

Charles (Jake) Adams Kindred Recollections

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Our generation is called the depression generation. We were teenagers in 1929 and through the 1930s. I was just a kid at that time, about thirteen or fourteen years old when it started. Fourteen years old in 1929 when they had the big stockmarket crash which I didn't know anything about, really, but I did hear about it through the years.

One night in 1931, I was walking home after a basketball game, with one or two other children, and the town was all dark. There weren't very many people left in town. I walked by the bank and there was a small sign on the bank door and one or two people looking at it. It stated that "this bank will be closed until further notice." That didn't mean much to me, but it obviously did to some of the people there. When I reached home, about a half-mile from the bank, I told my Dad and my Grandfather, who lived with us, about the note on the bank door. Well, they became concerned, of course. It was the only bank in town. They both had their savings in the bank. They made one or two calls to other people and word got around that the bank was broke. Many said that the banker had quite a bit of farm land around, was pretty well-to-do, and that he would probably use his money to support the bank. There was no federal insurance then.

A previous banker, in the early 1900s whose bank had failed, had turned over everything he had, including his gold watch, to the depositors, and even then, as I recall he may have been sent to jail for mismanagement. But that didn't happen in this particular case. The banker didn't turn over anything. He kept everything, which I suppose he was entitled to do and the bank later only paid out ten percent on each dollar of deposit. My Dad was a pretty heavy loser in the bank.

He had just agreed to buy a two hundred acre farm and was going to pay \$10,000 for it. He had gotten all his money together to pay cash and it was in the bank.

In those days the banker would do a lot of legal work and other such work. He had asked the banker to send the abstract to the county seat and have it examined by lawyers. The lawyers had examined it and had sent the abstract back to the bank but the banker had not told my Dad that the abstract had been returned. The banker knew that as soon as he gave my father the abstract, he would check the money out and pay for the farm. So he kept the abstract and closed the bank on my Dad's deposit.

In those days ten thousand dollars was a tidy sum and a lot of money to anyone, even to the bank. He was hit pretty hard. Took everything he had. He later filed suit and didn't get anything more than the other depositors which was ten cents on the dollar.

Everyone was real hard hit in that town, like most towns all over the country, and times were real hard. People hardly had enough to eat. We ate well, but we raised most of our own.

Everyone in the town was poor, so no-one really knew any difference. The people became closer and had more dependence on each other. This made people thrifty, very frugal, and probably helped our generation even to this day. My generation certainly remembers those times. You were brought up at that age when you had to be frugal. It probably had its good effect on us. Of course, I believe we're a frugal generation, those of us who are in our sixties.

It was in the late twenties that I became interested in music, and took saxophone lessons from a local farmer. I learned to play the saxophone and later became interested in the clarinet. We had a little orchestra there in the school, I suppose there were twelve or fourteen of us in the orchestra. They had two of us playing the clarinet. Later, after I got out of high school in the late thirties I got in the town band and there were about sixteen or eighteen people and we'd play every Saturday night in the summer. The man who directed the band moved out of town, so they asked me to lead the band. I was 17 or 18 and started directing the band with my clarinet. Then we were short on trumpets, so I borrowed a trumpet, and learned to play the trumpet on my own. I led the band with the trumpet. We later got two or three other kids on the trumpet and finally had them in the band. Then we needed trombones so I found an old trombone and learned to play it and led the band with a trombone for a while. I did that for several years. I was the director. I kept all the music and sorted the music. On Saturday nights I'd have to get all the chairs out of the church basement and set them up for the Saturday night concert, and have a band rehearsal once a week. I had the worry about the music, the boys and girls who played in the band, and to be sure they were going to be present because we couldn't afford to be short any instruments. The town began paying me \$5.00 a week and paid each of the members in the band 50 cents a week, which wasn't much, even in the depression, but it helped and was appreciated.

