1913 Stutz and he bought it new. He had to have many of the tires made special and some of them cost more than the car on which he used them. They had a Model A Ford in the collection but since they were not such a curiosity they did not bring it to Hydro. He said when they had bad snow or ice on the streets they drove it to work. It would go when the bigger cars got stuck.

One time later when he came to the yard I told him I had heard of a 1913 Buick Touring car that had been stored in a barn for many years. When the people bought a new car they put the Buick in the barn where it had been for years. He asked me to call the people and ask if they would consider selling it. The lady who answered the phone said they would sell it. It was Saturday and most people came to town to buy groceries and sell their eggs and cream so I told her that they could see Mr. Stewart at the yard that evening if they wanted to sell it. They came in and he gave them fifty dollars for it. He immediately sent a truck for it and the next time he came to the yard he told me he had it cleaned up and running in fine shape. I have since kicked myself for not keeping my mouth shut and buying it myself. I have often regretted that I was not able to keep some of the choice *old* cars that I have owned and could have bought for a song. But, during The Depression no one felt like singing for an old car.

John and May Payne had decided to retire from farming and had moved to town. He started working for me at the lumber yard after Juneita decided to quit and get married. He was very good help. He was like my Dad, he grew up in the *old school* where people believed they should earn what they were paid. He felt that he was not capable of writing out the tickets and figuring the bills but he made up for that by working harder than anyone else who ever helped me at the yard. The Stewarts used this as a reason for letting him go. They asked me to tell him that they wanted a younger man with more education for the job. That was one of the worst things I ever had to do in the thirty-two years at the yard. I hope that I made it clear to John that it was not my idea nor was it to my liking. I think the real reason was that the young man they wanted was a son of a man who had been a manager of one of their yards for several years and the son had recently been discharged from the Navy. In many ways he was no better for the Hydro yard than John had been.

The farmer's Elevator had let a contract for some large storage bins and the contractor gave us a chance to bid on the material. I was not too well posted on prices or availability of the materials needed so I called the General Office to try get the information I needed. I could not contact anyone who could get the information. Neither of the Stewarts were at the office and no one else seemed to know anything. I decided if that was the way they wanted it that's the way it would be so the Davidson & Case Lumber company sold the lumber.

The Lumber Yard Changes Hands Again

After they had owned the yard about nineteen months the office called me and said to have the DeWalt saw disconnected as they were sending a truck to pick it up and move it to the yard at Hinton. Hank Poore, my new assistant, when I told him about the call, said, "Those (You Know Whats) are selling this yard." This idea did not disturb me so much as it had happened to me twice before and I had remained on the job. Hank's guess was right.

A few days after they sent the truck for the saw the president of the Davidson & Case Lumber Co. along with Mr. Howard Case met with the Stewarts and their auditor at the Hydro Yard and took an inventory of the merchandise. The sale was completed and Davidson & Case Lumber Co. planned to close their old yard and take over the yard where we worked. I asked Mr. Neff, president of the company, what their plans were in regard to the employees would be. I received an evasive answer. There were rumors around that they intended to retain the manager of the other yard. If that happened I would be unemployed and the memory of the thirties gave me an uneasy feeling.

A man from another line-yard company came to see me. He said his company was looking for a manager of their yard at Anadarko and would consider me for the job. I owned our home in Hydro and had no desire to move unless

I had to tell him I would let him know as soon as I had more definite information. I did not sleep very well that night. I could not help worrying about the future. The next day I still had no assurance that I would remain as manager but my mind was made up that I would not move to Anadarko. I tried several times to call the man about the decision. I never did get him on the phone so I sent him a letter that I would not take the job he had offered. When I asked Mr. Neff about the jobs again he said, "We will go along the way it is now and see how everything works out." I suppose he thought a little uncertainty might spur us on to a little more effort. I don't agree.

Mr. Bill Stewart, Jr. was talking about the salaries with Mr. Neff and when he started to mention my salary he turned to me and said, "We are paying you \$145 per month, aren't we?" I said, "No, you are paying me \$125." I wondered if he was trying to promote a twenty-dollar raise or checking if I would lie for a raise. You never know about the devious ways of people. Anyway I went ahead as manager for the new owners at the same salary. After a few weeks the uncertainty wore off and it was not too long before my salary was raised. This job was to continue for another ten years.

