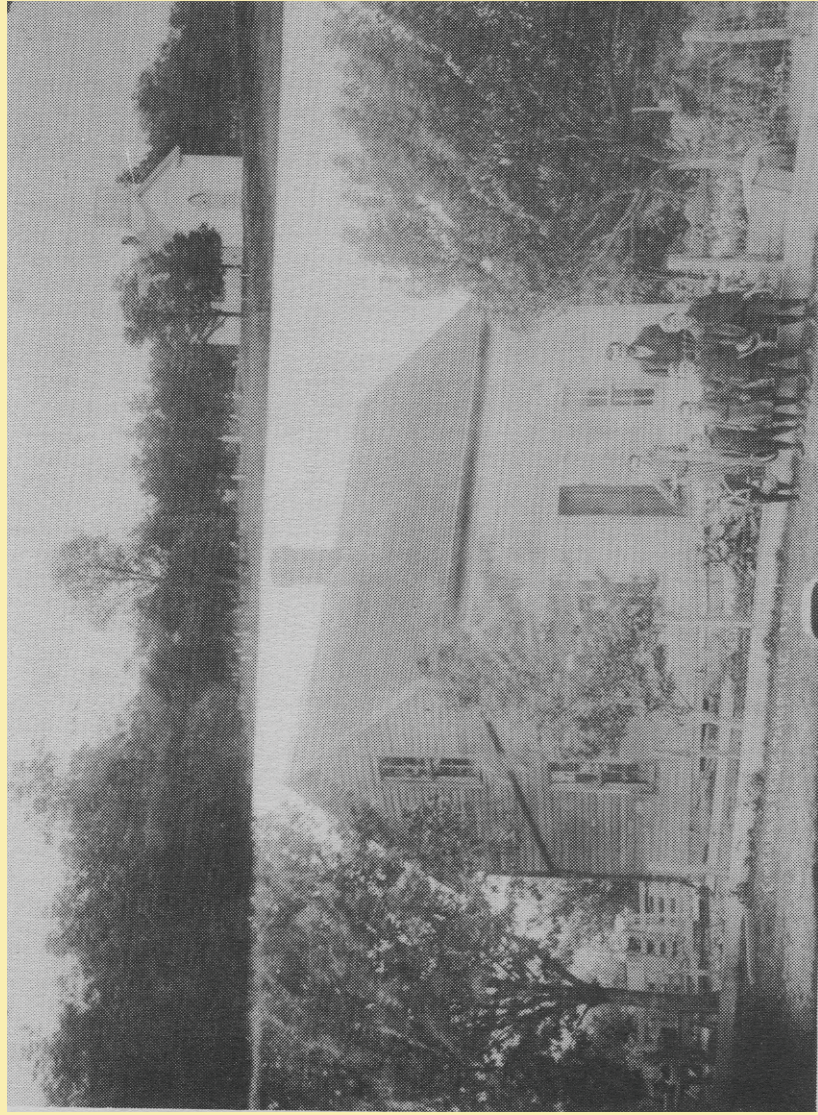


**Memories  
of a  
Central Illinois Farmer**

by  
**John A. Brookens**



Top: Mound Church. Bottom: Brooken's Family, 1903:  
James, Emma, John, Vinola, Curtis, Elmer, and Ormond

**MEMORIES  
OF A  
CENTRAL ILLINOIS FARMER**

**By**

**John A. Brookens**

**Edited by Linda McElroy**

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## PREFACE

As I approached my 90th birthday, various members of my family urged me to copy down the important events of my life. This is my attempt to oblige and to give my descendents some idea of how we did things in the "Good Old Days."

I want to dedicate this work first, to Beulah, my wife of over 69 years, who has had to put up with the continual peck-peck-pecking of my one-fingered typing and having my papers and "junk" all over the table and everywhere.

This is also dedicated to our children: Elsie and her husband Bob and Harold and his wife Rosella, who have done so much to help us, to wait on us, take us where and when we needed to go, and fix things around the house and lot. They have given us the pleasure of having them around while they grew up and then have given us 12 grandchildren to enjoy. Some of my most pleasant memories are of tramping around the timber and climbing hills and bluffs with them. Now, our grandchildren have given us 18 great-grandchildren to enjoy. Is it any wonder that we feel we have had a wonderful life? And that I feel that I have had much more than my share of pleasure in this life?

Besides all of the above family, I want to especially dedicate this to our granddaughter Linda (McKittrick) McElroy who agreed to try to piece together my record of events, which I wrote mostly "bit by bit" as I remembered it.

If my family and descendants get any pleasure from reading this book, I will feel well paid for the time and effort used.

John Brookens  
Spring, 1989



## CONTENTS

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| EARLY MEMORIES                     | 1  |
| Mound School                       | 5  |
| Holiday Celebrations               | 8  |
| School Days                        | 10 |
| Union County                       | 14 |
| My First Trip to Southern Illinois | 17 |
| Moving to Union County             | 18 |
| Rendleman School                   | 19 |
| Farming in Union County            | 20 |
| Exploring Union County             | 21 |
| Moving Back to Christian County    | 23 |
| Our Boy Scout Troup                | 23 |
| Beginning of Scouting in America   | 26 |
| The Bicycle Trip                   | 26 |
| My Fifteenth Birthday Accident     | 29 |
| More Kid Stuff                     | 30 |
| I Make a Gun                       | 31 |
| Learning to Farm                   | 32 |
| Farmers' Institute                 | 34 |
| My First Experience as a Salesman  | 35 |
| Home Remedies                      | 36 |
| Fighting Bumblebees                | 38 |
| Sparrows and Pigeons               | 40 |
| Micenheimer's Timber               | 40 |
| Poison Ivy                         | 41 |
| The State Fair                     | 42 |
| Daredevil Stunts                   | 44 |
| Stories I Heard                    | 46 |
| The First Telephone                | 48 |
| I Get a Whipping                   | 48 |
| Short Bicycle Trips                | 49 |
| THINGS WE MADE                     | 51 |
| Corncob Pipes                      | 51 |
| Postcard Projector                 | 52 |
| Sleds                              | 52 |
| Pop Guns and Squirt Guns           | 52 |
| Whistles                           | 53 |
| Button Buzzer                      | 54 |

|                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| Our Shocking Machine     | 54 |
| Our Coasters             | 54 |
| Corn Day at Mound School | 55 |

#### EARLY FARMING TECHNIQUES

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Hay Harvest                           | 57 |
| Harvesting Grain                      | 60 |
| Corn Harvesting                       | 61 |
| Shucking Corn                         | 63 |
| Planting Corn                         | 65 |
| More about Chinch Bugs                | 67 |
| Soy Beans                             | 68 |
| Sowing Grain                          | 69 |
| We Put in 470 Acres of Wheat (Nearly) | 71 |
| Early Tractors                        | 73 |
| Hedge Fences (Osage Orange)           | 74 |
| Clearing 20 Acres of Timber           | 76 |
| My First Calf                         | 77 |
| Our Timber                            | 77 |
| Hog Cholera                           | 78 |
| More about Wood Cutting               | 79 |
| Corn Cutter - One-Horse               | 80 |
| Hay Knives                            | 81 |
| Ormond Goes West to Work in Harvest   | 81 |
| Ormond Spends the Winter Trapping     | 82 |

|                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| ARMY DAYS                            | 83 |
| James' Death                         | 85 |
| Tourniquist Killed                   | 86 |
| Pass to Galveston, Texas             | 86 |
| My Furlough                          | 87 |
| Enroute to New York                  | 88 |
| Furlough to the Alps                 | 90 |
| Larouchette, Luxembourg - Old Castle | 91 |
| 33rd Division Sanitary School        | 92 |
| Amusement Park at Brest, France      | 93 |
| Pass to New York City                | 93 |
| Battery A Reunions and Newsletter    | 94 |

|                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| MARRIAGE AND FAMILY   | 97 |
| Walk Home in the Snow | 97 |



|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Hugh's Night Ride                             | 98         |
| Our Wedding                                   | 98         |
| My Folks from 1920 On                         | 99         |
| Our First Home                                | 102        |
| On Our Own Place                              | 106        |
| Apple and Peach Orchards                      | 107        |
| English Walnuts                               | 108        |
| Terraces                                      | 109        |
| Berries                                       | 109        |
| Melons  | 110        |
| Elsie Has Appendicitis                        | 111        |
| I Have Appendicitis                           | 111        |
| Measles                                       | 112        |
| Mumps   | 112        |
| Peddling Apples, Cider, Etc.                  | 112        |
| Harold and Harry Oliver Start a Fire (Nearly) | 113        |
| The F-14 Tractor                              | 113        |
| Pulling and Cutting Sprouts in the Pasture    | 114        |
| Our Boy Scout Troop                           | 114        |
| Auto Accident                                 | 115        |
| Allis Chalmers Tractor                        | 116        |
| Tractor Rolls to the Creek                    | 116        |
| Milk Cows                                     | 117        |
| Jersey and Guernsey Bulls                     | 120        |
| Wild Hogs                                     | 123        |
| Witching for Water                            | 124        |
| Witching for Oil                              | 126        |
| The Tornado of 1948                           | 129        |
| Lightning Strikes the House                   | 130        |
| Bee Keeping                                   | 132        |
| Wasps   | 134        |
| Hornets                                       | 134        |
| Yellow Jackets                                | 135        |
| Sweat Bees                                    | 135        |
| Insurance Agent                               | 135        |
| Supervisor                                    | 136        |
| Retiring from Farming                         | 136        |
| <b>OUR TRIPS</b>                              | <b>138</b> |
| California Circle Tour                        | 141        |
| 1966 Trip to Southern Illinois                | 143        |

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Turkey Run State Park                             | 144          |
| New England Color Tour                            | 144          |
| Wisconsin Trip                                    | 145          |
| Bell Smith Springs & Shelby Co. State Forest      | 146          |
| Alaska by Bus                                     | 146          |
| Florida Disney World Tour                         | 152          |
| Other Trips                                       | 154          |
| Colorado Rockies Tour                             | 154          |
| <br>  |              |
| OUR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES                   | 157          |
| <br>  |              |
| THE BROOKENS FAMILY AS OF NOVEMBER 1988           | 163          |
| <br>  |              |
| A BRIEF OUTLINE OF JOHN BROOKENS' LIFE            | 167          |
| <br>  |              |
| PHOTOS  |              |
| Mound Church and Elmer Brookens Family<br>in 1903 | Inside Cover |
| Mound School, 1915                                | 56           |
| John and Beulah with daughter Elsie               | 166          |
| Beulah and John Brookens, 1989                    | 166          |

## EARLY MEMORIES

They told me that I was born in Taylorville, November 9, 1898, and that my folks moved out on a farm in Johnson Township the next spring, but I don't remember a thing about it and this is supposed to be My Memories, so I'd better stick to things and events that I do remember.

I do remember standing beside my mother at the bedside of my Grandma Dappert when she died in 1903. There was a roomful of people, and one of the ladies closed Grandma's eyes and placed a penny on each eyelid.

I do remember my younger brother James when he was very small, and some lady said she was going to take him home with her. I didn't like that woman, and I watched to see that she didn't get him. He was 18 months younger than me.

I don't know why, but it seems that my memories of things and events were rather few and far between until I got to be about 4 or 5 years old--must not have been much happening.

I was fourth in a family of five kids: Ormond Dappert born in 1892, Curtis Gladstone born in 1894, Vinola Waneta born in 1896, me (John Amos Chilan Omar) born in 1898 and James Angelo born in 1900. Of course, there were also our dad, Elmer Asbury Brookens and our mother, Emma Matilda (Dappert) Brookens.

Our place had rolling hills with a branch running across it north and south near the center which entered the South Fork Creek at the north edge of our place. Just below where the branch entered the creek was a shallow place with a gravel bottom. This was known as Gravel Ford. The original road ran from the east across about the center of what is now the Mound Chapel Cemetery and ran west about on the line between the Brookens and Hays places and across the creek at Gravel Ford. Of course, this was before my time, but the stage coaches crossed here going from Pana to Springfield. The early log cabins were

built along this road. The Elijah Chesterman log house was built on the south side of the road, about the front of the present cemetery.

The George Hays log cabin was about 1/8 mile west on the west side of the branch that runs north through the east side of the Brookens Place. This log house was still there when I was small and was being used as an ice house. My folks bought ice from Hays to make ice cream.

The creek ran along north of our place until it cut across a small part of the northwest corner of our place. Then it entered Micenheimer's Timber, 40 acres of very rolling forest. The creek wound around across this timber. There was a long, high bluff near the west side of the timber. This was an ideal place for four energetic boys to work off surplus energy.

As early as I can remember, my folks took us kids back over the place through Micenheimer's Timber to hunt flowers and gather greens. You would be surprised how many different wild plants can be used for greens. The creek was a very good place to fish. It was really as if we had a well-arranged park right at home to play in.

My folks were lovers of music, and Vinola had music lessons on the piano at an early age. Each of us kids was given a musical instrument to play: Ormond, a violin; Curtis, a mandolin; Vinola, the piano; James, a tambourine; and me, a guitar. I never learned to play it, seems I never could find time to practice. I don't remember James ever fooling around with his tambourine much either. Ormond did very well with the violin, and he could pick out a tune on any kind of stringed instrument. Curtis learned the mandolin and later the coronet. Often the folks would gather around the piano and sing, all but me. I had a book to read or some other project. The singing was really beautiful; Ormond sang bass and my mother sang alto and the other just sang.

Our house, which had been moved from about a

quarter mile east of the church to its present location, was set on brick piers about two feet above ground level. In the winter, Dad would put bales of straw around to keep the cold air out from under the house. There was no insulation in the walls of the house. Rosin paper was tacked over the studding and the weatherboarding was nailed over that. The inside walls were lath and plaster, which was reasonably wind proof as long as there were no crack in the plaster. Of course, moving a house usually cracked the plaster. I don't know if it was patched after that, but you didn't have to go outdoors to find which direction the wind was coming from. I imagine the log cabins were warmer than the early frame houses.

A kitchen had been built onto the house after it was moved, and it was even colder than the rest of the house. In the coldest part of the winter, we would move out of the kitchen and use the dining room for both kitchen and dining room. We always had a stove in the front room in the winter, so we still had two rooms to live in and two bedrooms upstairs. About 1911 or 1912, Dad built a basement with a concrete floor under the house, all except the kitchen. That was quite an improvement and made the house so much warmer, besides giving us so much more room to store things.

The folks did their "trading" in Taylorville. Grandpa Dappert, Uncle Jim Dappert, and Aunt Lue and Uncle El Shover lived there, so we spent Christmas and other important days there at Grandpa's.

One Christmas some of us kids went across the street to see the presents that the Shover kids got for Christmas. Aunt Lue Shover was Mom's sister. They had three kids: Elmer, the youngest was about my age, and John and Ona, who were older. John had a steam engine that he put a little water in and lit a little lamp on it, and pretty soon it started to run. We thought it was something.

My Grandma Dappert died in 1903, but Grandpa married again in a year or so, and our new Grandma

was a perfect grandmother to all the grandchildren and made a wonderful wife for Grandpa.

When we moved on the "Brookens Place," there was a rail fence along the north line from the road west to the quarter-mile line, then south 1/4 mile to Chesterman's line. There was no lane to the pasture which extended from the rail fence west. A patch of farm ground was on the hill east of the bottom. The south end of the west 40 was all timber. The four acres of bottom ground may have been cleared before this, but I know Dad cleared the six acres south of the bottom. Micenheimer's Timber was just west of this, and along the north side of the west 40 was the creek (South Fork of the Sangamon River) which turned northeast. At Rocky Ford was the start of Hays' Bluff on the east side of the creek for about 1/2 quarter. This clay bluff was maybe 100 feet high at the highest point, which we later called "Inspiration Point."

Hedge fences ran on both sides of the road south to Mound School Corner, which was about 1 1/4 mile. We had a wire fence around the yard and a fence and outbuildings running west from the southwest corner of the yard to the branch. The north drive was next to the yard, and west of this was a lean-to henhouse built on the side of a granary. To the west of the granary was a shed and on west ways on the south side of the fence was a corncrib and a shed built on the north end of the barn. The barn had two double horse stalls at the south end with a feedway, a large stall on the west, and a small corncrib on the east side. Of course, there was a hay mow above. The barn was leaning badly to the south, and a large pole at the south end propped it up. The door to put hay in the mow was in the center of the east side. There was a ladder and opening to get into the mow from the feedway just inside the feedway door. A board door covered this opening while hay was being put into the mow. The barn lot extended from the barn east to the road and about 50 feet south of the south yard fence. The

gate at the road had to be kept closed as there were usually hogs in the lot.

West of the yard was a grape patch, four rows from the drive west to the branch. The "privy" was near the middle of the grape patch at the west end. (In case you don't know, the privy was the 19th century toilet, a place to dispose of old Sears Roebuck catalogs.) Another hen house was north of the grape patch, as well as an apple orchard with a blackberry patch extending west of the orchard to the branch. A small garden, maybe 50 feet square, was north of the east end of the yard and extended to the hedge. South of the barn was a small lot and a shallow well at the branch on the south side. The "straw shed" in the lot was the only winter shelter the cows had. There was (and still is) a well about 100 feet southwest of the house.

The cows were driven to the pasture in the spring, and they stayed there till fall. The milking was done in the pasture and the milk carried to the house. Later, Dad built a fence north and south, just west of the well. He also built a milk house with a milk trough. Water was pumped into the milk trough and through a pipe leading to a stock watering trough west of the fence. Cocks of milk and butter were kept in the milk trough to keep them cool.

In the northwest corner of the yard was a "cave" where we kept canned fruit, apples and empty glass cans. I mention this because whenever it looked like we might have a "bad storm," Dad insisted we go to the "cave." One night a storm was coming up and we had to go to the cave. Of course, we went just the way we were. I was barefoot, and I got back on the empty cans. One of them was broken, and I cut my foot pretty badly. We stopped going to the cave for storms when I was about seven years old. Some way or other, we always "pulled through."

## **Mound School**

Outside of our home, Mound Church and Mound

School were next in importance to the Brookens kids. Mound school was nearly a mile and a quarter south. All five of us started our education there. There were four houses along the road on the way to the school house. First was Ham Pounds who lived a ways east of the road and half a mile south of us. They told us that Mrs. Pounds had a lot of odd-colored gourds. When we stopped in once to see them, she was smoking a pipe, which looked odd to us.

Next was a house about  $3/4$  mile south and about  $1/4$  mile east. I am of the opinion that Frank Hays lived there then, but he could have moved there later.

Adam Shears and his son Albert lived in log cabin about a half mile south and a half mile west. They were both a bit odd. Adam raised watermelons and dropped them into the well to keep them cool. The watermelons floated (if not broken), and he could fish them out when he wanted cold melons. Chesterman bought this place, and after that the house was vacant and was soon torn down.

The next house was the "Mound Place." I believe the Driskels lived there. They had some sweet apple trees just west of the road and some holes in the hedge fence just big enough for kids to get through. Those yellow sweet apples ripened about the time school started.

My first teacher was Eugene Chumley. There were a lot of grown kids going to school then. I remember Elmer Bishop took me for a ride on the handlebars of his bicycle. He upset me and I bloodied my nose. Seems it was always my nose that got hurt. I guess it just stuck out too far.

The big girls were inclined to sort of wait on me, but I didn't mind, and I soon had little girlfriends too.

It seems that for some reason Eugene Chumley didn't finish out the term, and a one-armed man named Hall finished out the term. In a school picture, he is holding me. Maybe that was the only way he could keep me still. I started school in September 1903, but wouldn't be five years old until November 9.



When we got a good snow, all the big kids would make a large Fox and Goose game taking up most of the playground west of the schoolhouse. When there was no snow or rain, we played ball, Blindman's Bluff, Dare Base, Needles Eye, Farmer in the Well, Anti Over, and other games. On rainy days we played indoor games like Clap In, Clap Out and others I don't remember the names of.

One day we were playing a game where some were inside the school and others were outside on the porch. While I was outside on the porch, Everett McVicker was peeping through the keyhole from inside. I stuck a stick through the keyhole and stuck him in the eye. It seems I was always doing something without thinking about the results. No wonder I was always getting into trouble.

We always walked to school and often got our feet wet since we did not always have overshoes to wear. If we didn't get our feet wet going to school, we likely would at noon and recess playing outdoors, especially if there were any snow to play in. I can remember sitting in school with wet feet many days. When the weather was very cold, the teacher would let the kids sit as close to the stove as they could. It got pretty cold in the far corners of the room.

One day the teacher brought soup to school and gave every pupil a good helping at noon. That was the only time that ever happened during all my school days, but we all enjoyed it. The teacher always gave the pupils a treat at Christmas, usually some stick candy. Sometimes we had a Christmas tree and a Christmas program with recitations.

When we got older, they had "Corn Day," which was almost like a small fair. Two schools would go together and have quite a celebration with exhibits of grain and prizes for the best loaf of bread or cake that the pupils baked.

In grade school we had copy books--a line of writing at the top of the page and lines below where we were supposed to write the same words as near like the original as possible. It doesn't seem that we

ever had a class in writing, but the teacher would have the whole school do writing practice occasionally.

The last day of school was always celebrated, often by kids and parents. I remember visiting the last day of school before I started. I met other little kids, and one little girl I sort of "fell for." I got to pulling a chair over to the phone and calling her up. I guess I took to the girls pretty young.

As I said, I started school before I was five. My mother had another little tot to look after, and maybe she thought it would be a way to keep me out of mischief. From what my oldest brother always told me, I was inclined to get into trouble if there was any possible way to do it. They told me my mother gathered the eggs, set the gallon bucket full on the table, then went outside for something and forgot to take me along. When she came back in, I had pulled a chair up and climbed up on the table and was dropping the eggs onto the floor, one by one. It's a wonder they went to the trouble to raise me.

## **Holiday Celebrations**

Mound Church was about 400 feet from our house, and of course, we all took part in all the gatherings there. A-United Brethren Church, Mound Chapel had a "Children's Day" every year, and Christmas was a big event, especially for the children.

Santa never failed to show up each Christmas to give each child a sack containing some candy, some nuts and an orange. The kids all had pieces to say and maybe songs to sing, and there was usually a large play which included most of the kids, large and small.

Children's Day was also quite an event. Practices would be held a week or two ahead. No bigger part than I had in my earlier days, I don't think I had to go to the church to practice. I

remember distinctly my first recitation at church. I don't remember the occasion, whether Children's Day or Christmas, but I remember the verse: "God made man, Man made money, God made bees, Bees made honey, God made the World, A great big ball, And man put whiskey in it and that spoiled it all." They had a little trouble getting me to get up to say it, but I finally did it. They made me think I was practically a man.

For Christmas and other get-togethers, we would go to Grandma and Grandpa's. That was a good place to watch the Decoration Day parade pass on its way to the cemetery. Soldiers always led the parade. I don't know if they still had Company B in Taylorville then or if it was high school boys who had military drill there. (They still had some guns in the high school in 1914.)

One Decoration Day while we were waiting for the parade, a runaway team of horses hitched to an empty wagon were running east on Gandy Avenue. My dad ran out and caught them.

On a visit to Uncle Henry Dappert's, the oldest son had a "shocking machine." Before he showed it to us, he put a penny in a pan of water and told me I could have it if I took it out of the pan. I tried, but I got a shock when I touched the water. The machine had two things to take hold of and gave a good shock.

About 1911 at a practice for Children's Day at Mound Church, one of the ladies who came to help drove up to the hitch rack, got out of the buggy and tied the end of the line to the hitch rack cable, thinking she had tied her horse. The line was still running through the ring on the back band. When the horse pulled back, the line to its bit pulled harder on the bridle bit. The horse was in pain, and the first thing I thought of was my pocket knife. I soon had the pressure off the horse, but a good leather line was cut in two. George Hays, who was mowing a fencerow nearby, spliced the line, so the lady could drive home. I'll bet she got a scolding from her

husband when she got home. I thought a farmer's wife should have known better.

By the way, George Hays was a Civil War veteran. He married my mother's cousin, Anna Chesterman. Their log cabin was the one later used as an ice house.

## School Days

A spelling bee was an event that parents attended in the evening. All the pupils in the school would take part, and sometimes there would also be arithmetic contests.

Blackboards were at the front of the schoolroom and on the side walls too. Sometimes most of the blackboards had kids working problems, and there was a lot of peck-peck-pecking of chalk on the boards.

Each kid had a slate, which was a piece of thin slate about 8" by 12" with a wood frame around it. They used a slate pencil to write on the slate. A damp cloth would wipe the slate clean. I have seen kids spit on their slates and wipe them off with their hands. On the blackboard we used a stick of chalk and wiped it off with an eraser. These erasers needed dusting once in a while. We dusted them by patting two together until they were clean of dust.

We must not forget the "box suppers," when all the girls in the district prepared a pretty box and filled it with goodies for a lunch. The boxes were auctioned off, and no one was supposed to know which girl belonged to the box until all the boxes were sold. The buyer got to eat the lunch with the girl that brought it. Sometimes the older boys would run the price way up for a special box.

Sometimes there would be a contest for the "prettiest girl" or the "most popular young lady." At one box social, two girls were nominated as the most popular young lady. The father of one of the girls stood beside the one keeping track of the votes. Every time someone put some money in for the

other girl, he put more in for his daughter, which ended the contest right there. Of course, his daughter won, but she sure didn't really win anything.

Another time we were attending a box social at Oak Ridge School. It was a pretty cold night, and a couple young men were outside drinking--and it wasn't water. When they came inside, the heat must have brought things to a head because they started a fight soon after they got inside. One of them knocked the stove pipe down. Some of us small kids were soon out the nearby open window. We didn't want to get in anyone's way. The sale of the boxes was delayed for awhile, but soon everything was back to normal.

I attended Mound School for nearly two terms before we moved to Union County where I attended Rendleman School for three years. One teacher taught all grades (1-8), but later they taught 7th grade one term and 8th the next term. Sometimes a pupil would take 8th grade before the 7th.

At the end of the term, the would-be graduates took the "Central" examination. If they passed it, they took the "Final" examination. If they passed the final examination, they could go on to high school.

I started high school the fall of 1914 and went most of the first semester. I was driving back and forth, and the roads got bad, which was usual. My folks decided that I would have to stay in town at my Grandpa Dappert's during the school week. That lasted about three or four days; then I decided against it, so I quit school.

Most of the events in my early years were connected with the church and the school. Our house was the closest one to the church. In 1903 Calvin Resler, son of my mother's oldest sister and a free-lance photographer, went around taking pictures of groups--school, church, etc. One day he came to our place and wanted to take a picture of our family. We obliged and lined up along the yard fence just south of the house. He took a picture of us and the house. Then he set up his camera in the yard and took a picture of Mound Church at the top of the same

negative that we were on. This is the best picture of Mound Church that I have ever seen. It shows both the church and the cemetery. I had an enlargement made of it, which I value very much.

Every year the United Brethren denomination held a Ministerial Association meeting where they assigned ministers to their churches. Visiting ministers would come from the entire district and board at local homes for the week. When it was held at Mound Church, we never missed having two or three boarders since our house was so close.

A large percentage of the ministers were Civil War veterans, and I really enjoyed listening to them talk together about their experiences. I remember a Rev. Ninniger who had been a prisoner at Andersonville Prison. A group of them tunneled out, but about as soon as they got outside, they were discovered and everyone took out after them. Mr. Ninniger saw that he couldn't make it so he pretended he was chasing the escapees. The others got caught, but he got away.

Another one had helped with the "Underground Railway" helping the slaves escape. Another old gent with a white beard, Bishop Wright, told of his two sons who were working on a machine that would fly like a bird. Later we learned that his two sons were Orville and Wilbur Wright, and their machine did fly. There were many Civil War veterans living around here at that time. That year 1905 was only 40 years after the end of the Civil War. This year 1988 is 70 years after World War I, and there are still a few veterans of that war around, but they are getting scarce.

Mound Church used to put on a Fourth of July Picnic, usually in the pasture just north of the cemetery. They would have a big dinner and all kinds of contests. One time they had it in our pasture along the Cemetery Road just south of the creek. This time they had a greased pole contest. There was a dollar bill on top of the pole and whoever could climb the pole could have the dollar. The pole was a green elm sapling, fresh-peeled, which was very slick without grease. I climbed the pole and got the dollar.

On New Year's the kids liked to ring the church bell at midnight. We had a bunch of boys at our place one New Year's night, and one of our projects was to ring the bell at midnight. Just about midnight we went to the church and were waiting in the road trying to scrape up courage to go to the church door. There was a cemetery right behind the church, and at that time of night, there was no telling what might happen. We were about ready to risk it when the church door banged twice very distinctly. We were facing east, and home was west, but we didn't have time to turn around. East we went as fast as we could go. Omar Chesterman, who was heavy for his age and was having trouble keeping up, began to yell "wait for me." We told him to hurry up because we were not about to slow down. The Chesterman boys, John and Omar, lived east, and we were soon at their place. We decided to cut across the field straight west to get home. George Hays, a little younger than me, lived north of us. When we got to our place, we asked George if he was afraid to walk home. He said, "I won't be if you hitch up and take me." I think we finally walked him home. We never got the church bell rung that night. Later we learned that my brother Ormond had slipped over to the church and waited inside until we got there, then slammed the door twice.

Another time on Halloween, Ormond gave a bunch of boys a scare. We had a Halloween party at our house, and the Brookens family was "in on the deal." After we had been playing games and it was getting late, we told them a story about two hobos who had camped just north of our place. They had gotten into an argument, and one had killed the other one and buried him. We decided to go down to see the grave. While we were all standing around the grave, we heard a man's voice coming from the grave saying, "Get me out of here." We didn't get him out of there, but we did get the entire gang out there in a hurry. It seems that Ormond had buried a rubber hose so that the end came out of the center of the grave. He was

talking into the other end of the hose from behind a bush. It really worked.

We had "kid parties" until I got old enough to go to grown-up parties. I remember one Halloween they were having a party, and some of us changed the wheels on one fellow's buggy so that both the big wheels (the back ones) were on one side and the small wheels were on the other side. The fellow took his girl home after the party. He said afterwards, "I wondered why I kept sliding over against Lucy."

Sometimes we did things on Halloween that we shouldn't, sometimes things we were ashamed of afterwards, but we just didn't stop to think about the results. Once we built a fence across the road with field tiles that a neighbor had piled in his field near the road. There were no, or very few, cars at that time. The first person who came along threw the tiles out of his way, breaking a lot of them. Another time we wired a farm gate across the center of an iron bridge. It fit just between the railings. Of course, it did no real damage as the gate had been open and we let no stock out.

## **Union County**

In the winter of 1905, we moved to Union County near Alto Pass. There is a ridge running from Cobden to Alto Pass with a good gravel road--the Ridge Road. Just before you get to Alto Pass on this road is Alto Pass Cliff Top Park. It is not much of a park, just a shelter, and from there Bald Knob is visible. The park is on a high cliff. The Mobile & Ohio Railroad ran at the base of this cliff when we lived just west of Cobden. There was a four-mile grade from Alto Pass to Mountain Glen. Our place was three miles below Alto Pass and a mile above Mountain Glen. The tracks made almost a 90-degree bend on our place. The freight trains had two engines on them going up. Since the curve made an added pull, the trains would often stall. They would have to divide the train in two, take half up and then back up for the other half.



While we lived there all the branches had wooden bridges across them. There was one on our place which we had to go under to part of our place. Just below the southeast corner of our place was a longer and higher bridge--The Wolf Den Bridge named for a small cave and spring near it. This bridge was about a half-quarter from our house. At one time, the spring was supposed to be bottomless. Folks tied a rock on a string and let it down, but they never had enough string to reach the bottom, so they told us. It was maybe a foot deep when we lived there, and there was no cave. We never considered the water from this spring to be good to drink. When a hobo or anyone wanted to go to Alto Pass, they would wait at Wolf Den since the freight would be going slow enough that it would be easy to catch.

Originally, Wolf Den Bridge had a board walk along one side so folks could get over the bridge without walking on the track. If you have ever tried crossing a high railroad bridge, you know it is a scary job. The branch had a rock bottom, and once a boy was crossing on the walk when a board broke and he was killed. After that they took the walkway off. That happened before we lived there, so us kids took the track across or went below. There was another bridge about a quarter of a mile below Wolf Den Bridge near our swimming hole.

Every day the "local" would come down from Alto Pass, an engine with maybe six or eight cars--likely the engine coming down to take the next freight up the hill. (The railroaders called it "Rattle Snake Hill.") We all thought this "local" traveled too fast to take the curve. One day it had several cars of coal, and the bridge below Wolf Den broke down and spilled six cars of coal into the branch. The engine got across all right. Dad asked the boss of the work crew that was cleaning up what they were going to do with the coal. He said, "Burn it." Dad salvaged about five tons, the only coal we had ever burned so far as I know.

Another time the "local" went down making a lot

of dust. We kids went down to Wolf Den and saw that there had been a car off the track. The wheels had made a groove a little ways from the end of the ties across the bridge.

After we left down there, a large patch of ground slid downhill east and took the railroad quite a way out of line so they had to move it. Now the railroad between Alto Pass and Mountain Glen is gone, and there is no railroad at Alto Pass Cliff Top Park. There was a rock formation along the side of the tracks that they called "The Indian Chief." I wonder if the Chief is still there; if so, I'll bet he gets lonesome.

