REMEMBRANCES, ETC.

(Recollections from the 1930s and 1940s
plus other accounts relating to my life.)

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Note: Some information is repeated from time to time in this book. The repetitions, it seemed to me, were necessary to clarify, complete, or otherwise enhance the account of an event, an incident, or a happening.

Dedicated to

PHILLIP DEAN IRVIN
August 30, 1958 - May 1, 1978

My memories of Phillip would fill a much larger book than this one. Better than that, his life and memory have filled my life with joy, gratitude, and appreciation. The emptiness in my life, caused by his loss, will never be filled. The contributions he made to my life are without measure. His wit, his intelligence, his sense of timing, and his love enriched my life for more than 19 years; and they continue to bless me today. I am sure that his brother and sisters join me in thanking God and in thanking Phillip for the gifts he gave us and is still giving us.

I cannot count the times I have thought of Phillip, cried for him, laughed with and at him, and longed for his presence. At times, I even wish I could play Monopoly with him!

But Phillip, being who he was and what he was, would surely remind me that there are Sheri, and Les, and Nancy. And he would be right. They, too, have made my life full and continue to enrich it today.

To them also, I dedicate this collection of memories.

FORWARD

This volume of recollections and anecdotes has been compiled primarily for my children: Sheri Lynn Fitzgerald, Leslie Jay Irvin and Nancy Ann Swanson. At times, this labor of love has been tedious, but it has been a lot of fun from start to finish. I am glad that I undertook to do it.

I do not vouch for precise accuracy, particularly with dates and specific details. However, everything written here is true. These are my memories. Others involved, especially my brothers, in the recalled events may have memories which differ from mine. That does not detract from the validity of my recollections.

In compiling this booklet, I was perplexed as to how to organize the material. I decided that, for the most part, the remembrances ought to be set forth thematically. I also found it appropriate to record some of the memories in anecdotal form. The dictionary defines "anecdote" as a "little known, entertaining fact of history or biography". The table of contents suggests the organizational pattern.

I plan to make a collection of my sermons available to my children, so none are included here.

Some material I have left out, because it is available elsewhere. There are no geneological tables. I do hope that the existing tables and later discoveries concerning geneology will be passed on to the coming generations.

Nor have I included extensive memories of my life from about the middle 1950's. I may write another account of my life and work covering the 1950's through the 1980's. To a degree, that period has been part of my children's lives. I hope they will each compile something of this nature for their children.

In a way, this is an account of a large family, headed by a farm laborer, in the 1930's and 1940's. It is a story of a struggle to make ends meet in the great depression of the 1930's. In that respect, this volume represents a reflection of the effort and trial of many during those years as they strove to live life with some dignity and pride. Simply put, this pictures a time when life was difficult, when, sometimes, it seemed survival was the main goal.

Nevertheless, I am grateful for my past. I am glad that it happened as it did. In writing this, I gained a new and a deeper appreciation of the people around me during those years, particularly my mother and father.

I ask my children to accept this collection of memories. It is an attempt to pass on to them a sense of who I am and an understanding of what made me what I am.

I hope they enjoy these accounts. More than that, I hope they take pride in who they are. So be it for all my descendants.

Gerald L Irwin

MY NAME AND MY BIRTH

On this page is a copy of my birth record as found in the Mills County, Iowa court house in Glenwood.

The certificate lists the spelling of my first name as Jerald. I have always spelled it Jerold and I believe that was my parents' intent.

I also was known as Jerry Irvin. My records at Simpson College are listed under Jerry L. Irvin. My first Social Security registration was as Jerry L. Irvin. That was done in late 1949. In late 1983, I filed a change with the Social Security Administration as Jerold L. Irvin.

The birth certificate lists my father's first name as Lester. His first name was actually Luster.

STATE OF IOWA — MILLS COUNTY

CERTIFICATION OF BIRTH REGISTRATION

This is to certify that according to records on file in this office, that

JERALD LOCHART IRVIN
(full name of child at birth)

Sex Male was born Jan. 9, 1931
(mo., day, yr.)

at Deer Creek Township (town or city) Mills County, Iowa

Name of father Lester Winning Irvin

Maiden name of mother Opal Young

Date of filing 1931 in order
(mo., day, yr.)

In witness whereof, the seal of the Clerk of District Court of Mills County, State of Iowa, has been affixed hereto this 15th day of November, 19 83

Beverly D. Greenwood
County Registrar and Clerk of District Court

(Seal)

By Deputy Clerk

If this is a Certificate of Delayed Registration, the evidence used to establish this record is indicated on the reverse side.

Warning: This certification is not valid if it has been altered in any way whatsoever, or if it does not bear the raised seal of said clerk's office.

MY FAMILY

My father's name was Luster Winning Irvin, my mother's name was Opal (no middle name) Young Irvin. (We called them Pop and Mom). Pop was born June 30, 1884 at Miami, Saline County, Missouri; Mom was born October 23, 1896 in Mills County Iowa. Pop died April 24, 1954; Mom died May 13, 1957. They are buried in the Malvern, Iowa cemetery.

My paternal grandparents were Winfield Scott Irvin and Susan Elizabeth Burnside Irvin. My maternal grandparents were George Madison Young and Floy Eldria McMullin Young.

Pop had been married to Cecil Huff. They had two daughters Ethlyn and Elva. Elva died as a young lady. Cecil also died when quite young. Ethlyn had married and was away from home before I was born. She married Luey Trollman (Shorty) Degase.

Mom and Pop were married on March 22, 1922.

In addition to Ethlyn, my half-sister, I have one sister and six brothers.

Doris Helen was born January 21, 1923 at Strahan in Mills County, Iowa. She married Leo Daryl Hankins of Randolph, Iowa. They had four children: Sharon, Leo jr (Corky), Steven, and Linda Jo.

Melvin Lee was born August 9, 1924 near Strahan. He married Fern Porter of Northboro, Iowa at Hiawatha, Kansas. They had four children: Lillian, Michael, Carolyn, and Lisha.

George Scott was born August 12, 1926 near Strahan. He married Corrine Husby of Sioux City, Iowa in Sioux City. They had two sons: Kenneth and Jeffrey.

Lowell Howard was born December 12, 1927 near Strahan. He married Louise Alexander of Ames, Iowa in Ames. They had five children: Lee Ann, David, Karen, Teresa, and Laura. They were divorced and Lowell married Lorraine Thompson of Jewell, Iowa. Lowell died September 5, 1992. He is buried in the Homewood Cemetery a few miles north of Ellsworth, Iowa.

I was next. I was born near Strahan on January 9, 1931, but not at the same location as my three older brothers. I married Genevieve Frances Jones on July 18, 1954 in Denver, Colorado. We had four children: Sheri Lynn, Leslie Jay, Phillip Dean, and Nancy Ann. We were divorced on January 16, 1979. I married Anna Regina Fitzpatrick of Omaha (a native of Paterson, N.J.) on October 8, 1983 at Glenwood, Iowa. Phillip died in an auto accident near Maryville, Missouri on May 1, 1978.

Max Darwin was born September 2, 1932 near Randolph in Fremont County, Iowa. He married Patricia Larson of Hornick, Iowa in Hornick. They had four children: Craig, Brad, Susan, and John Lee who died as an infant.

Lloyd W. (initial only) was born Dec. 4, 1935 near Randolph. He married Bessie Ellis of Malvern, Iowa at Logan, Iowa. They had one son, Bryan. Lloyd and Bessie divorced and Bryan took the name of Bessie's second husband. Lloyd's son is named Bryan Galloway. Lloyd later married Janet Huff. They had one daughter: Jenny. His step-daughters are Cindy and Leslie. After a divorce from Janet, Lloyd married Shirley Donnelson Parker of Seattle. They were married January 14, 1984 at Omaha, Nebraska.

Larry Paul was born April 5, 1940 near Randolph. He married Laurel Peters of Davenport, Iowa. They had no children.

SOME MEMORIES OF MY PARENTS

Pop was an honest, hard working man. All his life, at least from the time I was born, he worked long hours at a demanding job...farming with horses and mules, along with all the other work around the farm being done manually. He did not gain materially from all the hard work. All his energy and time went to provide for the family. We had no luxuries in our home, there was simply no money for extras.

I grew fearing my father. I remember only one compliment he gave me. While I was doing homework one night, he looked at it and said how well I followed the lines on the paper on which I was writing.

I recall him as being demanding and stern. He was not to be crossed nor reasoned with. Disobedience brought punishment, sometimes severe. He used a leather strap. I remember him telling someone about the strap to the effect that the narrow end was for the big kids and the wide end was for the little kids. We quickly learned that when he said something we ought to heed him. He particularly did not like "horseplay" when he wanted to be serious, even about games.

I remember that he whipped Lowell across the bare back because Lowell laughed at him during a card game. Not only so, he forced Lowell to continue playing.

I got my share of beatings. He did not like the Hughes family. They lived about ¼ of a mile east of us when we lived near Randolph. Normally, we were not permitted to go there, even though we often did while he was working. I came home from the

Hughes' one night and Pop met me at the door with the strap.

For whatever reason there seemed to be little real communication between and among members of the family. I guess that was most apparent in Mom's and Pop's relationship.

I am confident today, however, that part of the reason for his sternness and uncommunicative nature was that he was worn down by his work, his long hours, and his inability to get ahead. I understand through Aunt Ida, his sister, that in his youth and young manhood, he had quite a different personality than the one I saw.

Mom did the best she could with the little we had. She worked endlessly, even helping Pop with the farm work once in a while. The housework, laundry, garden, the chickens, etc took what time she had left after caring for all the children. As with Pop, her energy and time must have been drained by the hard work and long hours. They both worked so hard, and had very little, if anything, to show for it...except a house full of unappreciative children.

Mom also beat us. Her thrashings were not as severe as Pop's. She used a switch or a lath usually.

Even though their relationship seemed to be one of just tolerating each other, I have the sense now that they really cared about us. Mom, I recall, would make good effort to talk to us, reason with us. If we wanted something which we could not afford, I think it was very hard for her to say "no".

Also, I am sure they made strong effort to give us positive guidance. They did instill us with values such as personal responsibility and personal integrity. Perhaps by default, they

taught us the value of knowledge and education. I guess they did something right. All of us turned out to be responsible people.

One of my great regrets in life is that I failed to show them the deserved appreciation while they were yet alive. They did give to me some valuable gifts. I thank them for that.

The only real conversation I had with my father was around Christmas in 1953. When I came home for Christmas vacation from my seminary studies in Denver, he was, as always, working. He was cutting wood a mile or so away in a fence row that a farmer wanted cleared of trees and brush.

The first morning I got up after getting home, he asked me if I would go with him. I did. So we walked the mile or so in the very cold weather.

The first thing he did when we got there was to build a fire. I set about to saw some wood to warm up a little. Soon the fire was burning quite well. He told me to put the saw down, have a cup of coffee which he had brought in a thermos bottle. He said he wanted to talk.

And talk we did. It was obvious that we both were thrilled by something we had never done...really talk to each other.

We talked about many things..other members of the family, his relationship to Mom, how he thought he had a disease, cancer, perhaps (which he did have, though he had refused to see a doctor. He was to die of cancer the next spring). He did not ever talk about my chosen profession and my educational preparation for it. I never knew what he thought about my being a minister.

I have orally recounted what he told me about his father. I write it down here so that it might be better remembered.

He said his father and three uncles were illegitimate. Parenthetically, Mom must have known about this. He said he thought she always held it against him.

He said that Roxanne Irvin lived in with a couple named Singleton, a couple quite a bit older than Roxanne. Mrs. Singleton was in poor health. Hence, a "live in" was necessary to care for her. By and by Mrs. Singleton died. But Roxanne continued to live with Mr. Singleton and mothered four sons by him. One was Winfield Scott Irvin, Pop's father. He said all the sons of Roxanne and Mr. Singleton took the name Irvin.

At this writing, I don't think all this has been verified, though I see no reason to doubt Pop's account.

I never saw Pop alive again after I returned to Denver.

SOME MEMORIES OF MY GRANDPARENTS

I have only vague memories of my grandparents - none of Grandpa Young who died before I was born. He died December 8, 1929.

My Grandmother Young was a large woman. I have vague memories of her visiting a few times when we lived near Randolph. I recall that she helped Mom mend some clothes.

I recall seeing my paternal grandparents only one time, though it is likely I saw them more than once. I remember a visit when they lived in Strahan. I was probably 5-7 years old at the time. Grandma Irvin was a small woman who wore a floor length dress. Grandpa Irvin was about average size, perhaps 5' 10". He wore denim bib overalls and a dark shirt. I remember how I thought he looked a lot like Pop.

I believe Grandpa Irvin's and Pop's relationship was under stress. I don't know why.

All three of these grandparents died within a few months time of each other: Grandpa Irvin on January 28, 1941; Grandma Irvin on October 26, 1940, and Grandma Young on October 18, 1940.

Grandpa Irvin died at the Iowa Mental Health Institute at Clarinda. Some of the family records, those compiled by Aunt Emma, show that he died at Strahan. However, his death certificate says that he died at Clarinda.

Parenthetically, it was Aunt Emma (Pop's sister) who made effort to cover up the circumstances of Grandpa Irvin's birth. See section SOME MEMORIES OF MY PARENTS.

I suspect that Grandpa Irvin was a victim of either hardening of the arteries or Alzheimer's disease. As Aunt Ida (Pop's sister) described his condition to me years later, it would seem a good possibility that he suffered from one or both. In those days, many people were committed to such facilities. Care of victims of disease is much more humane today than it was 50 years ago. Of course, knowledge has grown as well concerning the illnesses which frequently come to the aged. Of course, Grandpa Irvin may have been mentally ill..though I do not think that that was the case.

At any rate, according to Aunt Ida, Grandpa Irvin did become mean-spirited and difficult to control in his later years.

Apparently the stress between Grandpa Irvin and Pop was never alleviated. When Pop was contacted by personnel from the state hospital about what should be done with Grandpa because he was seriously ill, Pop said that he did not care what they did with the old S.O.B. My vague memory is surely only a part of that story. I am sure, however, that the strained relationship was still present when Grandpa Irvin died.

Grandma Irvin, on the other hand, as I recall, was a gentle and forbearing person.

Such are my recollection of grandparents.

WHERE I LIVED

I was born January 9, 1931 in the southeast part of Mills County Iowa, in Deer Creek Township. The house where I was born was two miles south of the Strahan school house corner and two miles east on the southwest corner of the intersection of two county roads. A Dr. Christy, I believe, delivered me. I weighed 14 pounds at birth.

After residing there only a brief time, the family then moved to the Irvin house in Strahan. That house is no longer there.

We lived there for a brief time before moving around March 1, 1932 to near Randolph, Iowa. That house was located two miles east (or two and half miles east of "downtown" Randolph), one mile south and one fourth of a mile east on the south side of the road. The road running east out of Randolph is State Highway 184.

My father, Pop, was employed by Howard Kayton. Ethyl Kayton, Howard's wife, owned 80 acres on the farm where we lived. The Kaytons rented an adjacent 80 acres from a Mr. Brandon. Brandon lived in Sidney and was associated with the Brandon Brothers Lumber Company which had outlets in Randolph and Sidney.

I lived at this location until I was in the 7th grade. In 1944, again around March 1, we moved to a house on a farm which Kayton rented south of Strahan. It was almost 2 miles south of the Strahan school house corner on the east side of the road. (The Strahan school house corner is the junction of county roads which were in 1993 numbered M16 and H46.)

We lived there for two or three years. Then Kaytons quit

renting the land. We moved then to a house on land owned by a Mr. Criswell, land which the Kaytons rented. That house had not been occupied for a long time. This house was 1 mile south of the Strahan school house corner and ¼ mile west on the south side of the road. (This road had been abandoned and closed for several years prior to this writing, 1993)

My memory is faulty about time spans, at least specific years and months. After a time, this house burned to the ground. We then moved ½ west on the north side of the road in a house owned by Zeno Bass.

Charles Kayton, Howard's son, who had taken over the Kayton farming operation then built a house across the road from where he lived. He moved in an old farm building, a chicken house, I believe. It served as the starting point for a fairly nice house. It was located 1½ miles south of the Strahan school house corner on the east side of the road. It, too, burned to the ground a short time after we moved in. In 1993, there is no evidence at the sites that either of these two houses, the Criswell house and the "chicken" house, ever existed.

We then moved to an abandoned store building in Strahan. It was located at the first street intersection south of the Strahan United Methodist Church on the southwest corner.

After living there for a while, we moved to the Irvin house in Strahan. I lived there when I graduated from high school in 1949.

The sites of all these houses can be located on the maps of Strahan, the neighborhood south of Strahan, and the neighborhood east of Randolph.

In September, 1949, I went to Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa. There I lived in a college owned house on north Buxton, the address was 310 North Buxton. It was just south of Smith Memorial Chapel and just east of the Carver Science Hall.

After a year, I took a room in a private home. Grace Beam was the land lady. It was on West Boston, though I do not recall the address. It was one block south of the southeast corner of the football field on the northeast corner of the intersection. I tended the furnace, and took care of the lawn, along with other odd jobs around the property to pay my rent. I lived there until I left Simpson in the spring of 1953.

I spent the summer of 1953 at home in the Irvin house in Strahan and worked on the farm for Emmett Gipe.

I went to Denver, Colorado in September 1953 to attend the Iliff School of Theology. There I lived in school owned Taylor Hall. The first year I lived in the single students' wing. After marrying Genevieve Jones on July 18, 1954, I lived in the married students' wing of Taylor Hall for the remaining 2 years of the seminary education.

In June 1956, I moved to Logan, Iowa. In Logan, we lived in an old house just east of the church. An addition to the church occupies that site now. A new parsonage was built while we lived there. It is located at 122 E. 9th Street.

In June 1960, I moved to Des Moines, Iowa where we lived in a rented house at 1819 Clark Street. The Gatchel Church paid the rent.

After residing there for a few months (We lived there when Nancy was born, and when Leslie was hospitalized briefly), we moved to a parsonage, which the church purchased, at 3929 North 38th Street.

In June, 1966, we moved to Denison, where we resided in a parsonage on south 14th Street. It was located between the two wings of the present United Methodist Church. Later, the church razed that house, and purchased a house at 105 Morningview Avenue.

In June 1974 we moved to Clarinda, Iowa. There the parsonage was at 209 West Washington, just east of the church building.

It was while we lived at Clarinda that Phillip Dean was killed in an auto accident on May 1, 1978 just north of Maryville, Missouri. And at Clarinda, Genevieve and I were divorced on January 16, 1979.

In June 1980, I moved to Glenwood, Iowa where I lived in the parsonage at 110 North Walnut. I married Anna Regina Fitzpatrick on October 8, 1983.

In June 1984, we moved to Epworth United Methodist Church in Council Bluffs and lived in its parsonage at 2416 Avenue A.

In June 1988, we moved to Lake View, Iowa. We lived in the church provided parsonage at 312 Ash Avenue.

Upon retiring in 1991, we moved in a house in Omaha (Millard) that Gina owned and had lived in before we were married. As of 1993, we still reside there - 15218 Jefferson Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68137.

SOME RANDOM AND VAGUE MEMORIES

The 1930's were difficult years. Not only were they years of severe economic depression, they were years of weather extremes... dry and hot during the summers, cold and snowy during the winters. The hardest years, weatherwise, were 1934, 1935, and 1936.

The winter of 1935-36 was particularly rugged. Pop said that it never got above 0 degrees F. during the month of January, 1936.

I remember one winter, probably 1935-36, when the road in front of our house was drifted to the top of the fences which lined the road. The drifts were 8-10 feet deep. This was true for hundreds of yards along the road, perhaps more than ¼ mile. The extreme cold caused the drifted snow to freeze so solidly that a person could walk for miles on it without ever breaking through. I can't vouch for them, but there were stories around about horse drawn sleighs which were able to do the same.

I do remember that the shovelled paths to the barn, the hen house, the privy, and the well were like caverns...with snow piled well above my head.

I don't know how we kept warm in the house. Water froze in the house, in the kitchen. It froze in the water pail, the tea kettle, the reservoir on the range. The upstairs bedrooms were frigid. The liquid in the "slop jars" froze. The "slop jars" were actually metal pails with the lips appropriately shaped for sitting on. Fortunately, there were lids for them. Sometimes, we used gallon corn syrup pails for "slop jars". During the blizzards of 1935-36, we often had snow inside the upstairs. The wind would drive it

through the loose fitting windows. We did not have storm windows.

In the living room, we had a wood and coal burning heating stove. The stove is described elsewhere. I remember we huddled around the stove. We ate our meals hurriedly in the cold kitchen, where Mom had prepared them while wearing a coat to keep warm. We then rushed back to the warmth of the living room and its stove. We rushed to and from the bedrooms as well. Looking back, it seems miraculous that the house did not burn down, in the light of the fact that stove burned full force for long periods of time.

One of the winters, we survived on cornbread and milk. The potato crop the previous summer must have been the victim of the drought. Mom did make hominy from corn which we "stole" from the corn-cribs. We must have had some wheat in a bin as well that winter. I remember Mom made wheat into an edible food which we ate like cooked cereal. Though Mom was an excellent bread maker, her bread during the winter was second rate. I suppose it was too cold for the yeast to work properly.

I do not remember how we obtained the necessary grocery items during these hard winters. In another place, I write about the weekly grocery shopping, but the weather was so bad I am sure that we did not get to Randolph for several weeks during the winter of 1935-36.

The weather affected the amount of milk the cow would give, and the number of eggs the hens would lay. I can remember that the ends of the cow's teats sometimes froze. The eggs had to be collected several times daily, else they would freeze.

Our dining area was part of the kitchen. We had a large rectangular shaped table, so dilapidated that it sagged in the middle. At one end of it, Doris and I sat on a bench. Pop sat at the other end. Three others sat on the side next to the wall, and Mom and three other kids sat on the other side, the side closest to the cook stove. Besides the bench, chairs were used, but several of them had had the backs broken off. The table was covered with an oil cloth. (I can remember the distinctive odor of a new oil cloth when a new one became necessary.)

Our flatware was a mixture of many kinds, including wooden handled utensils which no longer had the handles. The plates and other dishes were a hodge podge of cheap china and glass as well as tin plates. The cups frequently were without handles.

The center of the table had the usual things...sugar bowl, salt and pepper, tooth picks, and a corn syrup pitcher.

A typical evening meal (other than the winter of 1935-36), supper we called it, was fried eggs, American fried potatoes, bread, maybe a canned vegetable, and corn syrup. We poured the syrup on the plate and then sopped it with pieces of bread. We frequently had boiled potatoes, often with the "jackets" on, and milk gravy. The gravy sometimes would have bits of bacon in it. We did have lots of fried chicken in late summer and early fall.

The noon meal was dinner. It was not too different than supper. It was a full meal, too. I suspect that Pop's hard work demanded a full meal at noon.

For breakfast, we had oatmeal, usually. Sometimes on Sunday, just after the Saturday shopping, we might have a dry cereal. We did have "Cream of Wheat" and "Malt-o-Meal" from time to time.

Mom would prepare special dishes sometimes. Noodles with either beef, or chicken, or pork were served occasionally. The beef or pork used was normally some which Mom had canned. The chicken was an older hen that had to be boiled. I believe we had chicken and dumplings once in a while. We had fresh meat for a few meals during the time when the Kaytons butchered, and we got the meat from either a beef or a swine. I believe the Kaytons gave us one butchered animal each year. Occasionally, Mom would make a pie from corn syrup. I don't how it was made, and frankly I don't care to know. What a sweet concoction it was.

On Saturdays during corn shucking time, Mom always made certain that we were well fed. We had to spend long days in the cornfield. We always had meat and pie on those days. I guess Mom felt we needed the extra food for extra energy.

Basic to our diet were eggs, potatoes, and bread. Anything beyond those 3 basics, I considered a treat.

Of course, during the summer, we had the usual variety of fresh garden produce. A lot of produce...tomatoes, green beans, peas, beets, corn...was canned for winter use. Fruits were scarce in our diet, even though we had a couple of untended apple trees in the garden area.

In the mid 1930's, Pop supplemented his meager income by working in one of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs. He did this at least one summer. It was a public works program called the WPA, Works Project Administration. Pop assisted in building and repairing the county road which bordered the western ½ mile of the farm on which we lived. He took his own spade and went to work with several dozen other unemployed and underemployed men. The men did

the work by hand..the same kind of work that giant, powerful earth moving machines do today. The WPA worked on many publically owned projects, such as streets, roads, bridges, parks, and a number of other public facilities.

Here is a list of very vague memories. In most cases I cannot place a precise time on them.

I remember Lloyd had pneumonia when he was an infant. It was possibly in the late spring of 1937. The dirt roads had begun to thaw. The car, which was to take him to the Hamburg, Iowa hospital, could not get to our place. So he had to be carried to about ¼ mile north of where Emma Rogers lived. This happened when we lived east of Randolph.

Doris one time sprained her ankle while playing girl's high school basketball at Randolph. I believe she hurt it while playing in a game with another high school. I clearly remember her hobbling to the school bus the next day after the ankle was hurt. This likely was in 1939 or 1940.

I remember Larry's birth, or I should say I remember Larry being there in our home one morning when I woke up...on the 6th of April, 1940. (Larry was born April 5, 1940.)

I remember Pop playing the harmonica. He chewed tobacco, and I remember how he would have to tap the tobacco juice out of the instrument. He really played pretty well, however.

I recall he loved country and western music. I can remember him, after we got our first radio, trying to tune in WSM so he could hear Roy Acuff, Eddie Arnold, Bill Monroe, Ernest Tubb, et.al.

I can remember stealing a plug of Pop's Horseshoe chewing tobacco and trying it out. It made me very ill and I hid the rest of

the plug in a crack in the foundation of the kitchen wing of our home east of Randolph.

I remember Melvin getting his first car. I don't remember the make but it was a light blue color...lighter than the normal dark colors used on cars in those days. I also remember Melvin and Fern and Mom leaving for Hiawatha, Kansas so that they could get married. This was when we lived east of Randolph.

I have a very dim memory of George's return from the Navy, and how proud Mom was of him.

I have some memory of Mom and Pop's 25th wedding anniversary. This happened when we lived in the abandoned store in Strahan.

When we lived near Randolph, we had visitors one day...they were probably relatives, though I don't remember who. A friend came with them, in fact they came in his car. An electrical storm came up. The man went out to roll his car's windows up. While doing so, lightning struck the car and the man. He turned nearly blue. He recovered, though I do not recall how he was dealt with, what treatment he was given.

I recall that when Uncle Wilbur (Mom's brother) and his family lived at White Cloud, we visited there a time or two. White Cloud was rural school about half way between Malvern and Strahan near the Wabash railroad. There was a swinging foot bridge across the West Nishnabotna River and I played on it. It was built, I presume, by the school district so that students on the east side of the river could get to the school. It has been gone for many years, of course. In fact, there has been a bridge for road traffic there for many years.

When Uncle Wilbur lived there, he took some of us to Omaha.

In fact, it was my first trip to Omaha. I remember nothing about it except that Wilbur said he would drive us through "nigger town". That was the first time I ever saw an American of African descent.

I remember Max and I were playing around the horse drawn sickle bar mower one day while we lived east of Randolph. We managed to cut one of Max's fingers rather badly in the sickle. He bled, and the sight of his blood caused me to faint.

Strangely, to me anyway, I do not have vivid memories of the Second World War. My recollections of Pearl Harbor, D Day, VE Day, VJ Day, the Atomic Bomb, and Roosevelt's death are quite dim.

I did follow rather closely the accounts of the war as they were reported in the DES MOINES REGISTER. I remember being fascinated by the daily diagrammed maps of the battle fronts.

I recall the war time rationing of tires, gasoline, sugar, meat, and probably other items. Motorists were urged to drive no more than 35 miles per hour in order to save gasoline and tires. Families had coupon books..each coupon good for so much of the rationed item. I was aware that "black markets" were widespread. If you had the money, and knew the right people, the "black market" could supply everything a person needed or wanted. But we had neither the money nor the connections to get things through the "black market".

Wartime patriotic songs made a quick appearance. Some of them were: "Remember Pearl Harbor", "Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer", "Smoke on the Water", "Filipino Baby", and several more.

Doyle Hankins, Leo Hankins' younger brother, and I were good friends in those years. We were both in grade school. The

time was 1941-1944. We wrote a bit of patriotic doggerel which I still remember. It went:

Hitler's mustache is old and gray,
It's always getting in Eva's way,
She even chews it in her sleep,
And thinks she's eating shredded wheat.

Eva Braun was Adolf Hitler's mistress.

I think it strange that I do not remember more about those years. Perhaps, the limited sources of information available in those days is part of the reason. The DES MOINES REGISTER and the radio supplied our news and information. We could not experience the war live as television now permits.

SPARE TIME ACTIVITIES, 1930'S AND 1940'S

As a family, we spent a lot of our spare time by playing cards and pitching horse shoes. We most often played pinocle and seven point pitch, though we sometimes played rummy. When I was small, Pop set the horseshoe pegs at half distance so that I could play. At half distance, however, the game was a snap for him.

I had a lot of free time on my hands when I was a child. This was especially true during the summer months of school vacation. Since we had no electricity, and since this was the day before television, video games, and other kinds of entertainment dependent on modern technology, we had to find other ways to fill our time.

One of things I did was to do nothing. But I guess I discovered early on that that wasn't too exciting. Besides, if Mom or Pop found me idle, they would find some chore to do. Like all children I would much rather play hard than to do easy work.

One of the things we did was to build stilts. They were simple to make. Just take a couple of 5 to 6 foot boards, nail a step on each one of them, secure the steps with leather straps, and we were ready to go. We would walk around on the stilts all the time arguing as to who had the best or the highest stilts. We even nailed cleats on the bottom ends so that we would not slip in the mud. The cleats were merely short pieces of metal strips nailed to the sides of the bottom ends of the stilts.

We also rolled hoops around. The hoops were the metal rings which bound the hubs of wagon wheels together. We removed them from discarded wheels. They were probably 8 to 10 inches in diam-

eter and perhaps three fourths of an inch wide. We made a tee shaped pusher to roll the hoops with. The tee was merely a 3 foot lath with a cross piece nailed on one end. We raced each other sometimes. The tee served two purposes. One was to roll the hoop, the other was to stop it. That was done by catching the hoop with one end of the cross piece.

Sometimes we rolled larger metal hoops around by hand. These hoops were the treads from old wagon wheels. They were some four or five feet in diameter, and perhaps an inch and a half wide. Sometimes we would see who could roll one the farthest. We would get the hoop rolling as we ran as fast as we could. Then we let it roll on its own until it stopped and fell over. We would also let them free roll down the hills on the county roads near our home.

We also played with automobile tires in the same manner. We did not have a car, so I suppose we found the tires in the neighbor's dump. Dashner's junk pile was across the road from the west boundry of the farm on which we lived, so it is likely that we found old tires there. By the way, each farmstead had its own dump or junk pile. Frequently, the junk piles were in ravines as was the case with Dashner's. Ours was not in a ravine, it was along the fence roughly south of the cob house.

Before leaving the Dashners, I will add this note. The Dashners were rich. Byron Dashner farmed 320 acres, and had a John Deere tractor along with equipment for it. He still shucked corn by hand, though. Melvin, and I believe George, picked corn for him a year or two.

