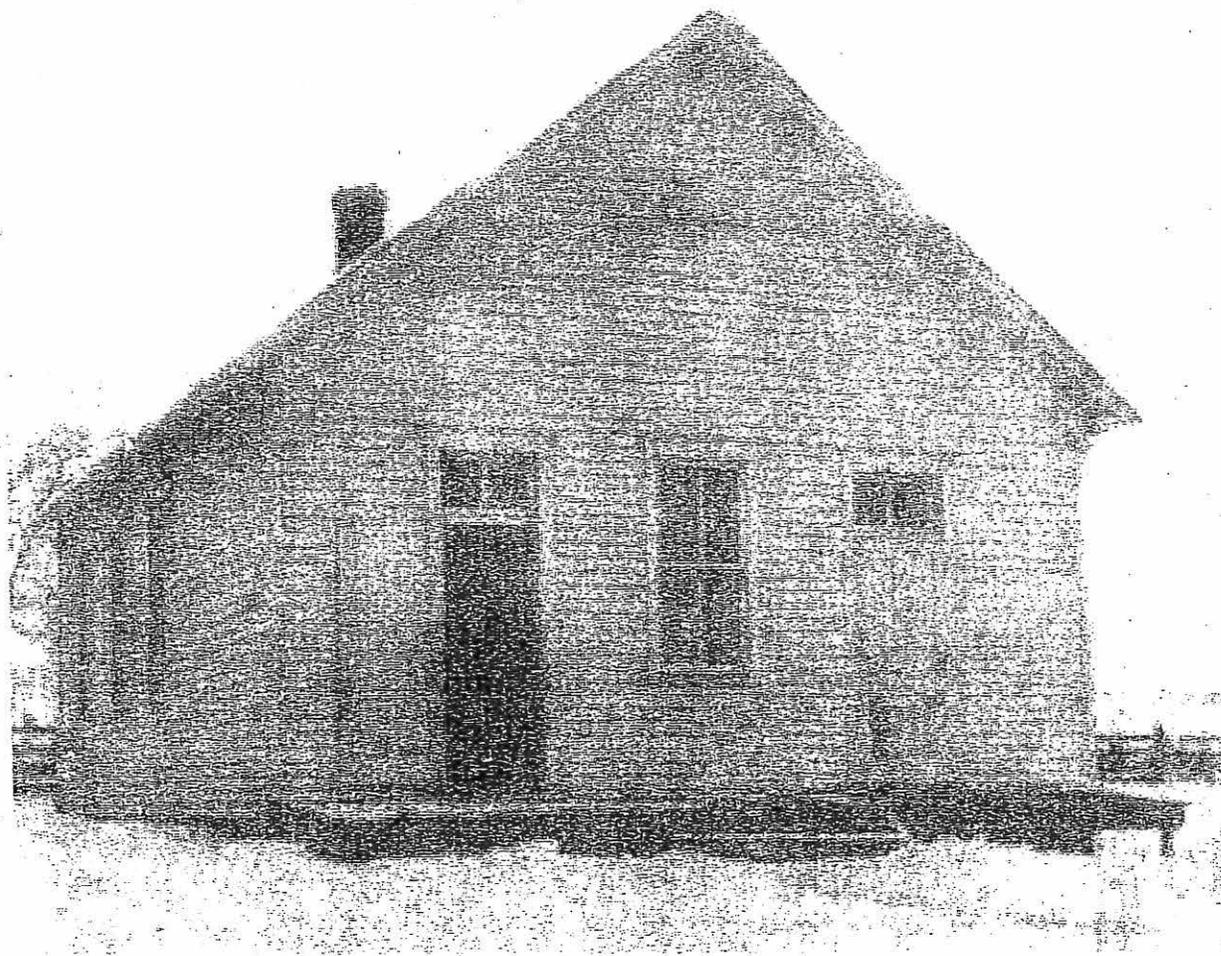


A Few Steps Back in Time

"Depression Days Through W.W. II"

By

Vernon Paasch



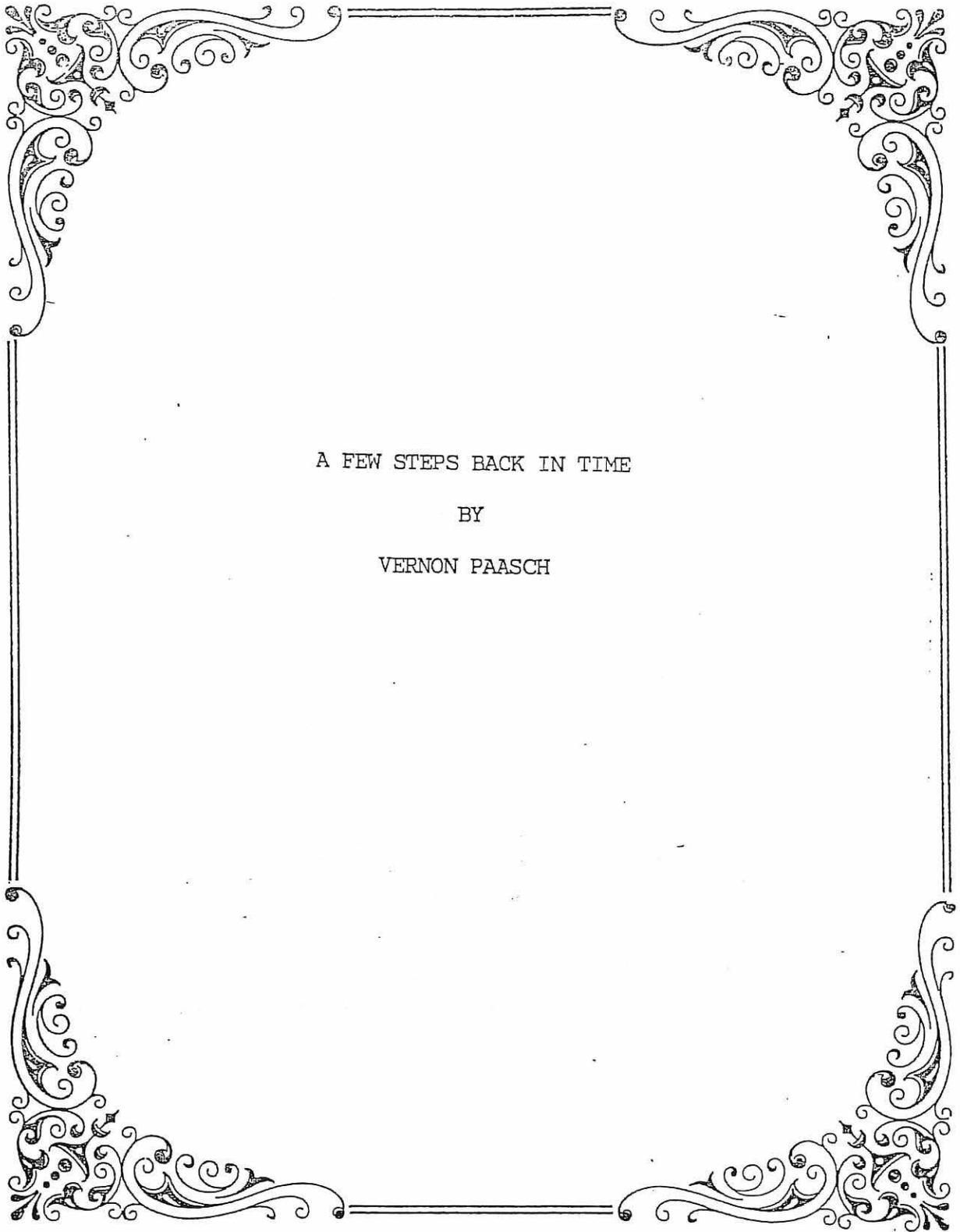
The stories on these pages are not written in sequence, but just as they came to mind, and as near right as I can recall.

1995

Vernon L. Paasch

Birth Date 7-23-1920

Health 3-14-04



A FEW STEPS BACK IN TIME
BY
VERNON PAASCH

FOREWARD

Annie and I are the only ones left of our family, and this is the time and the place to let the rest of our relatives that take the time to read these pages know what a wonderful, giving person my sister is. Only I know because I have been there, and no words that I put together here can possibly tell all she did for her family and others - unless it would be these four short ones - "She Did It All".

Annie was at home with Mom, Dad, and Belden when Mom passed away in 1945 (I was in the Navy), and at that time she took Mom's place, continuing to make the house a home. She picked up the cross and carried it, and only she and I know the pitfalls she encountered while going those extra miles.

The stories on these pages are not written in sequence, but just as they came to mind, and as near right as I can recall.

Christy Pickinpaugh asked me to write a few things about growing up on the farm during the depression days for her, and I got a little carried away - so this is her fault!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vernon Paasch". The signature is written in dark ink and is centered on the page.

By Vernon Paasch
February 1995

August Paasch.....	Born	6- 7-83	Died	9- 1-74
Paullina Reimer Paasch.....	Born	4-28-87	Died	5-11-45
	Married	2-26-08		
Belden Paasch.....	Born	4-26-09	Died	2-21-66
EttaBelle Paasch Clayton.....	Born	7- 3-10	Died	2-11-91
Robert Clayton.....	Born	7-21-11	Died	6- 3-83
	Married	9- 6-33		
Ora Vernon Paasch.....	Born	7-26-11	Died	2-28-12
Anna Bernice Paasch Dory.....	Born	4-14-14		
Clark Dory.....	Born	4-18-09	Died	10- 6-92
	Married	10-10-59		
Vernon LeRoy Paasch.....	Born	7-23-20		
Anna Kock Paasch.....	Born	5- 7-20		
	Married	8-20-50		

Note; This book was originally written for my nieces and nephews and their children recording family history and events. Response from friends and neighbors who read it has been so good that I am making this book available to anyone interested.

I was born and raised in the Walnut area and graduated from Walnut High School. Except for a time working in the shipyards and serving in the Navy during World War II, I have been a Walnut area resident all my life.

Vernon Paasch

Walnut, Iowa is a quaint little town with a population of about 300. At one time it could boast of 1000 residents but that was many years ago. The population dropped back to where it is now and hasn't changed much. You can look in any direction and see corn and soybean fields so you know that it is definitely a farming community, and it always has been.

When one makes the comparison between now and the 1920s or early 1930s you can see that one of the big changes that took place was the mode of transportation. In those times (early days) the women seldom drove a car until the self starters were invented. Before that the job of cranking those sometimes stubborn engines was left to the men. As a result the cars would most likely not be moved for several days at a time. Usually on Wednesday and Saturday nights when the stores would be open, it was necessary to take the cream that had been separated from the milk after each milking twice a day to the produce or cream station. It was wise to get the cream to town as often as possible while it was still sweet. If it had been kept in the icebox or hung in a container in the well and was sweet it would bring two cents a pound more.

The eggs were usually packed in thirty dozen egg crates and were almost always brought to town on Saturday nights from the farms. The price of the eggs was usually taken out in trade at the store that bought them.

Most of the main shopping area in Walnut was in the one block area, but on the lower end of the block to the east and west were two car dealers, three implement dealers, and a couple of gas stations. The most popular parking area was the main street business block and it was always the desire of the country folks to get to town early enough to find a place to park in the main block, preferably close to the grocery stores so the ladies could sit in the cars and visit to many friends going to and from the stores. This didn't always work out if there were too many cows to milk and it made them late enough getting to town that the main block would be full and they had to park in the darker side areas. Then many of the ladies after shopping would sit in a car with a friend that had gotten to town earlier and had a better parking space.

Wednesday and Saturday nights were looked forward to by most of the country children as it gave them a chance to get together with their friends. For the lack of something better to do, maybe three or four girls in small groups would walk down one side of the block, cross the street, and up the other side several times laughing and enjoying themselves in their own way. Most of the time while making their rounds they would stop to spend the nickel they were given to buy a sack of popcorn.

During the season of favorable weather Nick Cade and his wife would push their two wheeled popcorn popper downtown on Wednesday and Saturday nights and set up their little business in the light of the Hoffmann Hardware store window. Nick would turn the little crank which would turn the mixer in the popcorn. His wife Sadie would sack the corn after it was popped, put it in a holding bin beside a little grey coffee pot of melted butter, and pour it over the popcorn after it was sacked. If you liked it and didn't stop her, she would put on enough to go to the bottom of the sack. The smell of that fresh popcorn would move either up or down the street with those easy summer night breezes and we know it whet the appetite of many who bought a sack before they went home from town. At the end of the evening he would turn off his popper, put the muffin pan that held his change in the drawer, and he and his wife started home pushing their little corn popper ahead of them.

In the processed feed today livestock and poultry get all the elements and medication required to keep them healthy and productive, and this is built into their rations. In the early days one item that had to be available to a flock of laying hens was crushed oyster shells which are made up of calcium. That could be bought in fifty pound burlap bags and a common practice was to put a bag of shell in the chicken yard, cut the sack open from one end to the other and just let the hens eat as they needed it which was a little every day. That replaced the calcium they used to produce their egg shells. When they were out of this feed you would know it by finding a few eggs in the hens' nest with no shells. There was just the membrane inside the shell holding the egg intact.

Everyone had a big patch of potatoes so they would have enough to last until the next harvest. When they were dug in the fall, we very possibly might have 20 bushels to be put in the cellar, basement, or cave. We would eat from our supply all winter and those that were left in the spring would have long sprouts. Sprouting these potatoes was a job I hated. You had to break off the new sprouts from each one, and these potatoes had to last us until the new crop was produced in the summer. The ones that were left when the new crop was harvested had to be carried out and fed to the hogs.

When I was small it seems like the kids had more colds and sore throats, and a remedy for a sore throat was to put a piece or two of bacon on your throat, and then wrap the bacon and the neck in a long heavy stocking or woolen cloth for a couple of days. I don't know if it did any good, but we got better. In those days many home remedies had been handed down from one generation to the next. Babies were born at home, and there were cases where an appendix was taken out on the kitchen table.

The early tank wagon service to the farms started with a team of horses pulling a wagon gear with two barrels, one for kerosene and the other for gasoline. The next step in progress was the mounting of two specially designed barrels mounted on a truck frame. These are still used today only with more capacity and more types of fuel plus a meter to tally the gallons delivered by a hose, but before the time of meters all material was run into a special built 5 gallon can that was hung below a pipe outlet with a shut off valve, and as each was filled the hand operated counter was moved up 5 gallons. The operator used two gas cans so one could be filling while he emptied the other in the storage barrel. It was a law that the first trucks to haul gasoline were to be grounded. The thought for many years was they could build static electricity that could cause the fuel being hauled to explode. The grounding system was a chain fastened to the outer end of the rear axle and across to the opposite side. On this low hanging chain was a heavy iron ring that would drag on the ground. It seems like this was discontinued in the late thirties.

The old MANTEL CLOCK was given to my folks as a wedding gift February 26, 1908. For ninety years now it has stood on its shelf like a sentinel on guard waiting for the next thing to happen. If the old clock could talk, it could tell about every thing that happened in the Paasch family because it has been there since Day One.

It could tell of all the times it watched us go through - the good and the bad. The good were the best, of course, but even the bad gave us a lesson in values. When we had little, we learned to appreciate what we had.

It could tell of my bank that stood on the shelf beside it when I was small - a cast iron horse about seven inches tall. It held my coins. Then the amount didn't interest me too much, just as long as I could make it rattle. That was what was important.

It could tell of the loss of brother Ora in 1911, less than one year old. Mom said that was the hardest thing she ever did was to leave that little baby at the cemetery on that terrible cold day of the funeral. He was the fourth body buried in the north side of the Layton Township Cemetery.

It could tell about when I was about four years old and had a severe case of pneumonia. It was in the dead of winter, and we lived about 3½ miles southeast of town, and the roads were drifted shut. Mom called for the doctor, but he said he couldn't possibly get out with all the snow blocking the roads. Then the telephone was on a party line and when one made a call, all of the neighbors could hear the ring and listen in if they wished. At least one did that night and that was Henry Koos. They lived the first place east of the cemetery, and he said "Lene (short for Lena), I'll harness up a team and bring the doctor out in a sled, which he did. Now Henry almost always had half a cigar in his mouth - not lit - just there. Mom said this was the case that night, too, and when he got there with the Doctor, Henry had been breathing on this cigar so long that it turned out to be a chunk of frost about an inch and a half thick. The doctor said I was too bad and there was nothing he could do, but with the TLC of the rest of the family, I started getting a little better, but they said I wouldn't eat, so when Dad was in town, he brought home a can of white cherries. They told me that they gave me some, and I did eat them. The rest of the family got some, too, but Anne didn't eat hers. She saved them for me, and that could have been what turned me around. It was a sacrifice for her because white cherries were then quite a luxury.