The Brookens kids went to church quite a bit at Walnut Grove Church. It was not very far west of Mountain Glen, but there was no road that way, so we went west nearly a mile, then south to get there. The pastor was Mr. Baldwin, a Civil War veteran. The church is still there, well cared for and still in use. The pastor's son Paul Baldwin was about my age and a good friend of mine. They moved to Chicago after we moved back to Christian County.

Cobden was a very busy place at the time we were there. Most of the farming was fruit and vegetables, nearly all going to Chicago. The Illinois Central Railroad had a fast freight with refrigerated cars that went directly to Chicago. The first refrigerated freight car ever used went from Cobden to Chicago. Cobden had a canning factory, a box and barrel factory and large sheds at the depot where fruit and vegetables were kept until they were loaded on cars.

Commission merchants in Chicago would send their stamps to the growers so they could have everything marked where it was to go. They also had their representatives at Cobden, who would meet the wagons as they came in. Sometimes representatives would get on each side of the wagon and start bidding till one got too high for the other, and he would jump off. If the grower was satisfied with the price per crate, he would sell to the buyer who would blot out the stamp

on the crates and put the stamp of his own company on each crate.

Cobden is still a nice little town, but a lot of the hurry and bustle is gone. Illinois #51 was rerouted and now bypasses Cobden, which has the widest Main Street in the state with a branch and a railroad through the center of town and a road and businesses on each side. I wonder if they still have big 4th of July celebrations all day on the 4th and fireworks at night on the bridge?

I only lived in Union County three years and left there on my 10th birthday, but it impressed me more than any other place, and I go back down there every chance I get.

### **My First Trip to Southern Illinois**

In 1904 land agents came around trying to sell some virgin timber in Southern Illinois. Their price was pretty low, and my folks got interested in the proposition. Evidently it sounded pretty good to Grandpa Dappert also, so along about August my mother and Grandpa Dappert decided to go down and look it over. I don't know why, but they took me with them as I was only five years old. My oldest brother Ormond said it was because my mother was afraid to leave me at home as I was always getting into trouble and she was afraid I would hurt someone or myself. At least I enjoyed the trip, and I remember so much about it.

We took the Illinois Central from Pana. When we got to Cobden, we stayed all night at a hotel. We had supper and breakfast at the hotel. I remember we had a half of a small muskmelon each for dessert for breakfast.

The land agent took us in a two-seated rig down the Ridge Road to Alto Pass, then around through the timber and finally stopped in a narrow valley with a stream running through. There were a lot of large trees. We walked through the timber. The ground was rolling, but we didn't go up or down any steep hills. Grandpa Dappert followed along behind looking at all

the plants and shrubs and naming a lot of them. He seemed to be enjoying the hike through the timber. One plant I remember that he named was snakeroot.

Evidently my mother and grandpa were favorably impressed because my mother bought 160 acres of virgin timber for \$8.00 per acre. (In 1915 my brother Curtis and I camped on "the 160" and had a chance to look it over better. We camped at the edge of the valley and climbed the hill which was so steep that we had to hold onto bushes to go up. We came out in a clearing at the top of Bald Knob. We later got a map of the township and saw that one corner of the 160 came to the top of Bald Knob.)

### **Moving to Union County**

Early in the spring of 1905 my folks moved to southern Illinois to see what could be done with their "160." They had a sale, then loaded a railroad car with the things they wanted to take with them. Dad and Ormond went down in the car. Mother and the rest of us stayed at Aunt Sade's until time to take the train to Cobden.

On my last day of school I went home with Everette McVicker and stayed all night. Lola McVicker took Everette and me with her on a horse north through the pasture and fields to the road that ran from the line between the two 40's of Aunt Amanda's 80, as there was no road going north from McVicker's corner until a few years later. There was a gate where we came to the road, but it was locked so I got off and walked to Henney's.

I don't remember how long we stayed at Henney's, but I think at least two days. Then Henney's took us to Pana to get on the train. We had to change trains at Centralia and had a two-hour layover. It was snowing hard while we were at Centralia, and they scooped paths from the depot to the train. It seems the snow was at least a foot deep. We got to Cobden after dark and it was snowing. Dad had arranged for someone to meet us at the train, and he took us in a

carriage out to the place. It was about one and a half miles west of Cobden. When we got there, Dad had everything moved in and arranged, and the house was warm.

As far as I know, they had no place to move to when Dad and Ormond got there by car. He had had to find a place to move to. He was lucky to find the 40 acres with a house that close for sale.

There was a phone in the house, and as Mother had a lot of carpet rags in balls that she had brought, she wanted to have carpets made for the floors. She called on the phone and soon located someone with a loom and had carpets made.

### **Rendleman School**

Rendleman School was about a mile west, and we kids started school right away. Bob Province was the teacher. I believe he was a brother of Mrs. George Aldrige who lived about 1 1/2 miles from us. They had three kids going to school: Florence, Agnes and Johnny. Other kids going to our school were Eugenia and Paul Baldwin whose father was a Civil War vet and minister of Walnut Grove Church; Violet, Robert and Chester Fuller who lived a little way north of the school; Earl, Witt and Herbert Venerable whose father was Major Venerable and who lived in a large brick house on the ridge; Richard Turnage and a younger brother whose name I have forgotten; and Ethel and Everette Dillow.

The school faced east. The road in front went north to the top of the ridge, but from the house north of the school, it could hardly be called a road, more like a trail. The well was on the north side of the building. It had a chain pump. When you cranked it, rubber suction rings carried the water above them as they came up through the cylinder. Behind the school was a gully, all clay ridges. The kids would dig in the clay and find petrified mussel shells about the size of your fingernail, petrified beech nuts in the burr, and a lot of "Indian beads," fish backbones.

While I was attending Rendleman School, I got my first whipping at school. I believe Lloyd Spiller was teacher. When it got too quiet and monotonous during school time, it helped a lot to stick the toe of your shoe up thru the crack between the seat in front of you and the back of the seat and watch the occupant of that seat jump. I tried it on the boy in front of me and he sure jumped, so in a little while I tried it again. The boy held up his hand. Teacher asked him his trouble and he said, "John is deviling me." The teacher wanted to know what I was doing and he said, "Just deviling me." The teacher came back with his stick and hit me across the back just twice and not very hard, but it sure hurt my feelings. I had done a lot of things worse than that and never even got scolded for it.

About every year, the school would have a pie supper like the box suppers around here. Each girl would bring a pie and the boy who bought it would get to help her eat it. Pies usually sold for 25 cents to a dollar. I remember buying a chocolate pie for a quarter--that's all the money I had. If anyone had bid 30 cents, I would have gone home hungry.

### **Farming in Union County**

We raised fruit and vegetables, and everything was shipped to Chicago by fast, refrigerated freight. With five kids to feed, my folks worked part-time at other jobs. My mother worked at the canning factory during tomato time, and Dad worked part-time at the box factory and other businesses. Later Dad was a substitute mail carrier on two mail routes.

We kids worked at jobs like picking berries or cherries at 2 cents a quart. There was always work available during harvest time. School usually let out for two weeks for sweet potato digging. Onion skinning paid 15 cents a crate. I don't know how many onions a crate held, but I never quite skinned a whole crate. I did better trimming rhubarb. I got 35 cents a day, and the overseer bragged on me so maybe I did

something right, or maybe she knew how to get me to try harder. I was 8 or 9 years old at the time. We also all learned how to use a hoe and spent a lot of time at it.

The ground seemed to be underlaid with rock and most people depended on spring water or cisterns. There were a lot of springs, but not all were good to drink. We got our drinking water from a spring about 150-200 feet south across the road on the neighbor's place. I think we used a rain barrel to catch water for washing. We had a spring to water stock.

## **Exploring Union County**

The Brookens boys along with neighbor boys did a lot of tramping around the timber and "exploring" for miles around. There were sandstone cliffs scattered around through the timber that needed climbing and examining. One day a group of us took a hike south. We found an abandoned two-room schoolhouse. It had not been used for several years, but it had lots of books, maps and charts that we enjoyed looking at. The charts and books were much the same as the ones in Mound School where I first started school in 1903. I think this was Carter School. Union County, being close to the river, was settled long before Christian County.

When my mother's-sister and her husband (Aunt Amanda and Uncle Doc Large) from Christian County visited us, Dad took us to the top of Bald Knob with the team and wagon. Henry Rendleman lived there and had 40 acres cleared. He had a large telescope which he let us look through. Ormond and Curtis had stayed home to hoe sweet potatoes, and we were able to see them six or seven miles away hoeing sweet potatoes.

He then took us around the house and showed us four spans of--I always thought he said--Ead's Bridge, which is at St. Louis. When I got older, I realized that Ead's Bridge was almost as far from Bald Knob as it is from Taylorville. In 1949 I took Beulah to Union County and up to Bald Knob. Old Henry Rendleman

was dead, but his son lived there. I explained to his wife what had been bothering me all these years. She said that he must have said Speed's Bridge, which is between Illinois and Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and not too far away. Another mystery solved.

Each summer we took a two-day fishing trip to Running Lake near Wolf Lake. We would go in the morning, stay all night and come home the next evening. I don't remember doing any fishing myself, but the older members of the family fished from a railroad bridge across the lake. Wolf Lake was a large swamp, and Running Lake was swamp around the edges, but had deeper water toward the center. They always caught lots of fish: catfish, "mud jacks," suckers, perch, bass, etc. The mosquitoes were fierce, and the noise was almost a steady roar--mosquitoes, frogs, mountain lions, wildcats. At least they had me believing all these noises. Nevertheless, I enjoyed the trips.

The neighbors were great on hunting opossums, so we tried it. "Possum" baked with sweet potatoes was pretty good. One night Dad, Ormond and Curtis went possum hunting, and while they were tramping around in the timber, they came upon a dead horse that a neighbor had dragged out to the timber. (This was a common practice in those days.) The sides of the horse were moving so they investigated. Inside the horse were some possums getting a meal. We never ate any more possums.

Hoboes were common and they often came to the house asking for something to eat. I never knew of my mother turning anyone away without something to eat. It could be that they put some kind of marker or sign so the next one would know where to stop.

Elmer Silveus visited us, and Dad, Ormond, Curt and he went hunting around Wolf Lake. While they were tramping through the high weeds, Elmer shot a fox. He was so proud of his success as a hunter that he had a collar made from the hide. Ormond said the fox had been so close that Elmer thought it was kill or be killed when he shot it.



## Moving Back to Christian County

I think I enjoyed everything about living down south, but evidently the folks found it hard to make ends meet.

After three years in Union County, my folks decided to move back to Christian County. We had heard so much about the folks moving from Mississippi in a covered wagon in 1897 that we wanted to try it. I think Dad was also in favor of it, so on my 10th birthday, we started for Taylorville in a covered wagon. We had had a sale and had sent the rest of our belongings by railroad car. I was having the time of my life, but when we got to Centralia, just half-way, Mother took us three younger kids on the train.

Ed Oller's family was living on the folks' place and could not move until March 1, so Mother rented a small house across the road and south of Jim Hawkins'. Neighbors helped move our belongings from the railroad car to the house. By the time Dad, Ormond, and Curtis arrived after a week on the road, the rest of us were settled into our new home.

## Our Boy Scout Troop

The Brookens kids started borrowing books from the public library when I was about 11 or 12 years old. We would exchange them for new books every other Saturday night. If we had no other way, we would walk to Taylorville with the books in a flour sack over our shoulder. When nickelodeons came in style, we would exchange our books at the library, attend two nickelodeons, get a sandwich, and then walk home. It was only six or seven miles. We would get home about 1:00 a.m., and the bed felt mighty good.

In 1912, I borrowed Boy Scouts of Woodcraft Camp written by a Canadian scout master. That was the first we had heard of the Boy Scout Movement although it had been going on in England for some time.

We were living at the old Dappert place at that time, and right away, the three youngest Brookens boys

and a group of neighbor boys had a "Woodcraft Camp" in the northwest corner of the 40 acres where we lived. We ordered a Boy Scouts of America Handbook from the Sears Roebuck catalog. It gave instructions on how to organize a Boy Scout Troop.

We had to have someone to serve as scout master, and we finally talked my dad into signing the papers, which is about all he had to do. We kids made our own rules. We really had a big time and mostly followed all the Scout rules as far as we knew them.

We decided we needed athletic equipment, so we had an ice cream supper to raise money. It was a big success, and we were able to get a set of boxing gloves, a football, a baseball, a bat, a catcher's glove and a pitcher's glove. We made a wooden box with a lid to hold all the equipment.

We continued to get books on the Scout Movement from the library. One that we especially liked and used a lot was Ernest Thompson Seaton's Book of Woodcraft and Indian Lore. A wonderful book, I always wished I could own a copy, but that was beyond our means. I don't remember how long we kept the Scout Troop organized, but we had our boys organization until World War I and subscribed to the Boy Scout Magazine.

We corresponded with boys all over the world through the "Lonesome Corner" of the Boy's Life Magazine. Later, so many boys were writing that they changed the "Lonesome Corner" to "The World's Brotherhood of Boys."

My first correspondent was Bernard Chadwell of Liverpool, England. He was 16, but gave his age as 18 and enlisted in the 10th Battalion of the King's Liverpool Scottish Regiment. He sent me a picture of himself and some of his buddies at Camp Knotty Ash near Liverpool (the camp that I spent a couple days in later when our division reached England on our way to France). Bernard wrote about his experiences going up to the front and getting wounded and going to the hospital. He was discharged when he was released from the hospital, but he later enlisted in the Navy, and I never heard any more from him.

My second correspondent was Robert Rierce of Greenmount-Ellalong, New South Wales, Australia. He was a grown man and was Chief Scout of the Australian Imperial Scouts. He told me a lot about things there. I continued writing to him after I was in the Army and while I was stationed at Camp Logan, Texas, I received a large book from him--"Perseverance Island." It was supposed to be the story of a fellow that was shipwrecked on an island by himself for years, and he had written his story and sealed it in a glass container and put it in the ocean with instructions that if anyone found it to try to notify his family someplace in Texas. As I was in Texas, I guess Robert thought I would check into it. The book was interesting, but no one person could have ever done all the things he was supposed to have done. Robinson Crusoe and the Swiss Family Robinson all together could not have done all the things this one fellow did. I didn't try to locate the family as I was sure it existed only in someone's head.

Another boy I wrote to lived in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. His father was Inspector of Gold Mines or had something to do with them. The boy went with his father clear across Australia to Perth, Western Australia, stopping at all the gold mines along the way, especially a lot in Western Australia. The boy sent me a lot of pictures, including some of the Botanical Garden in Perth. He sent me the address of a cousin of his that wondered if I would correspond with her. She lived in or near Melbourne. She sent me several pictures of scenery. I wrote to her till I got a letter from her while we were in Argonne and it contained a photo of her. She was maybe 30 and not eligible for a beauty contest and I didn't answer it. How silly of me. Her letters were interesting and told a lot about her country. She thought maybe I had had bad luck. She wrote to the War Department to see if she could find out anything.

I wrote to boys in Southern Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand, exchanged stamps and photos and view cards. It was very interesting and educational.

I wrote to one in Brazil, one at Canal Zone, Panama and several others. One I wrote to I never heard from. I wrote to Hu Mao Fa at Ichowfu, Shantung, China, and I received one card from him.

## **Beginning of Scouting in America**

W. D. Boyce, a Chicago Publisher, was visiting in London, England when he got lost in the fog. The fog was so bad he could hardly see. A boy helped him across the street. When he asked the boy why he helped him, the boy said he was a Boy Scout and had to do a "good turn" daily. This impressed Mr. Boyce, so he gathered information about the Boy Scouts, and in 1910 he started it in the United States. He saw it develop into a wonderful organization for city boys, but so many boys in rural areas could not take part in it, so he organized the "Lone Scouts of America" and published "The Lone Scout Magazine." It really went over big. He encouraged the boys to send in their own articles, drawings, etc. Norman Rockwell was a good contributor although many others sent in their "bits" also. We saved the magazines and bound large bundles of them and kept them for years. We had a bunch to show our kids, but they got so torn up that we finally had to throw them away.

## **The Bicycle Trip**

In August 1913, Curtis and I took a bicycle trip down to Union County where we had lived from the winter of 1905 till November 9, 1908. We had a carrier on the back of our bicycles, and we had a blanket each and between us, everything we thought we would need. I also had my 4x5 Conley Box Camera and glass plates for it. No dark lantern, I would load and unload it in the dark. I believe I had three plate holders, each held two plates so each loading was good for six pictures.

We had very little money with us. We were going to sell subscriptions to two or three magazines along

the way to finance our trip. Each magazine was about 25 cents a year and we got to keep most of the money collected. The only trouble is we didn't sell a single subscription. We soon found out that folks wouldn't trust a couple kids they had never seen and never would again.

Another thing we soon found out was that dirt roads are nice for bicycles as long as it doesn't rain. We made it fine the first day. We did find a long hill that we had to "lead" our bikes up, got to Vera by dark but couldn't find a good place to camp, so after we got thru Vera, we crawled thru a barbwire fence and unrolled our blankets and slept near the fence. In the early part of the night, young couples going by in buggies would wake us up talking and arguing. But later in the night I woke up and I would have declared that a freight train was coming right down the middle of the road. It was a scary situation, and I knew I was awake. It was dark when we went thru Vera and we never noticed that there was a railroad right alongside of the road.

I don't remember when it started raining, but one day we tried riding down the railroad. That wasn't a success, but at least we didn't get mired down. We finally loaded our bikes in a coal car, but a conductor saw us and told us to get them things out of there--we did. He talked to us awhile and finally told us to put them back in but to keep out of sight.

It was getting nearly dark. In a little while, a young fellow climbed into our car and hollered, "Here they are," so a couple more got in the car, and they came closer and decided we were not the ones they were looking for. They explained that they had an argument with a couple Negroes and one of the Colored boys pulled a gun and shot at them. The bullet went thru one guy's pants leg but missed his flesh. I was glad we were not the ones they were looking for.

I didn't keep a record of events of our trip, but we finally reached Makanda, and we decided to spend the night there. An overland circus had pulled into Makanda and was going to put on a show that

evening. It was a very small outfit, no large animals, and besides we were flat broke, so we hunted up a "hotel room" for the night, a box car out at the edge of town. We had just got fixed for the night when "another hobo" came to the door and wanted to know if we had any paper. I asked him what kind of paper he wanted. He said "almost any kind but a cigarette paper." He said their car was so dirty he wanted some paper to sleep on. I gave him one of our magazines as we had no further use for it.

Between Makanda and Cobden, we stopped at a stream and washed up. We only had one outfit of clothes. I imagine our clothes were getting a little soiled. Of course it had been raining so much that they were seldom dry anyway.

We stopped at Wiggs', a former neighbor of ours while we were living west of Cobden. They gave us a good supper and breakfast next morning. They were helping Venerable's pick peaches. We asked them if they thought Venerables would let us help pick. They thought they would so we went along the next morning. Mr. and Mrs. Wiggs worked in the packing shed, but Curtis and I picked. We were glad to get the work, but we were more glad to get the money. I don't remember what they paid us, but it was mighty welcome.

Then we decided to hike to our "160" which our folks owned on the side of Bald Knob. We left our bikes at Wiggs and packed our blankets and a few things and walked up the Mobile and Ohio railroad to Alto Pass where we bought a little grub and went on to the timber. It was all virgin timber. There was a stream running thru it. We built a brush lean-to with leaves for the floor. Our blankets over that made a comfortable bed. We never thought about snakes although there were rattlesnakes, copperheads and cottonmouth snakes--all poisonous. We never saw any. We had some copper wire along and we cut a pole and used copper wire to make a slip loop on the end of the wire attached to the end of our pole. The stream was rock bottom and the water was clear and Curt soon had two suckers to fry. Suckers are rather bony but good

tasting. We found some corn growing someplace. I couldn't find any that wasn't too far along for roasting ears, but it helped with our meal.

After our meal we decided to do a little exploring. There was a hill near our camp that was so steep that in places we had to hold onto one bush till we got up to the next one. We finally came out to a clearing and we were on top of Bald Knob. We were sure surprised. (Dad took Jake Aufright, who owned a saw mill, down to look at the 160 acres of timber to see what he thought about moving his saw mill down there. He thought it would be nearly impossible to get the logs out. The land agent had failed to show us the hills. He must have taken us over a neighbor's timber.)

I have since seen a map of that township and one corner of the "160" comes out on the top of Bald Knob. Henry Rendleman owned 40 acres on top of Bald Knob. I don't know what other ground he owned there, but there was originally 40 acres cleared on top. There were other houses around Bald Knob but very little land farmed, all timber. Now it is a part of Shawnee National Forest. There is now a gravel road from Alto Pass to the top of Bald Knob, and Weyman Pressley has the "Cross of Peace" on top. The Forest Service had a lookout tower up there, but they took it down after the Cross became a reality

### **My Fifteenth Birthday Accident**

On my 15th birthday, which would have been November 9, 1913, Sunday after church, Jim, George Hays and I were going to go home with Hallie Wright for dinner and to spend the afternoon. He was in a buggy with the top up and the horse was a young one, not too well broke. The horse had been tied to the hitchrack on the east side of the church. We got in the buggy and Hallie untied the horse and stepped up on the step to get in. The horse whirled to the right and upset the buggy throwing Jim and George out. I was on the bottom and my head was caught between two

bows of the top. The horse started down the road east with the buggy on its side and my head stuck in it. A group that had walked to church were walking east. It included the Elliot kids and Art Schiken. He was grown and he caught the horse and likely saved my life. My head was badly bruised behind my ears and I had a hole thru the bridge of my nose. When they got me home (We were living at the Dappert Brick at that time.), Dad took me to Doctor Tankersley who patched me up.

### More Kid Stuff

At the Dappert Brick house, there were two full stories with an attic and ladder-like steps up to the roof. Above this ladder was a square cover that could be unhooked and lifted off and you could get out on the roof which us boys often did. We had the Scout Troop while living there and one of our Scout projects was "signaling." We used semaphore flags and a flag to use the Morse code, and we also had a mirror to signal with. From the top of the brick house was a wonderful place to send and receive messages. We took a long piece of gas pipe up on the roof. We would point it toward the house we wanted to signal, sight thru it to get it just right, then we would follow it with the light from the mirror and the kids at the house could see it.

We also did a lot of "tracking" using the signs and signals listed in Ernest Thompson Seaton's Book of Woodcraft and Indian Lore. One would go ahead and make the trail and the others would try to follow and find the leader. Micenheimer's Timber was a wonderful place to practice at this. We also learned to measure fields, heights of trees, distance across streams, etc.

We were allowed to own and use a rifle at a rather young age. I remember my first rifle, a 15 shot Marlin. I hadn't owned it very long when I went rabbit hunting with my younger brother one morning. We had a dog along and he ran a rabbit into a log



pile. I got down on my knees and looked thru the cracks between the logs and I could see the rabbit's ears but not enough of its head to get a shot at it. I told my brother to go to the other end and make it move. He did and the rabbit's head got in plain view and I shot it. My brother got up and said, "Why didn't you tell me you was going to shoot, now you have shot me."

He was bleeding from a hole in his eyelid above his eye. We went to the house, and the folks called the doctor. That was before school in the morning. The doctor didn't get there till evening. My brother slept most of the day and that side of his face got black and blue. When the doctor came, he examined the wound and decided that it was caused by a splinter there. The bullet must have hit mighty close to his face. I will never know if I hit the rabbit or not, it was forgotten. I have always felt that the hole was made by the bullet after going thru the rabbit and had spent most of its force. I never used the rifle for a long time after that, and I think it really impressed on me that the rifle was not a toy.

There were four of us Brookens boys and each had a rifle. We used them a lot for hunting and target practice. We would send to Sears Roebuck and get a thousand cartridges at a time. I don't remember any one of us ever having any trouble with them after my "Deal."

## **I Make a Gun**

While we were living "at the Brick," which is the way we generally referred to the Dappert Home Place, I got the bright idea of making a shotgun. I got a piece of 1/4 inch pipe about two feet long, hammered about two inches of one end out flat and bent it back against the round part of the pipe. I then filed a small hole in the center of the beginning of the round part, a place to light the powder to fire the gun. I then made a stock for my gun out of wood and wired the stock to the barrel, and I was ready to

go hunting. The only trouble was I couldn't figure how to fire my gun. I finally pasted a narrow piece of paper above the "firing slot" and let it stick down well past the firing slot.

I put a charge of powder in my shotgun, then a paper wad, then the shot, and then another paper wad. I went out to the barn to find a pigeon or sparrow to shoot. I finally found a pigeon, held the gun to my shoulder and lit a match and put it to the bottom of the strip of paper. The paper burned I thought clear out and nothing happened--yet. I pulled the gun up to examine the cause of the "fizzle" when the darned thing went off. I had the firing slot pretty close to my face. The powder had blown out in my face, and it was awhile before I could see what I had shot, but I knew it wasn't the pigeon.

The barn had a driveway up to the second story and north of this driveway there was first a corn crib (The crib went down to the bottom floor.), next was a grain bin and above the grain bin and crib was the haymow. South of the driveway was all haymow clear to the roof. Of course, there was a track in the center up near the roof to carry hay to the haymow.

It happened that my brother Ormond was scooping off a load of corn into the crib. My load of shot had hit the edge of the haymow door about a half foot from the edge. I had lacked a half foot from hitting my brother. That was the last and only time I ever fired my gun. I had powder burn on my face, but it soon was forgotten, but I don't think my lesson was forgotten. Of course, there were still so many things I had not tried yet, just another case of "some people live and learn, others just live."

## **Learning to Farm**

I worked for Charley Morrell the summer when I was 15 and I got \$15.00 per month. That is where I learned a lot about farming. I had two older brothers, and I had not done too much real farm work. Of course, the milking and looking after the stock I

had done since I was 10 years old. When we moved up from Union County, Dad brought a Shorthorn cow along with him. Incidentally, she had twin calves in the fall before we left down there and twins again the next fall, a little less than a year from the first pair of twins--four calves inside of one year--quite a record.

Ormond and Curtis didn't like the job of milking and feeding the calves, etc. That was my job from then on. Jim helped me when he got older.

While we lived on the "home place" (the Brookens Home Place), we usually milked in the "straw shed" in the winter. While the cows were on pasture, we walked back to the pasture to milk the cows and carried the milk to the house. There was no lane from our lot to the pasture till the winter of 1919 when Curtis and I built the lane.

Dad usually had a "straw shed" in the lot. The frame of the shed was built before threshing time and the straw was carefully stacked on this shed. It made a nice warm shed. It was fenced so the cattle and horses could not damage the stack. The only trouble was the rain thru the fall and winter often caused the stack to settle and sometimes leave a crack around the edges of the roof, and later in the winter the shed would develop leaks.

The summer of 1913 while I was working for Charley Morrell, his father had a rather large cherry orchard. Each summer at cherry picking time, he had their children come and can cherries and make "Sunshine Preserves." They took me along with them, and I was elected to pick cherries for a week. Another kid, Charley Huffman, also was there that week helping pick cherries. They paid us I believe 2 cents a quart for picking. I made enough that I bought a dandy second-hand bicycle for \$10.00.

Sometimes we would get too many cherries picked ahead, and we would get to help seed cherries, but we didn't mind. They also had a large tree of Black Tartarrian sweet cherries and we picked a lot of them for them. I really enjoyed picking them and eating them.

## Farmers Institute

While I attended grade school, they would hold a Farmers Institute in Taylorville, which was a bit like a County Fair. They would have all kinds of farm exhibits and household exhibits--bread, cake, canned fruit, etc. They would also have demonstrations of things of interest to the rural community.

One year they had a registered nurse from St. Louis to give a demonstration of how to handle a patient. Curtis and I were looking over the exhibits, and Anna Lois Barber, County Superintendent of Schools, stopped us and asked Curtis if he would be the patient for the nurse's demonstration. Curtis said he didn't want to, and I said I would if I was O.K. for the job. She said, "I think you will do. Come with me up to the stage." (This was the Elks Theatre.) She took me behind the curtain and told me to wait and the nurse would come in pretty soon.

The nurse soon came in and told me to take off my clothes. That wasn't in our original agreement, and I began to have doubts if I wanted to go through with it, but I took off all my clothes but my pants. When the nurse came back in, she said I had to take off my pants too. She had a nightgown for me to put on, so I obliged and she took me to the bed. Boy, was I scared!

Soon the curtain went up and the seats were packed full of people, and there I was in bed. The nurse demonstrated how to handle a patient. I don't remember what all she did to me, but I decided that maybe she was not going to operate on me. But I was glad when it was over, and the nurse gave me my clothes and let me put them on. I believe she gave me a quarter for helping her.

Vinola was sitting in the audience with Aunt Mame Dappert watching the performance. Pretty soon, Aunt Mame said, "Why, that is John."

I was likely 12 years old at the time. I was one of those guys who would "jump twice and then look back" instead of looking twice before you jump. I

guess that is the reason I was always doing things that hurt others and sometimes also hurt me. I can think of so many times that I got into accidents and "mix-ups" where someone could have been killed, but it seemed we always got out lucky.

I remember one time some of us kids were playing in the hay mow of the three-story barn at the Dappert Place. There was a corn crib at one end of the second story and a small hay mow above that. Some machinery was stored on the second story. I fell out of the hay mow and lit on my back on a mowing machine with those levers sticking up and barely room for me to go between them, but I missed the levers. Lucky there was no oil can in its regular place right in the middle of the mower. Just another case of "Fool's Luck."

### **My First Experience as a Salesman**

In one of our magazines, (We took two or three at that time; they were only 25¢ a year.) I found an ad. "Sell a bunch of needles and thimbles and you could win a Big Commission." Sounded good so with a little help, I ordered them, and believe it or not, I sold all of them. It was 10¢ a package for the needles--take two packages and get an aluminum thimble for 5¢ more. It seems that I got a copy of "Ropes Lightning Calculator," a small booklet with rules and instructions in all kinds of problems. This was really a valuable little book. I still have it and even still use it at times. I believe it was the Keystone Steel & Wire Company that furnished the needles.

I got along so good with my first sales job that I later got a box of garden seed to sell from some company in the East. For selling them I was to get a camera and complete outfit to make pictures with. I sold the seed, and the camera and outfit arrived. The camera was a little cardboard box in two parts. The front part had a small hole in the front center. There was a small lens fastened in this hole. There

was a piece of tin, one end fitted in a slot and one end covered the hole in the box and was fastened with a pin in the top part of the box. It stuck above the box a little way and was what you "snapped" the picture with. The back part of the box slipped over a collar on the front half of the box. You pulled it apart (in the dark, of course) to load and unload the camera. A 2" x 2" glass plate just fitted in the back part of the box. I got a dozen plates, some chemicals and instructions.

I did get some pictures that you could just about tell what they were, but I did learn something about photography. About 1906 I sent to Sears Roebuck and got a Conley Box Camera with 4" x 5" glass plates and a complete outfit to develop and print pictures. I used this camera for years and got a lot of good pictures with it, but I should--it cost \$1.98.

Then they came out with these new-fangled roll film cameras. I believe they first had "film packs," but I never "bit" on them. When I finally got my first roll film camera, I decided they were really better than the glass plate cameras. I have developed roll films, but not many.

## Home Remedies

At the beginning of the 1900's things were still rather primitive out in the country. It was a long way to the doctor, and folks were inclined to depend on home remedies for all but really serious emergencies.

My folks bought a large Doctor Book. I think it was dated 1900, and it was not long after that date when it was delivered to our place. The name was "Doctor Chase's Last and Complete Works." About the first half of the book was remedies. The rest was cooking recipes. I am sure that my folks used it often in medical emergencies. But I am sure they had many cures that were handed down from generation to generation.

When us kids got the measles, one of the old

reliable methods to get them to "break out" was the use of "Sheep Tea." Gather up fresh sheep pellets and make a tea with them. I guess it worked. At least we all "broke out" and also lived.

I remember once I had a boil on my rear end and my mother put a poultice of fresh cow manure on it. I guess it brought it to a head--at least it was soon gone.

When my brother Curtis fell and cut his head bad, my mother got some spider webs and covered the wound with them to stop the bleeding.

Some of the kids went skating on the creek. The creek was bank full when it froze over, but it had gone down so that the ice sloped from the bank down to the lower level. My sister started to get off the creek, and her feet slipped down. She fell forward and hit her head on the exposed edge of the ice, cutting the skin on one eyebrow so it hung down over her eye. When they got her home, my mother got a raw egg, broke it, and got the skin from the inside of the shell. She pulled the skin together and stuck it together with the skin from the egg. It healed so you could hardly see any scar.

Once a neighbor's little boy stepped on a nail and the foot swelled up and got all red. They brought him over for my mother to see if she could do anything for it. My folks got the Doctor Book, and it said to burn some muslin over some coals and hold the nail puncture in the smoke from the muslin. They did this and the wound healed. I think it was nearly a case of blood poison. Maybe the smoke did help.

Another home remedy which we never had occasion to use was a "Mad Stone." A sucking calf would get hair in its mouth and swallow it. The hair would accumulate in the calf's stomach and form in a ball that could not get out. When the calf was butchered, they would sometimes find these balls. For a dog bite, these balls were cut in half, soaked in milk and placed over the dog bite. They would draw the "rabies" out. Dr. Luzader, a veterinarian, showed me one that he kept.

The old reliable bread and milk poultice was good for a boil or infection when I was a kid, and it still is.