Interestingly enough, many years later when I lived in Glen-

wood, I had the funeral of Mrs. Byron Dashner. Byron had died previous to that time.

I suppose Mom and Pop got upset sometimes when we came home from wandering around the area. Frequently we brought stuff from other people's junk piles. It may be that some of the iron hoops came from a dump on a neighboring farm.

And that is another way we filled our time...just wandering around. We went all over the area; to Dashner's creek, to Hughes' creek, in Rogers' pasture, all over the whole area. I don't remember that we did much. Frequently, the roaming was done with the Hughes kids when we lived near Randolph. When we lived south of Strahan it was done with Fred, and maybe Freda, Brown.

Fred Brown and I used to strip and try to swim in Deer Creek. Along the creek, wild vines were often used as swings. Sometimes we could even swing across the creek.

Mumblety-peg was a favorite rainy day activity. As you may know, this was played on an old board with a pocket knife. The knife had a short blade and a long blade. The long blade was opened to a right angle with the handle, the short blade was fully opened. It was played by lightly sticking the long blade into the board and flipping the knife with the end of the handle. We had a scoring system worked out: 100 if it stuck on the short blade, 75 if on both the long and short blade, 50 if on the long blade, 25 if on the long blade and handle, and nothing if it landed flat.

We did not have a sand box, but we had dirt piles. We used to play in the dirt a lot. We had a couple of very small cars or trucks which we likely got for Christmas. We made roads and hills and bridges in the dirt. I don't recall that we put water into the

dirt to do things with mud. I don't remember what all our playing in the dirt was about, but we did spend hours at it.

I also used to make wagons from cereal boxes. We did not have dry cereal too often, though we did on some Sunday mornings. After the box was empty, I would cut the front of the box off. From that I would cut a tongue. It was a long narrow strip with a short tee on one end. I pushed the tongue through a slot where the bottom and the back side of the carton joined. From the rest of the front panel, I cut wheels and either glued them or otherwise attached them to the sides. Then I had a wagon, not a very durable one, but a wagon nevertheless.

We fashioned other items from the cereal boxes or other cardboard that we may have had around. I remember we would cut out farm animals and folded the legs in such a way that they would stand up.

We used other things normally thrown away to make items. Tin cans became telephones when a wire was stretched between them. It didn't work, but we imagined that it did. The flattened lids of syrup cans became "sailers". "Sailers" were thrown into the air to see how high and far they would soar and glide.

A wheel from a broken down coaster wagon, or one which we found in someone's dump, became a wheel barrow with some scrap lumber, a bolt, and some old nails. Sometimes a wheel barrow was strong enough to wheel each other around.

We would also walk into Randolph a couple of times a week. "Downtown" Randolph was a good three and a half miles away from where we lived. If we walked and did not loiter it took us about 45 minutes to an hour to get there.

I can't recall a whole lot of what we did when we got to Randolph. We probably went to the Hankinses (sister Doris' in-laws) some of the times. Leo had brothers and sisters who were about our ages. Maybe we visited other friends made at school. Perhaps I saw friends such as Ed Watts, or Duard Brake. We did not visit Jim Hiatt or Dick Wederquist. They thought they were above us.

However, I do remember one such visit to Randolph. Ed Watts, who worked a little for R.L. Russell in the Red and White Grocery store, had stolen a box of cigars. One day several of us smoked some of those cigars in an abandoned building in the south part of Randolph. I remember it very well, because I became very sick. I felt like vomiting all the time, and the whole world was spinning. I walked the 3½ miles home in absolute misery.

We frequently walked to Randolph for the weekly movies. They were at night, so we walked home after dark many times. The movies were usually westerns...Lash Larue, Gene Autry, Destry. There was also a drawing for cash. I don't remember what it cost to get in, maybe 25¢. When you went to a movie the first time, you received a number. That number was yours for the season. You had to be present to win. My number was drawn one night when I was not there. I do not recall what the drawing was worth.

On Sundays, particularly in the summer we had company. Usually it was my half sister Ethlyn and her family. Ethlyn's children were about the same age as we were...except for Doris and Melvin who were older than any of Ethlyn's kids. Ethlyn also had children younger than my youngest brother Larry. But from George to Larry there was a Degase (that was Ethlyn's married name) kid the same age as one of us. I never knew, when I was a child, what relation-

Ethlyn was to me. I guess I regarded her more like an aunt than like a sister.

When the Degases came we often played group games like "Hide and Seek" and "Sheep My Pen". The Degase children did not seem to be athletically inclined so we did not play things like base ball and touch football.

I don't remember ever having a baseball with the leather cover still on it. Usually it was an old ball wrapped in adhesive tape. We did not have bats either, so we used sticks. Nor did we have baseball gloves. Yet, we seemed to have fun.

Pop in his younger years had been a good baseball player. In spite of his gruff nature, I remember how thrilling it was for me when he would play with us once in a while.

Midge Moore and son Joey came often. In the mid-1930's Midge spent a lot of time with us, it seemed. I don't remember how she got to our house. As I recall, she lived for at least part of that time period, in a house in Strahan. Joey involved himself with whatever spare time activity we might be doing while he was there. Midge (Mildred) was a daughter of Pop's sister Emma.

Later, after Midge married Bill Lee, they continued to come regularly. Their visits became infrequent when they moved to Runnells, Iowa..just east of Des Moines.

Other visitors who came during the summer were Uncle Wilbur and family, Uncle Leverett and his wife and their lap dog, Aunt Ida, Uncle Leo and Marilyn, and Uncle Mack and family, Uncle Paul, and maybe other relatives. (Ida and Mack were sister and brother to Pop; Wilbur, Leverett, and Paul were Mom's brothers.)

Leverett was an engineer. He worked on the Hoover Dam and made

a lot of money. He lived in Barberton, Ohio. As a child, I got the impression that Leverett thought himself above the rest of the family. I understand that Leverett and Wilbur were at odds during the last part of their adult lives.

The summer rains presented a chance to have some fun. We would hardly wait for the rain to stop. When it did, we rushed out barefooted. (We went barefooted all summer, rain or shine.) Often, we would head to the creek between Dashner's and Fred Dodd's. We wanted to see how much the rain had caused it to rise, how much water it carried. Sometimes it overflowed its banks, though never enough to do severe damage.

However, once in a while, after a heavy rain, we could see a lot of debris floating by. Sometimes we saw drowned piglets floating by.

I don't recall doing much at the farmstead where we lived after a rain. We did check to see how the baby chicks came through the rain, if it came while they were little. Once in a while we lost a few. We also checked the nests of brooding hens, if those nests were located outside the barn or chicken house. See another section about the hens and chickens.

We were not the only creatures to roam about after a rain, so did the neighbor's ducks. One time, they stayed around long enough to lay some eggs. We put the eggs under a brooding hen and in time we had our own ducks.

As I noted, we went barefooted. We were supposed to wash the mud off our feet before going into the house. I can remember pumping water for my brothers, and they for me so that we could wash the mud off.

Summer rains also replenished the rain barrel under the down-

spout at one of the corners of the house. The "soft" water gathered in the barrel was used by Mom and Doris for washing their hair.

Another activity I did during the summer produced a little spending money. It was while we lived on the Criswell place south of Strahan. It probably was the summer of 1946 or 1947.

The county paid a bounty for groundhogs, so I trapped them. Groundhogs are very destructive animals. They are a large rodent getting to be 35 to 50 pounds in weight. They dug huge holes for their dens. I believe the bounty was 50¢.

I used steel leg traps. I did not have a rifle, so when I caught one I had to club it to death. Then I had to literally scalp the animal and remove its ears. Then I took the ears to the appropriate county office to receive the bounty.

Many of the dens in which I placed traps were in the grader ditches along the county road west of where I lived. (That road has been closed for many years.)

The groundhog, perhaps a woodchuck, is really a fierce animal. I can't imagine how the people handle Punxsutawney Phil on Groundhog's Day, if indeed Phil is a real groundhog.

About a mile from our house was Spencer's Orchard. The part of the orchard closest to us was farthest from the house of the owner/tenant. So it was rather easy for us to steal apples. I am sure that we stole them while they were too green sometimes. I don't remember getting caught. Incidently, most of the orchard was destroyed in the October 1940 freeze. I believe it is no longer there. It was a mile and a half east of Randolph on the south side of the road.

We also used to steal cherries from a couple of trees

near the Dashner's house. In both cases - the apples and the cherries - we ate what we stole. Sometimes we regretted it, however, for we often ended up with stomach aches from the too green fruit.

The Dashners had a huge barn, the kind with a cupola in the center of the roof. We had a large barn where we lived, too. Ours was more of a regular hay barn with stalls on one side, grain bins on the other, and a large area in the middle for hay. But the Dashner's white barn dwarfed our red barn.

It also attracted more pigeons, not that ours didn't. Pigeons are not the most desirable birds around a farm and around a barn. At any rate, some of us along with some of the Hughes kids went to the barn at Dashners to kill pigeons sometimes. We never thought about getting permission. The last time we went to Dashner's barn, Byron ran us off...with a good deal of cussing at us.

We made sling shots from the rubber of old inner tubes - tubes which probably came from a neighbor's junk pile. The sack-like piece which held the rock to be shot likely came from the tongue of an old shoe. The fork was from a branch of a tree. We used to shoot at cans, birds, and other targets. We never hit anything very often. I do remember, however, walking to Randolph one day. We were walking along Highway 184 which was gravelled, so we had plenty of rocks. I saw a sparrow on a telephone wire perhaps a hundred feet away. I shot at it - and hit it. I don't think I ever hit another bird. I didn't enter my mind that maiming a bird was not something to be proud of - nor did it enter my mind that "nigger shooters", that's what we called the sling shots, contained a most offensive and degrading term.

We also made "guns". They were merely an L shaped piece of board, perhaps a foot long with the foot of the L being perhaps four inches. We nailed a spring type clothes pin to the foot end. We used rings of rubber cut from old inner tubes. We placed the folded end of the rubber ring into the clothes pin and stretched the other end over the "barrel" of the gun. Push the clothes pin open and the rubber ring would fly away...not too far, however.

We also used to make "tractors" from wooden thread spools and rubber bands, and stick matches. This was done by putting a couple of tacks in one end of the spool. Then we threaded the rubber band through the hole in the spool. The next step was to use a piece of a broken stick match to run through one end of the rubber band, and wedge it between the tacks. At the other end a full length stick match was inserted through the rubber band. We lubricated that end with hand soap. Then we "wound up" the rubber band with the full length match. The tacks and the short piece of match on the other end of the spool enabled us to do so. After the rubber band was tightly wound, we then set it on a table or the floor

As the rubber band unwound the spool would crawl across the surface. Sometimes we notched the edges of the spool creating "lugs" on the tractor wheels.

Our home was visited once in a while by hobos. We lived several miles from the nearest railroad, and tramps and hobos usually travelled on freight trains, so I don't know how they found our house. As I remember, we always fed them.

Once, I remember a band of gypsies stopping. I don't remember the people, but I remember the elaborate wagons...wagons

in which the gypsies could eat and sleep. I am sure that they did not hang around very long. Popular belief was that gypsies were thieves. We certainly had nothing for them to steal.

Spare time winter activities were not greatly different in the 1930's and 1940's than they are now, I suspect...the out-door activities, that is.

We did the usual snowballing, fort making, and snowmen making.

We did have great fun sledding. We usually sledded on the hills of the county roads near our home. We were fortunate enough to have sleds, probably Christmas presents. Unfortunately, they often were broken...a broken runner or having collapsed from too much weight on them. We did make a couple of sleds of our own. They were not a great success. They were heavy and did not slide very well.

Aside from activities dependent on snow, most of our spare-time winter activities took place in the house or in the barn.

One of the favorite things to do was to play in the hay in the barn. This was great for the cold winter days when Mom would get fed up with us and run us out of the house.

The hay was quite dusty, normally. The barn had all kinds of open rafters and ledges around the hay area. In fact, we could climb all the way up to the big door, the one through which hay was put into the barn. Of course, the door was closed in the winter. After climbing up there, or to some other high place, we jumped into the hay. I guess we even had competitions to see who would jump from the highest place.

Sometimes the hay section of the barn was nearly full, other times it was empty. I don't remember why a lot of hay was "put up" some summers and lesser amounts or none during other summers.

Besides playing cards, we also had a Carom board. The several games that could be played on the Carom board occupied some of our time. Carom boards are still available. Checkers, a variety of Carom games, cokinole, chess, etc. can be played on them. The board is about a square yard with pockets in each of the corners. The caroms, wooden rings about an inch and a fourth in diameter, were the main game pieces. They were of several colors, usually red and green, with a lesser number of white and black ones.

The object of caroms was to get all your color caroms off the board before your opponent did. You had to flip the shooter (the white carom) with the index finger and knock your color carom into one of the pockets. There were some rules to the game...like a restraint line for the shooters, etc.

At any rate, we whiled away a lot of time playing various games, usually caroms, on the Carom board. Max seemed to be the best carom player.

HOW WE DID THINGS AT HOME

Laundry

The weekly washing was done on Monday. Mom, for the most part, used home-made soap. I do not remember specifically how she made it though she did use the fragments of the hand soap along with lye. The home-made soap was in bar form and she slivered it with a knife before using it.

There were several operations involved in the clothes washing process.

One part of it was to boil the clothes in a large vessel which we, appropriately, called the boiler. It was a flat oval shaped vessel about 3 feet long and 18-22 inches wide and about 18 inches deep with a lid. The water, soap, and clothes were boiled on the kitchen range. The range was fueled by corn cobs or kindling. A short stick, usually a piece of a broom handle, was used to handle the hot clothes.

As I recall, the clothes then went into the washing machine. The washer was hand powered. The mechanism of the washer was such that when a lever was pushed back and forth, an agitator, we called it the dasher, went up and down inside the drum of the washer. This beat on the clothes and, presumably, helped to remove the dirt.

The clothes were then rinsed a couple of times. From the washer the clothes were run through a hand-powered wringer. The wringer had two rollers made of rubber. They were about 2 inches in diameter and about 18 inches long. They were geared together so that when a hand lever was rotated the clothes were drawn between the rollers. This wringing operation was repeated a couple of times after the clothes had been in the rinse waters.

Mom scrubbed some of the clothes on a wash board.

After rinsing, the clothes, which included sheets, towels, etc., were hung on the clothes line to dry. We must have had 300 to 400 feet of clothes line space. Sometimes, because of the weather, the clothes were hung in various places inside the house, usually fairly close to one of the stoves.

I remember helping Mom take the clothes off the line. In cold weather, the clothes were frozen. Folding the clothes was like folding card-board. The long-johns looked like headless mannequins that had to be crushed in order to be folded. The legs of the overalls were like long tubes of denim. Frozen clothes were taken inside, thawed, and hung to finish drying.

Ironing

After drying, some of the clothes needed to be pressed. This was the day before modern permanent pressed fabrics. The clothes to be pressed had to be dampened a bit. Mom would sprinkle a bit of water on the item, and roll it up for a time. Sometimes, she had more than bushel basket full of "sprinkled" clothes waiting to be ironed.

I don't remember an ironing board. Perhaps there was one. But flatirons were heated on the range. The flatirons were lifted and used by a detachable handle. We must have had a half dozen or so irons. I remember that Mom used to test the heat by moistening her finger and touching the bottom of the iron. It took her most of the day to iron.

Incidently, the flatirons were sometimes used in bed on extremely cold nights. They were warmed and placed under the covers, usually at the foot of the bed.

Milk, Butter, Cheese

We usually had a milk cow or two around which we milked by hand, of course

Besides for cooking and drinking, we used the milk in other fashions, also. We did not have a cream separator. That was a hand operated machine that separated the cream from the milk. We had to wait until the cream rose to the top of the milk. Then it would be skimmed off. We used the cream in various ways - in cooking, on hot cereal, and for making butter. Parenthetically, one of the reasons I don't care to drink milk today is because in skimming the cream off there always seemed to be bits of it left in the milk. I guess it did not like those little bits of cream in my milk.

We used a churn to make butter. The churn was a ceramic container about a foot in diameter and perhaps two feet tall. It was fitted with a wooden lid with a hole in the center. The dasher, as we called it, was a three foot section of a broom stick with two cross pieces about 8 inches long fastened to one end. This was inserted through the hole in the lid and was manually dashed up and down until the butter was formed. The butter was then separated from the butter milk. It was salted and placed in an appropriate container. I don't remember what happened to the butter milk, though I believe Pop drank some of it once in a while.

Later, we had a different kind of churn. It was a glass container, holding perhaps a gallon and a half. Its screw-on lid was fitted with a mechanism that when a handle was turned a dasher would rotate inside.

In addition to butter, Mom used milk and cream to make cottage

cheese. I do not remember how this was done. I remember that it was hung for a few days in a cloth bag. I never thought much of the cottage cheese. It was dryer and had smaller curds than today's supermarket cottage cheese.

We used to use the cool storm cellar in order to prolong the life of the milk before it soured. We also had an ice-box which we used during some of the summers. Ice for it was purchased from the ice man. The ice man had an open pick-up with ice in it covered with tarps. He went from house to house in the area supplying ice in the days before electric regrigerators. I remember that when he came, we gathered around the pick up, hoping to pick up a bit of ice that might crack off as he sawed the large pieces into smaller ones. Even the ice "saw dust" was a treat.

The sour and unusable milk was put out for the chickens to consume.

Fresh Meat

We did not have a lot of fresh meat. I believe the Kaytons gave us one butchered animal annually.

We made some effort to salt some of the meat in order to preserve it. That was true of the hams. Mom canned quite a bit of the meat.

A lot of the meat was ground into sausage and hamburger. The patties were cooked and stored in crockery containers. Then melted lard was poured over the patties until they were covered. When we used the patties, they were dug out of the lard and heated. Of course, the lard was used, too.

We got the lard through a rendering process. The fat of the butchered animals was cut into small bits. These bits were fried

in order to extract the lard. The melted lard was poured off the bits of fat into crock jars. The little bits remaining we called "cracklings". The cracklings were stored, too. I do not remember how they were used. I do remember that they tasted pretty good, perhaps similar to pork rinds.

Lard was used in the same manner as products like CRISCO are used today.

Canning

Mom did a lot of canning. We had a large garden. It supplied fresh produce in season. But for winter use much of the produce was canned - tomatoes, peas, green beans, beets, corn. I do not remember the whole canning process. Mom did use the boiler, she used mason jars, and rubber rings which fit on the jars. It was rather complicated to can. I remember the preparation, the boiling, the sealing of the jars, though I cannot recall greater detail of the operation.

Making and Care of Clothes

Most of our clothes were purchased through the Sears and/or Wards mail order catalogs. As I note in another narrative we had two new outfits a year - two pair of denim bib overalls and two shirts. The shirts were sometimes of a printed cloth but usually were chambray or another durable cloth, the name of which I don't remember.

In addition to the new clothes which were the "school" clothes we had last year's clothes which were our "everyday" clothes.

The clothes took a real beating. They were frequently torn and ripped or worn through. They were patched and repaired by

hand or on the Singer treadle sewing machine. I remember times wearing patched overalls to school with the fabric of the patches being more or less faded then the article itself. The often huge patches stuck out like "sore thumbs".

Mom used to spend hours darning our socks, as well. She also spent a lot of time patching the corn shucking mittens. The mittens wore through quickly because of the way the corn was husked and thrown into the wagon. So these flannel mittens were patched in an effort to make them last longer, perhaps for another day only.

In patching the socks and mittens, Mom used a corn cob to keep the material in place as she sewed on it by hand.

I do not remember that Mom made clothes for me or my brothers, though she may have made a shirt now and then. What clothes she did make were for Doris and for herself. She probably purchased some of the cloth. Another source of cloth was the bags which flour came in. We bought flour in 50 pound bags. The bags were white or printed cloth. Many of these bags ended up being dresses or blouses for Doris.

Our coats, almost exclusively denim for the males, often had to be patched because of the rugged way they were treated in the winter work around the farm. They were blanket lined, that is, they had a flannel lining.

We usually wore a high top work shoe. We wore them so long and treated them so roughly that they frequently needed resoling or reheeling. Pop did this. He had several sizes of lasts and a stand which they fitted on. The last was a metal piece shaped so that it would go inside the shoe. Pop would resole or reheel shoes using new half-soles or new heels. He affixed them with

tacks and trimmed them with a shoe knife.

In order to keep the shoes from wearing out too rapidly, Pop would tack steel plates, particularly to the heels. We called them heel plates. On occasion, a rubber half sole with a glue on it was stuck over the worn out sole.

One place that Pop could not fix was the toe of the shoe, where we often wore holes. I can remember wearing shoes when the leather in the toe end had been worn away leaving a hole almost like a woman's toeless sandal.

We must have spent a lot of time crawling around on the rough floors and ground on our hands and knees. That is the only way I can account for the many holes we had in the knees of our overalls and in the toes of our shoes.

While speaking of clothes, I should mention about Pop's clothes. He had two pairs of overalls...a new pair and the ones he wore. The new pair was his dress-up clothes. He seldom wore his dress-up clothes.

Neither pair of overalls was ever washed. He apparently believed that washing them would weaken the material and shorten the life of the overalls. When his work pair would almost literally fall apart, he would then use his dress-up overalls for work and buy a new dress-up pair.

He also wore long-johns the year round, though his summer ones were lighter than his winter ones. Fortunately, he permitted his long-johns to be laundered regularly.

I never saw my father dressed in anything other than a pair of overalls.

Water, Dishwashing, Etc.

We got our water from a hand pump. It was near the house when we lived near Randolph. It was about a block away at a neighbor's when I was in high school and we lived in the Irvin house in Strahan.

Near Randolph, we had a table on which we placed a pail and a wash basin. The pail contained the drinking water. It included a metal dipper. Often, the water from the pail was used to cool the hot water placed in the basin when we washed our hands and face.

Water was heated on the cook stove, or in its reservoir. The reservoir was a tank holding about 5 gallons. It was part of the range and was located on the side farthest from the firebox. The water in it was nearly always warm because of the way the heat circulated around the oven. Of course, water was heated in tea-kettles and in pans as well. Hot water from either source.... the reservoir or heating vessel....was used in the wash basin.

Water for washing dishes came from the same source. We used two large metal basins, one for washing dishes, the other for rinsing. After washing and rinsing the dishes, silverware, pots, and pans were immediately hand dried with a dish towel, which was probably an old flour sack. They were then stored in the free-standing cupboard. Washing and drying dishes was a chore reserved almost entirely for 2 of the children. If the dishes were not properly washed, they had to be done a second time. Usually, the second time saw them come out very clean.

Floor Scrubbing

About once a week Mom, with the help of the older children,

would scrub the floors. The floors were bare wood, unvarnished and unpainted. The boards were ill-fitting. There was no tile or linoleum. The floors were scrubbed with a mop, rinsed and left to dry. The mop usually was a discarded shirt, blouse, or dish towel.

The dirty water from laundering, scrubbing, dishwashing, etc., was thrown out. At the place near Randolph, it was thrown out not more than 15 feet from the back door. Small amounts of water to be discarded were frequently placed in a "slop bucket". When that bucket was full of water and other kitchen wastes, it was poured out near the back door as well.

I might add that the contents of the "slop jars" from the bed rooms, if they did not contain solid waste, were emptied in the same place. With solid waste in them, the contents were poured into one of the holes in the privy.

Lighting

None of the homes I lived in had electricity or indoor plumbing. My first experience with those conveniences was in the fall of 1949 when I went to Simpson College.

We used kerosene lamps to light our house. The lamps were of the style which can often be seem as collectors items in many homes today. The lamps were very dim. Yet, we studied by them, and played cards by them. Mom used a kerosene lamp in the kitchen to prepare breakfast and, in the winter, supper. The lamp was also used late in the evening for doing the dishes, and cleaning up the kitchen.

We had three or four of them. We carried them from room to room as there was need.

We used a kerosene lantern for portable light. The lantern was

used to light the way to the privy after dark. We used it to milk by, Pop used it to harness the draft animals by. Pop sometimes took the lantern to the field when he was shucking corn. It provided a little light as well as a little heat for cold hands. Pop frequently went to the corn field before 5:00 A.M. Given the frost and cold weather perhaps the lantern's heat helped.

We did obtain an Aladdin lamp a little later, probably in the late 1930's. It was a kerosene lamp, too. It gave a lot more light however, than the wick lamps. It was equipped with a "mantle" which glowed. The mantle, and the pressurized fuel supply, caused the Aladdin lamp to give significantly more light.

The mantle was quite fragile. If the table was bumped, or the lamp was jarred in another fashion the mantle would break up. We tried to keep an extra mantle on hand.

We also had a flashlight, even though we had a hard time keeping fresh batteries on hand. It is hard to realize it now, but the first thing I bought with my own money was a flashlight.

We did not have yard lights, of course. We had to depend on the lantern and/or the flashlight when we went into the dark.

Sleeping

We slept on mattresses of straw, mattresses which Mom made. The ticking (the covering cloth) was similar to the striped denim cloth in some of the overalls we wore. I believe it was lighter weight, but it was similar to the touch and sight.

The ticking was purchased from Sears or Wards and sewn into the appropriate shape. We then filled it with as clean straw as we could find...likely from the windrows that the grain combine left at the harvest of small grain. Then, of course, the mattress

was sewn shut. The mattress was shaped best it could be when it was placed on the bed. We did have at least one corn husk mattress for I remember sleeping on one when we lived 2 miles south of Strahan, during my junior high years.

Mom and Pop did have an old commercially produced mattress. It was cotton filled. It did not have inner springs...that kind of mattress came later.

The bed linens were sheets (perhaps made from flour sacks), quilts, and feather filled pillows. One of the beds had a pillow that reached across its width. We called that pillow a "bolster". In extremely cold weather, we used coats thrown over the quilts to add additional warmth. Sometimes, we used heated flatirons or a heated "soapstone" to assist in warming the beds.

The bedrooms were equipped with what we called "slop jars". We used them to relieve ourselves during the night. On cold winter nights, the liquid sometimes froze.

But as cold as the bed rooms were in the winter, it was worse during the summer heat. The heat was so oppressive that it was next to impossible to sleep. That heat only lasted for a month of so, however. Nevertheless, we positioned our beds near the windows, hoping to catch any breeze that might be stirring. We slept outside on the ground once in a while in an effort to beat the heat.

School Clothes

For the first 13 years of my life I wore nothing but bib overalls, shirts, socks, and long underwear (in winter) except the baby clothes I wore as an infant.

After I started to school, I got two new pair of overalls,

and two new shirts each August. These were my "school clothes", as well as my "dress up" clothes. Most of the time the shirts were chambray or some other strong cloth. Once in a while, I did get printed and colorful shirts, which for want of a better term, I will call sports shirts.

I wore a pair of overalls and a shirt to school for a week. The next week I would wear the other pair of overalls and shirt. Immediately after getting home from school, I changed into my "every day" clothes. These were the overalls and shirts that I had worn the previous year to school. Maybe they were hand-me-downs from one of my older brothers...ones which he had worn the previous year.

Always, the every day clothes, particularly the overalls, were patched and faded. Usually, toward the end of the school year the school clothes were also patched. The knees is where the overalls wore out first. Mom would hand patch the holes, using denim from old overalls. The patches never matched the fade in the overalls. The patches, as a result, were very visible. Later Mom used a commercially produced patch, which under heat and pressure, stuck over the hole. Of course, that type of patch was never faded when it was applied.

The reasons I changed to every day clothes were fairly obvious. For one thing, I had chores to do and that would involve getting the clothes dirty or subject them to the possibility of getting torn. For another thing, using the old clothes while at home gave longer life to the school clothes.

I also got a pair of work style shoes before the beginning of each school year. We had older shoes, maybe handed down, to wear for every day.

I wore socks with the heavy shoes, the same pair all week. The socks were of a heavy material. Nevertheless, Mom spent a lot of time darning our socks.

I had two pairs of long handled underwear. I alternated weeks in wearing them, also. The underwear also served as night wear.

As I mention elsewhere, I did not wear shoes or underwear during the summer.

In addition, for cold weather, we had caps. The caps had bills similar to the advertizing caps of today. The caps were much heavier, however. They also had ear tabs which folded up into the inside of the cap. The ear tabs were folded out during cold weather to cover the ears. We wore the "blanket-lined" denim jackets for coats. One year I did not have a winter coat. How I got one is described in another place in this narrative.

In the 1940's, after I moved the Strahan, I was able to buy my own clothes. Then I wore jeans, briefs, tee shirts, and a shirt. It was really a stylish thing, at one point in time, to wear a white tee shirt under a regular shirt and have the tee shirt show at the neck where the two top buttons of the regular shirt were left unbuttoned. I did, however, continue to wear overalls to school part of the time, and used overalls for every day clothes.

Slaughtering Chickens

Young chickens were often slaughtered for food. The young chicken was known as a fryer. I guess that the chickens, born in the late winter or early spring, were large enough in late July and August to be used for food. My recollection is not clear about that time span, so it may not be exact.

The chickens literally had their necks wrung until the heads came off. A chicken was grasped by the head, and the bird's body was twirled around and around until the head came off. I suppose that we sometimes merely cut the head off with an ax on a chopping block from the wood pile. As I recall, we used both methods to kill the bird.

After the head was removed, the chicken then flopped around on the ground for a while, as the blood drained from its body. Then it was doused into a bucket of hot water. Upon removal from the water, the feathers were quickly removed. The hot water treatment made them easier to remove.

Then the "pin feathers" were taken out. I guess pin feathers were small developing feathers that were not removed by the water treatment. The feather removing process was called "plucking".

The bird was then butchered, carefully removing the intestines and cut into pieces.

I remember one of the things I liked to see was when Mom cut open the gizzard. I was always amazed at the sand and other material in it. I did not know then that the gizzard is a major digestive and food processing organ for a chicken.

The young chickens were almost always pan-fried. Mom was an expert at pan-frying chicken.

Chickens wounded by various accidents were quickly harvested, following the same method just described. Chickens were wounded by the mower or by being hit by a passing car.

Once in a while, an old chicken, usually a hen was slaughtered. It was prepared in the same way except it was probably cut up differently. The old hen was boiled for a long time, for the hen was usually a "tough old bird".

Chicken and dumplings and/or chicken and noodles resulted from the slaughter of one of the older birds.

I do not remember how we disposed of the intestines and other unusable parts of the chicken. I do remember that Mom used to fry the lower portion of the chicken leg, including the foot.

Personal Hygiene

If cleanliness is next to godliness, we were a pretty godless family. Compared to today's standards of cleanliness we were rather unclean. Parenthetically, God played no visible or significant part in our family or personal life while I was a child. I don't recall that there was any negative attitude toward religion, it was just not thought of or talked about.

I took a bath on Saturday night. All of us used the same tub ...a wash tub about 3½ feet in diameter and about 15 inches deep. We only put about 4 inches of water in it. Not only did we all use the same tub, we used the same water. By the time the last one was finished with bathing, the water must have been pretty ugly and dirty.

We washed our hair in the hand wash basin. We used the hand soap, we did not have shampoo. We rinsed the soap from our hair by pouring water over the hair. I don't recall how often we washed our hair...not more than once a week and probably less frequently.