Time went by and I still didn't want to eat so (I remember this), they would give me a silver dollar to at least eat part of my meal each time, but then the dollar would always get lost in the bedding. I wasn't smart enough to figure out that it was always the same one. The neighbor lady, Mrs. Holger Andersen, who lived just to the east of us said she would make some soup that would make me better. It was good - a fruit soup, and the folks got me a red delicious apple that tasted as good as it smelled after I decided to eat it. I thought it was too pretty to eat.

The clock could tell, too, about my fishing in the creek west of the place. It was probably ^{NOT} over a foot deep and six feet wide then. Mom wouldn't let me go alone at first so Annie had to take me down. It can't say that we ever caught

any. I know I didn't know how to fish and doubt if she knew any more than I did about fishing. Later Mom let me go alone, and I did have better luck. Every morning after breakfast I would take my pole and go down to the creek, catch one probably not more than 6 or 7 inches long and take it home. Mom would clean it and fry it the next morning for me, and then I would go and get another one. The farm was a wonderful place on which to grow up.

It could have told how the kitchen stove, fueled mostly by cobs and sometimes with a little coal, was designed so that the heat was pulled by the draft in the chimney around the oven and up the opposite end against the water reservoir which held about 5 gallons. This kept the water quite warm and was handy for dipping into it for dish and hand washing. There were no hot water heaters like today, and very few homes had running water. These stoves were real nice in the winter with all the heat they put out, but they were a "beast" in the summer time, especially at threshing time when the women had to cook for a large crew of hungry men - and they were fed good! Early in the morning the stove would be started to get all the pies done as well as a 15 to 20 pound roast, and it would go full blast until noon - there was no air conditioning and sometimes very little breeze to move through the open windows. It was in the hottest part of summer so the breeze was hot as it was hot outside, too. There was no easy way, and one wonders how the ladies stood the heat.

It could tell about the house we called home. They were all the same - there wasn't such a thing as insulation and they were drafty. The doors didn't fit tight and the windows were raised and lowered so much in the summer that they were worn enough that the curtains would move and the windows would rattle when the wind blew. It was not uncommon to have a little drift on the window sill and floor if we had a strong wind during a snow storm. Also, at times the water in the reservoir on the stove would have a crust of ice on it in the morning.

It could have told about the outhouse. Before the days of electricity, on the farm indoor toilets were almost unheard of unless there was a tank in the attic and they had gravity pressure. Most all had a "bath with a path". Ours was a "two holer". I never could figure out why all the holes - I never saw anyone stand in line to get in there. In the winter the first one out there after a snow would have to break a trail - there usually wasn't time to scoop a path.

It could have told of the many duties of the oven door. It not only served as the first landing place for all the good things Mom baked in the oven but it also served as a good heating pad by that warm oven for young chickens that didn't know enough to go in during a sudden summer rain storm. More than once we went out during a rain and picked up cold wet young chickens that were more dead than alive, brought them in, laid them out on an old coat on the oven door, and waited for them to warm up. Usually the survival rate was pretty good, but some would go to that "big roost in the sky". When Dad had a litter of pigs born during a cold spell, it was not uncommon for him to put a little straw in the bottom of a bushel basket, put a litter of chilled new-born pigs on it, and bring them to the house to set on this same oven door. Usually after an hour you would hear them starting to grunt a little and and rub their feet on the sides of the tin basket. Then it was time to take them back to their mother for feed.

It could tell of selling the livestock off the farm. In the early days, we had the railroad which ran through Walnut, and they also had a small well built

holding yard by the tracks with a loading chute so one could load the livestock on the cars on the side track. They didn't have trucks of any size to haul livestock then, so it went by rail to Omaha (and sometimes Chicago). The hogs could be hauled in with a team and wagon, but the fat cattle were driven in. Our neighbor about a mile from us would usually sell at the same time as Dad. - neither one had many, maybe 15 or 20 head. They would drive theirs up to our place and then Dad would turn ours out of the yard to join the rest. After being locked in the yard for several months, they enjoyed their freedom with a lot of bucking, jumping, and running as they joined the others on the road, but long before we got to town, they forgot about the play stuff, and by the time we got them to town, they were easy to handle as their heads were down and their tongues hanging out about six inches. When they got them in the holding yard, Dad and our neighbor sorted out their own and loaded them on the waiting cars that had been ordered in advance. This was always a big day for me to look forward to. After Dad and his neighbor had the cattle loaded, then our neighbor and his boy, Dad and I would go up to the cafe, and I would get my one malted milk of the year.

It could tell about the roads in the Spring when the frost was going out. The mud and ruts were so deep that the Ford cars with their narrow wheels and high clearance couldn't plow through the mud. There were areas, some a couple hundred feet long with a certain kind of soil that were worse than others. There were two areas south of town and one on the east side of the hill west of Marne where the mud would get so deep they would lay posts across the ruts to support the planks they laid on top to be driven on - and you hoped you wouldn't slide off! The roads were described with two words - dirt or mud. When the folks planned on going someplace, they always checked the sky first because if there were rainy looking clouds, you may change your mind because you may end up plowing home in the mud with chains on. When you wanted to go someplace around home, that wasn't uncommon, but usually when farmers shipped cattle to Omaha, they liked to go up the day after shipping to see them sold and weighed. The road to Omaha was all dirt, too, and if it rained, that was a long way in the mud - and sometimes it happened. The cars then only went about half as fast as they do now, and sometimes someone had to stop and go to the toilet. The best place stop during a summer trip was a country school house toilet. Everyone did it because the gas stations in those days didn't have all those luxuries.

Another thing we did when Dad shipped cattle was to take our dinner along. People didn't have the extra money to eat out so for a long time Mom always packed a basket.

It could tell about the gypsies that slowly came across the state. Several times when I was very young, they came past our place. They usually had a boxed in type wagon that they used for their transportation and for their home, and were leading one or two extra teams. Mom always had a fear of them stopping because of their habits of spreading out so they all couldn't be watched while they took anything they might need or didn't need. One time when they went by, they went for less than half a mile and then camped for several days. They tied their horses to Dad's fence to let them feed on the long grass growing there. When the grass in one area got short, they moved the horses down a few posts and tied them there. The folks didn't sleep very good during their stay for fear they would come back at night and help themselves to something they wanted, but we never found any signs that they ever came.

It could tell about the country school we went to just one mile away. Each school stood on one acre of ground, and on it was the one room school house. Eight grades were taught by one teacher, and when the number of pupils was larger, each grade could have more than one pupil in it. The teacher not only did the teaching but she moved the snow away from the school house doors, carried out the ashes, carried in the cobs and coal used for fuel, and cleaned the schoolhouse. The early school houses were heated by a large round heater about five feet tall. They did the best they could, but about the only warm place was by the heater as the many windows were drafty and the walls were cold. It was a common thing for the pupils to bring something for their lunch in jars that could be heated in a pail of water on the stove. Besides the schoolhouse there were two toilets, one fuel shed for the cobs and coal, and usually a cave in case there was a tornado during school hours. There was also a flag pole and in later years a swing set with a turning pole. If you were lucky there was a well. Otherwise the water had to be carried from a neighbor, and the pupils took turns carrying water. The teacher when I went to such a school usually stayed at a neighbor where she got room and board, and for this she paid \$4.00 and sometimes \$5.00 a week of her \$40.00 teaching check. There were more teachers than jobs so they were glad to get it.

About 1929 the depression swept over the whole nation like a big cloud - it didn't miss anyone. People in the city were hit just as hard as people in the rural areas. This terrible time started when Herbert Hoover was President when overnight all the banks in the nation were closed. The only money people had was the cash at hand, and what was in the bank that was theirs was lost. The most fortunate around here were those who had their farms paid for, but those that were making payments on land just lost it because there just was no money to make the payments. Dad sold hogs for 2¢ a pound, corn for 10¢ a bushel, and fat cattle for 7¢ a pound. Those prices couldn't make farm payments so he like all the rest making payments lost the farm we lived on southeast of Walnut where Robert Holst now lives.

There is no way to describe in detail the hardship in detail of living with no money to buy the necessities. Examples of prices were men's work shirts were 50¢, men's bib overalls were \$1.50, men's workshoes \$2.00 to \$3.00. Mom made most of the clothes for herself and the girls. Sears and Roebuck (Roebuck was taken from the title some years ago) would send out their catalogs, and Mom found yard goods in one for 7¢ a yard. She ordered that and made a dress for less than a quarter which she was going to wear to church, but Dad said "You are not going to wear a 25¢ dress, but she did and said "Why not? That's what the rest are wearing", and so it was. No one had anything so no one was any better than his neighbor. At corn husking season Mom would cut the worn fingers out of the flannel husking gloves and sew in new ones she had made. New gloves only cost \$1.50 a dozen then but she saved that much. Corn was so cheap at 10¢ per bushel that some people burned it in their cook and heating stoves. We did that for a couple days, but Dad made us stop it. He said, "I worked all summer to raise that corn, and I can't stand to see it burned."

We wore patched clothes - everyone did, and to get extra thickness they would patch the patches in the areas where there was the most wear like the knees and elbows. Mom would sit at night with a kerosene lamp and darn holes in the work socks with yarn. The patches got pretty thick but were better than a hole. (They could buy an egg shaped wooden item with a short handle to stick in the sock that was almost a must to do any darning, but you could get by with a small glass jar.)

When we got the fall catalogs from Sears and Montgomery Ward, we kids would start looking and wishing for what we would like to have for Christmas. We knew all along that it was mostly wishing, but we were used to "Maybe we'll get that sometime". That's what we expected to hear so it was no disappointment. A couple more phrases we heard often were "No, it takes too much gas" when we wanted to go someplace, and "We'll go after we get through threshing". This went on for years. I never could figure out why threshing was always the deadline - but it worked. The only place we went after threshing was to Des Moines so Dad could talk to the fellow that bought Dad's farm when he lost it about renting it again for the next year. That was another day when Mom packed a basket of lunch that we usually ate at some country school yard. The roads were all dirt roads so Dad always picked a day when it wasn't going to rain.

Mom ordered a spindly little Christmas tree from Sears and Roebuck, and it came in a carton about 6 inches square and 3 feet long. When it arrived and we opened it up and pulled it out, it went by the name of "tree" so that must be what it was - to describe it is difficult. It had a dowel painted brown for a trunk, and in it they drilled the same number of holes as there were branches, which were about a dozen of varied lengths that were wrapped in some sort of fuzzy green stuff, and on the end of each branch was a red berry about the size of a bean. All we had to do was pull this tree out of the box, bend the wires down to limb position, and we had a tree because it came stuck in a pot for a base, but there was one thing wrong. The trunk (or dowel) had gotten broken in the mail so Dad made three splints out of a peach box, wired them where they were needed most, and we were in business! We were proud of that cheap little patched up tree. It made our Christmas complete, and when we clamped on our tin candle holders and lit the candles in them (just for a couple of minutes - the folks were afraid of a fire hazard), that was just about the prettiest thing we had ever seen, and when the candles were blown out, we had the nice smell of hot wax and the smoking wicks. That was all a long time ago but the combination of all that one never forgets. When the Christmas season was over, we very carefully bent the wire limbs back up and put it back in its box to be laid away until the next season when we did it all over again. I'm sorry that cheap little tree ever got destroyed and I have wished many times I had it to put up because during the times of the depression when you had nothing, it helped set aside the few days of the Christmas Season as something real and helped us to appreciate the few precious things that our folks had to skimp and save for and for them to do with less. Christmas then was really something to look forward to because it was then and not until then did we have candy (this was hard Christmas candy) in such an amount that it had to be put into a bowl. Mixed nuts, too, were had then, but when those in the bowl were gone, that was it until next year. There was also always a 2 pound box of marshmallows. In those days they came neatly fitted in a two layer box (not like today smashed in a plastic bag) with a light sprinkling of powdered sugar over them. When the lid was put back on down over the box, little whiffs of powdered sugar would blow out with the escaping air (it smelled so sweet and is easy to remember). This all took place after supper when we had oyster stew. Dad would bring home a quart from the Moritz Meat Market a few days early before they ran out (50¢ a quart then). That would be about the time he would bring home a half crate of oranges to start on Christmas Eve. It was hard to even think at that time that anyone could have anything better, and we really didn't get enough of this kind of food. (I had a cracking of skin between my fingers and under my ears and Mom took me in to the doctor and he said I needed more fresh fruit because this

was caused by a vitamin shortage.) Then, too, Mom would bring out the Christmas cookies she had made.

When it came time for our gifts, Mom would unlock the top of the ice-box (this is where she knew our gifts would be safe because she carried the key in her apron pocket). Most of our gifts came from Sears and Roebuck. She would pack the gifts wrapped in newspaper in her reed clothes basket and carry them into the front room where we had the tree. The hard coal stove that was in the front room was usually started in there with the kerosene lamps and a room filled with love. We had wonderful parents who went the extra mile for us and made the simple life we had the best they could with the little money they had. On Christmas Day Mom would set the table in the dining room for dinner, put on the linen table cloth, get out her best dishes and silverware, and we would eat in there. How could anyone add anything better to a memory like that. When I see Christmas today, I so often think that at one home there is probably more money spent for wrapping paper than our Christmas cost altogether - food, gifts, and all, and I wonder what part of Christmas will be remembered as we remember ours.

Even if potato chips were available in town in the early years, there wouldn't have been money for that so Mom once in a great while would make them. This was a time consuming job and dangerous with the hot grease. The potatoes were peeled, and it seems she sliced them very thin by hand (maybe they didn't have slicers then yet). The grease had to be hot so they cooked quick. She always kept a large lid handy in case the heat ignited any splatter of grease that could get in the pan. If it did she could smother it out with the big lid. Each slice had to be put in the hot lard one slice at a time or they would stick together and end up in a chunk. She had patience and kept at it. It seems that we kids ate them about as fast as she turned them out. They were a treat, and we didn't have them often.

Our Sunday School started a program for any one of the members that wanted to try - to go 100 Sundays straight without missing with no excuse for weather or sickness, you would then be awarded a Bible. Not many tried. I don't know of anyone who tried but Ann and I. We were in the same class. If there were others who tried, it was for such a short time that it didn't matter. One hundred Sundays is a long time for country kids with the road conditions of drifted snow or deep mud. When either of these would happen, I rode in on my pony, and several times during the summer, we had those constant heavy rains on Sunday, and for this I dressed to fit the occasion. We didn't have a rain coat, but Dad had a full length horsehide coat which I wore. This would cover me pretty well, and he had an old felt hat with a wide brim that carried the dripping rain over the coat collar. With this all on, I rode into town and when I got there, I tied my horse to a power pole back of the gymnasium (it's still there) and went over to the church that was just east of the schoolyard to mark up one more Sunday - drifted snow found me doing the same thing again. A few times it was terribly cold with snowing and blowing at the same time - my heat houser didn't work very good, but I made my hundred Sundays.

Ann, too, started on the hundred Sunday program, but her situation was different. Her Dad, Arthur Kock, had to take her and for 34 Sundays he did, but on the 35th the roads were in that terrible spring thaw, and with Ann and her sister Arletta and two neighbor girls, they started to town for Sunday School, but going up one awful muddy hill, the front wheels got packed so tight with mud

they wouldn't turn - so he ended up jacking up the car, taking off the packed wheels, digging out the mud, and by the time he got the wheels back on Sunday School was over, so it's sad but true that she lost out on her 35 Sundays and was back to No. 1 again, and it never was possible to get to 100.

The depression stress was taking its toll. Some people were moving, hoping, I guess, to maybe find something somewhere that might be just a little better. I was small at the time, but I remember several times when a covered wagon would go by - the driver sitting right inside the front end and this couple had their family in there. I remember one was leading an extra team tied to the wagon. One wonders where they could have come from or how far they went before they gave up.

We had the railroad running along the back side of our farm, and the tracks were often used by bums and tramps getting from one town to another, and these fellows had to eat, too. Perhaps not regularly, but they had to eat sometime, and a good place for them to leave the track coming from the east would have been a half mile east and a quarter mile north. I'm sure they could see the possible route for food, too, because perhaps a couple times a month, one would stop and ask for a handout. I mentioned before that I was quite young when this was all going on so this really impressed me. These fellows were in a class all of their own - most were unshaven with long hair and dirty from riding in box cars and living and sleeping along the railroad. They all wore a long overcoat, usually torn, and an old felt hat or stocking cap and carried an old gunny sack of something (I suppose clothes). Most of the time from all the walking they did, even their shoe uppers had holes and large pieces of worn loose leather that needed sewing. I would have no idea how bad the soles must have been. Mom would never turn them down when they asked for food. Sometimes what she had wasn't very fancy, but she always filled a plate with something and gave them coffee. She always made them sit on the edge of the front porch to eat and she could watch them through the curtains until they left. Mom always felt sorry for these fellows, and we would talk about why and how they got into a lifestyle like that.