The band concert was the big thing on Saturday night. The farmers and local people would come into town and sit around on the benches, curbs and in the stores and talk and also do their shopping. Then after the band concert, which played until about 9:00 p.m., the town would sort of go to sleep. By 11:00 it was getting to be pretty quiet.

In those days, the stores would stay open until about 9:00 p.m. during week days. Many of the stores were owned by two people and both names would appear on the stores. This way the owner could take turns staying at the stores during lunch and staying at night, taking care of business. Of course every business was wide open on Saturday nights. That's when everyone came to town, brought their eggs, did their shopping and paid their bills.

Let me get to life on the river. The river was sort of our life. We swam in the river. We fished in the river. We hunted around the river. We ice skated on the river. Skating on the river was one of the social events of the town. Kids would get down to the river and clamp their ice skates to their shoes. They wouldn't stay on very good and many times they'd pull the soles off their shoes. They were always pulling the heel off their shoes and they had to get those fixed. We'd build a big fire out of logs from around the river, to get warm by and to see by. Your feet would get cold and we would probably get our feet too close to the fire and burn our shoes. The shoes would come apart. Many times gloves and other clothes, hung up to dry would get too hot and burn.

We'd skate way up the river, and there would be some drifts or ripples in the river where the water wasn't very deep, and of course, the water would not freeze solid there. So frequently someone would fall in, and get wet. Well, we'd get them out, wet and cold, and their pants legs would freeze and be just like a stove pipe. They could hardly bend their knees! That happened to me a number of times. The worst part, of course, was your feet would get awfully cold. After we'd get up the river so far and come to those shallow places, or drifts, we'd try to get out on the bank and climb around. Of course we'd never take our skates off. Then we would skate back down-river and you wouldn't think there's any down hill to water, but it always seemed like down hill and faster. We tried to watch the ice so we didn't fall in some place or break through. We'd have big hockey games on the river ice. The boys would have their own personal hockey stick. It was probably a most prized possession at that time. We'd get those hockey sticks from buggys. There were shafts in the top of a buggy to form the top, and it would be shaped just like a "u" at the bottom where it would come down the side of the buggy and across the top. It was just about the right size. Of course that made a good hockey stick. But the best one would be a root from a locust tree- the old hedge trees. If you could find a shaped root, it would be heavy, but hard and real stable. You'd cut the root up to suit yourself. The puck would be a tin can usually, or a rubber shoe heel.

The tin can would be beat up until there wasn't anything left of it. We'd have some real games- just choose up and play hockey. There would be many skating races. Sometimes we'd stay down on the ice long after dark, and it never seemed to be too cold. With the fire going we could see enough to skate around a little bit. If it snowed we'd have to take boards and brooms and scrape the snow off the ice. Everyone was there. All ages and sizes. They'd all play hockey. Regardless of how small they were, as long as they could skate, why we'd put them on one team or another.

The old cars, back in those days were usually Fords, Model T Fords and there was no restriction on the children driving them. We had all dirt roads around that area. Boys were always tinkering on old cars, and they had to work on them to keep them running. Now days cars are so complicated boys can't tinker on them much. In those days we could tear them down and put them back together just like a bicycle and that was one of our past-times. "Fixin up those old cars, and taking the motors apart and putting them back together again. Those farmers, a lot of them weren't such good drivers. You had to be careful. No-one ever locked a car. Cars wouldn't lock, actually. Some didn't have any top on them, or any doors with glass. Couldn't even lock the ignition. They just snapped off and snapped on. No-one ever bothered them. You just parked them around town any place.