A Bit of Verse

AT HYDRO FAIR

*At Hydro Fair in rows so bright
Is jelly in shades of dark and light,
Apples Red and Melons, too
At Hydro Fair.*

*At Hydro Fair the farm wife brings
Angel cake that's fit for kings
But food for Angels is food for men
At Hydro Fair.*

*Hand in hand the boys and girls
With shining faces, hair in curls
Walk about and turn and walk again
At Hydro Fair.*

*At Hydro Fair I found a song
To stay with me my life long
I looked and saw my friends all there
At Hydro Fair.
-- Mary Cloninger*

FRANK SMITH CURNUTT ... Died Sept. 29, 1948
*When he goes away forever after the funeral services are over
I must bury my loved one, bury him in my memory,
all he meant to me,
if I am to go on living myself.
--G. C.*

The two items above I found in Nellie's Mother's much worn Bible. The first was a clipping from an issue of our local weekly newspaper, *THE HYDRO REVIEW*. Evidently Nellie's mother appreciated Mom's effort and sentiment in the poem. Mom always loved to read, both poetry and prose. Perhaps, if she had more time to study and write she would have turned out more poetry. But she was too busy with the *poetry* of cooking and caring for kids and grand kids—and it approached poetry what she could do, sometimes with a minimum of ingredients.

In all the years I knew Nellie's mother I never knew that she could express her feelings so eloquently as she did in the note she made in her Bible after the entry of her husband's death. In our day to day contact with people we often don't realize the depth of their feelings and emotions. I often wish that I had more ability to express my thoughts. Perhaps, it can be learned but I feel sure some people have a natural talent along that line.

Edna is Widowed

In the early fifties, Roy Tomlins had been promoted to Engineer on the railroad and was looking forward to retirement before too long. He and Edna had been looking for a place to build a summer home on a lake where they could fish and perhaps make it their home after he retired. They, along with another couple, made a trip to the area around Bull Shoals Lake in northern Arkansas. They had looked at a likely spot near Mountain Home, Arkansas. It roused their interest but on the way home they came by Cookson, Oklahoma where the Corps of Army Engineers were completing a dam on the Illinois River at the Tenkiller Ferry site. The reservoir would be filled before too long and some of the land around the lake was being surveyed and sold for building sites. They found a lot, which they liked but did not buy it at that time. They decided to study about it a while and came back to El Reno.

The wheat crop in Oklahoma that summer was somewhat better than average and all the elevators were swamped with more grain than they could handle. Likewise, the railroad was having a rough time to get it moved to the terminals. They were putting all the cars and engines available into service to try to take care of the wheat. They had been using diesel engines altogether for a few years on the roads out of El Reno. They still had some of the old steamers in retirement at the railroad yard. They put some of them back into service and Roy was making the run to Caldwell, Kansas and pulling a big load.

We were listening to the early morning news on the radio and heard the newsman say that a steam locomotive on a Rock Island freight train had exploded near Okarche and three trainmen had been killed. He gave the names and we heard Roy's name in the list. That was a shocking way to learn of a relative's death. Soon after the news we got phone call from Edna confirming the news story.

All kinds of stories as to the cause of the blow-up of the boiler were circulated. Some started by the insurance company trying to get out of paying damages. The adjuster tried to make it appear that Roy was drunk but no one had ever seen him drunk. But, as is often the case, insurance adjustors try every way they can to find a loop hole to get out of paying a damage claim. The men who worked at the round house said the old engines were put into service without proper inspection or repairs and they felt that was the cause of the explosion. The whole back end of the boiler blew out and some of the bodies were a hundred and forty feet from the engine. After quite a hassle over settlement of the claims the insurance company paid off.

Edna Starts a New Home, Howard Finishes It

Edna continued to live in El Reno for a few years but she decided to go ahead with the plan to build a home near Cookson, on the Tenkiller Lake. She bought the lot they had liked and had a carpenter from El Reno start building a house for her.