Mom was always willing to and trying to help someone - not just the bums but anyone who had sickness or trouble. She would try to be the first one there with food and help. She was a wonderful person and those of you who never knew her missed knowing a loving, caring lady.

During those depression days we raised much of our food. We hatched our own chickens, and we all had roosters so the eggs would be fertile - so in the spring we would set hens on about 200 eggs, about 15 to 18 to a nest. It took 3 weeks for the chickens to grow in the shell and then break out. The old hen then had something to do to try to raise their brood of about 15 each. Each hen had her own weather proof tin coop about 24x30 inches. The coop had 3 doors in one opening 10 inches square. The one door was solid tin to be closed at night, the second one had four 4 inch holes that was used during the day so the chicks could go in and out but the hen had to stay inside, and the third had slots in the door one-half inch wide and three inches long to use on hot nights for ventilation. This one kept the rats out. The chicks were kept in here until they were all feathered out. Then they were put in the brooder house, and the hen was put back with the rest of the laying hens, and they were anxious to get back! I think they found out that having a family to raise wasn't as great as they thought it would be.

The problem with hens years ago was their wanting to set. At times one out of ten of the hens would want to do this. They do not lay eggs during the time they were "clucks" (names given these hens) so they had to break them up. This was usually done by making a pen out in the open, clip their wing feathers so they wouldn't fly out, give them feed and water, and let them stay there through rain and shine, night and day, and usually a week of this would get them back on track again and they were ready to start to lay eggs again.

Mom's goal was to have chickens big enough to eat, new potatoes, and new cabbage by the Fourth of July. Sometimes it took an extra chicken or two, but we usually had it. It was a nice change from all the salt pork we were eating.

Everyone had a big patch of potatoes so they would have enough to last until the next harvest. When they were dug in the fall, it was not uncommon to have 20 bushels to be put in the cellar, basement, or cave. We would eat away at them all winter, and those that were left in the spring would have grown long sprouts. Sprouting those potatoes was a job I hated. You had to sit there and break the new sprouts off each one, and these potatoes had to last us until the new crop came on in the summer. The ones that were left - usually a lot - had to be carried out and fed to the hogs.

Much canning was done while things were in season of pickles, preserves, fruit and vegetables, and by Fall Mom would have about 300 quarts of different things on the cellar shelves.

At times salesmen would come around selling magazines, hardware, yard goods, Watkins products, and fish. Most of them had a chicken crate tied on the running board of their model T Ford to put the old hens in that the buyers of their wares give them instead of money. No one had any extra money to give out but almost anytime there were a few old hens that were called "clucks" as they were trying to set and weren't laying eggs anyway. Then at the end of the day these salesmen would take these hens to the produce buyer in town and sell them - and everyone was happy. When I was young, I thought the fish salesman that came around had about the best thing going. He usually had cut the backseat and back out of a Model T, built a box in there about three feet wide and four feet long. In it they had chipped ice, but the part I thought was great was seeing all the dressed fish that he had buried in this ice. Mom would buy, but she checked them pretty close for freshness - and they were so good! At that time I thought if I could just be a fish salesman when I grew up!

The average farm size was 160 acres in those days, and since there was so much hand work, most farmers had a hired man - usually a single man that lived there on the place. During the summer they got \$30.00 a month, but during the winter they got just their room and board for helping with the chores and doing odd jobs. They were glad to do that just to have their job again the next summer. If they left, there was always someone waiting for his place.

When Bob and EttaBelle got married, Bob hired out to Dad to live at and help farm the north place (the old Paasch farm), and they too got \$30.00 a month. That doesn't sound like much but that was top wages.

In the "dirty" 30s you could buy a hamburger or a cone for 5¢ - if you had the nickel. Mom bought a crate full of big ducks from the produce dealer for 25¢ each.

The depression had odd ways of reaching the people, and in some cases from a long way off. The people down in Kansas and Oklahoma had the same money problems as up here, so to try to increase their production, they started to plow many, many acres of grassland under in an area of red soil where it was too dry to farm. After they had all this land plowed, they couldn't get enough crops to grow on it to keep it from blowing - and that it did. When the wind was in the southwest in the summer which is common, we could see a cloud start to form at the horizon. The next day it would be higher and a little redder, and about the third day it was here. There was so much red dust in the air, it would block out the sun. It could last for several days to a week, depending on the change of the wind. The red dust was into everything if you didn't try to stop it. Mom laid wet towels and rags in the windows where it would blow in, and also in front of the doors. But it still came in and got on the beds, curtains, dishes, and shelves. They cleaned it up as best they could, but the trouble was that it could do it again soon - and sometimes did. The wind direction was the factor.

The heating was about the same in all the homes. Some had furnaces but most were heated by heaters that were set in the Fall with stove pipes to the chimney and were fired with cobs, wood, and coal, the same as the cook stoves. We tried to hold back on the coal because that had to be bought. Coal was usually put in at bedtime as it held fire and heat much longer than the cobs and wood did so the rooms didn't get quite as cold before morning. By Fall the cobs that were used from the corn that was shelled and stored in the cob house were usually used up. Dad would always go out to pick some corn early in the fall for hog feed. This would not be shelled but dumped or scooped out of the back end of the wagon in the cattle and hog yard onto the ground so the hogs could eat the corn off the cobs. This worked fine. They got fed and Mom had fuel again - but first these cobs had to be picked up (most of the time they were frozen) and many, in fact most of them, had some hog or cattle manure on them. This didn't bother too much as long as they were cold, but when they got carried into the house and set beside the stove awhile, they had a way of letting you know they came from the hog yard and should be handled one at a time with two fingers.

There was no way to get much heat upstairs - usually there was a register in the ceiling in the room where the heater was. That helped warm that room a lot, but those away from the source got pretty cold. To take some of the shock out of getting into that cold bed, Mom would set a couple flat irons (the ones she ironed with) on the heater after supper so they would be hot at bedtime. She would take these upstairs, turn the covers back, and drag these hot irons over the area in our beds we kids slept in, and when she finished, she would wrap them in a heavy towel or two and just leave them in the bed. It wasn't fancy but it worked - but then nothing was fancy.

There wasn't much for entertainment in those days so most neighborhoods had card parties among the group of neighbors - and usually this was on Friday nights so the kids could go, too (babysitters weren't around then yet). This was just in the wintertime, and if the roads were blocked with snow, they would wait until the next Friday night and try again. The players were just as they are today - some were better than the rest, but it didn't make any difference. The important thing was that they got out and had a good time and they didn't spend any money that none of them had.

I remember one Spring when the roads were so muddy during the thaw that the only way to get any place was to walk (the folks and I didn't go) but Belden, Annie and Etta Belle did. It was a mile and they carried a card table (at night - that's spirit). Lunch was part of the evening. When the cards were put away, the hostess would bring out the sandwiches on a big plate, and I noticed when I went that egg salad was on most of them. It was almost perpetual - eggs were something everyone had plenty of and were cheap so it was a good combination.

The folks had the card party at their home on the night of one of their anniversaries. Everything was as usual - they all came, the men in their best overalls and the ladies in their dresses they probably made for a quarter like the rest there. They had a good time with their cards, but this card party quit a little early because the folks had a couple of fellows come to play music for the dance they were all told they were going to have this night. So they moved the furniture back, rolled up the rugs, and like they say - "Let the music begin", which it did, and they danced and the musicians played until it was time to go home. They played well because they had plenty of practice. They only played one piece all night "Sweet Jenny Lee".

In those days we butchered our own hogs for next summer's use. Dad always butchered three. Butchering was quite an operation. In later years we always skinned them, but for years after the hog was killed, when the hog was dead it was slid into a barrel of scalding water that would loosen the bristles, pulled out with a block and tackle, laid out on a makeshift table and the job of scraping the bristles started. If you got a good scald, it wasn't too bad, but that didn't always happen. When we killed the hogs, Belden was always gone. He hated this part of butchering. He really didn't care much about any of it, but this he couldn't stand. A rope was tied around the hind leg of the hog and then tied short to the hook on the block and tackle that in turn was secured high overhead in the driveway of the corn crib. The hog was then pulled high enough to have its head off the ground - This is the part that Belden couldn't stand - A sharp 10 inch knife was stuck into the hog's throat with the blade up. When the knife was stuck towards the tail and with a lift of the point of the blade with a little upward pressure, it would cut the arteries leading from the heart and in a minute or so all the blood was pumped out through their cut arteries. Dad would have me do it at times. I never gave it a thought. Whoever was closest to the knife just did it - no big deal. It's done the same way in the packing houses today.

In time all three were scraped, dressed (insides removed), washed and sawed down the middle of the back from the tail to the end of the nose (or snout). This was done in the winter and these hogs would hang out there for the rest of the day, and before bedtime, we pulled the wooden kitchen table out full length, put in the extra boards (I've seen Dad do this so many times). Dad would light the kerosene lantern, pick out a butcher knife, and out he would go. In due time he came back in with one-half of one of the hogs he had cut loose hanging on his shoulder. He would put it across the table and go get another one until all six halves were piled on the table.

The reason he brought them in at night was to keep them from freezing too hard during the night to work up in the morning. The next morning Mom would pull a couple of tenderloins out, slice them up, and fry them for breakfast. Those were real tenderloins and they were delicious. A tenderloin is a muscle underneath the backbone about 2 inches across and 18 inches long. They are tender because they never get any exercise (just ride along). After chores the process of cutting up these hogs began, and the day was finished about the time the meat cutting, rendering of the lard, and grinding was done. We usually stuffed the boughten casings with the ground sausage after supper, and it was my job to use a pin as the casings were being filled to puncture them to release air bubbles (I could handle that). That took care of today, but tomorrow the job of cleaning up all the greasy woodwork, doorknobs, floor, and all was done. You just can't be careful working with that much grease and not getting it on everything. The bacon, hams and shoulders were placed in huge crock jars for 10 days in brine strong enough to float an egg - and that's salty. After that those parts of the hog were taken to town to be smoked, and then it was ready to keep all summer. The salt was what preserved it.

The hogs at that time were fat, and at butchering time as much fat as possible was trimmed away, but even the well trimmed hams and shoulders had fat areas through them that had to stay.

It was notuncommon to get ten gallons of rendered lard from one hog. This was done by cutting all fat in pieces about an inch square and put in any large container. Many used a wash boiler about two-thirds filled. This was set on the cook stove and cooked until all the grease was liquid at which time it was put in a cast iron lard press and all the cooked material was compressed to squeeze all the lard that drained into crock jars, and stored for cooking until next winter's butchering. This rendering done in the house was dangerous because of the high heat. They had to use the cook-stove to get the job done. Also it could ignite any small amount of grease that could get dropped on the stove top. It was best to do it outside in one of those large cast iron lard kettles, but not everyone could have a luxury like that.

Some saved the feet, ears, and tail and used them in soup, but mostly they were pickled. Some saved the blood, too, and used it in special recipes, but the folks didn't save any of these parts or the intestines. If you used the intestines, they were turned inside out and cleaned and used to stuff with ground pork or sausage.

At that time all that salt pork got tiresome, but I would like to get a ham like that now . It was different than the smoked hams of today. The meat was firm and the gravy was delicious. A common supper menu was fried potatoes, bacon, and eggs fried in that deep bacon grease - Cholesterol wasn't heard of in those days.

The eggs and butter that the folks took to the store helped pay for the groceries. The store would take both. Mom was a good butter maker, and when she brought hers in, they pushed the rest back and set hers in the front of the cooler. She got 10¢ a pound for the butter and 6¢ a dozen for the eggs. When the groceries we ordered were put in the 30 dozen egg case to take home, the grocer would usually stick a little sack of candy in the corner - a real treat.

The merchants in Walnut did the same as they did in other towns - they started to show movies on Saturday night. They were shown close to the lumber yard where they carried out planks to lay across cement blocks to sit on. They weren't real good, but they were the first most of us saw so no one knew the difference. People had to be fast readers because they were silent movies, and the dialogue was printed across the bottom of the screen. Later they came with sound, but at times the sound didn't match the picture - but it was progress!

As tough as times were, they could get worse. In 1934 the summer was hot and rain was short. The corn was getting by but was under stress. The corn was about three feet high and was looking pretty good when Dad went threshing one morning, but while he was gone the sun's heat went past the danger point. When he came home, he came to the house and said to Mom, "Our crops are gone." The day's heat literally cooked the corn plants white. Dad wrote to John Galvin, the fellow that bought the farm when the folks lost it, and told him what happened. He wouldn't believe it and said he was coming out to see for himself the next day on the train. Dad met him at the depot with the Model T ford they drove. They went to the farm and Dad turned into one of his corn fields and drove to the far end right down the middle of the field as fast as this old Ford could go, turned and came back through another field. When they got back to the road, John was hanging on to his hat with both hands and said "I've seen enough. Take me back to town. There won't be any share rent there."

I'm sure I had some disappointments along the way, but the one that stayed with me was on my 10th birthday. For a couple of years, I ate and slept BB gun, but the folks would never give in. They always had the same answer "Too dangerous", but on my 10th birthday I just knew that was going to do it as I counted the days off, and it finally got there, but instead of a long narrow package about two and one-half feet long, Mom gave me one about six inches square, and when I opened it, it was one of her china sets of a cup and saucer. I remember going down behind the corncrib and crying, but what a precious gift that was as I still have it and will keep it until I have to part with it (She knew what she was doing.) In time I got my gun, too, but had to promise that when there were any kids there, I always had to say I was out of BBs, and I never broke that promise.

The winters of the past were much harder. In the winter of 35-36 the roads were blocked for a month and the temperatures never got above 0 during that time. The snow was deep enough that those going to town with a team and sled didn't try to stay on the roads. They went where they wanted like there were no fences because they were covered with snow. But all that snow didn't insure a good crop in 1936 because the crops burned up again.

This happened so long ago, I'm thinking I may not even have been in school yet, but somewhere I had heard that people bought furs from animals. That sounded interesting to me and not too long after that I got a muskrat somewhere. I knew I didn't trap it because I was too small for that, but anyway I had one. My next problem was to get the rat out of its skin. I suppose I pleaded with Mom long enough to help me skin it so that she finally broke down and said she would. (She would do anything for anyone to make their day a little better.) This was long before the days of video tapes, but I would really love to have this operation recorded. This skinning took place back of the house. I was holding the muskrat by its hind feet and Mom was working on the beast with a big butcher knife. She didn't know anything about skinning and never thought of skinning anything until that day. She was cutting where she thought it would

do the most good and pulling at the same time. As I see it now, it wasn't a real neat job, but she finally got the hide loosened pretty good from the hind legs down to the front legs. That's when she or we decided maybe that was far enough and cut the skin off so that took care of the skinning. We ended up with a piece of fur about six inches square - not really a prize winner. So the piece of fur laid around until it finally ended up in the corner of the porch room. The porch room was kind of a hole in the wall where we kept our overshoes and stored our winter clothes and anything you didn't know where to put, you put it in there. Well, the fur laid there and got forgotten about until the next fall when it was noticed and pulled out of its resting place - that is, what was left of it. During the summer the mice had consumed the lion's share, and it was said the fur buyers wanted dried furs. Well, that was what this was - stiff as a shingle - so that part was good. So, during the trapping season Mom and I put this fur in an envelope and sent it to a fur buyer at KMA in Shenandoah, and in a few days we got a letter from him in regard to the fur we sent him, and he wrote "There was great damage to the pelt and he could only pay 10¢ for it" but he forgot to put in the dime.

I mentioned Mom much more than Dad, but that doesn't mean he wasn't caring, but when you are growing up, you are just around her more, and he was out working. We all know he was a good provider and father.

We that grew up during the depression didn't know that things could be better because this is what we started out with. We were fed and clothed the best way they could, and we got by, but the hardships that came to most people in the nation overnight when all the banks closed was unbelievable. Many lost their homes, farms, businesses, and jobs. In the cities there were soup lines that never quit serving to the massive hordes of hungry men, women, and children. Let's hope this never happens again, but it could.

Our neighbor across the orchard to the east had this Model T Ford that he couldn't buy gas for so he sold it to Dad for \$10.00 (That's all he asked). Dad said it came out even because that's all he could pay, but he didn't really need it, but John, the seller, was destitute. After he sold it to Dad, he came over and borrowed it until he moved away.