My Dad got the Chevrolet dealership in 1922 for that small town. You could buy a car for several hundred dollars but that was quite a bit of money. They seemed to scrape it together, though, to buy a car. It got to be where, by the late twenties, most families had a car. There were still a few horses and buggies around. Some of them would leave the car at home and drive the buggy and wagons just out of habit. Many times, to sell a car, my Dad would have to teach them how to drive it. That was the biggest problem in selling a car. One farmer put him in the ditch a time or two while he was teaching him how to drive. My dad told him, "I can't sell you a car, you'd kill yourself and somebody else. I'm not going to sell you any car." He sold one to the old Doctor there in town. The Doctor was showing off his car around the depot. When the trains came in, two or three times a day, people in the town would go the depot and meet the train. The Doctor, while showing off, couldn't stop the car so he pulled back on the steering wheel and hollered "Whoa, Whoa." He kept on going and ran smack into the train. He was too used to the horse and buggy. People didn't change much in those days. You think when the automatic transmission came in, that would make a car real easy to drive. You didn't have the clutch, the gearshift and all this and that. People were used to the old ways and couldn't learn to drive a car with automatic transmission. They had trouble, and some still wanted a clutch and gearshift in their car.

Well, I'll tell you a story that happened in my senior year in high school. The four year high school had about a hundred and fifty students, you knew them all. We had a lot of fun in high school. A lot of excitement. Probably some mischievousness. But, good, clean, fun. We knew which teachers to respect. They weren't the teachers that batted us around. The ones that knew how to discipline never touched us. If they wanted to shake us, and slap us around a little bit, that was a challenge to us. We kind-of-got a little ornery, sometimes, I guess. We had good teachers. Every year we would have what they called, Freshman Day. The Freshman would make candy for the seniors. There was a girl that lived a block from us, with her aunt and her uncle. Her aunt had no children of her own and she was a little bit feisty herself. This niece, Margaret, was kind of feisty, too. She was four years younger than I was, I suppose, she was a freshman. The freshman all brought the candy like they were supposed to. I ate quite a bit of candy. That was before school started and the first hour of class was a study hour for me. I got up, after eating that candy, and I knew there was something wrong. I didn't know what it was but I went back and told the teacher that my throat was burning and my stomach hurting. She told me to go ahead and leave the room. The next class was Spanish class. Mr. Cramer, the superintendent of schools, came into the classroom and said: "Did any of you get some bad candy?" I said I got a hold of something, and it sure made me sick. He said, "You've been poisoned," pointing his finger at me and two or three others. He took us out of class and we later found out that other seniors were keeping the toilets busy, were using wastepaper baskets and everything else. It was an old school house with only several toilet stools. It was just a mess. I seemed to have it about as bad as anybody.

Come to find out they had put croton oil, an extremely potent laxative, in the candy. A Doctor denied that he gave a prescription; the druggist said the Doctor told him to give it. Everybody was in trouble. They sent another boy and I uptown to another Doctor, to get a bottle of something to help us. It looked like a pint and we were supposed to take it down and give the other seniors a dose. In those days, the Doctor didn't have much to work with and no telling what he'd mix up. He probably didn't know himself, and may have done more harm than good.

Anyway, this friend and I had to stop at houses and ask if we could use their bathroom. By that time word was all over town. Everybody knew the problem. I'd take a drink of that stuff and pass it to my buddy, he'd take a drink and start down to the next house. Got on back to school, three blocks from downtown. They had turned school out. I was sitting out in the school yard with some of the rest talking about it. Commiserating. The Superintendent hollered out, "If you boys are too sick to go to school, why don't you go on home?" I said, "Mr. Cramer, I can't get from one house to the next." They had a town meeting and there was a lot of commotion. They found out who made the candy, but no-one got in too much trouble. The funny thing was we were going to play a big football game the next day. The school was four or five times larger than ours and they had always beat us. They were always expected to beat us. So we went down there and just beat the tar out of them. That was the first time that ever happened. All our team needed was a good "compound cathartic." A cathartic in those days meant a laxative and we sure had a compound cathartic.

I'm usually the toastmaster when we have a class reunion and we have one about every five years. Used to have it every ten years, but now it's every five years. Every reunion I bring up the croton oil incident, and I ask somebody to tell what happened. Nobody wants to tell, so I start in telling and then, others in the class will start telling their side of the story. So much was going on that I wasn't conscious of. I had my own problems.

