

my uncle Peter Schmitz, my dad's brother, had some boys that were getting big enough to take care of the farm operation so he went to Dumont. He was a carpenter by trade and he built himself a nice two-story building there. It had apartments upstairs and the bottom was a general store, groceries and dry goods some ready made clothing that you could get at that time. Just about anything you'd want he had in there.

One day a lady came in and she brought in a big block of butter. She wanted to know if he had any other butter in there for sale. She evidently didn't want to use her own. He said yes he just got in a fresh batch of butter a little while ago. Well, she asked him to cut her off a couple of pounds. So he went to the back room and he took that block that she just brought in. She had it rolled up like a loaf of bread. That's the way they used to roll it. He cut the side off and squared her off a nice two pound chunk and brought it out to her and she bought it and took it home.

A few days later she was back in town and she wanted to know if he had any more of that butter. He said he thought he did. So he went back and brought some more butter out and she started complimenting him on the good butter that he got. It was her own butter that he had sold back to her. Evidently something happened. Maybe a mouse fell in the cream jar or something and she didn't want to use her own butter. She went and bought some others. She ended up taking her own butter home then complimenting Uncle Pete on the good butter.

There was an incident that happened about a year ago here that was when Mud Lake ran dry. There was very little water in the channel going north. But the beavers had built a few little dams inside the channel and stopped three or four feet of water in some places which were pretty nice for the deer and the partridge.

The government had some projects, too, to dig some holes for the sake of helping the wildlife. They also have a project now where you can grow some corn or grain and leave it out in the field to feed the wildlife in the winter. But many of them have tried feeding the deer in the winter time and haul bales of hay out and so forth but I read in the sports magazines that that is almost useless. The deer like to eat twigs off of trees or dig out some tall grass somewhere. Right now we're trying to save as much of the wildlife as we can because pretty soon there will be more hunters and less game to shoot.

I stopped out at a farmer's place one day and asked him, "How's the hunting out here?" He said, "You can go out and try 'er. The hunting is good — but the shooting seems awfully poor."

I think that's what most hunters have found the last several years. They're just chasing around, hoping to find a dumb pheasant sitting along the road. But with the price of gas now, every bird will cost you ten, twelve or fifteen bucks.

Anyway, about a year ago when the beavers had dammed up the water three or four feet anywhere in the area

you could find some partridge or pheasants, and there was quite a bit of wildlife around the area because they were close to some water. I remember when I was younger I used to always try to hunt within a half a mile or so of a creek. The better hunting was close to where the birds had access to water.

A bunch of these federal engineers came out and saw this beaver dam. The rummies went and broke that thing out. They let that little pond of water get away. The beavers went and built it up again in the night. The next day this same bunch of guys went out and were checking it over and were about to blow it up for the second time when a bunch of sportsmen stopped them.

There used to be a time when you could just hop in your car and come home with all the birds you wanted. Now if you are going to get any you have to get out and work for them. They are few and far between. They'll never be back like they were when the pheasants were first introduced into this country.

During those dry years when we had dust storms, people started to build windbreaks. There was more of it in North Dakota than in Traverse County but there were some who would plant a row of trees about every forty rods across their land. Or some big tree claim that was built lengthwise across the whole quarter. When the early settlers came here instead of putting in a little square or rod long patch they'd just make it a little narrower. Those things were quite valuable during the dust bowl years. They'd hold the dust to the ground.

I notice that now they are tearing out practically every thing on the vacant homesteads; trees are being rooted out. Ever since the land got up to such a high value they couldn't see it just sitting there not producing. They are ripping out all the trees. I was just wondering what will happen if we get those dry years again like we witnessed back in 1904, 1911 and then again in three years straight 1933, 1934 and 1935.

When we got those dust storms there was nothing on earth that would stop the sky from turning dark in the daytime just like it was at night. People would get lost coming home, would miss their driveways. The horses couldn't see and neither could the people. Those things could come back again, too. They say history repeats itself.

Back in those times in what we called the dust bowl when we didn't raise any feed we'd buy it from the government for a big fancy price — 5 cents a bushel for barley and 10 cents for oats. Everyone had a few chickens, pigs and kept a few cows. They'd find feed enough to keep them going and the main thing was to get feed for your horses. We used to turn our cows loose and let them run. But in the winter time we'd have to have some dried feed for them and that's when the government started shipping it in. Cows were selling for \$20 a head and we were paying \$28 a ton for hay.

People had to live on just what they had in those days, which wasn't very much. The style of living was different. Even today at the prices you get for stuff they sound kind of exorbitant. In my opinion, of course I could be wrong, but I

think the style of living has more to do than the cost of living has. It takes so much more now to live. What you could buy for a penny costs a dime now. If you had a few bucks you could go to town and buy your groceries. It's truly different today. It's not the businessman's fault altogether either, though we blame them for being too high on their prices. But the overhead they have to operate a business place is about the same as a farmer today. It's the overhead that's killing them.

Yesterday was the day the boys came back from Iran. It kind of brought memories back to me. I'm sure it had to for thousands of others. When World War II came to an end I had four boys in that. Some of them were gone for four years. We wouldn't hear from them sometimes for two or three months at a time while they were in combat or out in the jungles being shot at. Sometimes they were hit. None of them got hit seriously but had to spend some time in the hospital. I rejoiced with those folks yesterday when I saw how happy they were to see their children all back and safe.

In 1957 I quit the farm. The farm was up for sale and I didn't feel I wanted to keep on. I'd already farmed forty years on my own and my wife was quite ill with diabetes. We had the doctor out so often. Dr. Magnuson thought we should get in closer to some medical help. After fifteen months she died. The younger three boys were still in the service. When I quit the farm they went in. Dave and Jim enlisted in the Navy for four years and Vernon enlisted in the Army. He spent two years over in Germany.

There were so many settlers from the southern part of Traverse County who came up here. I wasn't able to get the names of them all. I know who most of them are but I forget the names of quite a few. But there was one family living north of Collis by the name of Diple. Joe Diple. He came up with that first contingent of Irish who came from Ireland and settled that southern part of Traverse County. He had a son there by the name of Pat. He was like all the rest of the boys in those days. He'd get out and have a little fun when he could. And once in a while he'd over-indulge. I saw him uptown one day and I said to him, "Pat, what's the matter? You look pretty droopy today." He said he had been uptown the night before until the bar closed and he had gotten slightly under the influence of intoxicating carbonics. He'd never say drunk or admit anything like that. He'd rather have more of a refined name for it. We used to have more fun with him. He was a bachelor.

Before the old K.T. came, we had that dirt road that led from Dumont to Collis and went right by their place next to the railroad track. The water would always wash the road out. That was about 1910 when the cars started coming in. Every car that came through there would get stuck. Pat kept a team of horses harnessed in the barn and he kept a chain all ready to go out and pull the cars that got stuck. Several would run through every day and some at night. He made it his business to see that this thing didn't dry out too fast. Business was getting good. Sometimes he was hitting as high as ten or twelve in a day. He used to go out there at night and stir it up a bit. He was a businessman. He was getting quite a bit of

business until someone reported him. That kind of put a stop to it. Then they went and got a few planks and beams and put a bridge across. Pat was without a business from then on. They didn't do anything but just reprimanded him a little bit.

Back in the early 1900's I told a considerable amount about the conditions of the roads before the drainage systems came in. In fact in parts of our township of Croke near where I lived with my parents there was quite a bit of gumbo soil. And after roads started being built through those areas there was a lot of this gumbo soil that would be brought up to the top of the road. Everything would be fine until we'd get a heavy rain that would soak this sticky stuff up. I can remember times when I would be going with a team and wagon, when I was still living with my parents, to some of the neighbors for something. We'd drive over those dirt roads and the gumbo would stick to the wheels and spokes of the wagon. And it would wedge in there so tight that the wheels would slip. There was only one thing you could do. If you tried to back up it was the same. You simply had to get down with your hands and dig it out. As we would go down the road away the same thing would happen again. Then we'd have to go through the same procedure. Finally when we would hit a good spot this gumbo would start loosening up from the wheels and fall off on to the road. Then in the fall of the year those big lumps of it would be lying in the road solid. It was just impossible sometimes to drive on the roads. Sometimes we'd cut across the ditches that weren't too deep.

After the county and the townships had spent so much money getting those roads and saw how they were going to pot on account of the traffic when the weather got nice they leveled them and then they started this gravel project. If it was anywhere near the Henry Harps farm, he had a good gravel pit out west of Dumont on his farm, we'd get a job hauling gravel to those roads with teams of horses.

There was a lumber company in Dumont that was operated by Frank Carlson. They would loan us lumber to make a box. We'd use two by sixes and two by fives on the side. We'd tack some little cleats on them and make some end gates. We usually got paid so much per trip depending on how many miles we had to drive. I think about 5 miles was the most we ever had to haul. We would haul about 5 loads a day and as the milage got up there we'd haul four. As we got closer to Dumont in the five mile range we'd haul three loads and get probably four dollars a day for a man, team and wagon.

Mr. Harps didn't get but ten cents a load for gravel. There was plenty of it out there and it was a help to him the same as it was to us that were doing the hauling. Later on they decided that they were going to gravel the road east of Dumont, too. That was always in bad shape. Sometimes it was smoother driving on the field after it had been harvested than on the road. We started over by Dumont and worked west. We were getting our gravel across the Traverse County line over east of Dumont in Stevens County. A fella by the name of MacKenzie owned a quarter of the land just as you get across the Traverse County line. He had a good gravel pit up in there. We'd go out there and get so much a load out

there for hauling, too. We had a little longer haul but we had to get three loads a day.

It was about five or six miles from where I lived, maybe a little further. That's when we were getting five dollars a day for hauling gravel. We'd leave home about three o'clock in the morning. Cold, quiet mornings long before the sun ever came up you could hear wagons rattling all over. If you didn't start early you'd have to wait some time to get into the pit. All the loading was done by hand. You had a number 10 or 12 scoop shovel. In those days we could fill a wagon in about six minutes.

Three or four families who lived in Dumont would come out and stay where I lived on the Joe Findlay farm right east of Dumont there. They'd stay at my place and we'd leave from there in the morning for MacKenzie's pit. We'd try to get two loads out before dinner. Sometimes dinner was a little late. We'd always try to get two out in what we called the forenoon. Then the next loads we'd get out after we'd had dinner and fed the team. We'd generally get through about sundown. And that's when we went into this recession.

