MEMORIES OF MOM & DAD

by

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Typed by

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THOUGHTS THEY LIVED BY

The heaviest thing there is
Is a chip on your shoulder.

Be careful of the words you say
Keep them soft and sweet
You never know from day to day
Which ones you'll have to eat.

THINK POSITIVE

Things turn out best for the people
who make the best
of the way things turn out.

12-28-21

Historical Setting

The year 1929 was a bad year. Many banks closed and the stock market pretty much collapsed. It was called "the year of the crash." People lost jobs, homes, and farms. Whatever was paid for was yours if you could keep it.

In the Midwest many farms were lost -- insurance companies bought up mortgages from banks whenever owners weren't making payments. In cities some rich people couldn't believe they were millionaires one day and broke the next day. Some -- not many -- couldn't handle it and jumped off buildings.

In a few cases a supervisor who had a bank account one day maybe had only the $10 in his pocket the next while the janitor who had never had a bank account still had his money.

In businesses where clerks had jobs they were fine as long as the business could keep going. If the business closed, there were no jobs available.

Very slowly things got better. It wasn't until 1942 when we got into World War II that the economy picked up. Many jobs were available in defense plants and many men went into the service. Then women really started to get into the work place.

I tell you this not to emphasize how poor we were --

these were living conditions at the time.


Boynton,
Pilot Mound, Ia.

Mom graduated from high school in 1916. She went to Cedar Falls (college) for the three summer months and started teaching country school. Then, the "schoolmarm" lived with one of the families near the school. She taught from September 1916 till Christmas 1921. She used to tell about one place she stayed, the housewife would sort of complain that her husband couldn't find sox or whatever in his drawer. She said he'd put a hand at each end of the drawer, bring them together, and throw everything up in the air - then he'd grab what he wanted as everything was falling back in the drawer. Of course, he couldn't find things next time either.

Dad had two older brothers. I doubt that either one finished or even went to high school. When they married or got jobs away from home, a decision had to be made. Dad and his brother, Walter, two years younger, were coming along. Walter wanted to go to high school. Dad liked to work with Grandpa so that was it. At different times he would help others. He used to help Walter Hanson at harvesting or when he needed help. Walter Hanson had married Dad's sister, Anna, so that made it nice. Dad was good with kids. Harris, about six months old at harvest time, would get fussy about 11:15. Walter would send Dad in about 11:30 to clean up and take care of Harris so Anna could concentrate on dinner. Sometimes he'd help brother Wesley. One time Mom was teaching in the area and staying at Wesley's. That is how they met.

They were married at the farm (her home) on December 28, 1921. Mom had made her pretty dress. Dad's parents and two sisters came and his brother, Walter, who was best man. Mom's sister, Mae, was bridesmaid. They were married at 4:00 p.m. and the dinner was served soon after. Brother Wesley and family had moved to Minnesota so they went there by train on their honeymoon. Wesley's wife served them breakfast in bed the next morning.

The first farm they lived on was probably only 80 acres. It was called Stoney Point. There are no buildings there now - probably weren't too many to start with. The second was a little better and bigger and the landlord lived only one-fourth mile away. They moved there in March 1924 and I was born in April. Early summer Dad had some sort of illness - like someone pulled the shades down in the room. The doctor didn't know what it was so told him to get bed rest. Dad's youngest sister, Linnea, came over and took care of me on days when Mom was outside a lot. Mom's sister, Emma, came from Humboldt and helped pick corn in the fall after Dad had his appendicitis operation. I had colic that first winter and cried a lot. Dad used to say he walked around the world and only saw the kitchen. No one had robes or slippers and the kitchen was the warmest room.

In March of 1927 we moved to western Nebraska. The house was probably about 16 x 20. The one outside door opened to the east, toward the outbuildings. The livingroom-diningroom on the north - about 10 x 16 and the kitchen and bedroom, each about 8 x 10, were back to back on the south end. You had to go through the living room to get to the other rooms. Of course, we didn't have a lot of furniture either. Oh yes, there was not a single closet in the house and no cupboards. Dad made a cupboard base and top three doors wide. That cupboard went with us and was used even in the last house in Lake View, 1927 to 1986. After they remodeled the kitchen the cupboard was used for storage.

For closet Dad got two 1' x 4' boards, four brackets and some hooks - the old fashioned kind that looked like a letter "J" and the other half was a backward "J". Anyhow, we three could hang all our clothes on hangers on one board. We didn't have many clothes but there weren't any skyhooks available either. On top of one board was storage space. The bed was up against the wall and Dad fixed a shelf above the bed for boxes, too. The dresser and Alice's crib were on the other side of the room and the "closet" at one end. There was one window.

We had company different times. One time Walter Swanson, Fan, their boys, Vern and Gordy, and Swanie and Wilma came (two of Dad's brothers). Walter and Fan and the two boys (about 2 and 4 years old) slept in the bed, Swanie and Wilma on the foldout davenport, Mom and Dad on a foldaway single cot in the kitchen. They took four dining room chairs and put them one facing east, the next one west, like for musical chairs. That is where I slept. When Walter came out the next morning he asked if the shelf and boxes had been there over the bed all night. He said if he had known that he wouldn't have slept a wink. I'm sure they had put in a long day on the road and were tired. Everyone probably got into bed as soon as possible and didn't look around. Of course, we didn't have running water or electricity - only lamps and the outhouse.

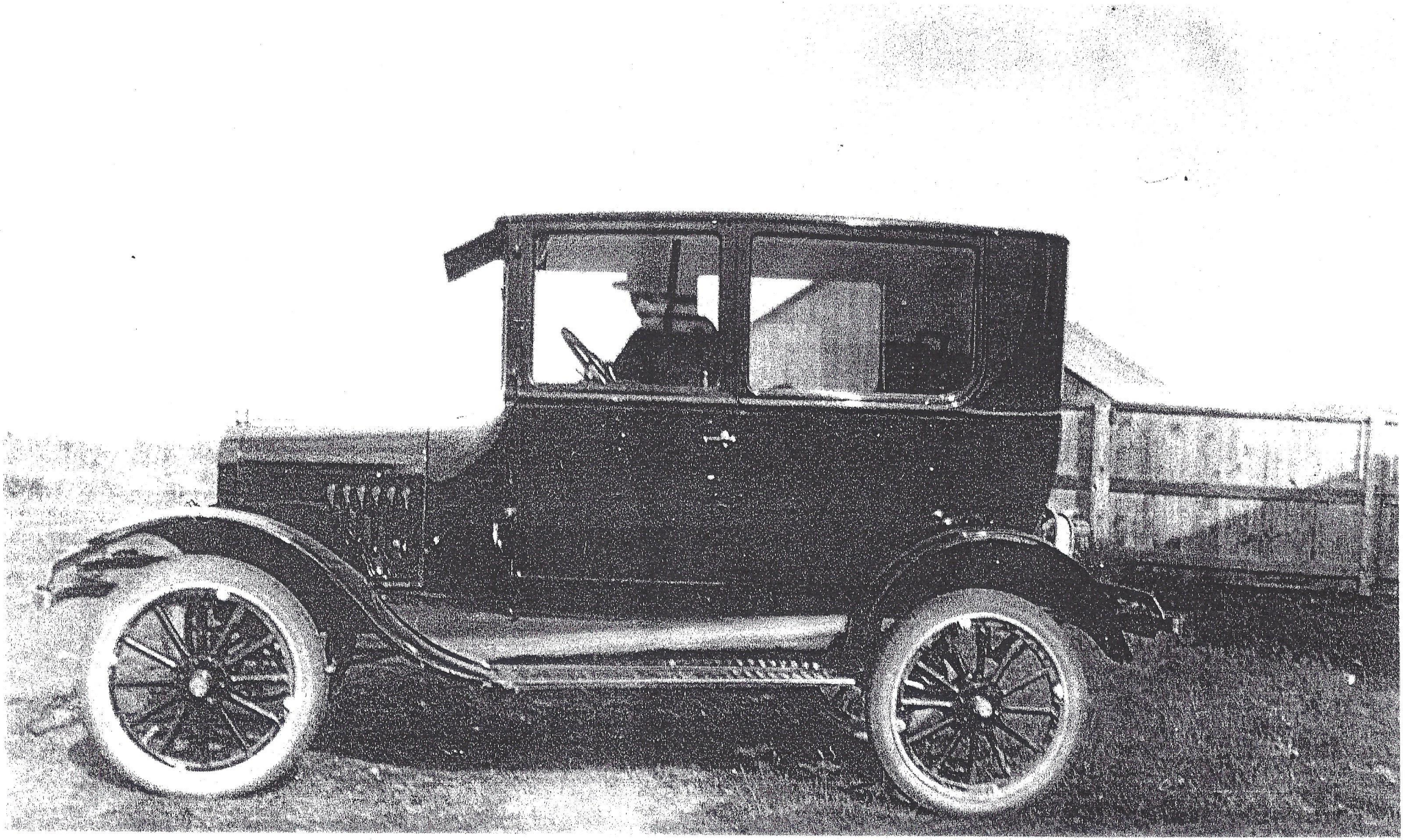
While they were there we decided to go to the Black Hills. It wasn't too far - probably 50 miles as the crow flies. Dad milked the few cows we had, Mom made sandwiches and we took off. We took both cars for the six adults and three kids, cars weren't all that big then. Roads weren't like today, either. To get across from one highway to another you drove along trails. When you came to a fence, one of the brothers (not driving) would open the gate for both cars. The three brothers would tease and sometimes the gate opener had to run a ways to catch the car.