Well, you know, it later developed that the girl who gave us the croton oil, and I had a sweetheart affair. Today you don't call it that, I don't know what you'd call it. You call it going steady, I suppose. In those days an affair meant something different than an affair means today, I suppose.

That river we used to fish on. We hunted around it. We swam in it. We ice skated on it. We canoed on it. We boated on it. Everything we did for fun, as children, seemed to revolve around that river. Now that river is full of sediment and farmland soil has filled it in. It used to flood the town once or twice a year. The government has now constructed a flood control dam just about one mile up the creek where we used to ice skate and swim.

I can tell you about one of the many instances that occurred at home. We boys were always catching or hunting rabbits. On this one occasion we had run a rabbit into a tile under the street. We put a gunny sack over one end of the tile and took a stick and punched the rabbit out of the other side. There were probably three of us boys together. Well, we got the rabbit in the gunny sack and of course we always had at least one dog apiece with us. We went into the house to show my mother what we had caught, and of course the dogs all went in with us. The rabbit jumped out of the sack, ran around the house, under the bed, and over the bed, the dogs yipping and chasing the rabbit, and the kids after the dogs, a 'hollerin and a screaming and mother after the kids. We were all through the house, the kitchen and the living room. We finally got the rabbit cornered in a closet and got it back in the sack.

Just one of the things that my mother had to put up with. We found some bumblebees one time, and my friend, Doc and I located the nest. Doc says, "That's honey," "take it in to your mother." I took the comb into the house and it had four or five bees in it that were as big as your thumb. We were really busy for a while battling bumblebees in the house. I suppose we got a 'scoldin but Mother tolerated us. "Boys will be boys." I don't think Mother ever spanked us much.

In those days we made our own kites. We never had any bought kites. We made two stick kites or three sticks. We'd go to the grocery store and get string. The grocery store, in those days, would wrap up any purchase in a piece of paper and tie a string around it. We had a big ball of string, gosh I don't know, must have had a mile of string on our stick. It was cotton string, of course, and not too strong. We'd put those kites up until they were almost out of sight. You could hardly see them. There'd be so much weight on the string alone and the wind blowing the string that the string would dip down for a quarter of a mile away. There was a lot of open space in the pastures, and we would sometimes keep them up all night, if the wind kept blowing. Sometimes the string would break and the kite would go, no telling where. We'd go look for it and we'd find it or make another one.

I remember one time I was sitting there holding a kite that had a stick on the end of the string. The kite was high in the air and pulled that stick out of my hands as it went free. It sounded like a boom-a-rang. REEEE! It went flying off. The kite started going down, down, down. All at once it stopped and started going back up and we ran after the string to see what happened. The kite string, with the stick on it, had hit a telephone wire and just spun around the wire. There it was hanging up on the telephone wire and the kite in the air. We didn't know how we were going to get that down. So we got a long stick and drove a nail in the end of it. We reached up there and hooked the string and pulled it down where we could reach it. We broke the string, and tied another stick on it and for years the string and that stick hung on the telephone line.

We had a swimming hole in a small branch, up the railroad track. It wasn't very deep- just big enough for us kids. We were nine or ten years old I guess. We'd walk up the railroad track about three quarters of a mile to the swimming hole. There wasn't a car or house around anyplace, and only the train went running through. Of course when a train went by, a passenger train, why we'd always run for the water or trees for we never had on any clothes. We didn't know what a bathing suit was. The people on the train would laugh and wave at us. The engineers would laugh when they would see us running across there, trying to beat the train to a tree, or the water. The engineer and the firemen, in the old steam engine would just stand there laughing at us as they went by. There was a white bull that was pastured where the swimming hole was and one day he came down there and began pawing dirt in after us so I told some of the boys "look out, you better get up a tree." My brother was about six or eight years old, but he went right up a tree, naked as a jaybird. He went up that tree, which was just like a telephone pole, - never had a limb for twenty feet up. He shot up that tree like a monkey. The bull didn't bother us, but we could have been hurt or killed.