That's when the timekeeper would give us our slips to take to the courthouse to get our money, we got those county warrants. The county was out of money. Quite a few people didn't pay their taxes in those times and the money didn't come in fast enough to pay the bills as they kept coming in. So the county issued these warrants that carried eight percent interest. But there weren't any of us that could afford to keep them and wait for the county to collect the next year's taxes. So we'd take them over to Andrew Peterson and Jake Heidelberger. They had their office in that building where the First State Bank had operated for a good many years. It's being used as an office building today.

Andrew and Jake used to discount our county warrants ten percent and they'd keep them until the county would get some money. Then they'd take them and cash them in. We'd go home with ninety cents on the dollar.

So they were collecting pretty fair interest at that time. But they were pretty handy guys to have around. You couldn't borrow any money at the banks because most of the banks were closed around the country. So we'd take our 90 percent and that would give them 18 percent interest — about the same as the money men are collecting today. So times haven't changed too much for those who still have lots of money.

We were glad to have those boys around. I don't know what we would have done without them.

Everything else was cheaper in those days. It didn't take as many dollars to operate like it does today. Our farming system was quite different at that time, too. Dad farmed 640 acres at that time and if he could thresh anywhere from 10 to 12 thousand bushels of grain off of that acreage he felt he had a pretty fair year. Of course, we always had plenty of livestock around there. Horses, 26 head of horses, around 55 head of cattle and some hogs. The cows didn't break any milk records just eating all those leaves. They did better after we

got going on that alfalfa. Dad was one of the first guys in the country who had that. I remember the variety. It was imported from Germany. It was called Grim alfalfa.

Everything was cheap back in those days but that stuff was \$1.40 a pound. I can remember Dad had a small acreage of that just to try it out. I proved so successful for cattle feed that he increased the acreage on that the following year after he used it one season.

Later on they had another graveling project going on in the county. They were still hauling gravel from the MacKenzie pit at that time. We didn't furnish any teams because gravel was being hauled to a farther area. Then trucks started coming into being and they started doing the graveling more or less from trucks. All we needed then was people with shovels to go out and shovel. This was a PWA project back in those days. They paid us 30¢ an hour for scooping gravel into the trucks. There was enough of a syndicate that we kept the trucks going just about all the time.

One day a guy from the state came out and said he wanted a foreman and he asked one fella if he would be the foreman of the crew. He'd get \$5 a day. He was farming near Dumont, too, and he said he had a field of corn that needed cultivating and all his chores at home. He didn't know where he'd get any help until he hired one of the fellas off the PWA crowd. I guess he figured this guy was paying the same wages as what he was making out at the gravel pit.

He was a married man and had quite a few children. The foreman hired this fella to do the chores early in the morning and do his field work. When he came to settle up with him the foreman gave him seventy-five cents a day. He took him off a three dollar a day job and paid him seventy-five cents because he was giving him dinner and supper out there at the place. He'd be with his family at night and then be out there early in the morning. Going wages for farm help at that time was only twenty or twenty-five dollars a month. He paid this guy off for seventy-five cents a day. I told this story to show that there were greedy people back in those days just like today.

My father bought some timothy seed once from a seed house. He sowed it down twenty acres of pasture ground. It surely made a wonderful pasture but in those days they didn't have very strict laws between the states about shipping in the seed. I guess what really happened was they sent in a lot of mustard seed along with the grass seed. It was a mixture of clover and timothy. It was pretty hard to get the mustard out of the clover. That first year after we had the field put into oats that twenty acres was just solid with mustard. That was the beginning of the mustard over in our community. Before that we didn't know what mustard was. That year quack grass was also brought in with seed from other states.

One of the real landmarks here in Wheaton is the Palmer House. That's where Mrs. Dunbar owns and resides today. That was known as one of the most up to date and nicest

rooming houses and hotels in the western part of Minnesota for a good many years. It's not being used as a rooming house any more. There are some restrictions that the state requires that this building doesn't contain, but it must have been well built because it looks just as strong and substantial as if it had been built within the last few years. There are a few small businesses that are occupying the eastern part of that building. Otherwise Mrs. Dunbar uses it for a residence for herself. Her husband died several years back.

That Erickson-Hellekson hardware store was another of the finer structures of Wheaton. Then there was the Norgram store where the First Bank is now. It was one of the leading feed centers in the county.

There were more people living here ten or fifteen years ago than there are right now. The farms got bigger and there are fewer jobs. There's so much of that where the young folks have to leave to find work. The population has been dropping in the county and also in our town. Now in this last year, 1980, we lost our railroad which was really the lifeline of this community for many years, since the 1800's when that came through. We have seen lots of things come and go here in our lifetime.

Of course there are lots of folks older than I am. Here in town we have Mrs. Spafford who is 101 years, and Paul Zabell, he's 99. I had some records here recently that Minnesota is the healthiest part of the nation to live in. It had the most elderly people for its population than anywhere in the United States. I have reason to believe this is true. All these people went through the hardships and worked hard all their lives. That seems to prove that work doesn't hurt anyone.

Henry Swanson lives just across the road south of what was called Boisburg and still is Boisburg on the county maps. His father I thought homesteaded this place that used to be his farm, but he told me that the homesteader that did homestead the place sold it to his father. Mr. Swanson's father came up to this area several years after it was being settled. Henry out there had one of the most up to date farms for one of the old settlers that I've ever had occasion to visit. And he knows probably more about the early history of the county than any man that's available today. They had running water out there and the sink is still there and in good shape. Henry keeps the place up just beautiful. The home had a fireplace in it which was put in in the early years.

His daughter and her husband lived on the farm for a good many years. The channel that lead to the Mustinka River going north towards Breckenridge is the outer edge of his farm. It's a farm owned now by his son-in-law and his daughter. One would never believe that that farm has been there this many years and is in such good condition inside the house and out and the buildings on the place are kept up well. He had a force pump put on his well that pumped the water up into a little tower that he had built and had enclosed. He had running water for all the buildings on the farm. This was years and years ago.

I remember my dad had one of those force pumps put on

his well out on the farm. He did it as a fire protection. He sent to Sears Roebuck and got several hundred feet of hose and had a little fire department out there on the farm. He had enough hose to pump water into any room in the house. At the time when the house burned down back in 1920 that thing was obsolete and wasn't used any longer. A fire started between the wall and burned that big house down. I have pictures of this early homestead house in among the other buildings that he acquired over the years. Our house and his first barn, the one he built in 1904, the little cabin that he lived in for six years which was only about 12 by 14. He had it plastered and so forth and he had moved it between the two barns and used that for a chicken house. That was what most of those old houses were used for after the people got in a position where they could buy lumber for a better house. I'm donating all those pictures to the museum up here in Wheaton.

Sometime when you stop in at the museum you'll see a picture of my son, Jacob, who was born in 1936, July 16. He held the world's record for being the largest natural born baby that they had on record from 1895 up until six or seven years ago. I think I had mentioned that I got word from the Guinness Book of Records and another outfit in Illinois that inquired about it a year or so ago. He is still the tallest baby ever on record in the United States. In the world, I mean. He was 24½ inches tall at the time of his birth. He weighed 16 pounds.

There may have been some larger ones born somewhere, but maybe there was no records kept. There was one born in Austria that was bigger than 16 pounds, but that was a cesarean operation. Natural birth we are talking about. If any of you find a copy of the November 22 of the Life and the Look magazines you'll see a picture of Jacob on the cover. The picture was taken down at the Graceville hospital. He was a year old at the time the picture was taken.

As one goes through a lifetime you have quite a few ups and downs. But I read somewhere that it isn't what you go through but how you come out that counts. I'm in pretty good health considering my age. My wife, my second wife, is over at the nursing home. My first wife was the mother of all 15 of my living children. Two of them have died in the last ten years. There are still 13 left with 108 grandchildren including the great grandchildren.

Back in 1916 during the War with Germany the government needed a lot of scrap iron for building battle ships and farmers pretty much cooperated. They'd go from place to place, some of them volunteered their help. Some farmers scrapped some of their old machinery, single cultivators, one-row cultivators they called them, and any old scrap iron that had been lying around the place for years and years. Government was paying a small price for it, but in those days no price was very high.

Traverse County had a drive to get as much as they could and shipped it down to the cities. They were selling it to the foundries. A bunch of dealers would first sort it and get the better grades of steel out to sell separately. They'd cut it up in smaller pieces so it would be easier to handle.

We'd haul it to the railroad loading platform, and some weeks we'd get three or four carloads. Someone asked where in the world all this scrap iron was going. I asked that to Fred Peickert one day and he said that dealers in the cities had been cutting it up and sending it to the West Coast where the Japs were buying all this extra scrap metal that we had lying around. I had an inkling that they must have had some evil intentions if they needed so much scrap iron, because some of our friends on the West Coast were telling us that the scrap iron that they were buying back in the 30's that was all being shipped over to Japan. They said that for miles as far as you could see there were freighters waiting to come up to the docks to load scrap iron.

One day someone said to me, "What are we shipping all that scrap iron over to Japan for?" I knew we weren't too friendly with Japan. There were some ill feelings between Japan and the U.S. like there are between the U.S. and Russia at this particular time. I said not to worry about that scrap iron deal because, "They'll be firing it back at us one of these days." Then when a war broke out in December that verified the statement I made. We were more-or-less joking at the time we were loading that iron.

We have the same problem pretty much today. Russia wants all the wheat that we can sell them and we have quite a few people who are interested in making some money from sending it to Russia. So it looks to me that history is repeating itself.

I did mention here awhile back about White Rock. They have eight people that is the entire population. They are all older people. It's an incorporated town and they have their

mayor and the rest of their officials. Of the eight people who are there, everyone has an office in what is left of their village. Jerry Olson is the mayor of the town. They have their councilmen, treasurer and the rest of the city officials common in every town.

Jerry informed me that the large building still standing there used to be an Opera House. Show people would come through and they'd have shows in there, and there would be social gatherings there. Other than that they had all the business places like you'd have in an ordinary town of that size, which was 1300 people when she was going at her best. That town was badly needed, too, because the South Dakota and North Dakota border was right close and there were people coming from the Rosholt area to trade at White Rock. The Western part of our county also used to do their business down at White Rock. It was a flourishing little town right in the heart of an agricultural area.