For a sore throat, Dad would make a cone from a sheet of paper with a small opening at the end. He would stick sulphur in it, put it down your throat and blow the sulphur all around in your throat.

If one of us had a "coated tongue," we had to have quinine. There was usually a capsule to put it in, but if not, it could be mixed in a tablespoon of molasses. Also you could mix flour and water to make a thin dough. Drop a small dab on a hot stove and press it out with an iron, making a thin wafer. Wrap a dose of quinine in it and swallow it--if you can.

For a cold or hoarseness, garlic tea was a sure-fire cure. I am not sure how it was prepared, but you got it in a tablespoon. It tasted strong of garlic and was sweet. It really didn't taste bad.

Skunk oil was good for frostbite. I have heard of lead tea for boils, but since hearing so much about lead poisoning, I think I'll leave it out. My brother used it once at the recommendation of an old trapper. He got over his boils and didn't die from using it.

There are many good remedies for warts. One we have tried is tie a thread tight around the wart, leave it on about three days, then take the string off and bury it. I don't remember if it worked or not, but the tight string around the wart might do the job. The best remedy that we tried: Stick a needle through the center of the wart and leave the big end sticking out as far from the flesh as possible. Light a match and hold it under the needle and heat it as hot as possible.

## **Fighting Bumblebees**

We had two kinds of bumblebees, the regular large bumblebees and the little "eye bungers." They were the fightingest kind and they were partial to a person's eyes. We would fill a jug about half full of water and set it by a nest of eye bungers, then stir



up the nest and Get Out. The bees would fly into the mouth of the jug and drown.

Fighting bumblebees was one way to prove our courage--or lack of it. We kept a good bumblebee paddle apiece. Straw hats were sometimes used when no paddle was available, but they soon deteriorated if used much. We would stand around the nest, and one of the boys would prod the nest with a stick or his foot. We would try to swat each bee as it got away from the nest. The large, slow kind of bumblebee was pretty easy to keep up with--if everyone did his part and didn't panic. Once in awhile, a boy would "take off" if a bee came his direction. Most of us could handle one bee at a time, but if too many came out at once, things could get serious unless every boy did his part. Sometimes a bee would slip past our paddles and somebody got stung. We carried an onion to rub on the sting. A honey bee could only sting you once as its stinger pulled off in the hide. A bumblebee could just keep stinging, which made them rather monotonous.

We didn't know that bumblebees pollinated the red clover blossoms and made it possible to get clover seed. Also, sometimes bees would build their nest where it had to be removed.

In a patch of meadow across the road south of Mound School, they found a bumblebee nest. Of course, it had to be fought out. I decided that I would tramp it out, which could be done if the nest was small. This one wasn't small. I started tramping, but the nest was so large that both my feet left some of the nest open, and these were the little eye bungers. I tramped as hard and as fast as I could, but I soon saw a stream of bees coming out between my feet, and they went right to my face. The kids were standing around, but every time I tried to get one to help me, they ran like they were afraid of me, and nobody helped me. I finally got shed of the bees; maybe they were tired of me.

This happened at first recess, and by noon one eye was shut. The teacher advised me to go home while I could still see. I will never know how many times I

got stung, but I am of the opinion my mother counted 21 stings around my head. A week later, I swelled up all over. They took me to the doctor. He said it was from the bee stings and that it was a wonder it didn't kill me.

## **Sparrows and Pigeons**

There were so many English sparrows that they were a nuisance. They made nests in every corner and crevice in the barn and other outbuildings.

We would get a bunch of boys together and have a sparrow hunt. Each boy would have a paddle similar to a bumblebee paddle. We would take a lantern or two and start tearing out sparrow nests. When a sparrow flew out, we would try to bat it with our paddles.

A straw pile also made a very good place to catch sparrows. They made holes in the side of the stack for their nests. We would reach into the holes and pull out the nests and sometimes catch the sparrow.

Pigeons were another source of entertainment for the boys. Pigeons were a pest in the haymows, with all their droppings on the hay and grain. They often made their nests around the eaves plate where it was very hard to get to.

Young pigeons just ready to leave the nest made mighty good eating. We called them "squabs." We also shot adult pigeons with our 22-caliber rifles.

## **Micenheimer's Timber**

The timber was a kid's Paradise for us and many other kids in the neighborhood. It was a wonderful place to gather wild flowers, hunt mushrooms, ride down hickory saplings to swing on, and practice woodcraft and Indian lore.

I tried to learn the name of every kind of tree, shrub and plant in the timber and very nearly did it. When we went in with a newcomer, we had to lead him

through a patch of "Horse Nettles" and maybe show him "Indian Turnips" and get him to taste them. It also made a wonderful place to put on a "snipe hunt."

One night a bunch of us started to go back to the Bluff at night. Nearly all had flashlights, which was a mistake. We headed straight west, each using the flashlight to see where to walk. We thought we were going straight west, but we circled left and soon came to the edge of the timber not far from where we went in. We tried it again and again we circled left. Maybe someone can explain WHY did we circle left?

One time we found a "bee tree" in the timber and cut it down. We got a lot of honey, also bee stings.

Us boys once decided to dig out a "den" in the timber. We figured the hole was too small to be a fox den. They were mostly around the bluff. We didn't have to dig too far until we decided it was a skunk den, but we dug the skunks out. The air got blue. When we got home, we weren't allowed in the house till we changed clothes and scrubbed off. Some folks live and learn, other just live.

## **Poison Ivy**

Once on a hike, we all sat on an old log to rest. My mother had a butcher knife to cut greens, etc. I borrowed it while we were sitting on the log. There was a big vine curled around the log, and I was chopping it with the knife. After awhile my mother noticed what I was doing. It was a poison ivy vine. She took me right home and washed me off good, but too late. I had "poison" all over my face and hands.

I was always very allergic to poison ivy. I have often had my eyes swelled shut with it. Once I trimmed hedge in August and had it so bad on both arms that I couldn't reach my mouth. It would last about four days--if I didn't scratch it too much. There were so many so-called cures, and I have tried them all.

If I knew I was exposed to it, the best remedy was to change clothes just as soon as I could and wash

off with soap and water. After you broke out with it, about the only thing you can do to help is don't scratch it and wait about four days. One of the early remedies was "gunpowder and lard."

After I was grown, a fellow told me that formaldehyde was good for ivy poison. Formaldehyde was used to treat seed wheat for smut. I got poison on both legs--all over them--and decided to try the formaldehyde. I poured some out in a saucer and dipped a rag in the formaldehyde and rubbed it all over one leg. It didn't hurt so I did the other leg.

By then it began to hurt the first leg and soon both legs burned so bad I got out in the yard and ran around. I think I finally tried washing it off. I guess I should have diluted it or better yet never have used it. I don't recommend it to anyone.

Once I was talking to a fellow pulling hedge. He was piling it on a brush pile and there was a lot of poison ivy in it. I asked him if it bothered him and he said, "It used to but I immuned myself and it never bothers me anymore."

I asked him how he did it. He said, "I took a young leaf of poison ivy and pinched a piece about the size of a nickel and ate it. Do that everyday for (I believe he said) nine days."

That sounded like a simple remedy, so I tried it. I think I got to number seven. I had poison on my hands, in my mouth, in my throat, and it felt like it was all the way down. I know it was where I discharge the waste food. I gave up and didn't finish the course, so I can't swear to it whether it would work or not.

I later told a doctor about my experiment. He said it was a wonder it didn't kill me. Like I said before, some people live and learn, others just live (and enjoy living).

## **The State Fair**

A visit to the State Fair has always been an important event for me since the first one that I can

remember, but my memories of that first one are rather slim. I was walking around thru the crowd holding to my Dad's hand, and about all I could see was folks' feet and legs. Someway I turned loose of Dad's hand and was just walking along with him. Finally I looked up to say something to Dad and, lo and behold, the man I was walking with was not Dad. Boy was I scared! How could I ever find him in this crowd? Pretty soon, I found them. They were watching me all the time to see what I would do. I know one thing I would have done if I hadn't found them pretty quick. But big boys don't cry.

After I got big enough to remember more about it, my dad would load the family in the "Big Wagon" (I wonder why we always called it the "Big Wagon.") and drive to Owaneco. We put the team in the livery stable and walked to the depot to wait for the train. There was usually quite a bunch waiting for the train. We carried our noon lunch with us. Who ever heard of buying dinner for a whole family?

The train ride to Springfield was a thrill by itself. Then we walked from the depot to the streetcar to go to the fairgrounds. Then the Fair and crowd, so many things to see, the souvenirs we collected.

Most new inventions that came out we saw first at the State Fair--a goat running a treadmill which was running a cream separator, a free taste of "Egg-O-C" (a new cereal), John Deere stick pins, all kinds of little notebooks given by different companies, literature and pretties.

The first airplane I ever saw was at the State Fair. Walter Brookens had a Wright Plane there and we got to look it over real close. It was bamboo, wire and cloth, but it flew. We saw it fly clear around the race track.

The first radio I ever saw was at the State Fair and both of our children saw it with us. Also the first television, WLS gave quite a demonstration. You could watch them doing their stuff in one room, and in the next room you could see it on television. What will they try next?

When we got old enough that we could find our way around by ourselves, a bunch of us boys went to the Fair. We decided to eat dinner before we went out to the fairgrounds, and one of the boys needed a haircut. He went in the barbershop, and when the barber got his hair cut, he asked the boy about different shampoos, etc. The boy thought everything went along with the 25-cent haircut. Anyhow, when he was thru, the boy didn't have enough to pay for his haircut, and he had not even been to the fair yet. Between the rest of us, we paid for the bill and let him have some money for the fair. Then we went to dinner. We found a restaurant where they had a sign "All you can eat for 25 cents." Sounded O.K. so we ordered dinner. I needed more bread so I ordered another slice. When I went to pay, they wanted 30 cents--5 cents extra for the bread. I told them I wouldn't pay it as they said "all you can eat for 25 cents." They made me think they were going to call the police and I paid up.

Other times we went to the State Fair, we went to the top of the State House before going to the fairgrounds. I took pictures of Springfield from up there.

All the new inventions in farming machinery were first demonstrated at the State Fair. I still think the State Fair is a very important institution and worth anybody's time to attend. The last time I attended, there were so many things I wanted to see, but in about a half hour, what I wanted to see most was a place to sit down, and I had that at home. So now I have given up the State Fair.

## **Daredevil Stunts**

About 50 feet north of the Hays-Brookens line, a clay bluff runs along the creek for nearly  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile, maybe 100 feet high at the highest place. It made a wonderful place for kids to explore and good fishing along the creek. Along both ends, it stops being a bluff and is only a very steep hill which we could run

up and down. I remember one time we were coasting down the hill when my sled upset and the sled and I rolled to the bottom.

One time some of us boys got the bright idea of making a "Slide-for-Life" from the highest part of the bluff to a fence post across the creek. It must have been nearly 300 feet from end to end. We got No. 9 wire and put a pulley on the wire. We had a loop of rope large enough for a boy to sit in it and hold on to it. We took this to the top of the bluff.

I volunteered to try it first, so they held the loop till I got in and they turned loose. It started out O.K., but a No. 9 wire was never intended to carry that much weight on that long a span. At least, it broke and I landed on the creek bank, quite a bit short of the water. The rest of the gang hurried down. From the way they acted, they must have expected to find me spread all over the creek bank. It did shake me up a little. We gave up the idea of a "Slide-for-Life," at least in that place.

We had a granary with a shed on each side. The roof was about 12 feet high at the highest part. It was easy to get up on the roof. My mother used this roof to dry apples, peaches and corn on. I never thought much about it then, but I am afraid the flies and bugs had a lot of free meals--and left their "tracks." I guess it didn't hurt us. At least, we lived.

One day, some of us boys piled a shock of grass, etc., in front of the granary, got up on the granary and jumped off onto the pile of grass. We were having a big time. When it came Omar Chesterman's turn, he took a great big jump and went clear over the grass pile and lit on the hard ground. We hurried down to see if he was hurt. We asked him if he was hurt, he said, "Gi-gi-give me a drink." It knocked the breath out of him, but no bones broken.

On the Dappert place, us kids used to get up on the hay in the haymow above the crib and grain bin. We would get the hay rope, swing out and drop down onto the hay in the "Big Haymow" which gave us quite a thrill.

While I am talking about the barn, the ground level had a wide feedway with plenty of room to drive in with a wagon. The barn faced south. It had horse stalls on the west side and box stalls on the east side to the crib which went from the second floor to the ground floor. It was really a very modern barn for the time it was built. The framing was fastened together with wooden pins.

I want to tell you something that happened long after the time we lived at "the Brick." At the west end of the driveway in the second floor was a big door that opened, likely for ventilation. Of course, you could throw hay or anything out there, nothing below there but the ground.

The fellow living there was very "hot-headed." He had a team of blind horses. He had driven in with a load of something and was unloading it. The west door was open, and the team kept moving around. He stuck them with the pitchfork, and they gave a lunge and fell out the open door. The framing of the door held the wagon and left the horses hanging head down. Some fellows were working on the road there. They heard the commotion and ran over to see what was the trouble. They cut the tugs and let the horses down. This is the truth, and I could have told the names of those mentioned, but decided to "let sleeping dogs lie."

## Stories I Heard

I am going to tell some things that I can't claim as memories, but I think you will be interested in.

When Grandpa Dappert bought the place that was later the Dappert Home Place, the man that lived there before had evidently made brick and brick kilns were already on the place. Mrs. Bates who lived a mile east of the Dappert Place told of her and her husband buying brick from an old German who lived west of them to build their house. There had been two brick kilns on the place, one across the road east of "The Brick"



and the other one southwest of "The Brick." I farmed the ground later and I could tell where the kilns were by the color of the ground.

The bricks Grandpa built his house with were soft, and either were not burned properly or the type of clay was not good. The bricks in the walls of the basement got crumbly. Some patching with concrete was done, but eventually the building was considered unsafe and was torn down.

If the present Bates brick house is the one Mrs. Bates was talking about, it was made of good solid brick. I really think the Bates brick house was built long after the Dappert house. The bricks must have been made someplace else. We would have to ask someone older than me.

My mother was four years old when the Brick House was built. When the basement was dug, she fell in and broke her arm.

After the Dapperts had become established in Christian County, a boy about 14 years old named Harry Ritzer stopped in and wanted a job and a place to stay. He was from an orphanage and looking for a home. He seemed to be a good worker, and evidently Grandpa figured it would be a paying proposition. At least, he took him in. He was to give him a home, and when he was 18, he was to give him a horse and a suit of clothes. I understand he did this.

I have never heard much mention of Harry in any of the family records. He was in the army during the Spanish-American War, and I think he went to Cuba. That would have been after he was 18 and likely after he had left the Dappert Home.

Frank Hays told me that Harry helped move Lincoln's casket from his original burial place to Lincoln's Tomb. Frank was a member of the local Company B at the time of the Spanish-American War, but he was out in Kansas when Company B was called out and didn't come back to go with them.

Here is a tale that Bert Hays told me. He said folks used to be cruel. The early threshing machines required a man to feed the grain into the machine just

a little at a time. A boy would have a knife and cut the string on the bundle so the man could feed it thru a small handful at a time. On this occasion, the boy was daydreaming and not paying attention. He made a pass with his knife and cut the man's hand. It made the man mad. He grabbed the boy and shoved him into the machine headfirst. Of course, the boy was killed. Those working at the machine caught the man and hanged him right there. This was supposed to have actually happened in this neighborhood earlier.

A neighbor had an orphan boy working for him and staying at their place. The boy went to the carnival in Taylorville one evening and came home drunk late in the night. The next morning this man filled up an old well. The hired hand was never heard of again.

## **The First Telephone**

I don't know when they first got telephones in Taylorville, but I think it was around 1903 when they were trying to run a line out south thru the country. I believe that was the first rural line out of Taylorville. A man came out to get my folks signed up for the line. I remember him telling Dad that it would never cost over \$1.00 per month. (That lasted for several years, but look at it now, but we would be sunk without a phone.)

## **I Get a Whipping**

We were living on the Dappert Place and I was attending school at Oak Ridge School where Maude Chesterman was teacher. I never was very fond of her. She was a lot older than me, and she was a close neighbor of ours. Incidentally, she and some other girls once caught some of us boys smoking corncob pipes. She went and told her "Poppie." Maybe I did cause her a little trouble once in awhile, but it seemed that if anything went wrong, she wanted to blame me for it. Maybe she was right most of the time.

One day at noon she came outside and saw the broom laying out in the yard. Some of us boys were out on the porch, and she asked if any of us had thrown the broom out there. We all said that we didn't, but she came back to me and said, "John, are you sure you didn't do it?"

I told her "I said I didn't and I'm not a liar."

She said, "John Brookens, I'm getting tired of your back talk. You come inside."

I went inside with her and she got her "club." Teachers didn't use whips. Their whips were sticks about as big around as your little finger and about three feet long. She got all ready to start and told me to turn around. I liked it better as I was as she would have to work on me left-handed. About then, one of the older girls came from the back of the room and asked the teacher to wait till she got out of there.

Then the operation began. The longer she worked, the madder she got, and she started hitting me across the back of the neck. I said, "If you hit me across the back of the neck once more, I'll knock you down." I don't know if I could have or not, but I intended to try.

She said, "You know there are other things beside whipping." That had never entered my mind, but I thought "expell," and I sure quieted down in a hurry.

I still say that I never got a whipping in my life that I didn't deserve, and I know I was at fault in this case. The next fall I got a letter from this teacher asking me to forgive her for the way she had treated me. I should have asked her forgiveness for being such a "smart Alec."

## **Short Bicycle Trips**

After I got my bicycle in 1913, some of us would get together and take short trips on Sunday afternoons. I remember one Sunday I wanted to go to Kincaid, but John Chesterman didn't want to go so far. I told him let's head that way, and if we think it is

too far, we can turn around and go home. He kept wanting to quit and I'd say "let's go just a little farther." When we were only two or three miles from Kincaid, I said, "You can turn around if you want to, but I'm going to Kincaid." He went with me and we explored "Kincaid--The Coal-Electric City" being built. They had streets graded up. I think they had the railroad depot built. It was quite a city. We were a little late getting home and maybe a little tired, but I was glad I got to go.

One day I was going to Taylorville on my bike along with a neighbor boy or two and a surrey overtook us. As they passed us, I saw a good-looking little girl in the back seat. I didn't know who the family was then, but after I got acquainted with Beulah, she remembered that time. She said her Dad said, "That's one of the Brookens boys and he don't need to be looking at you." I guess I showed him.

One Sunday afternoon some of us boys had taken a ride on our bikes. Coming home, John Chesterman punctured a tire about 1½ miles from home. Rather than his having to "lead" his bike home, I told him I would carry it home for him. I put it up on my shoulder upside down and carried it home on my bike. I had to hold it with both hands after I got started. I never held to the handlebar till I got to Chestermans.

That was "way back when," and here a few years ago I bought a second-hand bike at a yard sale. I couldn't even ride the darned thing. I gave it to the grandkids.

## THINGS WE MADE

### Corncob Pipes

Our gang that was usually together Sunday afternoons and often on Saturdays (and in the summer, most any day) was composed of John and Omar Chesterman, George and Alfred Hays, my brother Jim and me and sometimes my brother Curtis. There were others occasionally that moved into the neighborhood for a few years: The Reatherford boys; Clarence, King and Louie and Leonard Kurfiss.

We tried just about everything that kids could think of. I remember one Sunday afternoon we made a corncob pipe apiece. Cobs were plentiful and we always knew where to find some elderberry canes to use for pipe stems. It was easy to push the "pith" out of the center of a piece of the cane and we had our pipe stem.

We were all out behind Chesterman's barn enjoying(?) our pipes using cornsilk for tobacco when Maude and Grace Chesterman and some other girls came around the corner of the barn. To keep from being caught smoking, we all stuck our pipes fire and all in our pockets. We were talking to the girls, as innocent as could be when John Chesterman found out that he had put his pipe into the pocket where he had all his matches. They started to light. He quickly emptied his pocket, and of course, the girls saw the evidence. Maude said, "I'm going to tell Papa." To the house they went, and soon here came Papa. John Chesterman and George Hays started down the road as fast as they could go. The rest of us stayed where we were, but Papa soon caught up with John and George, and John got a good paddling.

I'm not going to say that is the last time we tried smoking cornsilks, but we were a little more careful where and when we tried it.

## **Post Card Projector**

Curtis was quite a hand at making things, more so than any of the rest of us kids. The "Lone Scout Magazine" was always showing all the details of how to make a lot of things. Curtis would try to make some of them. He almost made a wireless outfit, but he never quite got it to work. He did make a Postcard Projector, and it worked fine. We had a lot of "Picture Shows" with it. He only had one reading glass for a lens, so our pictures and all the reading was backward, but the pictures were very good.

We had to make our playthings ourselves. Maybe the stores had many toys, etc., for kids to play with, but who had the money to buy them?

## **Sleds**

Sleds were easy to make. Even a rather small boy could rig up a sled. Two 1 x 8 inch boards whatever length you wanted the sled to be were the runners. Angle the front ends and make a hole in each at the front to fasten the rope to. Nail two or three 1 x 4 inch boards the width of the sled. Nail one-inch boards lengthways onto these boards and you have your sled.

## **Pop Guns and Squirt Guns**

These were easy to make from pieces of elderberry canes. Punch all the pith from a piece about 8 inches to a foot long. Whittle a plunger from a piece of white pine board. (There were always old packing crates, and they were mostly made of white pine. It was soft and easily whittled.) Get a piece of pine about 2 inches longer than your pop gun. Trim the piece to a small enough stem to fit easily into the hole in your pop gun, all but the 2 inches at the end. This is your handle to work the plunger with. Your pop gun is finished. Chew a paper wad and stuff it into one end of the hole in the gun. Then make

another wad and stuff it into the other end, but make it small enough that you can force it on thru the hole. Push this wad quickly thru with the plunger. It will force the front wad out with a "pop."

To make a squirt gun, make it the same as the pop gun, except a wooden piece with a small hole thru it is fitted tight in the front end. Fill the tube with water and use a wad in the back end. It will force the water out thru the small hole.

See, all you need is a little ambition and a sharp knife.

## Whistles

A maple twig about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch in diameter is needed. When the sap is running and you can tap on the stick and the bark slips good, it is ready to use. Cut a piece of clear twig, no limb or leaf on it. Cut the front end diagonally at one side, but leave a little of the front end. Cut a groove out on the top side back about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch from the front. Then cut thru the bark clear around the stick. Then tap the bark gently all over the part you want to remove. Soon you can twist it very gently, and you can remove the bark. If the bark is cracked, your whistle will not work. After the bark is removed, trim just a little sliver off the top of the stick from the groove to the front of the stick and cut off some of the top of the stick back of the V-groove, making an air space back of the groove. This is so that when you blow on the front of the whistle, the air is forced thru the tiny opening and out thru the V-groove making the whistle sound. The bark is slipped back on the stick exactly as it was before. If the bark dries out, it will crack and the whistle is done. A real ambitious kid could whittle a good whistle out of a piece of wood, but that is a little harder.

You can make a whistle from a piece of onion "leaf." Cut a piece about 3 inches long. With your knife gently scrape just a little off the outside of both sides of one end. Put this end in your mouth and blow thru it.

To make another whistle, take a blade of grass between the two joints of your two thumbs. Hold it tight between your thumbs and blow on the edge of the blade of grass in the opening between your thumbs.

### **Button Buzzer**

Run a string thru two opposite holes in a button. Use enough string so it will make a double loop about 1½ foot long with the button in the middle. Twist the string by shaking the button around and around in the same way until the string is twisted up pretty tight. Then stretch the string out and relax it and you have your buzzer.

### **Our Shocking Machine**

Us boys got a "low tension" magneto and fixed a cultivator wheel on a shaft so we could turn it and run a belt from the wheel to the belt pulley on the magneto. When the wheel was turned, it ran the magneto a lot faster than the wheel. The cultivator wheel was likely 4 feet in diameter and the pulley on the magneto was likely 4 inches in diameter. When we got someone that didn't know what the set-up was, one of us would hold one "post" on the mag and another one would hold the other "post" with our victim between us. Then one would hold the victim's hand and the other would touch him on the back of the neck or anyplace that made a good "contact." The victim would get a surprise. Of course, the other two would get some shock too, but we knew it was coming; the victim didn't.

### **Our Coasters**

We would get the "running gears" of an old buggy. (The bed and all was off.) We would wire a board on the "reaches" (the rods that hold the back axle rigid with the part that coupled with the front axle). Then we tied a rope to each side of the front



axle out near the front wheels. The driver would sit on the board and guide the rig with the rope. It wasn't easy. If a front wheel hit a bump, it might cause the rig to turn that way, so it wasn't safe to go too fast or you might have a wreck.

When there was no fence at the bottom of the hill north of Hays' house and the creek, a bunch of us boys would get the coaster at the top of the hill and coast down into the creek. It gave us quite a thrill.

### **Corn Day at Mound School**

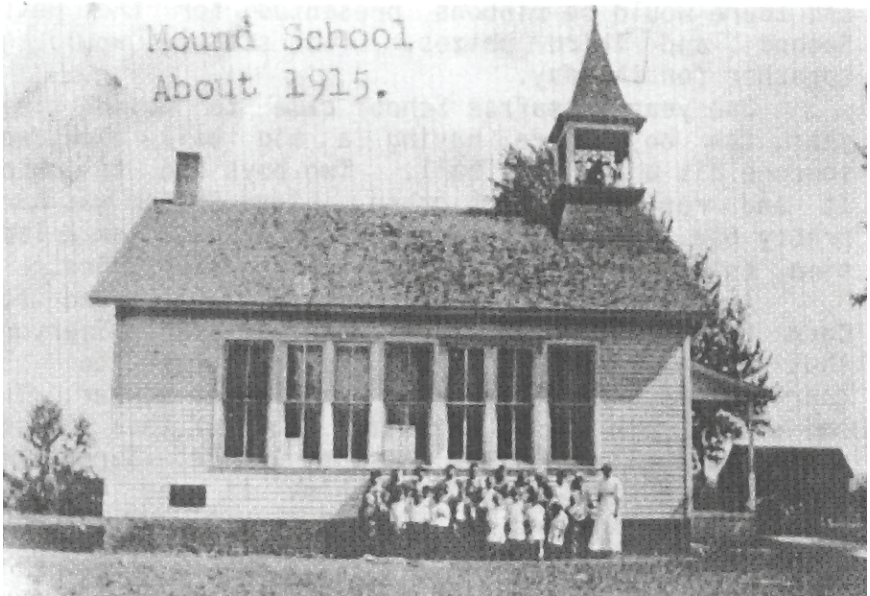
For a few years Mound School and some of the other schools around held what they called "Corn Day." It was a little on the order of the Farmers Institute, which was held in the county. The kids would take a small sample of different grains, breads, cakes, etc., and there would be ribbons presented for the Best, Second and Third prizes. Two schools would go together for the day.

One year Sassafras School came to Mound. That year, the boys were having a big ball game, and someone hit a high fly ball. Two boys ran to catch it and ran into each other. Lloyd Shafer was hurt pretty bad. He laid behind the schoolhouse for a long time, but I guess there was no permanent injuries.

Another year, Douglas School came to Mound for Corn Day. They had a foot race that year. Everyone that wanted to run walked down east to the quarter-mile line from the schoolhouse corner. The end of the race was at the stile south of the school, which made it a little short of  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile. I remember Vernie Masters and I ran. I think it was open to anybody that wanted to run. I know Gus Norris ran, and he was not going to school. He got in the lead. I tried my best to keep up with him, but I couldn't do it and he won. A big bunch started the race, but most of them soon dropped out. All I remember that finished was Gus Norris and me, but there were likely others that also finished.

I noticed that Vernie Masters had a good-looking

sister there that day. I saw her, but I never met her at that time. Where I met her was at a party my folks had for me 'when I came home on furlough before my regiment went across to France. It seems that the Masters kids had been chasing around with some of the local kids, so they were included in those who were invited. I know I started corresponding with Beulah after the party, along with about two dozen other girls I was corresponding with. When I got home from the Army. I started going with her. That was in June. 1919.



Mound School 1915

## EARLY FARMING TECHNIQUES

### Hay Harvest

Hay harvest could mean a lot of different kinds of jobs, depending on what method was being used. We always had a mowing machine to cut the hay with and a sulky rake to rake it with. Sometimes a small patch would be shocked by hand with a pitchfork and hauled in later. Most big barns had a large haymow door that let down, and there was a track above the mow so the hay could be carried the full length of the mow. A Harpoon fork was used to pull the hay from the wagon. This required at least three people: one to set the fork, one to mow the hay back and one to drive the horse on the rope that pulled the hay up to the mow.

Large fields of hay were usually stacked with a derrick. This method required a fork setter; a "grab fork" was used for this, two on the stack. A derrick boy drove the derrick horse. Two were running sweep rakes. The hay was not usually raked with a sulkey rake for this method. Then, of course, there was usually someone to bring fresh water once in awhile.

My first job in haying was driving the derrick horse. You advanced in jobs as you advanced in years and experience. Stacking was the most critical job. It was bad if a stack should get to leaning or fell over.

Another way was to use a "hay loader." It hooked onto the back of a rack wagon. The hay was winrowed with a side delivery rake or a sulkey rake. The hay loader would gather up the winrow and put it on the back of the wagon. The man on the wagon worked like the dickens trying to keep the hay spread all over the wagon and keep himself from getting covered up. You always had a driver while the hay loader was hooked onto your wagon. Under the hay loader was about the hottest place in the hay field. When you got a load, you disconnected the loader, went to the barn and unloaded, and then went back after another

load. In my book this is the worst method I ever worked at.

Some folks had what you call a "ricker." It had a part on it about like a sweep rake. The sweep rake would drive up into it and back out leaving the rake-full of hay on the ricker which would raise up and throw the whole rake-full of hay on the rick. These were also called "over shot stackers."

Once when I was pretty small, I went up to help Uncle Henry Dappert with the hay. He had a wooden "dump rake." I'll bet he made it himself. I never saw another one like it. It was a square pole about 6" x 6" with wooden teeth on both sides sticking flat like on a sweep rake. These teeth were about 3 feet long. The pole had a round place at each end that fit in a collar at each end of the rake frame. The frame had a handle bar behind and a hitch for the horse in front fixed so the person holding the handle could raise it up causing the teeth to catch in the ground and flip the rake over and dump the hay. My job was to ride the horse pulling the rake which was maybe 6 feet long.

Dad got a new 3-beat Admiral hay baler, a horse baler. They set it beside a hay stack, took off the wheels, put up the table and hitched the team on the "power." Round and round they went stepping over the "plunger" each round. There were three pulleys on the "power;" each one would push the plunger back to squeeze the hay from the hopper back into the bale in the chamber. Then the plunger would turn it loose and the spring pulled the plunger back leaving the hopper open ready for another feed of hay, till the next roller caught the plunger again, three times to the circle of the team. The "feeder" had to put a forkful of hay into the hopper and push it down with a feed fork. The feed fork was a short-handled pitchfork with a step on one side near the fork to step on with one foot to force the hay down. You only had a little time to do it as the plunger came right back and could catch the fork or even the foot.

They also had 2-beat balers. In fact, Bert Hays

and I bought one soon after we bought and moved onto the "Home Place."

My first job with the horse baler was to put the hay up on the table so the "feeder" could reach it and pull it into the hopper. After I got a little bigger, I was promoted to "wire tier" who pushed one end of the two wires thru the slits in the "block" that separated the hay into bales. Then I picked up the bale that had just emerged from the baler and loaded it on a wagon or stacked it on a pile. Then I ran back and pushed the other end of the wires thru the slits in the next block, then jumped over the baler and tied the wires.

There were marks scratched on the sides of the chamber. When the bale had reached that mark, it was time to put in a block. The wire tier had to watch and warn the feeder by saying "block" or "small feed." If you got one too many feeds into the bale, you had to splice the wires, which took extra time. If you couldn't keep up and keep things going, someone else tied wires.

When we were baling hay out of the swath with a horse baler, one sweep rake could usually keep it in hay. They brought in their rake load, pulled it into the "Table," backed out and went for the next load. Often there were bumblebee nests which the rake had picked up or at least stirred up. The driver usually walked behind the rake or rode on a seat at the back of the rake, where the bees could find him easy. Of course, the one who mowed the hay usually found the bees first. He would mow over the nest and not know it till he came thru on the next round, and the bees were swarming around their nest looking for a "victim." If they had two mowers cutting the hay, one following the other, the second one got the bees.

Then came the "power baler," a stationary baler with a gasoline engine to run the baler. It was pulled from field to field with a team, but an engine ran the plunger. This was quite an improvement as the engine didn't slow down like the horses learned to do when they got to the far side of the circle where the Feeder couldn't reach out to punch them with the fork.

Then they got "power take-offs" on tractors. Soon they had hay balers that they pulled around thru the field. The hay was "winrowed" with a side delivery rake, and the baler would pick up the winrow and run it thru the baler. There were two wire tiers, one rode on each side and one punched the wires and the other tied. The bales were dropped off onto the ground. Later the bales were pushed on an extension from the chamber so a loader on the wagon pulled behind the baler could grab the bale with a hay hook and put it on the wagon. Stacking the bales on the wagon while the wagon was going over rough ground could sometimes be a problem.

The bales had to be stored in a haymow or shed with the temperature reaching up to 90-100 degrees. Unfortunately, bales still have to be moved back in hot sheds.