There were three of us boys, our dogs, and with a lantern we went possum hunting one night. The dogs tried, but it wasn't a possum. It was a skunk. We boys had a pocket knife, as everybody carried pocket knives. We climbed the tree to cut off the limb the skunk was on. We climbed to that limb and the skunk let us have his full defense. It got all over us and in our eyes and burned like fire. The fresh skunk spray is very sickening. After it sets for a while, it gets a typical skunk smell, - Like you may smell when driving along the road. You've seen animals duck and run when a skunk gets after him. A skunk doesn't run from anybody. We three went to one of the boys homes to stay the rest of the night. We went straight upstairs to bed as it was past midnight. It was just at daybreak that next morning, when the boys Dad yelled from downstairs, "You boys, you boys up there, what in the hell have you been doing?" "Get out of this house!" "Get out of this house." We grabbed out clothes, what clothes we could find and we tore out of that house. We got out in the yard and he said, "Don't you come in here!" "Get those clothes and everything out of this house!" Gosh, we got out of the house and it was pretty chilly. We didn't know what to do so we went down to the barn and got in the hayloft where we spent the rest of the morning. Our Mothers got together on the phone and tried to decide what to do with our clothes. They didn't know whether to wash them out or to bury them, so they decided to call J.B. Neff's mother. J.B. was known as "Skunk" Neff because he frequently went to school smelling like a skunk. He was always skunk hunting, so his nickname became "Skunk."

Most people in a small town had nicknames, such as Mousy, Bed Bug, Scabby, Squint, or some other nickname. I was known as Jake. Before I was five years old they called me Jake and that's always been my nickname. It stuck with me. My Mother called me Jake and that's always been my nickname. It stuck with me. My Mother called me Jake and my wife calls me Jake. My name is Charles Adams Kindred and I don't know why I was known as Jake. I tried to shake it when I went to college, and then when I went to law school and practiced law, but I couldn't.

Let us refer back to those days when they made lye soap. Most women would make lye soap in a big black kettle. They put water and lye soap in a big black kettle. They put water and lye in the kettle with old grease and cooked it by a fire beneath the kettle. This made a strong smelling soap. You could tell it was Monday morning at school just by the smell, because the students had on clean clothes on Monday. They left the other pair at home for Mother to wash. You'd wear those that week, your Mother would wash on Monday and then you'd put on clean clothes again. The lye soap sure would help take out that skunk smell.

They had old fashioned remedies for all sorts of illnesses and diseases. They didn't have medicines, medications or injections. In those days there were dreaded diseases such as typhoid, diphtheria, smallpox, and polio and others. Tuberculosis was a common thing in those days. Families were quarantined if a member had any contagious disease and even the less serious such as chickenpox, measles, whooping cough, pinkeye and others. They've got medications,

inoculations, and treatments now for most of those diseases, and and [sic] you never hear of them anymore, thank God. Pink eye was a good one to have, because it kept you out of school and you weren't too sick to play.

Farmwork in those days was hard and it was long. We worked long hours and six or seven days a week. Of course, you didn't like to work on Sunday, because Sunday was a day of rest. It was a religious day. When they did work on Sundays they just excused themselves by saying, "To labor is to pray." I don't think that's scripture, as I've never found it in scripture. My hometown church has in the marble over the door, the inscription: "To labor is to pray." When I later went to William Jewell college, there in the chapel stage curtain was "Trust in the Lord and work." There was much emphasis on work. Anyone that didn't work was frowned on. You had to get up early in the mornings seven days a week to milk the cows, slop the hogs and feed the other livestock, so you could work the fields. Work was all day in the heat of summer sun. You had to pitch hay and you had to stack it in haystacks. Or you had to pitch it on a wagon, haul it to the barn, and pitch it off the wagon into the barn, tugging, pulling and lifting all the time. The hay was usually alfalfa, red clover or timothy in those days but you don't hear of timothy or red clover anymore. If they baled hay in the field they would drag it in to the baler with a bull-rake. Two or three men would stand there all day and pitch it into the baler. There would be two other fellows that would punch wires. One would punch wires through to the other one on the other side who would tie those wires and carry the bales back and stack them on the ground or on a wagon. The boys were usually the ones to pinch and tie the bales, which bales weighed between fifty and eighty pounds. The bales were tied with stout baling wire while the hay was compressed, and when the bale was pushed out by other hay, it would expand. Those wires would be so tight you could hit high=C. Some farmers don't even know what baling wire is anymore, as it's binder twine now, or cord used on those big bales. I haven't had much experience with those.

