

RECOLLECTIONS OF YESTERYEAR: AT HOME WITH MOM AND DAD  
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I Remember:

Dad couldn't get his old Model T Ford started so he hitched his horse to it to pull start it. He let me set in the front seat with him and, being only five years of age, I thought this was really something. He opened the crank-out windshield and put the bridle reins through it to control the horse and yes he got the car started.

In season we carried our homegrown dried, shelled corn in the horse drawn wagon to get it ground into meal for mom to use in the kitchen. It was course meal but it sure tasted good when made into cornbread for dinner and meal gravy for breakfast. Hot cornbread with butter and molasses was good for breakfast also. The miller was paid with a portion of the corn meal. He would sell it to get cash so he could buy other groceries.

Dad raised sorghum cane to make molasses. We would cut it and then haul it in the horse drawn wagon to the local sorghum mill. A joint of the cane was a great treat to chew on. The sweet juice was squeezed out of the cane with a mule drawn machine. The mule was hitched to a long pole that was balanced over the machine. The mule traveled in a circle around the large geared squeeze rollers. Sometimes dad would let me feed the cane into the rollers, also carry the remaining cane pulp to a large pile away from the machine. The juice was then cooked in large flat pans with a huge open fire underneath them. The man doing the cooking had to watch the pans very close or the syrup would burn and could not be used. He used a wooden paddle to keep the syrup moving through the pans. He also skimmed the "scum" from the top of the syrup. The mill owner was paid with a portion of the syrup which was put in new one gallon tin buckets. The bucket lids were pressed on while the syrup was still hot and as it cooled down the lid was pulled down tighter by the created vacuum. The owner sold his portion for cash.

One Christmas dad made a wooden wagon for me, I was about six years of age. I helped him cut the wheels from a gum tree log. The axle holes were made with a brace and bit which was turned by hand. The wagon was made completely of wood. This made it heavy and I could barely pull it but it made for a very good Christmas. Years later I had a metal wagon and I needed to add an axle brace. I needed a hole through the metal bed. I tried to punch a hole through it but could not. I went in the house and got dad's .22 rifle and shot a hole through the bed and added the needed brace.

On the first day after we moved to Malvern Arkansas (on the Butterfield road) from Princeton Arkansas one of us children discovered the family cat was missing. It was dark but dad took a lantern and walked the rocky hills across the road from the house looking for it. I was eight years old at the time. On the farm a cat was very important, not just as a pet but as a way to keep the rat population under control. I don't recall if the cat was found but I am sure that we had a "ratter" cat.

When the steel tires on the horse drawn wagon got loose dad would park it in the creek at the bottom of the hill in front of the house so the wooden wheels would swell up and tighten against the steel tires. He moved the wagon a little each several days so all parts and spokes of the wheel would swell.

After our regular wooden wagon rotted down and was discarded dad built a "Hoover wagon", it was made from the wheels, axles and other parts of an old car. These wagons were so named because

President Herbert Hoover promised a car in every garage. Most people during the depression of the thirties could not afford a garage much less a car.

It was always fun to find motor oil cans (cans were all metal back then) on the side of the road and step onto the side of them and use them to walk on. We also made tomwalkers. These were sticks or poles about six feet long with blocks about two feet from the end. This allowed us to walk two feet above the ground.

We played marbles and had fun, anytime I played for keeps I would lose and dad would always ask where my marbles were. We also played "mumbly peg" with our pocket knives, I don't remember the rules but it was a wonder that we didn't cut our fingers.

My sister Dorothy had a doll that would cry if you put it on its stomach then on its back. I could not figure out what made it cry. One day while she was out of the house I used my pocket knife to slit its back open to see how it worked. Within a metal cylinder was a rubber bladder attached to a weight, and a reed. When the doll was turned over the weight forced the air out of the bladder and through the reed and it cried. I was happy to have found the doll's secret and got mom's needle and thread and sewed the cloth back together where I had cut it. All was well until sometime later my sister found the sewed cut and I had to confess.

Mom cared for me after I had an appendicitis operation. I was eleven at the time. I know it is hard to believe but I was operated on without being put to sleep or even given shots to deaden my side from the pain. I had a cold and the doctor said if they gave me gas I would get pneumonia and die. I can now recall the sound of my own screaming as dad held my arms behind my head while the doctor operated on me. We were later told that people all in the hospital there on South Main Street in Malvern could hear me and didn't know what was happening. Dad told me several times that holding me was the hardest thing he had ever done in his life. My appendix had burst and during those days they would not remove it under those conditions. During the operation the doctor had put a drain tube thirty inches long in my side and mom would pull out one inch per day, cut it off and reapply bandages. This was to keep the tube from "growing" to the wall of the opening. I had to lay on my back for six weeks with mom caring for all of my needs day and night. One year later I had to have my appendix removed because of the pain. Years later I was told that I should sue Doctor Prickett, my response was why should I sue someone that had saved my life. After this surgery I had adhesions and had surgery again in 1955 to repair it.

The family laxative was castor oil. It worked well (in fact more than well) but just the thought of it today makes me think of up-chucking. When we were unlucky enough to get into poison oak or ivy it was doctored with vinegar and soda. I do not know if it helped or not but it was fun to watch the reaction of the two chemicals together.

I dared not cough or sneeze in the winter time or mom would doctor me with a folded piece of felt cloth saturated with Vicks Salve and pinned over my chest onto my long johns. I felt that people could smell me coming, and they probably could unless they were doctored in the same manner.