It's almost unbelievable that a town that was developing like White Rock should turn out like it did. But the young folks all moved away. Some of the folks who are living there today are among the folks that moved away to the cities. As they got older and retired they returned. As they got older they decided to come back out to the rural areas to spend the rest of their lives.

Jerry Olson mentioned that they have their meeting once a month just the same as any other incorporated town does. They have their snow removal equipment. So business is still being conducted as usual. They have modern homes equipped with all this modern equipment same as any other town.

5. Back in the earlier days we didn't have anything to use for a dance hall in Dumont. Just the large part of the second story over Andrew Doll's saloon. And then when that big brick building was built on the corner, we had plenty of places where we could have amusements.

One of the things they used to have back in those days was what they called a basket social. It was generally given for someone who had run into a little bad luck and was having a hard time. The proceeds were turned over to help some neighbor who needed help because of sickness or accident. Most of the girls in the community would find some fancy box or an old shoe box and fix it up. They's put their lunches in there with a few goodies and sometimes some homemade candy and sometimes a cigar, because most of the men in those days were smoking those good old cigars. When the dance was pretty well up towards midnight they'd bring out all these boxes of food. Occasionally some of the girls tipped their boyfriends off as to which ones were theirs. If some of the fellas wanted to have a little fun, when a certain guy started bidding on what he suspected to be his girlfriend's basket, they would start raising the bid on him and they'd just keep on roughing him up a little. The ordinary price on one of those baskets would be between one and three dollars. Then you'd be entitled to eat lunch with the girl who brought the basket.

Once in a while when they'd find out who the basket belonged to and her boyfriend would be bidding on it, they'd run it up to twelve or fifteen dollars. At that time that was quite a bit of money and those who bought those expensive baskets would probably go on a crash diet for a week or two after that. It's like the old saying, "Remember, boys, when you're squandering your cash that one day of turkey means six days of hash." Well I think that's what happened in some of those cases. Some of these guys couldn't see eating someone else's lunch but their girlfriends'.

Wages were low back in those days. My father used to hire extra help when we boys were all smaller. He'd generally hire a man about the middle of March. It seemed like we always had an early spring and could get out in the fields that early. He'd hire him for eight months and give him \$200 for the season. Most of those boys who would come into town from the cities or other areas were looking for jobs out on the farms. First thing they'd ask was if that included board and washing. Of course that was always included in the \$200. Very few of them drew out very much during the months. They just saved their money. They even offered to work for their board if they could stay over the winter, rather

than go back to the cities or wherever they came from and have to pay their board somewhere else. They'd be willing to stay the whole winter working for nothing just to have a place to stay.

I remember when the cars came out. That's when the changes were really made through the country. That's really what raised heck with a lot of our small towns. People were able to get farther from home. They were able to get 30 or 40 miles from home. The little towns started to deteriorate after the cars came in. Ford moved its first factory out of Detroit over to St. Paul after they started raising the wages to \$5 a day. Some of the boys from our area went down to get in on what they called the big money. Most of them came back because the line-up was so big and there was so few of them hired. My father hired men for \$200 for eight months; one who goes out and works on a farm now, if you count overtime, might make that much in one week. So that's how times have changed. People then lived off the land. Most people raised most of their stuff and there wasn't very much that they had to buy at the stores.

It's different today. Those large farms don't have the cows and the gardens that we had in our days. The population is decreasing and the young folks have to all leave town and go elsewhere to find work. There are less business places all the time.

When I was a kid I'd go to town once in awhile with my dad. He'd go into the liquor store. That is where you'd find company if you wanted someone to visit with. Most liquor stores had a pool table in those days, too, for those big enough to play around on the pool tables. You never saw a woman in the liquor store. If a woman came to town with her husband and she wanted to find her husband she'd go out in front of the liquor store and wait for some man to come by, to go in and see if her husband was in there. They'd call him outside.

I guess the attitude that people had in those days was that a woman's place was in the home taking care of the kids. I wouldn't go along with entirely. I think that was a little overdone. But that was the general custom. Of course when the women came to town they would congregate somewhere and talk and visit just like the men. You probably won't believe this, but when I started going to dances when I was a teenager if a girl knew that a boy had a bottle in his pocket or could smell it on his breath she'd walk off the dance floor and wouldn't dance with him.

The saloon keepers never had any problem getting anyone to come in to scrub floors for them or clean up inside their places. We had a guy living in Dumont who was working

on the section. The Milwaukee was paying \$1.50 a day for men doing work on the section. They'd generally get off duty about five o'clock. Then after the liquor stores closed at ten at night one of these guys would come in and scrub the place. He'd get a couple of glasses of beer and a couple cigars and that is all he'd ask for wages. Labor was cheap in those days. Everything was cheap. Most of the time you'd get your hair cut at home. The folks would cut it but after things got a little better they'd let us go to the barber and he'd cut it for 25¢. For those who wanted a shave it was 15¢ extra when you were old enough to grow some whiskers.

I've told quite a few of the humorous things that have happened in my lifetime. Now I'm going to bring up one of the more serious. On February 13, 1923, there was possibly the worst storm we'd had in this area since the 1880's. We lost one of our good neighbors in that storm — Mr. Hennen. You'll probably know him as Hank Hennen. My brother, Al, was on my dad's homestead farm and his wife Kathrine went up to Breckenridge to visit her sister, Mrs. Tracy. She was going to be back in a week or ten days. She had baked up plenty of goodies to make sure everyone had plenty to eat while she was gone. Al thought this was a good time to have a stag party while he was all by himself there. So he invited all the neighbors over that could possibly get away.

Clarence Issendorf was there. And we had Klaus Vollmers, Bill Weavers, Clarence Klindworth and Tom Thompson. I was there. Klaus came around and picked me up. We went down with the sled that night. When we got down to Al's place we thought there was somebody missing. That was Henry Hennen. Their youngest daughter was baptized that afternoon. Hank stopped in at my brother Al's and got a few horse blankets to cover the horses with to keep warm while we drove into town. Now this was February the 13th. It was right in the heart of winter. He was satisfied to stay home that night.

The boys talked to him over the phone and convinced him to come down and he agreed to it. He went out to the barn and hooked up his horses and came down to my brother's place. We had a good time that night. Everyone was in kind of a jubilant mood. We had lunch about 11:30 and Mr. Hennen went outside and said that it was darker than a stack of black cats out there. He said, "You can't see your hand in front of your face. Tomorrow we're going to have one of the worst storms this country has ever seen."

Klaus Vollmers went out to take a look and he said that we had better be getting home. We all got ready and I rode with Klaus. It was so dark that he hung a lantern in front between the horses so we could even see the road. It was so black that you couldn't see the road from the fields. He left me off at my place and he had left Bill Weaver off before he got to my place. He went home. Clarence went home in his own rig and Tom Thompson made it home in good shape too.

Al was all alone and thought it would be nice to have company til morning so he asked Hennen if he'd stay til morning and then go home when it got bright outside. He didn't like to see Hennen go home by himself because he had

got lost a few times. As one of his friends told me one time he was very easy to get mixed up in his directions. So he stayed over.

I judge it was about 8:00 the next morning, maybe 7:30, when I got up to do chores. All at once I heard a roar. It was just like a freight train was coming through. I went to the barn door and looked out and I couldn't see my house, only fifty feet from the barn. The first thing I thought about was Victor. He was always in the habit of coming right out in the morning when he heard me, wanting to help. He was just a little fella about five years old. I took a run for the house to make sure he wasn't going to be coming out in the storm. The storm was so bad I had to stop at the pump house which was about midway between the house and the barn. The rest of the day I stayed in the house. I only went out as far as the pump house to get some water.

Mr. Hennen started home in the morning. The sky wasn't clear but it wasn't stormy. Al said he couldn't have made over 60 rods from the place when that storm struck. He went a half-mile north and the horses turned on him. Instead of going east and then north again to get to his place where he was living, they went northwest across my father's half section. When they got north of the Fred Lundquist place on the next corner the wind blew the box off the sled. He went with the sled for aways then he unhooked the team and followed the team.

I was living on the place where Joe Findlay lives now, east of town. They missed the farm place I was on by ten rods. They went southeasterly across the farm I was farming and a few days later when the storm stopped a crew went out looking for him. They found the sleigh tracks in the fields and they followed them across. They noticed the horses out in my corn field. They were standing there by themselves. The nostrils of the horses from the snow and their breath had icicles that went from their head to the ground. It was a tremendous looking sight.

They started looking for tracks and they saw tracks leading down in the ditch towards the southeast. After about three-quarters of a mile they went to a tree claim on a farm that is west of where Lee Behrens lives now, and crossed over into a 160 acre virgin sod hay meadow that had never been farmed. They found him lying there frozen to death in that meadow land. They brought him into town and had him thawed out before they took him to the undertaker.

I believe in premonitions, and Mr. Hennen evidently had one that evening before he left. His wife told me that he came in the house and bid her goodbye before he left. She said that was unusual for him to stop back in the house after he had his team ready and say goodbye. The reason that I believe in premonitions is that many times in my life I'd wake up at night, so nervous I didn't know what to do with myself. And each time that happened I had a sickness in my home or someone got hurt seriously. On a couple of occasions we had to take one of the children to the doctor for an operation for something that appeared suddenly. My youngest son and Jimmy were in the Navy. I had seven children in the service.

One night I had one of those scary deals again and my wife woke me and asked what was going on. I was a nervous wreck. I told her that I had another one of those bad premonitions. I told her something bad had happened to one of our boys. "Or something else has happened." The next day we had planned on going somewhere and she asked if we were going where we had planned. I said that we should stick around that day. I said we were going to get a telephone call from somewhere. We got a call from Norfolk, Va. My son Jim was down in Norfolk at the time Dave was stationed there. He said that Dave had gotten in a car accident the night before and he was in the hospital in serious condition. They didn't know if he had an injured spleen or what his problem was at first. But he was bleeding internally.