I can remember shocking wheat. It seemed like we were always shocking wheat or putting up hay, which you did through the heat of the summer with the temperatures around 100. You were out in that hot sun all day, working.

There was one fellow by the name of Stanton who worked around town. He always had a lump on each jaw, just like a chipmunk full of peanuts. I had seen him all my life and it was just part of his makeup. I later learned that the lumps were plugs of tobacco he kept back in his cheeks. That's where he carried his tobacco wad and you never saw him without them. In those days when you were out working the field you had water in a brown jug that held a gallon. They would wrap a gunny sack around the jug and tie it, and then they'd wet that gunny sack to keep the drinking water cool. You'd put it in the shade of a wheat shock or under a tree and keep it there for when you shocked. Around the field you could get a drink. Well, they'd hired Stanton to help that day and when we got ready to get a drink of water, he'd get that darn water jug before I would every time. The first thing when you took a drink of that water, you had to get over the musty smell of the wet gunny sack, and not only did I have to get around that musty smell, but I had to get around his tobacco juice smell. I would put off getting a drink of water until I just couldn't go any longer.

I remember at another job where three of us were shocking wheat in about 100 degree sun. I was just eleven or twelve years old. These other two men kept telling me that Mrs. Jones came out of the house at 1:30 or 2:00 every day to bring out a jug of ice cold lemonade for us. Sometimes a cake. Well, we'd shock around the field and I would kind of stop and look over at the house and see if I could see Mrs. Jones coming. "Oh, she'll be here, she always comes out," they would tell me. She never did show up but I kept watching. When I got home that evening and told my Dad about Mrs. Jones who was supposed to bring lemonade out there, he said, "hell, she wouldn't have brought you a cup of water if it would have saved your life. Those guys were just kidding you." I'd been had.

They never got me on snipe hunting but we got some of the kids on a snipe hunt. We used to play tallyo, after dark, all over town. The fellows would choose up two sides and one team would be against the other team. When the "its" would holler "tally" then the others would have to answer "tallyo" in reply and that would give them a sense of where they were and then the "its" would try to catch them. They would hide in and around all the outhouses and sheds and there were lots of those in town. Hide anyplace you could to keep from getting caught. That was just a kind of town game.

Let's get back to working on the farm. Some weeks after the wheat was shocked, a threshing machine was brought in to separate the wheat, and this was powered by a steam engine or a Rumley-Oil-Pull. Not very many people even remember what a Rumley-Oil-Pull tractor was, but it was a big tractor, a huge thing, seemed like to me, that was powered by oil. Most of the steam engines had all been fired by coal or wood. But this was fired by oil and was something new. This generated power that turned the pulley wheel and the wheel pulled a huge long belt that powered the separator. You'd have to have a crew of men for thrashing. It would take about six bundle wagons, I believe. They would have about four pitchers, to pitch the bundles onto the bundle wagons. Each bundle wagon would have a stacker, and would haul the bundles to the separator. Then they'd pitch them off the wagons into the separator. The wheat was separated and would come out into the spring wagon which would hold fifty bushel. There would be two or three spring wagons so they could haul one load to the barn, while another was being filled. The wheat had to be scooped out of the wagon and into a bin but wheat you always had to go into the barn, out of the breeze and right where it was the hottest. You had to scoop with a twelve, fourteen, or sixteen scoop. It would get awful hot and sometimes you'd have to pitch it as high as you could