It was spring and the lake had been opened for fishing. The house project was going slower than Edna thought it should be and she heard by way of gossip that the carpenter was laughing about getting paid for fishing. She was inclined to believe he, perhaps, was telling the truth so she told him she had decided to wait about finishing the job. So she had him nail some plywood over the door openings. It was ready for door hanging and all the inside work remained to be done. I told her I would get a two-week vacation in July and would go down there and spend my time working on the house.

In June she came down to Hydro and bought some appliances for the house. She bought an electric range, a refrigerator and a 21" television from the hardware store where Nellie worked and the owner said we could use his pickup truck to take them to the house whenever we wanted to do so. She told me how much the lumber yard in Talequah was charging her for the doors and I could make a much better price, so we decided to take doors along with the appliances when we found time to do it.

We also decided to take lumber for stripping the ceiling for application of the ceiling tile as well as the tile to do the ceiling job. One hot clear Saturday in June we decided it would be a good time to make the delivery to Cookson, only

two hundred forty miles. That was the longest trip I ever made to deliver building material in the thirty-two years I worked at the lumber yard. An hour or two before noon I loaded the lumber onto the truck then put the doors on end in the front of the truck, behind the cab. Then we put the boxes of ceiling tile against the doors and behind that we put the stove and refrigerator.

We had set up the television at our house to try it out and since the truck was pretty well loaded Edna said to just leave the television and she could pick it up later. I had planned to leave from the lumber yard after dinner and let my helper, Hank Poore, close up the yard at quitting time. While we were loading the truck some big fluffy, white clouds started to come in from the southwest. I told Hank I'd bet we got into a rain before we arrived at Cookson. He said, "No, those are just dry weather clouds." We had a small tarp, only about eight feet square, not nearly big enough to protect the things we did not want to get wet. We tied it across the front of the load and as far back over the top as it would reach. Soon after lunch Nellie and I started for El Reno where Edna would join us for the rest of the trip.

The clouds continued to roll in and they started to get dark on the lower side. Soon after we came to the river bridge, east of Bridgeport, some big drops of rain splattered the windshield. I was really worried that the rain would ruin the doors and the ceiling tile. It rained pretty hard all the way to the west edge of El Reno. When we got to Edna's house it had stopped raining but the clouds to the southeast of her place really looked dark and threatening. We debated about unloading the material into her garage. The door was too low to permit the load going in on the truck. She finally said she was willing to risk it if we were. We decided to take off for Cookson. She went ahead of us in her little Studebaker. About three miles east of El Reno, on the old three-lane portion of the road to Oklahoma City, the dark, black clouds rolled in so low that you felt you could touch them from the ground. It was so dark that it was hard to see the road and the rain came down so much that the windshield wipers would not clear the windshield. The wind came up so strong that the old pickup leaned way over. Nellie wanted to get out and lie in the borrow ditch but I felt better where it was dry.

After a while the rain slackened and I could see that we were in the center lane instead of the right one where we belonged. A car going west stopped alongside our truck and the woman who was driving said something to me but with the glasses up and noise of the rain I could not tell what she said. I rolled down the glass and she did also. She said, "What am I going to do? My mother is having a fit." I told her I thought the worst of the storm was over and maybe that would calm her mother down. She went on down the road and our engine drowned out on the main road and the oncoming traffic drove right on through at about sixty-five miles per hour. The telephone wires had been broken by pieces of corrugated iron blown from a barn roof and the wires were across the highway. There were some pieces of lumber with nails in them scattered on the road but the people coming down the road did not realize the conditions and zipped on down the road without slowing down. I thought it would be a good idea to get off the pavement where the wild drivers might slam into our stalled truck. I put it into low gear and stepped on the starter. The battery had a good charge and pulled us out of the traffic. When the rain had slowed to a sprinkle I raised the hood and wiped the distributor and plugs with my handkerchief. About the time I got it dried we saw Edna coming back to see why we were not behind her. She had just missed the little twister that wrecked the barn at Tiny Royse's Dairy and did not know about it until she came back.