We were required to wash our hands before meals, and before going to school. We washed our hands in the basin on the wash-stand. The stand, which was a small table, also had the water pail on it. It had a metal dipper in it for it, the water in the pail, was our drinking water from the well. Anyway, I took water from

the teakettle on the range, or from the reservoir on the range, and put it in the wash basin. If it was too hot, I cooled it with water from the water pail. After washing my hands and face, I poured the dirty water in the "slop bucket" or threw it outside. The "slop bucket" was where liquid and small solid wastes from the kitchen were collected. It had to be emptied regularly.

I do not recall brushing my teeth when I was a child. I probably started doing that in my junior high years.

Grooming my hair was simple. I oiled it down with cheap hair oil, combed it, and slicked it down. Sometimes we ran out of hair oil, so I would wet it down, comb it, and hoped it would stay in place. The heavy hair oil made certain that it stayed in place.

One of the hair oils we used was named Brillantine. It had a cheap perfume odor. As I recall, it must have been similar to the household machine oils of today, except that it was red and had perfume in it.

Probably one of the least desirable events was hair cutting time. Mom, or Melvin or George, would cut my hair with hand operated clippers and scissors. I think the clippers pulled more hair than they cut. Those hair cuts must have left us looking great! Maybe they were similar to the one I gave Leslie when we lived in Denison!

Pop was bald with only a ring of hair. I remember cutting his hair. That was pretty easy, I just cut the ring off.

We never bothered cleaning our finger nails regularly. When they would get really bad, I used the point of a knife blade, or a nail. Mom cut our toe nails and finger nails with scissors.

Though I may touch on personal hygiene elsewhere in this narrative, that's about all I recall about personal care.

Home Remedies and Patent Medicines

We seldom, if ever, saw a doctor. Only the most severe cases of illness or injury caused us to go to the doctor. When Lloyd had pneumonia, a doctor was involved and Lloyd was hospitalized. I remember going to the doctor only once as a child.

Lots of sniffles, runny noses, coughs, and fevers were frequent around our large family. The drafty house, inadequate sanitation, contacts at school, and hazards around the farm contributed to all sorts of cuts, bruises, fevers, etc.

But we seemed to have a home remedy or a patent medicine for all, or most, of them.

For colds, coughs, flu, and runny noses, we had Vicks Vapo-rub. It was rubbed on our chests, on our throats, put up our noses, smelled, and taken orally. Whether it helped a great deal, I don't know. We thought it did, so it probably had some effectiveness. I can still smell the stuff yet today. It is still on the market, along with other Vicks products.

Sometimes when we had fevers we were given a "hot toddy". Mom determined whether or not we had fevers. She felt our foreheads. If the head felt warm, then we had a fever.

A "hot toddy" was a bit of bourbon or whiskey mixed with some hot water. That seemed to be one of Pop's favorite rememdies for himself. Sometimes it was used for the kids as well.

Pop did not drink alcoholic beverages though he always had a bottle around. In fact, he used to get quite upset when Uncle Paul (Mom's brother) and Goldie Hixson (Mom's cousin) would come and drink his bottle of booze which he kept strictly for medicinal purposes.

Somehow, however, another bottle would show up - perhaps as a Christmas or birthday gift.

A "hot toddy" was followed by getting into bed with a lot of covers pulled over you. This was supposed to "break" the fever. The combination of the "hot toddy" and the blankets caused the perspiration to come in profusion. I guess the fever was broken, but what happened to the infection that caused the fever, I don't know.

Lowell, and I believe Lloyd, often had the croup. Croup is some kind of inflammation of the respiratory passages. It is characterized by wheezing and a terrible cough. Since I did not have the croup, the rememdies used are a bit unclear in my memory. I believe kerosene was used...not ingested but taken orally and spit out. Local lore had it that skunk grease was a good treatment for the croup. I am pretty sure that we never used that.

In addition we all had the whooping cough, I believe. Whooping cough is an infection of the respiratory tracts, usually in children, which causes attacks of coughing that force an intake of air that sounds like "whoop". I don't recollect that we had any special treatment for whooping cough. I suspect that Vicks was used liberally for treatment both of croup and whooping cough.

We also made use of a patent medicine called Fletcher's Castoria to treat coughs and colds. It was used more when we were toddlers than when we got a little older. I don't know whether or not it is still on the market.

We had the usual childhood diseases. I vaguely remember having the measles. I did have chicken-pox but do not remember it. I'm not sure as to whether or not I had scarlet fever. All three of those diseases are characterized by rashes and fevers. I believe the treatment used was to rest until the disease had run it course.

We also had "pink eye". Pink eye was so called because the

eyes would become pink. They became extra sensitive to light. They also would produce a lot of teary mucous. At night, the mucous would dry and the eye-lids would stick shut. I do not remember the treatment we used. We did moisten the eye-lids when they were stuck shut. That would permit them to be opened.

We also had impetigo. Impetigo is characterized by small pus filled sores on the skin. A terrible itch accompanies the sores. I remember that the itch was so bad that we would have to bandage the sores to keep from scratching them. Sometimes, we would seek to alleviate the itch by scratching the sores so much that they would become raw and bleed.

I don't remember that we had any particular treatment for impetigo. We probably used mercurochrome mostly.

We also had what we simply called the "itch". I suppose the dry air in the house, and maybe the inability to wash as thoroughly as we ought, contributed to the itch. Anyway, we itched and we scratched where it itched. I don't remember this being a big problem even though we kidded each other about the "seven year itch". I do not remember what we did to treat it.

We seemed to have frequent stomach aches. And it seemed that we were often constipated. I suppose both were related to our diet. Stomach aches were definitely related to the green apples and cherries we stole and ate.

In any case, castor oil was the favorite remedy...castor oil straight. A bit later in time I remember we also used EX-LAX.

Pop had his own laxative. It was called "Black Draught". It looked like pepper. It was taken with water. On occasion, I had to take some. I hated it. Even though it was tasteless, the water caused it to stick to the roof of my mouth. I guess I didn't know

how to swallow it properly.

I guess the castor oil, the EX-LAX, and the Black Draught caused us to do our jobs.

And we had tooth aches. I suppose some of the aches were cavities. I don't remember any of us going to a dentist when we were children. My own first visit to a dentist was when I was in college.

The remedy we used for a tooth ache was oil of camphor. It was applied directly to the aching area.

Ear aches were fairly common. Our treatment for the ear ache was to pour a bit of warm milk into the ear and stuff a bit of cotton into the ear to hold the milk in. I have no idea what that did except to keep cold air from getting in.

Living on a farm, doing the farm work and chores, and going barefoot in the summer gave ample opportunity to experience cuts, gashes, bruises, abrasions, and strained muscles. There was a lot of broken glass, old nails, rusted metals, and weed stubs to make going barefoot rather hazardous.

Our treatments for cuts and torn skin were mercurochrome, iodine, and Watkin's salve. Mercurochrome and iodine are antiseptics...iodine being the stronger of the two. On application to a raw wound, both smarted...iodine the worse of the two.

Watkin's salve was basically a petroleum jelly. The salve was placed right into the wound. When the salve was used, usually a bandage was applied. The bandages were torn strips of cloth, likely from an old shirt, dress, or flour sack.

Pop used to treat his abrasions by putting tobacco juice on them. Since he chewed tobacco he always had an ample supply.

Incidently, Melvin and I both have scars over our left eyes. Both are the result of the same kind of accident...falling off (or getting pushed off) the porch when we were quite young. Of

course, the accidents happened a number of years apart. I guess the scars indicate a good deal of good fortune...less than an inch difference may have meant the loss of our eyes.

Because of the heavy manual labor necessary on the farm, strained and sore muscles happened regularly.

Sore muscles were usually treated with rubbing alcohol, or with liniment. The rubbing alcohol was massaged into the sore area. I imagine that the massaging had more to do with relieving the sore muscles than did the alcohol.

Pop used liniment on his sore muscles. It was applied in the same fashion as the alcohol. It was more potent. It was believed that to rub liniment too much would burn and blister the skin. I never saw that happen and I suspect the value of liniment, as with the rubbing alcohol, was mostly in the massaging.

Pop's hands used to get large cracks in the callouses, so much so that the live skin would crack. The hard work and the cold and wet weather caused his hands to have large callouses on them. When the cracks would form, he filled the cracks with some kind of patented salvelike substance. I guess it softened the callouses and eased whatever discomfort the cracks may have caused. I do not remember what the stuff was called.

I do not remember having hand creams, after shave lotion, and other toilet items around.

The first time I ever saw a doctor was when I was in fifth grade. We were at recess and a number of us were playing baseball. I slid into second base and somehow I got the cartilage in my nose shattered. Blood was all over. School personnel took me to Dr. Kerr in Randolph. In his treatment, he stuck a piece of plastic up my nose which was supposed to keep the nose from being crooked as it healed. It was so uncomfortable that Kerr took it out the next day.

HOW POP FARMED

The 1930's were hard times for most people; it was the time of the Great Depression. For the farmer that meant terribly low prices for the produce and the livestock. Indeed, some farmers used their corn for fuel during the difficult winters of 1934, 1935, and 1936. The corn was virtually worthless on the market. If fed to livestock, the livestock were nearly worthless, too. In fact, some farmers went so far as to kill their hogs. To feed them to maturity meant that they would only lose more money. About the best farmers could do was to produce enough to feed themselves and their families. In addition to the greatly depressed prices, the mid-1930's were marked with very cold and snowy winters and with severe drought during the extremely hot summers.

There was very little money around. The country, and the world, languished in deep economic depression.

Pop was fortunate, however. He had a job. He worked as a farm laborer for Howard Kayton. He worked from about March 1 each year until about the middle of July for $25.00 a month. He spent a couple of weeks in August cutting weeds at about the same pay rate. Then, when the corn was ready to harvest, he husked (shucked) corn by hand for 1 or 2¢ a bushel. Sometimes, there was fall plowing to do, and the corn stalks had to be removed from the fields. He was paid the same rate for that work.

I suppose that in the early and mid 1930's Pop never was paid more than $500.00 in any one year.

Here is how he farmed.

The Corn Crop

March 1 signaled the beginning of the work season in those years. The first task was to prepare the fields for the planting of corn (and oats). Some of the preparation may have been done the previous fall. I note that later.

The ground was tilled with a disk. It was a horse drawn implement. It took four horses, as I recall. (I should note that not all the draft animals Pop worked with were horses, some of them were mules. When I say horses in these accounts, I am referring to the draft animals whether horses or mules). The disk broke up the top 3 or 4 inches of the soil. It was about 10 feet wide in two sections. It had about 20 concave 18 inch disks on each of two axles. The two sections could be set in a wide vee shape so that when the machine was pulled through the field, the disks would cut into and till the soil.

At the appropriate time, the corn was planted.

This was done with another horse drawn implement called a lister. The lister had a double mold board plow on it. When it was drawn through the field, it would make a furrow with ridges between each furrow. Pop's lister made a single furrow at a time. The lister was fitted with a round seed box. In its bottom was a round seed plate which rotated. As it rotated it dropped grains of corn immediately behind the lister plow. A covering device covered the seed.

So Pop would go back and forth across the field planting corn. The spacing of the rows was important for later weed control operations. This was accomplished by keeping one of the wheels of the lister in the previously made furrow.

As you might guess, these furrows were an open invitation to

water erosion. That was especially true because these were the days before conservation efforts were in vogue. There were no terraces, and no contour farming. That came later.

Often, the spring rains would "wash out" the newly planted corn. Since the rows were usually up and down hill, the soil loss was great.

Corn often had to be replanted. Sometimes it was done with a hand operated planter. The hand planter had a little seed box on it. It was jabbed into the ground, the handles pulled apart, and the seed was "automatically" deposited. Depending on how much was washed out, perhaps the lister was used to replant.

Commercial pesticides were unheard of, nor was fertilizer used, except for manure. Weed management and control was done wholly by cultivation and with hoes and "corn" knives.

After the corn began to grow and after the weeds began to grow, the corn had to be cultivated.

Pop used two implements in attempting to eradicate weeds. One was called a "go-devil", the other we simply called a cultivator.

The "go-devil" was a two-row horse drawn machine. It cultivated every other row rather than adjacent rows. It had two similar parts which were bridged together with a seat in the middle of the bridging. Each of the two parts had two adjustable disks and a couple of plow shares as well.

When the go-devil was pulled along the corn rows, the disks and the plows pulled down part of the furrow ridge. The disks and plows would dislodge the weeds, and the soil from the ridge would cover the smaller weeds. A special shield kept the dirt off the corn. As I mentioned this machine skipped a row, but on the way back across the field it would cultivate that row plus another.

The go-devil was used twice. The first time only part of the ridge was pulled down. The second time the go-devil was used the disks and plows were adjusted so that the rest of the ridge was pulled down and leveled out.

Usually, the go-devil operations were done in June.

The third time the corn was plowed, the cultivator was used. Pop used a single-row cultivator for several years, then Kaytons provided a two row one. This machine had several plow shares - called "sweeps" - that tore up the soil and the weeds. After the corn had been weeded by the cultivator, it was said to have been "laid by". I'm not sure of the origin of that term. However, a common saying concerning a good farmer and a good corn crop was "Knee high (the corn) and laid by by the 4th (of July)".

By the way, the plow share or the sweep on both the go-devil and the cultivator was a slightly curved metal piece, a bit larger than a man's hand, with a sharpened vee on the end which tilled the soil. It was dropped into the soil and tore up the soil as it was dragged through it. A plowshare on a moldboard plow was much larger and was shaped in such a way that the soil was turned over when it was used. Pop often used a single bottom (share) moldboard plow for the fall plowing.

The three cultivating operations were effective, but they did not eradicate all the weeds. And some weeds came up later.

So later in the summer, when the corn had grown about head high or taller, those weeds had to be removed. The weeds were cockle burrs, button weeds, and sun flowers, and maybe some others as well.

Pop, and sometimes some of us children, would walk through

the corn with corn knives and/or hoes and cut them down. The removal of these weeds was important for several reasons. They hindered the growth of the corn and they deprived the corn of needed moisture. In addition, they were nuisances at corn husking time. The cockle burrs were a particular problem because of the burrs. They would become matted in the horse's hair, especially in the tail. I believe the expression "he's got a burr under his saddle" was derived from the pesky cockle burr.

Of course, at maturity the corn had to be harvested.

Pop harvested the corn by hand, one ear at a time. We called it "shucking" corn. It has also been called picking or husking corn.

Pop used a horse drawn wagon. It was fitted with a high board (the bang board) on one side. As the ears of corn were shucked and removed from the corn stalk, they were tossed into the wagon. The bang board was usually struck by the flying ears which then dropped into the wagon.

The team of horses was trained to draw the wagon along the corn row. They would move forward or stop on voice command. Pop worked along side the wagon, picking corn from two rows at a time. He wore flannel mittens and a specially fitted metal "hook" on his right hand. The hook assisted in the removal of the husk from the ear.

The mittens protected the hands, but they very quickly became worn through. The mittens also provided some warmth on the cold fall or winter days.

There was often frost on the corn when Pop got to the field in the morning. He usually went to pick corn about 5:00 A.M. The mittens would get wet from the frost...and the hands cold.

But Pop hung a kerosene lantern on the wagon and used its heat to warm his hands.

Pop usually took about 6-7 hours to shuck a load of corn. He was not the fastest of corn pickers...he seldom shucked a hundred bushels a day. Anyone who could shuck a hundred bushels or more a day was regarded as a fast corn picker.

The corn was measured by the amount of shelled corn, not the amount of the ear corn. In the wagon Pop used each inch of depth in the wagon indicated a bushel of shelled corn. If, for example, he shucked a forty bushel load, he would have to fill the wagon itself, which was 26 inches, plus 14 inches of side boards.

When the wagon was loaded, or when it was time to quit, he noted and recorded how many bushels he had picked. He was paid by the bushel for picking the corn. He then drove the team and the wagon very close to the corn crib. The wagon was equipped with a "scoop board" on the rear. He folded the scoop board into place...which amounted to an extension of the floor of the wagon. With a shovel, Pop would throw the corn into the corn crib.

One of my memories, unpleasant as it was, was shucking corn. During shucking season, I had to help on Saturdays and other school holidays. On Saturdays, Pop and 2 of us kids would pick to one wagon. We even started earlier, around 4:30 A.M., no matter what the weather. Often, it was miserable. Wet mittens, cold hands and body, looking for corn in the dark..to this day I can't think of many things worse than that. The lantern provided very little light, and for cold fingers very little warmth.

On Saturdays, we picked three loads, and had time left in the day for Mom to go to Randolph, in the wagon, to do the weekly shopping. Another narrative recalls those shopping trips.

When Pop finished picking corn, he always would say, "That's the ear I've been looking for", referring to the last ear he picked. It didn't dawn on me for several years that he was being amusing.

But even after the corn was picked, the farming activity relating to the corn crop was not completed. In those days, the corn stalks had to be removed from at least some of the fields, probably dependent on what crop was to be in the field the coming year. This was done by burning them after they had been gathered.

An implement called a stalk-cutter was drawn over the field. The stalk-cutter had a couple of large reels, maybe 3 feet in diameter. The reels were fitted with sharp blades, six I believe. The machine rolled the reels across the field cutting the corn stalks. They were then raked into windrows with a horse drawn dump rake. A dump rake was about 10 feet wide and had only two high wheels. It had around 30 to 40 spring steel teeth. The teeth were spaced about 6 inches apart. Each tooth was about 3½ feet in diameter, about two thirds of a circle. The machine enabled the teeth to be dropped so they dragged along and collected the corn stalks. Pop, riding on the rake, activated a lever which caused the teeth to rise, thus dumping the collected stalks. By going back and forth across the field, the windrows were formed

The windrows of stalks were burned, almost always after dark. I don't know why at night, except maybe the fires could be better watched. The stalks were burned because they did not decay rapidly enough. Their presence in the soil made it more difficult to use the disk, the harrow, and the lister.

It is likely, though I have no specific memory of it, that the stalks were sometimes plowed under with the mold board plow.

The Oat Crop

The oat crop was not a cash crop. Its importance was to provide food for the livestock...the milk cows and the draft animals. Oats also served in the crop rotation system of farming popular in those days.

The ground for the oats was first disked early in the spring. The oats were planted several weeks before the corn was planted. To plant them, the same wagon used for shucking corn was fitted in the rear with a device much like a rotary lawn seed and fertilizer spreader. It was larger, of course. It was powered by a chain from one of the wagon wheels. The oats were placed in the spreader attachment and Pop drove back and forth across the field, thus spreading the seed oats. To cover the oats, a harrow was used. This was a flat machine with several bars of spikes, about eight inches long. The angle of the spikes could be adjusted.

Oats did not need tending or cultivation.

A word about crop rotation. The theory is that soil cannot be subjected to the same crop year after year. So a pattern of rotation was often used. It may have been something like this: corn for a couple years, oats for a year, then red clover or alfalfa for a couple of years. The idea was to help the soil keep its richness and not have a single crop deplete it. The idea of crop rotation is still being used today. I don't remember the specific rotations but the above suggests the idea behind the rotation practice.

When the oats were mature, they were harvested.

The Kaytons came to harvest the oats, which were then stored in the bins in one side of the barn.

The Kaytons brought a tractor powered combine. This machine cut and threshed the oats in a single operation. The straw was disgorged from the machine into what amounted to a windrow of straw. Sometimes the straw was gathered to be used as bedding for the livestock. We also used it for new mattresses.

The oats themselves were moved into the bin by manually shovelling them. We had no grain elevators.

Another method of harvesting small grain had been a rural institution...the threshing machine and crew that moved from place to place. It was just leaving the scene. In fact, I had no personal experience with it.

In that method, the oats had to be cut with a binder. The binder was a machine which not only cut the grain, but actually bound it into small sheaves. After the binder had done its thing, the sheaves were then collected by hand and stood on the cut end. They were gathered into shocks of perhaps 20 sheaves each. Hence the term "shocking oats (or wheat)". The sheaves were stood on the cut end to keep the heads off the ground, thus preventing them from rotting on wet ground.

Then the threshing crew would come. Someone owned a thresher. He took the thresher from farm to farm during the harvest season. Many neighbors came to help. The thresher was a huge machine that threshed the grain. Many people were needed to gather the shocks of grain and transport them to the thresher, which was a stationary implement. The sheaves were loaded by hand, with a pitchfork, onto hayracks. The hayracks carried the unthreshed grain to the thresher.

The sheaves were pitched into the thresher. The thresher blew the straw and chaff into a pile and the grain was elevated into a waiting truck or wagon.

The threshing machine was powered by a belt from the pulley of a tractor to the belt pulley of the thresher. Often, as many as 20 men, and 6 or 8 hay racks were present on threshing day.

As I said, I never had any experience with the threshing operation. Later, however, I was to operate a combine many times when I worked for the Gipes.

The Wheat Crop

We did not have wheat very often. It was harvested in the same fashion as the oats..:and the ground for planting wheat was prepared in a similar fashion, too.

Wheat was planted differently than oats. A drill was used. The drill was about ten feet wide, with a seed box that ran the length of the machine's width. Its mechanism was such that it planted the wheat in rows about 3 inches apart.

As I recall, the harvested wheat was immediately transported and sold to an elevator in a neighboring town. I recall having wheat stored in one of the bins at least once.

The Mold Board Plow

The oats or wheat field had to be plowed after the harvest was over. This was done in late summer or fall with a mold board plow.

The plow Pop used had a single share (bottom). The plow share turned the soil over to a depth of 5 to 7 inches. Pop would go round and round the field with the plow, which was pulled by 3 horses. Since the plow was a 14 inch plow, that means that he moved 14 inches of soil with each pass of the plow. The plowed

ground was then either disked or harrowed.

The Hay Crop

Hay was another crop we had on the farm. I do not remember my father planting the hay. Either alfalfa or red clover was used for hay. Either crop produced 3 cuttings a year...that is the hay could be harvested 3 times from the same field.

At the appropriate time. Pop cut the hay with a horse drawn sickle bar mower. This machine had a sickle which went back and forth in the bar, which was perhaps 5-6 feet long.

Then the hay was allowed to cure for a few days. Then the dump rake was used to rake it into windrows. Then the rake was pulled along the windrows and put the hay into small stacks.

The day when the hay was "put up" saw several neighbors come with teams and hay racks. They gathered the hay from the field, pitching it onto the hay racks by hand.

The hay was hauled to the barn and put into the hay mow or the hay area of the barn. Some barns had an elevated area for the hay loft so that more floor space was available in the barn. Our barn had no loft or mow (pronounced like cow).

To put the hay into the barn a special hay-fork was used. It had 4 independent tines about 3 feet long which were placed into the hay in about a 6 foot square pattern. It was capable of taking a large amount of hay. It was attached to pulleys and ropes, which lifted the hay to the peak of the barn where the large hay door had been opened. The hay-fork then engaged a car which was on a rail that ran the length of the barn. As the hay-fork full of hay moved along the rail it could be dropped by jerking on a rope. Power for this operation was supplied by a horse.

I remember, a couple of times, neighborhood barns burning. The cause normally was spontaneous combustion. Hay that was not

properly cured, or was damp when stored, could generate enough heat to create fire.

Use of Draft Animals

So I noted earlier, the draft animals were both horses and mules, even though I use the term horses for the most part.

Horses supplied the power for the several machines and implements we had on the farm. The Kaytons usually kept at least 4 horses on the farm since some of the machines needed that many to pull them.

A black and white team of mules were around longer than any other team I remember. Jack was the black one, and Kate was the white one. This team was the one which most often was used for the weekly shopping trips into Randolph. They were gentle enough that Pop felt that Mom could handle them. I don't recall that she ever had any trouble with them.

We did have another team of mules around for a time. They were white. Their names were Jerry and Jenny. We had several teams of horses over the years, though I have little memory of them.

When the horses were not being used, they were pastured, usually with the milk cows. Care needed to be taken with horses (and now I mean horses). Given the right conditions of heat, weather, food and water a horse might founder. Mules were smart enough not to overeat, overheat, or overwater.

Cattle, given the right combination of grazing food and moisture, might become bloated...that is, they would fill up with gas. They would become almost like a balloon. I remember a veterinarian one time used a long knife to relieve the pressure. He inserted the knife at the proper place to let the gas escape. I re-

member that one of Kaytons' cows died from bloat one time. They were quite unhappy with Pop for somehow they blamed him.

But back to the horses. Each team had its place in a two horse stall in the barn. The harnesses for each animal were hung on the wall of the barn behind the animal. Harnesses were made of leather along with the necessary metal snaps and buckles. Rivets held the various part of the harness together. Some of the parts of the harness I remember: Bridle, halter, bit, reins, hame, and collar.

Pop had proper tools and rivets to repair the harnesses. He did that with some regularity.

Pop harnessed the horses when they were to be used. When the horses were used regularly, they were let out of the barn at night into the lots near the barn. While in the barn-lot they had access to water via the lane to the tank at the windmill.

Manure

The animals, both horses and cows, were frequently in the barn. And manure would accumulate.

Manure was a combination of the bedding material, usually straw, and the liquid and solid wastes of the animals. It had a rank odor when it was fresh. When the barn was closed up in the winter the smell was almost unbearable.

It was necessary to regularly remove the manure from the barn. Most of it, of course, accumulated behind the animals as they stood in the stalls. Behind each stall was a little door in the side of the barn. The manure was tossed out these little doors. We used a manure fork to do that. A manure fork had 4 to 6 tines about a foot long, they were spaced about 2 inches apart. A manure fork was different than a hay fork, a hay fork had only 3 tines.

So the manure was pitched out the little manure doors into piles just outside. By the time the winter was over the several piles were so big that they ran into each other. New bedding was spread when the manure was removed.

Late in the winter, or early in the spring, Pop would spread the manure on the farm fields. We did not have a manure spreader.

He hand loaded a hay rack with the manure from the stacks using a manure fork to do so. Then he drove the team and hay rack into the field, where he spread the manure, pitching it off by hand.

To my memory, the manure was the only fertilizer used on the farm in the 1930's and early 1940's.

Fence Building and Repair

One of the jobs around the farm that was essential was to build fences and to repair the existing ones. Fences had the obvious purpose of keeping livestock out of the crops, and to keep them from wandering away. The "line" fences separated one farm from another farm. Line fences had to be kept in good shape.

The fence rows had strips near them that could not be tilled by the machines. This area was called a turn row. It was where the team and machine were turned around to head back across the field with whatever implement that might be in use. Weeds in the fence row, or turn row, had to be cut by hand. Perhaps, in some cases the sickle bar mower could be used.

The fences we had were nearly all wire fences. We had a few board fences around one of the barn lots, along with several board gates.

Two types of wire were used. One was barbed wire; the other we called "woven" wire or hog wire. Woven wire had wire strands running at right angles to each other. The purpose of woven wire was to contain small animals such as baby pigs. It came in rolls, and it was perhaps 3 feet tall.

We did not use steel posts. Pop used wooden posts, most of which he cut from a hedge row which lined about ¼ mile of the property along a county road. He dug each post hole by hand.

In building a fence, Pop would set corner posts at the ends of the line on which the fence was to be built. A corner post was larger than the other posts. Pop braced the corner post with another post angled from the top of the corner post to the base of a third post which was set at the proper distance.

After the two corner posts and bracings were in place, Pop would string a strand of barbed wire between them.

This wire was stretched but left lying on the ground. It was stretched using "wire stretchers" (a small portable block and tackle). After anchoring the wire to one of the corner posts, the wire stretchers were attached to the other corner post and the wire. Thus the wire was "stretched". Actually, it was tightened so that it provided a straight line which served as the guide for digging the post holes. The posts were placed may-be 12-15 feet apart. Each hole was about 3 feet deep. Pop dug the holes with a tile spade. The post was placed in the hole, lined up, and the dirt packed in around it with a "tamper". The posts, above the ground, were about 5 feet tall.

After all the posts were set, the wire was attached.

If barbed wire was used, it was stretched using the method I have already described.

If woven wire was used, a special clamp arrangement was used on the woven wire to make sure that it "stretched" evenly. The same wire stretchers were used for the woven wire as was used for the barbed wire.

The wire was stapled to the posts. For some reason, we called the staples "steeples". The bottom of the woven wire was stapled at the ground. Normally, a couple of strands of barbed wire were added above the woven wire.

If the fence was a barbed wire fence with no woven wire, then 3 or 4 strands of wire were used.

Fences always seemed to be in need of repair. Time, weather, and the animals pushing against the wires made it necessary to watch the fences closely, particularly the line fences.

Sometimes, the livestock would get "out". That is, they would get out of the area they were confined to into an area where they were not wanted. Sometimes, we had neighbors coming to our place to reclaim animals which had gotten out and wandered off.

As I noted, we had a few board gates. Gates were about 12-15 feet wide. Most of the gates we had were wire gates..we called them gaps. There were lots of gates and gaps, because, unlike today, every field had a fence around it.

Fences were important and required lots of care. Pop spent a good share of his non-farming time taking care of the fences.

Seed Corn

I thought it would be well to add a brief account about the seed corn used.

During the 1930's, Pop planted what was called open-pollinated

corn. Hybrid corn seed was not developed until the late 1930's or the 1940's.

Before hybrids, Pop selected the largest ears of corn harvested for seed corn the following year. But this open-pollinated seed did not always turn out to be very productive. Often the crop would have small ears and the stalks would be weak and fragile. Wind and the other elements often caused the stalks to break. Most of the time, the corn would end up on the ground but still attached to the stalks. And the production was often very poor. A forty bushel an acre crop was considered good.

Then hybrids were developed. The developers first had in mind hand picking. So large ears on sturdy stalks were developed. Production was increased to where 60-65 bushels an acre was considered good.

For hand picking, as I recall, the corn seeds were planted 10-12 inches apart.

Later hybrid developments were for mechanical pickers and combines. It still had sturdy stalks, but a bit smaller ears, and more of them. It was also planted much thicker. Production, per acre, increased to as much as 200 bushel.

Odd Jobs

Pop had many odd jobs around the farm.

He cut weeds, using either a scythe, a corn knife, or the sickle bar mower. A corn knife was similar to a machete.

He kept the buildings repaired; he oiled and repaired the machines. The term "the squeaky wheel gets the attention" likely is derived from a farm wagon which has a dry wheel in need of axle grease.

Pop would also sharpen the corn knives. He trimmed the horses hooves, he did all sorts of odd jobs.

MY WORK LIFE

My father was a farm laborer...that is, he was employed by someone else to work on the farm. He was paid a monthly wage. He worked long, hard days. He never earned much money. What he did earn was stretched to the limit to provide for the family.

I guess it never occurred to me that life would be easy as I observed the long hours and the hard work which characterized my father's life. Very early in my life I took it for granted that I would have to work hard. That turned out to be true, though, for the most part, my hard work was not the physically demanding kind. I did not escape the "back-breaking" toil of hard physical labor, however.

My work life...work for which I was paid...began early. I think it was the summer between my fifth and sixth grades, which would have been 1941, that I first worked for money. It was for Emma Rogers. We always called her Emmy.