Mom would always help me do the field work after school that dad had assigned me to do while he was at work. I could not have done it otherwise. Dad never realized how very sickly I was while growing up. I sold Grit Newspapers on Saturday and my profit was one cent for each of the eight or ten sold.

We always saved some of the farm harvest for seed. Peas, beans, etc were harvested, some mom canned, and some were allowed to dry for seed. On a dry windy day the peas were put in a tow sack and beat with a board to get them out of the hull. Then, with an old bed sheet spread out on the ground, the pea sack was held up high and the contents poured out. The wind would blow the hulls away and the peas would fall onto the sheet. This is the way the peas were separated from the hulls. Once dad gave me about a half gallon of peas to plant, I planted many rows but had peas left over so I buried them. Boy did I catch it when they came up and dad saw all those peas come up in one place!

Dad did all of the work on his cars and I always helped him. When we worked on the Model A (yep, we now had an "A") Ford transmission the rear end had to be pulled back before the transmission could be removed. He would always get mom to use her weight (she was a heavy woman) to help spread the blocked-up rear spring to reconnect it to its shackle. When we needed to change the engine we would use a limb on the oak tree in front of the house to hang the block and tackle from. We would change the engine and then overhaul the old one and have it ready to install when needed. This was the type work we did when farming was off-season.

We used the Model A to haul wood and pine for the living room heater and the cook stove in the kitchen. We would travel old log roads, go into the woods that had been cut over and get rich pine roots to be used for fire starting. The rotted pine stumps would have a long rich tap root. Dad would back up then run forward and hit the root with the front bumper of the Model A to loosen it. After several hits we could pull the root out of the ground and, using an axe, cut it up enough so we could put it in the back of the car where the seat was removed. Dad always carried his rifle so he could kill a squirrel or rabbit if we spotted one. This was meat for the table. Once he left his rifle leaning against the car bumper and he forgot about it. When we went back and found it the fore stock was damaged and to this day the split is as he left it. Model As were tough vehicles.

I learned to drive the Model A Ford in the fields hauling fire wood that we cut. We would remove the back seat and the passenger seat and could put a lot of wood in there. We would spend the day cutting down a tree and cutting it into short pieces. We cut pinewood for the cook stove and hardwood for the living room heater. We would split and stack the wood after we hauled it back to the house. All of the cutting was done with a cross cut saw with dad on one end and me on the other. Dad said that I "rode the saw". This made more work for him. That kind of wood heated us twice: once while sawing it and later in the heater!

Mom used Mendits to repair her metal kitchen pots. For a few cents she could buy a card with assorted sizes on it. Each Mendit consisted of a thin washer, cork gasket, another thin washer, a screw and nut. If a pot leaked then she would use an ice pick to enlarge the hole so the screw could go through it then the Mendit was assembled with the nut tightened with the small wrench that came on the card. Now the leak was stopped and the pot was useable again. Farm wives did many things to conserve the small amount of family income.

Mom spent most of her days cooking and canning while doing her other chores at the same time. I still can't see how she did all of that at once. She cooked three meals a day on a wood cook stove plus all of the other work of a farm wife.

Kitchen flour was sifted before use to remove trash and bugs. This action was never given a second thought. Flour and some livestock feed was purchased in white sacks that were printed with various designs and colors. Mom used these to make dresses for my sisters, shirts for me and dad, curtains for

the windows, etc. Sometimes she would run out of a certain material and she would send a scrap piece with dad the next time he bought feed so she would have the same kind of cloth.

During WWII (World War Two) everything was rationed. Some things were simply not available. Dad would repair tire blowouts by taking a piece of old tire and using rivets, would fasten it to the inside of the tire over the split. All tires used inner tubes back then. Soldiers were stationed on the Malvern High School football field in tents. Their duty was to scour the countryside for scrap metal for the war effort because the USA had sold most of its scrap iron to Japan. When the soldiers came to get all of his scrap iron for the war effort dad argued with them that some of it was farming tools, and it was. The city boy soldiers didn't know what farm tools were! Dad was too young for WWI and too old for WWII although he did have to register for the draft.

Mom always wore a scarf to cover the long, large scar on her neck which resulted from goiter operations. She suffered poor health most of her life.

Dad was a big eater and should have been a large man but wasn't. He always really didn't want any sweets such as pie but always asked for a sample, likewise he never wanted a second cup of coffee but always wanted his warmed up!

My buddies and I knew where every deep place in the local creek was, these were our swimming holes. We had no swim suits, just our birthday suits. It was good to go swimming after working in the fields on a hot day. There was one swimming hole where we had to get in and run the snakes out before we took our swim. Someone told us the snakes could not bite under the water.

Mom would always clean the little fish I caught in the creek. I used crawfish tails for bait. I had fun catching the crawfish and the perch. The perch were so small she would fry them brown in corn meal and we would eat bones and all. If at that I had known that people ate crawfish then we would have also. The bait crawfish were about as large as the fish I caught.

We kept fresh water in a bucket on the back porch, there was one dipper and all drank from it. This is also where we washed our hands and faces in the wash pan. In the winter we would just break the ice and go ahead and wash. It doesn't take long to wash in cold water, boy was it cold! In the winter I have skated on the creek ice while the water underneath was still flowing. I don't believe it gets that cold now.