The old truck started O.K. and we set out again. After we had passed through Oklahoma City and were out in the country toward Meeker the clouds came in low and black again. The highway ran through a deep cut there so I pulled off the road to get a little protection from the high bank if the wind got rough again and it did. After that blow we started again. When we approached the little bridge over a ravine at the bottom of the hill there was a car with a California license stopped in our lane. The driver was out and dragging a large Cottonwood branch off the west end of the bridge. He got the road cleared about the time I arrived. The next bridge we reached had a man, a woman and a teenage boy standing in the left hand lane. Their car was standing on its nose in the ravine. The back bumper was just level with the pavement. It appeared that they had continued to drive in the rain and missed the bridge. I knew I could not help them and they did not seem to be hurt so we went on our way.

It continued a light shower on us until we were near Prague and at that time the highway went by a little town called Castle. At Castle the clouds opened up again and the old windshield wiper could not keep up. The water on the road seemed to be about six inches deep so we drove slowly for several hours and by this time night had fallen. Just

before we reached Henryetta we came to a detour at the foot of the long hill to the east of Henryetta. They were building some new culverts where the new road was to run. The turnout to go off the road had some mud on it and a big truck and trailer was taking more than his share of road. I stepped on my brakes and the pickup started *fish-tailing* in front of the approaching truck. I stepped on the gas to get control and slithered past the truck. I'll have to admit that I was a little nervous until I was on solid pavement again. It had not rained a drop in Henryetta and on to the east.

We had only one more *hairy* experience before we arrived at the house that night. The roads through the Cookson Hills were not paved at that time and the people were allowed to let their livestock have *free range*. In other words the horses and cattle could, and would, be on the road. I was not aware of this at the time. I was tired and anxious to get to the house so we could unload and get some sleep. I was driving pretty fast around the curves on the hills and saw a dark blur in the lights ahead. It was a horse sleeping on the dirt of the road. I changed lanes and got on the brakes then had to do another lane change quickly as I came up on another horse that was starting to get up from his bed in the road. By zigging and zagging I missed all the horses. I became a better driver in open range country after that. They have finally awakened to that danger to drivers and have made it illegal to let livestock run free.

We arrived at our destination at 1:30 a.m. just about completely exhausted. It had been one wild trip. I had an extension cord and bulb and a small electric fan and planned to tie it into the pump wiring at the well as the house wiring was not tied into the power lines yet. When I made the connection for the lamp nothing happened so I figured the bulb was blown. Using our flashlights, we unloaded the doors, ceiling tile and appliances. I was amazed at how little water had got on the doors. There was only a small amount of water stain on the doors. I set them against the wall so the wet ends could dry out. Some of the ceiling tile boxes looked pretty wet so I opened them and spread the tiles around so they could dry out. All my worry about damage came to nothing as there was very little damage.

The house place was in thick timber and there are many, many insects there. The house had stood vacant for several months and the insects had decided it would make a good home. It was after 2:00 a.m. by the time we had spread some quilts on the floor to make a place to sleep. It was hot and stuffy in the house so I decided to plug the fan into the cord. It ran all right except for one thing. It ran about two times as fast as it should and waltzed all over the floor. It then dawned on me that the pump circuit was for 240 volts. I had never seen 240 volts wired with only two wires before. The ground wire was not used. We live and learn, sometimes the hard way. Even with the stuffy, hot air it did not take long to doze off after the harrowing trip. I had barely dozed when I awoke from a bite on my upper arm. I instinctively brushed off the insect and said, "Where's that damn flashlight?" Then I told Nellie what happened. I directed the light in the direction I had thrown the insect and there was a cricket and a large spider squared off facing each other. I was sure it had been the cricket that bit me. It was more of a bite than a sting, and it was not painful. I did not sleep very well and was up and around by good daylight. The bath tub was installed but the walls were not finished nor was the water hooked up. I felt that a bath would make me feel better so I put some water in the tub and asked Nellie to stay outside while I bathed. After we did a few chores around the house and fixed some sandwiches for lunch we headed for home.