Then came the round-bale baler, "bobbin balers" we called them. Then there were the "Big Bales" which were handled with end loaders on tractors. What Next?

## **Harvesting Grain**

Harvesting grain has always been a big job, and I have seen many changes in my time. My dad cleared a patch of timber, and he wanted to get the ground in grass so he plowed all he could between the stumps and sowed wheat--broadcast. He sowed grass in the wheat that fall. The next summer he cut the wheat with a "cradle." This was a scythe with fingers on it to hold the straw straight on each stroke of the scythe. It was tilted at the end of each stroke, dumping the straw in a pile. The piles were gathered up by hand and tied into bundles with a handful of straw. These bundles held very well in handling.

It was then shocked till threshing time. (We didn't have to flail the grain out. The wheat and oats were usually hauled from the shock to the threshing machine, which was run by a steam engine.)

Threshing was a big job, and several families

went together to do their threshing. There would be maybe 6 or 8 with rack wagons, 3 or 4 pitchers in the field, maybe 3 box wagons to haul the grain to the shed or to market. The Separator Man, the Engineer, and the Water Hauler always went with the threshing machine.

They would set the machine where the farmer wanted his straw pile or stack. If possible, they would set it so the wind, if any, would blow the dirt from the feeder toward the stack. A wagon would pull in on each side of the feeder, and they would throw the bundles from each side. Of course, the wind would usually change, and one of the fellows throwing bundles in would get all the dirt.

There would always be a "water boy" to keep the pitchers and haulers in drinking water. These were usually small boys or maybe girls. If they got to playing around and forgot their job, they usually "heard about it."

Threshing was hard, hot work, but at noon everyone went to the house for a Big Threshing Dinner. Several neighbor ladies worked together getting the dinner, and it seemed each place tried to out-do those ahead in the threshing ring. There were usually so many men that part would eat at the "first table," the rest at the "second table" and then the women and kids after that.

Then farmers started getting tractors and smaller threshing machines. Everything was done about the same way, only using smaller thresher rings and less help.

Then they came out with combines that cut and threshed the grain right in the field, and a big part of the manual labor was done away with. Just think what the later generations are missing.

## **Corn Harvesting**

When I was small, the farmers cut and shocked a lot of corn so they would have fodder to feed the stock thru the winter. A shock was 16 hills each way.

The corn was planted with a two-row planter. The wheels were usually set 40 inches apart, and they used a "planter wire" with knots on it 40 inches apart. This wire ran thru forks on the planter, and every time the knot on the wire passed thru the fork, it dropped a hill of corn. If the wire was kept stretched just right, the corn would be "checked" and could be cultivated both ways, getting the weeds out between the rows both ways.

To start the shocks, you would count eight rows from the edge of the field, go eight rows into the field and tie four hills of corn together using the eighth and ninth hills each way and twisting the tops of the diagonal hills together. Then you would cut a few hills near the "saddle" to start the shock. Then you would count 16 hills and start the next shock and on thru the field. Then you would go around and around the shock row carrying the 16 hills between shocks, if possible.

After the shock row was completed, you took a  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch rope with a ring on one end, hooked the ring over an ear or between stalks about shoulder high on the shock, walked around the shock with the rope and slipped the other end of the rope thru the ring. Then you would draw the rope up until you had the rope about as tight as you could being careful not to pull the shock to one side. Then you'd tuck the end of the rope under the tightened rope to hold it. Then you'd take binder twine, run it around the shock just above the rope, make a loop in the end of the twine, run the other end of the twine through this loop, draw it up as tight as possible and tie it. Then you loosened the rope and went to the next shock.

After the fodder dried out, the strings became loose and would need tightening or the shock would twist and take water or maybe fall over. In the winter you would shuck shock fodder and haul it in. It was not near as much fun as shucking standing corn. If you were fortunate enough to own a sled, hauling the fodder in was much simpler as you could stand on the ground and put on a nice load. If you had no



sled, you used a rack wagon, and if possible, had someone on the wagon to load the fodder. If you had no help, you had to climb on the wagon every once in awhile to straighten the fodder around. After you got it loaded, you tied a rope at the front of the wagon and over the load to the back of the wagon and drew it down as tight as possible. Otherwise, you would lose fodder off on the way to the barn. Then you went back with the box wagon and gathered the piles of ear corn.

About 1913 my dad bought a corn shredder. To use this, the neighbors would work together a little like for threshing. The shredder would be set at the barn to blow the fodder into the mow. The fodder was hauled from the shock to the shredder. The shredder shucked the ears out and chopped the fodder into pieces about two inches long and blew it into the mow. Someone had to level the fodder off as it came in. That was a dirty job. There was dust from the fodder and often a lot of "smut" on the fodder. The ear corn ran out into a wagon. It doesn't seem that the shredder was used many years. The shredder was run with an I.H.C. Mogul, 12-24 oil tractor.

### **Shucking Corn**

Most of the corn was shucked by hand in the field. All that was required for this was a team and wagon with about three or four side boards above the wagon bed on the right side for "bump boards," a man or boy with a strong wrist and a "shucking peg" or a "shucking hook." You would shuck two rows at a thru, with one row that had been previously shucked between you and the wagon. If you got to the field about as early as you could see the ears, the average shucker could get a good load and get it scooped off by noon. Of course, there were good shuckers and poor shuckers and like me, just average. Some of the Old Timers could tell about how quick they shucked 100 bushels and stripped it of silks and ribbons. I have shucked 100 bushels and hauled it about a mile to the elevator in a day and did my chores morning and evening just

once. And I really worked at it. Our hired shucker shucked about 60 bushels a day.

Most places the corn was scooped off by hand. The first load usually went pretty good. Of course, the scooping was harder than shucking. About the middle of the afternoon, it was awful hard not to slow down a little.

In the morning about daylight, you would begin to hear the bump, bump of the ears hitting the bump boards. Maybe there had been a heavy frost and as it started to melt off, your gloves or mittens would get soaking wet and also your sleeves up to the elbows were wet and cold. The cornfields were not kept as clean of weeds then as now--no chemicals to keep down weeds--so you would get your pants legs wet also.

There were no insecticide sprays then, and chinch bugs would almost ruin a field of corn. We would run tar lines to head the bugs off and often catch and destroy a lot of them in holes along the tar line, but when they got old enough to fly, they scattered to the entire field and another "litter" would hatch out. Chinch bugs made the stalks very weak, and after the corn ripened, it went down. Sometimes the field looked almost as if it had been rolled. Then imagine the ground thawing out and mud about four inches deep. You would have 4-buckle overshoes on, and they would get so much mud on them that you would have to shake it off to walk, all the time stooping over picking up ears of corn and shucking them and throwing them in the wagon. I shucked 20 acres like that one fall for 5 cents a bushel. That isn't the time I got 100 bushel. I didn't have to hold my hand out behind my back to take my pay for it.

It was really something when they got corn pickers, first, one-row, then two-row pickers. They pulled a wagon behind the picker, and the ears ran from the picker to the wagon. One man ran the tractor and picker; another one took the loaded wagon from the field to the crib and unloaded it. They even had a hoist to raise the front of the wagon and dump the

corn into a hopper on an elevator that carried the corn into the crib. Of course, in the old-fashioned cribs, someone would have to stay in the crib to keep the corn pushed around so it wouldn't choke up the elevator. But that put an end to scooping, until it was time to shell the corn out of the crib. Then two or three fellows had to scoop the corn into the sheller.

One year a neighbor had such small stalks of corn in his field that he used his wheat combine to gather his corn. Of course, it was not fixed to handle the ears and heavy stalks, but it went thru and the neighbor was well-pleased with the job. A year or two later, they came out with a "corn head" for the combine, and it was the beginning of a New Era.

## Planting Corn

Maybe I should have planted the corn before harvesting it, but now I'll get it planted. We lived for three years in Union County in Southern Illinois. It was settled before Christian County, but it was very rough and the fields were very small. While we lived there, Dad marked off corn rows with a wheelbarrow and us boys planted the corn with a hoe. We carried the seed corn in our pockets, dug a hole with a hoe, put two or three grains from our pockets in the hole, pulled dirt over it with the hoe, and stepped on the hill as we made the next hole. It really worked pretty good.

The folks did have a hand corn planter. It had horizontal handles at the top on each side of a tank that held maybe  $\frac{1}{2}$  gallon of seed. At the bottom were two flat pieces of thin sheet metal about three inches wide. When the handles at the top were pulled apart, the pieces at the bottom were tight together. Every time the handles were pulled together, it dropped corn for the next hill down to the bottom of the planter.

A person could walk along, pull the handles apart and sock it into the ground, push the handles together and a hill of corn was planted. It was quite

an improvement over the hoe. A neighbor had a one-horse, one-row planter. I guess that was better. We never tried it.

In Christian County, we always had a two-row, two-horse planter and used wire to "check" our corn. It was cultivated with a two-horse cultivator. You rode on a hammock seat. There were three shovels in a "gang" on each side of the row. There was a "stirrup" on each gang with a pipe fastened to each gang sticking up so the top was about level with your head. There was a "D handle" on each of these pipes. You guided the gangs with your feet and hands and raised and lowered the shovels with the handles. You could spread the gangs apart, pull them together or push them from side to side to get as close to the corn as possible without plowing it out.

Later, cultivators had different ways of handling and guiding, but the general system remained about the same. They did get a two-row, three-horse cultivator. You had to be sure to get on the two rows that were planted together or the rows might not stay the same distance apart and you would plow out some hills.

There was no chemical to keep the weeds and grass out of the corn. At home, we usually had to go through the corn with a hoe. In fact, I usually carried a hoe on the cultivator to get some I missed with the cultivator.

Later they invented a surface cultivator. Instead of shovels, there were two "sweeps" on each side of the row. These sweeps were set so the front end angled about to the center of the middle and the back end came close together and would run close to the hill of corn. The back two reached farther out in the middle and were wider apart. These sweeps were set so the front end tilted just below level, and they were set to drag a little dirt to the hill. They were guided with your feet on U-shaped foot rests. They were very easy to move back and forth--a picnic to run after using the shovel cultivators.

Later, they started spraying the corn with

"2-4-D." It would cause the weeds to curl up and not make seed. Then they made the "High Boy" that would go thru the fields when the corn was tall. Everytime someone used 2-4-D around, the tips of our grape vines would curl up and our grapes failed to produce.

Now they put the chemicals on before the crop is planted. I guess they have forbidden the use of 2-4-D, but it really killed weeds, shrubs and sometimes trees. A neighbor used to park his tractor and sprayer under a shade tree near the well, ready to "reload" the next day, and the fumes killed his shade tree.

We used to cultivate the corn at least three times: the first time, the way it was planted, then cross it and "lay it by" the way it was planted. We have cultivated between the rows after the corn was tasseled out with a one-horse walking cultivator (garden cultivator). Sometimes we used a corn planter wheel laid down between the row. It just covered most of the space between the corn rows. We hitched one horse on this, put a board on the wheel to stand on, and could do a pretty good job of scraping the weeds out of the middle.

We always had to use a muzzle on the horse when working in the tall corn, or the horse would grab an ear and take a bite off it or break it off the stalk. I imagine they had muzzles for sale, but we always made them ourselves out of baling wire.

### **More about Chinch Bugs**

Another way we tried to head off the march of the chinch bugs was to plow a furrow where we wanted to stop them. We would drive a hook into a log about 4 to 5 feet long and about 12 inches in diameter. Then we fastened it to the singletree. A boy on a horse dragged the log back and forth in the furrow, and the sides would get dusty. The bugs fell in and couldn't get out, and the log would mash them, we hoped.

## Soy Beans

The first time I ever heard of soy beans, my dad was farming some ground that belonged to my Uncle Jim Dappert. He never farmed for himself, but someplace he read about soy beans and thought they might be a useful crop to raise around here. He found some seed someplace and sent them out to Dad to plant. No one knew a thing about how to plant and care for them, but when Dad started to plant a field of corn, he planted the soy beans first with the corn planter.

I imagine he drilled them about the same as he would corn, likely 4 inches deep. Maybe we got a big rain right afterwards or maybe the seed was no good. At least, I don't believe a single plant ever came up, so that experiment fizzled out.

A few years later, a man by the name of Hurlbrink who farmed over around Assumption began experimenting with soy beans. He even developed a new variety which he called the Hurlbrink soy bean. He recommended that farmers plant them in the hill with corn, that they were legumes and would help furnish nitrogen for the corn, and then the plant would be there for the stock to eat while pasturing stalks after the corn was shucked.

Many farmers got "bean attachments" for their planters. This was a box that held about a half gallon of beans and was attached to each planter box and fixed so that each time a hill of corn was dropped, a bean was also dropped. The idea gradually fizzled out. I think they decided that a bean plant in the hill was about the same as a weed which took the moisture and nourishment away from the corn.

We did gradually start sowing soy beans for hay. We would mow them green and put them up for hay. The first time I ever threshed soy beans, I mowed them, raked and shocked them, and later loaded the shocks and hauled them to a threshing machine. I got 50 cents a bushel for the beans.

Mr. Hurlbrink invented some sort of machine to harvest the beans. I never saw one, but I did see a picture of it. I think the idea was to strip the

beans off the plant. The farmers started cutting the beans with a binder and shocking them, then threshing them. This proved so successful that Mr. Hurlbrink's idea was forgotten. I think he did a lot to get soy beans established as a profitable crop to raise in Illinois. Some of the early varieties of soy beans were Manchu, Illinois, A.K., and a black bean that was a little "viney" and was used for hay.

Soy bean stalks and leaves are covered with a fine fuzz and threshing them was a dirty job. You would get covered with this fuzz and it would make you itch. That is just another plus in farming that folks farming now will never have the pleasure of experiencing. The combines put a stop to that, but the first combines were pulled by open tractors, no closed-in, dust-free or air-conditioned cabs. The dust would come up in the driver's face, and the dust and fuzz was about as bad as threshing. The younger generation will never know what a lot they are being cheated out of.

### **Sowing Grain**

The early way to sow grain was "broadcast" by hand. It was a very simple operation. You carried the seed in a sack over your shoulder. One corner of the bottom of the sack was tied to the corner of the top of the sack, and a stick, pointed at each end, held the mouth of the sack open so you could easily get your hand in to get a handful of seeds. You would get a handful of seed, bring your hand out of the sack and swing first right as far as you could, then bring it back left as far as you could. You would swing in time with your step, and you could walk along at a fair clip.

The rate at which you released the seed depended on the kind of seed and how thick you wanted to sow it. With oats you might throw a handful each way, as they were bulky. With wheat, a handful was enough for the full swing--right and left. For grass seed, you might make two full swings to one handful. You

learned how to release the seed one finger at a time for some kinds of seed.

Wheat and oats were usually disked into the ground. Grass seed was usually sowed on ground previously prepared or often on wheat in the spring when the freezing and thawing would cover the seed. Clover would sometimes freeze if the weather got too cold after it came up.

For sowing grass seed, we had "horn seeders." The bag held about 1½ gallon of seed and had a tin horn about three feet long that tapered a little toward the far end. It had a baffle across the small end to help scatter the seed. The other end fitted over a tin collar attached at one corner of the bottom of the bag. In this was a small opening that had an adjustment that you set to regulate the speed the seed was released into the horn. This worked very well, and a person could walk just as fast as he wanted to and it was really easy. The swing of your arm kept in time with your step. I knew a fellow once that never kept his arm and feet in unison. It looked so awkward, and I am sure it was much harder on him. Of course, they had other types of seeders, but I think that for walking and sowing, the old-fashioned horn seeder remained in style to the last.

Then they started putting seeders on tractors. From then on, you didn't need to expect the younger generation to walk.

I have ridden in the back of a wagon and sowed oats by hand. I would sit in the back of the wagon and throw oats with both hands as they drove the wagon thru the field. Then they would disk them in.

I saw a neighbor once sow his oats by hand, then go over the ground with a two-horse cultivator. He raised a good crop of oats.

The earliest grain drills that I used were about 6 feet long and sowed the rows of wheat or oats about the same as the later drills. Instead of a disk to open each row for the seed, there was just a "shoe" that dug the trench for the seed. I guess the disk drills were better, at least they are all made that way now.



I have used a one-horse drill that could sow wheat between the corn rows. After you shucked the corn, the stalks could be harrowed down out of the way of the wheat.

### **We Put in 470 Acres of Wheat (Nearly)**

Dad had bought an I\*H\*C\*Mogul-12-24 oil tractor with a 4-bottom plow. A neighbor had taken a load of cattle to Chicago to sell. The commission merchant he sold them to had a 470-acre farm in the "American Bottom" near East St. Louis, and he wanted to find someone to plow it and sow it in wheat. He offered a pretty good proposition. There was a house on the property, and a railroad ran near the place. If they got the wheat sowed and had a crop, he would put in a siding so they could load the wheat on the car right on the farm. He would also dig a well, so they would have water. The farmer thought it would be a good deal if he and Dad went together on the deal. Dad would furnish the tractor and plow, and he would furnish 8 horses and machinery. Anyway, they made the deal and the owner had the well dug.

Dad loaded the tractor and plow on a flat car and shipped it to the closest depot. When they went to unload the tractor, someone had stolen the magneto off it. They got a new magneto at the I.H.C. (International Harvester Company) headquarters in St. Louis, so they soon got it fixed and unloaded and drove it out to the place. The ground had not been farmed for at least two years and had pretty large sprouts grown up on it. They were going to plow these under. The ground was "black gumbo," the kind that would roll up on buggy wheels so that the driver would have to stop and punch it out of the wheels or get stuck.

Dad, Ormond and Curtis took the tractor and plow down there and tried to plow. Some gears were starting to cut, so they sent to St. Louis for an "expert mechanic" from the company to see what was the trouble. He said that tractor would never do the job

in that kind of soil. All he would talk about was trying to sell Dad a larger tractor. Dad wasn't interested in another tractor.

Dad then came home, and I went down to cook for the outfit. The neighbor had arrived with his horses and machinery. They drove down there and were all organized when I arrived and started my job as Cook. I don't know just what experience I had in cooking. I knew how to fry eggs and make pancakes, but I was game to try.

The tractor had gotten sprung a little getting it loaded and unloaded, and as soon as the gears cut down to a good fit, it worked fine. The horse flies were driving the horses crazy, not so much the big black ones, but small greenish ones that just swarmed around. Mosquitoes were very bad. There was no furniture, so we slept in our blankets on the floor. The neighbor was worried about rattle snakes. The water in our well would make the coffee as black as tar. Beans boiled in it were nearly as hard as raw. If you left a glass of water set overnight, it was all rusty on top. We had to get water from the "101 Ranch" not too far from our "set up."

The neighbor that had gotten us into the deal was ready to give up. I doubt if he was really sober any time he was there. On Sunday we all went to a big beer garden nearby where there was entertainment all day. When we got ready to leave that evening, we couldn't find our neighbor. We went to all the taverns, and we finally found him and got him back to headquarters.

The neighbor said he wasn't going to stay down in that "God forsaken country." He said he had just sold a big herd of cattle and he had enough money and he was going to quit. I think that suited all of us, so we loaded the tractor and plow on a flatcar again, and we drove the horses home. End of 470 acres of wheat.

That bottom land was level, and we saw all kinds of tractors plowing in different fields. One was a steam engine. I don't know if "our" 470 acres was ever plowed and planted or not.

## Early Tractors

The 12-24 tractor worked fine for belt work--after you got it started. It had no "self-starter." To start it, you had to set everything just right, then yank on the flywheel, or the belt pulley if it was on for belt work. If it should backfire, it could break an arm. Sometimes in cold weather, you could wrap a rope around the belt pulley and let two or three men run with it.

Once Dad received a "crank starter" for the tractor from the company. He had not ordered it. I don't think he ever tried to put it on, as it would be a lot in the way. Later Dad had an Expert from the company come to work on the tractor. (You had to send to St. Louis for a mechanic.) He saw the starter and asked Dad what he thought of it. Dad said he didn't think it was worth a darn. The mechanic said he knew it. He said he "invented that." He had been in Germany working for International Harvester Company as a mechanic. A fellow that had one of these tractors had been trying to start it when it had backfired and killed him. The government condemned that model tractor and said it could not be moved till it had a starter on it so it didn't have to be started by hand. The mechanic had rigged up the starter to move the tractor. Then the Company sent one of the starters to everyone who owned that kind of tractor.

The tractor started on gasoline. When it got warmed up, it was switched to kerosene and water. It was a two-cylinder tractor and went "put-put-putput."

The first oil tractor around was a Rumley, Oil Pull. I think it was a single-cylinder. It went put----put----put. We called it a headache machine.

International Harvester Company soon put out a larger tractor and also a smaller one. The smaller one had likely as much or more power as the 12-24. It burned gasoline only. Several years later I.H.C. came out with the Farm All 14 and 20 horsepower, F-14 and F-20. Up to this time, the tractors had all been on steel tires with lugs. Then they started putting them

on rubber tires. My F-14 was on steel. If I wanted to cross a wooden floor bridge, I had to lay planks down for the wheels to go on or the lugs would punch holes in the floor.

I.H.C. was not the only company that had tractors in the neighborhood. There were John Deere, Allis Chalmers, Minneapolis-Moline and others. An early tractor was the "Hart-Parr." A neighbor had one of those. It was a large tractor that came with more plow bottoms than power. I had him plow some for me on the Shuler Place, and he just skimmed the ground.

The craziest tractor I ever saw was a Moline. It was a large flat wheel with a track around the inside of the wheel. The engine would climb this track causing the wheel to turn. I don't see how it could have had much power, just the weight of the engine turning the wheel. I never saw but the one, so they must not have been a success.

The neighbor with the Hart-Parr tractor once started plowing a 40-acre field by measuring to find the center and plowing around and around the center. When he got thru, he had four corners left over. I don't remember how he worked them. I have seen fields in the West farmed that way. The rows were in a circle, and the field was being irrigated with a pipe on wheels. The well was in the center and the perforated pipe reached from the center to the edge of the field.

### **Hedge Fences (Osage Orange)**

Making fences to hold the stock was a big problem. The standard plan seemed to be rail fences. The Brookens Home Place had a rail fence from the road west  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile on the line between the Hays and Brookens places, then south  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to the Chesterman land. There was "hedge fence" on both sides of the road to Mound School  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles.

To make a hedge fence, little hedge trees were set out maybe a foot apart. (It may have been more than a foot.) These were left a few years; then they

were bent over and tied down all laid in the same direction. If everything went right, it made a "hog-tight, horse-high" fence. The fence would need trimming every year and an occasional patching of holes that developed in it.

Trimming hedge was quite a job. You needed a pair of leather gloves (Hedge has thorns.), a corn knife or hedge knife and a stick about two feet long with a limb at the big end that you cut off about 3 or 4 inches from the main stick. This is to hold the hedge twig over while you cut it off with the corn knife. Who ever saw a hedge that wasn't full of poison ivy? If you were allergic to poison ivy, you could plan on a bout of it unless you were lucky enough to get home and change clothes and scrub off good with strong soap suds in time to head it off.

You would trim all the brush on one side and across the top of the hedge. Of course, there was some on the other side that would have to be cut and later thrown over the fence. Then you took a pitch fork and pushed all the brush away from the hedge so a horse could walk between the hedge and the brush. Then you got a strong pole or small tree about 12 feet long and hitched a horse on each end. To pile the brush took three men: one to lead each horse and one to work behind the pole and hold a stick in front of the pole just above the ground to catch the brush and keep the pole from going over the brush. It did a good job of taking all the brush as you went. The thorns caused it to hold together. When you got a load, someone opened a gap in the line of brush with a pitchfork so the horse next to the hedge could get out. The load was pulled out away from the hedge, and the horses were turned around. The pole was pulled out of the pile, and you went back for another load. It was really a quick way to get rid of hedge brush. The piles were then burned.

If you were unlucky enough to have some washes on the place that you wanted to put some hedge brush in, that made a little more work. You used a pitchfork and a rack wagon with a hay frame on it.

You threw small forkfuls of brush onto the wagon. After you got about all you could get to stay on, you climbed up on the wagon on top of the brush--thorns and all--and tramped it down. Then you piled on another layer of brush. Then you'd drive up to the side of the wash as close as you could. You would get on the side of the wagon away from the wash and push the brush toward the wash with a fork, walking along the wagon to keep all the brush going together. Finally, it fell into the wash. A little straw or trash on and in the brush helped to hold the wash. It also makes a wonderful place for a dog to tree a rabbit.

It might be better to have a nice, level place that doesn't have washes on it, but I imagine it would get mighty monotonous if you had no hills and hollows to look at. I'm not complaining. Maybe we could have made more money on a good, level place, but some way I don't feel that money is everything. Some way I feel that we have had something that money can't buy--real enjoyment from life. Sometimes instead of you owning a place, a place can own you. Maybe I haven't been a "shrewd business man," but I have taken time to "live" as I went thru life. It seems that we have always had good friends and good neighbors wherever we have lived.

## **Clearing 20 Acres of Timber**

After Grandpa bought the 80 acres that later became the Brookens Home Place, he hired two fellows to work all winter cutting down trees west of the branch in the east 40 acres. They cut all the trees and left them lay for about three years and then burned it off. Frank Hays told me that it did a good job of cleaning it off, even burned out some of the stumps.

When I was young, it was customary to burn everything that got in the way of farming. Corn stalks were raked and burned. A field that had too much growth on it to plow under easy was burned off.

Of course, some folks were more inclined to want to burn things than others.

One spring a fellow working for Micenheimers' was plowing just south of the 40 acres of timber, and he got the notion that it would be nice to burn the timber off, so he set it afire at the south side. Our field that joined the timber on the east had a heavy covering of dead grass. We saw the smoke, and Harold and I went back and really worked putting the fire out. It got quite a way over into the timber before we got it out, but it never got out into our field.

I said something to the fellow that was plowing there, and he said yes he set the fire. He said he thought it would be a benefit to the timber and would make it easier to find mushrooms.

I have mentioned Bert and Frank Hays often. They were close neighbors, but older than me. Frank was nearly as old as my folks and was older than Bert. Bert lived to be 102, and Frank lacked a few days reaching 100, so they could remember things that happened long before my time.

### **My First Calf**

Because I was named after him, Grandpa Dappert gave me a baby calf. I wasn't very old at the time and hardly remember anything about it. It was laying in the meadow west of the branch and the grass pretty well covered it. Someone hunting shot it. I don't know what they thought it was. All I can remember about the calf is its getting shot.

### **Our Timber**

When my folks moved onto the Brookens Home Place, there was no timber left on the east 40 acres, and the hill on the west 40 was cleared at the north end. Dad then cleared the west 10 acres from our south line to the creek. This included about 6 acres at the south and about 4 acres of bottom ground.

We still had about 5 acres of timber where we

cut wood every winter. Earlier, we did all the cutting with axes and a cross-cut saw. As we still had nearly  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of rail fence to keep up, we had to keep a supply of rails to replace the ones that got broken. The  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of fence running north and south on the line between the east 40 and the west 40 was replaced with a woven-wire fence after Beulah and I moved onto the place. I can truthfully say that Abe Lincoln and I split rails (of course, not at the same time).

For rails we picked nice straight logs with no limbs having grown on the part we were going to use. Then with a wooden "maul" and 2 or 3 iron "wedges", we first split the log in the center. From there, it depended on the size of the log how many rails it would make.

Wood cutting was a wintertime job. The wood we cut one winter was mostly used the next winter for fuel; that way it was well dried out.

Our patch of timber had a woven-wire fence around it, and Dad usually kept hogs in the timber where they got the acorns when they fell. When he had no hogs in the timber, he sometimes kept sheep in the timber.

## Hog Cholera

One year Dad had a bunch of hogs in the timber and they got hog cholera. There was no remedy for this then, so there was nothing to do but wait. The hogs would die, maybe one or two a day, and we would burn them. There was an old sow that pulled thru and lived. All the rest we burned.

I don't think there is a cure for hog cholera yet, but they developed a vaccination that has about wiped hog cholera out of the country. After they started vaccinating, farmers always vaccinated the pigs when they were pretty small. After we started farming on our own, I think the only case of cholera I heard of was where someone thought he would just risk it and didn't vaccinate.



## More about Wood Cutting

Soon after we moved to Union County, my dad had a blacksmith in Cobden make him a "frow" which he used to split enough pickets to build a picket fence around the garden and to split enough clapboard shingles to shingle the barn.

The frow is really a very simple tool. The blacksmith used an old rasp that was used to rasp off a horse's hoof, hammered out one edge to make it sharp and welded a heavy strap iron onto this to make the loop for the handle to fit in. The wooden handle stood straight up with the sharp edge of the blade down. To use it, you would take a block of log the length of what you wanted the shingles or pickets to be, stand the piece on end, place the frow where you wanted to split the log and hit the back of the frow with a wooden mallet. If you had a nice clear-grained block of wood of a variety that split easily, you could make nice straight shingles that would lay nicely on the roof.

Dad brought this frow with him when we moved back to Christian County, and I dug it up or plowed it up years later. I believe it is with Larry Brookens' collection of antiques.

When they developed the "cord wood saws" and ran them with gasoline engines, it changed wood cutting completely. We made large piles of poles and split logs in pieces that could be handled. The saw would be staked down beside the pile and 3 or 4 fellows could saw up a lot of stove wood in a short time.

The cord wood saw was made of a circle saw on an iron shaft which was on a substantial frame that left the shaft the saw was on about breast high or a little lower. Then there was a sliding or tilting table to lay the big end of the pole or split piece on. The "feeder" would move the piece up the right length for a stick of stove wood and push it into the saw. The man that put the piece on the table had to hold his end of the piece so it was level with the end being sawed or it would pinch the saw. The saw had to be

kept sharp and properly "set." If the saw was pinched too much, the set would be ruined and the groove would be too small causing the saw to heat and smoke. Too much of this could ruin the "temper" of the saw. One fellow had to "off bear" (take the cut wood off the table). Usually a pretty small boy could do this, depending on the diameter of the pieces being sawed. Some stove wood chunks were pretty heavy. Also the one throwing the stove wood from the saw had his hands close to the saw. He usually tried to help the feeder pull the piece up ready for the next cut.

One neighbor used his Ford car for power to run the "buzz saw." To saw wood, he would jack up a hind wheel and run a belt around the wheel. It worked fine.

Bert Hays and I bought a saw with a flat table on rollers, which was the best I ever saw. I bought Bert out on his half of things we bought together. I sold this saw at our sale when I quit farming. Elsie's husband Bob bought it.

We burned wood a lot even after we had a coal furnace put in the basement until they came out with propane gas for heating and cooking. We had our furnace changed to burn gas and that did away with using wood. Oh, well, we had all the old fence rails used up and timber on the place was mighty scarce, and I was getting old and (shh) lazy. Times change and we must change with it.

### **Corn Cutter - One-Horse**

My brother Ormond bought a one-horse corn cutter, and he and Walter Hawkins took the job of cutting a field of corn for E. E. McVicker. Walter was to furnish the horse and they were to go 50-50. McVicker said he had a horse running in the pasture and that they just as well use it and not bother bringing a horse, so that is what they did.

I think they were to get 15 cents a shock for cutting the corn. Once they got the shocks started, they could slice it down in a little while. When they

finished the field and went to settle up, "Mac" charged a very high price for the use of the horse, and Walter had to pay it out of his half.

The corn cutter was so much faster than two fellows cutting by hand. It was a big success, but they quit cutting corn for fodder about that time, so Ormond didn't get to use it much.

The cutter was a triangular platform with one wheel in front and two on the back. A knife ran the length of each side. There was a board on arms on each side to let down over the knives when not cutting corn. An upright in the center of the platform had a bar sticking out on each side for the two operators to lean against for support. The lines to drive the horse hooked to a ring on this upright. While cutting, an operator on each side would hold the fodder in his arms as the knife cut it off. The shocks were 16 hills square. Sixteen hills made a big armload in good corn, but you could stop whenever you got an armload and carry it to the shock.

## **Hay Knives**

Sometimes a person would want to get a little hay at a time from a stack without opening the whole stack. With a hay knife he could cut a little off one side of a stack or cut the stack wherever he wanted to.

We used two kinds of hay knives. One was a heavy metal plate with three mower sections riveted to the bottom edge. The top edge had a wooden handle about like a spading fork handle. The back of the plate was smooth and the handle had a strap iron bolted on to step on.

## **Ormond Goes West to Work in Harvest**

When wheat harvest started in Kansas, there was a big demand for harvest hands. Ormond and Andrew Stevens went to Kansas to try their luck. This would have been around 1912 or 1913. They got jobs with a

threshing crew that followed the harvest from Kansas on north as long as they could find threshing to do. They ended the season in North Dakota. Ormond said that sometimes toward the last, a snow would delay the threshing.

Curtis decided to try it the next year. He went to Kansas and got a job with a man and stayed with him till the threshing was thru in that part of Kansas. His boss didn't go north, so Curtis came home after he finished there.

He told about a 16-year-old that went thru the harvest with their crew and kept right up with the others. I thought if he could do it, so could I. I fully intended to try it. I don't remember why I didn't go, but I still think I could have made a hand.

### **Ormond Spends the Winter Trapping**

Ormond and Jim Berry went on a trapping trip. (I believe it was to North or South Dakota.) They left in the fall and didn't get back till spring. Jim was an old hunter and trapper. Some said he was half Indian. I guess they more or less lived "off the land" and camped and "ruffed" it.