Emmy was a maiden lady who lived about ¼ of a mile from us though her farm was just across the road from our house. This was when we lived near Randolph. She had lived on her farm with her unmarried brother, whose name I don't remember, and her maiden sister Linnie. Both the brother and Linnie had died. Emmy, she must have been in her early 70's, rented her farm to the Weldons, Jim and Bill Weldon, I believe, and they farmed the land. Emmy retained about 40 acres of blue grass pasture for her milk cows. Emmy milked cows and then sold the milk and cream.

She hired me to assist. I went to work at 4:00 P.M. I helped her get the cows into the barn so they could be milked. As I recall, she would not let me milk. She thought I could not "strip"

the cows well enough. To "strip" meant to properly remove all the milk from the cow's udder. Of course, she milked by hand.

I helped carry the milk to the basement of the house. There it was run through the cream separator. The separator did just that, it separated the cream from the milk. The machine was manually operated. Emmy did the turning of the handle because it had to be turned at just the right speed...or so she said. The milk and cream were stored in separate containers which were picked up regularly by a creamery truck and taken for processing.

Anyway, I stayed all night. The next morning we would repeat the whole milking procedure.

I had to stay until 11:00 A.M. I cut weeds, worked in Emmy's garden, and did other odd jobs.

The Rogers' house had a couple of features which I thought quite unique. It had a dumb-waiter. The dumb-waiter had a car with a couple of shelves and a rope and pulley system which enabled it to be raised or lowered. It could be lowered into a shaft dug into the ground (perhaps an old well) where it would keep foods cool.

The house also had its own electrical system. Rural electrification was just beginning, but the Rogers had had electricity for sometime. I can't remember how the electricity was generated. I do remember that a large basement room was filled with many storage batteries. The batteries looked similar to automotive batteries, though they were larger.

I believe I had that job for only one summer. I was paid 25¢ a week.

Also, while living near Randolph, I mowed a couple of lawns for a couple of summers. I mowed for the Blakeleys...

Irene Blakeley; and Ned and Hulda Blakeley. I think they were only distantly related.

Ned lived about 3/4 of a mile away, Irene lived a mile or so. I mowed the lawns once a week in the spring and early summer, and less often in late summer and fall. I used a push reel type mower. I was paid 50¢ each time I mowed the lawn.

I also worked for a man named Compton who lived south of us. But I only worked a day or two for him. I was too young and not strong enough to operate a single row horse drawn cultivator. Besides that, Mrs. Compton served biscuits and milk gravy for breakfast!

After moving to the Strahan area, I had several jobs. At first they were day jobs or being hired for a specific task.

I helped the Costellos' "put up" hay a few times. The Costellos lived ½ mile west of where I was born. I helped Harold and Guy Grindle with haying, and also with weed cutting and cockle burr cutting from the corn. I believe I did the same once or twice for the Kaytons.

My first job operating a tractor came during the summer after my eighth grade, while we lived in the Criswell house. I was checking my groundhog traps one day about ¼ mile west of the house. Lester Shook, working in field near by, called to me. He asked me if I could drive a tractor. I told him I could even though I had never done so, alone.

He was planting corn and using a horse drawn planter. He needed someone to disk the ground ahead of the planter. I did the job. I worked off and on the rest of the summer for Shook at various jobs.

Along about this time I worked for Lloyd Angus. I operated a horse drawn lister which he had converted to tractor drawn. He drove the tractor. I also worked for Lloyd's brother David.

My first full time summer job came the next summer, probably 1946. Victor Norton hired me to labor on the place he farmed northwest of Strahan. I received $18.00 a week. I did all the work associated with farming in those days; plowed corn, hayed, cut weeds. I even tore down an old building on rainy days.

Years later, my brother Lloyd was salvaging lumber from the house in which Victor and his family had lived. Nortons had long since moved. I remember stopping with my family to visit. Sheri helped to pull nails and stack the lumber. A pry-bar got mislaid and though we looked for quite a while, we never found the bar.

Victor milked 12-15 cows. He assured me that the milking was his responsibility when I agreed to work for him. However, within a week or two I was doing all the milking.

Victor had a Model T truck. I remember trying to drive it full of oats out of the field while we were combining the grain one day. While going up a hill in the field, I missed a gear while shifting. Since the truck had no brakes, I just let the truck coast backward down the hill until it stopped. Then I tried again.

By the way, if mealtime came during a job, even a temporary one, I ate with my employer. That was true of Emmy Rogers, the Grindles, the Costellos, and the Nortons.

The next summer I worked for Everett Gipe, where I had the guidance, and often the supervision, of my brother Melvin. He had worked for Everett for a number of years and would continue to do so until Everett died.

The next two summers I worked for Emmett Gipe. Neither of the

Gipes milked cows for income purposes. Each did have a milk cow or two, which I occasionally milked.

While working for the Gipes, I also worked for Everett's mother-in-law, a Mrs. Duncan. She operated 3 hamburger stands and a dining room at the Iowa State Fair. The places were canvass tent-like temporary buildings, except for the one which was in the Varied Industries Building. We erected them before the fair began, and dismantled them and stored them after the fair. Much of the material was stored at Everett's residence which was a mile and three-quarters west of the Strahan School on the south side of the road. At this time (early 1993) some of the tables and other items used are in the "truck shed" at Melvin's place. They have not been used for years.

I worked in one of the hamburger stands with Everett. We served hot-dogs, hamburgers, coffee, and pop in bottles. I was responsible for many things, including keeping the pop barrells full and iced and keeping the grounds clean.

It was at the Gipes' and at Victor Norton's that I learned the meaning of hard physical labor. The Gipes were good people to work for. But we worked hard: things like baling hay, moving the bales from the field into the barn by hand, long hours on an old tractor with no springs and no power steering, hand shovelling grain, digging post holes by hand, etc.

During my high school years, I often cut school to help Clyde Conrad shell corn. The corn was shovelled from the crib into a drag which drew it into the sheller. My job was just that, to shovel corn. Archie Shaffer, Les Shaffer, or Theron Bolton, helped. Dallas Clites and Dale Laughlin provided the trucks to haul the corn to the elevator. I remember shovelling so long without interruption that the fingers on my left hand had to be removed

from the handle of the shovel by my right hand. It would take about a ½ hour to get it feeling and functioning again.

I remember one time we were "opening" a crib. We had laid the sheller drag and removed 2 or 3 boards from the crib right above the drag. We then took metal bars, poked them between the crib's remaining boards. Then we pried the settled corn so that it would roll into the drag. It was a hot day and I had an old worn T shirt on. About the time the corn began to roll, a huge rat either fell or jumped from the top of the crib. It hit me in the back of the head, went down inside my T shirt, and right out above my denim jeans. I honestly believe it was the largest rat I had ever seen. I was so startled and scared that I never gave chase to the creature.

I went to Simpson College in the fall of 1949. There I was the college mail man for 4 years, a part-time job of 2 to 3 hours a day. I gathered the mail from the various departments, metered it, and took it to the post office. In addition I worked Sundays for the Warren County Group Ministry. I served as a driver, youth worker, and student pastor at various times. I worked in churches at Liberty Center, Sandyville, and Spring Hill. I also preached for a year at Medora and Liberty south of Indianola.

I had a job cleaning Shannon's cafe at night for a time, also.

Summers while at Simpson, I did day labor on near-by farms, except one summer I worked full-time for Harold Runciman. I worked quite a bit for Ryle McKee who lived north of Indianola.

In the fall of 1953, I went to Denver to continue my education at the Iliff School of Theology. While there, I worked for a time in the school's book bindery. I rebound books, and bound volumes of various periodicals

I also worked at the Epworth Community Center, associated with the Epworth Institutional Church and the Goodwill Industries. Russell (Casey) Jones had been pastor of the church and superintendent of the Goodwill Industries in prior years. There I did group work and coached basketball and wrestling. We served mostly Chicano children and youth, as well as a few blacks.

George Nichols, who was director of the community center, was active in a square dance club. One time, he was responsible for planning a week-end outing for the dance club at a camp near Bailey, Colorado. One day, he was lamenting that he couldn't find a cook for the 70 or so people expected to attend.

I told him I would do it. I didn't tell him I had never before cooked for more than 2 people.

I spent a lot of time planning a menu, a lot more time hitting the wholesale markets on Wazee Street. Miraculously, everything went off without a hitch. George was so thrilled with the meals that he gave me a $10.00 bonus. I don't remember what I had agreed to do the job for, however. That was the first time I prepared and roasted turkey. I never again have prepared food for that many people.

My last year at Iliff, 1955-1956, I was custodian and youth worker at Grace Methodist Church in University Hills in southeast Denver.

Upon graduating from Iliff, we moved back to Iowa, where I was to spend my entire professional life.

In Iowa I worked at the following churches:

Logan-Magnolia	1956-1960
Gatchel (Des Moines)	1960-1966
Denison	1966-1974
Clarinda	1974-1980

Glenwood	1980-1984
Epworth (Council Bluffs)	1984-1988
Lake View-Wall Lake	1988-1991
Mondamin (interim)	Nov. 1991-June 1992
Shelby-Persia (interim)	Oct. 1992-June 1993

AT SCHOOL IN RANDOLPH

My first 7½ years of schooling were at the Randolph, Iowa, Consolidated School. The school building was on the east edge of Randolph. The building was razed in the early 1980's and the area is now (1993) a park. The building was two-stories. The high school occupied the second story. The elementary and junior high schools were on the ground floor. The lunch room, furnace room, locker rooms, and gymnasium were in the basement.

The school building was small, serving about 150 students. The gymnasium was very tiny. Outside there was a large school yard as well as a baseball diamond and a football field. Randolph High School played six-man football. In fact, during my years at the school, it had one of the better teams in the state.

The Randolph school became part of the Fremont-Mills Community Schools somewhere around 1960.

The school had a magnificent bell. It was used to announce various times, such as the school beginning time, the end of the recess periods, etc.

I started to school in late August or early September 1936. My sister, Doris, took me to school on my first day. She introduced me to Miss Sandon, who was to be my kindergarten and first grade teacher. Doris told her my name was Jerold, which surprized me because I thought my name was Jerry. She also told Miss Sandon that my birthday was January 12 (actually it is January 9). Then Doris went to her classes.

The misinformation about my birthday was entered into the school records. In those days, children having a birthday took

treats for the rest of the kids in the class. I always had to celebrate my birthday three days late!

I don't remember how many were in my class - perhaps a dozen or 15. Several were still in the class when I moved to Strahan while in the seventh grade. Some of the names I remember are Leonora Hughes, Betty James, Bonnie Wilson, Beverly Fichter, Merrill Howery, and Glen Nosekabel.

In the second and third grades the teacher was E. Mae Dunn. She was an excellent teacher. Years later, 1980-1984, when I was pastor at Glenwood, Mae Dunn was a resident of that town. She, of course, had retired by that time.

In the fourth grade Velma Hansell was my teacher. She was quite attractive. She and Fred Omar, a high school teacher and coach, were good friends. In fact, they later got married.

In the fifth grade I had Hansell in the mornings and Margaret Piper in the afternoons. I also had Piper for the sixth grade.

We had to call her Miss Margaret. She likely was the best teacher I ever had, though I had a hard time liking her. She was a social climber, I guess, and I was at the bottom of the society heap. To this day, I feel she was unfair to me. It seemed as though she looked for reasons to punish and/or humiliate me. I would estimate that I got slapped across the face at least once a week. I cannot count the times she struck me across the hand with a heavy ruler. I probably deserved some of that, but by no means all of it.

I do remember one time she had been making me stay in from recess to help a slower student. After about three days of doing so, I told her I didn't think it was fair to take my recess period from me. She sort of smiled. When the other kids came in from recess,

she slapped me and told the kids how thoughtless I was. In addition she took my recess privileges away for two weeks.

She was a great teacher, though. I learned more grammer from her than from all my other teachers, including a course in college taught by Leslie Bechter.

Margaret Piper retired in Randolph and somewhere around 1985 she was killed by a runaway automobile while sitting on her front porch.

In the seventh grade, Cora McCord was the teacher. She was stern, but a good and fair teacher. I moved from the Randolph school area around March 1, 1943.

I don't know about Miss Sandon, but Mae Dunn, Margaret Piper, and Cora McCord were all maiden ladies who felt they were supposed to be teachers. Maybe that is why they were good ones.

W. W. Molsberry and a Mr. Richards were superintendents at the Randolph school during the years in which I attended there.

The Randolph School was equipped to offer "hot lunches". I suppose about half the kids in my class bought hot lunches which cost probably 15¢ - 20¢.

The rest of us brought lunches from home. My lunch was homemade bread sandwiches of peanut butter and jelly or "minced" ham, a cheap cold cut. Sometimes, I had an apple or an orange. There was always too much bread and not enough filling. In the winter, the bread was awful. Though Mom was a good bread baker, I suppose the yeast did not work well in our cold house. At any rate, the bottom ½ inch of the slice was a gummy mass. Usually, I threw my sandwiches away.

I carried my lunches in one of three containers. Sometimes, I used a gallon corn syrup pail with a couple of nail holes in the

lid for ventilation. I hated that because other kids had commercially made lunch boxes, and, besides I had to take it back home. I also used a brown bag sometimes. That was better. Even though I had to take it back home, I could fold it up and stick it in my hip pocket. The way I liked the best was to wrap the lunch in a newspaper. By wrapping it in a certain way, it was secured by folding a flap under another flap. And I could throw the newspaper away after eating the lunch.

On rare occasions, I would get to buy the hot lunch. I even felt good when the cook came to the class room to get the number of kids who were going to eat hot lunch that day. I was proud to raise my hand and be counted. The food was not great, though.

After moving to Strahan, I quit taking lunches. And Strahan did not offer hot lunches. The noon hour gave me sufficient time to go, with others, to Kier's store. Since I had a little money from various jobs, I was able to buy lunch. Usually, it was a pint of ice cream and maybe a Twinkie, as well as a pop.

I remember several incidents from my grade school years. One happened when I was in about the 3rd grade. I did not have a coat adequate for the cold weather. Someone at school, likely the teacher, found someone to donate one to me. Even though it was a slicker-type coat, and it broke the wind, it was not very warm. I do remember how embarrassed I was.

I won a marble tournament when I was in the fifth grade. It was conducted during the recess period. I felt a sense of accomplishment. After all, I did not have time to play marbles all the time, like the town kids did.

While in the fifth grade I had a traumatic experience which

has affected me all my life. I was forced to sing a solo. The other kids and the teacher laughed at me. To this day, I have no confidence in my musical ability...or lack thereof.

My grades were nearly all A's, except in deportment which always seemed to be D's and F's. I enjoyed learning and I read everything I could find. I probably read fifty books in a series called the "Little Big Books". These books were about 1½ inches thick and the pages were about 4½ by 4½ inches.

THE TOWN OF STRAHAN

The small town of Strahan has suffered the same fate as scores of other towns in the rural Midwest...it has all but disappeared. In 1993, there were only a few residents, living in rather run-down housing, who resided there. I will pass on to my children 2 copies of a centennial book which the Strahan United Methodist Church compiled. It has quite a bit of information about Strahan in its "glory" days.

I recall visiting Grandpa and Grandma Irvin in Strahan, probably in the late 1930's. There were 3 or 4 businesses operating at that time.

When I lived in the area (1943-1949), there was one general store with a post office in it and Tom White's blacksmith shop. Another article recalls Kier's store.

Also, the Wabash Railroad still maintained passenger service for a year or two. My high school class took the train to Omaha for a prom - either when I was a junior or a senior.

Prior to my experience and remembrance, Strahan had been a thriving business community.

My information is that the town, at one time or another had the following businesses: 3 grocery stores, 2 banks, 2 grain elevators, a car dealership, several blacksmiths, 2 or 3 dry goods stores, 2 or 3 drug and sundry stores, a lumber yard, a slaughter house, and stock yards.

With the coming of the automobile and trucks, the demise of the railroads, along with fewer rural residents, Strahan has almost ceased to be. The church remains, perhaps stronger than ever.

The school became a casualty to school reorganization. In the 1960's, it combined with Henderson, Hastings, and Emerson to form the Nishna Valley Community Schools. A new school building was built a couple of miles east of Hastings on U.S. Highway 34.

Unfortunately, the passing of small town America continues. For example, Malvern was a vital, thriving business town in the late 1940's. I used to go to movies there, buy clothes there, go to cafes there, and bank there. But Malvern now is nearly a ghost town, though several businesses are still there.

To illustrate how small towns have disappeared, here are some of them, in southwest Iowa, that had schools when I was in school at Randolph and Strahan: Riverton, Thurman, Anderson, Bartlett, Silver City, Emerson, Henderson, Hastings, Coburg, Pacific Junction, Stennet, Wales-Lincoln, Percival, Elliott.

AT SCHOOL IN STRAHAN

We moved to Strahan in March, 1943. I was in the seventh grade. My teacher for the balance of the seventh grade, as well as for the eighth grade was Virginia Gruber. She was a plain, unmarried lady in her 30's. Of all the teachers I had in public school, I liked Virginia Gruber best. She was not my best teacher, however.

I played baseball for the high school team when I was in the seventh and eighth grades. That would not be allowed now, but, because the high school had so few boys, I was allowed to play.

In the fall of 1945, I entered high school at Strahan. By then, I had shed some of the negative images that people in Randolph had of me and my family.

Though I was popular and well liked by my peers, I really was a first class smart-alec. My years in high school were a series of conflicts with the teachers and the administrators. I spent weeks in detention, once being expelled for a time.

I did play basketball and baseball all four years. The last two years we had a track team, as well.

No prank was too much for me while I was in high school.

I remember one Halloween, some of us dismantled an old outdoor privy and assembled it on the stage of the high school auditorium. No one realized it was there for several days until the superintendent's wife, who was a teacher, drew the curtains one day.

Perhaps the worst prank we ever did, one of which I certainly am not proud, was done in Latin class. Fred Brown, among others, was one of the pranksters. At the small high school, the Latin class had students from several grade levels in it.

We placed a condom in the Latin book of one of the female students, Joan Isom. To this day, I swear I do not know where it came from. After we had gathered for class, she opened her book and held up the condom and exclaimed, "What is this?".

Of course, many of us were questioned long and hard. My brother Max was encountered by the girl's father (a school board member) and accused. As I remember, Max had not been involved. As far as I know, the school authorities never found the culprits. At least there were no suspensions or expulsions.

Those two examples help explain why the teachers and I had so many problems. I look back now with shame and regret. At the time, given my arrogance, it seemed great.

But it was while I was in high school that I discovered something that put some direction and meaning in my life.

I had worked a summer for Everett Gipe, and then a couple of summers for Emmett and Marjorie Gipe. They, Emmett and Marjorie, took an interest in me. Apparently, they could see behind the arrogance and bluff.

At any rate, they talked a lot to and with me. They got me to go to a summer church institute for high school age kids. I also started going to the Methodist Church youth group (MYF) and to Sunday School. Then, one day, I went to church with Mom, probably in the spring of 1947.

Under the counsel of the Gipes, the patience of Mom, and the influence of the church groups, I began to take another look at myself and my life.

At the church institute during the summer of 1948, I decided I wanted to become a Christian. I also decided to be a minister. Lawrence Lacour, the institute speaker, was instrumental in helping me make those decisions, though the Gipes and the Strahan Church

had laid a good foundation. (Lacour later followed Ben Lemburg as pastor of the First United Methodist Church in Colorado Springs).

Nobel Blackman, the rather strait-laced pastor of the Malvern-Strahan churches, also played a role in those decisions. In fact, he may have planted the first seed for them.

This is what happened with Blackman.

The Strahan Church sponsored an annual father-son banquet. Anyone in the community could attend, and Blackman invited me to be his "son" for the evening. He also, or someone did, persuaded me to give a response on behalf of the sons. Afterwards he said, "Jerry, that was well done. You know, with your good voice, you ought to think about becoming a minister". I found that rather amusing, even absurd. I believe, however, that that was a starting point in my decision.

About the decision to be a minister, I did not receive any blinding light or have any earth-shaking spiritual experiences. It was more a series of experiences. The Gipes were important in assisting, though they were likely unaware of it at the time. My own reflections about life were important. My skills seemed appropriate for the ministry. I learned to care about others because a few others cared about me at critical points in my life. I decided that I could best fulfill what I came to believe most important in life in the ministry. I never got wrapped up in the trappings of religion, and I never failed to understand that the church was a very imperfect institution and instrument. Yet, I am convinced that the Christian perspective on life, and that the Biblical understanding of the nature of human beings, offered and still offers the best and only hope for the future. Without that perspective

and undertanding, all human strivings are in vain.

If I have learned anything from my efforts at trying to be a Christian, it can be summed up like this: It is better to believe in something greater and better than myself; it is better to live with faith and trust than with fear and doubt; it is better to care than to hate; it is better to share than to worry about accumulating; it is better to live a full joyful life rather than an empty happy one; it is better to serve than to demand service.

The high school at Strahan had only about 30 students. Most of the time there were only 3 teachers, including the superintendent, who also taught.

John Harvey was superintendent for my freshman year. B. L. Hudtloff was for the other three years. Teachers included a Mrs. Ashby, a Mr. Golden, Bill McNally, Ruth Picker, Mary Margaret Stevenson, Harvey, and Mr. and Mrs. Hudtloff. Also there was a very large woman from Riverton who taught, but I do not remember her name

School was easy for me and I never applied myself. I chose rather to be a trouble-maker. I was aided in that endeavor by the likes of Hugh Bolton, Alva Achenbach, Fred Brown, and Bill Fitzwater, as well as Bill and Bob Ward. It seemed as though I was constantly at odds with Mr. Hudtloff. Several times he physically threw me against the wall, shook his fist in my face, and cussed me out. I make no claim that I didn't deserve it. We had firecrackers going off sometimes, we threw books out the windows, some property destruction, paper wads, BBs...its amazing how innovative we were. We thought we were great in our disruptive behavior.

But I did get good grades, and that kept me active in the sports program.

We had a horrible basketball team. We had no one on the faculty who knew anything about coaching. We got beat by scores like 69-10 and 71-8. We did manage to win a game now and then. But our basketball team was horrible.

In baseball we did a little better, going something like 7-2, 6-4, and 7-3. In fact, in my senior year, we were 9-0. We did not have a baseball coach, either.

Nor did we have a track coach. But we did have some success in the county track relays at Glenwood in the spring of 1948. In fact, I won second in both the shot put and discus, we won one relay and placed second in another.

In high school I played parts in three plays, and even sang, however softly, in the chorus.

One of the problems I had in high school was drinking. I blame no one, but I did get involved with the wrong crowd. Two of them, Herb and Ed Wiseman, were recently returned servicemen. As I remember I got to going out with them along with Junior and Glen Baslee. Usually, they had a bottle or two of Seagram's Seven Crown. We would drink the stuff straight. I was suspended from basketball for a time because of my drinking.

But the drinking proved to be an important turning point in my life. It happened late one night.

I had been out drinking and driving around with some of the fellows mentioned above. When they dropped me off at home (I lived in the Irvin house in Strahan), I was really sick. I got out of the car and they drove off. But the cool air hit me and I heaved up everything. Then I fell face first into the stuff. Sometime later, I struggled into the house and got into bed. But I could not lie down without everything spinning out of control. I had to sit up

until I fell asleep.

The next morning I vowed that I would not drink again. I kept that promise for many, many years. In more recent times, Gina and I usually have a glass of wine at our evening meal.

There were six in my high school graduating class: Joan Isom, Ione Bolton, Gerald Royston, Doyle Brown, and John Wiseman. John was a younger brother of Herb and Ed Wiseman.

Our senior "skip day" was one for the books. Mr. Hudtloff decided that we should go to Des Moines, which was fine with us. He was going to drive us there in his car. That was not so fine with us, but we accepted.

Hudtloff had just purchased a very low-mileage car - a marvelous used Packard.

Anyway, he hadn't driven it much, I guess. We loaded ourselves into the car and away we went...all the way to Corning, Iowa. There the motor burned out. Hudtloff had driven the car all the way to Corning in second gear.

We spent the day in Corning, waiting for a west-bound bus to take us back to Malvern. I don't recall what happened to that beautiful Packard.

HOLIDAYS

Christmas

As a child, I looked forward to Christmas, even though the long Christmas school breaks were often dull. Because of the weather we were often nearly house-bound except, of course, for the assigned chores. The chores were made even more distasteful by the cold weather. I am sure that we did some things like sledding on the county roads just east of the house.

Early on, I believed in Santa Claus. However, from my earliest recollections, I couldn't understand why other kids in other families were better treated by Santa than we were.

To my remembrance, Mom and Doris would fix up a Christmas tree. It was usually a small branch cut from one of the cedar trees in the front yard. I remember one year, Melvin climbed to the top of one of them and cut the top out of it. Pop, and I suppose the Kaytons, did not appreciate that. At least, we had a tree that year with a reasonable shape to it.

The tree was decorated with home-made decorations including strings of popped popcorn, and maybe some tinsel. Some of the decorations were cut from colored construction paper. Given what they had to work with, Mom and Doris did a pretty good job of adding color to the tree.

On Christmas eve, each of us took a chair and hung a stocking on the chair's back. Then we went to bed. I often imagined that I might be able to hear Santa Claus, but I never did. Some of my brothers used to tell me how they heard him pouring candy into a bowl. Mom always had a bowl of hard candy ready on Christmas morning.

We were up fairly early on Christmas Day. Santa left such things as a pencil and tablet, and a new item of clothes, perhaps. It seems as though I got a little toy truck or car every year. The toy was very small, maybe 3½ inches long and 1¼ inches wide. It was made of rubber. The stocking may have had an orange or an apple in it along with some candy. Sometimes, Santa brought a sled or a coaster wagon for all of us. In addition, there was a variety of nuts on Christmas.

I don't remember getting my parents anything for Christmas until much later. Perhaps I made something at school which was a present for them. I do not remember that, however. We did not give presents to or receive presents from our siblings.

The Dashners nearly always gave us a mesh sack of oranges. It was quite a large sack. I remember the oranges being stored in a closet under the stairwell. It was cool there and the only access to the closet was through Mom and Pop's bedroom. One of the sneaky things I did was to steal an orange now and then. The other kids did too, so the oranges never lasted very long.

I remember one year the corn shucking was particularly late. Pop took me to the field on Christmas day that year. I believe we finished the corn picking that day. I guess that something would have happened to that corn had we left it until the day after Christmas! But that was the way Pop was.

The Christmas meal included a little extra as I recall. Probably it included something made from the canned meat or a boiled old hen...and quite likely, molasses pie. Molasses pie was made from corn syrup.

I do not remember having company on Christmas, nor do I remember going any where on Christmas.

While in college, I spent 3 Christmases alone or with Grace Beam. Grace Beam was an elderly lady who owned the house where I roomed.

During seminary days, I spent Christmas of 1953 at home. The other two were spent with Casey and Oakel Jones in Pueblo, CO.

Thanksgiving

I do not remember anything special about Thanksgiving. The corn shucking usually was not completed. So I spent that day plus Friday and Saturday helping pick corn. I guess we probably had a meal similar to the Christmas meal, except it may have included fried chicken.

I do not remember having guests nor going to someone else's home on Thanksgiving.

Independence Day

On the Fourth of July, we usually had firecrackers, though I don't recall how we got them. Fireworks were legal in Iowa during those years.

I remember we used to light a firecracker and place a can over it to see how high the explosion would lift the can. I do not remember that any of us ever got hurt.

Memorial Day

It is probable that Mom and some of us went to the cemeteries on Memorial Day, if we had a way of getting to them. Pop likely did not, because May 30 (that's when Memorial Day or Decoration Day, as we called it then, was celebrated), was in the middle of the work season. He likely was plowing corn.

Birthdays

Our birthdays were recognized. No cake or presents were presented, however.

Other Holidays

To my recollection, the other holidays were not noted. Easter, New Year's Eve and Day, St. Patrick's Day, Mothers' Day, and the other lesser holidays were ignored.

SHOPPING IN RANDOLPH

The large family of which I was a member demanded a lot of food. Much of our food was produced on the farm...the garden, the chickens, the potatoes, some of the meat, and the milk. However, many of the household basics had to be purchased regularly. Even though Mom purchased flour in 50 pound bags, the supply never lasted very long. The same was true of sugar, corn syrup, oatmeal, and other items.

Mom would bake 8 - 10 loaves at the same time. She was an excellent bread maker. One of the pleasant memories I have was coming home from school on baking day. Upon getting off the school bus, I could smell the marvelous odor of freshly baked bread. A slice of warm bread with apple butter spread on it made the perfect after school snack!

To restock the kitchen supplies, Mom shopped once a week in Randolph. There were two grocery stores there at the time. Mom usually went shopping on Saturday. Normally, at least one of the kids went with her.

We went to Randolph in the wagon during corn shucking season. At other times, we went in the buggy. Usually, the mule team of Jack and Kate were used.

I always found the shopping trips to be embarrassing to me. All my friends' families had cars and we did not. I hoped that my school friends would not see us.

By the way, during corn shucking season the shopping was done in the late afternoon. At other times it was done Saturday morning.

If we had eggs to sell, we took them along. If I remember cor-

rectly we also took live chickens to sell once in a while, too. If we took produce to sell, it was sold to the grocer where we shopped. Before my remembrance Mom shopped at R.L. Russell's Red and White Store.

She shopped at Allely's grocery store, because Russell and Mom had some misunderstanding about our bill and bank acccount one time. I do not know the details.

Mom would write out a list of things needed. We parked the team and wagon or buggy behind the store. The store was small and lined with shelves and counters. They were filled with the items of groceries which were available in those days.

Mom gave the list to Lyle Allely, the owner. He would run all over the store collecting the items listed. Allely's was not a self-service store. Self-service stores had not yet come onto the shopping scene.

Lyle would then take a ticket and write down each item by hand, total it by hand, and subtract what he paid us for the eggs and the chickens. Mom wrote a check. We loaded the groceries into the wagon or buggy and went home. Remember, we had to drive 3½ miles each way to shop.

Usually, Mom would buy a treat for the kids...the cheapest candy that Allely's had.

Once in while, Mom would shop in Shenandoah. I don't remember how she got there. It was far too far to take a team and wagon.

Anyway, she probably bought things like cloth for dresses and maybe shoes for Doris and herself, along with other items which were not available in Randolph.

I remember her talking about Penneys. In my mind I imagined that she got her purchases there by placing a penny in a slot. She

also went to the "Five and Ten" store or "Dime" store. She may have gone to May's or Field's to get tomato plants or seeds.

While in Shenandoah, she always went to the Safeway. I guess the big Safeway store had prices much lower than Allely could or would offer.

That is my memory of the grocery shopping trips. Mom must have planned quite well so as not to run out of things between the shopping trips.

One shopping trip to Randolph needs to be mentioned.

Mom and I left home on a warm and sunny Saturday in October, 1940. We were in the wagon and Jack and Kate were pulling it. We headed to Randolph. It was the day of the October freeze and blizzard. While in Randolph, the weather began to change. On the way home the blizzard hit. We nearly froze. We laid down in the wagon to escape the fierce wind and the driving snow. We trusted Jack and Kate to keep moving, and to get us home. When we reached the corner just west of where we lived, the snow was so heavy that we could barely see the corner. Mom managed to get the team to head east. We made it home, though it took us both hours to warm up again.