Dad terraced his hillside land with my help using a one inch by four inch by sixteen foot long board with a 1" by 4" leg on each end to lay them out. One leg was shorter than the other and this controlled the drop in the terrace. A carpenter's level was secured to the top of the long board in order to level it. If one leg was two inches shorter than the other then the terrace was laid out with a drop of two inches per sixteen feet. The terraces would curve around the hillside. The crop rows would parallel them. This kept the land from washing away.

Dad built a barn with pole main framing and 2" by 4"s for cross framing. The roof was metal, the sides were slabs from the local sawmill. He sent me after a load of slabs one day. We used the wagon with the box bed removed. While going unloaded down Graveyard Hill toward Cooper Church the mule's britches' strap broke. When the mule tried to slow down, the single tree would get him then he would jump forward. I took a wild ride that day riding on the bolster with nothing to hold onto. The bolster was trying to turn around while I was holding on for dear life and at the same time trying to control that

cantankerous mule. I fixed the broken leather with haywire at the bottom of the hill. We used haywire to repair everything. I completed my job without further mishap.

Dad spent much time in the fields although he was working a regular job at the textile mill (International Shoe Co) at night. During the summer he would try to sleep in the barn hay loft but had trouble with the mule and chickens making a racket and keeping him awake. The barn was cooler than the house. We had no electricity for fans.

In the living room dad had a battery powered radio in a wooden cabinet, table model. It was operated only by him. He listened to the Stamps-Baxter Quartet, news and preaching. Later he let me listen to Tom Mix and Gene Autry. The radio used an AB pack, the "A" part was 1 1/2 volts for the tube filaments and it would run down first. The "B" part was higher voltage for the plates of the tubes. I would go over to the railroad tracks where the work-crew boss threw away the old 1 1/2 volt #6 batteries from their little putt-putt work cars. I would take them home and wire them to the radio so we could use the "B" part of the AB pack until it was fully discharged also.

The railroad track repair crew was stationed at Butterfield Arkansas which was one mile from the house. The workmen wore overalls and felt lined blue denim jackets. In the summer their overalls were worn without a shirt but the lined jacket was worn over them without being buttoned. I could not understand then that the felt lining was cooling them due to the evaporative cooling effect. They wore large straw hats in the summer, warm caps in the winter. They rode the little pump (see-saw) handcars and sometimes the little one cylinder gas put-put engine powered work car. They both looked odd because I was used to seeing large black steam engine and freight and passenger trains on the railroad tracks. I always looked for the red caboose and waved at the signal man riding in it. Sometimes I would put a penny on the track and the train would flatten it but most of the time the penny could not be found, I was a big spender.

I rigged up a "telephone" by using two tin cans with a string or wire about fifty feet long between the bottoms. A person could speak into one can and another could hear from the other can. I made crystal radios: wound coils of copper wire on oatmeal boxes, made crystals by melting lead in a metal jar lid on mom's cook stove. This was ok until I mixed sulfur into the molten lead then mom would run me out of the house due to the odor. The lead mixture was poured into metal bottle caps through which I had punched a hole and inserted a screw. I ordered my "cat's whiskers" from Johnson Smith and Co in Detroit Michigan, they cost one cent each. When I was twelve years old I built my first one tube radio from parts I had swapped for and using old thrown-away batteries. The radio worked great, I could hear stations in Hot Springs and in Little Rock!

Dad would cut field hay with a horse drawn sickle. I would rake it into windrows after it dried, with a horse drawn hay rake. We would then put the hayrack on the wagon and hand load the hay with a pitchfork. We hauled it to the barn then uploaded the hay from the wagon to the hayloft with a pitchfork. If the weather was still warm we would head to the creek to wash off the stinging hay. In the winter the hayloft was a good dry place to play, I would make tunnels under the hay.

I helped dad dig a well on the side of the hill, it was about thirty inches per side and eighteen feet deep. We used an old ladder made of two poles and cross steps of lumber to go down into the well. We used a home-made windless to hoist up five gallon buckets of dirt. Dad said there was a gas vapor in the bottom of the well and he couldn't breathe so he didn't dig any deeper. We never got much water from it but the frogs loved it.

Dad had a well drilled through the rock near the old house and we then didn't have to carry it so far. While drilling a special clay was found and dad thought he had hit it rich but he could not get anyone interested because it was underneath the covering of solid rock on the hill. The mud was the type used for firebrick and around oil wells. The well didn't produce enough water so we still had to haul water from the spring across the road from the house.

It was a big deal to make our annual trips to Princeton Arkansas each July and Christmas to visit grandparents and other kin. Highway #9 was a narrow gravel road at that time. In July we always had homemade ice cream. At Christmas grandma Taylor always had a large tree in the high ceilinged living room. Champion "Pap" Ennis always had a big fire in his fireplace. Dad would prepare the old Model A, hang two spare tires on the rear and away we would go. We always had a flat but with spares, tire tools, a hand air pump and tube patches we always made it.

At home while dad was working on a tire, and as usual I was there to see how it was done, the two pound head flew off of the hammer handle and hit me on the head. I thought he had killed me and he thought the same as I lay on the ground kicking around and around. I had a large goose egg on my forehead for many days but I survived. He was a good shade tree mechanic.

At Cooper school during recess us boys would ride our "stick horses" through the grounds and nearby woods. Also we would climb small trees, bend them over near another tree. We would jump up and down on one bent tree by holding on to another tree. Years later when I passed that site some trees were still bent over!