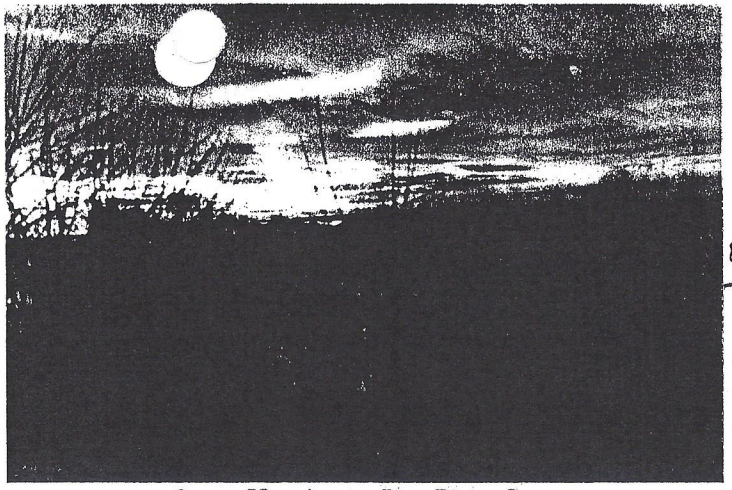
About noon when we got there it started to rain, thunder, and lightening. Gordy cried - he got scared. Somewhere in the Black Hills there was a high peak. They drove up on top and there was sunshine! We were above the clouds! We had our picnic lunch, drove around and started home. More gates to open and close and when we finally got home cows to milk and supper to prepare. While we were eating Fan remembered it was Gordy's second birthday that day. He sat in the high chair. He was no dummy. He ate his dessert first and usually fell asleep while eating potatoes and bread.

Swanie and Wilma had come out on their honeymoon a year or so earlier. About every 50 miles or so they had a flat tire. In those days tires had tubes. You <u>always</u> carried patches. Jack up the car, take off the tire, take out the tube and patch it. Put it back in the tire, pump it up with a hand pump and put it back on the car. I guess Swanie got pretty disgusted about the fourth flat so he examined the tire while the patch on the tube dried. There he found a little piece of glass partially embedded in the tire. He took it out -- no more flats.

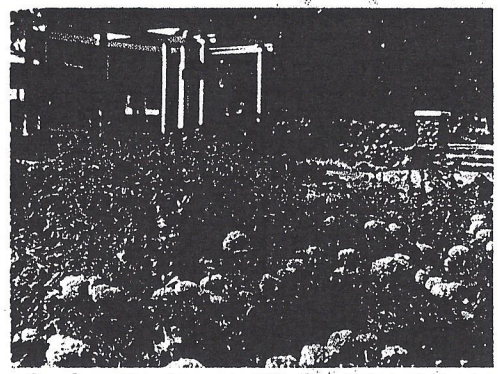
RAISING POTATOES IN NEBRASKA

Oats and potatoes were our crops in Nebraska. We bought seed potatoes the first year, cut them to be sure two eyes were on each piece of potato. You cut and cut and cut to plant even thirty acres, three pieces to a hill. As the potatoes grew they were cultivated and then dug up by





Goose Hunting - Box Butte County



Sunken Gardens - Alliance Central Park

Recreation

Outdoor enthusiasts will find plenty to see and enjoy as you visit Box Butte County and our surrounding Sandhills. Box Butte Reservoir, nine miles north of Hemingford, offers a large variety of fish — bass, northern pike, perch, catfish, walleye — all a fisherman's delight!

Are you a hunter? Deer, ducks, wild turkeys and pheasants abound in the area.

In Alliance, avid golfers can take a swing at the 18-hole public golf course or play Hemingford's 9-hole natural sandgreens.

Tennis buffs will enjoy the lighted tennis courts both communities offer — while swimmers can cool off in the outdoor pools.

Box Butte County is at the "center of it all" for local and regional activities. Fun is all around us!

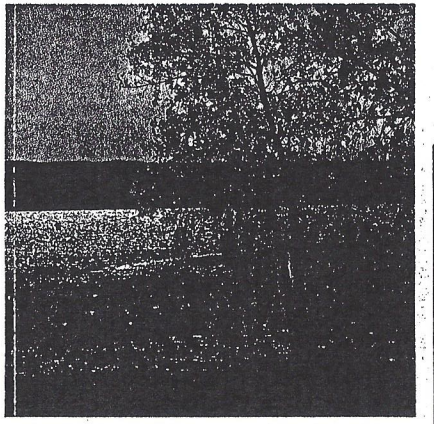
- 3 minutes from the internationally acclaimed Carhenge
- 1 hour from the majestic Scottsbluff National Monument
- 1.5 hours from Ft. Robinson . . . the place where Crazy Horse died at the hands of U.S. Calvary troops.
- 3 hours from our Nation's pride . . . Mount Rushmore

Alliar

Visit over 100 acres of parks, including Laing Lake — where children can feed ducks and geese — jog around the nature trail — or try your luck at fishing from the footbridge.

Enjoy a family picnic in the City Park near the beautiful sunken gardens and the famous lighted fountain. Then educate yourself on the history of Alliance and Northwestern Nebraska at the Knight Museum of High Plains Heritage. All of these pleasures are free when you visit Alliance.

Celebrate Alliance's three big summer events — Fountain Fest on Memorial Weekend, Heritage Days the second week of July, and Iron Rail Days in the early Fall.



Box Butte Reservoir - Hemingford

Alliance City Foun Central Park

Hemingford

Receive a big dose of hospitality when you visit the Village of Hemingford. Have a picnic in the City Park!

Hemingford is the home of the third largest County Fair, held every August for eight big days. Come back in December for the beautiful Christmas Diorama.

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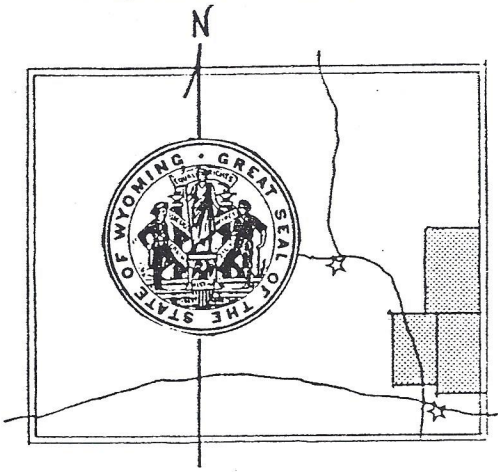

Stop, Visit & Experience Trail Country

We're on the route to Yellowstone National Park, Devil's Tower, Mount Rushmore, Custer State Park, Fort Robinson, and the Black Hills of South Dakota. Stop and enjoy the history, hospitality and recreation in Southeastern Wyoming.

Indians travelled from Pine Ridge reservation to hunting grounds in Big Horn Mts.

Site of Last Indian War

Powder River Trail

Cheyenne River

Black Hills Co...

Mule Creek Junction

18

Mount Rushmore 110 Miles

Redbird

Discovery Of Horned Dinosaurs

85

Lance Creek

270

Hat Creek Stage Sta.

Stage Road to Deadwood Wagon Ruts

18

Legend Of Rawhide, Site Of Annual Play

Niobrara

270

Manville

Lusk

Redwood Watertank

Lost Springs

20

Keeline

Jireh

Lathrop Mon.

Texas Trail

20

Node

To Casper 53 Miles

18

Shawnee

N. Platte River

Orin

Orgeon Trail

25

Feather Legs Monument

Niobrara River

Van Tassel

Burnt Wagon Train

Water Recreation

Glendo Reservoir

Glendo

Flat Top

85

Jay Em

Nat. Hist. District

Esterbrook

Old Horseshoe Stage Sta.

270

N. Platte River

Water Recreation Guernsey Reservoir

Sunrise

Hartville

Hells Gap

Wendover

Guernsey

26

Oregon Trail Ruts

Register Cliff

Fort Laramie

320

Grayrocks Reservoir

Grattan Massacre 1854

19

Lingle

LARAMIE RANGE

Wheatland

something more or less like a plow. Someone had to pick them up.

A couple of Indian families traveled around. They would pitch their tents across the road from our house and help pick potatoes. Our house faced away from the road. I was three and four years old (two summers) and was afraid of them. The women would come over and buy milk and eggs. Needless to say, when they were around I didn't get far from the door of the house.