CORN SHELLING

The 1930's and the early 1940's were the days before the mechanical corn pickers were used. The first mechanical corn pickers picked the corn by the ear and left it unshelled. A while later the giant picker-sheller combines came on the scene. These huge machines picked and shelled the corn in one operation.

But Pop stored the hand picked corn on the cob. It was stored in corn cribs. The cribs' sides had boards which were placed about an inch apart. That allowed some circulation of air and aided in the corn's drying process. But the ear corn had to be shelled, especially if it was marketed. Sometimes ear corn was fed to livestock. Normally, the corn had to be removed from the cob. It had to be shelled.

And that was a wonderful time for me when the corn sheller came. It was a large machine, and its only purpose was to shell corn. It was a stationary implement. The owner of the machine did custom corn shelling for many farmers.

The sheller was drawn by a tractor. The sheller, after arriving at the place where it was to be used, was set in place and anchored. The long drags were set in place, right next to the corn crib. The tractor was positioned so its belt pulley would line up with the pulley on the sheller. That is the way the sheller was powered. The drags had the unshelled corn put into them and they drew the corn into the machine.

When the power of the tractor's belt pulley was applied, the sheller would vibrate and shake. Then the corn was pulled along the drag and into the machine. The shucks and chaff were blown into a pile, the cobs were elevated and dropped into another pile, and

the corn was elevated and dropped into a waiting wagon or truck. Sometimes, the cobs were also dropped into a waiting wagon or truck.

It was a great wonder to me to watch the sheller vibrate and shake and tremble. I was awed by the corn being dragged into the machine, and to see the golden corn pour out of it into the truck or wagon. I often wanted to feel the breeze caused by the giant fan that expelled the shucks and chaff. I could not, however, for sometimes pieces of cobs would be blown out. And the force with which they were blown could hurt a person. It was even fun to watch the cobs climb the open elevator and drop almost one by one into the cob pile. I enjoyed the roar of the tractor, and the clanging and the whirring of the machine.

Suddenly, the machine would stop and the truck with a box full of grain would slowly pull away with its motor laboring under the weight of the grain. The truck groaned even though it was in "tractor low". It moved away and another took its place. Then the tractor driving the machine would be engaged and accelerated and the mighty machine would resume it task.

The owner, with an oil can in his hand, walked around the machine, squirting oil on this chain, on that gear, and all the moving parts. Soon the corn in the crib would cease rolling out into the drags. Then a couple of men with giant rakes and shovels had to go to work to keep the drag full of the ear corn.

As I watched and marveled, I usually had a club in my hand. While I was not permitted too close to the sheller, I was allowed to chase and try to kill the rats that frequently ran from the corn crib.

The day the corn sheller came was a great day for me. It was

even more exciting if the shelling was not completed in one day. In the evening, after the workers were gone, I inspected the machine by climbing all over it. I looked into the cavern where the drags dropped the ear corn, I felt the chains that drove this wheel and that gear. I touched the inside of the drive belt and found it to be sticky from the belt dressing used to treat it so that there was adequate friction between the belt and the two pulleys. I was really amazed at such a machine.

But then, there was that cob pile. Cobs were used in the range in the kitchen. They provided an easy to light fuel. Some of the cobs had to be moved to the cob house where they were sheltered a bit from the elements. One of the chores I had was to carry cobs into the kitchen each evening - enough to supply the range until the next evening.

Corn shelling day was a great day.

Later, when I was in high school, one of the jobs I had was with Clyde Conrad. Clyde owned a sheller. He used to hire me, along with Archie and/or Les Shaffer and/or Theron Bolton, to help. We were the ones who kept the drags full.

Shelling corn was not so exciting then.

WOOD CUTTING

The houses we lived in were all heated by wood and coal. Mostly we used wood, because it cost nothing, except a lot of hard work.

The house near Randolph had a heating stove which was about 4½ feet tall. Its fire box was oval shaped and was perhaps 3 feet tall. It was about 2½ feet long and 1½ feet wide. It had 2 doors, one in which to put the fuel, the other to remove the ashes. It was equipped with a grate which could be manually shaken to cause the ashes to drop into the ash pit.

On cold winter days, a constant supply of wood was needed. The room, the living room, was heated by convection from the sides of the firebox. I remember it being so hot sometimes that the firebox sides would be glowing red. It was topped by a syrup pail full of water, presumably to keep humidity in the room. The stove consumed an enormous amount of wood. On occasion, we did use coal, though I do not remember why it was used instead of wood.

The coal was a soft coal. It, when burned, produced "clinkers" as well as ashes. The "clinkers" had to be removed through the fuel door because they were too large to filter through the grate.

I remember Pop would "bank" the stove at nights. To "bank" the stove meant that he supplied it with enough fuel and set the damper in such a way that the fire would burn through the night. The damper was in the chimney pipes leading to the flue of the house. Its mechanism was such that it could be set to control the flue's drafting strength.

Next to the cob house, between the cob house and the chicken house, was the wood pile. Close to it were the saw horses or saw "bucks", the axes, the wedges, the mauls, and the saws. They were

stored in the cob house when not in use.

It was here that the wood was chopped, split, and sawed into usable sizes. Wood for the kitchen range had to be much smaller than the wood for the heating stove. As I note elsewhere, we used a lot of corn cobs in the range. Wood provided a hotter and longer lasting fire, however. I suppose Mom preferred wood when she baked. It may be that we used coal in the range once in a while.

I remember the wood pile being about 12 feet tall and spread out over an area of about 50 feet in diameter.

Unfortunately, the wood pile had to be regularly replenished. The long winter months, after corn picking, gave Pop time to cut and haul wood.

One year, during the 1930's, he cut wood along a creek on a farm where Everett Bliss lived. It was about 2½ miles from where we lived. (The creek was Deer Creek, the same creek we were to live near when we moved to the house 2 miles south of Strahan. The site of the wood cutting was several miles southwest of that house.)

As I recall. Pop went there about every day for 2 or 3 weeks, or maybe more. I think he walked to and from the area. There he felled trees, trimmed the branches, cut the logs, and burned the brush.

On Saturday, maybe more than once, I went with him. I remember Melvin being there, too. We spent the day preparing the wood so it could be hauled home.

As I recall, large wood was cut into lengths of 15-18 inches; while the smaller wood was cut into pieces 6-8 feet long. Usually, Pop did not split the wood at the site of the cutting. That was done after it became part of the wood pile at home.

There were no power or chain saws in those days. There were portable buzz saws which were tractor powered, but we did not have access to one of them.

So we did it by hand.

The tools were a cross-cut saw, axes, wedges, mauls, and a couple of other smaller saws, which one person could operate.

The cross-cut saw was used to cut the trunk and large limbs. It was about 6 feet long with large teeth along its entire length. It had handles on both ends, for it took two persons to operate it. The operators pushed and pulled the saw back and forth. It was hard and tedious work.

Smaller limbs were cut with either an ax or one of the smaller saws. The ax was used to cut off the smaller sprigs and branches. Pop would not let me use the ax, for an ax, unless used properly can be dangerous.

After the wood had been prepared, we used the farm wagon and a team to haul it home to the wood pile next to the cob house.

I don't remember how many loads it took to get the wood home. Pop must have worked for several days at hauling the wood.

Pop undoubtedly cut wood at other locations during other winters. I only remember the time at the Bliss place.

He must have spent a lot of time and expended a lot of hard labor to keep the wood pile stocked. I do not remember a time when we did not have enough fuel to heat our house...more accurately, to heat our living room. For on cold windy days it was impossible to heat the entire house.

THE POTATO PATCH

A major source of our food supply during the hard years of the 1930's was our potato patch. It was always in the same place - between the driveway and the fence surrounding the north barn lot. It was near the garage and fronted on the county road going east and west past our house. The tract was probably 250 feet by 250 feet or maybe a bit larger. When we planted and dug the potatoes it seemed like 40 acres!

We followed the established procedure of planting the crop on Good Friday, if possible. I suppose that relates to the idea prevalent that potatoes should be planted by the right sign of the moon. Since Good Friday is determined by the date of Easter, and the date of Easter is set according to a formula having to do with the phases of the moon, it must have been the right time, according to that thinking. So we always tried to plant potatoes on Good Friday.

As I recall, Pop plowed the area with the mold board plow in the fall. In the spring he probably disked the plot.

On the day of planting, he took the lister, the corn planting implement, and made rows of furrows across the plot. We dropped seed potatoes, by hand, in the furrows. Using a harrow, Pop then covered the potatoes.

Seed potatoes were usually purchased. They had to be cut into pieces, making sure that each piece had an "eye" on it. The "eye" was the place where the sprout of new plant would develop. If the planted pieces had no "eyes" on them they would not grow. Sometimes, if we ran short of seed potatoes, we would finish the job with potatoes left over from the previous year's crop. Usually,

these were small ones and did not need to be cut into pieces.

As the plants grew, they had to be tended. We hoed the weeds. That was job I detested. But, it helped assure a good crop. After all we had to have enough potatoes from the patch to last us through the next winter.

The growing plants were often attacked by bugs. I don't know what kind they were, but we called them potato bugs. The bugs would devour the foliage from the plants, thus killing them.

We tried to take care of the bugs in a couple of ways. One way was to crawl through the patch and pick the bugs off the plants by hand. This was hard work and not too effective.

The other way we tried to handle the bugs was to apply a solution of arsenic of lead. This was a mixture of powdered arsenic of lead and water. It was pink. To apply the solution, an ordinary garden sprinkling pail was used. Pop merely walked up and down the rows with the sprinkling pail and doused the plants with the solution. To my remembrance, this was the only time we used an insecticide. Pesticides (herbicides and insecticides) are widely used on farms today.

As the plants matured, each one was developing a number of potatoes as part of the root system. Then the plant itself would die.

It seems to me that potato digging time came around Labor Day, though it may have been later.

Digging potatoes was a job that no one liked.

The lister was used again. This time it was set to dig deeper into the soil, deep enough to go beneath the potatoes' root systems. The lister was drawn directly along the potato rows, creating a furrow. Along the edges of the furrow were the potatoes.

Now came the hard part. We had to take an old bucket, get on

our hands and knees, and pick the potatoes up. Soil clinging to the potatoes had to be removed. The soil had to be searched for hidden potatoes. That was done by digging around in the soil with our bare hands. Sometimes, potatoes were sliced in two by the lister. The pieces had to be dug out.

The filled buckets were poured into the wagon parked near by. We often had enough potatoes to fill the wagon box.

As I recall, the potato digging took 5 or 6 of us the major part of a day.

But putting the potatoes into the wagon did not finish the job. The wagon was moved some fifty yards to the door of the cave, the storm cellar. There the potatoes were again bucketed and carried into the cave and placed in bins. I don't recall for sure but there may have been some size sorting during this procedure. At any rate, I never did figure out why the potatoes had to be handled twice. Since the cave was not all that far away, why didn't we just put the potatoes in the cave as we picked them up?

The cave was damp and cool. It did have an air vent in the center which went above ground. It never froze inside the cave during the winter.

So we had our potatoes stored, to be used as they were needed through the balance of the year, especially during the winter.

By the time the potato crop was harvested again, all or most of the potatoes had been consumed. The length of time they were stored, plus the dampness in the cave, caused the potatoes to sprout. Often the sprouts were 5-7 inches long. The sprouting used so much of the potato's food that it became soft and wrinkled.

The potatoes were a major source of our food. Planting them, tending them and digging them were not jobs that we anxiously awaited.

THE CAVE

The cave, or storm cellar, was about 100 feet from the back door of the house near Randolph. Storm cellars were part of nearly all farmsteads in those days.

Our cave was round, I would guess about 15 feet in diameter. It was constructed of clay blocks. It was domed with an air vent in the peak. At its peak it was about 12 feet high. The cave had a large bin and several shelves. Both were made of wood, as was a floor in the bin. Since the concrete floor of the cave was nearly always damp, it was necessary to keep stored items off the floor.

The cave was about three fourths underground. The dome was covered with earth leaving a mound which clearly indicated the location of the cave. The entry was a door, nearly flat to the ground, though it was sloped enough to shed water. The open door revealed about 14 steps into the cave. I would judge that the temperature was a constant 65-70 degrees F.

We used the cave for two reasons. One reason was to store food. The bin was used for the potato crop. The shelves were used to store the home-canned food. They were also used to hold the milk pails when we tried to keep the milk a few days longer. Other items, such as butter and cottage cheese were on the shelves, too.

Sometimes, salt cured hams were hung from nails in the timbers supporting the shelves.

The milk usually soured quickly, and the ham sometimes turned green. But that was no problem; Mom just shaved the green off and we used the ham anyway.

Also in the cellar were the crocks of lard and lard covered sausages and hamburgers. That was another way of keeping meat

longer. I remember the crocks being about a foot in diameter and perhaps 18 inches deep.

An ax was a permanent feature in the cave.

The ax suggests the second reason why the cave was important. It was a safe haven from the violent storms that regularly visit the midwest. The name "storm cellar" is obviously derived from that purpose which the cave served. The ax was there in case the door was blocked by debris from a storm. We never had to chop our way out, however. In fact, though we saw dozens of funnel clouds, and watched several tornadoes touch down, our home and farmstead were never struck. We did receive wind damage on a couple of occasions, however.

We did go to the cave many times because of threatening weather, however. I suppose the summers of 1935 and 1936 were the most fearsome. Those were extremely dry years throughout the country and especially in the midwest.

I remember the huge red and orange clouds that came up in the southwest usually in the late afternoon or early evening. They were actually dust clouds, often as I said, brilliantly red and orange and terribly dark. The dust came from the cultivated and parched areas of Kansas and Oklahoma. I remember a couple of times these great clouds caused it to be pitch dark during the afternoon. In my adult life I have seen tornadoes, blizzards, violent winds, and downpours. Nothing, however, has approached the sheer fright and terror those dust clouds generated; nothing has ever looked so ominous.

These storms left large deposits of red soil and dust which literally covered everything. It filtered through the loose fitting windows and doors of our house. I remember one dust storm which left a fine layer of dust about ½ inch thick over everything in the

house. Water in the drinking pail was a slimy mud. Even the water in the tea kettles and the reservoir had to be replaced. All the dishes had to be washed. All the bedding and all the clothes had to be washed. It took a while to get over some of the storms even though we were never directly struck.

Usually the vent on the cellar was covered...I suppose to prevent excess moisture from getting into the cave. Usually it was covered with an old bucket or milk pail which was no longer usable.

One year, it was covered with an old slop jar, a chamber pot. And that was the same year that the school bus turned around in our drive and yard. I can remember the teasing we had to endure from the smart-alecs on the bus. I remember being a little embarrassed by that chamber pot.

I guess the chamber pot served the purpose of covering the vent. The storm cellar, the cave, served its purpose for food storage and as protection from violent storms.

After moving to the Strahan area, we had a cave only at the first place we lived. It was unusable because it had about 2 feet of water in it.

THE PRIVY

It was located about 150 yards south and a little east of the house near Randolph. It was a two holed outhouse or privy...we called it the toilet. It did not have the traditional crescent shaped hole in the door. It probably had never been painted, either outside or inside. It had a door with a latch on the inside to assure a bit of privacy.

Besides the two holes, it had remnants of Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward mail order catalogs in it. There were no covers for the holes. And maybe the reason there was no crescent was because the door was so ill fitting. The sides also had cracks in them. Presumably, that provided enough ventilation.

Frankly, during the summer, there never was enough ventilation. The privy just plain stunk. It reeked with an unpleasant odor. The odor, plus the uncomfortable seats, kept anyone from lingering any longer than necessary. In the winter the cold and the hard seat had the same result. No one stayed longer than they needed to. Get the job done and get out.

The paper, the Sears and Wards catalogs, had no resemblance to White Cloud or Charmin. Smooth, hard, and rough characterized our toilet paper from the catalogs.

It was bad enough to have to visit the privy during the day. After dark it was worse. Actually, by the time you found the lantern and located a match with which to light it, you may have gotten out of the mood. But the flashlight was different. All you had to do was grab it and run. But then add zero weather and a couple of feet of snow and a night visit to the privy was pretty miserable, especially, if after you got there, the urgings proved to be false.

I mentioned, that during the summer, the place reeked. But I didn't mention the flies, lots and lots of flies. They were all over, flying in and out of the holes and landing on our arms, our faces, and on the part of the body which had to be bared to use the privy. I guess it is fortunate that we were not sanitation freaks. Looking back now, the flies were pretty revolting. For that matter, so was the privy.

It served a family of eight. And every so often it would fill up. The solution was pretty simple...just dig another hole and move it. And that's what we did. Pop would dig a hole, square and just a bit smaller than the bottom area of the privy. He dug it perhaps five feet deep. Then he dug a couple of more feet directly under where the holes would be.

Then we moved it. I don't remember how we moved it, but we did. Dirt from the new hole was used to cover the pit where the privy had been. And for a brief time, the odor was gone.

We did not always use the privy for everything for which we use modern stools. Seldom did the males in the family use it for urination. That was conveniently done behind a tree, behind the cob house, or any place where we thought we would not be seen.

A traditional Halloween prank was to upset privies. I don't remember that ours ever was upset.

That was the privy, the outhouse. We had one at every place we lived. The first inside toilet and running water I experienced was in the college housing at Simpson College. For that matter, that was the first place I lived with electricity. That was in the fall of 1949.

CHICKENS

We kept a milk cow or two and chickens on the farm east of Randolph. It was fairly standard practice for a hired man, and that's what Pop was, to have his own milk cow and chickens. We were able to supplement Pop's meager income that way. Most of the feed for the cows and chickens was provided by the employer. As mentioned before, Pop worked for Howard Kayton.

The chickens were very important to us. They supplied us with a big part of our food. The eggs and meat from chickens cost us very little. Of course, they demanded a lot of care and tending. Pop did little of that. Mom and we kids took care of the chickens.

The adult chickens were housed in the hen house. It was a small building with roosts and nests inside. The nests were cubicles, about 18" by 18" by 18", which lined one of the walls. The nests had straw in them. Besides being a place where the hens laid eggs, they were places where the hens sat on eggs during the 3 week gestation period.

As I recall, we had 30-40 hens and maybe 6 roosters. That, as I remember, seemed to be the basic flock, though the numbers may have varied from year to year. In addition, we had more during the spring and summer. These were the young chicks which we purchased or which were hatched by some of the hens we had.

The ones we purchased likely were bought from Earl May Seed Company or Henry Field Seed and Nursery Company in Shenandoah. I believe we normally purchased 100 chicks each year. They were young, perhaps 8-10 days old, when we got them.

They needed special care during the first few weeks after

we got them. Purchased chicks had been hatched in incubators. That did not seem to make them less healthy and vital, but all baby chicks were very fragile.

I do not remember the exact time, but we must have purchased chicks in April or early May.

We kept them in a warm place. We had special waterers and feeders. I have forgotten everything we fed them, but I do remember feeding them ordinary rolled oats. We may have purchased commercially prepared starter feed as well. When the chicks got a little older we cracked grains of corn by hand to feed them. We did this with a hammer and a hard surface. The whole kernel was too large for the young chickens.

We often heated the area where the chicks were kept with our kerosene lanterns. I remember we often kept the baby chicks in the back room of the house, the one labeled "junk" on the chart. I remember one year, when we lived south of Strahan, we started the chicks in one of the upstairs bedrooms.

When the weather became warmer, and after the chicks had grown a bit, we moved them outside. They were usually moved, when we lived near Randolph, to an area between the house and garden. There we had a long narrow coop with perhaps ten compartments in it.

Pens made of chicken wire fronted the coop. The chicks were confined for a time. But they grew rapidly and confining them became difficult.

I remember one of the tasks we had was to get the chicks into the coops when a storm approached. Young chicks have a low tolerance for rain and dampness. So it was important to get them shut up in the coops. We forced them into the compartments and closed the doors. Even after the chicks had been released from confine-

ment, they still returned at night, and usually returned with the approach of a storm.

I do not remember how we got them transferred to the hen house. Most of them we did not have to move, because they were slaughtered for food.

We used some of them to keep the hen flock going. By the way, the purchased chicks had been "sexed". That is, they were of the sex we ordered. I don't know how it is done, but a chicken expert can tell a male baby chick from a female baby chick as soon as it is hatched. They all looked the same to me.

As I have alluded, some of the chicks we had were hatched by setting hens. The hens, called brooders, sat on the eggs. Then the chicks would break out of the shell. This happened over a few days period of time. A brooder, as I recall, would have 8-12 chicks. The newly born chicks were called the brood. Not all the eggs a hen sat on hatched. Some of them rotted, and some probably had not been fertilized. Most of the time, the hen setting was something which was planned. However, sometimes we would find a brooder setting on the nest of eggs in the barn, the garage, or even outdoors.

As fascinating as it was to watch the hatching process, an even more fascinating picture emerged: the hen, with her brood following closely, zig-zagged across the yard, scratched the ground and clucked the chicks into obedience. The constant peeping of the chicks seemed to urge the hen into even more clucking.

The brood could, and did, roam over a wide area; around the chicken house, the cob house, the front yard, the back yard, the barn lots, the edges of adjacent fields, across the road, and the potato patch. All the time there was the clucking, the scratching, the peeping and the pecking.

The almost constant scratching of the ground by the hen must have been a way of training the young chicks to search for food. The scratching was always accompanied by a lot of pecking at the ground.

It was also fascinating to watch the hen gather her brood. As I recall, the hen gathered the chicks under her so they could sleep, to protect them from what she perceived to be danger, and to shelter them from the elements.

One by one, the chicks would get to safety and warmth under the hen's body. She ruffled out her feathers so that she could better cover the chicks. She patiently would nudge a chick or two with her beak. She spread her wings and drew other chicks under her. All this was accompanied by constant clucking and peeping. The peeping stopped, however, once they were securely covered by the hen's feathers and body.

I don't recall the exact time, but within a few weeks the chickens had grown enough that they were pretty much on their own.

I will add a word here about the chicken house during the winter time. It was probably 20 by 30 feet in size. It housed perhaps 50 chickens and roosters. During the long cold periods it was closed up and the fowls confined. We equipped it with waterers which had to be filled regularly. They often froze, though the heat of the birds generally was sufficient to keep that from happening. As I recall, we just threw the feed, usually shelled corn, onto the floor. The floor was covered with chicken droppings. And the place really reeked. The droppings reminded me of chewed gum...we used to say "you should never drop your gum in the chicken house".

The manure was removed a couple of times during the winter.

It was later spread on the farm fields like the manure from the barn. As in the barn, we used straw for bedding material.

The few roosters we had had the run of the farmstead, except in the winter when all the chickens were kept in the chicken house and its small pen.

While I was not aware of it when I was a child, the roosters tried to establish territorial rights, or one of them tried to prove himself to be king of the flock. At least, the roosters frequently fought. They squared off face to face against each other. They used their beaks and claws in the fight. I don't recall any roosters being killed in the fights. After a fight, however, there was lots of blood and feathers around.

I do remember that a rooster would strut and preen himself around a hen. He would stretch himself tall and brush up against the hen. At times, he would stand on one leg and lean against the hen. There was a good deal of scratching and clucking, and an occasional crowing. I assume now that those activities were part of a mating ritual.

However, when it came to the actual mating, the rooster had to chase and catch the hen. I can remember the rooster chasing the hen as much as 50 yards before catching her. When he caught her, he mounted her grasping her comb with his beak and using her wings to support his position atop her. I didn't know then, and still don't know how or where he deposited the sperm.

But it must have been done right. At least, we ended up with eggs that would hatch and hens that wanted to set.

GATHERING EGGS

Eggs were a major food item when I was a child. In season, we had eggs as often as twice a day, and sometimes for all three meals. By in season, I mean when the hens were producing the most eggs, usually late spring, summer, and fall. Most of the time, the eggs were fried, though they were sometimes scrambled, and less frequently, baked.

I suppose that we had up to 40 or more layers, at times. Layers were hens we kept for egg production. They, along with the roosters, were housed in the hen or chicken house. In winter, they were confined to the chicken house and a small adjacent pen.

One of the chores I had was to gather the eggs. Since we all shared chores, and the assigned chores changed from year to year, I did not have the egg gathering chore all the time. I suppose our ages helped to determine what chores we were assigned to do. The older kids milked, the younger ones carried cobs, some gathered the eggs, etc.

Gathering eggs was a simple task. I just took a bucket, went to the chicken house, looked in the nests, put the eggs into the bucket and carried them to the house.

But it wasn't quite like that a lot of times. In winter, for example, the eggs had to be gathered 3 or 4 times daily. Otherwise, they might freeze. There weren't as many eggs in the winter, so we had to save them all.

In both winter and summer, it was common for the hen to be protective of her egg. I had to reach under her while she was still on the nest and feel around for the egg. The problem was that she often

resented such intrusion and she would pound her beak into my hand and arm a few times. This was true especially of a hen who had mixed it up with a rooster and was in a setting mood.

Gathering eggs in the summer often turned into an expedition around the farmstead. In the winter the hens had to use the hen house to lay eggs. That's where they were confined.

In the summer, though, the hens roamed free...in the barn, across the road in Rogers' pasture, in the corn crib, in the garage, under the lilac bush, in the hedge row, in tall grass, and in the weeds.

The hens laid their eggs in all these places and tried to hide the fact. It was not unusual to find 3 or 4 nests in the barn around the hay area, 2 or 3 in the grass and weeds, and in other places.

So once a nest was located, I had to check it each day. Sometimes we would not discover a nest until the eggs had spoiled... rotten eggs. Nothing is more foul smelling that a rotten egg.

Maybe I should note that one of the "games" we played as kids was to throw rotten eggs at each other. What great fun that must have been!

Sometimes we would discover a nest with a setting hen setting on it. When that happened, we normally left the hen to hatch the eggs.

During the summer, we usually had more eggs than we could use. Even though we used up to 2 dozen a day, Mom was able to sell quite a few dozen when she went on the weekly shopping trip.

We purchased a food supplement called oyster shell. It may have been just that. It was fed to the hens so that they could develop shells for the eggs they laid. Apparently, there was not enough natural material around for the hens. I suppose the oyster

worked. Yet, it was not unusual to find what we called a "soft shelled" egg. It really had no shell at all, but the tough membrane just inside the shell normally kept the egg together. The soft shelled egg felt like a small balloon with water in it. We also frequently found double-yolk eggs.

I remember one incident with an egg. Max and I were sweltering on a hot summer day and remembered the saying "it was so hot that you could fry an egg on a sidewalk". But we had no concrete sidewalks. But we did have a corn crib with a slightly sloped corrugated metal roof.

So we got an egg, climbed up the side of the crib, and broke the egg onto the hot tin roof. It didn't fry. It merely oozed slowly off the roof edge. So much for old adages.

By the way, the corn crib was easy to climb. The crib, for storing ear corn, had about an inch space between each side board. The opening was for ventilation and drying purposes.

I believe I learned to count while I had the egg gathering chore. Mom always wanted to know how many eggs there were. So I counted them as I gathered them.

I close this egg gathering account with a household hint. You can tell a fresh egg by the yolk. Upon breaking the egg, does the yolk stand up and appear relatively firm, or does it flatten out? The egg with a yolk that stands high is the fresh one.

GATHERING WALNUTS

Summer time presented us with opportunities to look for berries and fruits which grew in the wild. We pretty much knew where the wild plums were. Sometimes we would discover a patch of wild strawberries or raspberries. They were not abundant, though. The strawberries were so tiny they were hardly worth the effort. Usually there were only a dozen or so of the berries. We quickly ate them. The same was true of the raspberries.

We also found black walnuts. We didn't have any walnut trees on the farm on which we lived. There were, however, several walnut trees in Dashner's pasture about a half mile west.

Looking back now, I realize we gathered them while they were too green.

So we took our buckets, and maybe boxes, and headed to the walnut grove at Dashners. On the way we stopped to borrow Emmy Rogers' utility cart. It was two wheeled. It was steered and pushed with a bar across the back. The box on it was probably 4 feet by 4 feet, and sides about 3 feet high. The front end of the box was open. I remember Emmy once said, "Can't you use your coaster wagon?". I don't recall how many times we used her cart - maybe only once.

We gathered the walnuts and took them home, probably about 2 bushels of them. Then we returned Emmy's cart.

Gathering the walnuts was the easy part, preparing them was another story.

Black walnuts have a hull over the shell. The hull was a deep olive green color. If, however, the walnuts were allowed to naturally ripen and mature, the hull would turn black and dry out.

Usually we did not wait for that to happen.

We would get the hammer, or a brick, and crush the hull. Then we peeled the hull off the shell. The hull contained a brownish liquid. In "hulling" the walnuts this liquid would cover our hands. It was of such a nature that it could not be washed off. For several days after "hulling" the walnuts, our hands and fingers were brown from the walnut "stain". I do not recall but I suspect we were reprimanded for getting the stain on our overalls and shirts. It didn't matter much for our everyday clothes were dirty, patched, ragged and stained already.

After the walnuts were hulled, they had to be dried. Green black walnut meat is not very good. Our favorite place to dry the walnuts was on the chicken house roof. It was nearly flat, with only a gentle slope. So we laid the walnuts out in the sun to dry them.

I don't remember how long they had to dry. For that matter, I don't remember using the walnuts for anything. Maybe Mom used some of them in cooking. We probably cracked and ate some of them. But I really don't know what happened to the walnuts.

HUGHES' BORROWING

The Tony Hughes family was Irish Catholic. They lived about ¼ of a mile east of us when we lived near Randolph. It was a large family with children whose ages corresponded to our ages. There were more Hugheses, however.

Tony scratched out a living on his farm which I believe was 160 acres. He had an old tractor, a couple of horses, and a few cattle. Tony worked only when he had to. He spent a lot of his time in Randolph or Imogene. Imogene, a small town one mile west of US Highway 59 just off Iowa 184, had and has one of the most magnificent Roman Catholic Churches imaginable. Local word and lore, which I suppose to be true, was that a marble altar was shipped from Italy during the first World War - 1914-1918. The ship carrying it was sunk by a German warship.

Another marble altar was ordered. In due time it did reach St. Patrick's church in Imogene. The cost of the lost altar and the one which did arrive was enormous. According to hearsay, a number of farmers nearly lost their farms because they had to be heavily mortgaged to pay the bill. At any rate, in Imogene, now a practically non-existent town, is a most marvelous Catholic church with a marble altar.

But back to the Hugheses. Pop didn't much care for them, but not because they were Irish Catholic. Maybe it was because Tony was so lazy and indolent. He spent a lot of time in the beer joints in Randolph and Imogene. Or maybe he didn't much care for them because they were borrowers.

I don't imagine that a week went by that one of the Hughes' kids did not show up at our door wanting to borrow something. For

12 years they borrowed stuff.

They borrowed mostly household supplies - a cup of sugar, some flour, a couple of eggs, some lard, some stick matches, some soap. I don't recall that they borrowed big items, just small things and small amounts. Of course, they never repaid what they borrowed.

More than once, I remember, old Tony would drive by and drop off a kid or two on his way to Randolph. Never mind that Tony could have gotten the item in Randolph...still the Hughes kid came to the door to borrow something. Tony probably had no idea when he would be returning home.

I well remember how destitute we were. It was a wonder that we could loan anyone anything. I would guess there were times when Mom had to refuse the Hughes' request. I do not, however, remember that happening.

As I said, Pop didn't much like the Hugheses. I think it was because they were borrowers.