Without a load on the pickup it rode like a truck. I was so nearly worn out I could hardly keep my eyes open and the back of the seat pounded my aching back. After I had driven about two hours in the glaring sun I could no longer see the road. No difference which way I looked all I could see was a yellow glare. I stopped and got out and walked around. Nellie gave me a wet wash cloth to bathe my face and eyes. After a while I felt better and could see to drive. I did about everything I knew to do to stay awake the rest of the way and finally ended what I would say was the most miserable trip I have ever made. In looking back I recall a lot of pleasant experiences in spite of the bad ones.

In July I took my two weeks of vacation and started working on the house. I hung the doors, sheet rocked the partition walls, put on the new ceiling and finished the wiring and the plumber finished the plumbing and the floor men laid the linoleum. The house was livable. I had worked about fourteen hours a day for two weeks and reduced my weight by about fourteen pounds. Edna decided to give me the television. That was how we got started watching the *boob-tube*.

Lloyd Notices Someone

Along about 1953, when Lloyd was home on leave from the Navy, he came home from the drug store where he had stopped for a Coke. He said, "You know if Myrtle Wilson was not such a little kid I'd ask her for a date." Myrtle was working at the soda fountain at that time. I told him that she was not the little kid that he thought she was and that she was nineteen years old. That evening he asked if he could drive my Ford. He had the date. I noted that about every time he had a date the car would have a flat tire the next day or so. I found that he was driving up the street north from our house to Wilson's'. The street was not paved and I knew there were some roofing nails on it as another neighbor had his house reroofed and the workmen had burned the old roofing in the street. This had left many roofing nails and that was the source of our flat tires. I told Lloyd to use another street and the problem was solved. During his leave they had steady dates. He wasn't kidding about wanting to go with Myrtle.

By the spring of 1954 they had decided to get married. Lloyd was stationed in California and could not get leave to come home so they decided that Myrtle could meet him on a week end in Arizona and they would be married. Arminta went with Myrtle to Yuma, Arizona where Lloyd met them. Lloyd and Myrtle were married at Yuma on July 20th, 1954. Arminta then went on to California with them and visited with relatives before returning home. Now there were five in our immediate family. Lloyd was transferred to the Navy Technical Training Center in Norman, OK on 1 August 1954.

Myrtle came home from Norman in the late spring because Lloyd did not want the Navy doctors to deliver the baby she was expecting. He felt she would be better off to go to our family doctor, Dr. J.G. Wood. He was the one who had taken care of Arminta with her illness when she was about two years old and he had also operated on Nellie and treated her for years. Lloyd had been treated by him when he was about fourteen too. Lloyd, with some friends, was swimming in the creek when it was at flood stage and had kicked a piece of rotten driftwood which penetrated the top of his foot. Within twenty-four hours, his foot was swollen to twice its normal size. We took him to the hospital where Doc Wood operated to remove the scraps of wood. He could not believe that so much pus could have formed in only one day. All this had built Lloyd's confidence in Doc Wood so he sent Myrtle home so she could go to Doc Wood.

This was the year I had bought my first and only new car. In March I had bought a new Ford Fordor V-8 with overdrive. It was a very nice car to drive. I still had the old 1946 maroon Ford. Myrtle was staying with us while waiting for the stork. On the morning of May 16th, rather early, Myrtle said "Granny I think I'd better go to the hospital." She was very calm and brave. We wasted no time because we were sure she was ready to go. It was only a ten-minute drive from our house to the hospital in Weatherford. A new granddaughter arrived. Another new experience for me, being *grandpa* for the first time. The fellows up town were kidding me and asking me how it felt to be a grandpa and I told them it was not too bad as I could sleep with grandma.

Lloyd had already picked a name. It was to be Michael Dennis if a boy but since it was a girl the name was Michelle Denise. She was a very pretty, blonde, blue-eyed baby. As she grew we were naturally of the opinion that she was the prettiest and smartest granddaughter anyone ever had.

I still had two cars and Lloyd had none so I gave him the old maroon Ford. As things worked out we were able to watch our first grandchild growing through the first few years. Now we were a family of six.

THIS ENDS THE STORY AS NARRATED BY JAMES HOWARD CLONINGER.