We had a big cave to store potatoes in, probably 50 feet long and open at both ends. We could drive a team and wagon down, unload, and drive out the other end. The end going out was a little higher so some potatoes would roll out when you opened the wagon gate at the rear. Come spring we sold potatoes for seed and cut up many big buckets full to be planted at our place. Dad and a neighbor shared equipment. He said we got 7000 bushel from thirty acres of potatoes.

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The church we went to was fairly large for then. Reverend Bishop was a good minister and at that time I think a bigger percentage of people went to church. Mom and Dad both sang in the choir. Mrs. Bishop always sat next to the aisle near the front. Dad said I'd come hippity-hopping up the aisle and sit with her during church.

We had no phone so when Alice was born December 1, 1928, Dad took me to Bishop's to "visit" a couple of days and contacted a midwife or doctor - I never did know which. When I did come home I had a brand new baby sister which was fine with me. I wasn't allowed to pick her up for several months but when she cried I'd talk to her or sing some of the songs I knew. I was all of four years seven months and a few days old but I liked to talk to her.

The buildings where Alice was born are no longer there. You have heard of Stonehenge in England. If you see something about Carhenge in Nebraska - it is in the vicinity of where we lived.

In January of 1929 we moved to Wyoming, probably about 100 miles. Dad drove our 1924 Ford out to rent the land and came back. Then he loaded the wagon, hayrack and an old buggy we had and started out - driving one team on the wagon - leading another team pulling the rack and the buggy was tied on behind that. If you look on a map - from Hemingford, Nebraska, to 20 miles west of Lusk (Keeline) Wyoming, you will see there aren't many roads and few towns. In 1929 there were less yet. Dad said it was so lonesome, if he'd seen a coyote he'd have waved at it. I remember he had a long heavy black coat he must have worn and four buckle overshoes. I'm pretty sure he walked most of the way to keep warm, but his feet?!?

Dad managed to get there okay. He could have the horses trot sometimes - probably only on downhill. The altitude is right at a mile high where we were going so there were more uphills than downhills. He took the train back. Mom probably had dishes, etc., pretty well packed. A truck (small) came and loaded the rest of our worldly goods and off we went.

We stayed in the "hotel" in Keeline - over the grocery store. The next day I got my first

babysitting job. I was to watch Alice while Mom and Dad went out to the ranch and got the furniture unloaded and the house warmed. Mom had nursed her just before they left that morning. Alice, being seven weeks old and a very good little girl, slept right through until noon. Being assigned to watch her, I wouldn't leave. I remember the hotel owner came up a time or two and looked in. There was snow on the ground and someone had broken a north window in the house. They hung a couple of throw rugs over it until Dad could go to another town and get glass to fix it.

The kitchen-dining room was the biggest room - must have been about 12 x 16. The living room was small and the bedroom smaller - no closets, of course. There was an upstairs, one room with sloped ceilings and colder than whatever in the winter time. Had a front and back door in the kitchen - real uptown.

The house wasn't too well built and someone had put tarpaper on the outside as a little insulation. Between the cookstove in the kitchen and the potbellied stove in the living room we kept warm. There was an old granary across the road. In the spring Dad asked the landlord if he could tear it down and use the lumber to re-side the house. He saved most of the nails and reused them. The landlord was pleased and bought enough paint to cover it.

Also in the spring Mom noticed little spots on Alice's face. Bedbugs were coming out in the warmer weather. Food had to be moved out - bread, rice, etc. One night they milked and separated then put milk in the empty cream can - five gallons. Dad sprayed the house and we drove the 12 miles to Manville and stayed overnight with our preacher. Dad went back early in the morning and milked and aired the house. About 10:00 a.m. he came and got Mom, Alice and me. Then to move that food back in the house. The next winter Alice could play down on the floor a little. There was no carpeting, only throw rugs.

When Dad rented that first ranch in Wyoming, part of the deal was to take the landlord's cattle and riding horse, too. We had four horses and Dad got two more so when he plowed or disked he had all six hooked up. We were to take care of and raise cattle and share the new calves 50/50. With it we got their brand, 7 Bar K.

The riding horse, Midnight, was very good. One summer a neighbor had some extra pasture that another neighbor could share with us. We kept the milking cows at home. When the grass was eaten down they brought the cattle down this one dirt road. Our cattle were to go left - the rest straight ahead. Dad got to the front of the herd, riding Midnight. As the cattle came he separated them. One time three or four came close together - some were ours - some not. Midnight couldn't turn fast enough so he backed into the fence to cut that calf off. Dad said he relaxed after that.

Those first years when both Mom and Dad would be out in the field I'm sure Mom worried. I was told if there was a problem and I needed help to put a dishtowel a certain place on the fence. Dad used to say when Mom was going away from the house she kept the horses moving right along. When she could see the house she let them go a little slower.

When little calves are born they know how to nurse from the cow but not how to drink from a bucket. We needed the milk to sell milk and cream and churn butter so after a day or so the calf and cow were separated.

After milking Dad would put some warm milk in a bucket and set it on the ground by the calf. He put one hand in the bucket -- one wet finger pointing up and pushed the calf's head down to his finger. In a minute or two the calf got the idea and Dad could stand back.

Sometimes a cow would have a calf out in the pasture. Dad would ride out, put the calf in the saddle, swing up behind the saddle so he could steady the calf and walk the horse home with the mother cow right behind.

Sometimes a calf would eat too much or otherwise get sick out in a pasture. Dad would ride out, somehow get the calf in the saddle, and walk beside the horse all the way home. It seemed when they got sick, instead of heading toward the buildings, they went to the far corner of the pasture -- many times a mile or more away. We would have 70 head of cattle or more but Dad knew when one was missing and would ride out to find it.

CHURCHES

There wasn't a working church in our little town of Keeline so the first year we were there we drove the twelve miles to Manville. By the second year there, enough people expressed interest so the Keeline church shared the minister with the Manville church. The minister, Reverend Kessler, was very good. Sometimes he'd call and say he was working on his sermon and was there anything he could do while he was thinking about it. Usually there was a field needing plowing or cultivating or whatever. On the plow we used all six horses, two lead and four followers. That meant four lines but he didn't seem to have any problems. Mom and Dad also used that set-up many times.

The next preacher, Reverend Martin, was younger and a bit more brash. Dad used to say he couldn't preach worth a darn but he could sure pray. They had a girl about a year younger than I and a boy about Alice's age. When church conference came, about a three-day deal, they left the kids with us. One day Mom set a big pan of milk that was starting to turn to cottage cheese on the floor for a couple of minutes. Marilyn was mad at Mearle and pushed him down in the pan of milk. The chickens got **all** of that batch of cottage cheese.

Reverend Martin and family used to come "calling" about 4:30 in the afternoons and were invited to stay for supper. He never offered to help with milking or anything so Mom could cook. One noon Mom and Dad were talking about it. She figured they would come that night so we ate before they did the milking. Sure enough, they came. After they finished milking and separating, Mom put food on the table for them, fresh sliced tomatoes, cottage cheese, and homemade bread. They took the hint and didn't come again for a couple of weeks.

Thinking back, they got so little salary they probably needed to "sponge" off anyone they could. I remember hearing cousin Warren say one of their preachers had a habit of showing up at suppertime, too. In defense of preachers, I hate to think what they might or might not have been paid. Mrs. Martin was not about to raise a garden. We would not have made it if we hadn't planted a big one every year.

The only "equipment" churches had was pews, pulpit, and piano. Reverend Martin found out that a few people hadn't been baptized. A few miles south of our house was "Flat Top", a small version of Devil's Tower. Due to snow melting in the spring there was a small pool in the nearby pasture. It wasn't very deep in the spring and in summer the cows would wade thru to cool off. Anyway, Reverend Martin set a Sunday afternoon for this to happen. Those getting baptized wore just enough clothes to be legal, were immersed and blessed, and beat a hasty retreat to the "dressing room" (two cars pulled close together with front and rear door open to the inside and towels over the windows). I can't remember Dad's exact words, but he didn't think much of that service.

With so few members, there wasn't enough money. Dad was one of the stewards who went out to try and collect some money. I remember more than once he came home from an afternoon of collecting. He had gotten $10!

Reverend Sears and wife were next - older and small of stature. She wore her long hair in a braid and piled it on top of her head. I remember hearing him say it took him a week every day to comb it. One very cold December Sunday afternoon we were invited to a wedding. Reverend Sears couldn't get his car started to even come for church. Someone drove to Manville to get him and Dad took him back after he dropped Mom, Alice and me off at home. We lived on a ranch with canyons most of the way around the buildings. Dad drove down in the canyon and up the other side. Reverend Sears grabbed the dashboard on the way down. After he got his breath back he informed us he would never come calling. He didn't, either.

Dad and three other men formed a male quartet. They were good. Many times they sang at funerals and at the cemetery. The song requested most ended with, "We're going down the valley, going down the valley, we're going down the valley one by one." We still hear from the only member still living.