I was talking about February 13, 1923. We had a few trees on the west side of the buildings just enough for a windbreak and it drifted up the snowbanks so high that when you walked on the drifts outside you could look right in the upstairs windows. That was the time when I had some cattle freeze to death on me. I left them out in the morning and they were standing there until Thursday until some farmers came to check to see what things were like over on my place. That was after they got Mr. Hennen over to Dumont. They came over to my place and they helped me dig a large animal out of the snow pile and it was still alive. But those that were standing out and never found their way back to the barns. It was another 50 feet back to the barns and they had been standing out in that blizzard, their legs were frozen up to their hips. They were still alive but they were so frozen that I just took an axe and hit them over the head and put them out of their misery.

That was really the worst storm that I have seen in my lifetime. I hope history doesn't repeat itself because we don't need anything like that very often. My mother was living at that time yet. She went through that blizzard in 1880 out there on the prairie that is still in the history books as the worst one that ever hit the prairie. They didn't have trees for protection at that time. But she said that the one in 1923 was just as severe as anything she had ever seen in her lifetime.

One of the Ryans who used to live south of Dumont got caught in one of those bad blizzards. He got out to the barn okay in the morning to do his chores, but couldn't find his way back. He took a shot at it and got lost in his farmyard. He wandered around in this blizzard and couldn't find the house. He didn't want to go too far for fear he'd go off the farm, so he just kept going back and forth until he finally found the wash line. Then he got his bearings because he knew where he was when he hit the wash lines. But after that he stuck in a couple of more posts and strung a wire clean out to the barn. Then if there was ever a storm that bad again he could find his way from the barn.

I was a farmer. My house was east of my dad's homestead. About straight east a mile to the farther end of the farm, there were about 40 acres that were kind of light soil. The rest of the farm the soil was like the heavy type. Somehow we got a stretch in there that was rather light. We were out seeding a crop one day and didn't know that there

was a spot there that was quicksand. It had never shown up before, but that particular spring we had quite a bit of rain and everything got soaked up pretty good. The horse on the outside of that team hit that soft spot and went down clean to her belly in the sand. We got the rest of the horses out of there, but we didn't know how in the world we were going to get her out of there. She couldn't help herself and she seemed to be settling deeper all the time.

I got my brother and two of my cousins, Henry Schmidt, Mike, Dick, and dad's hired man, to come along back to take a look. Henry decided there was only one way to get her out of there. That was to build a kind of a tripod up over her. So we went back and cut down three big ash trees from my father's grove and threw them on the hayrack. When we got them out there Henry tied the ends together. Before we went out he took some heavy belting and made a little outfit to slip through under the horse. He cut off a couple of thick chunks from a drive belt. We had to dig the horse out a little to get them under her body. We got one underneath right behind the front shoulder and the other one near the back quarters. Then we stood up the trees we had tied together. Of course, they would sink in the ground too, if we didn't have something to prevent them from going in. We had the presence of mind to bring along some extra planks and boards to put underneath the stand where the trees were supposed to stand, keeping them from going down in the mud.

Then we had a big block and tackle and we tied the ropes between the two belts and hooked them up to the block and tackle. About six guys got hold of that rope and pulled this animal out of that quicksand with the block and tackle. She couldn't stand and we rolled her over on her side away from the soft spot. She'd been down in that cold dirt for so long her circulation was pretty well cut off. After a half hour or an hour she tried to get up; after that she came out of it okay.

We ran into a lot of problems with the Twelve Mile Creek. There were some years when the creek would go dry, but there was always so much subsoil moisture that in certain places there was always water seeping in from the side of the hill down into the creek bottom. Many times when we'd bring the cows in to be milked we'd be a cow short. We knew right away what happened. We'd take a team of horses or one good horse, and a bunch of rope and we'd go down along the creek til we found her. It was kind of a cruel operation to get her out of there. There was only one way you could do it; put a rope around her neck. And that's what we had to do. We'd get the rope around her neck and start the horse off and he'd pull her right out of the mud. There was no other way you could get 'em out.

In those days the water level was usually so high that in many places along the old creek it would almost look like a small stream. The cattle liked to drink out of the creek. We never lost any to it because we always got there in time. It was just one of the hundreds of different things that happened on a farm that seemed to be part of our job. There were many hazards at that time out on the farm.

We had this hog cholera. We were blaming the pigeons for that because everybody had a big flock of them around

their barns and they'd fly from one place to another and eat in the hog barns. The hogs would pick up some of the shelled corn, so we blamed the pigeons for spreading the hog cholera. Once in awhile you'd lose a whole herd of hogs before the vaccination came out. It would only be a matter of a week or two before you could lose a couple dozen, and sometimes 70 or 80 pigs. Later on at experiment stations, veterinarians came up with this idea of vaccinating 'em. They called and told me they could take care of it. From then on you'd get to Doc Burton or Mr. Rydell. The state sent out a doctor to give schooling to the farmers — you remember I mentioned him earlier in the story — his name was Dr. Cotton. He'd teach the people how they could do it (vaccinate) themselves.

I got a little money out of that. Some of the neighbors, when they needed help, used to come get me, and with a large family, if I ever had a chance to bring in a little extra money, I'd take it. They'd come over and hire me to help hold the pigs while they vaccinated 'em. I used to go work on the side for some of the neighbors at haying time when I had our work completed. We weren't farming that big, only 200 acres at that time. I had some time to go help out once in a while when somebody needed some help. Of course, I had a little insurance line at that time which helped bring in some extra money, and as I mentioned before, I had the assessing job. Every little bit helped.

There is another thing going today that I take quite an interest in. They're advocating doing away with smoking. There are always a certain amount of people who are going to keep on smoking. I've talked to many different people about it and they don't like the idea that their children are smoking. They're smoking tobacco. But I think the ones who would come out the best on this if they would cut out tobacco completely are the people selling dope. Those children who want to smoke are going to smoke regardless of what they get to smoke. They aren't going back to cornsilks the way we did when we were kids. They are going to smoke marijuana if they can't get tobacco. It's their life if they want to ruin it with one or the other, there isn't going to be a heck of a lot anyone can do about it.

But I think that possibly the kids who are allowed to smoke tobacco won't get hooked on these other dopes that are on the market. Tobacco may have its merits in that case, too. I'm not an expert on all these things I'm talking about. I'm just expressing my opinion. I don't mean to offend anybody. But my opinion is that I decided to write things the way I see it. I'm only human and I can be wrong too. I don't smoke and I don't advocate a lot of smoking. I still think it is the lesser of the two evils for those who are inclined to use tobacco. It's been used for centuries. It's just a matter of choice. They can always quit when they want to.

Well, it's spring now again. It's usually one of the most beautiful times of the year. I can recall the days back when I was a young boy we always looked so far away towards spring. Wildlife was flying from its southern habitations to the northern hatching grounds and ducks and geese were going through by the hundreds of thousands. Occasionally

they would stop off in a new field that was just coming up with new sprouts in the spring. Of course geese are more vegetarian and sometimes the whole forty acres would be solid with geese. Wherever you looked you could see ducks flying in any direction to their mother hatching grounds. Most were heading towards Canada. Prairie chickens in coveys anywhere from 15 to 30, around sundown every night, would be moving from one location to another, or hatching out in different prairie lands. It seemed as if nature had arranged for those birds to move to a new location and others to take their places.

One of the things that interested me back in my boyhood days was the sandhill crane. They would stand up so high and the noise they would make. Sometimes they would cover the full forty acres wide and half a mile long. Up in the sky they would be circling; they seemed to travel with the air currents. Sometimes there would be thousands of them around my father's farm.

Once in awhile one of the farmers would go out and try to shoot a couple of them. We got a couple of them and took it home for my mother to dress. They dressed out about the size of a good size turkey. But the tendons in their legs were just like wire, they were so muscular. She roasted them and they were still tough. They were no comparison to the tame duck, geese and turkey that we were used to having at home. We used to tell my mother that the cranes were so tough you couldn't stick your fork in the gravy. Well, it was a little extreme, but it came awful close to the way they were. They didn't roast up just right. Possibly they weren't fat enough. They didn't carry a layer of fat like most fowl.

In the prairie lying around and in the road ditches there were wild flowers on every side of the road. There was mostly roses. We didn't have much for roads in those days. There was quite a bit of virgin soil in the ditch that wasn't being farmed and that would be full of red lillies blooming, and dozens of other kinds of wild flowers in bloom. The rose bushes, of course, were a little harder to kill out. The road ditches were always banked with roses. There was so much beauty then and now everything is farmed clear up through the ditches. We don't see flowers along the road like we did back in those times.

There are a lot of happy memories, when you think back to the way conditions were. They weren't the best for making a living, but everybody seemed to be happy and lived according to the way things were in those days. It was not a bad time to have the opportunity to grow up. I have often been thankful that I was able to spend most of my life back in those days when everybody seemed to be satisfied with the way things were.

Of course, after those long, hard, cold winters everybody was happy to see the spring thaws coming. They expected things to be a little better this year than they were last year. Sometimes they were; sometimes they were worse. They took things the way they were. There was no pressure on anyone. They always knew enough to put in themselves, a nice garden, they'd have water they could water with in case

a dry spell would come along. Everything that could be canned was canned.

Clothes you didn't have much of in those days. Fifty percent of the people, when they went to church, had on a pair of good, clean nice white overalls.

The way of life was a lot different in those days. We seeded grain in the spring of the year. Many had what was called a shotgun seeder. It was a contraption that you'd put on the back end of your wagon and it sprayed the grain out over the top of the field just like a fertilizer machine does today. It spread the stuff about twenty or twenty-five feet wide. Then we'd go out with a disk and disk it under and drag it down. That usually took care of it pretty well if you got some rain at the right time.

Sometimes after we had a forty or an eighty acre field sowed down with one of those shotgun seeders we'd get two or three days of rain before we could go out and disk it down. The ducks and geese would come on the fields picking up the grain. Sometimes they'd practically clean up a field on a farmer. He'd go and see the game warden about it and he'd say, "Go out there with a shotgun and scare them off." You weren't supposed to shoot them, but you could scare them off. Many of them did that barely got back in the house when the ducks were back again. Often a field had to be sowed over again. So most of the time when they used one of those shotgun seeders they'd generally never try to plant too much ahead that they couldn't disk under the same day or at least the next.

I had a cousin who, one evening, wanted to know if I wanted to go along hunting with him. The geese were thick out on the rye field. There must have been thousands of them out there. He had an old mule on a buggy and he and his brother, Tony and I went out there and drove right into the flock. They weren't scared of horses. He fired two shots and knocked down thirteen of them. As some of them came circling down to help their mates he got three more, so he had sixteen of them.