Appendix A – Genealogy

Note: While researching this book, I began doing some studies on the Internet. I am not a professional genealogist, so this information may not be correct. Please forgive me if time shows that I was wrong.

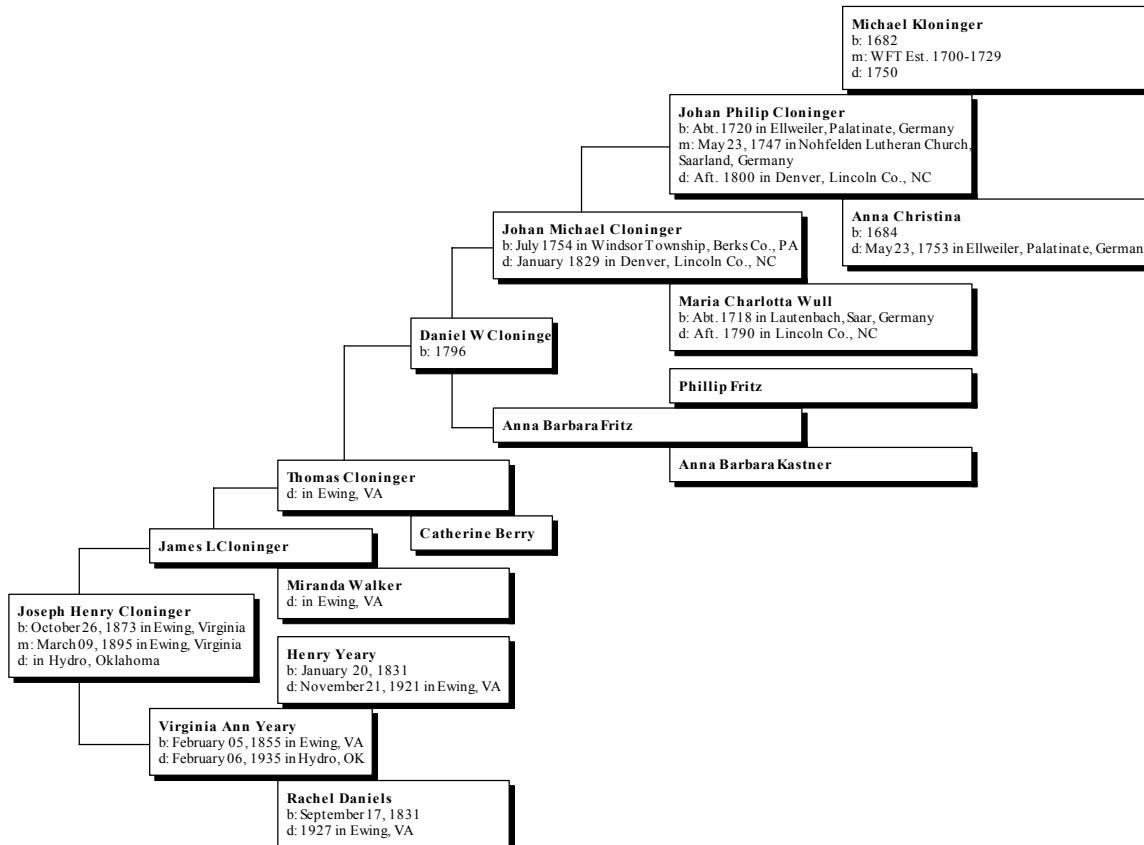
Using information from this book, I searched for clues that might've led to James L. Cloninger, Howard's grandfather. That search has thus far proved futile.

An exchange with Lee Yearly led me to search for Cloningers in the Sevierville, TN area. That search led to Daniel Cloninger (spelled *Kloninger* in some records). Daniel Kloninger was the father of Tom Cloninger, who is mentioned in the first chapter of this book. From Daniel Kloninger, we find Johan Michael Kloninger, son of Johan Philip Kloninger, son of Michael Kloninger.

Michael Kloninger was born and died in Ellweiler, Germany. Ellweiler, in 2004, is a community of about 300 persons about 30 miles from the border with France. It is near the city of Saarbrucken, which is about 350 miles west southwest of Berlin.