Mom allowed me to work for my school teacher, Mrs. Eudora Fields, each Thursday afternoon after school. I, along with some other Cooper School kids, would meet in front of our house on the rocky hill and gather large rocks. We made \$.10 each Thursday. The teacher was using them to build a rock fence in front of her house in town. That rock fence still stands in front of the house across the street from the North Malvern School.

Across the county road from the house was a small creek that ran most all year. On each side of the creek at that point were many huge rocks with almost straight walls from the water. I spent many hours there in the area. Once I was walking barefoot on rocks in the shallow water and when my foot stepped on one rock it seemed to move. I checked and I was standing on the largest turtle I had ever seen. We parted company after quickly inspecting each other. It was about sixteen inches in diameter. I also set steel traps for animals in the rock holes but didn't have much luck. Hides brought good money.

When walking home from school, using the rail road tracks because of muddy roads, I noticed on the high banks beside the tracks that telephone wires were near the ground in some places. Later I came back with a pair of headphones and a metal clothes hanger. I straightened the hanger and broke it into two pieces by bending it back and forth. I pushed the short piece into the ground, made a small crook in one end of the long piece and hung it over a telephone wire (these wires were not insulated). I connected my headphone wires between the two pieces of clothes hanger and I could hear people talking! Was that one of the first phone taps? Most people with good clothes lines had them that were made of old telephone wire which was often discarded.

When in Malvern Junior High School dad gave me \$.10 a week allowance, I would skip lunch sometimes so I could have another \$.10 in my pocket. I never knew I was poor until I started to the city school.

Mom washed our clothes each Monday at the spring across the road. I had to gather "wash wood" on Saturday to use to heat the water in the iron wash pot. The water was carried from the spring in buckets. Lye soap was used. The clothes were put in a metal wash tub and mom, by hand, scrubbed them on a wash board. The next step was to hand wring the water out of them then rinse in a tub of fresh water from the spring. They were wrung out again and hung on the clothesline. This work was done regardless of weather. Many times I have seen the clothes freeze on the clothes line as soon as they were hung there. Several times I have seen mom's hands crack open and bleed due to washing clothes. Some clothes would be dry that evening, the rest the next day.

Dad would not let me have any new nails to build things with so I would use a large magnet from a Model T Ford magneto, tie a string to it and pull it through the ashes around the wash pot. This is the way I retrieved nails that had been in old boards we had burned around the pot. I could then build birdhouses, etc.

When mom was cooking she would let me scrape the cake icing pan and eat the leftover icing. It was just like candy! Also after cooking brown flour gravy in the iron skillet she would let me eat the thin pieces of dried gravy from the skillet. Oh the memories of that kitchen!

The safe where leftover food was placed was protected from ants by placing an upside down jar lid filled with coal oil under each leg. Also coal oil and sugar was our cold medicine. During meals the family children sat on homemade benches around a homemade table covered with oilcloth.

In the summer I could hear the road grader coming while it was still a half mile away. I looked forward to this because it felt good to walk barefoot on the newly graded cool red clay. Sometimes the grader was left overnight nearby and I had a good time climbing all over it and playing like I was the driver.

Dad gave me haircuts until I was grown. He also cut hair for some of the neighbors. He used hand operated clippers and scissors with a barber comb. He said at one time he wanted to be a barber.

We had an old pump organ and I learned to play a few songs on it. After I married my folks offered it to me but I said no, I think it was given to a neighbor and they tore it up. I would love to have it now.

Dad sometimes lovingly called mom "the ole fat ma". She acted as though she didn't like it but I believe she did. They got along very good together for all they went through and the many years they lived together. There was too much to do and they were too busy to do much "fussing".

During World War II dad cut pine trees from his land and built the house on the rocky hill. The local sawmill ripped the logs, a portion of the lumber was given to the sawmill owner as payment for the work. I remember that during the first winter the snow would blow into my bedroom because there was no inside wall and the outside wall consisted of wide vertical boards with wood strips over the cracks. The cracks were very wide because the boards, as was all of the lumber in the house, were put up green and then dried out. The floor was the same way but later the wide boards were removed and made into tongue and groove boards and then nailed in place (the original floor was not nailed). After WWII when we got electricity dad let me wire the house and it stood with that wiring until it was torn down many years later.

Dad raised chickens and the hawks would get some of them. We killed some hawks by shooting them. Dad would cut the top out of gum trees around the barn and set steel traps on the very top surface of the tree, he caught several hawks this way. He heated the chicken house with coal oil heaters.

Dad's chickens were not laying as many eggs as they had been. While trying to determine why, he caught me shocking them. I was using a Model T Ford ignition coil and old dry cell batteries I had picked up at the rail road tracks. I had one high voltage wire tied to a nail pushed into the ground and the other high voltage wire running out and into a half tire which was used as a watering trough for the chickens. At one time he raised white rabbits. He would kill and dress them then sell them to the grocery stores in Malvern. He also sold vegetables which he had raised. He would buy bananas, still on the stalk, that were over ripe. This made them affordable; otherwise we would never have any. I was grown before I found out what normal ripe bananas tasted like. I still like over ripe bananas!

Dad taught me to hunt squirrels and rabbits for the meat to eat. We used mostly a .22 rifle so the shot would not tear up the meat. He taught me to shoot them in the spine. He didn't want the head shot up because he liked to eat the brains. When I went hunting alone he would count the bullets I carried and when I returned counted the squirrels and remaining bullets. I became a very good marksman. In season we would have cantaloupe with brown flour gravy on it for breakfast, it was good. Sometimes mom would make brown meal gravy, it was my favorite. She always had a big breakfast of biscuits, meat, jellies, preserves, eggs, milk, butter, and gravy.