Andersens, the new neighbors, that moved in there had two children - a daughter Ila and a son Harry. That was nice because Harry and I were about the same age. When I got over the pneumonia, our Moms would let us spend some time together a couple times a week at his place or mine. At first we stayed in or near the house to do what little boys do, but as our steps got longer, we moved out further starting to explore a new world by checking the far corners of our Dads' buildings, climbing up into the hay mows and jumping from some high spot (to us) into that soft, nice smelling hay. At that early age everything was new and great, but no matter whose barn we were in, they were the same in some ways. Each had the mixture of animal smells mingled with the sweet smell of new hay that had been pulled up to the track by ropes and pulleys through the big hay door, carried in on the track, and dropped in the desired spot. This was something great to our young eyes.

There were more boys in the neighborhood - Earl Sorensen, Junior (Charles) McCarty, and Rondo Smathers. Rondo's Dad was in the dairy business, too, and delivered milk to town over mud and snow roads five miles for 10¢ a quart. We boys were all about the same age and went to the same school and had many good times together, but since Harry was so near, it seems that we were together more. We all made our own entertainment, alone or together. We found something

to do - the farm was a good place to grow up.

As Harry and I grew a little older, our area to explore grew, too - although young we ventured to the back of our farms to the railroad - there to stand on top of the bank of the deep cut they made to keep the track level and look down on those long trains that were pulled by those huge steam engines as they belched out the black coal smoke, hissed and puffed as the steam escaped from the cylinders that made this black monster work, and could make the ground we stood on vibrate as it passed.

The railroad was not perfectly level and the high point was back of our farm, and sometimes when they came from the east and their train was too long, the engine would spin out, and from our vantage point, we could look down into the engine area and see the firemen carry the coal from the coal car with a huge shovel to feed the fire to keep the steam pressure up - then they would back the train several miles to the east, take a run for it, and try again.

A couple of times when Harry and I were out there we saw a bum walking the rails in our direction, and it didn't take much to scare us then so we hid in the weeds until he was well past. In season when we were back there, we would pick some of the wild flowers that grew. These flowers and grasses that grew between the railroad fences were the same things that were growing there at the time of the Indians and the buffalo because this land had never been plowed, and where it can't be farmed, they are still there. By the time we got home with these flowers we picked, they were always pretty much wilted, but it seems they were always appreciated by our Moms.

As we got older our fun times were shortened up a little because we were given some chores that we had to do - nothing heavy or strenuous but we could feed and water the chickens, gather the eggs, fill the cob baskets and coal pails. In season there were weeds to pull in the garden, and we helped clean the chicken house. None of these tasks hurt us, and we learned to work without complaining, but we had plenty of spare time to have our fun - sledding down our hill on the icy road or riding down the same hill in the summer in our coaster wagons. We explored all the areas. We knew where the best wild strawberries were, where the deepest hole in the creek was that had the best fishing, where the best wild plums were in the Fall, where the spring bubbled up in the back pasture where we would get down and suck up the cool, clear water. We usually had a drink just because of the challenge to get it. We watched a crow build her nest down in the grove, and when she was setting on the eggs, we left her alone so she wouldn't be disturbed. We tried to raise baby rabbits but never had any luck. We had better luck with young raccoons. We checked the young pigeons in the nest and watched their growth. We knew which patch of cattails had the most frogs among them.

All summer I carried a piece of twine about 15 feet long rolled up in my back pocket to snare ground squirrels with. On a nice warm day when we were out in the pasture these little squirrels would be out and around. We would chase one into its hole, unroll this twine, tie a slipknot on one end, put the loop down the hole an inch against all its sides, straighten out the rest of the string, lay on our stomach with the end of the string in our hand. In a few minutes the squirrel would stick his head above the loop to look out, and with one quick jerk you had it in the loop. They really didn't

hurt anything there. We'd turn it loose and go after another one. Along Dad's cornfields at planting time they would dig up patches of his seed corn, and he would give me a penny for each one I would catch. It wasn't much but five of them would buy me a can of sardines. I guess I was odd but I preferred sardines over candy.

We would check the mud along the creek banks for muskrat tracks to see if there would be any to trap in the Fall. Each of us fellows had a creek on our farm but Earl, and he didn't care about trapping anyway. To the rest of us it was a chance to make a little money. Our trapping was kind of a hit or miss deal. We all learned by trial and error, but we caught a few.

We could hardly wait until November 10th. That's when the trapping season started, but we were all ready to go before that. The stakes were made and in a sack with the traps for muskrats and a hammer in there to nail the trap chain to the post for possum, civit cats (now extinct) and skunks, plus a dead hen to use parts of for bait. We set our traps for muskrats in the water, of course, but the others we would set in a fence corner with a piece of that old hen hanging above the trap on any place it looked like the animals were traveling. Muskrats skinned and stretched were worth about 35¢, civit cats (small spotted skunks) 15¢ to 20¢, skunks 50¢, opossums 25¢. We didn't have to worry about the mink prices. Very seldom did any of us get one. We would trap during the week and skin our catch on Saturday - skunks and all. There was no way to skin one without getting stunk up. I still think Mom only had four senses (her smelling was missing) because when I got through with rats and at least a couple skunks, my hands were cold and I'd go to the house and stick my head in the door and say, "Can you smell me?", and Mom would say "No, come in and get warm. All I can smell is furniture polish." (Saturday is the day they would put polish on the furniture.) It seems like Moms had a way of overlooking a lot of faults. We didn't make much money trapping, but it was more than if we didn't trap.

Dad bought a pony which I thought was great, and it was a nice animal. I was just learning to ride, and I guess the pony could sense that. To try out my riding ability one day (and it wasn't very good yet), I rode down to the neighbors where they were threshing. I no more than got there and the horse decided that was long enough. He turned around and started for home. Lucky for me it had a mane long enough to hang on to. With its ears back and its head straight out leading the way, we went home. What a ride that was. I was only on the horse half of the time, but I stayed on. The threshers saw me start from there so they called Mom and she was waiting on the yard when I got there. The horse headed straight for the barn door and in it went. If I hadn't laid down on the horse's neck when I saw how little space there was between the horse and the top of the door, things could have been very different. All is well that ends well.

The second year I had the pony I could ride a little better and had a little more courage at which time George Drake, our neighbor and the threshing machine owner asked me if he could hire me to buck water when they threshed at his place which I certainly would. A water buck was the boy that would haul drinking water in a jug hanging from the saddle horn to the fellows working in the grain fields when they were threshing. They were the "pitchers", the crew that pitched the bundles of straw with the grain from the shocks

onto the 8x14 ft. racks. The "hauler" stacked them about 6 feet high and hauled them to the threshing machine. My equipment was not elaborate. Dad wrapped a gunny sack around a stone jug, sewed all the loose corners of the sack tight with twine, put a short strap through the handle to hang it on the saddle and with a piece of cob for a cork, I was in business. I'm sure I made a lot more trips to the field than necessary but that was my job.

At that age I was always hungry and I always managed to get to eat at the first table with the crew. Mrs. Drake told Mom she didn't know where I put it because I ate at the first table and just stayed and ate more with the second bunch. She thought that was funny. George always paid 50¢ a day. That was big money then for a kid.

The following Spring my uncle gave me an orphan lamb which I raised on a bottle. "Babe" was the name it went by, and it was a girl. Babe kept growing and about threshing time Dad told me to ride over to George, the neighbor who had hired me before, to see if he would let me pasture Babe over there in the Fall, and if I could, I would buck water for nothing. I remember him as half laughing when he said that I sure could. George always raised a lot of sheep so among them were three old bucks. (There was the key to the whole program but I was too little to know.) Threshing came and I bucked water liked I agreed and everything was fine, but it was even better when George came over and paid me one day later and paid me anyway. Time went on and by fall Babe was full grown, and then one day when George's sheep were all along the fence on the other side of the road, Dad said that would be a good time to take Babe over. We led her across the road and pushed her through the fence. She had never been around sheep before and she didn't know what to do, but apparently one of his bucks did because the next Spring she had a lamb.

This is one more item about the lack of money. There were 3 barbers in Walnut and they charged 15¢ for a haircut, but a barber in Marne, a small town 5 miles from home charged 10¢ so I and a couple of other boys from the neighborhood rode our horses down to Marne on Saturday to get the 10¢ haircut. I rode 10 miles on my horse to save a nickel.

This is a little addition to what I wrote about the outhouse. The first one out there in the winter after a blowing snow storm could plan on brushing off the toilet seat and shaking off the Sears and Roebuck catalog because they both would have fresh layer of snow on them that blew in through the cracks. The catalogs were standard equipment in all outhouses, and they worked well. They had to - that was all we had. The pages in the front worked pretty good but the efficiency dropped when you worked into the slick pages in the back of the book.

To say that is all they had is not quite true because if a fellow got a sudden urge when he was out in the barn or hog house doing chores, he would pick up a couple of corn cobs to use (due to the lack of paper) while he was going to the far corner to use them. This is another thing that is not being done now for two reasons: one, the cobs are broken up to short by the combine and two, they are sharp - I know.

The folks finally gave in when I was eleven and got me a BB gun. I was one happy boy, but I had to promise to never shoot that gun when there were other boys around, and I never broke my promise. When they came, they could see it, but I always told them I was out of BBs. Those guns didn't have much range

but I got rabbits in the winter that were taking shelter under some small sheds. The gun took a heavy toll on sparrows and starlings. I didn't like to shoot pigeons. I always thought they were pretty to have around. I would dress the rabbits and Mom would fry them with a few slices of bacon and then make a cream gravy out of the fryings. (Things just don't get much better than that.)

Dad told me when he gave me the gun "Never point a gun at anything you don't want to shoot" and I never forgot that. BBs were 5¢ for a quarter pound tube, and it took a lot of tubes.

A couple years after I got the BB gun, I got a single shot 22, and that was the answer to a lot of wishes, but it cost more to shoot. These shells were 18¢ for a box of 50, but what a delight that gun was. We spent a lot of time together. (I still have it.) That resulted in more fried rabbits. When we had as much practice as we did with those guns, in time you got to be a pretty good shot. Three boys would come out from town (Harry had moved away by now) and we went hunting on Sunday afternoons. This one time out, a rabbit got up and took off. We all shot, and when I dressed it, it had three bullet holes (Someone missed - probably me.)

This one Sunday when we went hunting, it was blustry, and we came in cold and as usual ready to eat. While we were out, Mom prepared for the problem. She made one of her tall three layer cakes with gooey thick marshmallow frosting between each layer and any place else on the cake where she could put it (It was still warm.) She set that on the table with a big pitcher of milk, and we just ate the whole thing. Two of the fellows live in Walnut yet and still talk about that cake and how she beamed about our pleasure in eating it.

Decoration Day when I was young was a day that the people planned for and looked forward to because this day was set aside as special, and people dressed up in their finest and spent their time talking and visiting with friends and reminiscing about the dear ones whose grave was marked by their headstones. Usually the afternoons had the largest crowds.

The folks like many others would go to the cemetery the day before with their flowers - iris, peonies, and bridal wreath were common. They would take fruit jars, scissors, a long knife, and a pail to carry water. The scissors were used to trim the grass around the headstones and cement frame that used to be placed over each grave (but long since has been removed). The knife was used to cut the sod and dig a hole to put the jar in to hold the water and flowers. Many trimmed the grass by the headstones because the cemetery caretaker just didn't have time for it all. At that time the cemetery was mowed by a push mower.

Mom would make new dresses for EttaBelle and Annie for this big day, and Ann said her Mom did the same for her and her sister Arletta.

Many people walked out to the cemetery to work on the graves and then again on Decoration Day on the cement sidewalk that was laid next to the fence on the south side of the road. The walk hasn't been used for years but is still there. Time has taken its toll and it is now covered with grass.

The third or fourth grade class in the Walnut school helped to decorate the graves. Each student was given a wire loop (possibly a bent clothes hanger) to decorate before Decoration Day. They were made the day before and submerged in a tub of water overnight to help keep them fresh until the next day. Then on the day they would all parade out to the cemetery with their wreaths with the American Legion to lay their flowered decorations on the veterans' graves as the Legion honored them with flags.

In the northeast corner of the south cemetery is a small headstone of a covered wagon stillborn baby that died in 1924. Mom never failed to put some little flowers on the forgotten baby's grave, and now that she is gone I do it for her. One other person is doing this, too, as there are always two flowers there on Decoration Day.

On Decoration Day when we go to the cemetery, I notice the difference between the Decoration Day of years ago when I first remember going there and now. Besides the lack of people and their fellowship, I notice the lack of meadowlarks now compared to then. At that time the songs of the larks never ended all day long. It was a haven for them as they liked short grass, and there must have been plenty of food because there were dozens of them. They flew up onto the tall headstones and sang. It seems that each was trying to outdo the others, but that too has changed. The larks are gone like so many of the rest of the birds, and the cemetery remains forever quiet.

In the Fall and Spring when the ducks and geese were migrating, one could look in any direction and see a string of ducks flying as they moved in that long wiggly line that one could hardly call a formation. The geese flew in their "V" pattern now and again changing leaders to lead breaking the air for the rest of the flock. One Spring when the ducks were migrating, I came home from school, and the ducks must have been landing in our neighbor's pasture by the creek all day. There were 40 acres in the field, and it was solid ducks, not only on the pasture but on the edges of the adjoining fields. I couldn't resist spooking those birds so I started walking in their direction. They must have all been watching me as they all practically rose at the same time. The noise they made could never be described - it was a combination of a roar of all those thousands of wings and the rumble of all the birds quacking at the same time. When they flew overhead they darkened the sky, but that has all changed. Market hunters, ruthless killers, and poor nesting conditions have lowered their number to a danger point. The few that are left follow the flyways and stop at the game reserves.

The covered wagon baby is buried in the northeast corner of the south cemetery, but in the southeast corner of the same cemetery lies the body of a horse thief that was shot by a Sheriff just south of Walnut, and his was one of the first bodies buried in this cemetery. It's sad that no marker or stone was never put up to mark his grave because he was part of Walnut's history.

In the early days oil was oil. There was no choice of weight - (one size fit all) so what was fine for summer use could get so stiff it wouldn't run in the winter, and it was not uncommon to have Dad come to the house when he wanted to start the old Ford, shake all the red coals in the heating stove into the ash pan, and then carry the pan and all to the garage and slide it under the crank case of the car. It did help. The oil would break down enough from the hot coal heat so he could turn the crank that was connected to the crank shaft. (There were no self starters yet.) Often they would jack up one hind wheel to let it turn. Because of the cold grease, the clutch would not release. Every old car had a wire extending out front for the one on the crank to pull that would help choke the carburetor for easier starting.

A common event for those that had a board floor in their haymow would be a barn dance up in the haymow (upstairs of a barn). Before they put a new crop of hay in the barn, they would sweep out the old hay chaff, hand up enough lanterns to see by (no electricity then), put in a few boards on cement blocks for seats, get a couple to make some music, and that's all it took. It wasn't fancy but no one expected it to be. It was a good place to go and they all had a good time.

The gas and aladdin lamps in early years before electricity were mantle lamps and put out a nice white light. Flying moths were hard on the mantles as they always flew into the light - hard on their wings!

Before the days of hybrid seed corn, all farmers, when the corn was dry before harvest, would walk through the corn fields with a large sack. They would look for large perfect ears to use for the next year's seed, pick them and put them in the sack. These would be used for next year's seed. It could take a couple days to fill their needs. This corn was taken home and put in racks to dry further until early spring. Then a sample of 4 or 5 kernels would be taken from each ear and put in a moisture tester for several days. If the sample kernels didn't sprout, the ear was taken out and fed to the livestock. Each tester cell number matched the ear number in the rack.

A common practice in almost all households was to buy the coffee beans to grind as needed. They cost less than the ground coffee, and it was always fresh so many homes had their own hand cranked grinder fastened to the wall in some convenient place, and the freshly ground coffee smelled so good.

It seems like the kids when I was small had more colds and sore throats, and a common remedy for a sore throat was to put a piece or two of bacon on your throat, and then wrap the bacon and the neck in a long heavy stocking or woolen cloth for a couple of days. I don't know if it did any good, but we got better. In those days many home remedies had been handed down from one generation to the next. Babies were born at home, and there were cases where an appendix was taken out on the kitchen table.

During my early years it was a custom on Mother's Day to wear a red tulip to church if your mother was living and a white one if she had passed away. We would stop at Grandma Paasch's on the way to church to get our flowers. Mom wore a white one.

Until I was about 9, boys wore knickers for dress. They were pants that were buckled below the knee, worn with black stockings above the knee. I hated them in winter because the long winter underwear made knots around my ankles. (Girls had the same knot problem, too).

Before the days of electricity and refrigerators, people had to rely on other means to keep their food cool. The first choice, of course, was the icebox, a double walled upright chest. The walls were 2 to 3 inches apart and insulated with the best material of the day. The chests were usually about five feet high, four feet wide, and two feet deep. The top double door area held the ice so that the cool temperatures it released would naturally go down to the two food storage areas below. Each area below had its own door so when you had to open it, you wouldn't lose cool air from the whole unit - just the one you opened. The top would hold a 100 pound piece of ice, but they were hard to handle so usually smaller pieces were used. As the ice would melt, the water would drain into a tub e that extended down the back and through the bottom where there was usually a dish pan placed to catch the dripping ice water. This was easily overlooked until one saw the overflow from the pan creeping across the floor.