reach it and it could get pretty bad. When dinner time came, boy, everybody would come in, the pitchers, the stackers, the scoopers and the water boys. Women would gather, and all the neighbors would come to help with the thrashing dinner. They would bring all sorts of pies and everything. There was a saying, "eating like a thrashing hand." They'd divide and eat at an early table and a later table. For the first table, the men would wash up outside at the water pump. And then they'd go in and sit down at the tables wherever they happened to be and wherever they could put half the 16 to 20 hot, sweaty, tired workers. I was just a kid, a water-boy and I was sitting at a dinner table by one of the local farmers who, after eating chicken, ham, beef, steak, and all the vegetables you could think of was then asked by one of the ladies, who had a pie, "would you like a piece of cherry pie?" Kurt said, "I don't care if I do," and he just handed the lady his empty plate and he took the entire pie, sat it right down in front of him and ate it all. I had never seen anything like that, although I could have eaten a couple of pieces of pie myself. I got home that night and I was telling my Dad about it, and he said, "He's one of those hard workers, and big eaters."

One time, at one of those thrashing dinners at the Silvey farm, the first bunch were in the house eating and one of those eating was named Porter. He was sort of a practical joker and was always teasing the others. He could not stand snakes and was scared to death of them. He'd left his straw hat outside like everybody else had. A fellow by the name of Ballinger, while in the field that morning, had killed a snake, about two or three feet long. He wrapped that snake up, put it in Porters' hat and tied it in there. Then he set his hat back down and straight up with that snake tied in there. He said, "don't anybody say anything." "Don't anyone say a word." Our group for the second table was all sitting there, waiting for the first table to come out. Porter came out and said, "Well, there's nothing left. We ate it all. We ate it all." "You guys are just out of luck." He went over, picked up his hat and started to put it on. He threw that hat down and jumped around like a wild man and said, "I'll kill the son-of-a-bitch that did that." He grabbed a board laying there about three feet long, and waved it around in the air. He was like a madman. No-one said anything. They were just scared. I suppose he would have clubbed the one who did it if he knew. They said he would put fleas on you, but I don't know whether he had fleas or not. The men said he would pull his shirt-tail out of his britches, pick a fella or two and put them on you.

There was one farmer who made home brew at his house and when we'd go out there to thrash he'd always have some brew in ice in a washtub, and this was during prohibition. We'd get out there in the morning, get ready to go to work and one or two would always get down drunk on that home brew; they wouldn't do much work. I don't know why they'd have that home brew because they knew exactly what would happen. It didn't help to get the work done.

In those days of thrashing wheat, each grain was handled four times, but with these modern combines, man never touches the wheat. The first job in harvesting was cutting the wheat with a horse drawn binder that tied the wheat in bundles. The binder would dump the bundles and shockers would pick them up and put them in shocks of eight to twelve bundles. Then we would cap the shock with several bundles to keep the water out. When they were ready to thrash the wheat, the bundles had to be pitched from the shocks onto the bundle wagons. From the bundle wagons they were pitched into the separator, and then the grain went into a wagon box. Sometimes they would scoop out of that wagon box over into another wagon with a team hitched to it. Then the grain was hauled to the shed, or wherever they were taking it to, and there the grain had to be scooped out and thrown into the bin. So every grain of wheat was handled at least four times. Today, with combines, it's never touched by man. Today, farming is done much differently, easier and better. To plant corn today the land need not be plowed, and I believe they call it non-cultivating farming or something of that nature and weeds are killed with chemicals. In the old days we would plow weeds until the corn got to [sic] tall to plow, and then we'd take our hoe and go up and down the corn rows and to hoe out the weeds. Of course, that was all done in the hot sun.