Every winter mom would make snow cream when we had the first snowfall large enough to accumulate. She made it with sugar, eggs and milk. This we looked forward to because it was about the only ice cream we ever had at home.

Hog killing day was always a big day on the farm. It had to be cold to protect the meat and you couldn't put on enough clothes to keep the steam from soaking through the clothes. It was cold! The hogs were always "topped off" by feeding them corn for about six weeks before killing time, this made the meat taste better and they were fatter. We were up early building a fire around the wash pot to heat the water for the barrel in which we dipped the hogs to remove the hair. Dad made sure the temperature was just right otherwise the hair would just set and then it had to be shaved off rather than pulled off. He taught me how to get the hog in position then, using the .22 rifle, shoot it just above the eye then quickly cut its throat to bleed it so the meat would be better. The hogs, we always killed three or four, were gutted and all the fat was removed and saved for making soap. Then it was put on a wood block and cut up with a chopping axe. We always had fresh pork chops and liver for a day or two. The main pieces of meat were put in the smoke house and hung for smoking and/or put in the salt box. I kept the smoke house full of smoke from hickory and oak wood for about ten days. This made for real good tasting meat. The scrap meat was ground into sausage, pepper was added and the next day mom canned it in glass fruit jars along with poured in fat. (She used a pressure cooker for this and for canning vegetables.) We usually had a small amount of meat hanging in the smoke house from last year's supply. Mom always made lye soap using lye and rendered fat from the hogs at hog killing time. (The lye was sometimes made from hardwood ashes.) It was poured onto a flat surface to the correct thickness then, after allowing it to cool somewhat, it was cut into bar size.

Dad built mom an icebox from tongue and groove lumber with inside and outside walls and filled the void with sawdust for insulation; it worked good. In the summer we would buy ice from our iceman, Mr. "Pop" Taylor (no kin). We would turn the ice card in the front window of the house to the amount we wanted that day 25, 50, 75, or 100 pounds. This was used until we got electricity on the hill then we all pitched in and bought a refrigerator on credit. Mom was very proud of that refrigerator.

During WWII dad bought a striped down Model A Ford and an old Model A Ford car body that was in a barn and put the two together; this became our family car.



Once when dad was riding his mule to the field to plow, the mule bucked him off and he landed in the spring branch. I never saw him on a mule after that day. Most people didn't trust mules, they preferred horses.

We always stored our harvested Irish and sweet potatoes under the back porch and in the winter covered them so they wouldn't freeze. Usually there were potatoes there when we harvested again.

We raised apples and stored them in a barrel in the house in a dark place. Each apple was wrapped in paper. This kept them from rotting. Mom would cut up some of our apples and peaches into small pieces, place them on a white bed sheet on the metal roof to dry them. Later they would be used to make fried pies. Mom always had pies, cakes and sometimes cookies available to eat.

The last whipping I received from dad was at age twelve. He called for me and I answered him with "huh" instead of "sir". After visiting the far side of the smoke house I always remembered to answer him with "sir".

Dad always tithed to the church and to the pastor with his money and vegetables. I believe he always did what he thought was right according to the Bible. I was grown before I understood why he gave our pastor the first fruits of the garden when he could have sold it for more money and given the same thing to the pastor later.

Our house was on a rocky hill. Dad always "saved" the car battery by letting the car roll down the hill to start it. This is the way I was taught and I did it this way for all the years I lived at home. Of course sometimes the car would not have started on its own anyway. When we went to Malvern we would park on the hill facing the train depot, when we were ready to go home we let the car roll down the hill to start it.

In those days all cars used a six volt battery. When one of the three cells would go bad I would build a fire in the front yard and set the battery beside it to warm up the tar which was between the cells. I would pour the acid into a glass jar then use a hacksaw to cut the lead connecting bars and lift the cell out of the case. I would replace it with a known good cell observing polarity and with the lead bars the same length. I would scrape the bar ends to make them shiny then slip a can lid under the cut and bend the ears upward. I always kept spare lead for fishing sinkers, etc and I would take some and put it in a can and melt it on the cook stove. I would use a pair of pliers to carry the can of melted lead to the battery and pour it across the cut bars, the can lid would hold it until it set up. This completed the electrical circuit and made the battery useful after I put the acid back in it. I then poured hot coal tar around the cell to seal it.

On the rocky hill no flowers would grow except mom's beautiful red lily flags at the back porch steps. She always poured her dish water there and we poured our wash pan water there. The plants produced many beautiful blooms. The hill was covered with cactus. They were pretty while in bloom but rough on bare feet! Mom always fussed about living on the rocky hill. After the interstate highway split the farm dad built a house on the back side of the land and then mom had a yard without rocks.

Dad wanted to clear some brushy land for "new ground" pasture. He bought some goats and put them in there. They did a good job. They ate the foliage as high as they could reach by standing on their hind legs. The goats multiplied like rabbits and we had to learn to eat goat meat!

During garden harvest time mom spent many hard, hot days canning the vegetables. She used a pressure cooker and glass jars. Most everything we ate was from dad's garden and fields. We had to buy flour, salt, etc but enough vegetables were sold to pay for these things.