For our first ice, I remember that Dad would go to the neighbors to get it. They had an ice house they would fill every winter from their pond for their own use and for selling to others. The ice house was more of a pit than a house. They were about fourteen feet square and eight feet deep, dug with square corners, had a flat bottom, and the roof was a simple gable roof where the eaves came almost to the ground. The ends were boarded up, but one end had a door for access to handle the ice. The bottom of the pit was covered with a heavy layer of wheat straw, the ice blocks were placed about five inches apart and the same distance from the walls, and this area was all packed with straw for insulation as each layer of ice was placed in the ice-house, and this was done until the pit was full. Then it was covered with deep straw. Sawdust was the best thing to use but was harder to get. Wheat straw was much better than oats straw because it stayed firm much longer.

This ice was taken from a pond or creek so it could only be used for cooling, but it worked fine for that. We didn't have ice all the time as that had to be paid for, so to keep things a little cool such as butter and milk, we would put them in a pail and hang them down in the well on a rope. This wasn't real cold but kept the butter from melting. All the stores, restaurants, ice cream parlors, and meat markets had their own ice houses back to the alley.

When the produce dealer started selling ice, then, too, a little device came out which was about two feet long. That could be clamped on the running board of the old Ford. It had tooth like points about an inch high to set the block of ice on. The ice would quickly melt into the bottom and keep it from sliding off.

Milk cows to me were something I could do without, but all farms had them. They were standard equipment like the gardens, chickens, and hogs. The hogs were forever making deep mudholes to lay in (that had to be kept filled). The cows helped put a few coins in your pocket through the sale of cream. I never did care about milking, and we never milked over five or six but that was enough. In the winter it was common for the teets to become cracked and chapped due to the cold weather, and the cows wouldn't stand good during milking because of the discomfort and the medication that was needed. In the Spring and Summer when they were eating their fill of grass, one could say they got "Loose as a goose", and more often than not, their tail was in the way when they relieved themselves. So now it's milking time, and they come into the barn and are tied in their stalls. You sit down beside one of these barnyard beauties with a tail like a slick green rope and wonder if you will be lucky enough to get through squeezing the juice out of that bulging bag before she decides to switch a fly off her

back with that disgusting tail and wrap it around your neck or head on the way. To me milking was never a fun thing.

In 1935 the Walnut State Bank officers came to Dad and wanted him to buy this farm they had north of Walnut. They got it back when G. D. Mueller lost it during the thirties crisis. They wanted Dad to have it and they almost insisted that he buy it. Dad said "I couldn't buy that, I just lost a farm." But they wouldn't hear of it - they knew Dad's character and his willingness to work. They said of all the farms around this one was for him, and if he would take it, he could write his own contract terms. After many discussions between Mom and Dad, they decided to take it. The bank sold it to him for \$135.00 an acre. Dad, after being down to nothing in the dirty thirties, bought and paid for long before his death at 91 years of age, 480 acres of some of the best land around. It was too bad that Mom didn't live to help him enjoy it.

Dad was a hard working good manager and always tried to invest in land around him or nearby. Land was easier to pay for after World War II. The cost of operating a farm was not as much as today with these inflated costs and the prices of farm products sold were higher - corn was up to \$3.00 a bushel at times and with better qualities of Hybrid Corn seed, the yields were good. On days he couldn't be in the field due to rain or other conditions, instead of going to town to loaf and spend time, he could always find a fence or barn door or something to fix.

Dad never went beyond the fourth grade in school. He had to stay home and work on the farm. Dad's father died from a runaway team accident when they hit a tree when Dad was eighteen years of age. All of the family and farm responsibility was put on him since he was the oldest son, and he told how hard that was because he had hired men twice his age working for him.

Dad was an outstanding fellow, always willing to help those in trouble, and he never ~~owed~~ a dime he didn't pay. He was an honest Christian man.

In 1937 and 1938 we were plagued with grasshoppers that were held under control with poison that was furnished by the county, and in 1939 the chinch bugs appeared in such vast multiplying numbers that they ate everything in their path that had a bladed leaf like small grain, grasses, and corn. You could see them coming because in a day a green field would lose its color as they moved along. Trying to deter them, the farmers put up 6 inch high tarpaper fences along their corn fields and sprayed them with creosote (a terrible job). This material was furnished by the county. Creosote was brought to Harlan by railroad in tank cars. In a short time the bugs were at the treated paper fences where they fell in holes dug about 3 feet deep with straight sides so they couldn't crawl out along the paper. When the holes were full, the bugs were killed with creosote and new ones were dug. Our arms and faces were blistered from the fumes of the creosote we worked with every day, but we couldn't stop because the chinch bugs didn't. Then one night we had a terrible rain, and we just knew before going out that our fences would be gone, but when we got to the field, we found the paper fences were gone but so were the bugs. No one knew where they went, but it was a welcome sight.

Moving day for those that were moving has always been March first unless different arrangements were made, and it was March first of 1936 that we had to move. This was the winter of 1935-36 when the roads were blocked with drifted snow for a month and the temperature that time never got above zero.

Dad and Belden moved many things in the Fall of 1935 (I was in school) - machinery, livestock, and feed that could be stored there and anything else that wasn't needed to care for the livestock until moving time.

The road conditions never got any better as they counted the days off to March first, and when that time came, they were prepared. Everything in the house had been wrapped and packed in boxes waiting to be loaded on sleds. On moving day it was a typical day when someone needs help - people started coming with their teams hitched to bobsleds with wagon boxes on them. These sleds were made to carry heavy loads with their wide heavy runners. Dad had prepared for this day and had sold his hogs earlier so they wouldn't have to be moved. A couple of fellows went to the chicken house and started catching the chickens and put them in crates that were waiting for this big day.

The fellows in the house started doing what they always do first - they started taking the cookstove out. Mom had not fired it up much and let it go out early to cool off so it could be handled. The cookstove always went on the first wagon so it would get there first and could be set up so they could start cooking dinner for the moving crew when they got there later. The furniture was set in the best way they could to save the most space and protected by stuffing bedding between and around it. One linoleum (floor covering) was rolled up and laid on top of some inverted chair legs, and with the cold temperatures and jiggling of the load, one chair leg went through the roll of linoleum which left a hole about every four feet when it was unrolled.

One sled was used to haul Mom's jars of canned items in the cellar. They put a couple inches of oats in the bottom of the box 29 inches high, 30 inches wide, and 8 feet long. The box was then filled with a layer of jars and covered again with another couple inches of oats again and jars of canned food and so on until the box was almost filled. The oats between the jars kept them apart and also served as insulation in that cold weather. When everything was loaded on the sleds, the furniture, chickens, boxes of dishes, jars, and everything else that was left to be moved had been loaded, they tied the milk cows behind several wagons. Some didn't lead very well at first, but after they got their necks stretched a few times, they were more willing to trail along.

It wasn't necessary to stay on the road with these sleds because of the huge amount of snow that covered the country side, and the snow was hard so the teams had no problem walking on top of it. Many places the snow had covered the fences so they could go about any place they liked. They came in on the south side of Walnut and up Main Street and then north because some of that road had been opened until they got to the west side of the place that we were moving on to. Then they turned east for half a mile, and they were there. It wasn't a fun trip but they made it. A few days later it couldn't have been done because it turned very warm and all that snow started to melt. As a result this water couldn't get away fast enough and areas that we had crossed were now flooded with water a couple hundred feet to a half mile wide, and within a week the snow and water were all gone.

My BB gun worked fine if I had the barrel pointed up or on the level to shoot it, but if I had the barrel tipped down, the BBs would roll out.

When EttaBelle was a girl, Dad got a pony for her. (Kind of a cross between a horse and a pony.) As I remember "Gerty", she wasn't exactly a prize winner. She was all black, but she had a slight defect. It seems that her right hind leg was just a little short (maybe the others were a little too long!). That didn't make her an ideal riding horse, but then she hadn't cost a lot either because Dad traded a hog to someone for her.

Time changes everything. Years ago when the farmers would do their spring plowing for their crops, there would be dozens of migrating seagulls that would land back of the plows to pick up earth worms that were brought to the surface when the soil was turned. The worms were an important part of nature because of the holes they made that aerated the soil, and they also helped loosen the soil for better penetration of the rains to lower areas. Now with all the herbicides to kill the weeds and grasses growing among the crops and the insecticides to destroy the root eating bugs and worms that we sprayed on the soil, the earthworms have all been destroyed. That is the reason we no longer see seagulls. To break the crust or hard pan below the soil surface that the worms prevented, now it is done by deep running machinery that cuts and tears through the ground. Even with all the money spent for herbicide, we have more weeds now than we had years ago - some we never heard of then.

The surface water is all contaminated with fertilizer, and that has destroyed all the shallow wells for human use, and when it leaches deep enough to get into the deep well level, a serious problem will develop.

The horses eyes are in a position so they can see forward and back at the same time, and to prevent them from looking backward at something that might scare them and perhaps cause a runaway, they had a piece of leather about four inches square fastened to the bridle back of the eyes. These were called blinders. Many of the old faithful horses didn't need this device, but all horses couldn't be trusted as some were brought in from way out west and broke (a term used when the wild spirit was destroyed when they gave in to being saddled or harnessed). Some of these didn't need much of an excuse to run so these were the ones the blinders were intended for. Also the bits (the steel device across their mouth) varied in severeness. The "old faithfuls" just had a straight steel bit, but those that held their heads a little higher with their ears turned back had a bit in their mouth that they had a little respect for. It was made of hinged flat sections (not sharp) with pointed sides, and when the driver pulled back on the ends of this, he was pretty much in control.

In the winter when it was terribly cold, rather than just put that cold steel bit on the horse's moist tongue where it could freeze tight, one would cup your hands around the bit and blow your breath on the bit a few times, and the moisture in your breath would freeze on the steel enough to put a glaze of ice on it that would prevent the problem.

In the Fall of 1941 I ended up in Bremerton, Washington with my cousin Viola Reimer. There was a U. S. Navel repair base in Bremerton, and Viola insisted that I put in an application for a job there, which I did. In a short time

I had a job, and not long after that World War II broke out, and then they really needed help when they started to raise and bring back some of the ships that were damaged in Pearl Harbor. These huge battleships were put in dry dock and completely rebuilt from the keel up, and they were worked on 24 hours a day in 8 hour shifts with countless workers. Like ants, they were all over the ships. Everyone worked out of a crew and had a certain job, be it steel workers, sheet metal workers, electricians, shipwrights, welders and steel cutters, just to name a few. They were short of welders so they opened a welding school in which I enrolled, and when I passed the government test, I was one of their many arc welders. I kept taking advanced tests and ended up welding high pressure steam pipes. I stayed with this work until I went into the Naval Reserves in 1944.

I ended up going to the Pacific area, and the ship I was assigned to was an L.S.T. which stands for Landing Ship Tank. They were designed with a flat bottom so at low tide they could slide up on a beach, open the huge bow doors, lower the ramp and let the cargo they were hauling drive off, be it trucks, tanks, troops, or food supplies. When the tide was in and they were ready, they could back off and be on their way to pick up or deliver something else. The ship had been in on the landing of several big battles before I got on it and was credited for shooting down 3 Japanese planes.

I was in on only one invasion, and that was at Baligpapan, Borneo. We laid in the mouth of the river there several days while they swept the mines out of the river and exploded them, and then we were the first to go in. They were shooting at some of our ships further out in the bay so they shot over us but not at us which suited me fine. When we did get beached, we were there for about 10 days. Our load was made up of navy beans in 50 pound paper sacks, and there were many truck loads of them along with heavy equipment. The beans would make many Thursday morning breakfasts. Every Thursday morning the navy has baked beans, and they really weren't too bad.

There were a good number of ships anchored in Manilla Bay when a radio message gave an order for all ships to move out of the area into the ocean as a typhoon was forecast for the area, and they didn't want the ships blowing into each other. The ships all moved out as ordered and prepared for the storm. Any items on the top deck that were not welded down were thrown over the side and all canvas awnings were taken down and stored. They left a butcher's meat block that stood in a tight area thinking it wouldn't come out.

The ship was one of the first 100 LSTs built and spent 30 of its 32 month life overseas and time had taken its toll with weakened and broken longitudinal beams under the top deck which let the deck crack way across the ship, and the steel hull had been slowly eaten away by rust from the salt water.

The storm came as forecasted with all winds over 100 miles an hour that made waves that went over our bow. The ship rocked so that the mentioned Meat block was rolling like dice up there until it broke through the railing. The cook couldn't prepare food even on the fenced range tops because the food wouldn't stay in the kettles so we ate food right out of the cans. You couldn't walk because the decks were so slanting so most of us laid on our bunks and held on to stay in. It lasted three days and now the deck crack was down each side about 20 feet. I still don't know why it didn't break in two and sink. I guess it just wasn't our time. This was just before we came back to the States. We went through the Panam Canal and up to Charleston where it was decommissioned and it was sold for old iron

And I came back to Walnut and home.

Bathing in the days before electricity when pressure water systems could be installed was difficult, but there were several ways to cleanse our heavenly bodies. By today's standards I'm sure none would pass inspection, but then it was a matter of making do with what you had. Even though there was no water pressure system to put water into a tub, some homes did have tubs that water was carried to after it had been heated in kettles on the stove or in the cookstove reservoir. What I am saying is that one batch of hot water took care of the whole family and that the last persons to use the water didn't spend much time in the tub because the water cooled quite fast. The cast iron absorbed the warmth of the water. Some had tubs made of tin, and the water in the tin tub stayed warm much longer. Most tubs had drains that piped the water into a small cesspool in the yard, but some tubs had to be dipped out. The only heat we had in our bathroom was a small portable kerosene heater that took some of the chill off.

Some that didn't have a bathtub used a washtub to stand in to bathe in. That was usually placed in the kitchen during cold weather or in the wash house (the small building where laundry was done) or fuel shed when it was warmer, but there again one batch of hot water served all.

In the summer after dark the hired men would go out to the horse tank, lay some boards beside it on the ground, and bathe there. The water was usually warm from being in the hot sun all day.

Another device that was seen now and then was a steel drum or barrel, usually a fifteen gallon size, that had been mounted in a pair of brackets on the roof of the south side of a building, usually the wash house, fuel shed, or the summer kitchen. (A summer kitchen was a small shed type building that some had that held a cookstove to use in the summer to keep the cooking heat out of the house.) A hole was cut in the top side of the drum to pour the water in and then from the regular threaded fitting at the low point on the end, a short pipe was attached with an elbow that went through the roof where a shut off valve was placed. This valve controlled the flow of warm water that had been heating all day in the hot sun, and below the valve hung a gallon pail with small holes in the bottom to help make many small dribbles of water from this "terrific" pressure, and this was the shower. The barrel or drum was always at the lowest part of the roof because this water had to be carried up a ladder so it could be filled.

Sometime during the thirties one of the barbers here in Walnut had a shower for the public that was frequently used by the farm hired men. The barber furnished the hot water, soap, and towels. He had a good business because in those days there were many hired men as most 160 acre farms had a year around hired man.

In the early Seventies we (Ann and I) went on a nice trip with some good friends of ours from Kansas. We stopped to eat at a town in Wyoming, and on the wall was an invitation to all to visit their buffalo range near town so we followed their direction arrows to the range, crossed the pipe cattle guard, and now we were in the buffalo area. We followed the surfaced road around a couple hills and there were the buffalo, about 25 or 30 head. They had just been fed some range cubes on an abandoned road about 80 feet away so we stopped to watch what there was to see. Melvin and I decided to take some pictures which seemed like something that we could handle. Melvin stayed by

the car, but I went down the road aways to get a different angle from the sun and then I went down the slope of the hill to get a little closer to a little calf that I thought was interesting. When I decided that I was close enough, I stopped. We had a nice 3D camera, and when I was looking through the viewfinder, I thought I saw a buffalo come out of the herd towards me. I then looked over the camera, and I was right. That was the most buffalo meat I had ever seen on four legs, and this big bull was coming at me at full speed with his head down. At that instant I knew I was through taking pictures. I turned and started back up the slope of the hill, doing my best to run, tripping over sage brush and loose rocks rolling under my feet. At any second I expected that big bull to hook me on one of his shiny black horns, spin me around, and then tramp me flat among those rocks that wouldn't stay put. It was like one of those bad dreams one can have when you want to run but can't - but this was for real! I finally got up to about five feet from the road where the car was, and I thought I could make it in one step which I could have if I hadn't slipped on a rock and fell. Anyway, I fell flat, tore both knees out of my pants, both elbows lit on the black top which took the skin off each of them, and I slapped the camera lens down on the road (which cost \$86.00 to fix when we got home.) I got up on my feet again, still thinking of that pair of horns and ran back up the road to the car, turned to see how close that big bulging bison was, and to my surprise he was standing down there looking at me from the same place where I had first seen him. He was probably thinking "Mark up another one for me. I just did it again to another dumb tourist!"