CHILDREN'S DAY PROGRAM

I was six that spring and Alice about one-and-a-half. Someone splurged a few cents and bought two packages of crepe paper - one yellow and one light blue. There weren't many little kids that came to Sunday School, six girls at the most. Anyway, crepe paper is about 30" wide. They used about 3' of paper and sort of wrapped around us (over our clothes). A narrow strip around our waist kept it from falling off. We had a bow in our hair to match the color of our dress. We were "flowers" in the garden of life. I'm quite sure it was Mom's idea.

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Apparently, no one in town sold coal. Dad would hitch a team to the wagon and start out about 4:30 a.m. He would drive to the mine, mine his own coal, load it, and drive home. One time he was about ready to leave and Mom heard an owl hoot. Hearing an owl hoot means bad luck. Mom didn't want him to go but he said he was ready and would be careful. All went well. We got a letter the next week telling us that Grandma Swanson fell and broke her hip the morning Mom heard the owl.

One time when he went to the mine, another fellow came along to get coal, too, so they worked together. At noon they sat down to eat their sack lunches and get better acquainted. It turned out this fellow had shot ducks near the pond on the farm north of Boxholm where Dad grewup.

When relatives, especially Swansons, came they didn't write -- just dropped in. One summer afternoon, probably about 4:00, Mom was finishing washing the kitchen floor (on hands and knees) and the phone rang. Someone in Keeline, 1-3/4 miles away, had seen a car with Iowa license turn down our road. The floor got finished in no time and I hurried to get furniture back in place. Got everyone in and "hello'd" and it was time for Mom and Dad to milk. Each had cows they always milked. That night maybe Mom was to milk the ones that gave less milk so she could go up to the house and start supper. I'm sure her mind was on food and how to get everyone a place to sleep to do much thinking about milking. Anyway, pretty soon she spoke

Dad's name and told him she was milking Bess and hadn't put the kickers on! Dad told her to keep going slow and easy and it would be all right. It was.

*Kickers: Cows kick forward, get a foot in the bucket, spoil the bucket and for sure the milk. If you would put a metal clamp above each of your knees and connect them with a 4" chain, you would see how kickers work.

WEATHER IN WYOMING

Weather was warm in summer - very low humidity. If it rained it lasted about ten minutes - then the sun came out. One hundred and ten degrees there was more comfortable than ninety degrees in Iowa. Winters were long. Mom always started planting garden as soon as Dad could get it plowed. One year she picked leaf lettuce out of the snow.

Our main crop was oats. When oats are ripe they need to be cut with a binder which spits them out in bundles tied with twine. If you make a circle with your arms, palm to palm, you get an idea of the size. Bundles were put in shocks, four bundles on the bottom, standing up, leaning against each other, three standing on top of that, and one laid flat on top in case it rained.

One evening in July it hailed. It was about 8:00 p.m. Dad and I were separating milk to get the cream. We were just finishing when the first one hit the roof of the "back room". Dad said "hail". We stopped cleaning up - he walked from window to window. It was over in 10-15 minutes. Next morning Dad walked around outside. Wyoming jackrabbits are big. They had laid up by sagebrush and shocks for protection but the hailstones killed them anyway. Oats had not been threshed. The grain was pounded into the ground but we salvaged some straw. Thistles grew somehow later. Dad watched them. When they were grown but still green and had some "juice" he cut them and piled them like a haystack. He put salt on them and they kept very well. That winter our cows ate green thistles and somehow or other still gave milk. By cutting them green, the stickers weren't so sharp and the cattle would eat them.

In Nebraska they picked up bundles by hand and put them in shocks. The first year in Wyoming a neighbor told Dad to <u>always</u> shock with a pitchfork. It didn't take long to find out why. Rattlesnakes like to lie under the bundles.

Then oats had to be threshed, separating the grain from the straw. Every ranch belonged to the threshing ring but ranch houses were a ways apart so there weren't too many places to go. When everyone had shocked their oats it all began. One man owned a rig and was "straw boss". He decided where it would all start. All the men came to the starting place with a team and hayrack. Each would load their rack with bundles. Two racks would pull up by the machine, one on each side, and pitch bundles on the threshing machine belt (probably 2-3 ft. wide), one bundle at a time but they should be close together. When one rack pulled out the person on the other side pitched faster until the next rack could pull up. The straw would fly into a stack and grain into a wagon.

When one place is finished, everything moves to the next ranch. Naturally, everyone gets hungry. Usually three meals or so at each place. I remember one time it looked like they'd be at our house for supper - about 15 extra. Dad came home about 11:00 a.m. and said everyone would be there for dinner. We knew he hated to come in and tell us that but he had no choice. Mom and I hurried like everything, but we were ready. We had planned on them for supper so we had the food - just not the time. It's a good thing Alice was a good little girl.

One day one of the cows was acting "different" so Dad kept her at home. He went over to help a neighbor and told us if the cow looked better by 10:00 a.m. that Alice and I should walk her out to the other cattle that would probably be half a mile away. We got to where we knew the cattle were just over the hill when I saw four animals standing on the hill and they weren't cows. Two of them took a couple of steps toward us. Right then our cow was on its own. I grabbed Alice's hand and we ran for home. She couldn't have been any more than 2-1/2, I had just had my seventh birthday so she probably took a step on the ground about every other one of my steps. We knew how to get under fences without getting caught on the barbs so got safely into the yard. When I told Mom she told me they were antelope and the fact they took a step forward to investigate was why many got shot. They didn't come up to the buildings so I never did see very many.

GRASSHOPPERS

Grasshoppers were terrible. They ate grass and crops. Some people said they ate fence posts, too. As far as I know, they didn't eat ours. It got so bad that the government put out poison. Dad drove to Lusk, our county seat twenty miles away, and came back with about five 100# sacks of the stuff. It was granular. Dad hitched a team to the hayrack. When we got into the pasture, I "drove". There weren't any trees. Dad would point out a fluffy cloud and tell me to drive toward it. He had a shovel and would spread the poison. When we got to a fence, he would pick out something else for me to drive toward. I'm not so sure it helped although we did have crops the next year. We raised oats, which grew best, corn a year or two, and cane one year. Anyone who had a few acres of alfalfa was lucky.

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One year a neighbor (five miles away) asked Dad if he wanted to harvest his alfalfa for half the crop. It needed doing right away. Dad and Mom and a good neighbor friend went over and cut, raked, and hauled fast. The neighbor's wife didn't work in the field so she cooked for all and sort of baby-sat. Alice was the youngest, approximately two years old. We older kids were six, seven, and ten.

Once in a while a cow would get greedy when Dad would put out a little alfalfa for them to eat. They would bloat something fierce. Dad would come to the house and get "the bottle". It was shaped sort of like a small catsup bottle. Mom would fill it with vinegar and Dad would take it out, tip the cows' heads back, and force feed some to the bloated cattle. He said you didn't want to be in front of one of them when they "burped" -- there would be a white smelly cloud in front of the cow.

If you remember your history, in 1929 many people went broke. We didn't. We didn't have much to start with but Mom and Dad managed to keep us fed and clothed by doing some thinking and a lot of hard work. We milked 20 cows - by hand. We sold one three-gallon and one five-gallon can of heavy cream each week. We got back a total of $6 for that 8 gallons. The phone bill (local calls only), kerosene for the lamps, and sugar and flour came first.

With the milk that was left, Dad fed some to new calves, we drank some, sold some in fruit-jars to "town people" (population about 50) and what was left was made into cottage cheese. That was our main protein. What cottage cheese we didn't eat was put out for the chickens. Nothing was thrown away.

Naturally there would be some cream left over after the cans were filled. We churned butter in a barrel churn and sold it in one-pound bricks. The churn was probably about a six-gallon deal, shaped like a barrel on a sort of stand and with a crank deal on one side. You put in the cream, put the lid on tight, and turned the crank round and round and round. Eventually it started to go "thump" on the ends -- then you knew you were getting butter. When it really thumped Mom would pour off the buttermilk, add salt to the butter, and you turn the crank some more - thumpity, thump, thump.

CHEESE MAKING

No one had any money in the depression days. Every six months or so a County Extension lady would come to a "club" meeting with useful information. This one time she taught them how to make longhorn cheese. It is quite a process and takes some time to make. Then it has to sit about six weeks and cure. Mom made it at least once a winter - I liked that - then sometimes I'd have a cheese sandwich to take to school instead of just bread and butter. Mom would line a gallon bucket with four or five layers of cheesecloth, put the cheese makings in (sort of like curds), and put it away with weights on it. Some of the time we used "sad irons", I can't seem to remember what else. We had to iron everything so I know we used something else, too.

In one of the Christmas cards we received in 1987, Lucy Cox was remembering that when they made cheese they jacked up the piano and put one leg on the cheese. Anything to make it work.