The game warden was up in Wheaton, but he was nowhere in the area. You could get away with that sometimes and I don't think he would have thought about it too much. Fines were small in those days — two and a half to five bucks. I got caught once and he charged me double because he said I had that one coming a long time.

We didn't hunt all together for sport back in some of those days. That was meat on the table, when you brought some wild game home. There was a time when jackrabbits were on the menu on most farm places too. Then they got some kind of infection and since that time nobody has been making a practice of eating jackrabbits.

The local butcher had what they called a meat wagon. He'd have a horse and a buggy with a box on it like those old mail carriers used to have. He'd have a big chunk of ice in there and would drive from one farm to the other. He'd have fresh sausage, homemade sausage, and all the cuts of steaks. Once in awhile he'd have some pork chops. It was just a nice

chance for the people out on the farms in those days to get some fresh meat. Most had a smoke house and they would cure their own meat out on the farm. Most of the year when they weren't using poultry they were using smoked hams and smoked bacon and so forth. People didn't buy from day to day when they went into a store either. They didn't always have an abundance of money that they could buy a lot at a time. They'd buy just the necessities that they couldn't raise out there on the farm.

Raising a garden back in those days wasn't always such a simple thing to do either. They had none of the insecticides they have today where you can spray and dust. Cabbage had cutworms. Those were the worst. They would cut off the biggest part of the cabbage if you didn't wrap it, so we generally took a piece of newspaper about three inches wide and we'd wrap it down right next to its roots. Then we'd bring it up the plant about an inch and a half above the ground. That usually kept the cutworms off pretty well.

Then we had potato bugs. There was nothing back in the beginning that would stop those darn things. They would just chew your potato vines all up. Then they came out with parascene. You'd mix that with water then make a brush out of coarse hay and wrap it around a stick. They you'd dip in the bucket and slosh it on the stalks as you went along. That's the way you handled killing your potato bug. If there was just a few on the stalks before they had a chance to lay their eggs the folks used to have us take a pan and we'd walk down the fields and brush them off into this pan. That's the way we earned our Fourth of July money. For every hundred of them that we could knock into a pan we'd get three cents from Dad. Then they came along with arsenic of lead. They don't recommend that you use that on anything today.

I got myself a blower after I started farming. There was a pump on it and you'd just blow it out on the plant. That hung on a little bit better. It was kind of a sticky formation and it dried to the leaves. Usually on treatment during the growing season would take care of the potato bug until the plants were ripe enough and in no more danger of the potato bugs doing much damage.

I used to sometimes put in five acres of potatoes and I and my wife Veronica used to go out and dig them. I'd get a triple box full and we'd generally get that many picked up before noon. Then in the afternoon I'd go to Dumont and go house to house and peddle them out for 50¢ a bushel. That got to be quite a bit of work. Some places you could pull right up to the basement door; that wasn't so bad. But when I had to walk fifty feet across the lawn with a basket full before I got to the basement and I made 20 or 25 trips to the basement I got pretty tired before the day was over. But it would just keep me in shape. I could stand a good days work.

Everything was man-powered in those days. You didn't sit on a machine and have it do the heavy part of the burden. The hard part of it was when you were behind one of those wooden harrows and you didn't have a cart and the field was loose. After you walked a couple of miles up and back twice a day going to work and coming from work in that loose

ground, your legs would get pretty strong after awhile. You could stand quite a bit of walking. I don't think most of the boys in those days could run as fast as the kids can today because their leg muscles were developed pretty heavily from all this walking and tromping around in those soft fields. You didn't need an athletic field to keep in shape. You didn't go out and hike up and down the highway and get yourself in shape to be able to run or stay on your legs. That all went along with our job. It wasn't so bad after you got twenty-five miles a day behind the horses and were walking down to the field, but when you came home and you had fifteen cows that had to be milked yet and all the chores to be done. There wasn't anyplace you could have gone at night if you had wanted to, but you didn't care much about going anywhere at night.

When the cars came, of course, that was quite a help. I think sometimes we worked a little faster so we could get done earlier and get the old Regal out. Dad bought a Regal 1912. Once in a while we'd take the car and go to town. We'd run into a bunch of our friends and spend an enjoyable evening. But there wasn't much to do in those days; just go to town and stand on the street corner and gad awhile. We didn't have much money to spend. Those who drank beer could get it for five cents a glass. A 5 cent glass of beer was about the size of what they call a frosty nowadays. That's fifty cents. That's how the prices have gone up on stuff. There weren't many young folks who drank beer. Some of the older folks would overindulge a bit, but the kids never had enough money to get into that habit.

Before Fred Siewert came to Wheaton, he used to be in the hatchery business in Bird Island. He had hatcheries all around in different towns of any size down there. When he went out of the hatchery business he bought interest in a store in Dumont with a fella by the name of Henke. It was Siewert Henke at that time. They had a real nice store on the corner where Con Lerum's old Liquor Store used to be. That's torn down now. That's where the highway goes through now. That was the main street at that time.

Later Fred sold out to Henke. Then Siewert came and took over the State Bank in Wheaton. Claude Lehman was running the bank I believe at the time when Fred took over. Einar Oscarson started a hatchery in Wheaton. From then on we never bothered too much with setting clucks and messing around with these things at home. When we needed a few hundred chicks we'd come up and get them from Einar. That building is now used for the Legion Hall.

When my two older brothers went over to France during World War I my dad hired an extra hand to help out on the farm. He came out looking for work, a married man from Racine, Wisconsin. He had a small place back in Wisconsin, but wanted to pick up some more income during the summer because his farm didn't bring enough income for his family. Going wage was two dollars a day at that time. So Dad hired him and he stayed through the haying season, through harvest and through threshing. Some of the ditches that had been blown full of dust during the dust storms, so Dad had him stay on after threshing to dig out ditches an extra two feet.

What I want to mention is the two dollars a day. A lot of the men who were working that season were getting a dollar a day or about twenty-five or thirty dollars a month. That included board and room and washing. Anyone who had a car back in those years could get four gallons of gasoline for his car for one day's wages. Today we hear such a complaint about the price of gasoline. But you can work one hour and buy yourself four gallons of gasoline.

I remember when this man got ready to go back home in the fall. He made two hundred dollars while he was working for my dad. When he left for home he had \$187 he was taking back with him. In all of his time here he only spent \$13. When my two older brothers, Paul and George, were over in France, they stopped in England for awhile on their way back. The American soldiers had so much money on them. They got thirty dollars a month for overseas service. The local people over there didn't have it so good. Some of them were starving during the war.

For comparison I want to mention what cars used to cost back in 1910, 11, and 12. My dad bought a car in 1912. It was sold by the Buick dealer and called a Regal. They have one on the market today. That one came out with carbide lights on it. There was a tank fastened on the running board. You'd open up a valve and a little gas would come into the lights and you'd have to light them with a match. We didn't go out much at night because you could only see a rod or two ahead of you. I remember he paid \$1300 for that car. My uncle bought an Overland which was a little bigger and that cost him \$1400. But later on they got really cheap. Plymouths back in what they call the Depression Years were as low as \$360 or \$370. Those were brand new cars. That's when the price of gas went down to 10¢ a gallon.

I was not inducted into World War I because after they took my two older brothers the draft board told my father they were going to leave me on the farm.

One of the most beautiful scenes in this area can be found if you follow Highway 27 out west to the first bridge you come to and then turn right. Then go down towards the reservation bridge. Cross the bridge and get into the South Dakota hills at about sundown, when the sun is shining down across Traverse Lake and the rushes and wild rice. Especially in the fall of the year, I don't think there is a prettier sight anywhere to be seen. I remember back in the pheasant days when hunters from the cities used to come and rent some rooms and spend the weekend hunting pheasants. When the season opened at noon I'd pick the boys up and take them out across the reservation bridge and let them take a look down on Traverse Lake from the west. For those people from the cities who had never been out here to see the western part of Minnesota and Traverse Lake it was a real treat to see the beauty that we drive by and take for granted.

I remember one Sunday morning I took the boys out and drove around the lake with them. They were from the cities and only had seen the Mississippi River. There is no natural beauty there. They were just amazed at the beauty that we have here.

Back in the early part of my story I mentioned the bank robbery at Dumont. I also mentioned the one at White Rock. When my brother George got to be sheriff, he got a call one night from Dumont to come down immediately because someone had just broken into the liquor store. They lit the building on fire as they were leaving. George grabbed a double-barrel shotgun, the first thing he could get his hands on and got into the car. When he got down to Dumont one of the fellas who belonged to the gang — there were three men in on the robbery — was waiting in the car for the other two who had gone in to get what they could and set the building on fire.

The villagers in town, when they heard the explosion, grabbed their guns and got out on to the street to see what was going on. They were going to take part in capturing these people if it was possible. By that time George got down to Dumont. The two men in the store could see there was no way of getting to the car because most of the people from town were out. So they took off on foot. They hunted around for them, but couldn't find them. What happened was the thieves had hit the railroad tracks and started for Wheaton down the tracks.

George didn't have any handcuffs with him, when he stopped this guy in the car. The guy was sitting in the car unconcerned. He had a loaded revolver with him, but wasn't the killer type. He surrendered his gun and George gave his double-barrel shotgun to Paul Zabell. Paul guarded the thief while George went back to Wheaton to get some handcuffs. It took him only a few minutes to run up and back. He had the old Model-T wide open. He handcuffed the thief. They couldn't find the other two in this job with him, so they posted guards out on Highway 75. Everyone who came down the road was stopped and asked if he'd seen two guys on foot anywhere along the road. Nobody claimed to see anybody.

It just so happened that George had passed them a few times on the way to Wheaton and back. Evidently they lay down and hid behind the railroad track. When two boys got to Wheaton they got behind the old Palmer House. There were a lot of cars sitting there with the keys in them. They grabbed a car and came right back through Dumont. They were also stopped and checked and asked if they had seen anybody, and they said that they hadn't. It was learned later that there was a car stolen up in Wheaton. They knew that those boys had back-tracked right through Dumont. The word was sent around the community and they had called police and sheriff's offices in different towns, telling them that the car was heading south. When these desperados got as far as Appleton they parked their car and went and rented a room there. They were going to sleep until the heat got off. Of course the cops got suspicious that these might be the fellas they were looking for, so they went up to their rooms. They apprehended those two fellas and George had this other fella back in jail in Wheaton.