This item had a wonderful ending but could have been disastrous. When I was about eleven I was fishing alone under the railroad bridge near our farm. Now we fellows had laid nails and wire on the tracks many times to have the trains flatten them for us, but I thought it would be neat to have the train flatten a railroad spike for me, and maybe some way I could make a hunting knife out of it. A railroad spike is about seven inches long and three quarters of an inch square with a head that extends an inch off one side.

I left my fishing and went up on the track to find a spike. They weren't hard to find and I found one and placed it on the track and went back under the bridge to wait for a train. Well, the first thing along wasn't a train but a section car. (This was a flat bed work vehicle on the track that hauled about 6 or 8 railroad repairmen). It kept getting louder and louder and I was getting more scared by the second wondering what would happen when they hit the spike so I just stayed hidden, and they did hit it. I could see their shadow from where I was and arms and legs were flying and they didn't have time to holler until they got back down and the car left the track, but luckily they came back down right on the track, and they kept on going. After they were gone, I went back to the track to make sure the spike was off. I told this story to some railroad men once, and one of them added that this was the luckiest thing that could have happened when the section car hit that spike first. He said that if a fast passenger train had hit it, it wouldn't have smashed the spike, but with its speed and the shift in weight, it could have taken the engine and train off the track. How could I ever have lived with that? Some great power was looking over a dumb kid.

When I was about ten, the four of us kids slept upstairs. Belden and I had the north room and EttaBelle and Annie had a south one. One night during the watermelon season, I just had to get up to take care of a problem that just wasn't going to wait until morning. Now I knew that the girls had something in their room that I could use that would make everything better that went

by the name of slop jar, thunder mug, or just plain pot. The one they had was about eight inches high with a fluted handle on one side, and I guess it was china. Anyway, I went into their room to use it because I knew where they always had it setting. In the total darkness with the help of a little moonlight, I saw this white object that I came in to use, which I did. Being half asleep it did register on me that it didn't sound just the way it usually did, but in a short time I was back in bed and forgot all about it until a few days had gone by and one of the girls was going somewhere. She came downstairs with her white shoes and asked Mom what was wrong with them because the one, worse than the other, had its innersole all unglued and it was rolled up. Then things came back to me from a couple nights before. The white object I could barely see was not the pot at all but a pair of white shoes that for some reason had been placed where the pot usually stood. I kept it a secret for quite awhile but finally had to tell them to get the mystery solved.

To give an example of how tight money was during the depression, Ann's dad, Arthur Kock, when in Walnut just had to have some gas for his car as both of his parent's were critically ill at his sister's home in Harlan, and he was helping take care of them. He went to Art Mertz who had a gas pump along with his implement business and got 50¢ worth (gas was 17¢ a gallon then), and after he got it, he didn't have enough money to pay for it, but Art said "That's alright, just pay when you can." which he did. Now, it isn't that Ann's Dad had any less than any one else, that's just the way the economy was then - if you had 50¢, you knew where it came from, and you knew where it was going.

I mentioned before being plagued with grasshoppers that were literally eating everything. The county furnished a bran and sawdust mixture in 100 pound sacks that was laced with strychnine to use. The dry material was put in a washtub where livestock molasses was added to it with much water to soak up the dry material. Then we had to get into it with our arms and stir until it was all mixed. After we had mixed enough to fill all the tubs and buckets we had on the farm, it was loaded on a wagon and hauled to the areas that had the most hoppers. As we rode along we threw it out by hand and scattered it the best we could. We did get some killed. I guess they ate it because of the moisture and sweetness, but those we got didn't offset all that was involved in getting the supplies for the mixture from Harlan, mixing it, and getting it scattered.

The hoppers had an ideal spring for hatching with no untimely rains to drown the little ones, and since there were so many hoppers the year before, there was an abundance of eggs to hatch. The fence rows was where they were hatched and grew up, and as they started eating, they went out into the fields, and the larger they got, the more food they needed so the faster they branched out into more area.

Chinch bugs eat only plants with bladed leaves but hoppers eat anything. They even ate into wooden fence posts and chewed paint off some of the buildings. When the hoppers were finished with a 5 foot corn plant, all that was left was the bare stalk and the rib of each leaf it had. For some reason they would never eat that. Hoppers do not only jump but they can also fly so one could find hoppers out in the center of the field, too; of course not as thick as they were working in from the fence, but they were there. They ate the soft green silks on the ear first, and if this happened before the ear was polinated, the ear would never get kernels on it as each strand of silk is connected to a potential kernel for pollination.

When they moved across an alfalfa field, it just turned to a mass of stems. They knew, too, which part they liked best as long as they could get it.

The oats fields had their share of damage, too. The hoppers would start on it at an early stage when it was green and full of sap, and as the head of grain emerged, they fed on it until it got ripe, at which time they would chew the grains or berries off, and they would fall to the ground.

If a garden happened to be across the fence from a corn field, it would just disappear. They would eat the tops off anything, and everything that grew below the ground just turned out to be a hole as the grasshoppers went down and ate that, too.

On washdays the clothes on the line were watched very closely because the hoppers would chew holes in them. As soon as the clothes were almost dry, they were taken back into the house.

This was about the time they came out with a synthetic screen material for the windows, but this wasn't the year to put it on as the hoppers ate big holes in that, too.

This hopper problem should never get this bad now with the sprays they have to control such a pest.

And now I'll tell you the rest of the story! People started noticing many small flies among and on the hoppers. They were only about a third of the size of a house fly, and as the report came out, these flies lay their eggs on the grasshoppers. When they hatch, they enter the hopper's body and feed on their insides which, of course, killed the hopper. This I can believe as something happened to them long before they normally disappear in the Fall. They became sluggish and inactive and many died still hanging on a plant. When the dead hoppers were examined and pulled apart, a red worm was found inside the hopper no larger than a needle and about two inches long doubled back and forth. This could be what eliminated that mass of hoppers.

As far back as I can remember, farm neighbors always helped each other with threshing, corn shelling, baling hay (from the stack - no portable balers then), cutting firewood with a buzz saw or any other job where a couple of extra hands could be used.

The buzz saw was a terribly dangerous machine, and it's a wonder more men didn't get hurt working around them. Some of the circular blades were up to 32 inches across and turning at such a high speed those huge teeth would hum as they waited for the next log to be laid on the hinged table to be cut in usable lengths, all the while the two men at the saw were just inches away from it.

Farming has changed. Now the farmers are individuals and each does his own thing. Their big combines take care of harvesting their crops, and the little amount of corn that is picked in the ear that is shelled and the hay and straw that is baled into small bales is done by help farmers hire among older school boys. The hay is very seldom put in small bales but in large ones handled by tractor power. Nevertheless, down inside farmers are still the same. If someone in the area has had a serious illness or the like, any of them will quit what they are doing and go on a specified day with any equipment he has that they can use and join the many others that come to help to get the job done.

On a cold winter day with the ground covered with snow in 1924, a knock was heard at the door of the Alec Stuart's home northeast of Walnut.

The knock was made by a man that needed some milk, food, and water for the breakfast of his wife and children that were in the covered wagon where they were camping west of the Stuart's home on the road. During the night the wife had given birth to a baby, and the baby had died. Mrs. Stuart went immediately to bring the wagon and family up to the house, and she supplied food and more for the wife and children. She enlisted the help of her neighbors for food, clothing, and blankets. They offered to share their home with the family until all were able to travel, but this offer was refused and the father made his family stay in the wagon but agreed to leave it on the yard. Mr. Stuart had the covered wagon team in the barn for some much needed feed.

Mr. Stuart made arrangements necessary for the baby's burial in the northeast corner of the "Old Cemetery". All seemed to be going well. The next morning Stuarts arose ready to furnish a warm breakfast and discovered the wagon and all were gone. No one ever saw or heard from them again.

A small white headstone in the cemetery bearing the inscription "Covered Wagon Baby" and the year is all that remains of the incident. This information came from a lady living in Walnut now but at the time lived about one-half mile east of Stuarts.

Dad told of boys 17 and 18 years of age going to his school and still in the lower grades because they could just go to school in the winter, and he was one. The rest of the school year they had to help on the farm. He told of one big kid wearing a home made heavy slipover sweater that got into trouble, and when the man teacher got through with him, the neck of the sweater had slid down over the kid's shoulders.

Country school programs were not too common so the teachers didn't have to worry about getting their program night the same as the school down the road a couple of miles.

The programs were a lot of extra work for the teachers. They had to get a school program book that had a play with the number of students in it that were in the school that she taught. None of the programs were long or difficult to memorize, but even that presented a challenge for little folks in front of an audience.

The most popular seasons for a program were Thanksgiving and Christmas. I especially remember one for Thanksgiving. A few weeks before the program we were all given our lines that we had to memorize in our spare time. With this done, we then started our practice. This didn't require much ability as our stage was limited in size, but after a couple of times we went through it all like we were pros.

A few days before the great premier we got to decorate the schoolhouse. We took some cornstalks from the field next to the school yard and set them in the two back corners. Someone came up with a few pumpkins to add to this fabulous array of originality. Some bats were cut out of black construction paper and pinned to the curtains. Now, to us this was the limit and nothing could make it any better.

About this same time the director came. A director is one of the men living in the school district that has been elected by the voters living in the district to take care of the school for a year. This included doing the hiring and firing, mowing the school yard, keeping fuel available, and handling any problems that came up. It was also his job to put up the wire for the stage. He turned a screw hook about seven feet from the front into both side walls and from these he attached a tight wire for the sheets to be hung from to make the stage. When this happened it took on the air of a great production to come.

Since there was no electricity in the school, this was another detail that had to be attended to, but fortunately two gas lamps were brought in before hand that worked well with a couple of kerosene lamps.

The day of the program was at hand, and tonight all 6 of us would give it our all. The sheets were pinned to the wire for the stage, and our stage props were all in place. These consisted of someone's dad's old felt hat, his old work coat, and a pitch fork.

Our parents got us all there a little early. Two of the guys from school I hardly recognized because I'd never seen them with their hair combed before. We watched for cars to come and one by one they turned into the yard. It wasn't just those in the neighborhood that came but grandparents and relatives also came, and when they were all in the building and seated in the school seats and on folding chairs, we had a surprisingly large crowd.

The hour of reckoning finally arrived. The teacher pulled the curtain shut and behind it we lined up for the opening song. After she thanked everyone for coming, she opened the curtain and we burst forth with song. I'm sure we rattled the rafters.

We all had our turn at standing up there alone and reciting our memorized part. This one little girl came out and stood there like a block of wood, her arms tight to her side, her fingers tight together and pointing straight down, and she didn't even move her eyes. She said her piece and she did fine. Just in case there was a lapse of memory the teacher was standing behind the screen with her copy to whisper one through a tight spot. The whole program went pretty good, and we closed with another joyous song.

The programs were usually held on a Friday night, and many times there was a box social in connection with the program. A box social was a way to take in a little money. The ladies that wanted to take part would bring an unidentified well decorated box of lunch. The box might be decorated with crepe paper and home made flowers, or just anything to try to make her box stand out above the rest. At lunch time these boxes were auctioned off to the highest bidder, one at a time. The boxes were held up and auctioned off one at a time, and the highest bidder got to help eat the contents with the lady that brought it. When this period of eating was over, the party soon would break up. They would all go to their cars and go home, and when the teacher turned out the gas lights and blew out the kerosene lamps, she too went out, pulled the door closed behind her and left, hoping everyone enjoyed the evening. She didn't lock the door because country schoolhouses never were locked. There was no need to lock them in those days. Perhaps at a later time it became necessary to lock the schoolhouses. She would clean up the mess on Monday.

The little country schoolhouse that just moments before was full of happy voices was now dark and quiet again. The few that dot the land today are now quiet forever.

Many of the old country schools were auctioned off and were razed to salvage the lumber they could, and the contents of the schoolhouses were sold at the same time. The items didn't bring large amounts because this was long before the antique rage. Many times the owner of the farm that the acre would return to bought the schoolhouse because he wouldn't have to move it off or tear it down. In some cases the empty schoolhouse just went back with the returning acre.

There were many schoolhouses that had to be disposed some way because there was a country school every two miles in each direction. At the time of this writing in the more isolated areas in Nebraska, country schools still exist but are much further apart.

The old schools were made use of in any way the farmer could get the best service from it. Some were made into machine sheds, some stored small bales in them. These were the most common uses found for them, but a few were rebuilt into hog houses or for whatever use that would fit the farmer's needs. Some didn't do anything with them at all and just let them stand, and this I like to see.

This is the way I see one of the old country schools as it still stands on its acre all by itself. The other buildings are long gone. The two toilets and the fuel shed have long past been consumed by ravages of nature. The cave door, too, has succumbed to gravity and deteriorated as it ended up in small rotting pieces at the base of the rotted steps.

The schoolyard that was mowed by the director with a horse mower often enough to keep small trees from taking over has gone back to nature as it is in an isolated case near Walnut, and it is my pleasure to stop there from time to time and walk onto the acre of ground that now has grown up with many scrub trees because of the larger trees that keep them shaded too much.

As I stand there by this old school it almost has a feeling of reverence when you realize how many children got started with the 3Rs inside this old building and how many happy memories were made among all those children from the day of the school opening until it closed.

But now, the school stands there, each year a few more of its aged shingles come sliding to the ground, the paint has long ago lost its grip to the weathered siding that too is bowing to the power of gravity as more and more of the nails that once held them tight are rusting away. The glass in the four pane windows now is all gone and many of the jointed frame works in the windows have rotted away, too. But this all makes easy access for the swallows that made a nest on the wall, one about where George Washington's picture did hang.

The holes in the roof were the cause of huge patches of ceiling plaster on the floor, and the shelves in the hall that for years held many lunch pails (usually one-half or gallon syrup pails) were now on the floor, probably because of too many raccoons on there at the same time.

One can stand there and visualize the pupils playing their usual country school games, and with a little imagination one can almost hear them as they were having their fun playing Kings Men, Kick the Can, Pump, Pump Pullaway, Andy Over, or Ball, and in the winter every school yard was full of criss-crossing tracks in the snow when they played Fox and Geese, but the only living things there now are the squirrels, the quiet raccoons as they sleep during the day in those huge hollow trees that tower over the schoolhouse, but down there in the corner somewhere in the wild grape vines and the plum brush with the ripe fruit several blue jays are making a racket to let someone know that might be interested that someone is still making use of the old country school yard.

This is a Sunday afternoon in about 1938, and it is harvest time as we stand on the yard with the corn picking equipment of that time. The corn picking has been going on about three weeks now, and if the weather holds, we should be done in another 3 weeks. We have had a few days of rainy weather, but we don't wait until it all dries up. As soon as the rains quit, we go. The wagon wheels cut in some for a couple of days when loaded and get wide with mud and dry grass and foxtail as they roll through the corn rows, but you can't stop for mud because time is precious this time of the year. A couple days delay could mean the crop may not all get out if it snows.

This is about the last of harvesting the corn by hand. A few single row pickers were being used but most is still hand work. A few years later when World War II broke out, mechanical pickers came on pretty fast because so many young men were in the Service and not around to help - but on this Sunday all is quiet and everything is enjoying the calm warm sunny day because the last week was cold and windy. Now a couple of cats and several old hens have found the warm sun on the south side of the barn. This is a much deserved day of rest for both man and beast. All the horses are free to roam where they please in their yard or pasture and do what they like. They have all had all of the hay they want and are satisfied to stand and sleep or just stand - one just had a roll out there in the yard (probably it had an itch on its back).

A big flock of pigeons flew up out of the cattle yard where they have been feeding and circled the barn a couple of times, and now we can hear their little claws squeaking on the tin ridge roll as they land on the barn. In the grove we can hear the tap of a downy woodpecker as it tried to dig a little grub from a dead branch. About the fastest moving things today are the fluffy white clouds hanging under a clear blue sky, and as we watch them pass, we see the sun shining on a flock of snow geese so high they look like a string hanging in space.

