Those Early Years, 1914 – 1935

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During 21, August, 1914, in a small stone and wood farmhouse located about 3 miles west of Oakhill, Kansas, I was pushed out into this world. I was the fourth son (a brother Paul, our parent's first child, had lived but a few months after his birth in 1901). In chronological order, my siblings were Paul, Marion, Frances, Florence, Harold, me and a younger sister, Aileen. My mother was Frances Angelina Huls. My father was Terah Edward Smiley. I do not remember my grandparents because the last one, Grandad Smiley, a member of the Grand Army of the Republic, died two years after I was born. I was later told the other three grandparents had also died that year or a year or two before that and because mother was away helping out, my Dad was home to care for the family when he died. He was chief cook, etc., even though all he knew how to prepare was tomato soup so they had it for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I was later told that Grandad Huls, who lived west of us, leased or rented a number of sections of prairie land which he used to fatten cattle he imported from the Texas area. He would then ship them to market when he felt that they were ready.

The Oakhill area is one of low rolling hills on the very eastern edge of the High Prairie. Buffalo grass covered most of the open areas not being cultivated for cereal crops. There were many scattered trees along the numerous creeks and in the low swales. This was purely a ranching, and in proper areas, a farming community.

My father was a plastering contractor at the time of my birth and was away from home so very much that I have little recollection of him during those early years. He must have learned the trade early in life because one of the earliest photos of him shows him plastering a house even before he married mother. He was certainly no farmer.

My mother, with the help of Marion, did nearly all the farming work. I recall one day toddling out to the field where Marion was plowing and as he unhooked the plow and headed the mules toward the barn, he put me up on one of the mules just behind the collar. This was my first "horse back" ride. I loved it and I have liked to ride ever since that day. Another early recollection is of Mother harnessing our trotter horse and hooking her up to the buggy for making a trip into town. We had no car in those days - in fact there were but two or three cars in the entire area. I wanted to go to town in the worst way and raised a real racket when she said no. She went back into the house for something or other so I

climed into the back boot of the single seat buggy and covered up. Abou half way to town when, not being able to keep quiet any longer I pinched her leg. She thought some hen had gotten into the buggy but when I pinched her again she stopped, got out and came around to the back. I got a good swat out of it and, as I have been told, had to walk back to the house. I am certain that this took place soon after my younger sister, Aileen, was born.

As I recall I was a rebellious brat in those days and I hated to have anyone tell me what to do. I was constantly picking on my older siblings since I did not dare do anything to the "baby". I was always fighting with Harold in one way or another. I once threw a old horse shoe up in the air and it came down on his head causing a good gash. He came back though and threw a tin can at me which cut open the end of my nose. I still have a slight scar after all these years.

Winter time was rather severe on the edge of the prairie. I was always cold and when there was snow on the ground I had wet feet, but I would not stay indoors. Many of the farm houses in that area would be essentially snow bound through the worst of the winter. I recall that early in the fall, the wagon bed would be taken off the wheel carriage and put on the sled runners. During the winters, few people paid attention to roads and would cut across fields with their sleds. Snow drifts would sometimes reach to the top of the hay barn and other out-buildings. When a warm spell did come, the snow would melt and the swales and creeks would flood. Stoves were always inadequate to heat the entire house so when it was very cold we would all gather around the old "pot belly" and we hated to leave it for a cold room and a colder bed upstairs. One winter about this time all our cows (range animals) went dry and we had to go to the neighbors for our needs. One day I rode over with my sister Chic to the nieghbors to get milk and when we were coming back the horse decided to play. We always rode bare-back because we did not have saddles. Well, we got dumped and so did the milk. Mother was a bit miffed at us. Earlier that fall, Harold was out in the corn field playing around. The corn had been cut and stood in shocks to dry. Harold had some matches and he managed to set one of the shocks on fire. Marion happened to see the smoke and ran over and pulled Harold from the shock otherwise he could have burned to death. Needless to say, he was sorely taken to task.

There was a number of Scots living in the area and my first introduction to church activities was to attend a Scottish Presbyterian bible school. One of our neighbors was the preacher for a Holy Roller church, but we never attended.

Sometime along about this time, two of my cousins returned from Germany after WWI was over and they were wearing their army uniforms when they visited us. I was rather taken with the wrap-around leggings my [redacted] Frank was wearing. I must have told him so because to my suprise, he gave me a pair since he had an extra set. They were much too large for my skinny little legs but I simply wrapped them around several times and was always trying to keep them where the belonged. They did help keep my legs warm though.

We had a dog as did every farm in that area. Ours was named Rover as I recall. I used to take him and go look for snakes just to have something to do. We would occasionally find a friendly bull snake that pleased us because they kill all rodents that might be eating our corn, etc but once in a great while we thought we heard the buzz of a rattler then we would run like the very devil back to the house.