Mom quilted quite often, the quilting frame was hung from the ceiling and rolled up to the ceiling after each quilting session. Sometimes the neighbors had a "quilting" in order to help one another with that chore. She patched and ironed our clothes. The iron was heated on top of the wood cook stove or the wood heater in the living room. She also did a lot of sewing on the old foot treadle powered sewing machine.

After we got electricity (about 1946) and were able to buy some electrical appliances mom really appreciated them. Now she was able to iron the clothes without building a fire to heat the smoothing iron, use an electric fan, not have to worry with coal oil lamps, etc. We even put a converter in the battery radio so we could run it on electricity! About this time I had a telephone installed. It had no dial, you just picked up the handset and the operator would ask "number please". You could also ask the operator for the correct time. It was like magic!

My cousin John Taylor (son of Hilman Taylor) brought some shotguns home from WWII and he gave dad one. As I recall it was captured from the Germans but it was made in France. It had no safety. It was a light weight single shot sixteen gage gun. Dad was afraid to shoot it so some months later while he was at work I took it out in the front yard and fired it. It was summer and I had on my straw hat, it knocked my hat off and nearly knocked me down. Although it was unsafe I used it many times while hunting by myself.

When goats or cows would try to get out of the pasture dad would put a yoke on them. The yoke was a small "y" shaped piece of oak tree branch which was put around the neck with a piece of rope across the top. Sometimes a bell was put around the neck of the lead cow and goat so we could know where they were. I still have a cast bronze bell that I listened to for many years on that farm.

Dad bought me an OIC pig when I was in junior high school as an FFA (Future Farmers of America) project. He loaned me the feed for her. I showed her at the Hot Spring County fair and won a blue ribbon then carried her to Little Rock where she won State Champion Guilt. Later she gave birth to fourteen babies of which three were dead. I sold the pigs and then sold the grown hog to dad so I could pay him back for the pig and feed. I broke even. He let the hog run loose, this was legal then. He later found it poisoned, he lost money on the deal.

Dad let me plant and raise purple hull peas in order to make a little money. It was a little money. As our shoe soles wore down dad would buy soles and glue them on the old shoes. Most years we would get a new pair of shoes.

On the farm we always had coal oil (not kerosene) and it was used to free rusty bolts, burn in the lamps at night, put in a bottle with green pine straw and was slung onto the crosscut saw when we were sawing green pine trees so the saw would not stick. Also if we got cut while cutting wood then we poured it in the wound to clean it. If we kids coughed then a few drops onto a spoon of sugar was given as a cough remedy. Dad used it to heat the chicken house where he was growing baby chicks. Dad bought it in a fifty gallon drum and sometimes I used it to "extend" the gasoline in my car. It ran ok but

was hard to start when cold. I even used it in place of antifreeze but it ate up the water hoses. We sometimes used it to help start a fire in the living room heater.

Nothing was wasted on the farm. Used motor oil was put on rubbing sacks so the hogs could keep the lice off of them. It was also put on the dogs to get rid of the mange. Dad always kept dogs for hunting, our dog's name was Ole Scooter.

Dad tried to help me put out a fire I started in a hollow tree when I tried to smoke out a possum. It scared both of us because we couldn't put it out. The fire finally burned itself out after a few days. We would pick peanuts off the vines in the corn crib in the winter time when there was no outside work in progress. Sometimes I would get scared because dad usually kept a snake in the crib to help control the rat population. Sometimes we would have a rat killing which consisted of having guns ready then moving things around in the corn crib until the rats started running outside then we would shoot them. Once I used dad's straight razor to whittle a piece of wood and I broke plugs out of it, boy did he get onto me. I still have that razor. He let me start carrying a pocket knife as did all boys and men then.

He always would wind the old pendulum clock each night. Sometimes he would hear the correct time while listening to the radio and he would set his clock. I listened to this clock tick-tock every day of my life at home. The clock has now been passed on to my son Terry.

Dad always kept books on his various projects to see if he was making any money. He kept good books and knew where every penny was spent. I suppose anyone who lived through the 1930s depression learned to handle money or live without any!

He sometimes used a horse drawn planter to plant corn, peas and beans. It sometimes was more trouble than it was worth. It was hard to keep it adjusted to drop the seed the correct distance apart. Most of the time everything was planted by hand.

After harvesting the corn we would cut down the corn stalks and stand them up in the field tee-pee style. After they dried we would haul the fodder to the barn and use it for cow feed in the winter time. Sometimes neighbor boys and I would go rabbit hunting at night using a carbide light on a special cap. Carbide looked like small rocks but when you dropped water on it a gas was formed and this was burned to give off light. The light was dim and the rabbit would look at it and you could see the reflection in his eye then we could shoot it. If you saw two eyes you didn't shoot because it was some animal other than a rabbit.

Sometimes dad and I would camp out at night and use set poles to fish for catfish in the old swamp area near the river. Sometime a neighbor would go with us. Our bait was pieces of rabbit which we had killed the day before.

In the winter we slept on a feather mattress and on a feather pillow and sunk down so far that the covers on us were level. It was a task just to turn over! Mom preheated a smoothing iron, wrapped it in old cloth and put it at our feet to keep them warm. All was OK until it came time to get up the next morning in a room that was freezing cold.

Dad and mom would always feed the bums and hobos that came up the road from the rail road tracks, we were about a half mile away and ours was the first house on the south side. Dad always let the men split wood so they would feel OK about accepting food, they were always nice acting. Dad said we never

knew who we were feeding. It could be one of God's people. Needless to say I always stayed back and watched them from afar to see if indeed one was an angel.