Johan Philip and Maria Charlotta (Wull) Kloninger arrived in the British Colonies in 1747 aboard a ship called *The Two Brothers*. Johan Philip and Maria Charlotta (who is sometimes referred to as Charlotta) settled in Berks County, PA for several years before moving to Lincoln County, NC.

Ancestors of Joseph Henry Cloninger



Appendix B – Photos

These photos were taken by Eric Cloninger or people on the Internet who volunteered to help.



Frame/booklet with picture of James Cloninger.
Mentioned in Chapter 1.



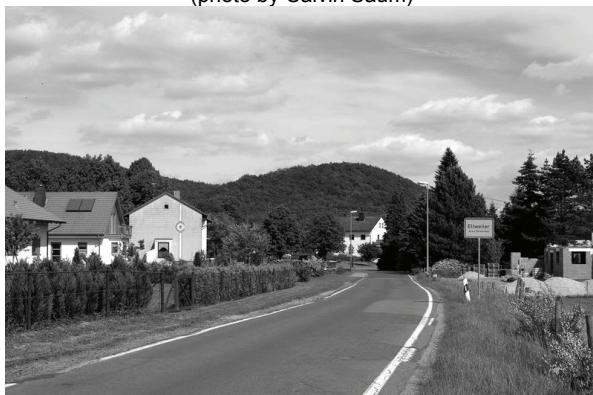
Yeary Cemetery. Nov. 2003. Ewing, VA
(photo by Calvin Saum)



Henry Yeary grave. Ewing, VA.
(photo by Calvin Saum)



Rachel Yeary grave, Ewing, VA.
(photo by Calvin Saum)



Ellweiler, Germany – The village where Johan Kloninger was born.
(photo by Jürgen Herzog)



The church in Ellweiler, Germany.
(photo by Jürgen Herzog)

The remaining photos in this book were taken either by Howard or using his camera.



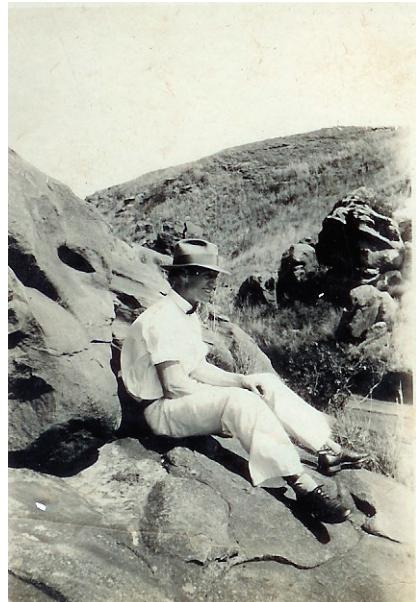
Howard and Nellie in the Ghost Mound area south of Hydro, OK.



Howard and Nellie



Howard with his car, Christmas 1929 on the South Canadian River, north of Hydro, OK



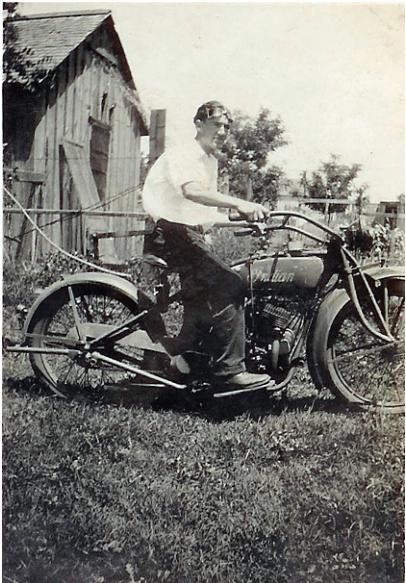
Howard at the Lasley Mounds, S of Hydro, OK



Howard fishing



Making music.



Howard on his Indian motorcycle



Hugh



Hugh



Hugh



Howard and Hugh



Hughes Lumber Company. Howard is on the left.



Howard



Ma and Pa Cloninger in front of the Hughes Lumber Co.



Lloyd Cloninger with his surviving grandparents.
Joseph Henry and Mary Cloninger, Gertrude and
Frank Curnutt, Virginia Ann Yeary (seated)



Lloyd on a horse



Lloyd's first fish. Hugh took him fishing.