Dad and Belden came out a while ago, and we greased the wagon wheels. There are three wagons so they will be ready for tomorrow. We were lucky today. Usually there is something that needs repairs. The wagon boxes are 26 inches high, 36 inches wide, and 8 feet long, and since we are all right-handed, the bang board (a term given these movable boards to throw the picked corn against making it drop in the wagon) are on the right side of the wagon. They are held upright by cleats that extend down over the board below so as the corn gets above the box, a few of the top ones can be moved to the left side of the box to make it higher. You could estimate the number of bushels on the load by the number of inches deep the load was - 40 inches equaled 40 bushels.

All corn pickers wore some device over their glove, either a hook or a peg. The peg was a leather loop that fit over the fingers that had a pointed piece of steel about one half inch wide and an inch longer than the width of your hand and this was riveted to the leather. This was used to rip the shucks open so the ear could be twisted out, but I never liked them because they were clumsy and they could be thrown off when the ear was tossed into the wagon.

The other was a hook for either a palm or thumb that was riveted to leather that fit around the hand and buckled around the wrist. Of these two, my choice was the palm type.

This is Sunday. Things are pretty quiet around here today. Everyone is taking advantage of a rest day as much as we can. The horses will be put in their stalls at chore time, and the rest of the chores done. Tomorrow it will be back to cornpicking as usual. We will be up early enough to have all the chores done like milking the cows, the hog chores, horses fed and harnessed and breakfast eaten. The teams have been hitched to the wagons and out to the field, and it is still so dark that you can't see where the row you quit on was the last time out. That makes a long day.

It always started with a breakfast of a big pan of cornbread or piles of pancakes. It took a lot of food because picking corn by hand was hard, fast work. A meal like that for breakfast wouldn't "hold me" until noon so I always had a coffee can of cookies along to carry me through.

When we got to the field with the three wagons, the best picker would turn in first and start there, then the next best. It's hard enough to pick but worse yet to have someone good right behind you. A picker would start the team through the field - one on each side of a picked row, and they would stay on it. They didn't have to be told when to move ahead after they got used to it. They would take a few steps ahead and stop, wait awhile, and then move up again. A picker would take the two rows next to his wagon and was supposed to pick the broken stalks leaning between the second and third row and all ears laying on the ground in these three rows. Before we got hybrid corn, there could be a lot of broken stalks and dropped ears. Sometimes after a strong wind when the stalks were dry, half of it had to be picked up. That's good for the waist line.

I never was a big picker - if I got a hundred bushels one day, I couldn't do it the next. Some could do it every day, but not me. There are 100 ears in a bushel so you have an idea how many there would be in a hundred bushels.

The corn pickers got paid by the bushel, and for several years it stayed at .04¢ a bushel, but Dad told of when it was .02¢ a bushel and they had to scoop it off for that, too. Dad always had an elevator to put in the crib or pile when I picked so I missed out on that pleasure.

It was a relaxed feeling when the corn harvesting was over because there were so many things that could make it uncomfortable - such as frosty mornings when every stalk you would touch would shower you with frost down your neck, your clothes and your gloves would get wet, your hands would be chapped and cracked. Picking with snow hanging on the stalks would have the same results. Wet, sticky mud was no help either. The mud stuck to the grass or foxtail and that stuck to more on your feet. When the temperature was nice for everyone else, it was way too hot in the field. Many would take their coat off when they got to the field and pick in their shirt sleeves and wearing a vest even on cold days. Freedom of movement was important in picking.

Picking was a simple operation - the right hand would rake across the side of the ear with the palm or thumb hook. This left that side of the ear exposed. With the same hand you would grab the ear and give it a little twist. While the left hand held the shank, the ear came loose and it was flipped over against the bang boards, and it fell into the wagon. How fast you could do this determined how good you were at picking.

If we had to harvest our crops by hand, we wouldn't have the surplus that we have now as that old way of harvesting was quite different than the four, six, or eight row combines that eat up the fields today.

When the cured hams and bacon were brought home after being smoked, they were hung in the basement, or cellar as we called them in those days, and in time they got moldy. When this happened, we carried them up, laid them on the sidewalk, and Mom scrubbed them with a broom, and when they dried they were hung back where they came from. That smoked meat made the cellar smell good.

Like I mentioned before, a farm is a wonderful place for a boy to grow up, but times have changed. Now the young folks get so involved in outside activities with practices both early and late. They are so involved, they haven't had a chance to be a child, to make memories, to live a child's life. When they grow up they can say I spent my early days learning to shoot baskets. I guess I'm just old fashioned and our values are different. I liked what I did.

As I write this, I can say I lived through a wide range of travel. I've seen them use covered wagons and pictures of astronauts walking on the moon. Even though things are not always good now, let me add they were not always good in the past. Even though we didn't acquire much in our early days, we learned two things - and they were how to entertain ourselves and the value of a dollar.

We learned it isn't what you make, but what you save, that counts.

Thanks to Ann for correcting my errors and typing these memories. I couldn't have done it without her.

The 87 year old Mantel Clock still stands on its lofty shelf in our home today giving us the hourly time with its deep brassy toned strikes. Though what it sees today is not as interesting as years ago, maybe in the next 87 years this could be interesting again.

MEMORIES OF A FARM BOY GROWING UP

By Anne Paasch Dory

It would be nice if for one day you could turn back the clock 50-60 years and have Christmas Eve. Most of the time it was oysters for supper. Less dishes to wash so we could get at the business at hand.

Mom always hid stuff in the ice box on the porch. She brought the stuff in the house in a clothes basket. The kids of today would say it was crude. To us it was CHRISTMAS. No names on the package. Mom just pinched each one and knew who it was for. One wonders if the beautiful paper and bows of today make it anymore Christmas than ours. That was one day of winter we opened the "parlor" and started the hard coal stove. That alone was special. I guess it didn't take too much to make simple folks happy. Christmas Day - that was Mom's day to do her stuff. All that food that she never fixed except at Christmas - Goose and alllll the fixings. I wonder now how she ever did it. We had company. No one brought any food. She fixed everything on that old cook stove. That's the way it was done. Then - kids ate last. Now, they are first. Don't know when that change took place. I always wanted to get old so I could be a little closer to the front lines - then I got old and things were changed to kids first. You can't win.

Do you remember, Vernon? I'm sure you do. Mom wanted a chicken for dinner but she forgot to lock them up the night before - but Vernon to the rescue. He had his trusty BB gun and he'd shoot one for her. She picked out the rooster and the fun was on. Vernon got a bead on that poor chicken's head - shot him through the wattles. That poor chicken jumped 4 feet in the air and took off running, Vernon with his gun and Mom with the hatchet to cut off his head IF Vernon got him shot. Don't know what I wanted out there but wanted to see The Greatest Show on Earth! Poor Mom couldn't run but she was doing her best. That poor chicken never had a chance. I believe they got him. You weren't supposed to eat meat that had been heated up. This poor rooster was heated up. Don't remember but imagine he was our dinner.

On Mother's Day the kids in school made paper carnations and made a bouquet for their mothers. You brought the bouquet home but didn't know how to get them in the house so you put them in the wash machine in the wash house. You forgot all about Mother's Day and flowers and Mom found them on wash day Monday morning.

Thanks for the write-up about the folks' 25th anniversary. I suppose I'd seen it 'way back then" but must not have saved it. I remember that day so well.....You were standing behind the heating stove and the cars started driving in and you in your night gown flew into the folks' room and under the bed. What a way to surprise the folks.

Hope you had a nice birthday. It seemed we generally had threshers on your birthday. Mom always had time for a party for you - a cake with candles and ice cream. What a treat that was!

Remember the syrup buckets? We had 2 gallons - one white and one dark, and they always stood on the cellar steps. We'd fill the syrup pitchers - one dark and one white. Don't say we were poor with a choice of syrup to put on the fried oatmeal!!!!!!

I know now Mom was trying to save money and fed us lots of cornbread. Heck, that was no punishment - we all liked cornbread. With the choice of syrup, who could ask for anything more.

Remember the room off the back porch? Guess it could be called the "mouse house". Somebody killed a muskrat, and I believe Mom skinned it and laid it in the porch room awhile, and when she found it, the mice had eaten part of it, and the rest she sent in to a fur buying place. They were going to pay 10¢ for it but guess they forgot to put it in. End of trapping experience!

We were so fortunate to have such wonderful parents.

I was at EttaBelle's house one day and talked about dishes, etc. she had gotten through the years and didn't know where she had gotten the little Dutch girl cream pitcher. I said Vernon gave it to you for Christmas - 1000 years ago. Remember Madsen's having Madsen money? Sort of like coupons. For the produce you brought in, you got that amount in "fun" money. Mom always had eggs and butter so she had lots of money.

Madsen's had shelves in the back of the store with their premiums. The bottom shelf wasn't the greatest but got better towards the top. Christmas was coming so Mom gave you a fist full of money to shop. You and papa went shopping - I presume off the bottom shelf! Ettabelle wondered what I had gotten. Yes, I still have it. It is a cream pitcher, too - a robin with a worm in its beak. I wonder how long ago that has been?

One looks at the loot kids get now and it makes one wonder if we weren't better off with our simple Christmases - simple compared to the stuff they get today. I imagine we thought that a cream pitcher was an O.K. gift. How many kids would today?

On your birthday Mom would have your birthday cake baked - probably pink and white. She may have threshers for dinner but the cake always came first!

Something I would cross the street for is some of Mom's Irish stew and some fried potatoes that were cooked with the peelings on and then peeled and fried in butter and that stew over them. I've made it but not for a long time and never thought it was as good. It was different than the stew now.

I was reading an article, and it said you could travel the world over but you could never go back to your home. It would be so nice to go back 60+ years for one more Christmas. Simple as they were, it was home at Christmas. After an oyster stew, it was time to get out the many bowls of nuts and candies. Remember the box of marshmallows? Mom would take the lid off the box and the powdered sugar would puff out, and I believe the marshmallows were softer and better than the ones we get at the store now. Of course, having the groceries on top of them doesn't help the quality any.

I get to remembering and I remembered how very sick you were. A couple of years old, I guess. Dad went to town for groceries and bought a can of white cherries. You wouldn't eat anything and he saw them and got one can. You ate some - the first in too long. At supper time Mom put the rest out for the rest of us. I didn't eat mine. I saved mine for Vernon. Big Deal - but maybe it helped make you well. I'm sure Dad bought more cherries - even though they cost 39¢, I suppose. Mom didn't have time to do cooking for the rest of us. I guess we were getting hungry. Aunt Vena came over with a "care" package. She had a big cream can (not like now), and she had it full of baked goods. The top was a pan of cinnamon rolls. I suppose we flew into that like the starving Africans. Aunt Vena was the best baker around. She had a heart as big as a pumpkin.

When Mom was in the hospital the last time, the nurse came in and said we had a visitor in the waiting room. We went to see who it was. It was Aunt Vena standing in the hall. She had a big black hat on. I can see her as plain as anything. She stayed with us.

This is about the time of year, (Christmas) Dad would go and pay his years' charges at the lumber yard, Oldehoffs, etc. He'd bring home all those paring knives, calendars, pens, etc. Some of the stuff was O.K. but the knives never could be sharpened.

Mom always said a winter fog would freeze a dog.

We were down at Margaret and Gene's, and I was asked (told) to make the gravy. I remember Vernon saying he knew dinner was not too far away when the stirring spoon went over the bumps in the bottom of the roaster. This came back as I hit the bumps in Margaret's roaster.

Yesterday was such a cold snowy day and it reminded me of Vernon when he would come to the door and want a gun. I got so I knew a 22 gauge or the 410. He'd go rabbit hunting and generally brought back some, skin them, and hang 'em on the clothesline a few days. They were good fixed with cream.

Remember the hot wash room off the kitchen. Sometimes Mom would have all the burners with canning stuff on them. I think they call those rooms Saunas now - very expensive - and ours was free and you got the peaches canned at the same time! In the winter the same hot room turned about face, and it was cold. Some nights were so cold the water froze in the reservoir. Young people don't like to hear these things, but some day they will get old and live in the past, too.

The congoleum rugs - remember on cold mornings you had to climb over the rugs as they would have turned up on the edges.

I don't know why but Dad had a square cut out of the "sauna" room when the pipes froze. I presume there was a shut off there or something.

I also remember you wore your little night shirt and dressed behind the heater!

Wouldn't it be nice if we could go back 50 years and have Christmas again. Mom always had the goose roasting. Of course, you'd be out awhile with your gun and maybe get a rabbit - or skunk - and come to the kitchen door and say "Do I stink?" Mom always said "No, come in, Vernon and get warm." Then you'd "stink" worse. You always made it back by dinner time. Sometimes we didn't have company, but we would eat in the dining room with the best Mom had - linen, silver, crystal - the works - for just us! We surely could fix that goose! Sometimes we even opened the parlor door for Christmas. We had wonderful parents.

THE MIGHTY BUD - Do you remember Bud, the racing horse? Of course, you do. No one could forget the wonder horse - and the speed that horse did have.

It was proven on a hot July afternoon. Carl Lorenzens were threshing, and you rode down to watch. Something scared the Mighty Bud and all hell broke loose. Bud was headed for home around the corner. Vernon was still hanging on. Over the creek bridge. Vernon was still hanging on. Someone called Mom and told her about the runaway. Mom never could run but she made tracks that afternoon. Out to the road and Vernon was still hanging on or more like laying low. Mom guided Bud into the yard and from there on Bud knew where to go. The barn - safe at last. Vernon's worry was that the barn door was closed - the bottom half. Bud knew what to do. Stop. And he did!

End of true story.

These memories were all written by Anne Paasch Dory - Vernon's sister - and were sent to him in birthday and Christmas cards over the years.

As we step back in time, I will try to recapture the August Fischer grocery store back in the twenties as near as I can recall.

When one entered the store, the smell of ground coffee was always there to meet you as it was ground as it was needed. The coffee beans were stored under the counter in one of the tilting bins there. The coffee grinder was mounted on this same counter as was the scale, and if a pound of coffee was ordered, the coffee beans were weighed in a paper sack which . . . then poured into the top of the grinder. The same sack was then set under the grinder to catch this coffee when ground. The first grinders I can remember were turned by hand. These grinders had a cast iron flywheel mounted on the grinder shaft on which the handle to turn it was attached. When the operator got this wheel turning a good speed, he would let the coffee through. The weight of the wheel did most of the work of getting the coffee ground.

A little later the coffee beans came in one pound sealed paper bags with a narrow tin strip longer than the sack was wide fastened in the open end of the bag. When the contents were poured into the grinder and ground, they were then poured back into the same bag, the top was turned back down a couple of times, and the long tin end bent around the folds, and it was sealed up again.

The other bins under this counter held dried peas, lima beans, navy beans, and sugar. These were the days before packaging and most everything was sold in the bulk. Buying sugar in 100 pound sacks was very common, and you could buy flour in 49 pound bags, but as I recall there was a smaller sized bag of flour too.

In those days there were ceiling fans in the grocery stores as there was in most every other place of business, but as time went by in later years, they were deemed useless or bad, and they were all taken out for some reason. As they say, "History repeats itself". Now the fans are back in use and one wonders why they were ever taken out.

When the farmers came to the store on Wednesday or Saturday nights or any other time it was a common thing to bring their eggs to the store, too, in hopes that the 30 dozen case or whatever they had would pay for groceries they needed. All farms had laying hens so many cases were handled at the stores. They were marked with the names of those who brought them in because in those days the stores had to candle the eggs at the store. If they got too many cases in at a time, you sometimes would have to wait a couple days for your credit. Egg cases came in two sizes - the most popular one was the 30 dozen case, but the 15 dozen case was certainly the most convenient if the women had to handle them very much. Either size were nice, especially when you got back home with the case and the groceries, because usually the grocer had put in a small sack of candy in the corner somewhere among the groceries. After all these years I can still see that little white sack with the soft pink and green stripes that held a couple peanut clusters and three or four caramels of a couple of chocolate drops. We would divide them between us and thoroughly enjoyed them because during the depression a piece of candy was a treat as there was no money for such a luxury.

The glass candy showcase wasn't large but was made up of enough bins to display the few kinds of candy available which usually were peanut clusters, candy corn, jelly beans, caramels, and chocolate drops, and on the top of the case were several glass

top jars that held that many different kinds of suckers or penny candy. On the lower glassed in shelves there were several kinds of gum and candy bars, and it seems that Babe Ruth and Hershey bars were always available.

When one came to get groceries, you had a list you either gave the grocer or told him what you wanted, and he in turn would write into his carbon copy pad so he had a copy for his file in case the groceries were to be charged. In those days a well stocked grocery store had only a small fraction of the items available today on the shelves. At the time the quality seemed good, but by today's standards it would not be very high. They just didn't have the ability to process food as well then. For example, the peanut butter would separate if it stood on the shelf too long and the oil would become rancid and rise to the top while the ground peanuts at the bottom of the jar became hard and dry.