I'll tell you of an instant that occurred in my high school days. Two or three boys that came to high school had cars. In those days, to keep the car radiator from freezing, they would put alcohol in the radiator. That's all they had, was alcohol and the alcohol would boil out if the car got hot, which they usually did. Then it would freeze up and bust a block, radiator or something else. There were two brothers, that had an old car and lived in the country. Honey doesn't freeze, so they put honey in their radiator and when they got to school they had honey all over the hood of that car-and all over the windshield. It was a real mess. That was the only time I ever saw honey tried.

There was one farmer, back in 1920's that bought a new dodge car. All cars were black in those days. Henry Ford said, "We'll give you any color you want, as long as it's black." They never had car polish in those days and they never even knew what it was, I suppose. Well, he found out that oil-just plain old oil would make the car shine, so he rubbed it all over with oil. Of course, there wasn't anything but dust roads in those days, and when he came down the street in the car, covered with oil and dust, it looked like a mud ball rolling. I am sure it took many buckets of hot water and lye soap to get the Dodge touring car clean.

My brother and I were quite innovators of toys, games and other things. We'd get chocks from railroad box cars in which they shipped four or five automobiles in those days. The [sic] would use those to keep the cars from rolling back and forth in the box cars. They also put two-by-fours under the second tier of cars to hold them off of the ones on the floor. When

they unloaded a shipment of Chevrolets, they would throw those two-by-fours away. We would get those two-by-fours, pull the nails out of them, and take them home. We had a hill going down our backyard, and off the well frame. We laid those two-by-fours on edge and drove wooden stakes on each side to hold them upright, and this made a track about a foot and half apart. We'd lay two of those chocks up side down and nail a board across those to sit on. Then we'd take an old black crank case that oil came out of car and paint those two-by-four rails with the oil, all the way down, as far as we had rails laid, maybe forty feet down. Then we'd climb up on the cellar, put those chocks underneath us and we'd go like lightening on that grease. Frequently, we'd fall off and get greasy, as well as get a seat full of splinters. Our Mothers or whoever else was around would take out the splinters. We finally got to making sleds to slide on down the greased rails. We would sure go a skootin for that short distance and it was great fun for us kids, but after one summer we tired of that sport.

One of our friends who was an only child, came to our house to play one day, and he was all dressed up. He sure had a good time but he went home with oil on his good clothes. His Mother wouldn't let him come up and play, as long as we had the oil slide. I don't know how our Mothers put up with it.

My brother was six years younger than me, and one time he and I had an old canoe we'd made ourselves- or patched up what was left of one. This little creek that ran through town would get up and flood the community of Smithville. Well, during one of those floods, we got our canoe out and went up the river by paddling around the fields and out of the current. When we started down the river we got out in the current. I was in the front of the canoe and he was behind me. We came down that river current just hell bent for election. You can talk about your river rides but we really had one coming down that current in our canoe. Just as we passed under the town bridge, the canoe flipped over. When we came up my brother said, "Swim for your life," which we were both doing as we were only about 100 feet from the dam that was covered with water. We each grabbed the top of a willow tree and hung on. I said, "What turned us over?" and he replied that he had stood up and grabbed for the floor of the bridge as we floated under. Then he said he had lost his pants, and I told him he was lucky to not have lost his life. An ironic incident happened at this time. A little girl, about 6 years old, had been at our house playing with our younger sister, and was on the bridge going home when we turned over. She was the only one there and had seen us. At that time our Dad drove on the bridge and stopped to inquire what she was looking at. She told him that his two sons were down there in the creek, and that they had gone under the bridge in a boat, but when they came out on the other side they were swimming. Our Dad got out to look and then other people came to the bridge until we had an audience of 50 or 60, who lined the side of the bridge to see us hanging to the willows in the current. The audience, to help us, had gotten a hay rope, tied a stick of stove-wood on one end and tried to float it to us, but it was 20 or 30 feet too short. We were both good swimmers, and could have gotten out, but why should we break up the entertainment. A couple of our friends swam out to us, to show they could, so this eliminated the excitement and we swam down stream and to the bank. Dad never said too much about the matter for I expect he thought we had learned our lesson.

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