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Another idea Mom got from those meetings was "wool fat". It was a "cream." Heaven knows what it was made of. It was good for everything, cracked hands, burns, and Dad even put it on cows' teats when they were cracked. The closest thing I've seen to that in looks and smell is Bag Balm.

We had a 1924 Model T car. It was medium green, had windows instead of curtains and could go wherever we wanted to go. We moved from Nebraska to Wyoming in January when Alice was seven weeks old. There weren't heaters in cars in those days but Mom had her

bundled up warm.

I don't know when they got the car - I know we had it in Nebraska. It had a muncie gear in it. Don't ask too many questions about that. As far as I can figure from remembering different things, it was a little like overdrive except you had to slow up some before shifting out, otherwise it took longer to stop - like free-wheeling. There was no door on the driver's side or else it didn't work - just the door on the passenger side. One day Mom, Alice, and I were delivering butter, milk, and cream in town. She parked in front of the house, which was on a hill, to take the order in. She left the car running (no starter - you had to crank a car to start it). When she got back in the car (from the passenger side) her knee bumped the shift and put it in this muncie gear. We went down the hill, crossed Highway 20, down more hill and crossed the railroad tracks and out in the country a ways before she could get the car stopped. Highway 20 is a U.S. highway so someone was watching over us that day.

Gas got to the motor mostly by gravity flow. If you were going up a big hill and the tank was less than half full, chances were you would turn the car around and back up. That way gas got to the motor. Motors were more simple in those days. You always carried wire and pliers. Two of Dad's brothers drove out to Nebraska from Iowa to see us. Something went wrong with the car. The men inspected it and one called to his wife to pull a stay out of her girdle. They fixed the trouble and were on their way.

Grace, Mae, Emma, and Allen came one time. One of the few things we did for entertainment was to climb Flat Top. It is a miniature Devil's Tower and not quite as steep. I was about six years old and could scramble up by myself. Alice was about 1-1/2 so Dad carried her and helped Mom and Emma (one on each arm). I remember him saying afterward that when he got to the top he was poohed. Allen probably got to help Grace and Mae but didn't have to carry a small child also. When we got back down one of Alice's shoes was missing but no one wanted to go back up with me to try and find it.

I still correspond with some of the people who lived near us - within 15 miles or so. A Mrs. Hines, whose family lived about three miles away, wrote that they had invited us over for New Year's dinner. It snowed like everything the night before so she sort of wondered if we would come but prepared the meal anyway. Somewhere Dad bought a sort of chassis with four sled runners rather than four wheels. He slid the wagon box over on it, hitched a team up to it and we were ready to go. She said we four came in talking and laughing. We went in the sled several times. If it was not windy, Mom, Alice, and I could look out. If it was terribly cold and/or windy, we three would sit down side by side along the side of the wagon and Dad would put a blanket over our heads. We would stay fairly warm and could chatter, too.

SKUNKS

In Wyoming skunks "visited" every once in a while - usually one or two at a time. On this particular ranch there was a chicken house about 2/3 of the way from the barn to the house. We carried milk up in three-gallon and four-gallon pails. When full that would be about 24# and 30# respectively, plus the bucket. One morning when I got up I looked out and saw the pails

standing a ways from the chicken house. When I asked Mom, she said as she was carrying milk up from the barn she saw a mother skunk and five little ones following her. Ths skunks had come out from under the chicken house and headed toward a field. Mom didn't take any chances. She set the pails down and headed away from the skunks. She figured they could dump the milk if they had to but she didn't want any of their "scent" on her.

NO SIDEWALKS

In the "Good Old Days" there were no sidewalks or concrete driveways. When you left the front or back steps after a rain or thaw, and didn't have a good stand of grass, you were jumping from high spot to high spot between puddles. One Scandinavian had been visiting right after a shower. He had left the steps and was commenting that the spot he was standing on was soft and he was surrounded by puddles. Someone said "Jump." He said, "How can I yump when I've no place to stood?"

TREATS

We didn't have dessert -- our meals were usually a lot of vegetables, cottage cheese and homemade bread. One summer the store had corn suckers for sale for one cent each. The sucker part was probable 2-1/2" long and 3/4" wide, shaped to look like half an ear of corn. Mom or Dad would manage to cut it into four pieces. Alice got the piece with the stick and Mom, Dad, and I each got a piece, too. We didn't usually buy more than one every two weeks so it was a treat.

Sometimes in the wintertime, maybe on a Saturday, Mom would make pancakes and homemade syrup. I know there was brown sugar and butter and some cream (the honest-to-goodness stuff) in it and brought it to a boil. It was good!

TURKEYS

The dumbest, absolutely the dumbest animal (?) on the farm is the turkey. About 1931 we got some small turkeys. We kept them in small "houses" in the wide area on each side of the driveway. About the end of May, late one afternoon, we got a little shower of rain. The turkeys just wandered around and got wet. In Wyoming the nights cool off pretty good. Mom said we had to dry the turkeys or they'd catch pneumonia. So -- Dad, Mom, and I started catching them. The coal burning cookstove had been going so we stood turkeys, about eight at a time, in 10" x 15" bread pans and put them in the oven, leaving the door slightly open. Mom stayed in the house to watch the turkeys while Dad and I caught the rest. It didn't take too long and we got them dried.

By August the turkeys gave me problems, especially the gobbler. He liked to try and grab the hem of my skirt and many times got me on the calf instead. Mom got a bright idea. After that I carried a broom when I was outside alone. She told me to hit him on the head. He didn't remember from one time to another to leave me alone, but one bat with the broom usually would get me ten minutes of peace. One time Mom wore something with a sort of fringe on the hem. The old gobbler spied her and moved in. The yarn would come off and get stuck in his mouth.

When we knew he wouldn't choke we all had a good laugh seeing him "cough" or whatever turkeys do to get it out of their mouths.

MAKING SOAP

I can't remember if we bought face and hand soap or not. I know we made our own laundry soap. Any time you fried bacon, or anything for that matter, you saved the grease. We made soap while it was warm so we could have the house open. Mom would wash the fat the day before. To do that you pour the used fat in a big crock and fill it with hot water. The next morning the bits of bacon, etc., were on the bottom, then water and the nice, clean, hard fat was on top.

The day we made it, Mom would mix the clean tallow (or fat), lye, and whatever else was in the recipe in a big dishpan and set it on the range and I'd stir it with a stick. It seemed like I stirred for hours - probably until it boiled so long. Then it was poured into a big pan to harden. It was cut into bars later. The day we washed, Mom or Dad would sliver about half a bar of soap and it would dissolve in hot wash water.

WASHING CLOTHES

The first washing machine I remember was a tub affair on four legs with a hand wringer. There was a handle on top like a broom handle, that went through the lid to a sort of stomper in the tub and you pulled it back and forth to wash the clothes -- a sort of "stomping" action inside. I stomped a load before walking to school. I was short and stood on a box to reach it but it worked. That machine must have been sold on the sale in January 1935. I didn't see it again. When we moved to Lake View, we set a boiler on the oil stove and stomped with a stomper. Washing for seven people, Grace and Mae lived with us, too, took a while. We had to wash on Tuesday because someone else used the clotheslines on Monday. That went on from January 1935 to April 1937. We moved from those rooms in the rear of the store to a house -- Grace and Mae still lived there. Then we got a used Maytag. I think they had a few Maytags through the 49 years they lived in houses in Lake View. Never a dryer. In the fall of '84 the wringer wouldn't work anymore and no parts were available. The rest of the washer wasn't in such hot shape either. I showed Dad how to wash at the laundromat which was what was used from then on.

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Thinking back, I marvel at Mom's resourcefulness, not only in keeping us fed and clothed but in emergencies.

At one of these club meetings that the Extension lady came to, she told them what to do about ticks. There were a lot of Rocky Mountain ticks around, especially at certain times of the year. One hooked onto Dad between the shoulder blade and armpit. He found it the next morning. They have to be removed at once or they burrow into your skin and cause Rocky Mountain fever. Anyhow, she told them to sterilize a needle, make little pricks close together, slanting down and in, close to and all around the tick, then lift it out. Mom got it out (probably a

little of Dad, too).

One time I was outside playing alone. I was throwing a small stone up and catching it. You guessed it- one time it hit my glasses. I went in and told Mom. Alice had a little blue tam with a fuzzy top. Mom brushed glass away from my eye - then told me to cry. We sent the frames away to get a new lens. Of course it came back C.O.D. When we left the post office we saw a truck on the hill selling peaches for $1 a bushel. I thought it would be nice to get some but Dad told me he spent our last dollar to get my glasses back. I sure felt bad.

Judging from pictures I've looked at, it must have been the summer of 1929 when Grace and Mae moved to Casper, Wyoming, 90 miles away. There wasn't much money for gas but we did drive up to visit them a few times. Grace worked at the hospital and Mae taught piano lessons, kept house, and cooked. That fall Mom and Dad looked at a ranch to buy near Douglas which was about 50 miles from Casper. For whatever reason we didn't and a year or so later they moved back to Iowa - Grace to work for a doctor and I think Mae taught school some then. She had taken music at the conservatory in Chicago. I'm not sure. I know she taught some. When writing at her desk she wrote left-handed. At the blackboard she wrote right-handed. Either way, her penmanship was very good. When we went to the visitation the night before her funeral I talked to a man who had been one of her students.