Once Ormond had trouble with boils and Jim made lead tea (boiled lead in milk) and had Ormond drink it. The boils cleared up and he lived. That was before they started warning about lead poisoning.

Early in the spring they took their winter catch of furs to St. Louis and sold them before coming home.

Ormond was always trapping thru the winters and hunting a lot ever since he was old enough. He was always getting his toes frozen. Mom kept some skunk oil on hand for frostbite and frozen fingers and toes.

## ARMY DAYS

Note: This will not be a history of my memories of World War I as I have rather completely covered that in "History of Battery A in World War I" written at the request of some of my buddies from Battery A.

I had a couple teeth that needed filling, so I walked to Taylorville one Saturday, May 28, 1917, to be exact. I went to Dr. Henshie to get the teeth filled. When he got through, he said, "Now if you want to get into the Army, they can't keep you out because of your teeth." I asked him if he knew how to get into the Army. He said Captain Bullington, a lawyer in Taylorville, was in the service and could tell me how to get in.

I beat it over to Bullington's office. I told him what I wanted. He didn't try to talk me into enlisting, but he told me there would be things I didn't like and that they didn't consult a private about what he liked or disliked, but if I really wanted to get in, there was an outfit in camp in Springfield. He looked at his watch and said, "You just about have time to catch the train to Springfield." I beat it to the depot and went to Springfield and took the streetcar to the fairgrounds.

Another fellow on the streetcar, Norman Spence, was also headed for the camp to enlist. He later became our cook and was wounded in the Argonne.

The camp was just west of the fairgrounds. I stopped and talked to the guard at the gate. He was a member of Company C of the 6th Illinois Infantry. I had corresponded with a boy--John Godsil--thru the Lone Scout Magazine for several years, and he told me that he had a cousin in Company C of the 6th Illinois Infantry.

The guard at the gate, Leslie (Dizzy) Linn told me to see Lt. Dickerson. I easily found him and he soon had me signed up. I told him that my folks didn't know where I was, and I wondered if there was someway I could go home and tell them. He said,

"Sure, you can go home this evening and report back Monday morning." That suited me fine. I took the train to Taylorville and walked home. I got home about 1:00 a.m. I went right to bed and told the folks what I had done the next morning.

We went to church that morning. I was Secretary, and after my report for the day, I wrote, "Pvt. John A. Brookens, Co. C, 6th Ill. Infantry, Camp Loudon, Springfield, Ill." The folks took me to the train on Monday morning.

The first few evenings along about chore time, I got mighty lonesome. That was a slack time in camp, and I missed milking and looking after the stock, but I soon got used to camp life and got acquainted with the fellows. Most of the 6th regiment were in camp there, but the companies were far below their full number of men and they were looking for recruits.

We were out in the drill field on July 3, 1917, when they got the call at 3:00 p.m. for Companies C and I to report to East St. Louis at once. They were having a race riot there. We double-timed to camp, packed our equipment and furled our tents and were waiting at the east side of the fairgrounds by the railroad track for our train to come before 4:00 p.m. We got to East St. Louis before dark and were sent out on guard immediately.

It seems the Aluminum Ore Company had a strike at its plant and had imported a large group of Negroes to replace the strikers. They burned a large part of the Negro section of town and several were killed. We were supposed to put a stop to the burning and killing. I spent the first night at the Aluminum Ore Company's office. I slept on a brick floor with one blanket while I was not on guard.

The trouble was soon settled, but we remained at Camp Reig in East St. Louis until September when they had a camp ready for our regiment at Camp Logan near Houston, Texas. When we got there, the 6th Ill. Infantry was changed to the 123rd Field Artillery, and Companies C and I formed Battery A.

## James' Death

While I was stationed at East St. Louis, the folks sent a telegram to the officers of Company C that my brother Jim was seriously ill and for me to come home if possible. The officers notified me, and I went home as quickly as I could. When I got to Taylorville, I went directly to the hospital. Jim was unconscious and died soon afterwards.

He had appendicitis, and the doctor had tried to cure him with a new "Wild Cherry Compound" he had developed. Of course, the appendix burst. They didn't know near as much about operating for appendicitis then as they do now. I had a 72-hour pass. I stayed till after the funeral and returned to camp. Lt. Dickerson asked me how my brother was. I told him that he had died. He said they would have extended my pass if they had known.

## Tournquist Killed

We left Camp Reig, East St. Louis on September 8, 1917 for Houston, Texas and Camp Logan. I was riding in the last car on our train in the front seat. The backs of the seats could be turned so you could sit facing either way. My seat was facing back and the next seat was facing me, and the next two seats were arranged the same way. We had the windows open and put our heads out a lot. You could see more that way.

I don't remember who was sitting with me or on the seat facing me, but Swede Tournquist was sitting on the next seat. Like me, he was next to the window. We both had our heads out of the window when Clifford (Whiz) Turner came into the front of the car hollering "Heads in!" I jerked my head in as quick as I could, and the corner of a coal car rubbed past right where my head had been a second before.

I looked at the next seat in time to see the car strike Tournquist's head. I ran to the next seat. His head had slumped down. The fellow in the seat didn't know anything had happened. I said, "Help me

pull him in." I knew there were some doctors at the front of the train so I ran for a doctor and brought one to the back car.

The doctor had us lay Swede on the floor and told me to get some ice. I got a piece out of the drinking water in the toilet. This happened in Missouri about 150 miles before we got to Springfield, Missouri, which was the closest hospital. He was dead long before we got there. His head was smashed.

The coal car had been on a siding and was pushed into our train by some Mexican railroad workers, so we were told. It scratched a groove from about the middle of the train to the end. I think we all knew it was against regulations to stick our heads out the windows on the train.

After we were in Camp Logan, there was a post-mortem trial. I was the only witness, so there was a lawyer for the railroad, a lawyer for Company C (Lt. Dickerson), a recorder with a typewriter and me.

Lt. Dickerson was a swell fellow. He was the one that enlisted me into Company C, but he liked his "licker." Once when we were in Camp Reig, East St. Louis, he was ordering food for the Company C kitchen, and he ordered a carload of onions. They eventually got the order canceled. "Dick" didn't get to go across with us, and he really hated that. Maybe it was for the best.

## **Pass to Galveston, Texas**

While at Camp Logan, Texas, I got a two-day pass to Galveston. Lloyd Melton went with me. The trees and shrubs there were more like Florida or California, different kinds of palm trees. It was quite a sight for me. I don't think I had ever seen palm trees before. We visited the Crystal Palace. They had a skeleton of a whale there that reached across a large room. There was a sea wall between the Crystal Palace and the beach. To get to the beach, you had to go up steps to a walkway above the street, across the sea wall, then down the steps to the beach.



We got into our swimming suits in the Crystal Palace. I don't think folks in bathing suits were allowed on the streets. This was in November and we spent quite awhile paddling around in the water and hunting sea shells. I gathered up several different kinds and took them home when I got a furlough later. I got sunburned that day on the beach in the later part of November. I had my Kodak with me and got several good pictures.

## My Furlough

Nearly all of us got a 10-day furlough to go home before we were sent overseas. When I found out when I could get mine, I had to telegraph home for enough money. I guess it was too long after payday, but I doubt if I would have had enough even if we had gotten paid the day before. I don't remember what the round-trip ticket cost then, but I got my money in time.

I got sick on the way home. The folks had a doctor for me after I got home, and he called it Texas Fever. He said many servicemen on leave had it. When we left Texas on our way to the East Coast, I got very sick on the way. Maybe that was Texas Fever too, but I thought it was something some of the Service Organizations gave us to eat in St. Louis as we went thru there.

I don't remember much about when I first got home. I remember some kids from Taylorville picked me up one evening after dark and took me for a drive. We went south and I didn't know there was a bad mud hole up that road. We got stuck and had to get Frank Hays to pull us out. His father George Hays had died the day before. I didn't even know that, and I hated it that we had bothered him.

The folks had a party for me. The Masters kids were among those who were there. I think I started corresponding with Beulah after that and I kept it up till I got home June 7, 1919. Just look at all the trouble it got me into--two children, 12 grandchildren, and 18 great-grandchildren, at present.

I remember I brought home a tobacco can with some scorpions in it. A day or two before I left camp to come home, some of us in the B.C. Detail had Signaling for one period. We decided to go out in the timber to practice. There were two lieutenants with us. I don't remember that we did a bit of signaling, but I know that one of the lieutenants and I were hunting scorpions and centipedes.

Once after the war I told Dr. Luzader about the scorpions. He said he wished I had given them to him. He would have put them in alcohol and kept them. He had quite a collection of odds and ends.

### **Enroute to New York**

While our Troop Train was on the road, the cooks prepared our meals. The train would stop at mealtime and we all went for food outside the train. When we got to St. Louis, our train stopped long enough for the Red Cross and some other Service Organizations to pass out candy and junk to everybody. I ate what they gave me, and after I got back on the train, I got very sick. Our train passed thru Taylorville, and I didn't know about it till afterwards. They stopped in Decatur a little while, and I do remember that.

When we got to Detroit, they loaded our train on a ferry and took us across into Canada. At Niagara Falls they took us out to see the falls. Then we went to Camp Merrit, New Jersey. While I was there, I got a 24-hour pass to Coney Island.

Sgt. Floyd Hibbs and I went together. The officers told us to be sure to be back on time as we were leaving for overseas the morning after we were due back. I bought a salt and pepper shaker and toothpick holder set and mailed it to my folks. I also sent them a card and told them not to worry if they didn't hear from me for awhile. I didn't tell them why, but I figured they would know.

We went to the Steeplechase Park. We rented "clown costumes" for over our uniforms to protect them. When we entered the park, they gave us a card

with 100 amusements listed on it and a place to punch for each attraction. We took them as we came to them. At one place we went up several steps and came out on a platform that sloped a lot making it hard to stand up. There was a railing to hold to, so I grabbed it and turned loose just as quick when it gave me a shock. Down I went, scooted around a corner and down a steeper slide onto a spinning table that had steep stationary sides and a floor that sloped up to the center. There was a raised place where a person could sit down, but how to get there? We were tumbling around the bottom edge of that roulette wheel with nothing to get hold of. I finally got on my feet; then I could run up and down having a big time.

Another amusement I remember was The Steeplechase, like a roller coaster only you rode a horse. I really enjoyed it and it didn't scare me a bit.

We only had a 24-hour pass, but we didn't waste any of it sleeping. We stayed as long as I thought we dared and took the streetcar (maybe it was an interurban) back to camp. Someone kept pulling the "trolley thing" off the wire. We were afraid they were going to make us late for the boat, but we made it.

I was on guard when we pulled out of New York Harbor. I had to go around and check the guards. The smells below deck and around the engines were bad or something. Anyhow, by the time I was off guard duty, I was feeling bad in my tummy.

Floyd Hibbs was having a little trouble with his stomach and he said, "Let's go up on the top deck and walk it off." That's what we did, and we found that officers get seasick too. Some were hanging over the railing. The walk must have helped as I soon was feeling fine, and I never missed a meal. We had one fellow with us that declared he was going to stay in Europe, that he absolutely wouldn't cross that ocean again. I think he did come back. Maurice Godsil wrote to his folks about his trip over. He said, "They sure fed us good on the ship--6 meals a day, 3 down and 3 up." Mine were just "down."

## Furlough to the Alps

After the Armistice, we were in the Army of Occupation, and we were given a 7-day pass to the Alps. It was in March 1919 when I got mine. On the way there, our train ran head-on into a freight train. I was riding about in the middle of the train and likely felt the jolt the least, but the packs, etc., fell off the shelves above our heads. No one in our car was hurt enough to need a doctor, but we were talking about how careless they were trying to stop so quick. When they came thru our car to see who was hurt, we asked them what the trouble was, and they told us we had run into a freight train.

I got out and walked to the front of the train. Six cars of the freight had folded up into the air and fallen over the side of the railroad. The first car on our train had telescoped the tender of the engine. It was a boxcar, but several of the train crew had been riding in it. One had his foot in a tight place, and it was smashed flat. They must have taken an hour getting him out of it.

It delayed us about a day, but we had a 7-day pass that we spent at the Alps, but we were gone from our outfit 14 days. Chamonix, France was the headquarters of that leave area. They had another leave area for American soldiers at Nice, France.

I am glad I got to go to the Alps. There were so many different things we could take in. You had to pay a little for the guide. You had to have a guide, but several went on each trip so the cost was only a franc or two.

One trip I took was to the Glacier de Bossons. Going to the glacier we saw where there had been an avalanche a couple weeks before we got there. They had been building a cog railroad to the top of the mountain, and the avalanche had knocked down four piers of the railroad. We got to walk around the glacier. The guide told us a couple of newlyweds on their honeymoon had once been walking over the glacier. The man fell in a crevasse, and they

couldn't get him out. Scientists figured that when the glacier thawed, that part of the glacier would eventually reach the front. The wife came back at that time, and sure enough, her husband came out just like he was when he fell in. By that time she was an old lady. This was a true story.

Another thing I saw was "The Alps in Miniature." This was made by a father and son who were guides there at Besanson. Each peak was made of a piece of the peak of the mountain it represented. They had this at the World's Fair in St. Louis in 1904. My dad saw it there. The son showed it to us and told all about it.

Another trip I took was thru the gorges of the Diosiz. We rode to it downhill all the way on a train, but after taking the hike, we had to walk back up the hill all the way. Just the same, I'm glad I took the trip. I have postcards of all these things in my album of Cards Collected Overseas.

Some of us also rented some skis, the first ones I ever saw. I also bought a cane with a spike in the end to help walk on snow and ice. (I carried this cane tied to my pack until I was discharged, and I still have it.) We took our skis way up the side of the mountain, put them on and started down. Nothing to it, we thought. I was going fine, but I came to a wall of snow banked about 4 feet high on the upper side and nothing below on the low side. I gave a jump, but something went wrong. My things got twisted crossways or something. I lit in a pile, took my skis off and walked back to the YMCA where I rented the skis. It was a fancy hotel built by a German just before the War and taken over by the French.

### **Larouchette, Luxemburg - Old Castle**

After the Armistice when the 33rd Division was in the Army of Occupation, we were given all kinds of schooling to keep everyone in shape to carry on the War if anything should turn up to require it. One school I was required to attend was a regimental

school with instruction in figuring data for our guns (155 millimeter Schneider Howitzers). There was quite a bit of figuring to get the projectiles to drop somewhere near where they were needed. All the Batteries in the 123rd Field Artillery had men taking this schooling.

The problems we studied at this school were usually figured by algebra or trigonometry (whatever that is). I had an 8th grade education plus less than the first semester of high school. One evening after school, I was walking back to our billet with Erwin R. Seiler. He had graduated from Officers Training School before we left the States, but they found out that his father had immigrated to the U.S. from Germany, so he didn't get his commission. He had three years of college.

He asked me, "Brookens, how did you answer (a certain problem)?" I told him and he said, "Oh, you got it wrong."

I said, "I got it right because I proved it."

The next morning at school, the instructor said, "There was just one in the whole class that got that problem right, and it was John Brookens." (I know this sounds like bragging--and it is. But I will swear that it is the absolute truth.)

At the end of the week, the three with the highest rank in the class got a trip to someplace of interest. I was one of the three, and we got a trip to an old castle at Larochette, Luxemburg with a couple of officers in the reconnaissance car. I think the castle had been built in 1523 and was pretty well in ruins, but it was an interesting trip and I am glad I got to take it.

I have two postcards of this town and castle, which I bought there and mailed to my folks. I wrote on the back of both something about the place.

### **33rd Division Sanitary School**

Another school that I was sent to was the Division Sanitary School. I will never know why I was

sent to this school. I think I was the only one from the 123rd F.A. that got to go. When we got to the school, the officers said, "This is more or less a vacation. You will fall in at reveille for check. There will be classes, but no examinations. You can take part in the work or not. The things we teach may be of use to you after you get home."

I had a notebook and I did all the work they gave us. I still have the notebook with all the drawings and information in it.

It was a small group, and the instructors told us and showed us how to fix things to make it more sanitary in camps or towns. We were billeted in private homes. I was with a fellow from the 122nd F.A. and one from the 108th Sanitary Train. They ran ambulances and took care of the wounded--all part of the 33rd Division. The three of us roomed together in a nice house.

One afternoon the girl that lived in the house and a couple of her friends wanted us to go with them. We couldn't understand what they were going to do, but we went with them. We walked around town and stopped in a lot of places. That night we had a big dance at our house. They were getting it ready that afternoon.

This school only lasted a few days, as the 33rd Division was finally being sent home. The name of the town where the school was held was Redange, Luxemburg.

### **Amusement Park at Brest, France**

The Division was sent to Brest, France to wait for our boat to take us home. There was an amusement park near Brest, nothing like Coney Island, New York or Blackport, England, but a lot of things for entertainment. I got to spend some time there.

### **Pass to New York City**

When we got back to the U.S.A., we landed in New York City and were sent to Camp Mills, Long Island. We were there a week or so, and I got a pass to visit New York City.

Lester Friend and I went together. We were both nearly broke, but we thought we could make the trip. We spent the night at a Servicemen's Center for 25 cents each. Our bed was an army cot and a blanket. I believe our breakfast was a roll and a cup of coffee, maybe something more. I think it cost a quarter too.

We got a tour of New York City on a double-decker bus. I don't think there was anyone telling us about things along the way, but we saw a lot as we rode on the top deck. Maybe we were thinking more about getting home than sightseeing, but I didn't seem to enjoy the trip near as much as I should.

### **Battery A Reunions and Newsletter**

I had corresponded with some of my buddies of old Battery A from the time we were discharged. We discussed getting together once in awhile, but not seriously till long afterwards. About 1966 we thought it was time to do something about it if we ever expected to have a reunion.

As Company C of the 6th Illinois Infantry was from Galesburg, I figured that we would likely find some of our old buddies around there, so Beulah and I went to Galesburg and got a room at the Travelodge Motel. I looked up the names in the telephone directory and started calling. I invited the ones I found to meet me at the motel that evening. There were four of us "Old Buddies" present that evening. We enjoyed our visit so much that we decided to make it an annual affair, so we all started looking for more buddies.

The 33rd Division War Veterans Association was having an annual reunion for the entire division, so we set up a reunion of Battery A, 123rd Field Artillery - World War One to be held in connection with the Division Reunion. I think there were nearly 30 buddies that attended our First Reunion.

Four of us had had a picture taken while at the Rifle Range at Camp Logan in Texas. It happened that



all four of us were at our First Reunion in Chicago, so we had a picture taken with us standing just as we were in the 1917 picture. These two pictures were in the Veterans Paper, and it went all over the country. Floyd Hibbs in California saw it and attended our next reunion. Those in the picture were Clayton Kidd, Lloyd McCulley, Clarence Nelson and me. McCulley is still alive, living in California. He has both legs off above his knees and is blind.

Our following reunions were held in Galesburg until there were so few that were physically able to attend that we gave up the reunions. They had all wanted some sort of a history of our own Battery A. Our captain Sidney A. Patchin was a retired college professor, and we thought he was the logical one to write it, but he declined. I had kept a "diary" all the time we were on the Front although it was not supposed to be done. After the Armistice, the Regimental Headquarters borrowed my diary to help them prepare the history of the regiment. The "Buddies" called me the "Historian" of Battery A.

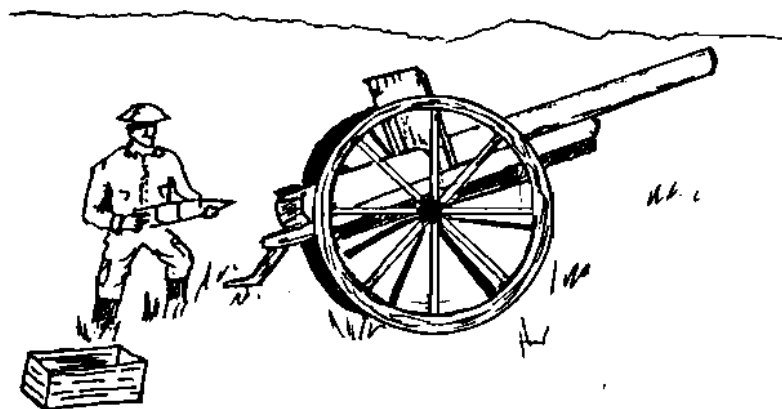
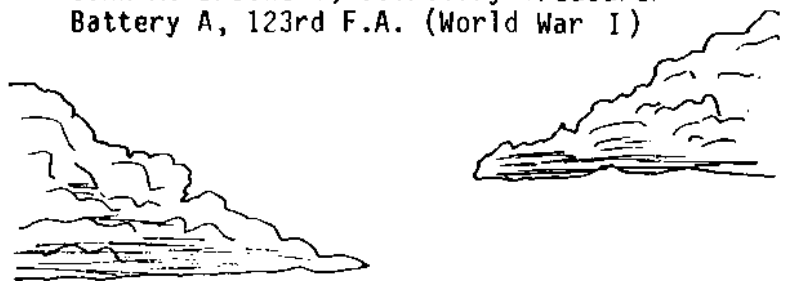
When we couldn't get anyone to write our history, I told the Buddies that if no one else would do it that I would try. I spent my spare time in 1974 looking up and checking everyplace I could find any information, as I wanted everything to be absolutely true and properly dated. Finally, I got it finished and had it printed at the Breeze-Courier. I ordered 100 copies; then I thought that might not be enough, so I ordered another 50, which were quite a bit less per copy.

I told the Buddies I would charge \$1.00 per copy till I got my money back on them. Captain Patchin was very well pleased with the booklet and ordered 10 copies. He said they would not be available in future years, and he wanted enough for his future descendents. Hibbs sent \$10.00 extra and named nine public libraries he wanted me to send copies to. After I got my money back, I sent a free copy to everyone on my mailing list and to the families of all the deceased buddies I could locate.

When we decided not to hold any more reunions, Nelson suggested that we send the letters received from the Buddies around to the others. I figured, rather than sending the letters around, I would copy all the letters that I received and send them to all on our mailing list--the birth of our Newsletter, which I sent four times a year. I sent three the last year or two and will send only two in 1989.

From about 50 on our mailing list at the start, we now have 6 Buddies including me. Of those, only one has been able to write his own letters, and the last I heard from him, he was going to a "Care Center." The wives have been good to write, and some of the widows still write and want to receive the Newsletters.

John A. Brookens, Secretary-Treasurer  
Battery A, 123rd F.A. (World War I)



Wick

MEM

SEAN MCELROY-89

## MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

After the War, I reached home on the 7th of June 1919 after two years and two weeks in service. Taylorville and home sure looked good to me. I don't remember all I did that summer. I got work through the harvest, and in the fall I helped Bert Hays make sorghum molasses. It was my job to run the cane thru the mill. It was run by a gasoline engine instead of a horse. The mill was at the top of the hill north of their house. A pipe carried the sap down to a tank at the bottom of the hill right near the cooking pan. It was a very handy set-up.

Bert had a large patch of cane of his own, and I helped him strip and cut it. To strip the leaves off the cane, you used a narrow paddle. You would strike it down the sides of the cane stalk knocking the leaves off as it went. After we had stripped as much as we were going to cut, we cut the stalk at the ground and cut the seed clump off the top onto a pile.

That fall I shucked corn for Henry Morrell, Charley's dad. I started in with white corn, not too ripe and very hard to break the ears off. I sprained my wrist right on the start, but I stayed with it until we got the corn all shucked. I was trying to make as much money as I could, as I was planning on "going into business on our own" in the spring.

### Walk Home in the Snow

It seemed that I did an awful lot of driving over to Masters with my horse and buggy in the winter of 1919. One night there must have been at least 6 inches of snow on the ground, and I was over at Masters. After all the good-byes, I went out to go home and the horse and buggy were gone. I always put a horse blanket on the horse when I tied it up while I was visiting, but evidently the horse got tired waiting and somehow got loose.

I had to walk home in the snow, only about 4½ miles. Beulah never even asked me to stay till morning. Well, I guess it was already morning.

## Hugh's Night Ride

Beulah's brother Hugh had been sick in bed with pneumonia. One night he got out of his head; got up and dressed; put on his cap, overcoat and overshoes; and went out to the barn and saddled up a horse. He didn't remember anything about that, but when he came to himself, he was about two miles south of Owaneco and the horse was all wet with sweat. He was about 10 miles from home.

He stopped at our place on his way home and told us his trouble. That was before Beulah and I were married. It's a wonder the trip didn't kill him, but it never seemed to hurt him.

## Our Wedding

Beulah set the date--March 10, 1920, as that was her baby sister's 5th birthday. My folks moved to Taylorville about two weeks before that, so I batched and tried to fix things up so Beulah would be willing to stay with me. I painted the woodwork inside and papered the entire house. Then, we (Beulah and I) went to town and ordered our furniture. Even at that, it was awhile after we were married before they could get it out to us. The roads were so bad.

I drove the horse to the buggy over at Masters. I had a whole new outfit of clothes. I had even stopped at a barber shop in Taylorville and got a "real bath."

The wedding was to be that evening at Beulah's folks. My folks were supposed to be there, but it was so rainy, and the roads were so bad that they couldn't make it.

Beulah's uncle Danny Masters performed the ceremony. When it was over, Beulah's mother was crying. I didn't know what I was supposed to do. I really felt that I could too.

Then we sat down to the wedding dinner. I guess it was customary for the groom to feel a little

confused. Uncle Danny told us about one wedding dinner that the groom glanced down and saw the edge of the tablecloth and thought his shirt tail was out. He started stuffing it in. Soon the dishes started to move, and he realized what he was doing. I didn't do quite that bad. At that time, getting married was something that a person didn't get much practice on. The first time was usually the only time. Now it seems that a lot go through it several times.

The next morning I asked Uncle Danny how much I owed him for "tying the knot." He said, "Whatever you think it was worth to you." I said I would have to wait awhile to know that, but I gave him \$5.00 or \$10.00. That was as much as I felt like risking that early in the game, besides my finances were mighty thin.

We hitched the horse to the buggy, and I took Beulah to her new home. The hill at Hays was about all the horse could make. I began to think I was going to have to get out and push. Bert Hays was waiting at the top of the hill to greet us.

When we got home, the house looked pretty empty because it was. Our furniture had not been brought out yet. We used a big box for the table. We had an old oil burner to cook on. We did have a bed and a couple old chairs.

Then they came to chivaree us. We had the treats, but they all had to stand or squat around the walls. We made out, and I guess the others did too.

My folks gave us a horse and a cow and the "loan" of many things. Beulah's folks gave us a horse, a cow and a sow.

### **My Folks from 1920 On**

Two weeks before Beulah and I were married, my folks moved to a 4½ acre place in the City Park addition to Taylorville. It was a brand-new house, but had not quite been finished. The bathroom had never been finished, and there was no electricity or running water. Of course, they were not used to these

modern conveniences, as there were none in the house they had left. They had a well just north of the back door. The outdoor toilet (privy) was about 100 feet west of the back door. There was a basement under the house, but it was not concreted (the floor). There was a small porch at the back door and four or five steps from the ground to the porch. There was a large front porch with a roof over it with plenty of room for the whole family to gather there. Curtis and Vinola were still at home, but Ormond and I were married.

The folks had taken out a Federal Land Bank loan on the Home Place to buy the new place. They borrowed all they could get on their farm. It was a 30-year loan, I believe, and the payments were \$107 twice a year.

As this was a new place, there was no garden, orchard or anything, but my folks liked to have fruit trees, flowers and a garden. They set out fruit trees and flowers, and my mother soon had a large variety of peonies and iris.

Dad, with Curtis's help, bid on building a levee on the Owaneco Road over toward Owaneco where the Locust Creek flooded the road during the high water and got the job. He bought 20 "slip scrapers" and hired 20 farmers with teams to run the scrapers. He did a good job, and later he bid on a larger job over by Palmer. He was lucky that the creek didn't come up before he got thru to wash out what he had done.

When the County decided to build a levee across the Dappert Bottom across the South Fork, they hired Dad to run the job. They still used the horses and scrapers for this job. Most of the dirt for the levee was taken from the east side of the levee, and this was all timber, so the trees and stumps had to be taken out of the way. The trees were sawed down and the wood and the brush burned or removed. Then they hired Bud Smith, an experienced hand with dynamite, to remove the stumps. He had a trailer and lived there on the job and kept the stumps out of the way of the scrapers.

"Shady Lane" had the job of building the bridge across the creek. I worked for him on this job. I got 50 cents an hour and did all kinds of work from digging out for the piers to pouring the floor of the bridge.

My mother increased her flower business and sold iris plants and peony plants all over the country besides having a large sale of cut flowers for Decoration Day. Dad helped with the flower gardens and got a job as caretaker of the grounds at the new high school.

I forgot to tell about landscaping the grounds for the athletic field of the new high school. Dad took this job with his slip scrapers. The ground had to be just so, and it took quite a while to do. Ormond and I both used teams on this job. We had to join the Teamsters Union to work on this job. I worked on the levee job on the Owaneco Road, but it was not a union job, neither was the work on the bridge in the Dappert Bottom.

My sister Vinola Brookens married Hugh E. Masters on March 5, 1922. They lived on the "McDonald" place north of his folks for about two years. They lived on three or four different farms and farmed. Then Hugh quit farming and worked for Sugar Creek Creamery. He ran a milk truck for several years and later worked in the creamery. They had three children: Wanda Louise (Masters) (Jackson) Easley lives in Morrisonville; Wayne E. Masters lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Arlen Masters lives in Washington state. Vinola died in 1960 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Hugh died in 1967 in Decatur. Both are buried in Mound Chapel Cemetery.

Curtis Brookens married Ruth Ettinger on January 4, 1931. Curtis was working for a construction company that worked for a long time in the South building dams and sea walls around Biloxi, Mississippi and New Orleans. He was hurt in a concrete mixer accident and was permanently disabled. They built a new house on 40 acres northwest of Clarksdale. Later, when my folks moved to Pana, Curtis moved on the City Park place. When my folks died, Curtis got that

place.

Dad had a stroke about 1945 and never fully recovered, but my mother insisted on taking care of him herself as long as she could. Then they moved to Pana near Vinola and Hugh, so they could help look after them.

Dad died in Pana on May 15, 1950. My mother died in Pana on June 27, 1952.

Ormond married Ruth Shivers on February 20, 1915 in Montgomery County. They lived on the "Church 80" from the time the house was built for a few years, then moved to the Large place 3/4 mile east of Oak Ridge corner where he continued farming until they bought a 10-acre place in Kincaid. They moved there and Ormond worked at Mine No. 7 till it closed down; then he worked at Mine No. 8 till it closed down, and he retired.

Ormond's wife Ruth died on April 7, 1951, and Ormond died May 9, 1984 (both in Christian County).

Curtis Brookens died August 16, 1962 in Taylorville, and his wife Ruth died February 25, 1969. Both are buried in Mound Chapel Cemetery.

My brother James Brookens died August 1917 of appendicitis and is buried in Mound Chapel Cemetery.

## **Our First Home**

I had borrowed about 400 dollars to buy furniture, gave a note for one year. I had to buy grain to feed the stock. We sold a little cream and had a few chickens, but we learned a lot the first year. The cream would not buy many groceries. The grocer told me not to worry, to go ahead and buy what we needed and he would trust us. We had a \$100 grocery bill at the end of the first year. I said never again. If we don't have the money, we won't buy extra groceries. We never owed a grocery bill again.

I did go in debt for machinery, etc., once in awhile. I remember once we had a bill coming due and nothing to meet it with. I looked around the garden and loaded up potatoes and anything else that might



sell. In a couple days I had the money to pay the bill.

Before one of Beulah's birthdays, I was talking to some neighbors about it and they suggested having a party and serving ice cream. They would chip in to pay for it. I got 5 gallons of ice cream. The party went over fine, and everyone seemed to have a good time. After it was over, everyone went home and not a word was said about chipping in to pay for the ice cream. I had to take the empty container back the next morning and pay for the ice cream. I didn't have a dollar so I caught enough old hens to pay for it.

I had a note for the furniture at the Farmers National Bank. When it was about to come due, I went in to see about renewing it. Ed Adams, the president of the bank, said they would have to have half paid down before they could renew the balance.

I went to Colgroves Bank. They said if I would transfer my account to their bank, they would loan me the money to pay the note off, so that's what I did.

Incidentally, Ed Adams was the one who bought my war bond, which I cashed to get money to start up with. We were nearly forced to buy a \$100 bond before going across. We paid for it with \$10 a month out of our pay. It was paid for before I got home. I took it to the bank, and Adams gave me \$95 for it--not a cent of interest. I always felt it was a "gyp."

We gradually got a little more stock. We sold a couple batches of hogs a year and had more cream to sell, but we always lived within our means. We went to town in a buggy while nearly all our neighbors drove cars. I didn't see how we could afford to buy gas if we had a car, but we risked it and bought a brand new Ford, one of the first closed cars. Boy, was that a change! Believe it or not, it seemed we had just as much money to spare for other things as we had before or maybe even more.

We lived on the Brookens Home Place for five years. Then Aunt Sade and Uncle Louis Henney wanted to retire and move to town, and they asked us to move onto their place and farm it. We had more good ground

there so it was quite an improvement. When they became dissatisfied in town, I told them to move back on the farm if they would be better satisfied there and that we would find a place. Mr. Henney said he would help us find a good place.