One of the fellas in the gang was a guy by the name of Rocky Luciano. Years later when we'd read the Minneapolis or St. Paul paper we'd find articles about different jobs that he had been in. Once he was involved in a more serious crime

down in Virginia near Norfolk. He got into a shooting match with someone. Later I guess he got disposed of by some member of his own gang.

They had the ringleader in jail in Wheaton. They brought him into court and he had decided to pay for all the damage he had done. The judge offered them a pretty liberal settlement. They agreed to pay for the damages and they got off the hook that way. But this guy Rocky kept on with his business.

Getting back to the fella in the car, after George had the handcuffs on him and took his shotgun away from Paul Zabell, Paul said to George that there weren't any shells in the shotgun. George said that he knew that all the time. but that the guy in the car didn't know it.

This gang was headquartered in St. Paul. There were some friends of mine who were running a gas station down in Graceville some years back when those underworld characters were prowling through the country. They always gave pretty good service. When this big car drove up to the station, they didn't recognize at first that it was an armoured car. They cleaned off the windshield and had the front door open and started dusting off the floor boards. They filled it up with gas and when the attendant reached in to clean off the foot boards, he hit a peddle with his hand. Some little electric appliance opened up the windshield. It was one of those windshields in two halves. One side went up and the other side went down. While it was doing that there was a machine gun mounted in the back that automatically came up over the top of the seat. The guy told him not to mention it to anybody. Years and years did go by before they started mentioning this incident because it probably wouldn't have been too healthy to report those things at that time.

Previously in my story I have talked about our large baby that was born. It was born in the Graceville hospital and held the world record for being the tallest baby ever born by natural childbirth. Today we got challenged on the birth on a pair of twins. There was a set of twins born that weighed 18 pounds between the two of them and one of the Twin Cities papers came out and said that must be a world record. We had that one beat 46 years ago on March 15. We had a pair of twins born. Vernon weighed 11 pounds and 15 ounces, and his twin sister, who is Mrs. Earl Triplet now, weighed 9 pounds and 15 ounces. So that was in the area of 21 pounds between the two of them. When they dig into their records a little more they will find that this is the largest pair of twins on record. Now these children were weighed at birth at the Graceville hospital on tested scales. To make their weight official they had to be verified by three doctors and two nurses. Otherwise there are a lot of large babies born around the country that were probably weighed on fishpeddler scales who never had been tested too closley.

But Jacob Jr. is still considered to be the world's largest baby. He weighed 16 pounds. A lot of you folks remember Junior. He died when he was 31 years old, as I mentioned before. He had contracted sleeping sickness. At the time he was born the doctor estimated that he was going to be

possibly a 9½ pound baby. And when he figured out he couldn't handle a baby being born as large as this he called two more doctors. He had three nurses working with him. There was Nellie Jane Stanley, Mabel Jorgenson, and Rose Bollin from Graceville. They were nurses at the hospital at that time. Three of them verified Junior's weight on the hospital scales, which showed him to be 15 pounds, 15 and 2/10 ounces. When he was born he wasn't breathing, so they started this artificial program on him. For an hour and a half artificial respiration was administered, and he started to breathe.

Three hours later he took nourishment, and they put him in the nursery and kept him on a corn syrup, milk and water diet for awhile. For his size he would take so much more than a 7 or 8 pound baby would need. They didn't want him to turn into some kind of a monster from the beginning from overfeeding him so they put him through what they called a stream lining process. They took him out of the nursery, where they had all the other babies, and put him up on the second floor at the right hand alley of the hospital away from the rest of the family because there was so much newspaper publicity at the time. They didn't know if it was safe to leave him in the regular baby nursery. Occasionally it could be a problem where someone could come and take him for ransom. They kept him there three weeks after my wife came home from the hospital. They cut his weight down to 13 pounds before they let him come home. Then he got put on a regular 3 ounce feeding, the same as any ordinary child. He always seemed to be hungry and once in a while we'd slip him a bottle in between.

He got to be okay until he contracted encephalitis when he was 4 years old. That affected his nervous system. His hands would quiver sometimes and it affected his walk slightly. He went out and did ordinary work at the time he died. He died suddenly overnight. He had been driving truck for the county, hauling gravel, graveling roads. He went to college two years after he graduated from high school in Wheaton. But he was like all other boys at that time. The main thing he had on his mind was to have a car, so he quit school to take a job to earn money for a car. At the time of his death they did an autopsy and found that he had a tumor in his head about the size of a chicken egg. That thing burst in his sleep and he died instantly. The doctors figured that the high fever that he had back when he was four years old caused some damage to his brain and later that tumor had formed.

We contacted the daily newspaper and the news source regarding the story had come about the 18 pound twins. We wanted to make a correction on that because my twins still hold that record. As I mentioned before I have heard from the office in Kansas City of the Guinness Book of Records and then last year I heard from another outfit in Illinois. They told me that 15 pounds and 15 2/10 ounces for Junior is not the world record anymore. Some have been larger since that time. But he still holds the record for the tallest baby ever born in the world. That's 24½ inches. They had an article in the paper at one time about a negro baby who was born dead down in Gate City, Georgia. But that didn't count because they were only

keeping a record of those born alive. That negro baby that died was 21 pounds.

Today is March 19, 1981. I was thinking this morning about some of the prices and the auctions that we had when I was a boy. We had an auctioneer down at Graceville by the name of Garvey. Here we had Doc Burton and Charlie Winchell to do some auctioneering for those who wanted to get rid of their property. Doc Burton used to get the sales out of the way pretty quick, but Winchell used to hang in there for the last penny. I remember he was having a sale just two miles north of Dumont. My dad took me along to the sale that day. It started right after dinner. It wasn't such an enormous amount of stuff to be sold, but Winchell spent a lot of time on those 25¢ or 50¢ bids on cattle. It took a little while to make a sale. My dad was one of the last ones to stick around. They were selling the cattle by lantern that night, it had gotten so dark. Most of the people had gone home to do their chores. Winchell worked pretty slow on that stuff and he didn't get through before dark and he was in the barn selling by lantern. He was selling big cows in there. My dad bought one. It was about a five hundred pounder. It was in good shape. He got this animal for \$15. It sold for a little less than some of the others. He figured that if it wasn't a good milker he could always use it for beef.

I mentioned earlier about that boy from the cities who wanted to know which faucet you got the cream out of when Dad was milking the cows when I was a little boy. This one had only three faucets and that's why she sold cheaper, but she gave just as much milk as the rest of them. So we figured that he got quite a buy on that one. That's why butchers could sell meat so cheap. Like Jim Lynch. You'd go in and ask for a quarter's worth of sausage and you'd get three of those large rings like you get one of now. You'd get three of those for a quarter. Of course the meat was cheap and he usually did his own butchering so hardly anything ever went to waste. Hides, too, were cheap in those days. You could go and get your hides tanned and used them for leather.

Back in those days when a farmer put on an auction, back in the saloon days, you'd have a few guys walking through the crowds with water and jugs of whiskey giving everybody drinks. Some of them got a little tipsy and they kind of over-estimated their checking accounts as they overbid each other. Then when they'd go to the bank the next day to straighten up they didn't have any money there to pay with, and some of them didn't have any credit either. I remember on one occasion there were some relatives who came up from that Lake City area and one of the boys in the crowd wanted to show those relatives of his that he was a big operator. He went and bought a couple of thousand dollars worth of stuff on the auction sale, and when he went to the bank to straighten up the next day he found out that he didn't have any credit. That was down at the Dumont bank. The banker wouldn't accept his notes. He knew one of the other bidders this man had been bidding against, so he called him up on the phone and asked him if he'd accept a certain bunch of stuff that this guy had bought and was unable to pay for.

He said that he'd take it for his last bid. So the banker came out of that one pretty well.

That was quite a habit in those days to bring in drink and get the guys pretty well plastered. They would talk when they should have been listening. There were always enough of them there who got a little high. Then they'd buy things that they really hadn't intended to. Or they thought they were going to run the price up on someone else and then got stuck. Many of the bankers had their problems, too. Nowadays they use a different system. The guys who want to buy things on time go to the bank first to see if it's okay before they start making bids.

When Emil Sorenson was a young man, when his father was a cigar maker up in Wheaton, the grocery stores would get peanuts in by big sacks full. They would give Emil a bushel or two of those and he'd go out to the auction sale. He had a big burlap bag which he put over his shoulder. For a nickel he'd give you all the peanuts you could take out in a handful. He did a pretty good business. He was always aggressive from the time he was a young boy. He was always trying to do a few things to make a few cents. He wasn't afraid of work.

Of course, after he got older and on his own he started a restaurant on the south side of the street in Wheaton. He had one of the better eating places in town. I guess it was commonly known among the community that there wasn't anyone that could put out a better lunch and hamburgers than they could get over at Emil's for that amount of money. I got to know Emil when I went to school in Wheaton, but other than that I didn't know him too well other than when I would see him at an auction sale. I always had him figured to be an ambitious, aggressive sort of boy.

George Allanson wrote a lot of articles about the history of this county. He had quite a few books and articles published. I don't think there was anybody in Traverse County that knew as much about the history of the county as George Allanson did. His books are scattered in different places and it's pretty hard to get any of his articles. He used to be the publisher of the newspaper here in Wheaton, too. The name of the paper at that time was the Wheaton Reporter. It went to the Gazette Reporter and now it's finally just the Gazette. His ancestors were some of the first to settle down in that Browns Valley area. He was related to the Browns. And they were the first. He got a lot of information through them and he was growing up at the time and was quite interested in the early history of the county. George had one son whose name was also George, and a daughter, Helen. When I was working at the courthouse I got a call from New York. They wanted to know if anyone wanted to claim George's body. He died while in New York. This was about ten or twelve years ago.

I was thinking about when we used to farm with horses. Many times we had to keep about a third of our crop for horse feed. Of course every farmer then had a lot of cattle, too. So all the grain you raised in those days wasn't sold on the market. We used a good part of it for feed. Every town had a

feed mill. That's before the gas engines came out. Most of the people would haul their grain to Wheaton or Dumont to get their feed ground. I had nothing but hay and old fodder corn, which was corn that was planted thick so it would make a lot of leaves. We didn't get too much milk from our cows, just feeding them that alone. So we'd feed them a little ground feed on the side, which brought them up a couple of quarts a day on their milk.