On Saturday we would carry water from the spring, let it set in a wash tub in the sun to warm then continue heating it on the stove in the kitchen. There we would have our bath, one after another, all in the same water. In winter dad would warm his feet on the chrome plated rails of the wood heater in the living room. Mostly the kitchen was the warm place in the house because mom was always cooking there.

Dad and my sisters Pauline, Wilma and Dorothy would sing as a group in church. I sometimes played my guitar along with them but was never good at it. I have seen dad take a regular guitar, retune it, hold it in his lap and using the metal handle of a table knife play it like a steel guitar and it sounded good.

We never missed going to church regardless of the weather, the roads were red clay and very muddy during rains. The hills on the way to church were not too bad but coming home the people would always stop their cars at the foot of the hills and help push one another over. Mom always dressed us as nice as she could for church. Of course all were muddy when we got home.

Several times I was a pallbearer at funerals in the local Cooper Church because the men were not available due to having to work. I helped dig graves at the Cooper Cemetery and also put dirt back on the casket. I will always remember the sound of gravel hitting a wooden box that held the body of a person I had known all of my young life.

Mom helped me plant several rows of popcorn. We would pop it in a wire basket popper over an open flame. It was white rat-tooth and real small, it popped small also.

Dad allowed no work to be done on the farm on Sunday but he always liked to walk through the fields to see how things were doing and decide what work was most needed. He would not allow me to play ball, he said it was a day of rest. Cards nor dice were allowed in the house, he said to shun the appearance of evil. While home I was never allowed to see a movie, go to a dance or go to a party.

Most of the time we had chicken, fried or with dressing, on Sunday. Of course it had to be killed and dressed on Saturday. I was not too good at catching a chicken with a wire hook and then either chopping the head off or wringing it off. I preferred using the .22 rifle and shooting it in the head. (I told you I was a good shot!)

Mom, dad, and my youngest sister went with me in my 1934 Ford to Little Rock Arkansas when I decided to join the army. Back then if you passed the physical you left right then. I failed the physical and returned home with them.

My first car, and I use the term loosely, was a 1930 Chevrolet "strip down". The body was completely removed and a wooden bench was added to sit on while driving. Needless to say this was a dry, warm weather day car. The first real complete vehicle I owned was a 1931 Chevrolet truck I bought from my brother-in-law Roy Huckelby. He had done a lot of work on it while using the GI Bill of Rights after WWII. Sometimes it would start and sometimes it would not and would have to be pushed off or let roll down a hill. Mom found a root beer bottle in my car one time and thought I had started drinking but I explained what it was. (Remember I was to shun the appearance of evil!)

We kept our fresh milk in a glass gallon jug in the spring down on the side of the hill in front of the house. It had a string tied on it with which to retrieve it. One summer I let it bump a rock and burst it in the spring. Boy was that a job to dip all of the water out and find all the pieces of glass. The water was flowing and was cold, I thought I would freeze.

Dad always tried to keep fruit trees and honeybees but seemed to have trouble with both. His tree grafts wouldn't take and his bees would die.

Once while dad was asleep in his chair and was snoring with his mouth open I put some black pepper on his tongue then tickled him, I never tried that again.

Dad kept a cat, and sometimes a snake, at the barn to try to keep down the rat population. I guess every farmer hated rats. They ate the stored corn, peas, beans, etc.

We were allowed to let our hogs and cows run free in the community and sometimes one would get killed by a train on the railroad tracks. They would not tell us but if one was missing dad would walk the tracks looking for a new grave. Sometimes the cow would be hit and go off to die in the woods, dad would find it by watching for buzzards circling in the sky. If it could be proven that it was our cow then the railroad company would pay us what they considered a fair price.

Dad raised white faced cattle and once had seven white faced calves at the same time. He was proud of them and wanted his picture taken with them which we did.

During WWII everything was rationed and times were hard but living on the farm we made it better than the city folk. We had plenty to eat but it was hard to get by with the small amount of gasoline available with the ration book stamps. Also no tires were available for the car.

Dad allowed me to use the Model A to haul water from the spring to the house so mom could stay at the house to do the family clothes washing. I would put a 55 gallon metal drum on the front bumper and tie a rope around it to the lights support bar to hold it in place. I would fill it at the spring with a bucket then cover it with a tow sack so not much would be spilled and then drive to the house. There I would unload it with a bucket into the wash pot and the rinse tub.

Dad always took good care of his guns and tools by drying, cleaning and oiling them. He taught me well.

Mom would sweep our rocky front yard with a brush broom. In the yard we had cactus, stinging scorpions, snakes, etc. Rocks were as high as three feet tall. This made it rough to go bare footed in the summer but it sure didn't stop me. I had my share of "stone bruises".

Mom taught us children to brush our teeth with a sassafras toothbrush (made from a small limb cut from a sassafras bush) and table salt.

All of my years at home we never had a bathroom therefore the outdoor toilet was used all year, hot or cold weather. That made for some fast trips to the outhouse! The Sears Roebuck catalog always ended up there along with some corncobs. Boy was it cold there in the wintertime. In the winter it didn't take as long to do what you had to do as it did in the summer time!

As a child I was always sickly and mom took care of me. Once I was playing with some boys in the pine thicket behind the house and I broke both bones in my left arm near the wrist. I remember dad driving me to the doctor as I sat in the back seat of the Model A holding my broken arm with my right hand, it was at nearly a right angle. After the doc set it with dad's help, dad did not have any money to pay him and had to pay him later.