Times were tough in the early 1930's. Aunt Grace was working as cook and housekeeper for a doctor in Omaha. They used clothes a few months and threw them in a box for Salvation Army. Aunt Grace asked if she could take any of it and send to us. They told her she could send anything she wanted. About every six months a box would come. Nothing fit but Mom knew how to use the sewing machine and was good at it. There were very few things that didn't get remodeled.

I remember in one box there was a dress that was gold, white, and brown -- <u>really</u> flashy for 1930. Mom said "What am I going to do with this?" I don't remember what she did do with it but I'd bet good money it didn't get thrown away.

Mom was one who could do a lot with a little money. She tried to plan ahead. She needed to - those dollars had to be elasticized to buy cloth and thread. It is really a good thing she knew how to sew -- not only underwear but she could remake dresses and coats and they looked professional. Nothing - absolutely nothing got thrown away. No one did in the 1920's and '30's. When I outgrew clothes they were put away for Alice. Anything still wearable was put aside for Bonnie. When they were past patching the good parts were put aside for quilts.

IN THE HEN HOUSE

Dad's sister, Mae, and husband, Harry, came to see us on their honeymoon. They came in September. They wanted to see the Natural Bridge by Douglas, about 40 miles away. I can't remember why Mom and Dad didn't go unless it was because Alice was about ten months old and probably teething. Anyhow, at five years of age I was elected to be "guide". I'm sure Dad gave Harry directions when I wasn't around but he didn't let on. We got there and back without

problems.

A night or two later when everyone was sound asleep a coyote got in the henhouse and the chickens started squawking. All adults got up - Dad and Harry put on overalls and shoes. Dad got out his Winchester rifle and the one bullet left and loaded up. He asked Harry if he wanted to shoot the varmint but Harry said, "No, Ernie, you're used to the gun." Out they went, Harry with the flashlight and Dad with his rifle and one bullet. Of course nothing stays put at a time like that but Dad did kill it - the coyote, that is.

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I always walked to school. It was a mile and three quarters. Spring and fall it was nice - in winter there was a lot of snow. I had overshoes that came almost to my knees. Coming home I walked with two neighbor boys - they only had about three quarters of a mile and were older, about 8 and 10, but they never teased me.

One winter day there was a lot of snow and a cold north wind. Dad took me to school on Midnight. He faced the wind and even though he had a cap with ear flaps, the lower part of his ears weren't covered and froze. I sat behind him out of the wind and leaned right up to him. I was the only one in school that day. Grades 1-4 were in one small room, a hallway, and a small room for 5-8 grades at the other end. There were six of us in my grade (the biggest class). We all had desks and bought our pencils and tablets -- tablets cost three cents each.

SAD IRONS

Those were the days when you ironed - dresses, shirts, tablecloths, etc. Shirt collars and cuffs were dipped in starch to make them stiff. When clothes were dry you sprinkled the right amount of water on each piece, rolled it up so it would stay damp, and ironed it the next day. With no electricity, you used sad irons that were heated on top of the kitchen stove. They were some narrower than electric irons and had points on both ends. A handle would clip onto each iron as you needed it. In the late fall, winter, and early spring the kitchen range was always going so the sad irons were moved over where the stove was hottest. At other times they were kept at the cooler end of the stove, except at cheesemaking time. The firebox was on the left, then the oven, then the reservoir, our primary way to heat dish and bath water, was on the right end. In the summer time you planned so you would iron the day you baked bread so it wasn't so warm for so long just for ironing. Mom knew just how much coal to put when and where to get just the right heat when she baked bread. Under the firebox was the "drawer" where the ashes fell. Naturally, that had to be emptied regularly.

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The summer of 1931 Roy Elder asked Dad if we would move to his ranch. It was larger and he would dig out a basement under the house. He was going to marry a widow lady from Douglas and would be moving to her ranch. When the decision was made to move, Dad helped him dig a basement. Steps to the basement were on the outside, on the south side of the house.

The dirt floor was hard and fairly level. We always had a garden and canned everything we didn't eat fresh - peas, beans, and tomatoes mostly. Swiss chard came out about that time. It looks like spinach only the leaves are larger. We would wash each leaf four times to be sure all the dust was off. Dad would take the screen door off and lay it on two pails. Mom put cheesecloth over it and we laid the washed swiss chard on that to dry. A hot sun would dry it in a day. When you put the dried leaves in a cloth bag they would break up. Hang the bag in a dry place and when you want to use some, grab a handful and put in hot water to sort of reconstitute. We also ate dandelion leaves. In those days they weren't sprayed so all they needed was to be cleaned. You know dandelions come out before anything is ready in the garden so the timing was good.

That place was different. The house was probably 20 x 24 -- two rooms equal size downstairs, kitchen and living room. In one corner of the kitchen you went up about five steps to a landing, through a door, and up five more steps. Of course, the ceilings upstairs were sloped down to about three feet from the floor. There was enough room for two double beds and a small room at the head of the steps. I was eight, nine, and ten and Alice three, four, and five on the years we lived there. The landing in the stairway was our "stage" for many "programs" that Alice and I put on. Mom was always busy but I doubt that she missed much.

There was the usual outhouse. This one sat behind and facing the chickenhouse - I don't remember that there was a door. There was no bathroom tissue as we know it. Thank goodness Sears and Montgomery Ward sent catalogs. You didn't use the colored pages - when crumpled a little they scratched. Last thing before you undressed was a trip outside to the outhouse. On the first place we lived in Wyoming there was a sort of lean-to shed on the house. When there was a lot of snow we used a commode without the chair at bedtime. The top rim wasn't cold - it was **very** cold. You didn't linger any but it was better than going outside.

When Roy Elder was going to get married, people wanted to plan something. He was probably about forty and had never married. He was one who sang in the male quartet and was always ready to help someone. He had lived on that ranch since he had been in the service and got out in 1918.

People knew he'd never come to a party for him so we waited until after we had moved in. He stayed with us that last week before the wedding. Anyhow, it was decided we'd have sort of late supper and still be sitting around the table. When neighbors came to our gate they turned off their car lights and came "by the light of the moon" to the house. He didn't realize what was going on until people started coming in the door. They only stayed an hour and a half or so and I don't remember that there was lunch. There was one present to unwrap - a pot with whatever money people could give. He knew everyone would miss him and he almost cried. He knew he'd miss them, too.

It was terribly cold the day of the wedding. At breakfast Roy asked Dad if he wanted to milk or build fires under the cars to start them. Dad said he'd milk. Afterward he said Roy was so excited Dad was afraid he'd not milk all the cows. We weren't milking more than three or four then. Calves were due to come in the spring and then there would be about twenty to milk. We

four went to church so he had the house to himself to clean up and get all gussied up in his one suit.

The Elder ranch was the one almost surrounded by canyons. Dad found a fairly narrow one with the point to the south and the sun wouldn't shine there. When we got the first snow he packed it down in that canyon and covered it. Next time it was going to snow he uncovered, let it snow, stomped it down and covered it again for each snow. Company stared open-mouthed when Dad came carrying a four-gallon bucket of snow July 4th to make homemade ice cream. That was about all the longer it would keep from melting.

The upstairs in that house was dark. Somewhere Mom got her hands on some old magazines. We took them apart sheet by sheet. Mom made flour and water paste. I spread paste on each sheet while Mom and Dad put them on the sloped ceiling. The ceiling hadn't been finished - 2x4 rafters with shingles on top. That made the room lighter and a little warmer.

Every few years in spring or early summer young livestock had to be branded. When we got to the Elder place a neighbor and his live-in hired hand needed a few branded, too. Our brand was in three parts: 7 - K. The branding came out in a vertical line. The 7 was on top with the bar below that and the K at the bottom. The 7 and K were each about three inches high. You would build a small fire in the barnyard and put the iron in to get hot. Each iron had to be on about ten seconds to burn the hair off. The calves were tied down during all this. I knew it had to be done but I felt sorry for the little calves. They waited until the last to brand a two year old steer - probably anticipating problems. They were right. They got three ropes around his neck - one to the saddle horn on each of their horses (Dad, neighbor, and hired hand). The neighbor sat on the steer's head and the other fellow on the rear lower legs. Dad hit him with the first iron and he struggled. The second iron was worse. When Dad came with the third iron they yelled "Hurry". The steer got up - broke all three ropes and ran like crazy up and down canyons with the three men on horses in hot pursuit. The ropes were broken so an end hung down almost to the ground. They didn't dare leave them - he could step on one or all and choke himself. They had to get close enough to ride alongside and get the ropes off - all the while going at top speed. They managed to get the job done about ten minutes later. When the ropes broke I ran for the house - they were all over the yard as well as the canyons.