We finally rented the Debar place south of Owaneco. We had a lot more ground. Dan Howell's lived there before we moved in. There was no fence around the lot that would hold the stock. I had to shut the stock in the barn till I could get the fences fixed up. The house was old, but in fair shape. It had no basement, but there was a small cave. The ground was pretty good, but some was pretty wet. There was about 10 acres of pasture a quarter west of the barn with no lane to get to it, but stock could be driven down the road, fenced on both sides. There was 20 acres of pasture a half mile north with no lane to get to it. We lived there three years, and I built a lane from the 10-acre pasture to the 20-acre pasture.

We had good neighbors. Camerons lived south of us and we worked together and visited a lot. They sold me a team of small mules that had not been broken yet, but they helped me break them. "Tom" was a small, dark mule and was a pill. You had to keep a pole between him and you or he would kick you. He would try his best not to do any work. "Whistle" was a chunky, little "cotton mule," so called because mules like him were so handy to plow cotton with. I would hitch him up with three regular-sized horses, and he would stay right up with them, not a lazy bone in his body. I usually worked him half a day, then put another horse in his place.

We had 20 acres of timothy hay one year. It looked so nice and clean that I thought it would pay to cut it with a binder and thresh it, and we would still have the hay. I talked to Robert Debar who was looking after the place for his aunt who lived in Colorado and he thought it would be O.K. The manager of the elevator in Owaneco agreed to give me \$1.00 a bushel for the seed. After I had it threshed, I took it to him and it had buckhorn seed in it. He would

only give me 50 cents a bushel. I took a sample to McWard's in Taylorville and he agreed to pay me 75 cents a bushel, but we would have to bring the seed there and help clean it. We took two wagon loads of timothy seed down the hard road to Taylorville. Art Cameron hauled one load and helped us clean it. We baled the hay after threshing it.

One spring, Mr. Kettlekamp, who worked for John Law, said he had a son 10 years old and a very good worker that he wanted me to hire for the summer. He wanted \$10 per month. I hired Everette and he was a lot of help. He could handle horses almost as good as a grownup. I didn't give him any hard jobs to do.

When I planted corn, Everette harrowed with four horses and I planted. Once I was at the north end of the field with the planter. As I turned to go south, I saw Everette at the south end of the field and something shining on the ground. I threw off the wire and ran my team to the other end. In turning with the harrow, a horse had stepped on a corner of the harrow and flipped the two-section harrow upside down. It came so close to Everette that the harrow caught his jacket pocket and tore it off. If that harrow had fallen on him, it would have very likely killed him, but he was standing there holding his lines more calm than I was. The horses didn't act like anything had happened.

While Everette was helping us, we took a day off and went to Springfield to visit the State House and Lincoln's home.

One summer I hired a married man to help me for a short time, just by the day. When plowing corn, if a shovel got loose, he couldn't fix a thing. We were to start threshing at a neighbor's on Monday morning. This fellow went home over Sunday and was to be there Monday. He didn't show up. I called Dad and he came and helped me. This fellow pulled in Monday night. I asked where he was all day. He said he went fishing with a bunch. I told him he could go ahead and fish; I was through with him.

We bought the Home Place from my folks and had a

public sale and sold all but what I thought I would need to farm the 80 acres. The renter on the place had not been notified that he would have to move and could not find a place, so I rented the Shuler place for one year. We had a very wet spring that year, and the corn was so late that it was still soft at frost.

While we were on the Shuler place, some of the folks wanted to get up a play and wanted me to help them. We practiced at Oak Ridge School. One night it rained hard all the time we were practicing. We were with Lowell Boston in his wagon. There was Lowell and Gladis Boston, Zelma Wicker and me. When we got to the top of the hill east of Henneys, the water was way over the floor of the bridge. We put the team in the barn at Henneys, and the two girls stayed at Henneys. Lowell and I pulled off our pants and waded across the bridge and bottom and went home. We were lucky there were no planks washed off the bridge.

We put the show on at several different schools, the last time at the high school in Assumption. That was the only place we had ever played where they had lights and everything fixed "according to Hoyle."

### **On Our Own Place**

The next spring, we moved onto our own place, ours less what we still owed on it. I had always thought if we could just get a place of our own, any kind of a place, we would be "sitting on top of the world." It was a wonderful sensation.

But soon came the Depression. We had a small note at the bank, and I was trying to get enough to pay it. I took a couple checks to the bank to deposit. The bank was closed. There were several standing outside. I asked them how come they were closed. One of them said, "They are not going to open. They are closed down."

I had to "dig up" enough money to pay off my note. I never lost a cent. I think those who had money in the bank eventually got 5 percent of the money they had in the bank. All the banks in

Christian County, except the Palmer State Bank, were closed.

John B. Colgrove and Harvey Golliger of Colgroves Bank spent a year each in jail because they wanted to help the poor man and didn't require enough collateral.

When we moved onto our place, there were 8 rows of asparagus in the garden south of the house and a row of rhubarb. This helped us to have a little income to help with groceries, etc.

We would gather the asparagus after I came in from the field. After supper we washed and bunched it ready to take to town in the morning. I had a couple cows to milk and horses and hogs to feed. The trip to town was by horse and buggy. The horse also had to work in the field after I got home. The asparagus had to be cut every other day. We got 25 cents a bunch on the start of the crop, but sometimes it did not sell so good. The rhubarb brought 2 cents a pound. The trip to town spoiled the forenoon.

## **Apple and Peach Orchards**

I decided we needed an orchard. Grandpa Dappert had set out an orchard north of the house when he first bought the place, but most of it had died out. I gathered up apple seeds and peach seeds and planted them early in the spring. In August the peaches were ready to bud. I bought some raffia, tough, grasslike leaves. Then I got first-year twigs from the kind of peach trees that I wanted in our orchard. I won't take space here telling all about the budding process, but after the bud was inserted, it was tied with the raffia. The tree growing in the spring would usually break the raffia before it damaged the tree.

The next spring you could easily tell which buds had united and were growing. I removed the trees on which the buds had not united. The others were left till next spring. The tops were cut off a little way above the bud the first spring after budding. After the one summer's growth of the new bud, the tree is ready to set in the orchard early in the spring.

For the apple trees, one-year "whips" were dug late in the fall and placed in a box of sand in the basement. Then I got new growth twigs from all the kinds of apple trees that I thought I would want in the orchard. These twigs were labeled so I knew the kind they were. I cut the top off the apple trees and whip-grafted them and tied each kind in a separate bunch. These were buried, top and all, in the box of sand and left till early spring. No moisture was added to the sand, just basement moisture. The next spring the grafts had practically all united. These were set out in a row about a foot apart and left till the next spring when they were set out in the orchard.

We had nearly two acres of apple orchard and 21 different kinds of apples. It would have been much better if I had put out one tree of each kind and the rest of the orchard had been two or three of the best market-type apples. We got a lot of good from the orchard. I think that there is one apple tree left, a yellow transparent.

### **English Walnuts**

I read an article in the Country Gentleman magazine about a missionary from Canada who found English-type walnuts growing in the Carpathian Mountains in Poland. The Canadian Nut Growers heard about this and sent the fellow Mr. Crath back to Poland to collect all these nuts he could. They were offering some of the nuts he brought back to interested folks in different parts of the country to plant experimentally. I got 9 of these nuts and planted them. I got 4 trees from them and set them along the south side of the garden south of the house.

They began bearing in about 9 years. They had to be protected from rabbits until they were large trees. There was a black walnut tree just east of the row of English walnut trees. We planted many of the nuts and gave many to neighbors and friends all around. We found that some were crossed with black walnuts. They made faster growing trees, but the nuts were no good.

Crath Carpathian English walnuts are now offered for sale at many nurseries. The nuts are just as good as those shipped in from California, but the trees are short-lived. The squirrels love the nuts and start eating them as soon as there is any kernel in the nut.

## **Terraces**

I attended a soil conservation meeting and demonstration on a farm down by Rosamond where they had built a lot of terraces. This looked like it could help on our place.

Roscoe Hawkins also decided to build some terraces. Mr. Brock, our Farm Advisor, laid out the terraces and supervised the building. I helped Roscoe with his and then we built ours. Mr. Brock came here from Union County and had a lot of experience there with fruit trees. He demonstrated to me how to trim my peach and apple trees.

We used an old township grader with four horses on it to make the terraces. I sowed grass on the terraces and they did a lot to conserve soil. We had several big washes that we had to level off. The terraces kept them from washing out again. They also made a lot of extra trouble to farm over and around, but I recommend them for very rolling ground.

## **Berries**

I set out a raspberry patch next to the lane on the south slope north of the peach orchard. I had several rows next to the lane and some blackberries and below that a strawberry patch. We had to hire help picking, especially with the strawberries. We paid 5 cents a quart for picking. The strawberries were practically through before the raspberries started ripening. We had as many as 13 helping at a time. When we finished picking, I would take them to town to sell all that wasn't sold at home. They sold fine at the beginning of the crop, but later I sometimes had trouble getting rid of them all.

One time I had a crate of raspberries that it looked like I was going to have to take home when I found a storekeeper who said he would like to have a crate, but he had loaded up on a lot of pineapples and couldn't take the berries. He said he would trade a crate of pineapples for a crate of raspberries. I took him up on it. I didn't know much about pineapples, only that they made good preserves.

Beulah got the job of putting up the pineapple preserves. I didn't have to leave home, but I got orders--"No more pineapples."

## Melons

One or two years we had a melon patch on the slope below the berry patch. We had Irish Grey watermelons. About 20 pounds was the largest we had, but they were the sweetest melons I ever saw. Everyone bragged about how good they were. We sold a lot of them--2 cents a pound. We also had a lot of muskmelons. Everytime anybody came, we filled them up on muskmelons and watermelons.

At that time, we had a drive across the south side of the place to get to the west part of the place. One Sunday afternoon we happened to see a buggy going back west. We figured they were up to something as they could go back to the pasture and get to the melon patch without us seeing them. Beulah's folks were here and a couple of us went back. The horse and buggy were at the gate to the pasture, and one of the boys that was with them, but wanted nothing to do with swiping melons, was sitting in the buggy.

We took the horse and buggy to the house and tied it up. The largest melon in the patch was about 20 pounds. I had been watching it because I wanted to be sure that it was ripe before I picked it. I slipped back to the patch and saw two boys walking out with the biggest melon.

We knew they would have to come after their horse and buggy. It was nearly dark when they finally came in. I made them pay for the melon before they could take the rig.



## **Elsie Has Appendicitis**

When Elsie was about 3 years old, she got sick. She had a stomachache so we gave her a laxative, which was the usual remedy for a stomachache. She got worse so we took her to Dr. Tankersley in Taylorville. While we were waiting in the waiting room, Elsie fainted so the doctor saw her right away.

The doctor told us that she had appendicitis and Dr. Mercer was going to operate on her, but he had to have \$10 before he would do anything. I had a check for a little over \$10, but I had to run downtown and cash it so Dr. Mercer could have his money before he would do a thing.

After the operation, we visited Elsie in the Recovery Room. The Sister told us that they got her just in time, as her appendix was just ready to burst, and that little ones go awfully quick. Elsie recovered nicely and was soon as good as new.

## **I Have Appendicitis**

About a year after Elsie's operation, I got pains in my stomach and was vomiting so they took me to the doctor. Dr. Tankersley said, "You know what your trouble is just as well as I do. You get to the hospital as soon as you can."

Dr. Tankersley operated on me himself. After the operation I was in the recovery room and just starting to come to when someone came to the door and said, "Well, you're a new fellow in here. What are you in here for?"

I heard a nurse say, "Here, here, you are not supposed to be in here." She took him out. It was Dr. Fraser, an old retired doctor that used to live in Vanderville and had his office there. He died that night.

After I got fully awake, the doctor brought my appendix in and showed it to me. He had it in alcohol, and it was about the size of a small wienie. He said when he saw what condition it was in, he

opened me up more so as not to burst it. He said it was about ready to break.

My operation was in the spring at farming time, and I remember Ormond and Hugh helped me get my crops in.

## **Measles**

Elsie started to school while we lived on the Henny Place. Gerald Boston was the teacher and he had five beginners that year. During the term, Elsie got the measles, and of course, Harold got them. As Beulah had missed the measles as a kid, she got them from the kids. They didn't seem to make the kids very sick, but Beulah was in bed for a spell. I had had the measles when I was supposed to, so I could look after the sick folks. I guess the kids were over them before Beulah got them.

## **Mumps**

While we were on the Shuler Place, Elsie and Harold both got the mumps. I don't think it bothered them very much. I don't think they were even sick, but this time it was me that had missed the mumps as a kid, so I took them from the kids. I don't think I was really sick with them, but everyone said that I would have to be very careful as they could have some bad side effects on a grown man.

I was feeding green corn to the hogs, and I remember Curtis came out and "snapped" some corn for me to feed the hogs so I wouldn't have to do that. The mumps left me with no permanent effects that I know of.

## **Peddling Apples, Cider, Etc.**

When we bought the Home Place, there were several apple trees left in the orchard south of the house. We would get several bushels and take them to the cider mill. John Dappert made cider while he

lived on his Dad's place, and Bert Burchfield also had a small cider mill at one time.

We would pick several bushels of apples and take them and the cider in the wagon to Taylorville to peddle to the residents. The cider sold for 50 cents a gallon and the apples from \$1.00 per bushel down to 50 cents. We usually had pretty good luck getting rid of them.

### **Harold and Harry Oliver Start a Fire (Nearly)**

Our son Harold and Harry Oliver Chesterman were about the same age and played together as kids. Once when they were pretty small, they were playing in the hay mow at Chesterman's. There was a door on the north side where they put the hay into the mow. The floor was bare by the door, but there was hay in the rest of the mow. They had some matches and decided to build a little fire just inside the door. After they got it started, they decided it wasn't such a good idea so they put it out before it got much of a start. Harold told us about it when he got home.

At the start of World War II, Harold and Harry Oliver both joined the navy as aviation cadets. Harold finished the training, got his commission as a pilot and served in the Pacific on carriers as a fighter pilot. Harry failed the tests and never got overseas in the war.

### **The F-14 Tractor**

Mr. Huddleston, who lived north of the Shuler Place, was retiring and wanted to sell all of his farm machinery together. He had an F-14 International tractor that I wanted, so I bought it all. I had been using horses up till then.

The tractor was on steel wheels with lugs and it pulled a two-bottom plow. High gear gave it a speed of three miles per hour, and low gear was a lot slower.

I farmed Jimmy Norris' ground one year. I spent

a lot of time on the road. If a storm came up, I usually got wet before I could get to the house. It was quite an improvement over horse farming. I also farmed Chesterman's place one year with the F-14. When we farmed more ground, we gradually began to get a little more income, and we gradually got more milk cows. We quit selling cream to Colliers and started selling to Litchfield Creamery.

### **Pulling and Cutting Sprouts in the Pasture**

The pasture on the Church 80 had grown up in brush, and Ormond thought it would be a good idea if we tried to clean it out. I used my F-14 tractor. Ormond and Noah Painter used axes and spades while I used the tractor and log chains. Together we pulled and grubbed out most of the sprouts in the pasture. It was mostly hedge sprouts, some pretty large. We hitched the chain quite a ways up on the tree. Then I started pulling while Ormond and Noah dug to uncover the larger roots and chopped them. The small sprouts we cut off below the ground with a sharp spade.

We did an awful lot of work, we thought, for my folks, but as it turned out it really benefited the lake. That is all part of Lake Taylorville now. I ruined the clutch on my tractor and had to get a new one.

### **Our Boy Scout Troop**

In the 1930's we organized a Boy Scout Troop with Mound Church as sponsor. We had a nice group of boys. I was Scout Master and Lawrence Leslie was Assistant. I don't remember all the members of the Troop Council, but Clarence Klinefelter was one of the members. Once he took the troop to Springfield in his truck to visit the State House and Lincoln's Home.

Several of our scouts were later in World War II. Dean Hawkins died on the ship Arizona in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Theodore Large died in the war, and Eugene Ryan was the only survivor of a

plane crash somewhere in Africa. He was so badly burned that he spent a long time in the hospital and never recovered 100 percent. Rodell Silveus won a battlefield promotion to lieutenant. Edward Hays was a member of the original 82nd Airborne Division. Only a small group of the original members of the 82nd Division returned. James Wilson was a prisoner most of his time in the war. I don't remember the record of all of our former scouts, but they did their full part.

### **Auto Accident**

In the early 1930's we decided to go to the County Fair. Beulah, Harold, Keith (Ormond's oldest boy) and I were in the 1930 Ford going about 40 miles an hour. At the crossroad which now goes to the Golf Course, a car coming from the west hit our car. Our car ended up on its left side in a field northeast of the corner. I turned off the key and said, "Is anybody hurt?"

Nobody said a word for a little while, then Harold said, "Get this car off of me." His feet had gone out the window and the car was on his feet and legs. I crawled out through the top window. There were about 4 folks standing in the middle of the road beside their car which was laying on its side. I told them to come and help me get the car off the boy. They came and got hold of the top of the car and lifted it up onto its wheels. I pulled Harold out as soon as his legs were free, but Beulah had fallen thru the broken window and cut the inside of her left arm to the bone and cut all the tendons in her arm.

A young fellow came along in a pick-up truck and took us to the hospital. Beulah's arm was bleeding a lot. I tried to make a tourniquet and held it with my hand. Evidently I didn't have it tight enough as there was blood all over the truck floor.

Dr. Tankersley let me watch till they were ready to hunt for the tendons to fasten them together. He said that was going to be quite a job and that I had

better not watch it, so I went out of the room. When I went back, they had the tendons all together and the meat on Beulah's arm sure showed signs of a lot of abuse. I watched them sew it up. Beulah had not been put to sleep for the repair work. They got everything back together, and she has been able to use all her fingers, her wrist and everything as good as before.

### **Allis Chalmers Tractor**

My folks had bought out the other heirs on the "Church 80," except for Aunt Lue Shover, so they owned 4/5 of it. I was farming the ground. The house was rented separately. I was plowing back in the bottom one day when one of Keller Brother's of Nokomis came and wanted to sell me a new Allis W\*D tractor. He made me such a good trade-in offer on my F-14 that I took him up on it. I drove the tractor home and they brought the Allis on a truck and took my F-14.

I got a three-bottom plow with it. Boy, the new tractor was so fast and had so much power that it almost scared me on the start. I could handle more farm ground so I farmed Amy Hawkins' ground one year and another year I farmed Ona Henney's ground.

### **Tractor Rolls to the Creek**

I had been mowing with the Allis tractor on the west side of the place. I started to the house and had driven thru the gap on the hill next to the creek and went back to shut the gap. I thought I had put the brake on, but when I finished shutting the gap, the tractor had started down the hill. I started after it, but it had run under a tree and limbs had caught on it and blocked the seat so I said to heck with it. Down the creek bank it went. The front wheels were almost in the water when they hit a tree and stopped it. All I had to do was put it into reverse and back out. I was so sure I was going to have to get somebody to bring a tractor and drag it out of the creek, which would have been a job with the

mower on the tractor. Another case of just being lucky.

## Milk Cows

When we were first married, Beulah's father gave us a milk cow, Old Bob, so called because part of her tail was missing. She was a pretty good milk cow, mostly Jersey, and was our start toward a herd of Jersey cows. My brother Curtis bought a Jersey calf that was pure-bred or nearly so. I kept her till she grew up and came fresh. In a year or two something went bad with her, and we had to sell her on the market.

I think we bought a calf once in a while but we eventually had six milk cows of mixed breeds. I bought good Jersey bulls, practically pure-bred. I think one was eligible to register, so our herd gradually became Jersey.

Then they started artificial insemination for cattle, and all their bulls were registered. We quit keeping a bull and bred all our cows artificially. They had a technician that you would call early in the morning when you needed him and tell him what breed of cow you had. He would come that day and artificially breed your cow. It was a relief not to have to keep a bull as I had trouble with a couple bulls and was always afraid they might hurt someone.

We joined the Dairy Herd Improvement Association. A tester would come around once a month and weigh and test the milk in the evening and again in the morning of each cow. He kept a record and at the end of the year gave you a report on your herd of how much milk and how much butter fat each cow had produced in the year.

The members of the Dairy Herd Improvement Association visited two or three farms each year to see how they cared for their herds.

Our dairy barn, milking parlor and entire set-up was inspected occasionally. If they found that everything was not "spick and span," you could lose your license to sell Grade A milk.

Our herd kept improving and in 1957 we had three Jersey cows that ranked in the top in the state. We got the trophy to keep for the year. In 1958 I had so much trouble with arthritis that I was having to get help with the milking. I saw the auctioneer and got a date for a sale. We sold all but two of our milk cows and all of our dairy equipment. When we had our sale, every head of cattle on the place was from artificial breeding, and our herd was bred up to where we could have registered them. We were milking 20 cows when we sold out. The creamery that bought our milk told us we were going to have to go on bulk pickup, where they pump the milk out of our tank into their tank truck. That would have been a very expensive change-over, so I guess we were lucky that we were quitting anyway.

I have always said that quitting milking was one of the wisest decisions I ever made. We sold separated milk to Colliers Brothers in Taylorville till we had more cows. We fed the separated milk to the hogs. It was richer than this 2% milk you buy at the store now. (I tell Beulah it is hog feed.)

When our herd got bigger, we started selling whole milk to Litchfield Creamery. I liked their ice cream better than any other we could buy. Later, we started selling milk to a creamery in Springfield and continued until we quit milking. From the time we started selling whole milk, Beulah and I worked together at the milking and taking care of the milk. A truck would pick up the milk every morning, and we had to have the milk in the cooler and cool before the milk truck came.

After our sale of the dairy herd, I sure got lonesome. It seemed I had nothing to do, only two cows. I kept two as one would be dry part of the time. We had more milk than we could use and not enough to bother selling milk so I would go to the sale barn and buy a two or three-day-old calf that someone wanted to get rid of. If it was a dairy type calf, I would feed it till I could sell it for veal. If it was a beef type calf, I would keep it till I could sell it as a "feeder."



I went to a farm sale and bought two registered Short-Horn cows, but decided I didn't want Short-Horn cattle, so I bought two registered Hereford cows. They had two dandy bull calves. I kept them and fed them till they were about a year old. They were dandies, fat as butterballs, the first calves I had ever "fed out" and the last, but I was really proud of those two steers.

Jersey cattle and most other breeds of cattle have horns, and it is best if these are taken off. The easiest way to get rid of them is when the calf is very small. I have cut them out with my pocket knife as soon as I could find them. I have also rubbed caustic on them and it ate them out. If the horns are left to grow until the cow is one or two years old, they get long, and on Jerseys they are very hard and hard to cut. We used to tie the cow's head down tight and saw them off with a hand saw. The blood would fly in every direction. We would spread pine tar around the place we had cut the horn off to keep flies out of it or they would lay eggs and maggots would get in the sore before it healed up.

I bought a pair of dehorning shears, a contraption that slipped down over the horn and laid flat against the head with a knife that would clip the horn right next to the head. It had two long handles that would give you a lot of leverage. We were dehorning a two-year-old Jersey cow and thought we had her tied up tight. I slipped the dehorners over one horn and by putting everything I had into it, I got the first horn off. Then I put them on the other horn and was squeezing just as hard as I could. Somehow the cow jerked her head. The horn fell off and the dehorners also fell, and I couldn't pick them up with either hand or both.

I went to the doctor and they x-rayed my left shoulder (which hurt the most). The doctor said it wasn't broken, just a bad sprain, so I went home. I couldn't use that arm.

The next day they called me back in. I had a lot of things I needed to be doing, but I sat and

waited as folks kept coming in and got taken care of. I finally decided to leave. Just as I got to the door, a nurse came running and said I couldn't leave, that they had sent the x-ray to Springfield and my shoulder was broken. It had cracked the socket. I guess it almost pulled it out of the socket. That was about the last time I ever used the dehorner.

Besides dehorning, calves had to be vaccinated and the doctor would put a stenciled number in their ears. The veterinarian would bring a chute that we could run a calf or cow into and that had an opening for its head and a clamp to hold its head steady. The chute could be used for dehorning and castrating bull calves if you wanted to keep them as steers.

While I am telling about cows, I just thought of a rather unusual incident. I had a cow that I wanted to take to a bull, and the closest bull was two miles away. The cow was gentle and halter broke so I started walking down the road with her. She was going along so nice with my hand on her back that I wondered what she would do if I jumped up on her front shoulders. Up I went and she just kept going as if that was the natural thing. I rode that cow on down the road about as fast as she could walk.

Another time I tried riding a cow was when I worked for Charley Morrell. Going after the cows and milking were part of my chores. One evening I went after the cows and they were across the creek way down in the north end of the pasture. I had to go down the road and cross the bridge to get the cows. When I started to drive them across the creek, I thought why walk over to the bridge so I jumped on the back of one of the old milk cows that was gentle and rode her across the creek. She worked so good that I later got Harold and Milford both on her back and took their picture. Years later when they were grown, I had the picture put in the Breeze-Courier.

## **Jersey and Guernsey Bulls**

A bull of any breed is unpredictable, but

Jerseys are most liable to be dangerous. Before we went on artificial breeding for our cows, we always kept a bull. Most of them were pretty gentle, but it was very easy to spoil one.

While we were on the Shuler place, I had a gentle Jersey bull that had never caused a bit of trouble. One day Lowell Boston asked if he could breed his cow to our bull. I told him to go ahead and take her to the pasture. When he got in our pasture, the bull saw the cow and naturally came on the run. Lowell had a halter on the cow, but he got scared and turned the cow loose and ran. When he ran, the bull decided to forget the cow and chase Lowell. I had to take a pitchfork along with me when I got the cows that evening, and I had to stick the bull a couple of times to make him leave me alone. I had to watch him for quite a while after that.

Another time I had a Jersey bull that was almost a prize winner in looks and for producing good-type Jerseys. He had always been gentle. One day I was looking after the fences when I saw that the bull was not with the cows. I finally found him in the bottom corn field. I had a wire gap into the field and the top wire had come loose and the bull had gotten thru.

I opened the gap and went in after the bull. It was late summer and the corn was tasseled out. I walked up to the bull and tried to explain to him that I wanted him to go out the gap, but he had other ideas. He just stood with his head down as if to dare me to make him move. I didn't have a stick of any kind, and I knew that if I turned around to get away, he would take me. I just stood there facing him and pulled out my pocket knife and cut a corn stalk and cut the small end off. I took it like I was going to kill him with it and darned if he didn't turn around and walk out the gap. It sure surprised me.

Just as he got thru the gap, I saw Herman Goodall and another fellow walking across the pasture. I hollered to them and said, "Watch out, the bull is mad." Then the bull saw them and went after them as fast as he could. The other fellow made it to the

fence and Herman climbed a honey locust tree. I don't remember how I got the bull away from Herman, but I think I drove all the cows to the house. I still see Herman once in awhile and always think of him climbing the honey locust tree, thorns and all.

Later, that same bull took after Harold in the lot. Harold started to run and and fell. The bull stumbled on Harold and also fell, then got up and walked away. We didn't see this, but Harold told us about it afterwards. I would say it was a miracle that the bull didn't butt him.

Another time I had a young Guernsey bull. He had horns about six inches long. I don't know what went wrong, but he was lifting the gates off the pins the hinges hooked on. He acted crazy. I had a new axe handle that I had not put an axe head on yet. I grabbed it and went after the bull. He came at me with his head down. I beat him over the head and nose with it till I was ashamed of myself, but he wouldn't budge. I was near the fence and Beulah was standing there watching me. I knew if I turned around, he would take me so I told Beulah to get the gun. I had nothing but a rifle. She wasn't going to get it, but she finally did and handed it to me. I shot him thru the end of his nose, and he turned around and ran off. I went to the house and called Leslie Lane who had been hauling my stock to St. Louis and told him I had a bull to send.

The only other experience I have had with a bull happened since we moved to town. Joe McAdam and I went out to our daughter Elsie's place to go fishing. We walked down the lane going back to the lake, but we cut across the field coming back and climbed over the gate into the lot. I was ahead and had just gotten over the gate when a young short-horn bull saw me and ran as fast as he could right at me. I didn't have a stick, but I picked up a dead corn stalk and drew back with it like I would kill him with it. He stopped within four feet of me with his head down, but he turned around and walked away. This was a young bull that had never acted a bit hostile before and likely

never did again, but if I had run, he would have tried it again.

My advice is to never trust any bull, but don't run from them. If you do, they will take after you.

## Wild Hogs

One day I went back to the pasture and saw where hogs or something had rooted around. The next day more had been rooted up. I decided that somebody had some hogs that had better be shut up. I finally found six or eight shoats that weighed about 60 pounds each. When I was in town, I mentioned the hogs to Roy Oller, who ran the filling station. He said, "I'll bet I know whose hogs they are." He said a fellow east of town had bought some shoats at the community sale. The pigs were brought up from down south. The fellow had taken them home and shut them in the barn. The next morning they were gone; they had rooted out.

Roy called the fellow on the phone and the next day he came. We tried to drive the pigs up to the house to corral them, but we had no luck, they were so wild. We decided they had been raised in the timber and were not used to being shut up.

The fellow came back and brought some corn and scattered it on the ground near our lot. The pigs found it in the night, but the next day they were gone. We tried every way to corral them, but had no luck. Some neighbors helped me catch two and the owner came and got them. By this time they were getting pretty big. We finally decided to shoot them and call the owner. We ran those hogs all over the country. Frank Barnes finally killed one and the owner insisted on giving Frank a mess of meat from it. It was a male and weighed about 150 pounds.

Mrs. Barnes started to fry the meat, but when it started to fry, Frank told her to throw it out. Several folks had quite a thrill out of hunting wild hogs. We finally got the last one. Several of us with guns ran it several miles before we finally killed it. We called the owner and he came and got it. We sure didn't want it.

## Witching for Water

I think it was soon after we were married that I first learned about witching for water. I think my folks told me that the well north of the house on the Brookens Home Place had been dug where someone had located a vein of water. They said he had used a peach forked stick. I experimented with a peach fork and it worked for me. I followed the vein west to the creek, and on the bank of the creek down near the water level I found a trickle of water coming out of the ground.

When we were kids, while working back on the west side of the place near the creek, we would hunt a "spring" along the bank of the creek. If we found one, we would dig out a small place, and when it filled with water, we could get a drink anytime we got thirsty. It was nice clear, cold water. Now I had found out why there were springs along the creek.

I kept experimenting with a forked stick and learned how to locate a vein of water and how to tell where two veins crossed, which made a very good place to dig or drill a well. Folks began asking me to find them a place to dig a well.

I found that the seepage from a lake or pond can throw you off, and unless you are sure that there is a vein there, you can be mistaken. At the Dappert Youth Reservation, I made that mistake, and they dug a dry well. Later, I got back away from the seepage from the lake and found a good vein and followed it to near the shelter where it would make a handy well. They got a green-horn driller to drill the well. He hit a good vein of sand and got his drill stuck. I guess he had a worn-out rig. Anyway he left his drill in the sand and gave it up. So far as I know, they still have no well there.

One place where I witched for a well, they had a well at the southeast corner of the house that had gone dry. I found a vein near the southeast corner of the house. They dug the well just deeper than the

vein and had trouble keeping ahead of the water while laying the brick for the wall of the well. A neighbor had a stock well in a pasture about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile north of where they dug the well, and his well went dry.

One time John Engling, a friend of mine, took me down to Fayette County. He said a fellow that he knew was running short of water for his stock so he had called the geologists at the university. They came and checked over the ground and set a stake. They told him there was a big gravel bed about 250 feet deep that should make a real well. He hired folks with an oil drill to drill the well. At 250 feet they hit the gravel bed and it was dry as a bone.

I found a good vein; I don't remember if it was cross veins or not, but it was not over 100 feet from where they had drilled the first well. At 65 feet they struck a good vein and had a good well.

Oak Ridge School had no well for years. They had a cistern, but mostly the kids carried water from the neighboring family wells. They had a "pressed paper" bucket that held about three gallons and kept a tin cup beside the bucket. All the kids drank out of the same cup.

In the late '20s the directors of Oak Ridge School got a fellow from Taylorville to witch for a well. He said there was a cross vein near the northwest corner of the school building. He drove a stake and told the depth of each vein. I tried my stick and found the cross veins in the same spot, but I couldn't tell the depth.

My brother Ormond and I took the job of digging the well. At that time, the State had definite rules for a school well. It had to be four feet in diameter up to within ten feet of the top, and from there on up, it had to be six feet in diameter. There had to be a concrete platform six feet in diameter over the four-foot part of the well with a hole in the center for the pump pipe. The platform was six inches thick. There was a soil pipe from the buried platform to the base of the pump at the top of the top platform.

We dug the well and found the veins at the depth

that he said they would be. We walled up the four-foot part of the well with brick and got a wrecker to lower the six-foot platform down for us. They had to put a lot of weight on the front of their truck to hold it down. As they pulled the platform over the hole, they dragged a big chunk of dirt into the well. While the wrecker held the platform over my head, I went down in the well and cleaned it out. I felt safer after I got out of there, but everything held together and we finished the well. The top ten feet was filled with dirt and the top platform was put on. The soil pipe came up into the base of the pump, and the pump was bolted to the platform. The well and the water passed State inspection. I wonder if the well is still in use. The school was sold and there is a private residence there now.

I have "witched for many wells, and mostly they got good wells. I will admit that not all were successful. I never learned to tell the depth of the veins. Some could do that.