After I left home and television became available I wanted to get one for mom and dad. Dad didn't believe people should watch television, but mom wanted to see it therefore I bought them a TV set but it was years later before dad would let me put up an antenna on his house so they could get good reception (I told him he needed to watch the news).

Dad loved to read the Bible and later when he couldn't see very good I bought him the Bible on tape and a tape player. He wore out the tapes and I bought him another set. The family never missed church, rain or shine, sleet or snow. I remember going to church in a brush arbor there near the Cooper school. Later an old house (Otts) nearby was used for a meeting place. This was the beginning of the Cooper church. Dad and I helped build it.

In 1950 dad and mom would always bring vegetables to me after I left home, they wanted to be sure I had enough to eat. They continued to do this after I married Betty Sue Tillery (daughter of Walter and Mamie Tillery).

A few times dad would loan me money, we would go to the old dug well house on the side of the hill. He would remove a board and retrieve a glass fruit jar and count out the needed dollars. He didn't charge me any interest but I repaid every cent. He kept good books.

Dad and mom gave each of the four children a parcel of land. When I married they helped me build our little house on my land so we could stop paying rent. I wired it for electricity. That little house built of seasoned oak lumber still stands after nearly fifty years!

Dad let me use his 1934 Chevrolet only once, he was always afraid something would happen to it. The 1934 Chevrolet was a Master. This meant it had a "master front end". This consisted of a housing, one for each side, that contained a large spring with a hydraulic piston inside it. The housing was full of fluid. This made for a very smooth ride. He bought it from a neighbor that worked at the textile mill with him.

The vehicles dad owned were a Ford Model T, Ford Model A, 1934 Chevrolet, 1939 Willys truck, 1949 Chevrolet truck, 1956 Chevrolet car and 1964 Ford truck. All were old except the Ford truck. Dad bought a new 1964 Ford truck in 1965 from Moore Ford Co in Little Rock, this was the only new vehicle he ever owned. Dad drove his 1964 Ford truck until he was 88 years old. My brother-in-law William E. Hobbs rebuilt the truck and still has it.

My first job away from home was at age fifteen working as a mechanic in Aubrey Stacy's Garage about a mile from home. I earned \$2.50 per day plus a noon meal prepared by his wife Beulah. We did minor and major repairs to all of the neighborhood autos. I learned very much at that old garage.

After leaving home mom and dad always had jobs saved up for me to do when I visited. I was always prepared to do what was needed.

For decades dad taught Sunday School, was a deacon, the Sunday School Superintendent and sometimes led singing at the church he helped start and build. The church was lighted with coal oil lamps hung on all of the walls and was heated with a wood heater. He was still a member there when he died.

Dad never smoked, chewed or drank. (It was years before he would drink a Coke.) It was never mentioned, he just lived by example. Every meal was preceded with saying a blessing and giving thanks to God. Sometimes at night he would read us the Bible and we would all kneel and pray together. Mom and dad have said several times that they wish they could have done more for us kids but I think they did real good under the circumstances. All of the children have continued to live a Christian life. This is written with the hope that all of their descendants will follow in their footsteps and live a Christian life and have a grand reunion in Heaven some day. Amen

#### POSTSCRIPT

Dad: George Evans Taylor Born Sept 27, 1901 in Dallas County Arkansas. Died Oct 30, 1993 in a Benton Arkansas hospital.

Mom: Gladys Aline (Ennis) Taylor Born Oct 21 1905 in Jacinto (Dallas County) Arkansas. Died May 23 1989 in Stillmeadow Nursing Home; Malvern, Arkansas.

My parents married July 3 1921 and were good, hardworking, Christian country folk. They lived their entire lives in Dallas (Princeton area) and Hot Spring (Malvern area) Counties in Arkansas.

They were active in Cooper Assembly of God Church and were true to God and their children. I never heard either swear or use off-color words. Some years before they died I wrote them a letter telling them how thankful I was that they reared me in a Christian home, when going through things after their deaths I found the letter.

They went beyond the call of duty to their children and grandchildren rearing me and my sisters during the great depression of the 1930s and then through World War II.

Both had received the education normally acquired by children of that time of the century. Dad was a farmer, factory worker (textile mill and veneer mill, Malvern), and construction worker (Alco at Bauxite and National Lead Co at Magnet Cove). Mom was a housewife (read that as a hard working farmer's wife) and for several years was a clerk at a Malvern dry goods store.

The last time I visited dad at home we slipped in on him, he didn't have the front door locked. I could see through the front window that he was reading his Bible with a magnifying glass as usual. I opened the door and walked in and spoke to him and he jumped (he was "jumpy") and was very glad to see me and my wife Betty. The last time I visited him in the Benton hospital he seemed to not realize we were there except that his eyes would follow us around the room. As we left I kissed him on the forehead and told him I loved him and as we started out the door I waved bye to him and he waved back with his little clinched fists!

The last time I saw mom in good spirits was in a Little Rock hospital in ICU, she was smiling while we visited with her. Later I learned she had a stroke as we were driving back to Alabama. The last time I saw her in the nursing home she was just there and that was it. Some weeks later when we went back to

visit her the room was empty. I asked the cleaning lady where mom was and she said I should ask at the desk. Mom had died that morning as we were driving to Malvern.

I believe dad and mom are now in heaven free of the pain and problems of this old world. May God keep memories of them in our hearts as long as we live. Both are buried in Cooper Cemetery with other family members.