I helped milk there in the evening. I even had my own milk stool! I was short and couldn't hold a big milk can between my knees and have it lean toward the cow to catch the milk. So, I milked with my right hand and steadied the bucket with my left. Sometimes in summer we milked outside - it wasn't as hot as in the barn and flies weren't as bad. It just plain isn't any fun to have a cow's tail swish across your face when the cows are trying to fight flies. Mom and Dad had to be careful where the kicker cows stood.

In summer Mom and Dad would eat early breakfast and Dad would go out to the field or "ride the fences" and leave early. When you ride the fence you carry some barbed wire, a hammer, some staples, a fence stretcher, and a spade on the horse. You did that at least in spring and fall to make sure the cattle didn't get out or get into the oat fields.

One day each winter Dad would bring the harnesses into the kitchen to clean and oil them. They were rather dusty but the barn was pretty cold to work in. He rubbed some kind of oil on them to keep them pliable.

There weren't too many members in the little church. Few people lived in town and neighbors were a mile or more away from each other. Anyway, the church had a "basement" with a dirt floor and a furnace with only one floor register. Anyone needing a bathroom had to walk over uneven ground about 1/2 block to the grade school outhouses. Usually there was someone who could play the piano. There was no choir but once in a while someone would feel inclined to provide special music. One day Mom decided we would sing a hymn she especially liked. I was seven and could read the words I didn't know by heart. Alice, almost three, memorized them. Mom and Dad stood on the floor and Alice and I hopped up on the stage, about six inches high, and stood between Mom and Dad. We had practiced at home many times so it sounded fine.

I remember one very cold winter Sunday only about ten people came to church and the church didn't get warm. The preacher came down off the platform and stood by the register. The rest of us sat in the two front rows close to the register. No pianist that day so we sang acappella -- turned out it was mostly a song service and a short one at that. We sounded pretty good while it lasted. Everyone was thinking about extra chores to be done because of the cold.

MONEY

In the early 1930's money was "scarce as hen's teeth." In summer there was a little more. Monday we would put a five-gallon can of cream on the train before 10:00 a.m. The can and check for $3.75 came back on Wednesday. On Thursday morning we put a three-gallon can of cream on the train and the can and check for about $1.75 came back on Saturday. We always had some chickens. A 12-dozen case of eggs once a week brought $1.00. We had a total of $6.50 per week in the summer.

We bought a 50# sack of flour for $0.75 in cloth bags that made good dish towels (like the square dish towels you may use today) and/or underwear. White sugar came in bulk and the grocer sacked up what you wanted - usually five pounds for ten cents. Dry yeast cost twelve cents a package. One package made four batches of bread. There were no bakeries around -- everyone baked their own bread. Gas for the car was six cents a gallon and kerosene for the lamps was five cents a gallon. Oatmeal for breakfast came in ten pound sacks for about forty cents. You didn't need everything every week. We milked twenty cows from early spring until late fall when most would "dry up." Their calves would arrive in early spring. We needed to save our "extra cash" from summer to get through the winter. In spring we bought seed for planting oats and for the big garden and canned the rest that grew. I don't think we ever planted cucumbers until about 1940. Mom knew vinegar was good for us but didn't feel we could afford it to make pickles. Peas, green beans, beets, and tomatoes along with potatoes were the main things. Onions were harvested and hung up in a dry, dark place.

We usually had hot oatmeal for breakfast. Sometimes when there were extra people we'd have eggs. On very special times, if we happened to have brown sugar on hand, she'd make

french toast and syrup. For the syrup she'd take brown sugar, cream, and butter and bring it to a boil. The plates would be scraped clean those days.

One night one of Dad's sisters, her husband and daughter, Dad's Mom and two of his nephews arrived unannounced about 11:00 p.m. The next morning when Alice and I woke up we looked over and there were three strange men in Mom and Dad's bed! Dad's Mom, his sister and their little girl (about 3) slept on the foldout davenport, the brother-in-law and nephews in Mom and Dad's bed and Mom and Dad on that single cot. Alice and I got to keep our bed.

While they were there it was decided to get Grandma on our horse, Midnight. It took some conversation, pushing and pulling but they made it. Our little cousin was put up behind her, Alice next, and I wound up close to the tail. I think Grandma was relieved when her feet were on the ground again. The nephews, especially one, had a good time riding horses up and down the canyons after Dad told them to let the horse go where it wanted to. The horses had been up and down enough to know where they could maintain their footing. The other cousin had to have Dad lance a wart on his fanny and riding wasn't as much fun for him.

You couldn't buy bread in a store out west - you baked your own. No yeast as we know it now. The night before Mom would put a dry cake of yeast (about 2" square and 1/2" thick) in warm water to "soak". she waited a bit, then added eggs, flour, etc. and would wrap it in Dad's big overcoat so it did not chill. The house would get quite cold overnight. In the morning she would pull it out after the house warmed up to let it rise, put it in loaves and bake it. One time she didn't feel so good the next morning. Thinking back she was probably pregnant with Bonnie. Anyway, Dad was elected to do the bread. Mom was downstairs and gave directions from the davenport. Usually she got four loaves of bread and a pan of biscuits. Dad got five loaves and a pan of biscuits. I used to tease him about it sometimes. He never would answer - just smile and wrinkle up his nose. I think the loaves and biscuits must have gotten a little smaller although no comment was ever made.

MAKING QUILTS

With no money you didn't go out and buy material for quilts - you saved everything. You reused everything one way or another until it was no more. My clothes, when I outgrew them, were carefully packed away in a box till Alice grew into them. Anything that had too many holes to patch also was put away for a quilt. Dad would wear his one suit until it was past shiny - it was dangerous to wear.

Parts of material that were usable were put together - odd sizes matched up somehow. It was aptly named "crazy quilt". This was material collected over 10-12 years' time. Mom got some brightly colored heavy thread and we would sew pretty patterns across where the patches were put together.

Sheep were raised there and one day when I came home from school there was a big grocery size sack of wool. There were two pieces of wood about 3" square with rows of nails sticking out. I would put a small handful of wool on one set of nails and pull across it with the

other board with nails until the wool was pulled apart and quite soft, put it aside and get another handful. It took a few evenings to get through that sack of wool.

We put up the frame - attached the bottom side of the quilt (more pieces - a little larger) and spread out the wool I had carded. Then we put the top of the quilt over. Mom tied the first row. You do this by threading yarn in a needle with a big eye. You go down through the quilt and back up about 1/4" away. You tie the two ends together and cut off about 1" above the top. With a little practice you get so you can pull the yarn through leaving only an inch to tie with. Mom cut a piece of cardboard in a triangle about 3" on all three sides. I could put the corners on two ties and put the next tie at the other tip. At eight years old I could help tie the quilt, too.

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November 19, 1933, Dad woke us somewhere around 11:00 p.m. and told us to hurry and dress. When I went downstairs Mom called me aside and told me she was going to the hospital and would bring home a little brother or sister. Dad and Mom took Alice and me to a neighbor's home. We slept four in a bed. They didn't have a phone but knew we would be coming around that time. Then Mom and Dad went the 21 miles to the hospital in Lusk. Twenty minutes after they arrived, Bonnie arrived -- some timing. Glad there wasn't a flat tire or some other catastrophe. Mom went to the hospital with Bonnie because she was almost thirty-seven at that time. Dad picked me up from school and Alice from the neighbor's that next afternoon.

Any time we went to Lusk we took butter, eggs, cream and dressed chickens. That was the way many people paid their doctor and hospital bills.

When Bonnie was born I was 9-1/2. It wasn't very long until one of my jobs was to change her (cloth diapers, of course). One thing though, Mom saw to it that **she** <u>always</u> did the smelly ones.

About that time Mom found out there would be a tonsil-pulling day between Christmas and New Years. A lot of kids needed it done. Mom got a reservation early for me. Many didn't find out in time so didn't make it. The doctors came to the school. Teacher's desks were pushed together for operating tables and they went from one patient to another. We were kept overnight, sleeping on the floor. Most kid's moms were there but Mom needed to be home with Bonnie so Dad took me. The lady whose kid was next to me said she'd watch me so Dad spent the night at a gas station - probably in the car. Everyone was released the next day - on Sunday. Sunday night I said something was in my throat. Mom told me to hang my head over the edge of the bed. When I spit there was some blood. Off to the hospital. The next morning the doctor took a clot out of my throat about the size of a marble so we went home. Tuesday my glands swelled up so bad, back to the hospital. Dad didn't stay - they let me out on Saturday. My question - How did Mom know to have me put my head over the edge of the bed?

Alice was blessed with soft wavy hair. A neighbor girl - probably high school - would call sometimes and ask if she could wave Alice's hair. She'd ride her horse the three miles to our place. Mom would quick wash it and Alice would sit real still. it didn't take her long and it

looked real nice when she had finished. It stayed nice several days.