Milk was necessary because the cream check was what we bought the groceries with back in those days. And also egg checks. That's what the people used for living. They bought the stuff they couldn't raise out on the farm. Father used to buy quite a bit of his bran. Every town like Wheaton, Herman, Graceville, Morris, they all had flour mills. This bran, maybe the younger generation doesn't know what that is. Of course they know what bran flakes are, but bran was hulled off the wheat before it was milled. That was taken off the wheat before it was made into flour unless you wanted whole wheat flour. Then we'd give some of that to the cows, along with the roughage, to try to bring up their milk production just a little bit.

Horses took a lot of feed too. They weren't like a tractor that you could drive six months a year, then put in the shed. You had to raise enough grain so that you could feed those horses year-round. They were about ready to fall by the time they got done with the farm work. Some of the more aggressive horses did a little more than their share and they would get pretty thin. During the winter months you'd build them back up again with feeding them grain, corn, and some oats. They had their couple meals of grain a day all year-round. You had chores all year-round in those days, too. You didn't have any days off. You worked Sundays and holidays. You had to be there to milk those cows in the morning and again at night.

My father was farming 840 acres with horses and he had about 25 or 26 head of horses including the colts. Those colts, you know, you had to feed them for three years before you could break them and put them out in the field to do a day's work. If you had horses, you generally tried to raise a couple a year to replace the ones that were getting old. Once in awhile one would drop dead of a heart attack, same as humans do today. They'd get sick, too, so we had doctor bills. We'd have to get the vet for the horses. It wasn't all glitter back in those days either. It was a rough battle for the boys who came out here and tried to live off the land. Many times after a mare had foaled, and you were a little short of help, when the colt was big enough it would have to follow the mother around the field. If you had a team of four horses abreast you'd have the mother on the outside so the young colt would run alongside the mother as we'd go up and down across the fields. Of course, he was always there when it came to be lunch time. As soon as we'd stop he'd have his lunch. Otherwise you'd have to keep him up in a box stall up in the barn. Sometimes it wasn't safe to tie them because the little fellas would hang themselves from the tie ropes. We always had box stalls to put the young colts in when we didn't let them go along with the mother in the fields.

Of course, when harvest time came and we had machinery that was a little more complicated to run, so we didn't let the colts follow around. Sometimes we'd hitch up to go to town for a load of something and we'd hitch up the mare and the little colt would follow us up and back. It didn't seem to hurt them any. It built them up into stronger horses. It was always fun to break in these young horses for field work. In only a few days they'd learn the gait they were supposed to travel. At first they would want to get in there and want to do the whole thing all by themselves and we'd have to tie them back so they wouldn't play themselves out within a few hours. But after they learned the gait, the rest was no problem.

I started farming on my own in 1917. I worked for my father the last year after I got to be 21. He paid me wages the same as he would any other man. Going wage was \$35 a month at that time. He gave me \$45. When I rented a quarter of land that fall and started out on my own, I bought a bunch of old horse machinery and had to buy four extra horses. He had given me one. I got a cow from home and I had to buy four or five milk cows and I had to buy feed grain and seed grain. With the wages I got from Dad, I furnished the house. I got married to Veronica that fall. We went to Sears Roebuck and got a range. The trade name of it at that time was a Mayflower. They had everything from soup to nuts in those catalog houses at that time. We went into Lynch's Hardware store and got a dresser set and got a woodburning stove.

One of the biggest tragedies in the early days was the dust bowls that we were right in the heart of here. It hit farmers who homesteaded their land and lived on it for 50 years. I know one particular farmer out west of town, Mr. Zocker, who homesteaded his farm and decided he wanted to put up a better house. He borrowed \$5,000 to build himself a new house and make a few other improvements on his place. He ran into those bad years, which was no fault of his. It was just the elements that were against him. One of my brother's first duties as sheriff was to go out there when the bank foreclosed on his farm after he had homesteaded it and lived on it for 55 years. He wasn't a man who was throwing his money away. He was a conservative man. He worked hard.

Those things can happen again. We have prices of land skyrocketing and we get a few bad years and people start mortgaging their whole places to buy another one. I knew people who homesteaded a quarter of land and had it clear, then bought another quarter and also didn't owe anything against that, then went to borrow \$12,000 or \$13,000 to go and buy another half section. The bad years came along and it was just impossible to meet payments and the loan companies came and took the farm.

My father had all his farms yet at the time he died. But when the drought years came along times got tough. The estate loaned money on one quarter of land. I built a house in town. And they had four other ones that were clear. After Dad died we borrowed some more money on the half section.

We had \$12,000 on that. When the drought years came along three or four years in a row and no income, the loan company took that. After my dad had owned five quarters of land at one time, the whole thing went back. We borrowed money on one quarter at a time to try to make the interest to pay what we owed on the other, and soon we had lost the whole thing. So I know how those things did happen and could happen again.

I believe that I mentioned earlier that there was one township that had only three landowners left. They had all lost their farms. The loan companies took them. After a few years the loan companies sold the farms back to the farmers again. The rains started coming again and things gradually got better.

Back in those early days when the government had all the homesteaders coming out here, if they planted ten acres of trees and cultivated it for five years, they would get a title to another quarter of land. Many farmers planted tree claims. I often wondered where they got all these saplings to plant, but in some recent research I found out that in the early years before most of the settlers came into this country there were some folks who had been here sooner. They had plowed up some ground near their building plots. On the hills near Lake Traverse it was heavily wooded with oaks and cottonwoods. They would cut those down and make log houses for their first homes. In the spring of the year the seeds from those cottonwoods would blow and there would be millions and millions of seedlings lying around. Some of these progressive settlers figured that they could cultivate a little piece of ground and scatter seeds around. They put in several acres of them and the following year the ground would be covered with little seedlings that had sprouted. When they got to be about a foot tall they would pull them up by the roots and put them in pails and sell them to those people who wanted to start a tree claim.

I read articles which said that you could buy a thousand of those saplings for around a couple of dollars which was a help for those folks back in days when dollars were pretty scarce. I understand that is where most of the people who started tree claims and groves around their farms got the seedlings. We had one guy down in the Dumont area who applied for a tree claim. As I mentioned before, you were required to plant ten acres. Well, this guy had his homestead and he also had his application in for a tree claim, but he never got around to planting any trees on it. After so many years the state sent an inspector out to see if people lived up to the program as planned. They checked their land to see that they had planted trees and cultivated them. This poor guy never got around to planting the trees. He got the notice that they were going to come and inspect. It was winter at the time and there was a heavy snowfall. He got busy and cut some branches off trees from around the community and he stuck them into the snow. When the inspector came he saw there was something unnatural about this. He pulled a few out of the snow and saw that they were just branches stuck into the snow. So the guy lost title to his tree claim.

6. At one time there used to be an Indian village in what is now Browns Valley. Major Joseph Brown came into that area in 1835. There were many families which came into the area later on. Most of the people who moved into that area were fur traders. It was a good location. They had Big Stone Lake to the south as well as Traverse and the rivers in between. That got to be quite a business there. A lot of other settlers came into that area around Browns Valley, but there weren't too many doing farming, as I just mentioned. They were mostly fur traders. The Indians used to do a lot of trapping and they used to sell to buyers in Browns Valley.

The Indian chief who was head of the tribe which lived in the area of Browns Valley, or what they called the Indian village that was located where that log house now stands, was known as Chief Standing Buffalo. He was quite a friend of the white people and they got along well with him. He was respected by everyone who knew him for his honesty and his integrity. He was about six feet two tall and they said he was a very fair-minded man. He had a good reputation and he never broke a promise. And he was a good military leader. Back in 1862 during the Sioux uprising, Little Crow was the leader of the gang that started that massacre down at Browns Valley. He wanted Chief Standing Buffalo to join him in trying to get the whites all out of the country. But Standing Buffalo refused. He remained a staunch friend of the whites. As a result of that outbreak Congress decided to take all the land away from the Indians. Chief Standing Buffalo and his people had always been loyal to the whites, and he got pretty discouraged about it. He took his tribe all out of there and moved them up into Canada. The Indians at that time weren't doing any farming. They were living off the land. There were buffalo out there by the thousands and when they needed some meat they would kill buffalo and would use their hides for clothing, shoes and moccasins. They also used them for covering their teepees. They were living comfortably down there at Browns Valley getting along with the whites.

There was about 1800 citizens in Wahpeton Indian tribes on the reservation. After the farmers came in, the Indians adopted the farmers practices quite a bit. They started raising livestock. Their season crops usually consisted of about 14,000 bushels of grain. And about 4,500 bushels of vegetables. They put up lots of hay. They figured about 5,000 tons of hay a year. Tom Bailey came out to Browns Valley in 1867, and George Scheifley, another of the early ones, came out in 1871. Those were some of the earliest settlers in the Browns Valley area. Then there was Joe Bangle and W. J. Smith. They came in 1877. They had a

doctor there, too, by the name of E. R. Marshall, who came in 1877. It was in 1878 that quite a delegation came out and settled in Browns Valley. My father had been here for three years before that. Most of the early settlers in that area settled in either Arthur or Windsor township. Windsor township was named after one of the early settlers, but Arthur was named after our President at that time.

Many of the people that settled in that area stayed for a certain length of time until they proved up on their land. That is after they lived on it five years and got the title. They sold it quite cheaply and a lot of them went into Canada. Most of them followed the Red River up into Canada, going by boat. Some of the children of the old settlers are still up there. Many of them went over into North Dakota and homesteaded again there. North Dakota didn't open up its land or get surveyed for homesteaders until much later than Minnesota. South Dakota was opened up well before North Dakota.

At the time they built that fort up here, Fort Abercrombie. It wasn't necessary, but it was a precaution. They didn't want the same thing to happen that happened down in Browns Valley the time the Indians rebelled. It is an interesting place to go see. The old lock houses are still there and old cannons and portholes, and large buildings where people would go in in case it was necessary. I was told that they did attack once, but my father was pretty well acquainted with what went on at that time, and he told us that there had never been an attack. Most of the travel was by water when Chief Standing Buffalo moved his people to Canada. Most went up with canoes.