Lloyd and Arminta on the front step at the house in Hydro.



Lloyd, Nellie and Arminta



Arminta



Howard, Arminta, Nellie and Lloyd



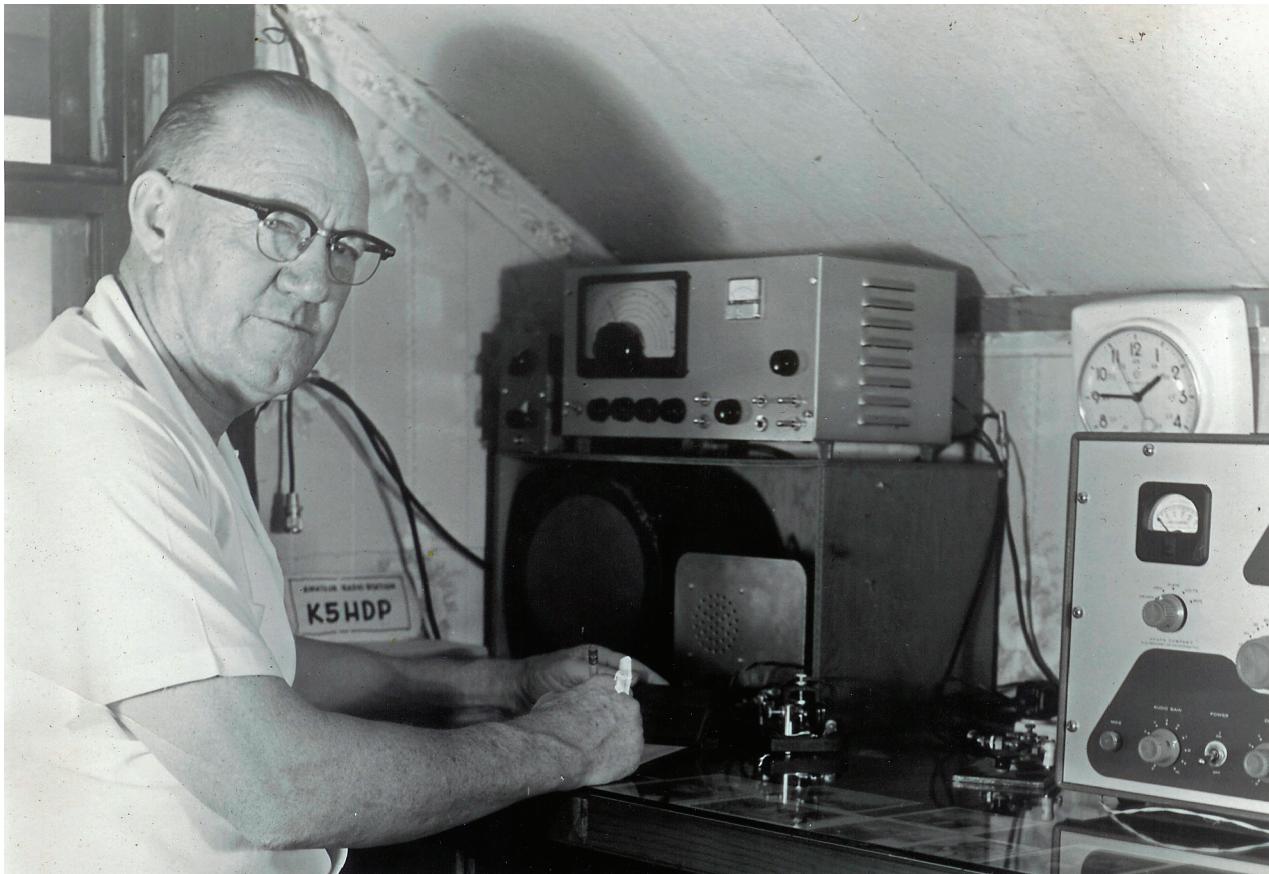
Howard, Arminta, Nellie and Lloyd



Arminta



Lloyd's US Navy Photo



Howard in his *ham shack*, in the attic of the house in Hydro, OK