THE BULL NEXT DOOR

In the 1930's we were quite dependent on our cow. She gave us, often somewhat reluctantly, our milk, our cream, our butter, and our cottage cheese. The times were hard for everyone, the great depression was at its worst. As I note elsewhere, Pop's income was hardly sufficient to provide for our large family. So we had a large garden, and we ate very simply.

We had a cow. The cow was allowed to pasture on the farm, and the Kaytons supplied what hay and grain the cow needed for food. The boss fed our cow. But she had to be serviced in another fashion as well.

That is where the bull next door came in.

After our cow had a calf, she was "fresh". She gave milk for several months. Saying she "gave" milk is not wholly true, we had to work to get it from her. See article on milking the cow.

Gradually, the cow's milk supply would decrease until she gave very little. She was then "dry". And we could no longer milk her.

The way to "refresh" her was to have her have another calf. But we had no bull. And it takes a bull to help a cow have a calf. Emmy Rogers had a bull. Emmy needed a bull more than we did, for she milked 12-15 cows all the time. She had cows going dry regularly and she had cows getting fresh regularly.

But when our cow went dry, it was bad news because a good share of our food supply dried up, too.

But Pop knew what to do...get Emmy's bull with our cow at the right time.

I don't know whether or not Pop talked to Emmy about sharing

her bull. Since she was an old maid, he may have thought that she would be a little shy about it all.

Emmy's bull didn't seem to be too active at the time. He was out in a field by himself, the field just east of the blue grass pasture which Emmy used for her cows. It was along the road to the Hugheses. In fact, the field ran all the way to Hughes' property line. A gate, just over the hill, out of Emmy's sight, went into the field.

So we drove our cow out of the barn lot, out into the road, and just over the hill to the gate. It was rather easy to open the gate and put our cow in with Emmy's bull.

Pop wouldn't let me stay and watch what the bull and the cow might do. Indeed, he didn't even tell us why our cow was put in with Emmy's bull. I didn't know why, and I knew enough not to ask questions.

Well sometime later, whether it was hours or days later, I don't remember, we went back to get our cow. That presented no real problem even though Emmy's bull was hanging around fairly close, apparently unsure as to whether or not he had done his job.

We got our cow out through the gate into the road, herded her along the road, and finally back into our barn lot. There she could go to the pasture...and do whatever contented cows do.

I still don't know whether or not Pop got Emmy's permission ...nor do I know whether or not the bull next door got our cow's permission.

MILKING THE COW IN THE SUMMER

Some things are tough to do.

One of the toughest, especially if one is rushing, is to open the pouring spout of one of the two-quart plasticized milk cartons. It looks so simple, the instructions are right there. It says "Open this side". It says "Push up", with arrows pointing the way to push. So you do that and so far, so good. Now you have to fold out a portion of the carton, which, if properly done, forms a pouring spout. But you will discover, many times, that it is glued with the world's best glue. So you try to separate the spout so you can fold it out. For tools, fingers and finger nails are tried, and maybe even a table knife. Eventually you succeed in overcoming the glue. If you haven't done too much tearing of the carton, you manage to fold the spout out. And if it isn't too badly mangled, you can pour milk quite well.

Opening a milk carton can be tough.

But it is easy compared to getting milk the old fashioned way...directly from the cow.

Let me tell you how tough.

When I was in about the sixth grade, it was one of my chores to milk our cow.

I had to know how to sqeeze and pull the cow's teats just right. A person can't be told, or even shown, how to do it. Its something that has to be done to be able to do it. I mastered the art of milking without too much difficulty.

Knowing how to milk, one might surmise, was about all that was needed. You merely grabbed a pail, a milk stool, sat on it at the cows right side, and tugged away. Simple enough.

I'll tell you what it was really like, and why it ranked as one of the all time worst chores.

Before the milking actually began, I had to get the cow into the stall in the barn. I'm not talking about these modern dairy barns, clean and neat as an operating room. I'm talking about a barn and stalls which housed both draft animals and a milk cow or two. It was dusty, smelly, and dirty. The earthen floors were covered with soiled bedding material. We called it manure.

So I took a manure fork and tossed some of that stuff out the little door just behind the stall where the cow stood. That's what the little door was for. Then I spread some dry straw for bedding, and put some oats in the feeding trough and some hay into the manger.

The cow, of course, was in the pasture...as far away from the barn as possible. Not only so, she usually would lie down in as secluded a spot as she could find.

So I went to the pasture to find her. I drove her to the barn, even though it was obvious that she did not want to go. You must never forget the cow's stubbornness and obstreperousness in the whole process I am about to describe. Her reluctance was apparent even while getting her into the barn lot just outside the barn.

I succeeded in getting her there, and then had to use some strong measures to coerce her into the barn and proper stall. And tied there. By the time that was done my demeanor, and the cow's, had greatly deteriorated. She was unhappy, I was unhappy. Besides I was drenched with sweat from all the running around, and the pushing and shoving and the swatting of the cow.

But I finally got her into the stall and the rope tied around her neck.

It is about this time I notice, that as usual at milking time, the cow has an attack of diarrhea as well as what would appear to be a serious bladder problem. So, by now, the fresh straw is dirty and wet.

I also am aware of the flies...hundreds of flies, swarming here, there, and everywhere...on the cow, on me, everywhere. In addition, the cow's tail is filled with the results of her diarrhea...about the consistency of thin gravy.

Next I put the "kickers" on the cow, on her rear legs. The purpose of the kickers is to keep her from kicking while she is being milked. The kickers were specially designed. They fit over the large tendons on the cow's legs, and the chains could be drawn up quite tightly. Thus, the cow's ability to kick, and to walk, was limited. It should be noted that the chains on the kickers did not wrap all the way around the cow's legs.

So I got the kickers and knelt down to put them in place on the cow's legs. It is about this time that the cow's tail slapped me full force across my face. It hurt, and the stuff in the tail was all over me. I finally got the kickers in place, but not before I got slapped a couple of more times with the tail. While putting the kickers on, I was getting hotter and hotter... both emotionally and physically. And the flies, what a lot of swatting they required...but it was fairly useless to try and control them.

I got the milk pail, and the milk stool, and sat down to milk. When I grasped the teats I realized that they were covered with dirt, and, yes, the product of the cow's diarrhea. I got a cleaning cloth and did the best I could cleaning the teats, all the while being battered with the cow's tail.

Perhaps I should add, parenthetically, that these were the days before being a minister ever entered my mind. So by now I had sworn enough to supply every drunken sailor who ever lived with swear words.

I sat down on the stool again, placed the pail under the udder, and leaned my head against the cow. The temperature was high, I was hot, the cow was hot. In short, it was really warm. And still the tail drummed on my back and on the side of my head. And the flies continued to pester, and the sweat rolled down my face, my arms, my legs, and my back.

Finally, I got started with the actual milking. I pulled and tugged and streams of milk began to rain into the milk pail.

The cats, have I mentioned the cats? There were 8-10 hungry cats hanging around. It was then that I made a miserable milking chore even worse. I squirted some milk into one of the cat's mouth. Immediately, they swarmed to the pail, trying to climb over the edges so they could reach and lap up the milk. So in addition to the flies, I now had 10 cats to contend with. They had to be constantly brushed away. And their "meowing" was enough to drive me crazy.

All the while, the cow was taking a rather dim view of all of this. She had a bladder attack. She haunched up and let go. I had to grab the pail to keep the stuff from splashing into it. And with the kickers on she almost lost her balance while she was all haunched up.

The cow couldn't or wouldn't stand still. She strained against the kickers. She swayed, she minced stepped, she lurched. One of the minced steps caused her hoof to be placed on my foot. By the way, did I mention that I was barefoot?

Little by little, I milked away. Besides the squeezing and tugging on the teats, the flies were swatted almost without ceasing, the cats were brushed back constantly, and the cow's tail continued its assault on my face and head. The diarrhea never abated and the bladder attacks came 3 or 4 times.

At last, with the pail about 3/4ths full, and a deep layer of foam that came to the top of the pail, I got the job done. The cow was milked and stripped.

Then it happened. .

With super-human effort, or I should say with super-bovine effort, somehow the cow kicked the kickers off... and deposited a filthy foot and hoof right into the pail of milk. And with that, the tail, which had been refilled by the most recent diarrhea attack, lashed me across the face one more time.

The milk was ruined, it had to be given to the cats. The cats won, the flies won, the cow won, I lost.

But I was back milking the next morning..but only because Pop made me.

WEANING THE CALF

When our milk cow had a calf we had to wean it as soon as possible, so that we could have the milk. That was the reason we had a cow...to provide milk for our use. I don't remember what happened to the calf. We must have sold it later. I don't remember butchering any of them.

I do remember a bit of the weaning process. The calf was separated from its mother. It was normally kept in the north barn lot with access to the driveway in the barn by the bins. The conversion from milk to solid food was a fairly long process. The calf, for a brief time, was allowed to nurse the cow. And solid food was gradually introduced to its diet.

Here is something of how we did the conversion...and I did it several times with different calves.

The calf could not, or would not, drink milk from a pail in the manner of a cow or horse drinking water. So I would stick a finger in the calf's mouth and push his nose into the bucket of milk. The calf's sucking action on the finger drew the milk into its mouth.

After a number of times, I don't recall how many, the calf was finally able to drink the milk without the assistance of the finger.

The calf was fed milk like that for sometime. Then the milk was withdrawn from its diet. The calf was then able to sustain itself on grain and forage food...grass, red clover, alfalfa, and hay.

RFD, RANDOLPH

Compared to the media glut and output today, and the modern means of communication, we were quite isolated on the farm east of Randolph in the 1930's. I suppose we never thought much about it. Our contact with the outside world was limited. Of course, we did have contact with others at school, on the weekly shopping trips, as well as with the neighbors. But we did very little socializing with the neighbors. And we had an occasional visit from relatives.

The most important factor in being kept from almost total isolation was the rural mail carrier. The service was called RFD, Rural Free Delivery. We were served by a route out of Randolph. Harry Comstock was the mail carrier. I believe he delivered the mail for the more than 10 years we lived there.

We received the DES MOINES REGISTER through the mail. As I recall, we subscribed to the REGISTER all through the depression years. At any rate, before we got a radio, it was our only source of information and news about the outside world.

We did not receive a lot of mail. What we did get seemed to be important.

Parenthetically, there were very few, if any, advertizing pieces in the mail; very little, if any, junk mail.

We got many of the things we needed through the mail, for example, our clothes. My recollection is that nearly all, if not all, of our clothes and shoes came through the mail. They were ordered through the Sears or Wards catalogs. Both, in those days, had mail order facilities in Kansas City, Missouri. And their catalogs were free.

We even ordered baby chicks by mail a couple of times, and they were delivered by Comstock. Likely, they were ordered from May's or Field's rather than Sears or Wards.

So we did use the mail for the purchase of a lot of our needs...cloth, thread, utensils, perhaps small tools, and chimneys for the lanterns and lamps. We also bought garden seeds, and cabbage, pepper, and tomato plants by mail.

All the companies we ordered from offered no credit. We had to send a check with the order, in an amount to cover the delivery charges as well as the cost of the merchandise.

After mailing an order, a certain amount of excitement was apparent among us while waiting for the order to be delivered. I have forgotten the normal time we had to wait for a Sears or Wards order. Maybe it was a week. I do remember the disappoint- I felt if the order was not received when I thought it ought to have been. That was especially true if something had been ordered for me.

So Harry Comstock had a big role in our lives. He was the delivery person for some very important things for our lives.

Mom probably wrote and received more cards and letters than I remember. She probably kept in touch with Grandma Young, and with her sisters, Blanche and Hazel.

Stamps cost 3¢, a post card cost 1¢. To buy stamps and post cards we merely put a note and money into the mail box and Harry would leave whatever the note stated.

Harry had two cars. He had a newer car which he used on good days. He had an older blue coupe which he used on bad days...bad days being when the roads were bad. Most of the roads were of unsurfaced dirt. They would be made very muddy by the rains and the spring thaw. Sometimes the ruts were axle deep on cars and on the

school bus. So the blue coupe nearly always had tire chains on it. I do not remember Harry missing many days of mail delivery. I am sure, however, that he missed days during the terrible winters of 1934-35 and 1935-36.

Our mail box was old. It was of a different size and shape than so many mailboxes are today. It was merely a rectangular box about 14" by 8", and about 8" deep at the back and about 5" deep at the front. The lid was hinged in the back and, when closed, it formed a slanted roof for the box. It did not have a flag. We tied a piece of cloth to it to serve that purpose.

The arrival of mail creates a sense of anticipation yet today. It did so in the 1930's...for then, too, the coming of rural mail carrier was something of a lifeline. Our address was RFD 1, Randolph, Iowa.

FIRST RADIO

In the late 1930's our only source of news was the DES MOINES REGISTER. It was delivered by the rural mail carrier, Harry Comstock. We never used money to subscribe, however. When the REGISTER salesman would come at renewal times, we would help Mom catch 2 or 3 old hens. She gave them to the REGISTER man. I assume he sold them. I guess he got enough to cover the subscription cost, and maybe more.

About the same time, the REA (Rural Electification Administration) was making electricity available to the rural areas of the state. When the power lines were put up south of Strahan, Pop's employers - Charles and Howard Kayton - got their farmsteads electrified. They lived some 6-8 miles north of where we lived.

When the Kaytons got electricity our horizons expanded a bit. We got our first radio for nothing. Wally Salyers gave it to us. Charles Kayton gave us the 6 volt battery which powered it and the Wincharger (maybe Windcharger) which kept the battery charged. Charles was going to trade the radio in on a new one that could be used with electricity. In making the deal with Salyers, he mentioned that he was giving us the battery and the Wincharger. Salyers said, "Well, hell if you're giving them the battery and Wincharger, I'll just give them the radio".

Wincharger was a brand name for a wind powered generator. We mounted it on the kitchen wing of our house. It had a long propeller which turned extremely fast in the wind. And how it shook the house! It generated enough electricity to keep the battery charged.

So we mounted the Wincharger and ran the necessary wires to

the battery which sat under a little table just inside a window. The radio was placed on the little table. We, I believe Melvin did most of the work, ran an aerial from the radio all the way to the peak of the barn.

And it worked. We could pick up stations in Shenandoah, St. Joseph, and Omaha. And, if conditions were right, WSN in Nashville could be heard. That was a joy to Pop because he could hear the GRAND OLE OPRY. The voices of Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, Bill Monroe, Minnie Pearl, and others came right into our home.

Usually, though, we listened to KMA, KFNF and the network affiliates in Omaha, including WOW and KFAB.

KMA and KFNF were both in Shenandoah. Both stations are still there, though KFNF now has different call letters and is part of a Christian family network.

Shenandoah was the location of two major seed and nursery companies - the Earl May Seed Company and the Henry Field Seed and Nursery Company. The stations were founded by the founders of the seed companies - KMA by Earl May and KFNF by Henry Field. They were used, as you might guess, to promote the seed companies.

Henry Field died and apparently left no strong business minds to care for the business. It still operates today, however.

Earl May's son, Ed May, built the Earl May Company until it now has Garden Centers in many towns and cities around the Mid-west. He also founded KMTV television in Omaha. The Earl May Company no longer owns KMTV.

We listened to the network affiliates quite regularly in the evenings. We heard such programs as FIBBER McGEE AND MOLLY, BOB HOPE, JACK BENNY, THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE, Mr. DISTRICT ATTOR-

NEY, DR. I.Q., THE SHADOW, and others. In the afternoon, after school, JACK ARMSTRONG, SKY KING, and TERRY AND THE PIRATES could be heard. Mom often listened to soap opera type serial programs. Included were STELLA DALLAS, LORENZO JONES, BACKSTAGE WIFE, and YOUNG WIDOW BROWN.

But mostly, I guess, we listened to KMA and KFNF.

Both stations had live entertainers. The personalities were mostly country and western musicians. Some of the less than memorable names were Garland Hutchens, Curly Dale, Jimmy Morgan, Grandpa Jones, and KFNF's "famous blind musician" Sonny Day. Both stations had several announcers including Earl May and Henry Field. Pate Simmons hosted KFNF's Saturday Night Barn Dance program as well as serving as announcer at other times. Jim Ross Lightfoot, presently a member of congress, was a farm announcer for KMA in more recent times. His radio name was Jim Ross.

Both stations had occasional amateur nights. Fern and Ruby Porter played and sang once or twice. They were called the Porter Sisters. Fern later became my brother Melvin's wife.

Frank Field, Henry's son, was with KMA. I am unaware of the circumstances under which he ended up working for his father's biggest competitor. Frank was listened to widely with his farm advice, garden tips, and weather shows. Before he died, he did the same on KMTV.

KMA was, and still is, known for its homemaker programs. Leanna Driftmeir was long associated with one called KITCHEN KLATTER. Later personalities on the homemaker shows included Brenda Kay (Brenda Kay McConahay of Clarinda) and Evelyn Birkby of Sidney.

KFNF and KMA both sought to promote the two seed companies and to sell their products. As a result, the programming and news were heavily oriented to farm, garden, and home.

KMA did have one live act that is somewhat important. It was Ike Everly and his family. His family included sons who went on to fame and fortune as the Everly Brothers.

So we got a radio. We continued to get the REGISTER. But now, we were in touch with the world every day. And we had Jimmy Morgan, Pate Simmons, Frank Field, THE SHADOW, JACK ARMSTRONG, FIBBER McGEE, and all the rest coming right into our house.

HALES' BABY

Back in the 1930's there were many farm laborers. Pop was one and so was Ed Hale. Ed Hale and his family lived for a few years ¼ mile east of us, across the road from Tony Hughes.

Ed's wife was pregnant, and she was expected to deliver during the winter of 1935-1936. Babies were normally born at home at that time, with the local general practice doctor coming for the delivery.

Early on that winter and late fall it began to snow, and to blow. And how it snowed and how it blowed. Snow drifts covered the east-west county road to the Hales from fence post to fence post. The drifts were 8-10 feet deep and hundreds of yards long. And cold...it remained below zero for the whole month of January in 1936.

But all that did not make Mrs. Hale less pregnant.

Since the snow and wind were so heavy and so frequent there wasn't much chance that a county snow plow could come daily and clear the road so that the doctor could get to the Hales' place.

There was a solution of sorts, though. Pop, Ed, Tony Hughes, and the kids shovelled snow each day to keep the road open for Dr. Kerr. But every night it would drift full again. So more shovelling was done the next day...over and over again.

Tony came to the rescue, or so he thought. He took an old stock tank, about 10 feet in diameter, filled it with broken concrete and other heavy material, and tied a chain from it to his old tractor. He had it all figured out...just draw that contraption along the road and it would clear a path for the doctor. Unfortunately, it didn't work.

So back to the shovelling. It turned so cold that you could walk for miles on top of the snow and never break through.

In spite of the cold, the wind, the snow, and the drifts Mrs. Hale was still expecting.

All that community concern was wonderful, and I guess it worked. Mrs. Hale's baby was born - a healthy baby boy - late in the spring after all the snow had melted.

TUMBLE BUGS

The lane was about 300 yards long. It went south for about half that distance, then turned west at a right angle. The lane, about 30 feet wide, led from the barn lot near the barn to the windmill and the stock watering tank. The windmill harnessed the wind so that wind power operated the pump which kept the water tank filled.

One of the occasional chores I had was to turn the windmill on and off. That was a simple matter...all I had to do was pull a lever down to turn it off. A wire attached to the lever ran to the top of the windmill and to the brake. Pulling the lever not only applied the brake, it also moved the tail or fan in such a position that the wind did not strike directly into the large wheel of fins. That, and the brake, kept it from running even in the strongest wind.

The lane had several gates along it. They gave access to the pasture and crop land which lined the lane.

The lane was well travelled by the farm animals, the cows and the draft animals. Cows were path followers, I don't remember that the draft animals were. After establishing a path, the cows walked it every time they went to and from the water tank. Their hooves dug deeply into the hard soil, so much so, after a period of time, the path would be a deep furrow. It then became an easy target for water erosion when rain fell. That didn't seem to bother the cows too much, though. They didn't know about erosion and they just moved their path a little to the side of the furrow and began all over again. So the second half of the lane, the half nearest the windmill, had deeply eroded paths in it. It was

sloped, the first half was quite flat.

There were some hardy weeds growing in the lane. Some sandburrs, and some weeds that had stickers and tiny yellow blossems on them. I don't know what they were called, but I called them stickers. And there were some pig weeds here and there.

As I say, the lane got a lot of traffic from the farm animals. So it was generously supplied with cow and horse droppings ...fresh ones and dried ones.

Horse droppings are about the size of a couple of golf balls, though not round...a flattened oval shape. A horse would drop 12-18 of these at a time. They held their shape and, when dried, could be tossed like a ball.

Cow droppings were of a wholly different sort. They were runny. Assuming the cow was standing still while doing her thing, it would form a pile 2-3 inches deep and 8-10 inches in diameter. When the stuff dried it became a cow chip. We did not use it as such, but I understand that cow chips have occasionally been used for fuel.

But I wanted to tell about the tumble bugs. In a way, I have been already, because the cow droppings are necessary to the tumble bugs.

About the middle of the summer, as I recall, and about the middle of the drying time for the cow chips came the tumble bugs. This strange creature was about an inch long, black, and with a large body, and a relatively small head. It had powerful legs, I'm sure, six of them, I believe.

The tumble bug attacked the partially dried cow pile with a good deal of energy. And he formed little round balls from it. The balls were perhaps an inch in diameter. Just how he did that,

I don't know. After the ball had been formed, the bug would roll it around. He did this by getting on top of it, then dropping his front feet and head over the side. Thus, he rolled the ball backwards with his front feet doing the pushing.

I found out much later that another name for the tumble bug is dung beetle. I never did find out what the tumble bug did with that ball, however.

KIER'S STORE

The center of Strahan when I lived there in 1944-1949 was Kier's General Store. It was the only business other than Tom White's Blacksmith Shop. The United Methodist Church was there too. It was an important part of the community. It functioned more as a community church than a denominational church.

But Kier's was probably the center of the area because all of the community's people, even the non-religious, came to Kier's store.

Ronald Kier was the owner and operator. He lived across the street from the store with Uarda, his wife and their two children Patsy and Charles. Ronald always had a pipe in his mouth. It hung right in the center and drooped down toward his chin. It seemed that even his teeth had been worn off by that pipe.

Strahan had been quite a thriving town in earlier years. See another article about Strahan's glory years. But in the second half of the 1940's Kier's store, along with the blacksmith and the church, was all that was there. There were a dozen or so residences. It was not an incorporated town so it did not have a mayor or town council.

Kier's store was crammed with wares, a pop cooler, cluttered shelves, a barrell or two, a pinball machine, a counter style meat cooler, and a few chairs for the loafers. The pop cooler was the top opening model. Outside, there was a number of benches and a gasoline pump. The pump was the old kind. It had a glass, metered globe about 6 feet above the ground. The gasoline had to be hand pumped into the globe. The gasoline was fed by gravity into the vehicle's tank. The markings on the glass globe showed how much

gasoline was being delivered. If I remember correctly it cost something like 35¢ a gallon.

Back inside the store, was a frequently dirty, rough wooden floor.

Kier's wares included the household basics: flour, sugar, salt, bread, ice cream, spices, lard, some meats, especially processed ones like weiners and cold cuts. He had candies of various sorts and some snack foods like potato chips and Twinkies. He also carried pipe tobacco, cigars, and cigarettes. I don't remember Kier's freezer. That is surprizing because I surely bought enough ice cream and it was self-serve. That is, the freezer was of such a nature that you could get your own ice cream. The rest of the store, other than the pop cooler, was not self-serve.

The cash register was ancient. When operated, it flicked little tabs up showing the total. It did not show the amount of change to be returned to the buyer.

Back in one corner was the post office. Ronald was the post master. There was around twenty patron boxes.

The Wabash Railroad had the mail contract for Strahan. A lot of small towns in those days were served by a "star" route. A star route was a system of delivering mail to small post offices by car or truck. But Strahan had the Wabash. But the train never stopped. The mail bag was thrown from the train, and Kier had to search along the tracks to find it. That is how the incoming mail got to the Strahan post office.

(When I was in Simpson College I sent my laundry home to be laundered by Mom. We used a specially designed container for that

purpose. That is, the same container I sent the clothes home in was the one in which Mom returned the clothes. It must have been, and indeed was, a sturdy container to have withstood being thrown off the train so many times. I believe we used the same one for four years. I have a laundry box designed for sending clothes back and forth. It is not the one Mom and I used. I don't know where the one I have came from.)

The out-going mail had to get on a train which did not stop. Kier put that mail in a heavy bag and attached it to a pole beside the tracks. A mechanical arm on the train reached out and snatched it. That is the way the out-going mail was put onto the train.

I remember that Kier asked me to pick up the incoming mail several times. He never asked me to position the bag for the out-going mail, however.

Jessie Bruce worked for Kier. As I recall, she spent a few hours each afternoon and Sunday mornings in the store. Jessie lived next door to the Irvin house in Strahan. Jessie was a nice lady, but as plain as a board walk. She didn't seem to ever talk, she just mumbled. Jessie fit well into the drabness of the store. In fact, she added to the drabness.

Kier kept his store open on Sunday mornings, including the church and Sunday school hours. So there was usually a lot of men around the store on Sunday mornings. You know the kind, religion is okay for the women and the kids, but I don't need it. So they waited at Kier's while the women and kids went to church and Sunday school.

Kier was the agent for the OMAHA WORLD-HERALD and the DES MOINES REGISTER. He laid the Sunday papers out on a table with

the subscriber's name penciled on each paper.

Of course, some of the church crowd stopped after church to pick up their papers and some bread and milk or whatever.

After I left the community, Kier got religion. He began closing his store during the church and Sunday school hours and became a faithful participant in the church.

In the late spring, summer, and early fall Kier's store really came alive in the late afternoons and evenings.

That's when people would gather. Some would be playing the pinball machine, others would be loafing inside, and the regulars would be outside on the benches. The regulars included Tom White, Archie and Les Shaffer, Dale Laughlin, Henry Nims, Ikey Nims, and Art Wax. Sometimes, a farmer or two would join them, and Dallas Clites and Frank Steele were there occasionally. I believe my brother Melvin used to spend some of his evenings there, too.

I spent a lot of time there, too...nursing a pop, often with a small bag of peanuts in it. I played the pinball machine. It only cost a nickel per game. And free games could be won. Often Hugh and Theron Bolton were there. Glen and Junior Baslee, John Wiseman, Doyle Brown, Ronald Bruce, Richard Morrison, and others showed up on occasion. Sometimes younger kids were there too... Lloyd and Larry, and Charles Kier.

I remember one night Theron Bolton had over 100 free games on the pinball machine.

I guess in the modern idiom...we were just hanging out.

Kier spent most of his time in the store. Sometimes his wife Uarda would be there.

I don't know the year in which Kier closed the store. It probably was in the late 1950's or early 1960's.

RIDING THE MULE

By the time we lived in the Criswell house south of Strahan Doris and Melvin had already gotten married. George had been in the Navy and did not live at home again. Lowell left to go to Jewell, Iowa while we lived there. He resided in the Ames, Nevada, and Jewell area until he died.

I was the oldest child still at home. I was in high school. It was my responsibility to milk the cow or cows. I have written about milking the cow elsewhere, but here I write my recollection of riding a mule to get the cow to the barn.

It was in the fall and the cow was pastured in a harvested corn field. By this time, the Kaytons had mechanical corn pickers, and Pop no longer picked corn by hand. I believe the last year he picked corn by hand was 1944.

More because it was challenging than necessary, I tried on several occasions to ride one of the mules to get the milk cow out of the corn field so that I could milk it. I don't remember which mule it was...Jerry or Genny. Maybe it was even a mule from a different team. It was a white mule.

The mule showed no tendency to buck, indeed, it seemed pretty mild and tame. Being a mule, though, it had to be prodded to move. So it would plod its way out of the barn lot and plod along in the corn field. Then, suddenly, the mule would take off in a furious gallop. I had to hold on with all my might. I did not have a saddle.

The mule and I went off toward the cow at a fast pace with me almost bouncing off at every step. But then, suddenly, the

mule would plant its front feet and stop on a dime, as the saying goes. The quick stop would cause me to hurdle over the head of the animal and land abruptly about 25 feet in front of the mule.

I don't know how many times I had this happen before I decided it would be better to walk to get the cow. I guess the mule was smarter than I was.

THE BUGGY WRECK

One of the most talked about incidents of my life was the buggy accident. Listening to my brother Lloyd tell about the event seems to indicate that my memory is limited, "selective" memory, maybe. It happened when we lived at the Criswell place. That place was on the top of a hill about ¼ of a mile west of the road running south of Strahan.

My family did not have an automobile even in the 1940's. All through the 1930's and into the 1940's we used a team and wagon, or a team and buggy, to go to shop for groceries. We did not do that after we moved to the Strahan area. Apparently, the grocery shopping trips to Kier's store were done with transportation supplied by Melvin or neighbors. I do not remember using a team and wagon or buggy to shop at Strahan.

But we still had a buggy. Actually, the buggy in the accident was only part of a buggy. It had been stripped. The tongue was gone, the folding top had been removed, the seats had been taken off, and the box-like frame was gone. All that remained was the four wheels and the chassis. We added a board to sit on and a rope with which to steer.

The stripped down buggy was very light. We had for years pushed and pulled a buggy chassis around. We pushed it up the hills so we could coast down. The rope was tied to each end of the front axle just inside the front wheels. To steer all we had to do was to pull one or the other end of the rope from the steerer's sitting spot...usually a board secured above the rear axle.

Pop had warned us on many occasions not to coast and to stay

off the public roads. But the roads were the best place to push the buggy and the smoothly planed hills were certainly better than a rough farm field for coasting.

It is probably well to say that steering the buggy, while not requiring a great deal of physical strength, required some skill: Keep the steering rope tight, don't yank on the rope, don't turn sharply, and never let go of the rope.

As I said, the Criswell house was atop a good hill. Going west from the house was easy for the buggy. There was a slight grade in the road and the hill was short, because another rise in the road came immediately.

Going east was different. The hill was steep and long. And right at the bottom it intersected with what, in 1993, was Mills County Road M16. It was a fairly well travelled road.

I guess I never thought of the hill as a challenge. I had walked up and down it many times. I had coasted a bicycle down it and pedaled and pushed it up the hill many times. I suppose I had thought about coasting the buggy down the hill. One day I decided to do so.

Max and Lloyd were near the bottom of the hill. I don't know whether they were checking the mail box or coming home from Kier's, or just goofing around. Now was the time.

I pushed the buggy into the road, turned it east out of the drive way, jumped on it, and away I went. It must have been pretty exciting for I shouted at the two as I sped past them right aross the intersection and quite a ways down the road...the road that led to Everett Ratherford's.

Max and Lloyd were impressed. They wanted to try it. Why don't the three of us do it?

So we pushed the buggy up the hill and turned it around. We planted ourselves on the board seats, and checked traffic on M16. We could see quite a ways both ways on M16 from our vantage point on top of the hill. It was clear.

The buggy started to roll. It gathered speed. The wind was cool on our faces and we were shouting with glee. We were nearing the bottom.

Then it happened.