Some people can witch for water, others can't. Although they recommend a peach fork, I used most any kind of green fork, but some were a lot better than others. Maple works good and is easier to find than peach, besides most folks wouldn't thank you for cutting a fork out of their peach tree.

I always let folks try my stick to see if it would work for them. When it wouldn't work for them, I would have them grip the stick on one side and I would hold the other side. If they held the left side, I would hold the right side with my right hand and hold their right hand with my left hand and tell them to grip tight. We would walk over the vein, and most of the time the stick would turn in our hands. That would usually make believers out of them.

## Witching for Oil

Several years later the oil companies leased a large acreage to test for oil. Our place was leased for 10 cents an acre per year. I believe it was a



10-year lease. They drilled a hole up on the Mound. Of course, no one knew what they found. Several other wells were drilled in the county, all dry holes so they said.

A fellow by the name of Landon came in with a "spudder" and showed us how to witch for oil. It was on the same principle as witching for water, except you used a thorn apple fork, dried completely and soaked in oil, cylinder oil or better yet, crude oil from an oil well. That is what I used. I got my green forked stick and laid it on the sand on top of the furnace until it was completely dry. Then I put it in a can of crude oil, big end down until the oil had saturated the entire fork. Then it was ready for use. Water veins would not affect it, only "oil pull."

First, I tried walking around, and there were so many places where I found "oil pull." Then I found that it ran in veins like water. I also found that I could ride in a car and feel the "pull" just as good as walking. I think a person could practice and study this and could do a lot of "finding" oil. I fooled with it enough that I am sure that it is oil that causes the "pull." As a rule, where my stick said the center of the vein was, they would hit some oil if they drilled there.

Once I was walking around an oil well that had a running pump on it, but I could find no pull at all. I found they didn't have the pipe connected to the pump. It was a dry hole, and evidently they were trying to fool folks, likely trying to unload some stock.

One day I was mowing the fence row along the road north of Ormond's 40-acre place east of Henneys with a scythe. A car stopped and the driver said, "Isn't that pretty hard work? Wouldn't you like to work at something a little easier?"

I asked him, "Like what?"

He told me his name was Perardi and he was hunting for a good place to drill for oil. He said his dad was a "witcher" and was very good at it, but

that he was so crippled up with arthritis that he could no longer work at it. He wanted me to go in with him in the oil promotion business. We talked quite a while, but I told him that I thought I would have to turn him down.

He got a block of leases in Section 22 on Cleonia Morris' land and got a "spudder" to put down a hole, but it was a dry hole. A "spudder" is a rig that punches the hole down instead of drilling. It is slower than a drill, but is not as liable to go right thru a saturation and not see it.

I expect that Perardi or his dad could have shown me a lot of things about "witching" that I never learned. He told me his dad could just walk over an "oil pull" and feel it by holding his arms down. Perardi also told me that where I felt an "oil pull" if I got a shovelful of dirt and took it someplace where there was no oil pull, the shovelful of dirt would cause a pull. He said it was the seepage from the oil vein that caused the pull.

I have put a dime in the end of my oil stick and had someone hide a silver dollar in the grass outside or under the rug in the house. I could find it by walking around with my stick. To find iron, I used a nail on my stick.

The last place I ever checked with my stick was after they started buying up ground for Lake Taylorville, and we had decided that there was oil in the neighborhood of Section 24 of Johnson Township. We finally got them to allow a test well in Gus Norris' bottom ground where an offset of the lake would be on the place where Harold Brookens lives. They drilled the well and took a core. There were three places in the core with definite oil saturation, but they decided against producing it. That well is now in Lake Taylorville, and no drilling is allowed in the drainage of the lake. So now my oil stick is done. I still get a call once in awhile to use my water witching, but not often. I have arthritis in my hands so bad that it is hard to hold the stick.

## The Tornado of 1948

The wind was starting to blow very hard. The house started to shake and the linoleum on the dining room floor was blowing up. Beulah thought the basement door had blown open. (It had.) She ran to the basement to shut the door, but she didn't get the door shut.

The day before I had been wiring my folks' house for electricity. I had been working in the attic using a coal oil lantern for light. The only opening to the attic was a small hole to crawl thru, and I guess the lantern had burned up all the oxygen or put out too much carbon monoxide. At least, I got very sick and hurried to the hole, missed the joist and stepped thru the ceiling with one foot and nearly broke my knee. By that morning I could hardly walk.

As soon as it quit blowing, I ran (hobbled) outside to see what had happened. Beulah said, "The church is down." I went to check the cattle. They were in the lowest place in the lot--in the branch right next to the fence and bunched as tightly together as they could get. They had not budged yet when I found them. It was a good thing they had stayed there for awhile; the gates were blown open.

The barn roof was laying flat on top of the barn. The north rafters had all pulled loose from the plate. It was a galvanized metal roof. All our small buildings were gone; that was what I had seen going past the corner of the house. I had T-lock shingles on the house and had to replace only 4 shingles. Milford Morrell and two or three others soon came and helped me set up the toilet and what we could.

When we checked out the extent of the damage in our neighborhood, here is what we found. The church was blown down and destroyed. Dallas Geddis' house was blown down. He lived southwest of us on the Nokomis Road. I had 21 trees on my pasture fences.

All of the trees in the cemetery were down, but one small cedar tree. Gus Norris, who lived north of us, had lost the top of his barn down to the haymow

floor. All his small buildings had blown down and some were destroyed. Some pieces of lumber were sticking thru the side of his house. He got 100 percent of the insurance he carried on all his buildings except the house.

Over at the "Church 80" that my folks owned and I farmed, the house was rented to Joe Strickland. He was home when the storm started and ran upstairs to see if the windows were shut. He had just reached the top of the stairs when a 2 x 4 blew in the west window, went across the room and went out the east window knocking off the ceiling light fixture as it went thru.

The barn on that place had been full of straw bales, and the roof and most of the rest of the barn was gone. It was scattered over J. W. Dappert's 80 just east of the "Church 80." The fellow who farmed there gathered up a rack wagonload of lumber and metal roofing and brought it over. I thought that was a mighty neighborly thing to do.

The baled straw was round bales, but they were pretty well soaked. I tore the barn down and put the barn lot into farm ground.

I hardly knew what to do with our barn roof. The roof was corrugated galvanized roofing. The sheeting was hard wood lumber, and a person would ruin most of the roofing getting it off. Joe Stricklin wanted to help me. He said we could use jacks to jack the roof back up and re-nail the rafters and not damage the roof. He worked at the No. 7 mine so he borrowed some jacks from the mine. We lifted and cribbed up until we got it all back to its place. I don't think I could ever have got it done except for Joe Stricklin.

## **Lightning Strikes the House**

I had cut some beans for hay and stacked them near the fence in the orchard just west of the lot. Every morning I would get up on the stack and throw hay over the fence to the cows.

One morning I had finished the milking and was up on the stack feeding hay to the cows. A bad-looking cloud had come up and I was hurrying to get done as I was afraid it was going to rain. I just happened to be looking toward the house when there was a sharp crash of thunder. There was a metal ridge roll on the roof of the house, and it looked like a neon sign. The lightning wasn't just one flash, but it was a long streak coming down.

I jumped off the stack and ran to the house as fast as I could. I had two gates to climb over. When I got to the house, I almost expected to find Beulah lying on the floor, but she was up and fighting fire.

I said, "Are you all right?"

She said, "Yes, but help me get this fire out."

The window curtains were blazing, but we got them out. Paper in the breadbox drawer was burning. The drawer was open; Beulah had been getting bread out of the drawer when the lightning struck. The drawers were tin.

I ran upstairs to see how things were up there. The north wall of the stairway was hot, but there was no fire upstairs.

We had no T.V. yet, but we had a radio and a small wire for an aerial fastened from the house to a pole. We never found any of the wire; it had burned up. The lightning had struck the metal ridge roll, and the main part went down the west side of the roof knocking off a six-foot strip of the roof from the ridge to the eaves. The rafters were scorched. It had knocked off a piece of kitchen plasterboard ceiling. We had a pump at the sink in the kitchen with the pipe running to the well north of the house. The lightning had jumped to the pump, and some had followed the metal edging of the covering of the sink cabinets and had jumped to the metal drawers in the kitchen cabinet.

We found signs of the lightning going across the west side of the upstairs, following from one metal object to another. Some went down a maple tree south of the house and split it. The door frame of the basement door was split near the bottom.

We figured we had been very lucky to get off as well as we did, as it must have been a very large bolt of lightning.

## Bee Keeping

My first experience with honey bees that I remember was when I was a very small boy. My folks had a hive of bees in the orchard north of the house, and I was playing near the hive when a bee lit on me. I guess he got his stinger caught in my clothes. It stuck right there and I had to knock it off. It never touched me with its stinger, but I thought it should be punished so I threw a brick at the hive and got even with the bee for trying to sting me. I got away without getting stung.

The first time I ever "hived" a swarm of bees was while we lived on the Debar place near Owaneco. Everette Kettlekamp, a 10-year-old boy who was working for us, went with me to help get the bees into the hive. I believe I used a 100-pound nail keg for a hive. Everette sat on the ground right beside me and was not a bit afraid of the bees although he did get stung once. I didn't have a "smoker" at that time so I got them into the hive the hard way--shook, pushed and crowded.

We had two or three hives that we moved to the Shuler place and put in the orchard northeast of the house. When the bees got their hive full of honey, I put a box on top of the hive with a hole from the top of the hive into the box. One of the hives had gotten the top box full of honey, so after supper I went out to take the box of honey off. The top box was open on top so I had a cover on it. I took the cover off, and it had a large bunch of bees on the inside of the lid. I leaned the lid against the hive and proceeded to remove the "super" (the box full of honey). I was about to take the box of honey to the house when a bee stung me on the back, and I discovered that the bees had left the lid and crawled up my pants leg and were all under my clothes. I shed my clothes in a hurry

and went to the house and got Beulah to pick out the stingers. Another lesson learned. It seems that I had a lot of lessons to learn. I didn't blame the bees so I kept on working with them.

After we got on our own place, I kept catching more swarms of bees till we had several swarms. We got tailor-made hives and equipment: smoker, bee hat with veil, supers, comb foundation (narrow strips of manufactured comb to fasten in the frames so the frames could be easily removed when you wanted to take off the honey). I even borrowed Roscoe Hawkins' extractor one year. That way I could extract the honey and leave the comb on the frames ready for the bees to fill with honey again.

Eventually we decided to quit the bee business and I sold most of the bee equipment to Maurice Durbin who wanted to enlarge his stand of bees. I gave Harold some of our swarms and equipment, and he worked with them for awhile, but with the little tots around he gave it up.

One year while I was farming the 80 on the Cemetery Road, which my folks owned 4/5 of, Joe Stricklin, who lived in the house and had use of the garden, borrowed my team and walking plow to plow his garden. I was working with the tractor in the field to the north. Mrs. Stricklin came running to tell me that Joe had got the team into a hive of bees I had at the east end of the garden. I stopped the tractor and ran to the house. The team and plow were at the east end of the garden with the horses standing right at the hive, but Joe was at the west end of the garden. I almost felt like committing murder. The horses were switching their tails, but they were standing perfectly still. The plow was on its side with the sharp bottom edge up. If the horses had gotten excited, they could have been ruined on the plow.

I drove the team out as quickly as I could. I couldn't see that the horses had even been stung. The bees were all around, but none stung me. I never swat at honey bees as that makes them sting. The horses had been switching their tails a lot, as they would at flies.

## Wasps

I have told about bumblebees and honey bees, but wasps are a little like bumblebees only a lot more so. Wasps never seem to bother you unless you bother their nest, which is usually in the weeds along a fence row that you can't get at with the mowing machine and have to get with a scythe. You don't usually see the nest until you have mowed the weeds or brush off; then if you can get away in time, you are lucky. When one of them sets down on you, it makes a hole that looks like someone has jabbed you with a very sharp lead pencil and pushed hard. It hurts like the dickens.

If you find the nest before you mow it off, mow all around it being very careful not to disturb the nest till you get everything mowed for quite a ways on all sides of the nest. Then go back and mow the patch in one swipe if you are lucky, but don't hang around and stretch your luck.

It is important to know the difference between wasps and mud daubers. Wasps are reddish yellow in color, and their nests are made of paper-like material. They are round and flat and attached to brush or weeds at the back center of the nest.

A mud dauber is usually black, and I never knew of one stinging anyone. The nest is made of mud. They carry balls of mud and build their nests under the eaves of buildings. Wasps do too sometimes, so if the nest is made of mud, it's O.K., but if it's paper, watch out. The color of the varmint is pretty easy to distinguish.

## Hornets

Another ill-natured bug that used to be pretty common was the hornet. They are about the size of a honey bee, but are black. Their nest is made of paper-like material shaped like a top with no stem on it. The size can range from the size of a gallon bucket to a five-gallon bucket. You find them hanging



up in a tree or shrub. If you find one in summer, better give it a wide margin for safety. If hornets are disturbed, they are like "eye bunger" bumblebees, they head right for your eyes or face, and they hit hard. I have not been stung with many hornets.

### **Yellow Jackets**

Yellow jackets are larger than honey bees and more yellow. Their home is a hole in the ground. They seem to be willing to leave you alone if you leave them alone. Their sting doesn't seem to hurt as much as a wasp or bumblebee, but I'm willing to leave them alone if they leave me alone.

### **Sweat Bees**

There are two kinds of sweat bees. The little, dark grey ones light on you while you are sitting in the shade resting. One will light on your arm and you probably won't notice it unless you happen to press on it accidentally. Then you know right away that it is there. Its sting is not serious, but it hurts and makes a small welt that itches for awhile. I still like to see one on somebody's arm and slip up and press on it. Shame on me!

The other kind of sweat bee is larger with yellow stripes and large wings. They are harmless.

### **Insurance Agent**

I had my fire and windstorm insurance with the Nokomis Farmers Mutual Fire and Lightning Insurance Company for several years. At their annual meeting, I was elected to be a director. A director wrote policies in his township and adjusted any losses to his policy holders. The Nokomis Fire Company carried wind loss insurance with the Pana-Hillsboro Insurance Company.

Before I was an agent for the Company, the tornado of 1948 damaged the property of so many of

their policy holders that it nearly broke them. They changed some of their methods and carried Emergency Insurance with large companies. On extra large policies, The Reinsurance carried part of the loss.

It was good insurance and quite a bit cheaper than regular insurance. When I was elected Township Supervisor, I had several other part-time jobs and didn't have enough time to go around so I resigned. I served as a director for 12 years. They reelected me for at least one term after I quit.

## **Supervisor**

I had been on the Election Board off and on ever since I came home from the army, but had never held an elected office except School Trustee. In 1959 some neighbors asked me to run for Supervisor. I had never thought of it before, but I finally decided to run. I was elected. It surprised me. I held the job for 15 years till I resigned to move to Taylorville. I was Chairman of the Board one year.

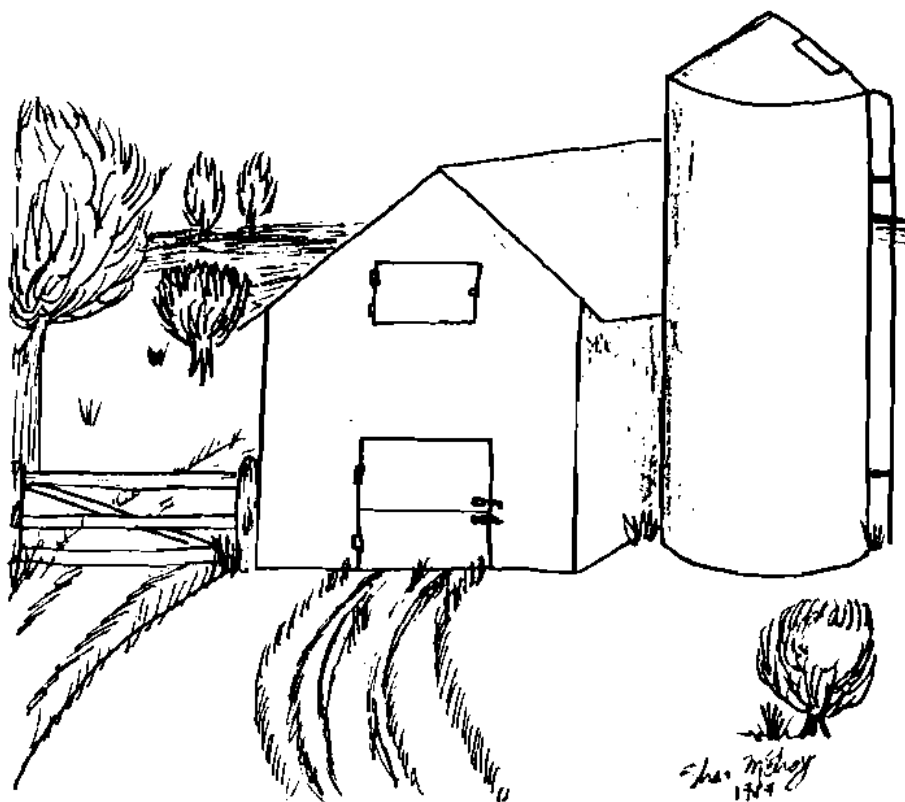
## **Retiring from Farming**

I retired from farming when I was 65, but I had some livestock and had to keep track of every bit of work I put on them. The Social Security bunch in Springfield suggested that I wait a year and dispose of the livestock before retiring. This is what I did and sold two years of grain. It helped us a lot on our Social Security.

We stayed on the place and looked after the stock we had given to the kids. There was too much pasture ground on the place not to keep some stock. I had electric fences to hold the stock, which was fine as long as no weeds were against the wire or no limbs were across it, so it needed a lot of looking after.

In October 1974, we moved to 710 S. Clay in Taylorville. The kids and all of Beulah's folks thought we had bought a place that needed a complete overhauling, and they all came and helped to see that

it got it, but it has made us a good home. Another bedroom and a little more closet room would have been fine, but we have been comfortable. Now we have lived here 14 years.



## OUR TRIPS

One thing that Beulah and I both enjoyed was traveling, but it seemed we could find the time only for one-day trips. In 1949 Beulah and I took a trip to southern Illinois in the pick-up truck. We went to Alto Pass Cliff Top Park, to the top of Bald Knob, to the place where I had lived west of Cobden and to Giant City State Park. We thought it was a wonderful trip.

Then in 1951 we went to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. We got a room in a motel in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, the Gateway to the Smokies. At that time Gatlinburg was only a string of buildings along both sides of the hard road, not spread all over the country like it is now. We visited Cades Cove and intended to spend a night in Cherokee Village and see the Indian play, but everyplace near was already sold out so we had to drive on after driving thru the Smokies. We stopped at Clingman's Dome and New Found Gap, then drove south til we found a place to spend the night. It was also a wonderful trip.

In 1953 Beulah and I took Elsie and her four children with us to southern Illinois. (Karen was not yet born.) That was one of the best trips I ever had. The four grandchildren and I really had a picnic in Giant City State Park. We took a lot of trails. When we first got to the park, we took a two-mile trail that started at the high bluff and came out thru the timber. Everyone got tired. I took a picture of all the kids lying on a picnic table. Elsie told the kids "don't run the wheels off Grandpa. Remember he's not as young as he used to be."

We stopped for breakfast at the Stone Fort shelter. Beulah and Elsie cooked breakfast while the kids and I took a hike. I think Linda was leading and Dale, the youngest, couldn't keep up. When Linda told him to hurry up, he said, "Remember I'm not as young as I used to be and 'sides my feet hurt." He was about 5 years old at the time.

After the children were married and on their

own, it seemed we could find more time to travel, or maybe we just decided to take more time for relaxing.

In 1960 we took our car and Bob and Elsie took theirs and went to southern Illinois. We camped at Fern Cliff State Park. They had a big tent and a pup tent. Bob and I slept in the pup tent and Elsie, Beulah and the kids slept in the big tent. (I believe there were two pup tents, and John and Dale slept in the other.) It got pretty cool before morning.

We talked to an old gent who had sold some of the land for the park and lived in a log cabin in the park. He told us a lot about the history of the park. We also visited Giant City State Park, but didn't spend much time there. We ate dinner at the top of Bald Knob. I thought it was a wonderful trip, as all our trips were.

In 1961 we took George and Violet with us to Rocky Mountain National Park. We were gone four days so we drove mostly, but it seems we saw more on that trip than any one of the three more trips we took thru the same park. This was the only trip that I did the driving, and besides it was our first trip there. We drove thru the Big Thompson Canyon and looked things over in Estes Park. George and I rode the cable car to the top of the mountain. It was August, but we got a picture of George and Violet standing in snow at Fall River Pass. There was snow at the same spot every time we went thru there.

In 1962 we took John, Dale, Donna and Ralph with us to southern Illinois. We went down to Cave in Rock, Dixon Springs and across to Fern Cliff and Giant City, then stayed all night at A.F.D.K. Motel in Murphysboro. We were to have a two-day trip, but were having so much fun the kids wanted to stay another day. We called their folks and they said it would be O.K. I don't know how much the kids remember about the trip, but I could never forget the good times we had. Ralph fell in love with the railroad engine at Devil's Backbone Park.

In June of 1964 Beulah and I drove to Cumberland Gap, Rhone Mountain and Blue Ridge Parkway and the

Smoky Mountains. Rhododendrons were in bloom and some azaleas were still blooming. The Tennessee and North Carolina state line was on top of Rhone Mountain. Each state held its Rhododendron Festival on top of the mountain at different times each year. A festival was being held the day we were there. We drove down the Blue Ridge Park Way for a long way. It was quite an experience. You could see so far and numerous lookouts had points of interest pointed out. There were also books telling all about each section of the road. These books were \$1.00 each then. I think there were five sections. We drove two sections and got two books. It was getting along toward evening when we got to Grandfather Mountain. I wanted to go to the top, but was afraid we would have trouble finding a place to stay overnight if we waited too late. We found out later that they had overnight accommodations on the Grandfather Mountain. We stayed in Asheville and went thru the Smoky Mountain National Park the next day on our way home.

In August 1964 we took Ormond and Ruth to the Brookens Reunion at Canton, Ohio. We stopped at Caledonia, Ohio and visited a little while with my cousin Florence Resler. Then we stopped at the cemetery at Mt. Eaton and saw the graves of Thomas and Jane Brookens, my great grandparents, and Joseph and Elizabeth Brookens, my grandparents. Then we went on to Canton in time for the dinner. We sure met a gang of Brookens, but most of them spelled it "ins" instead of "ens," but they admitted it should have been "ens."

They were descendents of Thomas Brookens, Dad's uncle and the youngest of Thomas Brookens' family. We enjoyed the reunion very much. Of the descendents of Joseph and Elizabeth's family--our line, those who attended were Fred Sommers from California, a grandson of Dad's sister Martha; Queen Pool and Merna Brown, daughters of Dad's brother Joel from Michigan; Ormond and Ruth and their daughter Elva and husband Chester Cook; and Beulah and me.

That evening after the reunion, we started home. We had not gone far when I turned in front of a

semitrailer loaded with steel. Our car was totaled. Beulah had a broken shoulder and a bruised side. I called the Farm Bureau Insurance at Bloomington, Illinois, and they said to leave the car in a garage parking lot. Chester and Elva came along before we left the scene of the accident, so we loaded what they had room for in their car. We all rode home in their small car, but we got there. The insurance company gave us another car, but it was not the car we lost by a long shot.

In 1965 Linda graduated from Illinois State University in Normal, and we took her with us on a trip to the Black Hills. We took Ill. #51 north up to the Wisconsin Dells and stopped and saw both the Upper and Lower Dells. Then we took a road straight west thru lower Minnesota. We stopped at the Corn Palace in Mitchell, South Dakota, saw the Badlands and stayed overnight in Rapid City, South Dakota. Then we drove on to the Black Hills, took the scenic drive thru the "Needles Eye," and got a housekeeping cabin. It was pretty chilly that night. I could tell about getting a bath in the night, but maybe I better not. We took a 4-wheel jeep ride up to the top of Harney Peak. It was quite a thrill and we were glad we took it.

In July 1966 we took Ray and Lois Klinefelter and Clyde and Bertie Ryan with us to southern Illinois. We stopped at Alto Pass Cliff Top Park, saw the cross from there and took some pictures. Then we went to Bald Knob. We stayed overnight in cabins at Giant City State Park and had supper and breakfast in the lodge.

## California Circle Tour

In July 1966 we took the California Circle Tour with Presley Tours, a 9-day trip. We were to get on the bus in St. Louis at 8:00 a.m. so we decided to go to St. Louis the evening before and stay overnight at the Holiday Inn. I called sometime ahead and made reservations. I didn't know they had a Holiday Inn East and a Holiday Inn West. We wanted to stay at the

one by the "Arch," but when we got there we found our reservation was at the wrong one. They finally let us stay on the top floor center front with a balcony out in front. It had a wonderful view of the Arch, the Admiral, and all that part of St. Louis. I imagine it was also their highest priced room.

We stopped for dinner at Independence, Missouri. I called Kenneth Brookens, and he and his wife and two children visited with us while we ate dinner.

We stayed the first night in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and I called Wayne and he came and took us to his place for a visit.

Our next overnight stop was at Abilene, Kansas where we saw Eisenhower's Home and Museum, Library, etc. We also saw "Old Abilene."

I believe our next stop for the night was in Salt Lake City, where we were on the sixth floor of the Temple Square Hotel. I got good pictures from our window of the Tabernacle and part of the Temple and the State House. We saw a play that night about the early history of the Mormons in Salt Lake City and also heard an organ recital in the Tabernacle.

We went thru the Painted Desert and to the south rim of the Grand Canyon where we stayed overnight and where we could spit a mile. We saw the mule train starting for the bottom of the canyon. I wish we could have gone with them, but we had our schedule all laid out for us in advance. They did a pretty good job of showing us most of the interesting things along the route. The only trouble was they didn't give us enough time to really see them.

We ate dinner at Knotts Berry Farm and saw a lot of it, then went on to Disneyland. We saw three or four of the several highlights. It was crowded and long lines were waiting to see them.

We did get to see a lot of Los Angeles. We took a bus tour of the city. We stayed at the Hollywood Knickerbocker Hotel. I called Lowell Boston and told him we would take a taxi to their place. He said not to do it as it was about 20 miles. He came to the hotel and took us to their place in Rodondo Beach



where we spent the day and took us back to the hotel in the evening. This was a "free day" so we could do what we pleased.

While in Los Angeles, we saw the "Chinese Theatre" where the stars had their handprints, etc., in concrete and walked on the "Avenue of Stars" and saw the star's names on each star. We had a tour of Universal Studio and saw many stars.

From Los Angeles, we went to San Francisco. We had a tour of the city and saw the cable cars and Chinatown, Alcatraz and Treasure Island, Farmers' Market, the sailboat Balcutha, and the Crookedest Street in the World. We crossed the Golden Gate Bridge and saw Muir Woods National Park (or Memorial), then went back to San Francisco and thru to Sacramento and on to Virginia City.

### **1966 Trip to Southern Illinois**

In October 1966 Beulah and I took a trip to southern Illinois. We went to Pounds Hollow, Garden of the Gods, Old Iron Furnace, and Old Rose Hotel. The Old Rose Hotel had quite a history, and The Illinois Magazine had carried glowing articles about the hotel and the wonderful meals served there, so we decided that we would have to try it out. Along toward evening we stopped there and asked the lady in charge if we could get a room there for the night. She said yes. I asked about meals and she said they did not serve meals anymore. We went uptown in Elizabethtown and got our supper, then came back to our room. We never even looked at it before then. The lady got a bucket of coal and cobs and took us to our room and started a fire in a coal stove in our room. It was a very chilly evening, and we left our wraps on till the room warmed up.

The hotel sets on the bank of the river. Along about 9:00 p.m., a string of barges came along. We could watch from our window, but I said let's go out on the porch so we can watch it better. We got cold and started back in, but I had shut the door to keep

the room warm, and the door was locked with my key inside. I went down to the office and told the lady and asked her to unlock it. She said, "I forgot to tell you, but we can't unlock the door from the outside."

I said, "How are we going to get back in?"

She said, "I guess we will have to take the screen off." It was just a sheet of screen wire tacked to the window frame. She took it off and we got back in our warm room. At least, we will always remember "The Old Rose Hotel."

### **Turkey Run State Park**

In July 1967 Beulah and I took a notion to go someplace quite a while after noon, and we went to Turkey Run State Park in Indiana. We got there about 6:00 p.m. and went right away to the Lodge to see about a room for the night. We were lucky and got a cabin. They asked us if we had eaten "dinner" yet. Of course, we knew they meant supper and we had not. They said that we had better hurry as it was just about time for the dining room to close, but we got fed O.K.

This was our first trip to Turkey Run, and we took three or four of the 10 trails. We promised ourselves that we were going back and take every one of them. I think we went back three times, but there are still some trails we have never taken. Guess we'll just have to let someone else take them for us. We recommend Turkey Run for a two or three-day trip for anyone that can walk, and you don't have to walk very far to see a lot.

### **New England Color Tour**

In October 1968 we took the New England Color Tour with Presley Tours. Lois Klinfelter and Harriet Large went along with us. We drove to Lawrenceville to catch the bus and miss the traffic of St. Louis. We parked our car at a filling station there. This was a 9-day trip.

We saw Niagara Falls and Thousand Islands in the St. Lawrence River and rode a ferry across Lake Champlain. We all had to get off the bus at Burlington, Vermont while the bus was being filled. It was so cold we nearly froze. I think it snowed a little.

We visited the Rock of Ages Monument works and went to Franconia Notch and saw The Old Man of the Mountain (Old Stone Face). I rode the "lift" to the top of Cannon Mountain. It was cloudy and very cold. They have a house on top where you could buy lunch and souvenirs. As it was cloudy, we were in clouds on top and could not see anything so I stayed inside till I could get another cable car down. Beulah said it snowed where they were all the time I was on top.

When we left Franconia Notch, the mountains were covered with snow. They said there was 6 inches of snow on Mt. Washington. The road was full of cars, folks going to ski.

We had a dandy tour of Boston, and they showed us all the places we read about in history. We even saw the graves of many of those we had heard of, even Mother Goose. We were on and all over "Old Ironside." We also noticed that a lot of Boston is built on piers over water.

We stopped for dinner in New York City and had a little spare time so Beulah and I went to the top of the Empire State Building. We didn't have much time, and I wanted Beulah to see as much of New York City as possible. At least, she saw the Statue of Liberty and a lot more.

## **Wisconsin Trip**

From July 16-21, 1969, Beulah and I took a trip up along the Mississippi River to Grant County, Wisconsin. We got a room at a state park and found a "Brookens" in the telephone directory, called Elgie Brookens. He was a descendant of Dad's uncle James Brookens. He and his wife visited us at the Park Lodge. I don't remember what route we took, but we

visited the northeast corner of Wisconsin around Anberg where my folks had owned 240 acres of cut-over ground. It was all back in timber and looked pretty good. Across in Michigan where they had just let the ground grow up, it didn't look near as good. In Wisconsin, they had set out the kind of trees they wanted. We saw a lot of pretty and interesting places in Wisconsin.

### **Bell Smith Springs and Shelby County State Forest**

In 1970 Beulah and I took two short trips, both were our first to these places. Bell Smith Springs in southern Illinois was interesting with rock cliffs. It was hard to find and doesn't cover a very large territory. We two were alone there, and Beulah stayed at the sign while I took the trail alone. I got several pictures.

Shelby County State Forest didn't have very much to see at this time. A large sycamore tree was the main attraction. There was not a very good road to get to it then. I have been there since and now there is a good road. They have a nice large shelter and picnic areas and likely camping areas.

### **Alaska by Bus**

From July 13 to August 12, 1971, we took a 30-day Presley Tour of Alaska. We went thru 15 states and three provinces of Canada. We stopped at Truman's Memorial at Independence, Missouri; Eisenhower Memorial and Old Abilene, Abilene, Kansas; Denver, Estes Park, Rocky Mountain National Park and Steamboat Springs in Colorado; and the museum at Vernal, Utah and the dinosaurs. We stayed overnight at Salt Lake City at Temple Square Hotel and saw a play "Promised Valley." We went thru the "Salt Flats" and saw the Bonneville Speedway. Then we went up thru Oregon and Washington to Seattle. We saw many places of interest and many mountains in the distance on the way.

We stayed overnight in Seattle. Elnora and Hal Manke took us on a tour of Seattle and we got back to our motel about midnight after a real tour.

We drove along the shore on Chuck-a-Nut Drive thru Bellingham to Sumas and crossed the border into Canada. The customs agent asked us, "Are you all American citizens? Are all the clothes you are carrying for your own use? Do you have any alcoholic liquor?"

We went north and stayed overnight at Williams Lake, British Columbia. We went thru Prince George to Burns Lake. Most of the inhabitants here are Indians. We went thru Smithers, New Hazelton. There is barely room for both the railroad and the road between the rock cliff and the river. You could look out the window on the side of the bus toward the river and imagine you were on a boat. We reached Prince Rupert, British Columbia where we spent the night.

The next day we visited a fish processing plant before loading on the boat for our trip thru the National Forest up the Inside Passage. Prince Rupert is the Halibut Capital of the World, more halibut processed there than any other place.