There is quite a bit of discrepancy as to when the railroad went up as far as Breckenridge. Many claim that the railroad had been into Herman in 1871. That is impossible because at the time my father came into this country the end of the line was Morris, and that was in 1875. I got in touch with the Burlington Northern railroad at the regional office in St. Paul and they checked their map which shows the routes that the railroad had taken. The man in charge there said that it was in 1877 or, possibly it got as far as Breckenridge in 1878.

I read an article in the Wheaton paper just last week that claimed they had a railroad in 1871. They did have a store and they anticipated that the railroad was going to come through the area at that time, as soon as the railroad could raise some more money. They were running into some financial problems. But the town was started before the railroad was there. My father used to say that he could walk across the prairie from his homestead for eighteen miles where no one had lived. The only structure between his place

and Herman at that time was on old frame building that had been left out in the prairie about halfway between his home and Herman. That was used as a shelter for the surveyors when they surveyed the area in Traverse County and the western part of Grant County. That corresponds quite well with the information I got from the early settlers north of Wheaton when the Norwegian delegation came over in 1882. The area closer to Wheaton along the Mustinka River was settled mostly by the Swedish. According to this, I was correct in saying that my father had been in this country six years before which would again correspond to when the townships were organized.

I was told by a lot of my Scandinavian friends that their parents shipped out to Herman when they came out to settle this area. The settlers up near Tenney were able to use the railroad to come into this area. Many of them stayed only a short time, selling out their homesteads after they had gotten possession. Some moved out as far as Montana and Wyoming and lots of them went back to where they originally came from. One family sold their farm and went out to Montana. They didn't get there soon enough to get any kind of home built before winter set in. They just dug a big hole in the side of a hill and that was their home for the winter.

I read an article that was in the Browns Valley paper back in 1966 that mentioned that some of the early settlers who settled down around Traverse Lake got their sod log houses up pretty well and covered them with sod and brush for a roof the best they could. It went on to tell how during a big blizzard the door blew open and they had a couple feet of snow lying inside of their home. Snow was coming in through the cracks in the roof. They had some hardy people back in those days.

I will again recall those days when I was little boy and my folks used to hitch up two horses to a buggy and we'd go for rides through those hills on the east side of Traverse Lake. Now they are bare hills and have been pastured out. There is no more beautiful spot that I have seen in my lifetime than the east side of Traverse Lake. All these barren hills as I mentioned were covered with trees. There were oaks, and practically every kind of tree growing out there. Cottonwoods, and plum trees. The wild grapes would be hanging from the tree branches. You could pick them from the ground. There were always some who would go out there with a garden rake and tear those beautiful vines down. They destroyed so much of that stuff. We used to stop at Mr. Tubbs' farm straight west of Wheaton on the lake hill. We'd get permission from him to go down in the trees. All you would have to do would be to find two or three trees and shake them and the ground would be literally covered with plums. It was our only source of fruit in those days unless we bought dried fruit at the grocery store. My mother used to make jams and jellies and everything possible to use up the enormous amounts of fruit we would accumulate in just a few hours.

When the first explorers were sent out by the government they went back with their reports that the land west of what is now Charlesville was under water twenty feet deep. This area was then called Lake Agassiz. This whole area was

under water from the South Dakota hills to Sauk Centre. There were many homesteaders who homesteaded in that area after the water was all drained off pretty well. It was so wet and they had so many wet years out there that many of the homesteaders left. They stayed only a short time. Many of these farms went back to the county for back taxes and were sold to anybody who wanted to buy off the back taxes on it. I know a fella down by Dumont that got five quarters of land just by paying off the back taxes. People saw that it was almost impossible to make a living off the land up there while the water level was so high. So they just pulled out and went elsewhere. Today that is probably one of the most valuable spots in Traverse County. That land up there was the deepest part of this lake at the time, with the exception of Lake Traverse. The soil is fertile because it used to be a lake bottom.

When I was a little boy my dad used to tell me about the first years he was homesteading out here in the prairie back in 1875 or 1876. We had all this low swamp land and standing water and he said that lots of nights when he would look out over the prairie he could see what looked like flares coming up out of the swamps. He said it was caused by gases that were in the vegetation. I've heard in the news lately that they are experimenting with making gasoline out of vegetation. Someone said that they were making it out of weeds and grasses and they are also making it out of lettuce.

While I was reminiscing today I was thinking about some of the entertainment we had years ago. I believe I mentioned once before about these Firemans tournaments and such things. Well they decided sometime along the month of June one time that they were going to put on some kind of doings down near Dumont. The fire department was having their contests with the different towns. They had done some advertising that they were going to have a high-dive off of Lynch's building. That is that building on the corner in Dumont that is now used for the Legion Hall. A guy was supposed to dive off the top of that building into a tank of water. Ed Robinson, our lumber man at the time down in Dumont, was on top of this tall building. They had made up a dummy that looked real to us hundreds of people that were standing below. He came up to the front and introduced what looked like an original man, but it was made up as a dummy. He was going to jump off the top of the building and land in that water tank. Well, people came from miles and miles around to see this sight. As the dummy went over the edge to land in the water tank he missed the tank. One lady in the crowd fainted. Another farmer didn't think it was so humorous. He said that he left his team standing in the barn and should have been out cultivating his corn. Instead he came to Dumont and lost a half day's work, just to see that high dive. Everybody else had a big laugh out of it. It took a while before they revived the woman who fainted when she saw this fella hit the side of the tank.

They had a lot of regular concession stands at that time, too. We had our own band down there at Dumont at that time and we had plenty of music. But the thing most enjoyable was to see hundreds of people gathering together and having a

chance to visit. Nobody went home early. If my memory is right that was the same day that Mr. Hunter got killed.

I was thinking back to when we didn't have showers in every home. Nothing modern. The only thing you had for a shower in those days was an old bath tub. We were threshing out at Ernie Gronberg's one day. We were threshing barley and as I recall, it was a hot sultry day. The grain was rusty that year and there was regular smoke coming out of the separator. Everyone was just burning up with this rust in their hide and their hair, and sweating. Along about three or four o'clock in the afternoon a thunderstorm came up and this was about the only time I witnessed what you would call an original shower bath. We were all sitting in the house during the storm and all at once Ernie took off for the barn with a bundle of clothes under his arm. We watched to see what he was up to. The water was coming off the barn in torrents. Pretty soon we saw the barn door open and Ernie came out entirely nude and stood under the overflow that was coming off the eaves of the roof. He had a rag and he was giving himself a real scrubbing. The shower let up a little and he came back to the house feeling all clean and great, and the rest of us were still burning up from the dust from the grain.

Back in those days there was so much typhoid fever. Some of the people didn't survive, but those who did generally had about six or eight weeks before they came out of it. A lot of this was caused by the type of wells we had. Generally they were about a four foot hole and as they went down they got a little narrower. They had one of those derricks up at the top where the guys would ride down in the bucket then another fella would wind up the rope and pull him to the top. That is the way the well was dug out in my dad's homestead. They hit a good vein there after they went down about forty feet. The water came in so fast that when it started, the digger got in the bucket to come to the top and yelled to be brought up. He rode all the way to the top with his feet hanging in the water. They weren't all that productive. The doctors thought that typhoid was caused mostly from the drinking water in those times. Wells would fill up pretty much to the top and the water would get so old because it didn't get used and would just stand there stagnant.

Earlier in my story I told about my uncle Peter Schmitz. He learned the carpenter trade. I told of when he and two other men were putting a steeple on a church they had built and the steeple had slipped loose on them and carried them all three down to the ground where one was killed instantly and the other was uninjured. But Uncle Pete had a hip injury and one of his feet seemed to be causing some trouble. He was off homesteading in the eastern part of Traverse County and seven years after the accident his foot started to swell up and show an infection. It went on for weeks and finally came to a head. And when it finally opened he saw some dark object sticking down inside the opening and it was a piece of one of those old square nails that we used to have back in those early years. It was about an inch long and he carried it around in his foot until nature decided to take care of it and push it out. Many people who had something like that happen to them with some piece of metal in them would get lockjaw.

Of course, there was no cure for that. Those boys were a hardy bunch and they took a lot of lumps and bumps along the way. Those who remained strong and healthy overcame most of those obstacles. It wasn't anything unusual. I had mentioned before that after my dad was up here homesteading, when those last teeth started coming in, which they call the wisdom teeth. My dad was twenty-seven before his first came. His jaws were swollen and he was in such terrific pain. He sharpened up his jackknife and boiled it good to sterilize it and put the knife between his gums and lanced his gums. After loosing a little blood he said the pain all disappeared and the tooth came through normally.

Earlier I told about the Non-partisan League that was sponsored by its members who paid a fee of eighteen dollars to get the organization started. They wanted legislation in Congress whereby farmers could get a guaranteed price for their crops. The way it had been and still is today, you take your grain to the elevator or your livestock to the markets. We've never had an organization that was powerful enough to set a price on their merchandise. Other businesses have always had the right to do this. Arthur C. Townley from North Dakota had started that Non-partisan League. We older members all remember that plainly. That's when airplanes had just come into being and the pilot who was hauling Townley around from place to place while he was organizing this league was Charles Lindbergh. There were no airfields or anything like that. They would get in close to where they wanted to go and find a field. Then they would settle down in a plowed field or pasture that looked like he could land on T. There would be someone out there who would be able to bring them into town.

He introduced himself when he was over at the International building where the street had been blocked off. They had to get a stand for him to stand on and he looked back and forth at the crowd and introduced himself and Charles Lindbergh, his pilot. He started speaking and this was one of the first things that he said, "Why you do-nothing, dumb, ignorant, brainless sissies. You don't have brains enough to go and vote for your own interests. You have to be driven with a club in order to get you to go to an election to vote for a candidate who is willing to help you get some legislation equal or similar to what the big businesses already have. They are allowed to set any price on things and you just come to town and say what will you give me for this? What will you give me for that? You dummies." I think conditions are pretty much the same today. We have a number of farm organizations yet — Grange, the Farmer's Union and a few others. At least a half a dozen. Now we have NFO to see if we can't get cost plus a little profit.

Farming today had changed quite considerably with this new and modern machinery, larger farms, larger machinery, better seed, better grades of livestock. The American farmer and cattle raiser are raising much more food than can be used in the United States. And a good deal of the price that they receive today depends in some degree on the amount of foreign markets for their products.

I think the changes will continue in the future. Many of