Bananas were first shipped in cone shaped baskets about 5 feet high, about 20 inches across the top, and 14 inches at the bottom and were placed in this attached to the stem with the thick stem end up and packed in shredded paper with a short two strand rope around it to make a short loop around the upper stem. Each store had a stand to hang these bananas on. It had a cast iron base with an upright pipe in the center about six feet high with an arm extending to the side from the top of the pipe and a fixed hook on the end from which the bananas were hung. To remove the bananas from the crate or basket, they simply put the looped rope over the hook and pulled the basket off which brought the shredded paper out also. After the bananas were hung, they had to be carefully checked for tarantula spiders because it was not uncommon for them to be in the fruit when packed at the plantation in the Tropics. The bananas were easily cut from the stem with a special curved knife about ten inches long, and to have it handy for its next use, the blade was stuck into the stem.

About three fourths the length of the building to the east a wall was put up, part of which was the wall of a built in cooler. In its early days it was cooled with ice that was put in from the back side. This ice was harvested in the dead of winter and stored in ice houses below the ground and insulated with sawdust or straw (preferably wheat straw). Most businesses that handled meat or milk had an icehouse. This ice was cut and harvested from farm ponds or dammed up creeks, but as soon as electrical refrigeration came along, the use of ice was discontinued.

The front side of the cooler was made up of a series of wooden doors with glass insets so the food inside could be seen. This consisted of milk and cream in glass bottles, eggs, lard, lunch meats, cheeses, butter, and sometimes a few crates of strawberries were kept in there to help keep them a few days longer. What impressed me the most about the cooler was the watermelons when they were in season. They would cut one in half and lay it in the cooler with both cut ends towards the glass. When one is small, everything looks larger to you, and that was certainly the case here because they were the largest, reddest melons I had ever seen. Of course at that age I hadn't seen too many.

We would go through the door by the cooler into the backroom, and there over in the corner were two barrels - one a metal one laying on its side and one made of wooden staves. Both were on a rack about two feet high. The metal one held kerosene as it was only sold in grocery stores then and the wooden one had a wooden spigot at the bottom because this barrel held the vinegar that was only sold in bulk.

The containers to be filled were either tin or stoneware (or crock) jugs. Kerosene was usually put in one or two gallon cans, but at times it too was stored in jugs so the grocer would always first smell the jug to be sure he got the vinegar and kerosene in the right containers. The kerosene cans had a pouring spout on them, but most of the time the turn cap that went on the spout was missing so to handle the problem the grocer had a supply of small potatoes handy for that purpose, and he would press one on each outlet of the can to keep the kerosene inside where it belonged.

Extending out from the wall in the corner and up close to the ceiling was a wheel type rack with a slotted side so a brooms could be hung in it, and that was its purpose to hold the stack of brooms to be sold.

In the back rooms of the grocery store was a small room about six or seven feet square and tall enough to stand in that was completely covered with one-fourth inch hardware cloth to make it mouse proof. It was in this area that the grocer stored the flour or anything else that mice would chew into.

Dried fruit such as dates, raisins, figs, peaches, prunes, and apricots came in bulk packed in wooden boxes lined with wax paper. They held about 20 to 30 pounds and then this fruit had to be dug out of the box and weighed into one pound amounts and sacked. I saw them working them at this sticky job, and the best tool to use to loosen it was an ice pick.

All stores had a handy tool or two that was simply a wooden one inch dowel about four feet long. On the lower end was a squeegee handle that opened and closed a pair of clamping jaws at the upper end, and with this simple device they could reach up and get items from above the top shelves that otherwise couldn't be reached except by a ladder.

In season watermelons would find their way to these small grocery stores, not in amounts we see today, but there would be a few. Since they were more of a luxury than a necessity, the depression budget didn't include many melons, but the point I would like to make is how customs and the ways of doing business have changed. Back then if a person was interested in a certain melon, the grocer would willingly plug it for you. This was quickly done by usually using the point of his cheese knife to make three angle cuts in the rind about two inches long. With this done he stuck the point of the knife in the loosened plug and lifted it with about two or three inches of the red melon to see that it was ripe. One wonders what a produce manager would say if he was asked to do that today.

Most all businesses had a removable steel grating over a small pit in the sidewalk next to their store front. These could be lifted out and the window of the basement wall removed, and through this entrance a tin coal chute was put in to slide the coal being delivered by the dray and the cobs from a farmer into the fuel room by the furnace. The grocery stores had two of these gratings. The second one was used for potatoes. In the fall often farmers would raise far more than they would use, and the grocer would buy what he needed from them. They were put in a special storage room with a chute the same as for coal. They were later sacked up to the desired weight and sold in the store. When the farmer delivered his potatoes, he backed his wagon as close as possible to the chute. Then he would take the endgate out, and he used a potato fork to get them out of the wagon. The potato fork was shaped like a

a scoop but were made of tines about an inch apart. The reason for the fork being like this was so that the dirt that had stuck to the potatoes and had fell off would not get scooped into the basement with the potatoes but would fall through the tines of the fork and stay in the wagon.

The produce section of any early store was limited to items that were not very perishable. Like I mentioned before the potatoes from the basement, sweet potatoes, coconuts, oranges, grapes, cranberries, apples, bananas, and celery were the chief items available. In the twenties we had two kinds of celery - one was the variety we have today and the other was called pascal. It grew like the green variety, but in its later time before harvest it was protected from the sun and it turned white and very tender with leaves almost white but with just a little tinge of yellow. There was always a choice between the two when it was in season, and my mother always chose the white. In those days some food items were not always to be had the year around like today. The first iced and then refrigerated railroad cars made things more available.

Strawberries were brought up from Missouri in crated quart boxes, and many times the quality was not good. They were small and uneven in size and there was much waste. Peaches and apricots were available in season, too, and many were sold as more canning was done during the depression days.

As I recall, during the early years there was always a bakery in Walnut so bread and pastries could be bought there. A few things from the bakery were sold at the stores too along with a choice of factory made cookies. The cookies and crackers were all packed in boxes of the same dimension, probably a foot square and deep, so they would fit into the display racks at the stores. When the boxes were placed in the racks in a tipped position, the box tops were removed and the grocer's flanged metal frames with glass doors were placed over the opening. They didn't take a lot of space as there were not many kinds to pick from, consisting mostly of ginger snaps, oatmeal cookies, fig bars, ice cream wafers, a marshmallow topping on a flat cookie base dipped in chocolate, and another two kinds of marshmallow type that were the same only the color was different. One was pink and the other was white. They were on a vanilla type cookie and covered with chopped coconut. They have been around for a long time as they can all be gotten yet today - they must have been good "sellers".

Cheese has been a popular food for a long time. As a boy it seemed to me it was used a lot, probably because it didn't need the refrigeration that other food did. I can't recall how many kinds were in the cooler behind the glass doors, but of the several, two impressed me the most. One was a large brick type wrapped in a single layer of cheese cloth (a course loosely woven cotton type material) that had been dipped in hot wax which prevented it from drying out, and when it was sold, they just cut through the cloth and wax and it went with the purchase. The other type that I saw just a few times (it must have been replaced with something more convenient) was a round wax coated cheese about 14 to 16 inches across and 4 or 5 inches thick. To cut this it was centered on a turntable that could have handled a cheese two feet across, and to cut it, a straight blade wider than the cheese was thick was held so that the inner end was on the center of the cheese and could be forced straight down with the use of a lever, and to make another cut, the table was turned with the cheese to the desired size of the next piece and repeated, but with this device you always got a wedge shaped cut.

stone, and it is certainly a piece of Walnut's history.

The grocery stores would help the farmers, usually in the Fall, by letting them bring their old hens to trade for groceries. They had to get rid of the old hens to make room for the young pullets they had raised during the summer. The grocer would buy these old hens for so much a pound and then take this off of their grocery bill if they had a charge account, and many did. Back of the Fischer and Baker stores, they each had an old shed that had a couple dozen wire chicken batteries or cages stacked five or six high, and it was in these cages that the hens were kept, perhaps for a couple days, before they were picked up. These were fed and watered in a trough attached to the outside of the cages. This made a haven for the rats with all the feed and water. During the day one could look in there and see so many rats they couldn't all get in the troughs.

The Moritz Meat Market was in business for many years butchering, processing, and smoking meat. They were also the pioneers in the dairy business in Walnut. They were selling milk before they used bottles. Milk was hauled in cans on a cart pulled by a horse. They had their regular route at a regular time, and those that needed milk would watch for them, go out to the street with their containers, and Moritzs would measure out to them what they wanted.

When one came into their shop, you noticed the well painted walls and the white wainscoting, the ceiling fan, and the well stocked showcase of many cuts of meat, milk in bottles, a variety of cheeses and lunch meats, and the smell of garlic and peppercorns used in their bologna. It wasn't always like this because they, too, went through the era of harvested ice in the cooler and show case. A barrel of dill pickles had its place over against the wall. In the show case in season was a wooden tub of pickled herring, smoked fish, a tub of pickled pigs feet, and a two gallon crock jar of oysters with a dipper that they used to fill the pint and quart containers with. One item they always had on hand was their home made bologna (they would never give anyone the recipe), but they were known for this delightful food by everyone in the area. To make the sales even better, they timed the making of them so they would be hot yet on Saturday night, and this was the last stop many made before they left town so they could have a snack of hot bologna and bread when they got home.

Behind the showcase in the working area, the floor was covered with sawdust. I never could figure out why, but it made a nice piney smell along with the other smells in the shop.

The meat block was a heavy table about three or four feet square. The top was about eighteen inches thick. This was made of many pieces of hard wood glued together setting on end on four heavy legs. Along the side was fastened the knife rack. This was made up of a series of slots that the blades could be dropped into. This block had been used for many years because the top was no longer flat but showed the areas that were used the most with its low spots from cutting and scraping (a means of keeping the block clean).

Over the center of the block from the ceiling hung an iron rod about six feet above the table, and on the lower end about six inches apart were two hooks. This was the convenient place to hang their meat saws they used when they had to cut through the bones.

They sold potatoes, too, that were stored in the basement. These were grown on their small farm east of Walnut where their first slaughter house stood - but time had taken its toll here - the same as at many business places in town - and all that is left are some old photos and a lot of memories.

A grocer that started in Walnut during the twenties was Abe Baker, and after leaving here went to Omaha and became very successful with his many huge grocery stores, but while here in Walnut he had about the same type of store as any small town grocery store. He did also sell shoes, overshoes, and a few items of work clothes, and he also did a few things to get people to pay their bills and come into his store. During sometime in December he would ready his north window to hold six or eight large turkeys. All that kept them out of the store was a flimsy wall of chicken wire. These were given away at a drawing about Christmas time to someone having their name pulled from the many, many tickets that were given them to sign when their bills were paid.

Another thing he would promote was a pancake day that was well advertised. The manufacturers of some pancake flours would have someone traveling on the road with a grill and whatever else it took to put on an all day pancake feed. They did a good job putting out crusty pancakes that pleased the appetite of young and old, and the display they put on by flipping cakes onto a plate several feet away several cakes deep and as neat as though they were placed there was quite an attraction.

I recall too that one winter Abe had a crate of frozen fish outside at the entrance of his store that were there night and day. These were black cod about two to three feet long, and he got them all pieced out and sold before the weather turned warm, but it was an item that drew interest and people to his store as fresh fish at that time was a pleasant change in their diet.

Most all businesses on Main Street had awnings to let down to keep the sun from driving the heat into their businesses. This was before air conditioning, and it was routine for those on the west side of the street to put theirs down in the morning and take them up about noon and those on the east side put theirs down at noon and up in the evening. The point I'm making here is the problem it caused the sparrows during nesting season. When the awnings were up, it made an ideal place to build a nest among the folds of the awning, but before the nest was finished, the awning would be let down and all their work would land on the sidewalk so they carried the material across the street to build, only to have it happen there again in a few hours. They never gave up, and they never caught on.

The largest store in Walnut any any time was Madsen Brothers located on the west side at the upper end of the block. This was a large store and carried everything from lace to hay rope. One could get anything they needed here as they carried hardware, groceries, work clothes, ladies clothes, shoes - they had it all.

Not only was their place large but they had a system for handling the money that was quite elaborate for Walnut. They had no cash registers but instead they had a cashier in a small room or cage in the back of the store. A series of light overhead tracks led from each department to the cashier, and when a sale was made, a pint sized container attached to the trolley that ran on the track was taken off and the money inserted in this container, It was again attached to the carrier, and with a quick pull of a short rope on it, it rolled back to the cashier. If there was any change involved, it was sent back the same way.

The store was large but it couldn't stand the pressure of the depression, and it closed its doors in the late twenties or early thirties. Yet today on the floor of the entrance to this old store are the one inch square blue and white ceramic tile. In the white background and spelled with blue tile are the words "MADSEN BROTHERS", a reminder of the bygone days of the proud people that wanted their name to be remembered, and it will because it is written in material about as hard as

IT'S TIME TO QUIT
By Vernon Paasch

In 1945 when Rev. Thomas was here
They had this cat that they loved dear,
And every so often her kittens would arrive
The trouble was, they were always alive.
He should have gotten rid of her at the start
Because to kill kittens he didn't have the heart.
After church one morning when the first batch came,
He took me aside and called me by name.
He said their chances of staying were pretty slim
And asked me if I would kill them for him.

I took care of his wishes, and in a few weeks more
I had to come back because she had more.
This went on many times I can say
Until they packed their things and cat and moved away.
I had no title then but I worked on still
But "Kitten Killer" then would have filled the bill.

Since then I've been on this job, and I've seemed somehow
To say when the phone rings "What's wrong now?"
The Property and Planning Committee is great you see,
But when something is wrong they all call me.
As chairman of the group I held that throne
Maybe that's why they think of me when they pick up the phone.
Many jobs I could do and many were small
So I didn't bother to call the others at all.

One odd thing that happened in my career
Was at the time when another pastor was here.
The stool wouldn't flush well so I went on the call
But when I got there, there was no problem at all.
The next week at church I was told, "Still no go"
So I returned the next day and watched the flow.
Everything seemed to be working so I left it alone
Because I hated to take up that mighty throne.
It worked off and on for a couple weeks more
Until the job I could no longer ignore.
I took up the stool to examine it right
And found high in a bend and out of sight
A seven inch scissors was in the line.
It was removed and the stool worked fine.

We were trimming some limbs of a parsonage tree
Not a large group - just we three -
My ladder high against a limb long and strong
You wouldn't think anything could go wrong.
To the top of the ladder I made the trip
with a small chain saw to the outer end to clip.
When the limb came off, my branch did rise
Letting my ladder slip under before my eyes.
I knew in an instant this was not my day,
When I lit on the sidewalk hard and gray.
John Clayton and Ed thought I was dead.
I might have gotten hurt but I lit on my head.
Parts of me did hurt and throb,
But in a short time I rose to finish the job.

For one garage door many times I went back
Because it was always coming off the track.
Many times I've cleaned the parsonage eaves
Of their yearly collection of shingle grit and leaves.
Replaced basement ceiling tile after the plumber was through
When he replaced clogged pipes with new.
Fixed many church faucets and at the parsonage, too,
And replaced sprayer heads with new.
The lock on the back door was old, 'tis true,
And finally had to be replaced with new.

The flat roof of the church had a few leaks at first
And every time it rained the leaks got worse.
Several five gallons of pour type roofing was spread on leaking spaces
But it seemed when it rained again it leaked in other places.
When they called from the church, I needed no details,
And I was on my way with plastic and pails.
This went on until the new roof was put on,
And since then the leaks are gone.

The double south doors have been quite a pain,
With the wet carpet we had with each south rain.
I tried caulking and stripping and drip caps of tin,
But with each south rain some still came in.
So I gave up with disgust as little did I gain,
And decided the doors do not leak when it doesn't rain.

The planter in the carport was rusting away,
So I lined it with plastic and there it will stay.
A pipe in the wall between the restrooms began to leak,
And along the floor the water did seep.
There's only one way to get to the source,
And that's to use a sledge hammer with a little force.
I took out two blocks on the men's side of the wall
To reveal the pipes, leak and all.
A removeable patch covers the hole where I went in
Let us hope it never happens again.

I glued the open seam in the carpet on the church floor,
And worked on the double Fellowship door.
I patched an office carpet spot
Where the heater had gotten a little too hot.

There was painting, mowing, and raking leaves
And renailing and tightening the church's west eaves.
The volunteer trees growing in the west greenery galore
Were cut off and killed but there'll be more.

I could write more but this is enough
Before you get tired of reading this stuff.
As the end of 1995 nears
I'll have been on call for 50 years.

I told Ann years back that if I survive,
I'm going to quit ushering and all when I'm 75
That time is here and a little more,
So I'll turn my key in for the parsonage door,
And it won't be long and you and I will see
Just how well you are getting along without me!