Did a front wheel catch on uneven ground? Did I mishandle the steering rope? Did Max or Lloyd panic and grab the steering rope?

Whatever, there we were hurtling into the grader ditch right where the roads joined. Lloyd apparently escaped unscathed, even though most of the family has long felt that he injured his brain. I ended up with a wrenched back. And Max was bleeding from the mouth. As we struggled back up the hill, Max took two or three of his teeth out and cast them aside.

Mom was a bit excited when she saw us. She told one of us to go to Kaytons, about ½ mile away, and call Melvin to take us to the doctor. Melvin was not available but Howard Kayton took us. I don't remember the visit to the doctor.

I do remember Pop's wrath. The buggy was soon gone. I don't remember the punishment he gave to Lloyd and Max. I do remember that it took me days to hand pump the big stock tank full of water.

Some 45-50 years after the accident, the steel drainage tube under M16 still has a dent in it. The dent marks the spot where one of the buggy wheels smashed into it. It is a mile south of the Strahan school house corner, on the northwest corner of the intersection. The road up the hill is now closed.

DATE WITH POLLY

Polly was red-headed. She was smart. She was not unattractive, nor was she beautiful. But she looked good to me. I was in high school, a junior, and she was a senior.

She was shy, and believe it or not, I was bashful.

I wanted to date her. That meant something like taking her to Malvern or Shenandoah to a movie. But I had no car. But there was an even bigger reason why I could not date her. Her mother wouldn't let me...not only me but no one was allowed to date her.

Her father, Lloyd Wilson, was a jolly type of fellow. He was the school custodian, and one of the bus drivers. Lloyd and I were friends. In fact, I often helped him with his custodial work.

I longed to date Polly. The odds were against it happening. She was willing, but I had no transportation, and then there was her mother.

I can't remember the circumstances but it was worked out so that I could take her home after a school function. My brother George, recently returned from the navy, loaned me his 1934 Ford.

During the school function, I think it was a play, I was all excited about my date with Polly. And Polly looked pretty that night. And she was excited, too.

I even told her she looked nice. She reminded me, reluctantly, that I had to drive her straight home. That was okay because in the back of my mind I thought there would be longer and better dates with Polly.

We were surprizingly at ease and talking comfortably as we

made our way out of the school house. It was a thrill to place my hand gently on her arm and steer her through the crowd. Some of my male school mates made funny and even suggestive comments. That didn't bother us, however. We were too much into our first date and the prospect of being alone for a two mile drive to Polly's home.

We reached the car which was parked on the road in front of the school, and also in front of the superintendent's home. So I opened the passenger door for Polly, made sure she was in, and gently closed it.

I went around the car and got in under the driver's steering wheel. I started the car, put it in gear, smiled at Polly, and drove about 50 feet square into another 1934 Ford. I had forgotten to turn on the head lights.

And Polly broke her nose.

And Polly's mother never let me date Polly again. For that matter, Polly did not want another date with me, either.

After paying for George's damaged fender and Tony Olhava's damaged fender, I guess I lost some of my excitement for Polly, and I lost at least a month's summer pay to fix the cars.

That was my date with Polly.

(On Good Friday, April 9, 1993, I spoke at a Good Friday service in St. John's Lutheran Church in Persia, Iowa. One of the persons who attended that service was Tony Olhava, jr.)

LARRY'S FIRE

When I was 9 or 10 years old and Larry was maybe 15 months to 2 years old, some of us were in the living room one night, in the house east of Randolph. We smelled smoke. We investigated and found Larry in Mom and Pop's bedroom just off the living room. He was watching their bed burn. He was playing with matches. The little blaze was quickly extinquished without a great deal of damage.

The fire was easily put out. But I did not so easily get over the fear it caused me. My imagination was beyond control. I imagined that my bed would catch on fire while I was asleep. And that trauma lasted for several weeks.

One night, quite soon after the incident, I dreamed that the kitchen wing of the house was on fire. In my dream, I raised up to look out the window through which I could see the kitchen wing. My fear in my dream was such that I broke the window before I woke up.

For several weeks, I could not sleep. I was not allowed to sleep in Mom and Pop's room. They did let me sleep on an old couch in the living room close to their bedroom. I guess I just wore out the fire phobia I had. I do not remember the circumstances under which I went back to my own bed.

Some 6-8 years later we lost two homes to fire in the space of a few months. These fires did not prompt a recurrence of the fear which I had over Larry's fire.

GROUNDHOG IN THE KITCHEN

The house on the Criswell place had been unoccupied for many years. There was a good well near the house, and a shed-like building that could be, and was, used for housing a team or two of draft animals and a place to milk the cows.

Kaytons rented the 80 acres on which the house was located. When the Kaytons lost the lease on the farm where we lived when we first moved from Randolph, they fixed up the house on the Criswell farm so we could live there. Pop continued to work for the Kaytons. By this time, Pop was pretty much a handy man around the farm. Most of the farm work was being done with power equipment. The Kaytons did keep at least one team of horses around so that Pop would haul hay, mow weeds, etc. with horse drawn machinery.

The house had four rooms on the ground floor and one large room on the second floor.

When we moved to the house we brought along our milk cow and some chickens.

I suppose it was a few days after we moved into the house that Mom called me and asked me to help her get an old hen out of the kitchen. She didn't know how it got in.

It was under a free standing cupboard she said. So I took a straw broom and tried to push it out from under the cupboard. But I couldn't get it to move.

I was a bit irritated at the old hen. So I knelt down to see what the problem was and found myself looking into the face of, not a hen, but a groundhog. To say I was startled would be an understatement. I remember breathing a big sigh of relief that

neither Mom or I had tried to merely reach under the cupboard without looking.

What to do? I remember trying to convince Mom that there was a groundhog there. After convincing her, I had to calm both of us.

Here is what we did. We closed the doors to the other rooms. Mom watched while I went to the barn shed and got a manure pitchfork...the kind with 6 tines on it. And we left the door to the outside open. I put Mom into one of the other rooms. We had no idea what a wounded 40-50 pound groundhog would do.

It turned out to be easier to remove the animal than I imagined it would be. I impaled the animal on the tines of the manure fork and held the impaled groundhog against the baseboard until it ceased to struggle.

As I note in another article, groundhogs are terribly destructive and vicious rodents, not at all like the cute little creatures featured in Groundhog Day cartoons.

I don't know how the groundhog got into the house. I do know that it went out on the tines of a manure fork...and I had another pair of ears for the 50¢ bounty.

MY FIRST CAR

Brother Melvin said, "Don't buy it". I did and I wished I had listened to him. I was a marvelous car to look at...a four door 1928 Buick. The body and interior were in mint shape.

The problem was with the timing and the ignition. No one seemed to be able to do much with it. It wouldn't start. It had to be roll started. And it used gas...a straight 8 motor and it really guzzled gas.

In addition the tires were worn clear down to the fiber belts. Part of the problem was that, after I spent $100.00 to buy it, I had no money for tires, not enough for gas, and none to have it tuned by a certified Buick mechanic.

I only had it a couple of months during the summer of 1947 I believe it was. It was effective in keeping me penniless for the summer. I finally sold it to Roger Degase for $75.00.

I have often thought what that car would be worth today.

MEMORIES OF RURAL SOUNDS

One of the things I remember are the sounds and noises on the quiet farm during the 1930's. A list of all of them would be long. Here are a few of them.

The plaintive "lit-a-coo" cry of the turtle dove; the sparkling "bob white" whistle of the quail; the lonesome, distant yodel-like of the "rain bird"; the cooing and the wing-flapping of the pigeons; the blaring screech of the owl; and the raucous "caw caw" of the crow.

The hungry bawling of the calf; the mooing and lowing of the cows; the meowing of many cats jostling for a place at the milk pan; the proud rooster with his "cockle doodle doo", really more of a "err err err" that finally explodes; the cackling of a hen as she announces the egg she has laid; the "cluck cluck" of the hen as she gently coerces her little chicks; the chicks themselves with their tiny "peep peep peep"; the drake duck, the male, with his quiet subdued quack; and the female duck's loud and noisy "wak wak wak".

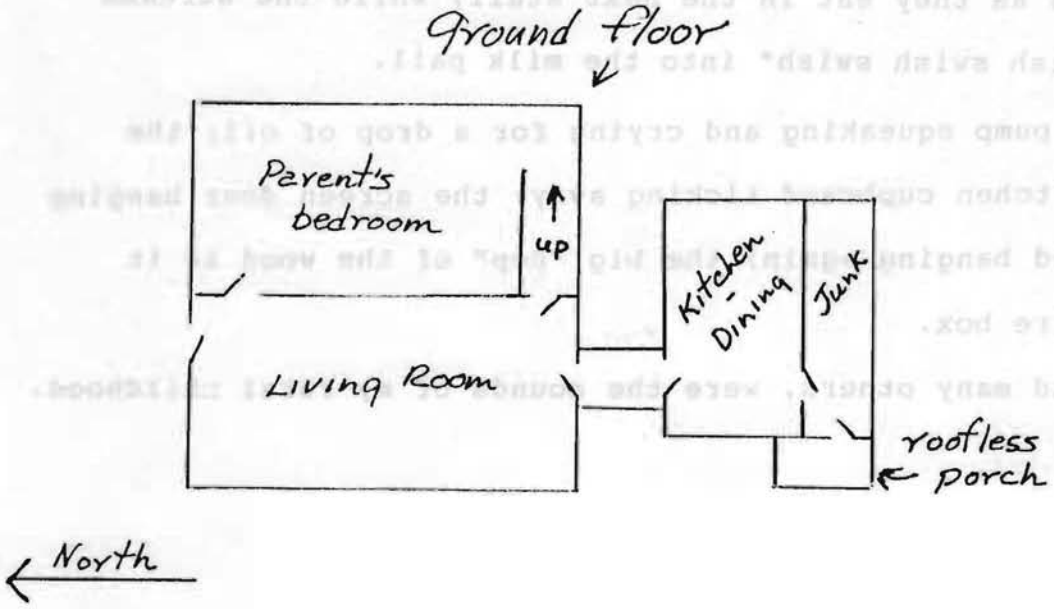
The flying insect we called the "jar fly" with its sustained and wavering "ras ras ras" echoing through the trees during the early evening; and the crickets "chirp chirp chirp".

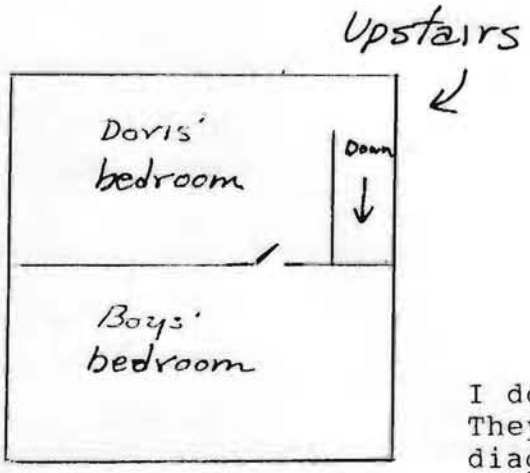
The erratic, yet regular "thump thump thump" of ears of corn striking the bangboard in the early morning hours; the muted "pop pop pop" of Dashner's John Deere, with its 2 horizontal cylinders, echoing across the countryside; the "bang bang bang" of the hammer as a neighbor repairs the roof of his barn; the harness jangling as a team of horses trots by; the Dashner's calling their hogs with "suey, suey, suey, here pig, here pig"; Emmy Rogers en-

ticing her milk cows to the barn lot with "here bossy, come on bossy, bossy, bossy"; the windmill creaking and screeching as it moves with the shifting wind and straining to turn its fan; the horses crunching grain as they eat in the next stall, while the streams of milk go "swish swish swish" into the milk pail.

The hand pump squeaking and crying for a drop of oil; the clock on the kitchen cupboard ticking away; the screen door banging and bouncing and banging again; the big "pop" of the wood as it burns in the fire box.

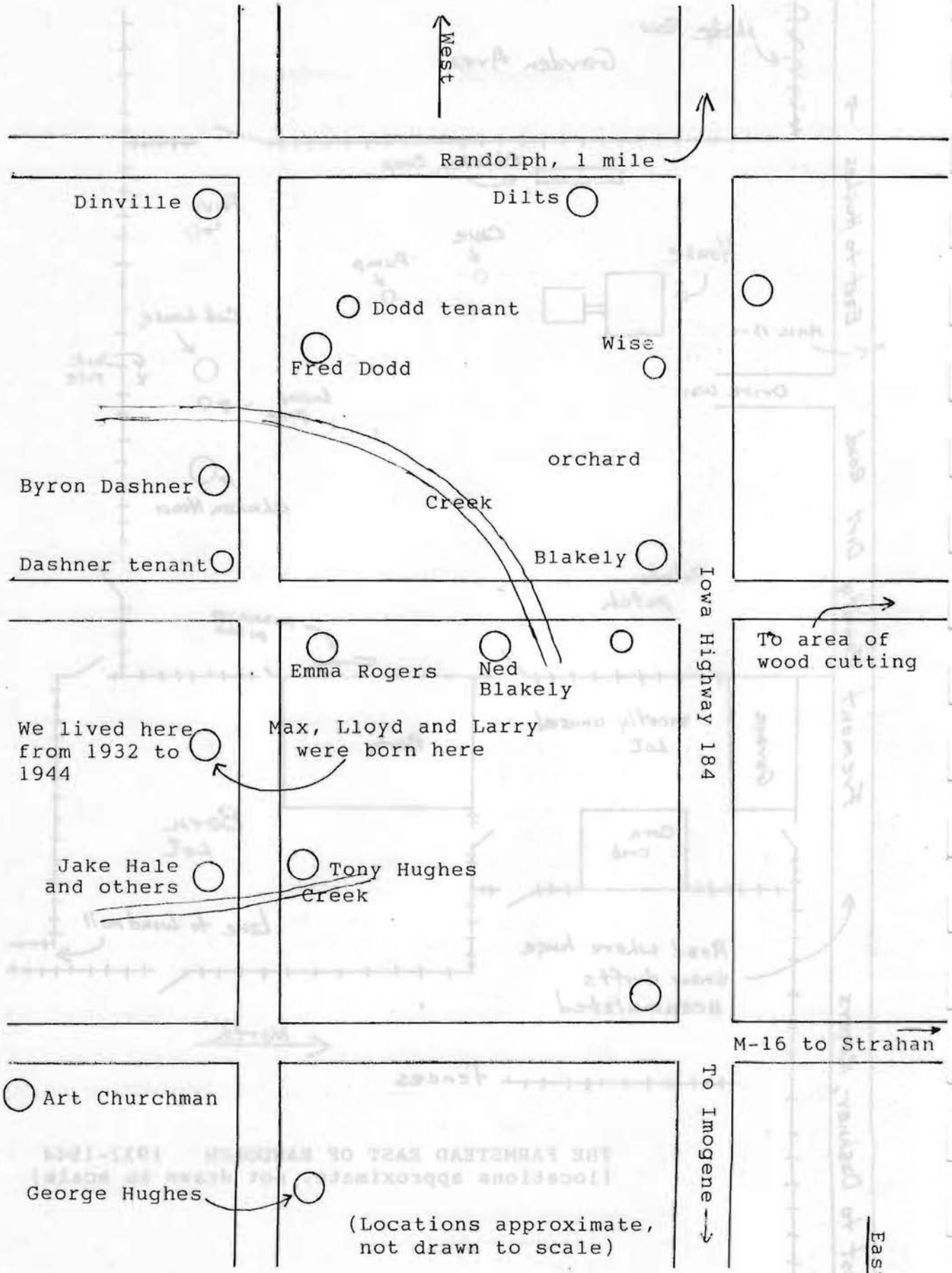
These, and many others, were the sounds of my rural childhood.



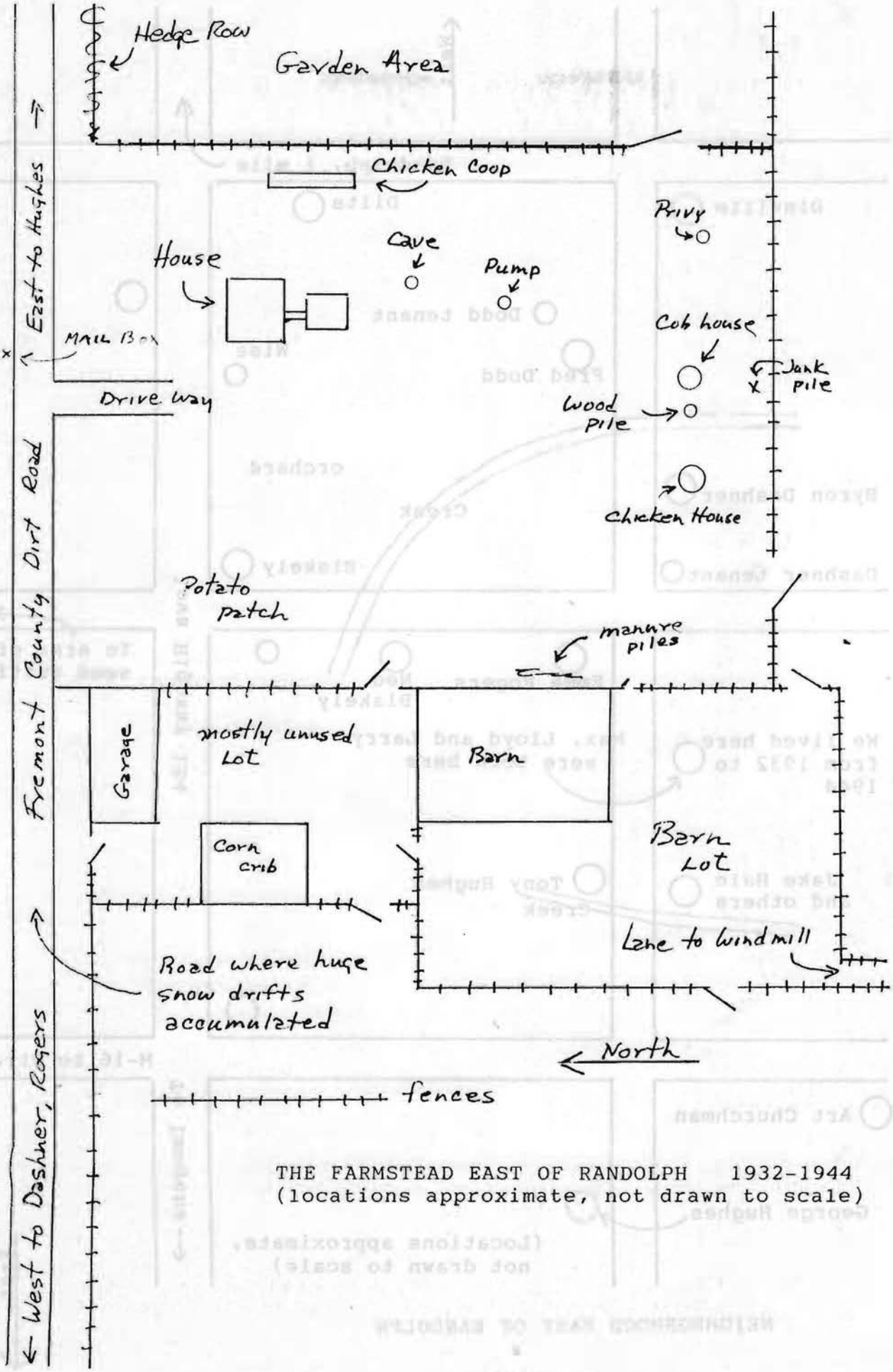


I do not remember the room sizes. They were quite small. This diagram is not drawn to scale.

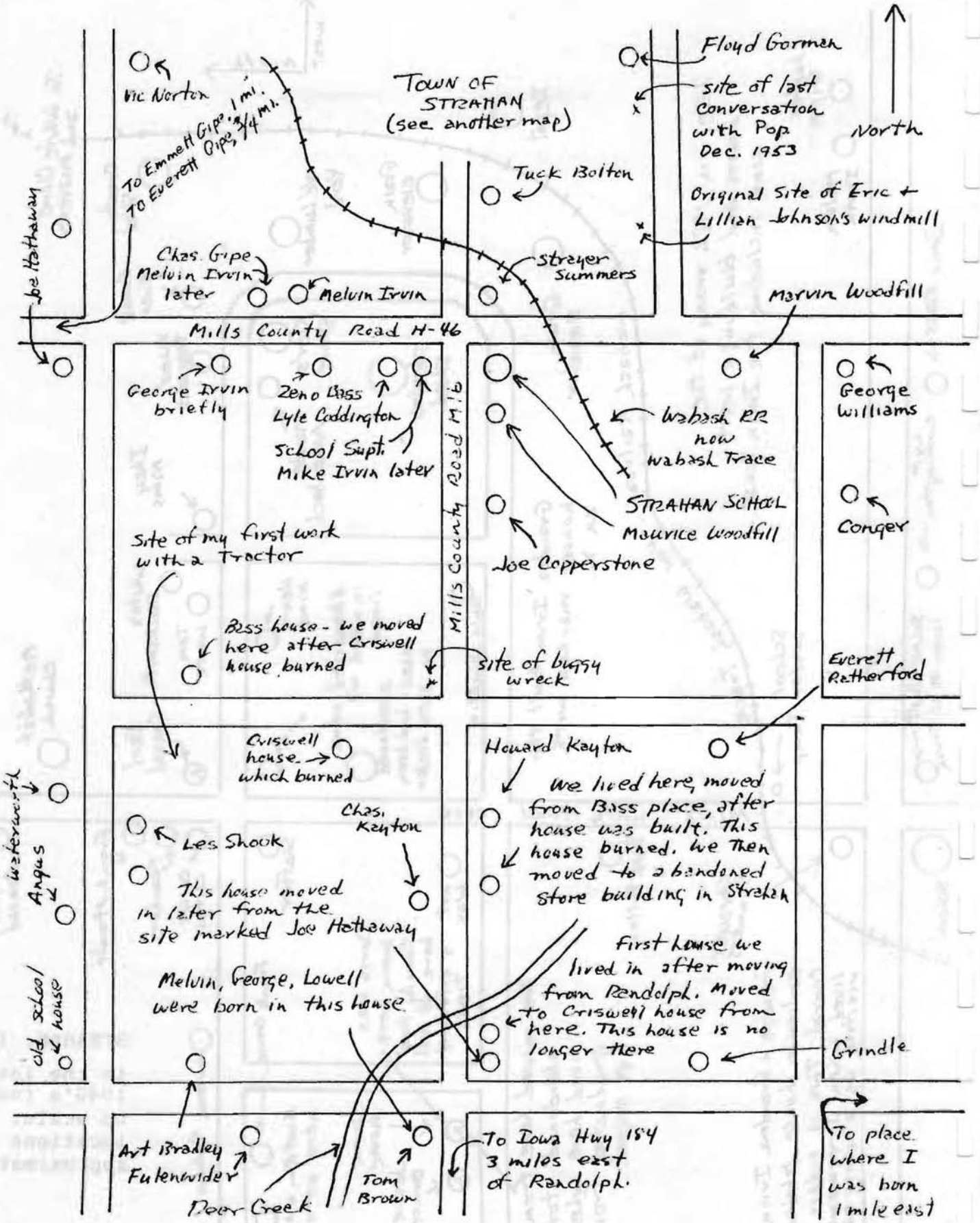
HOUSE EAST OF RANDOLPH, IOWA 1932-1944



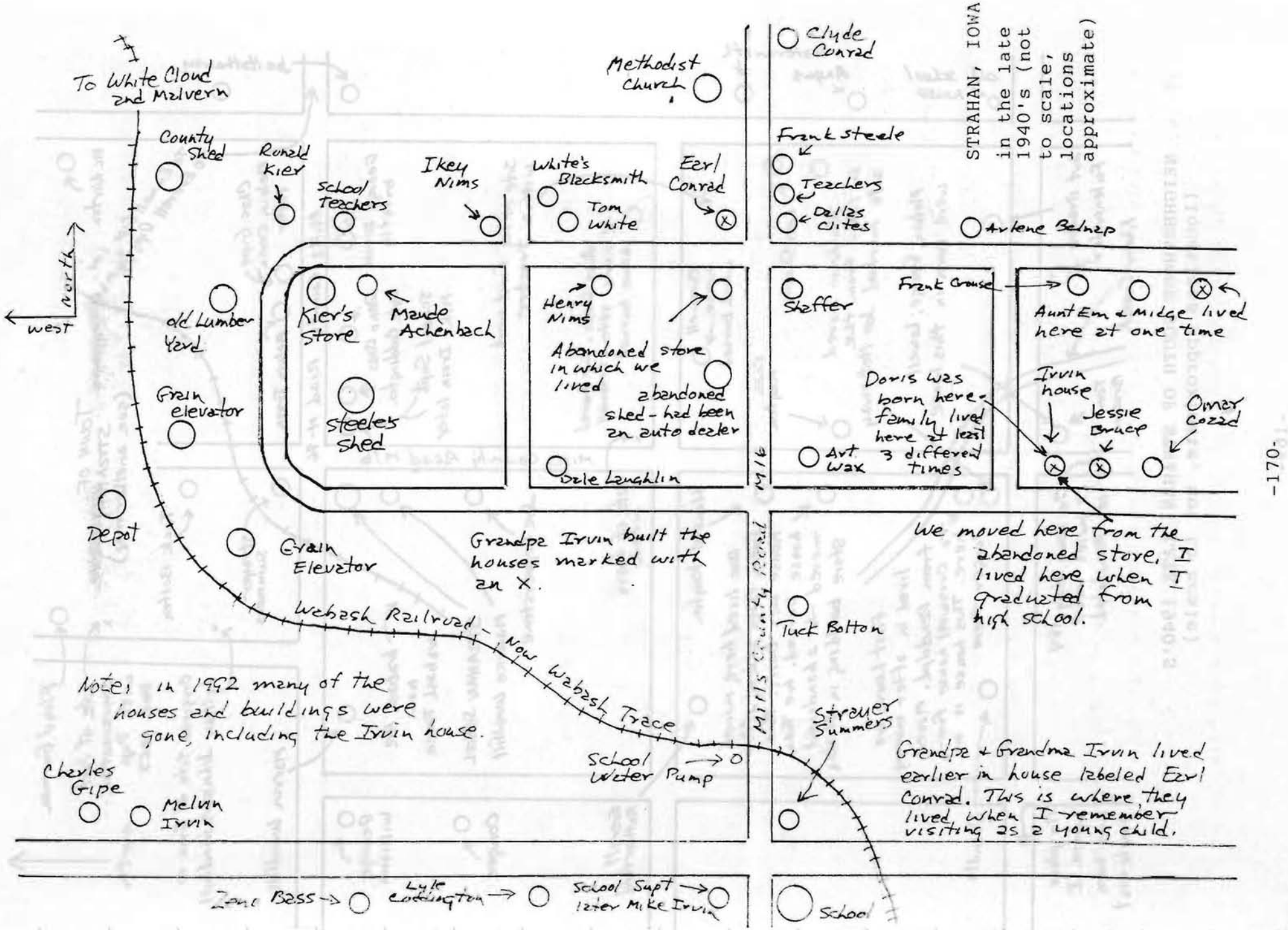
NEIGHBORHOOD EAST OF RANDOLPH



THE FARMSTEAD EAST OF RANDOLPH 1932-1944
(locations approximate, not drawn to scale)



NEIGHBORHOOD SOUTH OF STRAHAN, LATE 1940'S
(locations approximate, not to scale)


STRAHAN, IOWA
in the late 1940's (not to scale, locations approximate)
To White Cloud and Malvern
north
west
County Shed
Ronald Kier
School Teachers
Ikey Nims
White's Blacksmith
Tom White
Earl Conrad
Methodist Church
Clyde Conrad
Frank Steele
Teachers
Dallas Cites
Arlene Belnap
old Lumber Yard
Kier's Store
Maude Achenbach
Steeles Shed
Grain elevator
Depot
Grain Elevator
Heavy Nims
Abandoned store in which we lived
abandoned shed - had been an auto dealer
Dale Laughlin
Shaffer
Art Wax
Frank Crouse
Doris was born here - family lived here at least 3 different times
Aunt Em & Midge lived here at one time
Irvin house
Jessie Bruce
Omer Cozad
916
Grandpa Irvin built the houses marked with an X.
we moved here from the abandoned store. I lived here when I graduated from high school.
Wabash Railroad - Now Wabash Trace
Mills County Road
Tuck Bolton
Note: in 1992 many of the houses and buildings were gone, including the Irvin house.
Strauer Summers
Grandpa & Grandma Irvin lived earlier in house labeled Earl Conrad. This is where they lived when I remember visiting as a young child.
School Water Pump
Charles Gipe
Melvin Irvin
Zane Bass
Lyle Cottington
School Supt Izzer Mike Irvin
School

SIMPSON COLLEGE YEARS

After I graduated from high school in the spring of 1949, I faced the rather formidable task of getting 4 years of college and 3 years of post-college training. That was the educational requirement for the ministry in the Methodist Church. I had no money, and there was no prospect that my parents could assist financially.

I had worked summers for several years while in high school, but I lacked the discipline necessary to save any money. Nevertheless, in the fall of 1949, I headed to Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa. That was about 125 miles from home.

Simpson is related to the United Methodist Church (it was then the Methodist Church). The college had benefited from the G.I. Bill of Rights which enabled veterans of World War II to go to college at government expense. Simpson, a small college, grew to around 1300 students in the late 1940's. Many of them were veterans. During the war, Simpson was nearly a women's college since the war called so many young men into the armed services. But the end of the war brought a large influx of students, many of them veterans and many of them older than the normal, for those days, student.

The presence of the veterans caused Simpson and Indianola to change a lot. Before the war, tobacco products and alcoholic beverages could not be purchased in Indianola, nor could they be used on Simpson's campus. That all changed when the veterans arrived.

In fact, Simpson erected 3 sets of barrack type buildings

to accomodate the increased enrollment. The barracks had been purchased from various military installations. Many of the veterans were married, some with families. The war and the G.I. Bill not only changed Simpson, it changed the nature of college enrollments everywhere.

So I went to Simpson with $30.00 in my pocket, my tuition half paid, and an 8-10 hour a week job at the college. Half my tuition for the first year was paid by a grant from the Council Bluffs District Women's Society of Christian Service, now the United Methodist Women. As I recall, the grant was for $139.00. The tuition must have been $278.00.

I immediately sought another part-time job. At first, I mostly substituted for students who worked at the college cafeteria. But all I got from that was a meal...I was able to eat for substituting.

I also borrowed money from two sources...the Methodist Student Loan Fund, and from a loan fund administered by the college. As I mentioned elsewhere, I worked for a time at Shannon's Cafe cleaning up after it closed for the day. I did not mention in the account of my work life that I served as the "house boy" at Mary Berry Hall, a women's dormitory. There I did some sweeping and emptying of waste baskets. I also worked for the Warren County Group Ministry. I will note more about that later in this article.

I had a hard time financially. For the first two years, I also had a hard time academically. In high school I had never learned to study. I had never really studied before. It took me a while to realize I had to and to learn how to do it.

I guess my college life was like a lot of persons before

and after me...students who have had to work as much as possible as well as going to class and studying.