We loaded on the boat "Matanuska." Our bus was also loaded on the boat. We took "The Marine Highway thru the Inside Passage." I am sure all the Presley Tour Group had state rooms, but there were many passengers who slept on chairs or rolled in bed rolls on the floor. There were (I believe) four different grades of state rooms, and you didn't pick the kind you wanted. They assigned you to a state room, and that was it. We were lucky as we drew a deluxe. It had about everything (if you could hit the right button)--toilet, bathroom and the works. There was barely room to squeeze between the stool and the door. I went to the bathroom in the night, and when I flushed the stool, I hit the wrong button and turned on the shower so I had a shower with my nightclothes on.

A lot of our bunch had to use the public toilet

to wash, shave, and everything. Our bed was an upper and lower bunk. I used the upper. There was no ladder to get up so I stepped on Beulah's bed and pulled myself up onto mine. Course, I was younger then and more active. We had a porthole in our state room which we could look out of. The boat whistle woke me up in the night, and I looked out and saw the prettiest view of Petersburg with the fishing boats in the harbor and the buildings between the water and the mountains. It wasn't light enough to get a picture with my camera, but I sure wish I could have. I never stayed up all night to see if it got dark at all, but I stayed up pretty late one night and it never got dark. The water was so calm that you hardly realized you were on a boat. It was late July or early August, but it was cool enough that a jacket or sweater felt comfortable.

Our boat had some business at Sitka, which was not on the same route that most of the boats took. Since we had a layover at Sitka, I asked some of the natives if they could rig up a short tour and promise to get us back before the boat pulled out. They said they could. For \$5.00 apiece, we got a very interesting tour of an hour or more. I think most of our bunch took the tour.

Sitka was the capital of Russian Alaska, and the ceremony of transferring possession from Russia was carried out on Baranoff Hill, where Baranoff had built his headquarters before the Indians burned it. There were steps to get up there, and a lot of them, but Beulah and I went up. There were some cannon and an American flag up there, but not much else. I took some pictures of Beulah and the other scenery. We were the only ones of our bunch that went up. We all went thru the museum. There was a lot to see in it. I was glad our boat made the Stika stop.

Our boat stopped about an hour at Juneau, but it was night, and no one was allowed to get off. The trip lasted two days and we spent the time watching the scenery on both sides. All the towns were wedged between the mountains and the water. The only way to

get from town to town was by boat or plane. There were no roads, no room for them.

We landed at Haines, Alaska and took the Haines Highway thru Canada to Haines Junction. We followed the Alaska Highway to Tok, Alaska where we again went thru customs entering Alaska. We had to go thru customs at Pleasant Valley to enter Canada on the Haines Highway; then we went thru Yukon Territory before we got to Tok where we again entered Alaska. We stayed overnight at Tok Junction, then took Road #1 thru Glenallen to Anchorage. While in Anchorage, we called Clyde Ryan's daughter Catherine, and she visited us at our hotel. Her husband was stationed there in the army.

From Anchorage the bus took us to Portage Glacier. They told us about the effect of the earthquake on the glacier. A couple scientists were measuring the depth of the water when the quake struck, and for a little while there was no water. They got out of there as fast as they could. Portage, a little town near the glacier with a population of about 400 was completely wiped out by the tidal wave after the quake. Some of the buildings were still laying there when we were there. They also took us to Earthquake Park. It was left about as it was after the quake. The ground was very uneven, but grown up in weeds and flowers.

One of the highlights of our trip was to be our train ride from Anchorage to Fairbanks thru wild country where moose often get in the way of the train. They were working on a road thru there, but it was not near finished yet. It rained hard the entire trip. We stopped at Mt. McKinley Visitors' Center, but we never saw a thing. If we ever saw Mt. McKinley, it was from a distance. There were always mountains in sight in every direction while we were in Alaska, but I didn't know the names of most of them. The bus driver had to take the bus around by way of Glenallen to get to Fairbanks so he had to hurry to get there by the time we got there on the train. The train stopped at every town, and a person could flag it down

anyplace along the way, as it was the only way to get from one town to the next.

Our bus driver was waiting for us at Fairbanks. That was the end of the Alaska Highway. While there we visited the NASA Tracking Station and had a complete tour of the entire set-up. It was sort of "over my head," but I'm glad we saw it. We also visited a musk ox ranch. There was a good, strong-looking fence around the lot, and we were standing near the fence looking them over when a bull made a dive right toward where I was standing. He stopped with his head almost against the fence, right in front of me. The caretaker said he couldn't figure it out, as the bull had never acted that way before. What I'd like to know is why he picked me for his target. There were folks all along the fence.

We then loaded on a two-engine plane and flew to Anatuviik Pass, an Eskimo village 125 miles north of the Arctic Circle. It was cloudy, and we were above the clouds so we could see practically nothing going up there. The pilot said he might not be able to land at Anatuviik Pass unless there was a break in the clouds. If he couldn't land, we would have to go back to Circle to land. The plane was sure not pressurized, as the wind whistled thru under the door and around the windows. Once in a while the plane would shake and rattle. I said they needed to drag the roads. It felt like driving over rough, frozen roads when we went over mountains.

Finally, there was a break in the clouds, the first I had noticed, and the plane circled and landed at Anatuviik Pass. The landing strip was just like the rest of the ground around except there was a line of empty oil barrels along one side of it. They opened the door and put a ladder down to the ground. We all climbed down, one at a time. The tour conductor stood at the bottom of the ladder and helped everybody down. There were several Eskimo women and kids standing around watching. I noticed that there were some of the biggest mosquitoes on their faces, but they didn't seem to mind them.



I had written a bunch of postcards to about everybody I knew the address of, and I wanted to be sure to get them postmarked Anatuviik Pass if they had a post office there. I started out looking for a post office. There was no town, just some plywood shacks and some caves. I met a woman and asked her if they had a post office there. She just grinned and shook her head. She didn't know what I was talking about. I showed her a card and she nodded and motioned for me to follow her. I did and she walked quite a ways and came to a plywood shack and started in and motioned me to follow her.

I wasn't sure she knew what I wanted, and I didn't know if I should or not, but I decided to risk it. When we got inside, there was a good-looking young lady and about three Eskimo men there, and I began to think I had gotten into the wrong place. But I asked if they had a post office, and the young lady said, "Yes, right over there." There was a board across one little corner of the room; that was their post office, so I laid my cards on the board and left.

While I was hunting a post office, the rest of our gang was being shown the sights. They saw the schoolhouse and the church. I saw the post office. There were two men and a woman standing by a big cave. One of the men had a "mask" he wanted to sell. I asked him what he wanted for it. He asked the other man. I don't think they ever said how much, but I wasn't interested. A lady with our bunch bought the mask. I later saw them for sale other places in Alaska, and all were made at Anatuviik Pass. The price was around \$40.00.

One of the men asked me if I would like to see inside the cave. I said I would so they took me inside. The floor was covered with skins. There was a quarter of a caribou laying on the floor near the door, and it had ice on it. I asked him how they kept it cold, and he said, "In the cave." I asked if it was on permafrost, and he said yes.

I took a picture of the three standing by the cave. He wanted me to send him a copy of the picture.

I got his address and sent him a copy and some other pictures after I got home and got my pictures finished. I missed seeing the things the others saw, but I'm not complaining. We had only a short stay there and then went back to Fairbanks. There was more clear weather going back, and I took a picture of the Yukon River. It was so crooked, and I wanted to get some more pictures of it. I got in too big a hurry and didn't quite get the negative pushed back before I took another picture, and my camera locked. I couldn't take any more pictures till I got it fixed. As soon as I got back to Fairbanks, I went to the Penney store, a nice big building about like the one on the east edge of Springfield. I went to the Kodak department and asked the lady if she could fix my camera. She said, "Sure, but you will lose one or two negatives." She fixed it, but I have no picture of the Yukon River. Oh, well, you can't have everything.

When we landed at Fairbanks, they gave each of us a certificate for having crossed the Arctic Circle. From Fairbanks we went down the Alaska Highway from one end to the other. It was all interesting. At one place we went past a forest fire, and the smoke was so bad that you couldn't see anything. Private cars were stopped, but they let the bus proceed. We went very slowly. I don't see how anyone could see to drive.

We consider the Alaska trip our best ever, but we enjoyed every one. We had many short trips that we enjoyed very much, but we won't take up the time telling about them.

### **Florida Disney World Tour**

In March 1974 our pinochle bunch (7 of us) took this 9-day trip with Presley Tours together. Our first really important stop was Lookout Mountain. We ate dinner at a restaurant beside the entrance to Ruby Falls. As soon as we finished dinner, we seven decided to take the tour of Ruby Falls.

I went and asked at the ticket office about the trip and how long it would take. They told me, and I

asked the tour conductor about it and she said, "The bus leaves at 7:00." I figured we could make it. We walked fast, too fast for Beulah, and she complained of her ankle. It was a wonderful trip if we just didn't have to hurry so much. I took a lot of pictures (slides), and when we got back, we found that the bus had waited on us, likely not too willingly.

Our next important stop was at Atlanta, Georgia, and we saw the Cyclorama of the Battle of Atlanta of the Civil War. You walked around the circle with the narrator and saw the different troops as they were during the battle. It was very interesting and instructive. It was three-dimensional. Close up, the men were about 4 feet tall. Of course, the part farther back was paintings.

We stopped at the Stephen Foster Memorial at White Springs, Florida and saw the diorama of his different songs. Then we went on to St. Augustine, Florida. The early part of the town and the fort were interesting. Of course, we all took a drink out of the Fountain of Youth. Don't let them kid you, it don't work.

We had a complete tour of the Space Center at Cape Canaveral of all the machinery and gadgets they use in launching the astronauts, the launching pads, rocket carriers, etc. I guess I'm hopeless, but I got more kick out of Cypress Gardens with all the pretty flowers, trees and plants. I would have enjoyed spending a lot more time there.

I must not forget Disney World. I would have enjoyed having more time there and at Busch Gardens with all the animals, birds, and the monorail. It was a nice trip, but we could have used more time everyplace we went, if we just could have had it.

We stopped at Professor Jones' School for Negro Boys and Girls. We had dinner with them and had a visit with Professor Jones. I think he had done a very worthwhile thing there.

## Other Trips

Our Pinochle Club (6 of us) took many trips together with 6 in one car. Here is a list of places we visited: Pounds Hollow and Garden of the Gods; the Admiral Boat in St. Louis; Turkey Run State Park, Indiana; Fort de Chartres; Dixon Mounds; Freedom Train, July 1975 in Springfield; Libby's Pumpkin Canning Plant in Morton; Siloam Springs and Quinsippi Park; Hannibal, Missouri; Galena and northwestern Illinois; Calhoun County; Branson and Silver Dollar City and Arkansas; Giant City State Park, Bald Knob, Fort Kaskaskia, Pierre Menard Home; Maple syrup making in Kinmundy, Illinois; Hidden Springs State Forest; Golden Windmill; Shades State Park; Lake of the Woods Park; Funks Grove; Nauvoo; River Road Color Trip.

We saw so many interesting places and things on all these trips on all the hikes and nature trails. There are so many points of interest and beauty in our own country that we could spend a lifetime and still not see but a small part of them.

## Colorado Rockies Tour

We took the 9-day Colorado Rockies Tour with Presley Tours in August 1978. This was a relatively trouble-free trip as we stayed two nights at the same hotel in Denver and four nights at the same hotel in Colorado Springs. The bus took us around to see the sights, then took us back to our hotel for the night. On the other trips we had to hurry every morning to get our breakfast, get packed and be ready for the bus when it was ready to leave.

We had a tour of Denver and of the Mint where they "make money" the easy way. Then we went thru the Rocky Mountain National Park. This was Beulah and my fourth trip thru there, and always before it had been nice and clear. This time we ran into a snowstorm which closed the roads till they could get them plowed out, but we got thru before they closed the road.

When we got to Colorado Springs, our hotel was

on Pikes Peak Boulevard, and we could see Pikes Peak from our hotel. It was white with snow. The next morning they took us in limousines to the top of Pikes Peak. Several of our bunch stopped at the half-way house including Beulah, but I went to the top. It was pretty cold and cloudy, not a good picture-taking day, but I couldn't pass up a chance to go to the top. We got a picture of the whole bunch at the half-way house.

We visited the U.S. Air Force Academy and had dinner there. It sure looked like they had plenty of money to spend, especially on the church.

We went to the Flying W Ranch for supper and saw their show. We visited Bob Young's Melodrama and had supper there and saw their show. I still think the Conklin Dinner Theatre at Goodfield, Illinois is lots better.

The Royal Gorge was really something. We took the Cog Railway to the bottom, then rode the aerial tramway across the gorge. It made a person feel like he was a bird flying across. Believe it or not, Beulah went along, and she didn't want to get off and walk. She never before went with me on any of my rides on one of these things. I wanted to walk around to the bridge and walk across to where we started, but Beulah didn't want to walk so far. I believe she just liked the ride across, so we rode it back.

Our next point of interest was Cripple Creek Gold Field. We went to the bottom of the Molly Kathleen Gold Mine, 1100 feet deep. They gave each of us a piece of gold ore at the bottom. I'll bet it would take a lot of it to yield an ounce of gold. We had a tour of the gold field. The narrator of the tour, a native about my age, told interesting tales about the different old, rusting-out gold mine tipples we passed.

We visited the Garden of the Gods, but it was cloudy and rainy so we just drove thru. We consider this one of our best trips. I would recommend it for "old folks" if they are not like us--too old.

A year or two later, we signed up for a trip to

the Desert Southwest, a 12-day trip, but I got sick and we had to cancel. We still have our \$20.00 reservation certificate that we had to pay to make reservations. What a shame, and there are still so many places in the "Good Old U.S.A." that we have not seen.

## OUR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

Our daughter Elsie arrived April 19, 1921. She was born at home. Dr. Miller of Palmer came and stayed till everything was all O.K. His bill was \$40.00. It would have been \$25, but she was a 9 pounder, an "instrument" baby. Beulah's mother was here and stayed about a week.

Our son Harold arrived January 17, 1924. We called Dr. Miller about 10:00 p.m., and he came in the car. It was a very cold spell, about 20 degrees below. The doctor stayed all that night and all the next day, and Harold was born the second night. The doctor drained the antifreeze out of his radiator into a bucket, as he was afraid it was getting weak and might freeze up. Harold was also an "instrument" baby. The doctor's bill was \$40.

Elsie started school while we were on the Henney place. Garel Boston was the teacher. He had five first graders. We were in the Oak Ridge District while on the Henney place. She went to Owaneco School for three years along with Myrtle Esther Cameron and back to Oak Ridge one year while we lived on the Shuler place.

Harold started to school at Oak Ridge while we were on Shuler's place. Elsie, Harold and Leland Large would sometimes cut across the fields northwest to school. It was quite a walk and not a very good trail. The next year we moved on our own place. They had nearly a mile and a quarter to walk to school, but it was down the road.

Elsie joined the 4-H club, and Beulah was the leader at least one year. Harold belonged to the boys' 4-H club. He had a Duroc hog as a project.

Once a group of young folks went to St. Louis. Elsie went along and met Robert McKittrick. In the fall of 1941 they set a date to be married. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was only a few days ahead of their wedding date. They debated about whether to go ahead with the wedding or not as it looked like Bob would have to go to the service. They

decided to proceed with the wedding. They were married December 11, 1941. Bob went into the Navy in 1942. Harold also joined the Navy in 1942 as an aviation cadet.

Elsie and Bob's daughter Linda was born December 21, 1942. Elsie stayed with Bob for awhile in Norfolk, Virginia when Linda was 5 months old and came home in the summer before Donna was born. Donna was born August 21, 1944 in Pana. Bob was sent to Luzon in the Phillipines and was an airplane mechanic.

Harold had training in this country and was sent to the Pacific as a fighter pilot on a carrier. When his Air Group was relieved and sent back to the U.S. to recuperate, he was sent to Florida. He took up night flying there. In practice, they were flying low over water to get under the radar when Harold made a little misjudgment and his plane hit the water. He said it went down a long way as he was a long time coming up. When he came up, his arm hit something and he crawled up on it thinking it would hold him. It was a piece of the wing. There were folks in a boat close by, and they got him in the boat.

We got a letter from him, and he never said a word about his accident, but when I read the letter, I told Beulah that I just had a feeling that something was wrong. I telephoned to his address, and they connected me to the hospital and I got to talk to him. When the plane hit the water, something behind him cut his leg bad, which was the only injury he had. He never got back overseas and decided he didn't want to make a career of flying. He was discharged and came home. He had the rank of Navy Lieutenant J.G., which would be a First Lieutenant in the Army.

Harold later attended college at Albuquerque, New Mexico and later in Colorado. He came home and married Rosella Willingham on October 3, 1950, at Buckeye Church, where they had first met after his return from the Navy.

Elsie's husband Bob came home at the end of the war and got a job working for Robert Vitts on a farm near Pana. Their son John was born August 30, 1946 in



Pana. Their son Dale was born April 22, 1948 in Pana. Then Bob and Elsie moved onto Paul Peabody's place near Edinburg and went into partnership with Paul on the farm. Paul bought a herd of Holstein milk cows that had not been tested for Bangs disease. The next year when the tester came around, a bunch of the herd tested with Bangs disease, and they had to sell the herd. They had paid a big price for the herd, but they sold at market price. Paul could stand that kind of a loss, but Bob didn't have that kind of money to spare so he went broke. Their daughter Karen was born April 28, 1954 while they lived on the Peabody place.

Bob got a job with Circle Steel in Taylorville and did a good job and was soon a foreman. He was careful and particular, so they sent Bob the new help and slow learners to break in. It began to get on his nerves, and he finally quit and took a job as a carpenter's helper. Then he went on his own. He was careful and did things right and soon he had all the work he could do. He stayed at this work until he retired. He has his shop and all kinds of tools and can make about anything he wants to. He is always making toys and gadgets for his grandchildren, and there is always someone wanting him to come and fix something for them.

Elsie got a job at the First National Bank in Taylorville and worked there until she retired. When we moved to town, Elsie and Bob moved on the Home Place.

Linda graduated from Illinois State University in Normal and taught school for a few years. She married Patrick McElroy and had two boys: Shan born in 1972 and Sean born in 1974. She was divorced and is now working for the State Board of Education in Springfield.

Donna became a telephone operator and married Morris German. They had one daughter Christina born in 1973. She was later divorced. She married Jerome Pleshe in January 1981, and they have one son: Nicolas born in November 1981. They live in Kincaid.

John got his master's degree from Illinois State

University after serving in Viet Nam. He married Sally Joy in 1973. They have two sons: Mikel born in 1979 and Chad born in 1981. John is a school counselor.

Dale served in Viet Nam and graduated from Illinois State University. He married Gloria Clesson in 1971. They have two children: Noah born in 1981 and Ian born in 1983.

Karen attended Illinois State University and married Larry Spiegler in 1974. They have one child: Jacob born in 1987. Karen worked as an actress and director at Conklin Players Dinner Theatre for several years. She has recently started her own business of writing and directing shows for children.

After Harold and Rosella got married, they lived the first few years in a trailer in her folks' yard. Harold worked as a maintenance man for St. Vincent's Hospital and worked there until he retired in January 1989.

They have seven children: Ralph born October 2, 1951; Ann born January 19, 1953; Joe born August 21, 1954; Daniel born December 8, 1955; Larry born September 9, 1957; Leroy born December 25, 1961; and Thomas born October 26, 1967.

Harold, Rosella and their family moved from the trailer to our East 80, and they still live there and own the place. Their children were raised so near where we lived, and we enjoyed having them near us. We had many hikes back to Micenheimer's timber, along the creek, and around Hays Bluff and Micenheimer's Bluff. I was just a "kid" with them. It seems they grew up so fast. All are married now, but Larry and Tom.

Ralph married Connie Vickery on February 17, 1972. They live in Springfield. He has a business there where he repairs and refinishes antique houses, especially floors. They have two boys: Matthew born in 1976 and Gregory born in 1979. Ralph graduated from Taylorville High School and attended Lincoln Land Community College for awhile.

Ann graduated from Southern Illinois University

in Carbondale. She married Tucker Russell of Charleston, but they later divorced. She continued to live and work in Charleston. In 1987 she married Scott Raymond and moved to eastern Ohio. They have a daughter Katina Elizabeth born in 1988.

Joseph (Joe) graduated from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale with a major in art, but he couldn't find a paying job in that line. He tried printing sport shirts for companies, but gave it up and now works for his brother Ralph in Springfield. He married Brenda Mansfield in 1977. They live in Taylorville and have two mighty sweet little girls, Heather born in 1984 and Holly born in 1985. Brenda worked at a day care center till she was married.

Danny did not attend college, but he worked at various jobs and was a good worker, but never took up any trade before he married. He married Sheryl Mase on May 8, 1982, in Ohio. They bought 40 acres of rough ground in partnership with a couple others. Danny and Sheryl lived there a couple years. It was a wonderful place to live, but a long way from town and a good road. They finally gave it up and moved to Michigan. Danny works as a tree trimmer and remover. They have two children: Rachel born in 1983 and Michael born in 1988. Sharon works as a librarian at a children's library in Yipsilante, Michigan. They go by the name of Mase-Brookens.

Larry graduated from high school and went in with Ralph when he started his business. Larry owns a small place in Edinburg. He built a large building for storage and a shop and is now in business for himself.

Leroy graduated from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. He married Rhonda Roberts in 1983 and is a school teacher. They have two children: Sarah born in 1985 and Aaron born in 1987.

Tom was active in Boy Scout's and was a counselor in camp, but didn't quite get the Eagle Degree. He graduated from high school and enlisted in the Marine Corps for a 5-year term. He has now served about two years, part of which was spent on a carrier

in the Mediterranean. He is with helicopters. He just returned to North Carolina after a short visit home.

With twelve grandchildren and eighteen great-grandchildren, is it any wonder we remained "kids" all our lives? Their parents claimed we spoiled their kids. I think they spoiled us. At least, they kept us from growing old so fast.

I am writing this on November 11, 1988, the day after my 90th birthday. We went out to Bob and Elsie's for dinner, then we went over to the Village Hall in Owaneco where there was an open house from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. They had tables and chairs all set up, and Elsie and Rosella had made 10 cakes and some punch and coffee all ready for the crowd. Larry and Rosella had a table covered with my World War One souvenirs and photo albums of our kids and grandchildren.

They started coming in at 2:00 p.m. and kept it up till 4:00. There were so many more than I ever expected. It was a Wonderful Day. To say that I will always remember it "the rest of my life" doesn't mean so much at my age, but it was a Big addition to my extra large "Garden of Memories." I will never be able to thank our family and all those who came and those who gave and sent cards and all those who helped to make it such a wonderful day.

John A. Brookens  
710 S. Clay  
Taylorville, IL 62568

**JOHN AND BEULAH BROOKENS' FAMILY  
AS OF NOVEMBER 11, 1988**

**Daughter: Elsie May Brookens** (Born April 19, 1921, Christian County, IL)  
Married **Robert John McKittrick** December 11, 1941, Christian County, IL. 5 children:

**Linda Ann McKittrick** (Born December 21, 1942, Pana, IL). Married Patrick McElroy June 28, 1969. Divorced, 2 children:  
**Shan Michael McElroy** (Born December 30, 1972, Springfield, IL)  
**Sean McKittrick McElroy** (Born June 17, 1974, Springfield, IL)

**Donna Carol McKittrick** (Born August 21, 1944, Taylorville, IL). Married Morris German March 9, 1968, Christian County. Divorced. 1 child:  
**Christina Danielle German** (Born August 23, 1973, Springfield, IL)  
Married Jerome Pleshe January 8, 1981. 1 child:  
**Nicolas McKittrick Pleshe** (Born November 5, 1981, Springfield, IL)

**John Robert McKittrick** (Born August 30, 1946, Pana, IL). Married Sally Joy December 22, 1973, Funks Grove, IL. 2 children:  
**Mikel John McKittrick** (Born March 10, 1979, McLean County, IL)  
**Chad Whitney McKittrick** (Born October 31, 1981, McLean County, IL)

**Dale Earl McKittrick** (Born April 22, 1948, Pana, IL). Married Gloria A. (Erickson) Clesson January 30, 1971, Bloomington, IL. 2 children:  
**Noah David McKittrick** (Born November 22, 1981, Bloomington, IL)  
**Ian Benjamin McKittrick** (Born February 8, 1983, Bloomington, IL)

**Karen Marie McKittrick** (Born April 28, 1954, Taylorville, IL). Married Larry Spiegler June 8, 1974, Normal, IL. 1 child:

**Jacob Martin Spiegler** (Born February 19, 1987, Normal, IL)

**Son: Harold Eugene Brookens** (Born January 17, 1924, Christian County, IL)

Married Rosella Willingham October 3, 1950, Christian County, IL. 7 children:

**Ralph Edward Brookens** (Born October 2, 1951, Pana, IL). Married Connie Vickery February 17, 1972, Raymond, IL. 2 children:

**Matthew Edward Brookens** (Born July 16, 1976, Springfield, IL)

**Gregory Ryan Brookens** (Born May 10, 1979, Springfield, IL)

**Aleta Ann Brookens** (Born January 19, 1953, Pana, IL) Married William Tucker Russell June 8, 1973, Christian County, IL. Divorced, no children.

Married Scott Raymond November 1, 1987, Charleston, IL. 1 child:

**Katina Elizabeth Raymond** (Born September 1, 1988, Huntington, WV)

**Joseph Lynn Brookens** (Born August 21, 1954, Taylorville, IL). Married Brenda Ann Mansfield August 26, 1977, Taylorville, IL. 2 children:

**Heather Nicole Brookens** (Born February 28, 1984, Taylorville, IL)

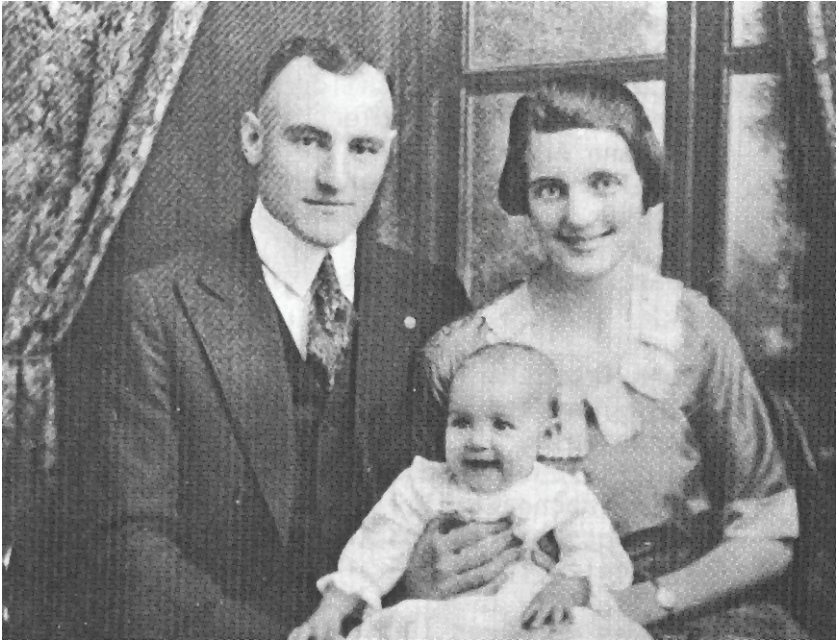
**Holly Anne Brookens** (Born September 9, 1985, Taylorville, IL)

**Daniel Lee Brookens** (Born December 8, 1955, Pana, IL). Married Sheryl Mase May 8, 1982, Jackson County, Ohio. 2 children:  
**Rachael Erin Mase-Brookens** (Born November 19, 1983, Ann Arbor, MI)  
**Michael Brian Mase-Brookens** (Born September 18, 1988, Ann Arbor, MI)

**Larry Dean Brookens** (Born September 9, 1957, Pana, IL)

**Leroy John Brookens** (Born December 25, 1961, Pana, IL). Married Rhonda Elaine Roberts June 4, 1983, Carbondale, IL. 2 children:  
**Sarah Elizabeth Brookens** (Born February 4, 1985, Carbondale, IL)  
**Aaron Joseph Brookens** (Born July 4, 1987, Carbondale, IL)

**Thomas James Brookens** (Born October 26, 1967, Taylorville, IL)



John and Beulah and daughter Elsie, 1921



Beulah and John on 69<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary, 1989



## A BRIEF OUTLINE OF JOHN BROOKENS' LIFE

- November 9, 1898 Born in Taylorville.  
 Spring, 1899 Moved with folks to Johnson Township.
- Winter, 1905 Moved with folks to Union County.  
 November 9, 1908 Moved back to Christian County to Brookens Home Place until 1912.
- 1912 Moved to Dappert Place, lived there until 1915.
- 1915 Moved back Brookens Home Place with folks.
- May 28, 1917 Enlisted in Company C, 6th Ill. Infantry, Camp Loudon, Springfield.
- July 3, 1917 Sent to East St. Louis, Camp Reig on riot duty.
- September 8, 1917 Sent to Camp Logan, Houston, Texas.  
 March 1918 Home on furlough (10 days).  
 May 13, 1918 Left Camp Logan for New York. Arrived Camp Merritt, New Jersey, May 18. Left Camp Merritt and loaded on H.M.T. Scotian, 13 days crossing, 13 boats in our convoy.
- June 7, 1918 Landed at Liverpool, England. Hiked to Camp Knotty Ash.
- June 9 Left Camp Knotty Ash by train.  
 June 11 Arrived at South Hampton. Loaded on the H.E. Miller, an English cattle boat at 6:30 p.m.
- June 12 Arrived at Le Havre, France at 2:30 a.m. Hiked to camp on the hill. Left "rest camp" at 6:00 p.m. and hiked to railroad and loaded on boxcars (l'hommes 40-les chevaux 8).
- June 15 Arrived at Ornans, France in rain and mud.
- June 16 Left Ornans in trucks for Fallerans where we were billeted.
- July 14 Bastille Day. 1st Battalion of 123rd Field Artillery represents A.E.F. in celebration at Besanson, France.

July 29 Moved to Camp Valdahon. Flu epidemic caught up with us here.

August 22 Left Camp Valdahon and moved up to the Front (on St. Mihiel Sector).

September 12 Start of St. Mihiel Drive. Battery A was at Bouconville supporting the 1st Division.

September 14 Started hike to Argonne Front. Night hikes.

September 24 We were shelled all night.

September 26 Bombardment started at 2:30 a.m. and lasted till 5:30 a.m. (Backing 91st Div.)

September 29 58th Brigade moves into the Very-Epinonville Valley (Hell's Valley).

October 11 58th Field Artillery ordered to rest camps in the rear. 123rd F.A. to Ville Sur Cousances. First rest since the last of August.

October 17 123rd turns its horses, etc., over to the 122nd and 124th F.A. and went to Doulaincourt to receive tractors and trucks and training with same.

November 11, 1918 The Armistice was signed while we were in Doulaincourt. The 58th F.A. Brigade had supported six different Divisions on the Front, but never had we backed our own 33rd Division.

December 18 "The Slow Train," tractors and trucks, left Doulaincourt to rejoin the 58th F.A. Brigade at Stenay, France, the last town captured by the Americans before the Armistice. The 33rd Division was ordered to Luxembourg to serve in the Army of Occupation.

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| January 7, 1919                  | We left Stenay for Luxembourg. The 58th F.A. Brigade was finally to be united with the 33rd Division Infantry for the first time since leaving Camp Logan. Battery A was billeted in Lintgen. The B.C. Detail was billeted in the home of the mother of the burgomaster of Lintgen. Seven-day pass to Alpine leave area. Train wreck near Conflans. Seven days around Chamonix and Mt. Blanc. |
| April 22, 1919                   | 33rd Division inspected by General Pershing at Ettlebruck, Luxembourg.  |
| April 28                         | Left Lintgen in trucks and loaded on train at Mersch, Luxembourg.   |
| May 3                            | Arrived at Brest, France.   |
| May 16                           | We were loaded and packed as close as they could pack us and taken out to the ship, U.S.S. America.   |
| May 24                           | Pulled into New York Harbor and went to Camp Mills, Long Island for a brief stay. Then on to Chicago where we paraded and then ate dinner at the "Loop" hotels.   |
| June 5                           | We went on to Rockford where we were discharged on June 7, and the 123rd Field Artillery ceased to exist.   |
| June 7, 1919                     | I reached Taylorville after 2 years and 2 weeks in the service.   |
| June 8, 1919 -<br>March 10, 1920 | I helped neighbors with grain and hay harvest. Did a little "chasing around," but settled down to going pretty regularly to John Masters' place. Helped Bert Hays make molasses in the fall. Shucked corn for Henry Morrell (Charley's dad) that fall.  |
| March 10, 1920                   | Married Beulah Masters.   |

March 11, 1920      Moved into our new home, no  
furniture yet.  
1920-1924      Rented the Brookens Place.  
1924-1925      On Henney Place.  
1926-1928      On the Debarr Place.  
1928      On the Shuler Place.  
1929      On our own place.  
1964      Retired but stayed on the farm.  
1974      Moved to 710 S. Clay, Taylorville  
in October.



From fighting bumblebees to planting corn to witching  
For water, John Brookens tells how they used to do things  
in “the good, old days.” His memories span the years from  
the turn of the century to 1989, his 90th year. He tells his  
stories with simplicity and humor, mostly directed at him-  
self.

He wrote this book as a legacy for his descendants, but his  
efforts can be appreciated by anyone interested in the early  
days of this century in Illinois. In these hectic days, we can  
all enjoy looking back at a simpler lifestyle and profit from  
the lessons he learned.

-Editor