Mine was very straight. When there was something very special we'd wash my hair and Mom would "fix" it. She had 12-15 rags about 1-1/2" wide and 12" long. When she'd fix the right side I would hold one end of a rag in my left hand above my head. She would wrap some hair around the rag starting in the middle of the rag and wrap hair toward the end. Then she'd take the end I was holding and wrap it round the hair on the rag and tie the ends. After it dried and was combed out I would have curly hair the rest of the day.

We didn't get much rain in Wyoming. In the spring it took some doing to get ready to plant. First they would plow. It took six horses - two in front and four behind them. The ground was so crusty it "turned over" in clods. Then you used the disk to break up the clods. Then you used the drag to further break up the lumps. Finally, you could plant.

A disk has flat circular plates about 8" apart. They are blades that break up the soil and are very sharp. Our disk was probably 12 feet long so there were about 16 of the blades 15" or so in diameter.

One time a shower came up. It was a Saturday so I was home from school. Dad was disking a field that was almost a mile away by way of the trail. It was raining hard so I was watching for Dad. I saw him coming - the horses were running when I saw him turn them toward the canyon and go over the edge. I told Mom. I don't remember that she answered - she was probably praying. That was a long 18-20 seconds until they came up the other side and I could let Mom know. I knew he knew the canyons like the back of his hand but I was still scared for him. I knew that the horses were hooked up so the disk shouldn't get to them. Dad had pulled the lever to put the blades pretty well in the ground as they went over the edge and pulled them out as they started back up. It did cut off a good quarter of a mile. I also knew that if Dad would fall in front of it he would be cut up - bad.

My thoughts: We didn't have money to buy machinery, we couldn't spare any horses and for sure we couldn't spare Dad.

In March 1934 we moved to a smaller ranch near Manville. I'm sure Dad hated to leave the ranch we rented from our friend. We had had much company and the place had many memories for us. One thing that made a difference - the Manville place had electricity and in the summertime - running water. There was a big raised tank by the well. In cold weather we couldn't use it or it and the pipes would freeze. Then, back to the outhouse. When it was warm we could use the bathroom. Too bad it wasn't the other way around.

With less pasture for the cattle, they soon ate the grass down. By the time I got out of school in May it was imperative they not be in the pastures. About 8:20 to 11:30 and 1:00 to 4:00 or so I'd take them out to graze in the ditches or to the railroad tracks half a mile away. If Dad didn't need Midnight we'd ride him. Otherwise we'd ride one of the horses bareback. Alice usually went with me. She couldn't see over my shoulder so would lean over to see around me. Especially with no saddle I'd have to lean the other way. Midnight was a wonderful horse. One

day when we were out I got miffed about something and decided I wasn't going to lean over so I sat up straight. Of course we fell off. Were we surprised when we picked ourselves up. The horse was still headed in the same direction and had not touched us - just a fast stop.

One day in late May Mom was trying to do some housecleaning but Bonnie was fussy. Mom put a towel on the fence - our signal that we were to come home. She told me to let Alice down and take Bonnie. Of course I walked the horse toward the cattle but the warm air outside and rocking motion of the horse soon put Bonnie to sleep so I turned and took her home. Alice was glad to go with me again.

One of the first nights when we had running water we had warm baths in the tub! What a treat! No one carried the water in or out, of course we heated it in the reservoir. Anyway, Mom had her bath and went to bed. Dad was in the tub. Pretty soon he came to bed shivering. He had gone to sleep and the water was getting cold when he woke up.

One day Mom washed the kitchen floor on hands and knees and threw the water out rather than put it in the septic tank. When she came back in and washed her hands, the towel caught on the prongs of her rings. Her diamond had come out. We were going outside to look where she threw the water. The sun was shining and as we walked the short hall, the rays shown on the diamond. That was one relieved Mom.

Alice started first grade that fall. Our school bus was someone's car from farther north of us. The mailman delivered mail to the ranch every day but didn't wait for the last mail to come. Sometimes the bus driver would ask if any of us wanted to stop for the mail. One night - for no good reason - I said I wanted to stop. There was a letter saying Grace, Mae, Emma and Allen would be at our house the next night. They stopped at the school and we went with them to give directions. During the few days they were there it was decided we'd sell our cattle, horses and machinery and move back to Iowa to start a grocery store. They had someone looking for a building - found one and we arranged for the sale of our livestock and machinery.

MY EYES

Sometime around 1930 Dad inherited $100 from a relative. Dad and Mom could have used it for any number of things but put it away for the day when my eyes could be straightened.

They took me to an eye doctor in Chadron, Nebraska when I was about three and I started wearing glasses. When we moved to Wyoming Dad would take me back about every four months. We would drive to Harrison and catch the train, see the doctor, catch the train back and drive home the same day. It must have been 100 miles each way. The conductor got to know us. One day we had a flat tire so when we parked the car and ran to the depot the train was ready to pull out. The conductor saw us, told me to come to the steps, and told Dad to get the tickets. He held the train for us.

One trip was made on Mom's birthday. probably coming back we took a bit of time and went into a department store. I, in my six-year-old wisdom, picked out a pink cream and sugar

on a pink tray. A year or two later I knew she could have used hose, a slip, or almost anything. She made hers and our slips and panties out of flour sacks and sugar sacks. She made her bras, too.

It was probably in August 1934 after threshing that the folks decided I should see a doctor in Cheyenne about my crossed eye. Cheyenne was 125 miles away. The preacher said they were going down and Dad and I could ride along. Their car wasn't new but newer than ours. We all stayed with friends of the preacher the two days Dad and I were there. We were going to catch a train back and have Mom come and get us 12 miles away. They took us to the depot and parked the car and another car pulled up next to us. It was the school superintendent from Manville where Alice and I were going to school. He had brought his wife down to catch a train and said he'd be glad for company going back.

December 15th Dad and I took our Model T Ford and drove to Cheyenne to have my eyes operated on. They operated on Friday and Monday, let me out on Tuesday and we could go home Wednesday, December 21. Dad contacted an auctioneer for the sale January 2nd. He worked like a good fellow getting things lined up. We weren't milking many cows but it was cold and there was snow on the ground. Probably the hardest part was selling the horses. I know we had them in Nebraska because he drove them to Wyoming when we moved in 1929. That is how he got the wagon, hayrack and buggy moved plus all the stuff loaded in them.

About January 5th we made another quick trip to Cheyenne to have my eyes checked. Dad had told a friend that we had driven our car to Cheyenne and back, about 125 miles each way. He insisted we take his car for the last trip - down early one morning and back the next evening. That car was about a 1930 Model A. Real uptown compared to our car.

The $100 Dad inherited paid the doctor in full. The hospital bill was paid in about six $25 payments. It wasn't too much, either. After surgery my eyes were bandaged so they let Dad feed me. I didn't go hungry but I would bet that the only food Dad had was from my plate.

On one of our trips to Cheyenne Dad said some people had gone on relief (sort of like food stamps). He went on to say with some pride, "We didn't."

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People came and got the machinery and cattle they had bought. We sold the Model T on the sale, too, with the arrangement that we could keep it a week. Dad said if it brought enough to pay for tickets for Mom and we three kids to go back to Omaha on the train, he'd be satisfied. It brought $20 and that covered the tickets. Dad rode with the two guys bringing our furniture in the truck.

On Mom's birthday we left Wyoming on the 11:00 a.m. "Toonerville". Mom was 38 that day, I was 10-1/2, Alice 6, Bonnie 14 months. Bonnie was still in cloth diapers. I have no idea how many Mom took - probably all we had. We were on the train from 11:00 a.m. until almost 6:00 the next morning. She had fixed sandwiches. I don't think we had anything else to eat. I do

know that although there weren't many towns, apparently there were crossings where the engineer blew the whistle. That night we'd get Bonnie to sleep, he'd blow the whistle and she would wake up and cry. Mom and I took turns going to the little area (sort of a vestibule) and holding her. That way other people on the train could sleep.

Mom fixed a little nest for Alice with our coats and she slept from the usual bedtime until about 5:00 a.m. when we pulled into Omaha. Rose and Gardy, Mom's youngest sister and husband, were at the station and took us to their home. A couple of days later Dad came on the bus. They had gotten to Lake View and unloaded the furniture. Uncle Gardy had found a car for us and they bought it that day. The next day we left for Lake View in our 1929 Model A.

The telephone had been our way of communicating with neighbors. We were on a party line and I'm sure the operator didn't miss much. Mom and Dad weren't ones to pick up the receiver every time the phone rang other people's rings. If there was a birth or general announcement you gave five long rings on the phone crank. Everyone who heard the rings hurried to the phone. It seemed like our ring was one short ring, two longs, and another short.

Life as we had known it ended. The two years in Nebraska and six in Wyoming we were a unit - our own little world - we revolved around each other. A couple of years we had taken the "Cappers Weekly" - six pages once a week. Other than that, no newspapers, no radio, no TV - just the family working together.

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