The social aspect of college life was all about me, but I did not have the time, nor the money, to participate. I was able to have a date now and then, to go to some musicals and plays, and to go a few times into Des Moines for a movie. (At Simpson, I did play minor roles in the "Merchant of Venice" and in "Arsenic and Old Lace".)

Basically, though, it was go to class, study, and work.

It was at Simpson that I met Jim Poulsen. I roomed with him for about 2½ years. He became one of my closest friends, even though we are as different as night and day. Another life-long friend I made at college was Carroll Robinson.

About the Warren County Group Ministry - Gene Carter, a minister and faculty member, was its director. Before I arrived at Simpson, he had used pre-ministerial students and female students who were interested in Christian education careers to reopen a number of small Methodist Churches in and near Warren County. (Women could not become ministers in the church at that time.) The reopened churches were rural and small town churches.

These churches had student pastors and youth workers. They worked under Carter's supervision. My first job with the Group Ministry was to transport student pastors and youth workers to and from their churches on Sunday, as well as to meetings during the week. I used vehicles owned by the Group Ministry.

I soon became the youth worker at Liberty Center in addition to the transportation job. A little later, I began to preach at Liberty Center.

Later, I quit driving and preached at Spring Hill. Gene Car-

ter left at the end of my junior year, and Don Koontz took his place. Then the Group Ministry changed a lot. But I did preach at Medora and Liberty, both south of Indianola, during my senior year. I drove a DeSoto to and from the churches. It was also owned by the Group Ministry.

I suppose I went home 3 or 4 times while at Simpson.

I lived the first year in college housing...which was really an old home converted to a dormitory. There were about 12 others living there. It was at 310 North Buxton, near the present chapel and Carver Science Hall.

The rest of my college days I lived at the home of Grace Beam on West Boston. She was a retired Simpson teacher and was so lame that she had great difficulty getting around. I took care of the lawn, the furnace, ran errands for her, etc. for my rent.

She was really quite a wise lady. She seemd to know when I had not eaten for sometime, or when I was subsisting on bread and cheese. Several times she fed me...pretty poor stuff, but it was better than the little or nothing I had. I spent 3 Christmases alone and with Grace Beam. It was at Grace Beam's that Jim Poulsen was my room mate.

When I went to college, I had one suit...an old suit that my brother George did not want anymore. I managed to save enough money, at one point, to buy a cheap suit at the Penney's store in Indianola.

My summer work is outlined in another section.

The best thing that Simpson did for me, other than a basic college education, was to broaden my world. I got to meet and interact with all kinds of people...Afro-Americans, Orientals, city people, southern students, eastern students, and urban peo-

ple. It was really a marvelously broadening and enlightening experience.

Of course, the educational aspect changed me a lot, also. The opportunity to hear new ideas and ways of thinking; the in-depth studies; the introduction to the fine arts; and the emphasis on knowledge had a lasting influence on me. In retrospect, the four years at Simpson molded me as much as any comparable period of my life.

I managed to complete the work at Simpson in four years. On May 31, 1953, I received the bachelor or arts degree in history. Mom, Lloyd, and Larry came to the commencement. I belive that Emmett and Marjorie Gipe did, too.

I felt that I had made a major accomplishment. But I was already in debt, and I still had more educational requirements to complete.

A copy of the diploma is on page 176.

Let me add a note here about television.

Television came to the Des Moines area, and to Indianola, in the fall of 1949. It came to the Denver area in 1954. So I got to participate in a number of "television parties". These were conducted by dealers. Sometimes they were at the dealers, sometimes in the homes of people who had just purchased a set. The sets had round screens, perhaps 12 inches in diameter. The intent of the parties was to show what television was and, of course, to sell sets. In the small dormitory I lived in at Simpson some of the more creative young men had a television set brought out on trial. We were able to watch a couple of world series games before it was taken back.

The Trustees of

Simpson College

at

Indianola

On the recommendation of the Faculty

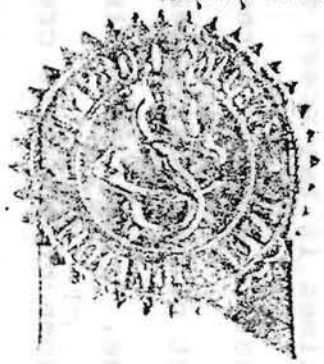
have conferred upon

Jerold L. Irvin

the degree of

Bachelor of Arts

together with all the rights, privileges, honors and marks of distinction which everywhere pertain to that degree.



Given this 31st day of May, in the Year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred fifty-three, in the City of Indianola, State of Iowa. Witness the Seal of the College and the Signatures of the President of the College and of the Secretary of the Board of Trustees hereunto affixed.

J P Henderson
SECRETARY OF THE BOARD

H E Kratzer
PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE

ILIFF SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY YEARS

There were some 20 ministerial students in the Simpson College graduating class in 1953. Only two of us chose to continue our education at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver. Clarence Campbell was the other one. He went to the Nebraska Conference when he left seminary, as the theological school was called. He had a successful ministry there. He served a term as a district superintendent.

I spent the summer of 1953 at home and working for Emmett Gipe. Late in August 1953, Emmett took me to Omaha. I was answering an ad for someone to drive a car from an Omaha dealer to a Denver dealer. When I got to the dealer, he refused to let me take the car to Denver. But Emmett knew what to do. For years, the Gipes had purchased their Studebaker cars from Morton Motors in Omaha. So we went there, and Emmett explained our problem to Mr. Morton. Morton made a phone call and then said, "Go on back out to the dealer. He has the car for you".

We did, and I was off to Denver. (What's the old saying? "It is not what you know, but who you know".)

I had never been west of Omaha. I drove all night, arrived in Denver, and ended up going down Broadway during the morning rush hour. I had never seen so many cars, and I had no idea that a city street could go on and on for so many miles. To tell the truth, I was terrified. There were no throughways and interstate highways in those days.

Finally, I got to Iliff on South University Blvd. I moved into Taylor Hall, owned by the school. I lived in the single

students' wing. Glen Russell was my room mate.

Clarence Campbell helped me deliver the car to a dealer in Arvada, a Denver suburb. Clarence had previously arrived in Denver. He and his family rented a house several miles from the seminary. (Clarence and I were friends, though we never had a close relationship.)

I'll add an experience I had with Clarence at this point, even though it happened a year or so later. After Genevieve and I were married, we lived in the married students' wing of Taylor Hall, and Clarence and his wife had moved to Taylor Hall also. They lived in the apartment just above us. We seldom locked our door when we were home. One evening we were there and the door opened. It was Clarence. He was so startled and embarrassed that all he could say was "woo woo woo". He had gotten on the wrong floor and thought he was going into his apartment.

My room mate, Glen, was older, a military veteran, and had been a journalist with a newspaper in Riverton, Wyoming.

Glen was asthmatic, he had terrible eyes, his health was generally quite poor, he had night mares, he owned an old Nash, and he knew hundreds of dirty stories. But he was a fine person. He later left the ministry and became a social worker in Denver.

I could tell many stories about Glen...his lousy driving, his snoring in class, his asthma attacks when I rushed him to Denver General Hospital, his drinking habits. I'll note only one or two.

He had night mares. One night he had a terrible one - he was screaming. He junped from his bed onto my bed. At last, I got him awake. He said he was dreaming about driving his Nash down a one-

way street, posted for 35 miles per hour, going about 50. I told him that that must have been pretty scary. He said, "It was a lot scarier than you think. I was driving backwards".

Glen owned a lot of clothes. He took his socks and underclothes and stuffed them under his bed every night. He kept doing that until he ran out of socks and underwear. By that time, there was so much under the bed that it often rolled out into the room. Then he gathered it all up, stuffed it into the metered wringer-type washing machine in the laundry room. He washed them all for a dime. Since there was no dryer, Glen's socks and underwear were laid out over most of the laundry room for several days while they dried.

After Genevieve and I were married and lived in the married students' wing, Glen continued to live in the single students' wing. More than once he opened our door, walked in unannounced, went to the cookie jar, grabbed a hand full, and as he walked out would say, "Just passing through".

My seminary years were good years. My work record is recorded elsewhere. The course work was not particularly hard, so I received above average grades.

I did get married and became a father.

Genevieve was a student seeking a Master of Religious Education degree. We were in a number of classes together and often ate together, with other students, at the Denver University cafeteria just a few blocks from Iliff. We were married July 18, 1954 at Highlands Methodist Church in northwest Denver. Lloyd, Larry, and Mom came out to the wedding.

Sheri Lynn was born at St. Lukes Hospital in Denver on October 4, 1955. We lived in Taylor Hall at the time. We lived there

until we moved back to Iowa in June 1956.

The move was to Logan, Iowa. That was my first full-time appointment. The church at Magnolia was included in the appointment.

I bought an old two-wheeled trailer, and built a large box on it. We filled the trailer with our belongings...not much, mostly books and baby stuff. Genevieve owned a 1951 Chevrolet coupe. We pulled the trailer load to Iowa, where we went to Emmett Gipe's for a while before going on to Logan. The Herb Wingard's travelled with us. We left Herb and his family on US Highway 34 at Hastings, Iowa. He went on to Indiana. I have never seen nor heard of Herb since that time.

At Iliff, I was introduced to the great religious thinkers and personages. Iliff taught a philosophy called "neo-naturalism". It was extremely liberal. It denied the existence of a personal God. I did not adopt that point of view. Fortunately, William Bernhardt, the leading exponent of that view, was liberal in another way, too...explore all options, arrive at your own convictions, and be able to defend them rationally.

But the great thinkers like Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Wesley, Knox, Brightman, Brunner, and Barth all contributed to my intellectual growth, as did the Iliff faculty members.

Our marriage was troubled almost from the start. While at Iliff we had a trial separation. We had many counseling sessions with 3 different counselors. One of the counselors was Theodore Bauer, a faculty member.

But the problemed marriage continued. We both worked hard to make it work.

We both got our degrees at the same time...June 7, 1956. Genevieve got an MRE, a Master of Religious Education; and I got a TH.M.; a Master of Theology.

The Iliff School of Theology

of the Methodist Church

Denver, Colorado

To all to Whom these Presents may Come, Greeting

Whereas **Jerold L. Irwin** has satisfactorily completed the prescribed course of studies in The Iliff School of Theology, and has been duly recommended by the Faculty, the Board of Trustees as authorized by the Charter of the School has conferred upon him the Degree of

Master of Theology

with all the Rights and Privileges pertaining thereto

Witness the seal of the School and the signatures hereunto affixed this 7th day of June, in the year of our Lord, 1956

S. Arthur Kemp
PRESIDENT OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Harold F. Carr
PRESIDENT OF THE SCHOOL

William H. Bernhardt
REGISTRAR

Walter R. Williams
REGISTRAR

STEPS INTO THE MINISTRY

When I first became affiliated with the church in 1948, its official name was THE METHODIST CHURCH. In 1968, when the Methodist Church merged with the Evangelical United Brethern Church, its official name became THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH.

To become a full minister in the United Methodist Church, two things are necessary: membership in an annual conference and ordination.

Usually, these two "tracks" are done concurrently, so there is sometimes confusion, even among United Methodists, about the processes.

While in college and working in churches, I was granted an "approved supply" status by the Des Moines District of the conference. That gave the district superintendent the option of appointing me to a church. That was probably done in 1950.

Membership in an annual conference is a two step thing. After meeting certain education requirements, usually two years of seminary training, a person can be admitted "on-trial". That step is called "probationary membership" now. I was admitted on trial to the then Iowa-Des Moines Annual Conference in June, 1953. That was before the 2 year seminary rule came into effect.

I became a full member of the Iowa-Des Moines Annual Conference in June 1956. I was voted on and accepted as a member by the other members of the Annual Conference.

The other track, ordination, took place as follows: in 1950 I was granted a "local preacher's license". That was not an ordination, but was the denomination's approval for the right to

preach. That enabled me to preach and work in the churches of the Warren County Group Ministry while I was in college.

I continued to hold the local preacher's license until I was ordained "deacon" in June 1955. On January 6, 1957, I was ordained "elder" at Logan, Iowa. Both ordinations were done by Bishop F. Gerald Ensley.

It is the usual practice of the church to ordain at the time of the annual meeting of the Annual Conference. Bishop Ensley established the policy in the Iowa-Des Moines Annual Conference of ordaining in the local church to which a minister had been assigned. That is the reason I was ordained at Logan and not at the site of the meeting of the Annual Conference.

As time went by, the Iowa-Des Moines Annual Conference changed its name to the South Iowa Annual Conference. That conference later merged with the North Iowa Annual Conference and became the Iowa Annual Conference. It was still called the Iowa Annual Conference after the Methodists and Evangelical United Brethern merged. As of 1993, the conference is the Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Copies of the ordination certificates are on the next two pages.

Know all Men by these Presents, that

FRANCIS GERALD ENSLEY

ONE OF THE BISHOPS OF

The Methodist Church

under the protection of Almighty God and with a single eye to His glory by the imposition of my hands and prayer have this day set apart Jerold L. Irvin for the office of a Deacon in the said Methodist Church, a man who, in the judgment of the Iowa-Des Moines Annual Conference, is well qualified for that work and he is hereby recommended to all whom it may concern as a proper person to administer the ordinance of Baptism, Marriage and the Burial of the Dead, in the absence of an Elder and to Feed the Flock of Christ, so long as his spirit and practice are such as become the Gospel of Christ, and he continueth to hold fast the form of sound words according to the established doctrines of the Gospel.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and the seal of my office this twelfth day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and Seventy-five

Done at Des Moines, Iowa Harold Ensley

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Know all Men by these Presents, that

I FRANCIS GERALD ENSLEY

ONE OF THE BISHOPS OF

The Methodist Church

under the protection of Almighty God, and with a single eye to His glory, by the imposition of my hands and prayer (being assisted by the Elders present,) have this day set apart Jerold Lockart Irving for the office of an Elder in the said Methodist Church a man who, in the judgment of the Iowa-Des Moines Annual Conference, is well qualified for that work, and he is hereby recommended to all whom it may concern, as a proper person to administer the Sacraments and Ordinances, and to Feed the Flock of Christ so long as his spirit and practice are such as become the Gospel of Christ and he continueth to hold fast the form of sound words, according to the established doctrines of the Gospel.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and the seal of my office this sixth day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and Sixty-seven

Done at Logan, Iowa Francis Gerald Ensley

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LOGAN-MAGNOLIA

Bishop Ensley appointed me to the Logan-Magnolia Methodist Churches in June of 1956. This was my first full-time work as a parish minister.

From Denver and Iliff, with a short stay at Emmett Gipe's, we moved to Logan, we being Genevieve and Sheri and myself. We moved into a perfectly horrible house situated on a high bank next to the church building.

I conducted two worship services each Sunday - one at Logan and one at Magnolia. Magnolia was a small town about 6 miles from Logan. The church had some 90 members. Logan was the county seat of Harrison County. It was a town of about 1200. The church had around 225 members. I was paid $3750.00 the first year. I stayed for 4 years and was paid $4800.00 the last year of the pastorate there.

It was at Logan-Magnolia that I lost some of my unrealistic idealism about the church. Not that I ever thought the church to be perfect and without blemish, but I really had never been wholly involved with a church and its people before. I joined the church at Strahan as a senior in high school and almost immediately left for college. I had never been involved with the structure, the organization, and the interpersonal interplay.

I would not suggest that there are not many wonderful, sincere Christian people in every local church. I guess what surprised and dismayed me was the number of people active in the church whose motives seemed largely unrelated to the purposes of the church.

I was inexperienced, of course, at being a parish minister

so I confess to known and unknown errors in judgement. Yet, I endured a lot of things which I thought would be unthinkable in the life of a church. I was cussed out in public, lied about, lied to, undercut, accused of stealing church funds, accused of having an affair, and accused of insulting my parents-in-law.

Overall, though, the time at Logan-Magnolia was profitable for the churches and proved to be a good learning experience for me professionally.

I organized youth groups at both churches, organized a choir at Magnolia, saw the membership decline and the attendance increase about 50%. A new parsonage was built at Logan and the Magnolia church was redecorated.

In addition two new family members were born: Leslie Jay on August 10, 1957 at Nebraska Methodist Hospital in Omaha (the old one on Cuming Street at about 36th Street) and Phillip Dean on August 30, 1958 at the Missouri Valley, Iowa hospital. Dr. Floyd Sarff attended both births.

Bishop Ensley came to Logan for my elder's ordination on January 6, 1957. This ordination culminated the process for becoming a full minister in the Methodist Church.

It was while we lived in Logan that Mom died on May 13, 1957. (Pop had died while I was at the Iliff School of Theology on April 24, 1954).

I still have good friends in the Logan area. Included are Ed and Leeta Hubbard; Don and Ruth Dickenson; and Rob and Sondra Dickenson.

GATCHEL (DES MOINES)

We moved from Logan to Gatchel Methodist Church in Des Moines in June 1960. That church was located at 1907 Harding Road. (In 1993 the name of the street was changed to M.L. King Blvd.) The church is on the near northwest of downtown Des Moines' inner city. Though the building is no longer there, it was a white stucco building which did not look like a church. There was also the basement of a proposed new building. The church was heavily in debt. The parsonage was a rented house at 1819 Clark Street some 10 blocks from the church. I was paid $4800.00 the first year.

Gatchel was a church dominated by 3 families: the Art Gunns, the J.C. Whites, and the Clark Gepperts. White owned the J.C. White Construction Companies, Art Gunn was a highly placed executive with Armco Steel, and Clark Geppert owned Dean Studios. They did not, for the most part, seek to impose their will on the rest of the church, however.

Sheri started to school shortly after we moved there. She went to a school about 2 blocks from the rented parsonage. I have forgotten the name of the school.

Gatchel purchased a parsonage at 3929 38th Street in the fall of 1960. That was some 5-6 miles from the church. We moved to that house and Sheri transferred to Woodlawn School at Madison Street and Lower Beaver Road. Both Leslie and Phillip started to school at Woodlawn.

Gatchel was pre-occupied with its debt and getting its building program completed. It had all kinds of fund raisers, the

largest of which was a food stand at the Iowa State Fair. This project occupied better than two months time each year. The entire membership's time and energy was absorbed by it. I used to go to the stand during its operation while the fair was in progress as early as 4:30 A.M. There I assisted in serving the breakfast. I remember one time serving over 300 pounds of pancake mix, made into pancakes of course, one morning. That is a bunch of pancakes. I often was involved during the lunch and dinner serving times as well.

It took us about a month to erect and prepare the stand. In those days, the concession people did not have permanent buildings as permitted in later years. It ended up being a complete restaurant and kitchen. Nettie Sanders ran it...that is what she did for the church. A full menu was served including desserts. Methodists from all over Iowa ate at the stand. And it was profitable. During the six years I was at Gatchel, the church made about $150,000.00.

(Mrs. Duncan, whom I worked for in high school, still was operating her stands during these years).

At any rate, that project, combined with fund drives and other fund raisers, enabled us to pay off the debt and erect a new building on the previously built basement.

The church did not have any extensive ministries. While it had youth and women's groups, they were not outstanding. It did have a strong adult Christian education program. Its 4 adult classes functioned as service, social, and educational groups. They were the backbone of the church.

In many ways, Gatchel was my most satisfying and successful pastorate. Again the numbers of members declined, as at Logan

and Magnolia. However, the attendance more than doubled. (Loss of members was a deceptive statistic. Most Methodist Churches, at the time, had rolls which had not been updated for years. I merely brought the membership rolls up to date. Active membership actually increased).

Nancy was born while we lived on Clark Street. She was born at Iowa Methodist Hospital on October 26, 1960.

Leslie spent a brief time at Iowa Methodist's Raymond Blank Children's Hospital. His condition was diagnosed as a form of meningitis.

While we stayed at Gatchel for 6 years, we could have stayed longer. The circumstances of leaving the church are amusing to me now and illustrate, in a way, some of the politicing that sometimes goes on in the denomination.

O.E. Cooley was the district superintendent. He was within a few years of retirement. Cooley wanted a smaller church to serve for the last few years of his active ministry. He settled on Gatchel. Of course, I did not know of his intentions at the time.

So early on, he began to tell me that I deserved a promotion. I guess I thought I did, too. A promotion and more salary sounded good to me. I was being paid $7600.00 during my 6th year at Gatchel.

Cooley knew that Gatchel was in good shape, with no real budget problems, and a full, though average, program going on.

Cooley finally told me that it was set for me to go to Denison. I hesitated, but he said, "Jerry, if you're going to get ahead in the ministry, this is a step you have to take". (Cooley's idea and my understanding of "getting ahead" apparently were different. His idea was to be a district superintendent and have some

power in the conference. I really did not want that.)

Finally, I agreed to go to Denison. When I asked Cooley who was going to Gatchel he calmly, with a grin, said, "I am".

Unfortunately for Cooley, he had a hard time at Gatchel and stayed only two years.

It was a Gatchel that I honed my people skills, and refined my ability to work with people of varying interests and views and motivations. Those skills were vitally important in the pastorate at Denison to which I was moving.

DENISON

I was assigned to the First Methodist Church in Denison, Iowa in June, 1966. I was paid $8000.00 the first year. We moved into a large parsonage between a new educational wing of the church plant and the large frame church. The church building was pretty deteriorated.

We lived in Denison for 8 years.

Sheri graduated from high school and had opportunity to go to Morningside College in Sioux City. She, however, had her own agenda and chose to do other things.

Leslie and Phillip reached high school and Nancy went into junior high school while we lived there.

Our marriage continued to deteriorate, in spite of continuing efforts to save it.

Overall, the Denison years were good years. There were, however, difficult times. I chose to be deeply involved in community and school affairs as well as with the church. I also chose to voice and demonstrate my opposition to the Viet-Nam war. Those matters caused opposition to my ministry and to me personally to develop.

The church moved forward with some of its previously set goals. It also prospered in other ways.

It paid off its debt on the educational wing, razed the parsonage, and bought an existing house for a parsonage. It also razed the church building. Those steps had been previously planned. The congregation was to build a new church building a few years after I left.

While serving the Denison church, bell choirs were developed,

the programs of the church became more extensive, some new ones were developed including a community nursery school. Attendance and participation increased about 25%.

Several good friendships were developed - Don Uker, Fred Clements, Ruth Wareham, Marilynn Jepson, and Don Sessions. Other persons who were of assistance (or hindrance) were Allen Nash, Russ Hyde, Dick Knowles, Don Bartlett, Jerry Jackson, Jack Simonson, Ruth Welch, Hollis Keele, Dwight Westcott, Mary Lou Anderson, Don and Curtis Yankey, Janet Higgins, Evelyn Hulsebus, and Adele Bowden.

While at Denison, the conference, through the Bishop and the district superintendent, offered a district superintendency to me in June of 1972, and a large church in Marshalltown the next year. I refused both because I had decided that my place of service was in medium sized churches. I went to Clarinda in June of 1974 after receiving $12,000.00 salary for the final year at Denison.

It was while I lived at Denison that I retired the debts I accumulated while I was in college and seminary. It took me 13 years after I left the seminary to do so.

CLARINDA

I was assigned to serve the Clarinda United Methodist Church in June of 1974. I was paid $12,500.00 the first year there. While at Denison the Methodist Church merged with the Evangelical United Brethern Church in 1968. The name of the denomination became the United Methodist Church at that time.

Clarinda proved to be a solid county seat town (Page County) with several advantages for a town of around 5500 people. It had a branch of Iowa Western Community College. The college included several vocational study areas as well as a 2 year arts and sciences college. The town also had an Iowa Mental Health Institute. The area had a good golf course, and several strong churches.

The United Methodist Church had about 900 members.

Sheri had graduated from high school at Denison. Leslie and Phillip and Nancy graduated from Clarinda High School while we lived there.

I played a lesser role in community affairs at Clarinda than I had at Denison. I was elected, however, to a two year term on the Board of Directors of the Community College.

The church had a quality music program, particularly vocal music. While at Clarinda some bell choirs were formed.

The church seemed to prosper. The attendance increased about 30%. We started a nursery school, a community food pantry, developed an extensive tape ministry to shut-ins, and founded a number of enrichment study groups.

After Sheri returned home she managed the Kentucky Fried

Chicken outlet and worked as a DJ on KSWI radio. Leslie had a number of jobs including the construction of Morton buildings, house painting, and as a maintenance person in the Page County Parks. Phillip worked at the Clarinda and Maryville, Missouri Ben Franklin stores. Nancy was employed at a convenience store. After she was married, and while she was pregnant, she was the victim of an armed robbery. This happened after I moved to Glenwood and while she and her husband were living in Clarinda. Fortunately no physical harm came to her.

The last year or so I lived in Clarinda, I also served the Rose Hill United Methodist Church about 5 miles north of the city. Rose Hill had only about 20 members, and it was closed when I left Clarinda.

While Clarinda held many positive things for my ministry, it also was the scéne of great tragedy and stress for the family.

Genevieve and I were divorced on January 16, 1979.. We had been married for 24 years. Even though the marriage was a difficult one for many years, the divorce was devastating to the family.

Phillip was killed in an auto-truck accident just north of Maryville, Missouri on his way home from the Ben Franklin store where he was the assistant manager. It happened on May 1, 1978 when he was 19 years old.

The tragic loss of Phillip left a void in my life which I still feel today. His loss had the same effect on the lives of Leslie and Sheri and Nancy. In spite of the loss and its continuing pain, I am grateful for Phillip, for his contributions to my life, and his continuing influence. I am sure that his

sisters and brother feel the same way.

Phillip was a bright young man...and according to one of his high school teachers, was a mathematical genius.

Leslie went to Morningside College in Sioux City, and later received a degree from Iowa State University. Nancy went to Iowa Central Community College in Ft. Dodge, Iowa for a year. Sheri came back to live with us for a few years, before moving to Carroll, Iowa to work at a radio station there.

We lived for 6 years in Clarinda, leaving in June of 1980.

GLENWOOD

I went to Glenwood in June of 1980. I was single and only Nancy was home. Leslie was in college.

The Glenwood appointment was one which probably should never have been made and accepted. I was a liberal, both religiously and politically. The Glenwood community and the United Methodist Church were very conservative. The church had a number of charismatic fundamentalists; and the community was a center of activity for the John Birch Society.

It was mismatch from the beginning. But my time in Glenwood would prove to be one of the most important times of my life. It also proved to be one of the most difficult.

Not much positive happened in the church during my ministry in Glenwood. In addition, I developed serious health problems. I missed about the first six months of 1982 with by-pass surgery and other health problems. The district superintendent failed to supply interim leadership, and I went back to work too soon. By that time, conditions had deteriorated too much for me to redeem them.

But two marvelous things happened while I lived there. Nancy was married to Ed Swanson in the Glenwood Church.

And I got married to Gina Fitzpatrick in the church on October 8, 1983. My brother Lloyd had introduced me to her. They both worked for the then Stauffer Chemical Company...Lloyd in production, Gina in sales. Gina was to continue to work for Stauffer or its successor companies until 1988.

Gina and I happily left Glenwood in June of 1984.

EPWORTH (COUNCIL BLUFFS)

We went to Epworth Church in Council Bluffs in June, 1984. The church was located on the city's west side. It had been a large membership church in years past, but it had lost members and influence by the time I was assigned there.

I had requested an appointment near Omaha so that Gina could continue her professional life. Epworth, of all the Iowa Conference churches, was, at the time, the one nearest Omaha.

Epworth, prior to my going there, had had a second person on the pastoral staff. The church promised to hire another person. It did not, except for an attempt which did not work out three years later.

Trying to do the work of two persons is a bit overwhelming. It did wear me out. We made some progress in the church's ministry, though not anything outstanding. The church needed to refocus its purposes given the many changes that had happened in that area of the city. I helped to lay some ground work for that refocusing. Even now, in 1993, that process is still going on. And the church is still struggling to find its mission in Council Bluffs' west side.

Nancy and Ed moved to Council Bluffs after living in the Los Angeles area for a brief time. She joined Epworth. They lived fairly close to the church and she is still active there. Among other things, she inspired the purchase of handbells and helped to develop the hand bell choirs.

Prior to June of 1988, I requested an assignment to a smaller church. At about the same time, ICI (Gina's employer) was moving its offices to Wilmington, Delaware. She left the company and we left Epworth.

LAKE VIEW-WALL LAKE

I was assigned to two small churches about 100 miles from Council Bluffs in June of 1984. They were at Lake View and Wall Lake. We lived in Lake View.

The small town atmosphere was a welcome relief to me, though Gina had never lived in a small town. The combined memberships of the two churches was around 200.

I must admit that I went to the appointment with retirement in mind. I wanted a few years of relatively relaxed work. That proved to be true at the two little churches.

I helped merge the two churches into a single congregation in 1990. The congregation used the building in Lake View and called itself the Lakes United Methodist Church. The property at Wall Lake was sold.

Gina was unemployed during our 3 years at Lake View. She used it as an opportunity to complete her work for a college degree. She accomplished that at Iowa Central Community College and the Buena Vista College Center, both in Ft. Dodge, Iowa.

I decided to retire from the full time ministry in June, 1991. Gina and I then moved to Omaha.

RETIREMENT

Before Gina and I met, she had purchased a house. She lived in the home when I met her and when we got married. Upon retirement, we moved into that home in June, 1991. The address is 15218 Jefferson Street, Omaha 68137. We had rented the house for nearly eight years.

In retirement I served a 7 month interim assignment at Mondamin, Iowa; and an 8 month interim at Shelby and Persia, Iowa. I commuted to those churches.

Gina became employed by the investment firm of McMannama and Associates in 1992.

In August, 1992, she was diagnosed as having cancer. At this writing (10:30 A.M., May 5, 1993) she is about to conclude a second series of chemotherapy treatment after having a series of both chemotherapy and radiation, and I am about to conclude the interim assignment at Shelby-Persia.

A copy of my retirement certificate is on page 201.

In my retirement, among the things we enjoy are our grandchildren. They are Sara Beth Stanton and Dylan Michael Russell who belong to Leslie; Marli Dee, Elgin Lochart, and Leah Frances Fitzgerald who belong to Sheri; and Jeremy Paul and Phillip Paul Swanson who belong to Nancy.

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Certificate of Appreciation

In grateful recognition

of the 38 years of faithful service rendered by

JEROLD L. IRVIN

as a minister of Jesus Christ

the Iowa Annual Conference

of The United Methodist Church presents this

Certificate of Appreciation

upon retirement as a token of love and respect
and with the gratitude of the Church.

Given at Ames, Iowa

on the 9th day of June, 19 91

Reuben P. Job
President of the Conference

Janet E. Stephenson
Secretary of the Conference

STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF MY MINISTRY

While statistics can never tell the full story of my professional life, they do serve as indicators of how my life was spent. The most important statistics cannot be measured, however. They have to do with the number of people who were ministered to over the years. I cannot estimate the number of bereaved persons, the persons with shattered lives, the hurting people, and the discouraged people whose lives were touched and strengthened. And, in the final analysis, that is what being a Christian minister is all about.

Here are some actual and estimated numbers.

38 years of "approved" service in the Annual Conference

44 years of preaching and church work

2300 sermons and messages

521 funerals conducted

319 weddings

512 baptisms

914 members received

12,900 meetings

1,350 books read

9,000 pastoral calls

8,600 hospital and care center calls

T H E E N D