We had an underground cellar near the house which served several purposes. As it was always cool, it was where we stored potatoes and other vegetables as well as shelves of bottled vegetables and fruit. Whenever the vegetables or fruit was ready for peservation we canned or bottled it. How I hated those times when I had to help shell peas and prepare other fruits and vegetables for canning. I had to scrub my hands until they were actually clean and white. I hated that. We always entered the cellar with caution because often snakes would worm their way in to lie on the cool stone steps leading down to the room. The cellar had a very heavy wood door which I had a hard time propping open when I went in. The cellar also served as a cyclone (or tornado) refuge. I recall several times watching very black, low clouds forming over the prairie and when we saw them we knew a "twister" could be forming so we would run to the cellar and wait it out. It was usually a false alarm but we did not take chances since my Uncle Hugh (mother's brother), who lived about eight or so miles east of us, had the roof of his house taken off in one of the storms, plus lots of other damage done to the house by one.

Late summer always brought another worry in the form of "prairie fires" especially if the grass was farily thick and dry after good summer rains. Those fires could, if the wind was right, out-distance a horse. Which reminds me that, as previously stated, we had a good Hamilton (?) trotter horse (I can't remember her name) for the buggy, and two small black mules (named Jack and Pete) for the farm work. They were our pride and joy.

We had a small pond near the Oakhill house which gave us a place to "swim" in the summer and "skate" in the winter. Once or twice a year a band of roving gypsies would pass

through the area trading horses and selling goods that they had made. They would camp near the pond because of the water. They were supposed to be wild, bad people and we were warned to never go near their camp, especially we were not to go alone. They were supposed to steal children and sell them in the next county for slaves. But I knew they wouldn't do that so I would sneak away from the house and go down to their camp to listen to them sing and watch them dance. I thought that they were wonderful people and I always looked for their coming.

When I was about four years of age, I was so bored with home life that I started following the older sibs as they went the several miles to the one-room school house. I stayed far enough behind that they didn't know I was there until they were at school and by then it was too late to take me back. It was a small school of ten or so pupils. All eight grades were taught by a highschool graduate. The teacher let me stay as long as I was quiet and behaved. I followed the reading so well that I was soon keeping up with the lower grade students by the end of the year. I still think that mother was glad to see me out of the house. The next fall (I had just turned five years) I became a full fledged first grader. I was a small runt for my age and I was always getting into trouble because of it. I wanted to do the same things the older and larger kids were doing. There was a small wood shed near the school building and the larger boys would climb up on the roof and jump off. Once I bawled so much they helped me up on the roof but I was too scared to jump - so they left me up there when the recess was over and they went back into the school house. I yelled so loud that finally the teacher came out and helped me get down. I did not get up there again. One outstanding item comes to mind - I was always breaking my slate and getting scolded for it - yes we used a slate and chalk in those days - paper and note pads did not come until later.

That part of Kansas had a large mixture of nationalities or ethnic groups from all parts of Europe. I don't remember the incident specifically but my sisters related that during this time they had a special Russian girl friend who lived on the way between our place and the school. They used to stop in with her sometimes after school and were always treated with bread covered with sour cream and sugar. I was not allowed to walk home alone so I guess I must have gone with them and have been offered the bread and sour cream. Anyway, that may be why even today I hate the smell of sour cream but I like the taste.

Sometime during these early school years we moved to a farm about two miles north of Longford, a small town about fifteen miles south of Oakhill. I do not remember much about

this farm as we were there only a short time. One or two events do stick in mind though. There was a creek nearby and Harold and I would occasionally go swimming in it. One day while swimming around we noticed several snakes in the water with us but we paid little attention to them. Later when we were back at the house, we told Marion about them, he immedialtely got the old shot-gun, put some shells in his pocket, and went over to the creek. The end result was that he killed several water moccasins, or cotton mouth snakes as we called them, a very poisonous type. We did not go swimming there again.

The farm bordered a railroad to the east which ran from Longford to Oakhill and beyond. I used to run to the tracks to watch the trains go by every time I heard a train coming, which was probably one or two a day. We always walked down the track to school in Longford. I also recall a "wagon" road running along the west side of the farm which ran on to Longford. I remember it well because going into town, it crossed three very high hills which I coasted down when there was snow. I now know that those hills are not over 75 to 100 feet high but they were the tallest I had ever seen at that time of my life.

Sometime during the middle of my second year in school at Longford, my parents bought a "commercial" hotel in Wakefield, a small town about 20 or so miles due east of Oakhill. The hotel seemed huge to this small country boy as it had about 30 roomsin a half-basement and three upper stories. The building seemed like seventh heaven to me because I could explore it from basement to third floor, and explore it I did. I found places where I could hide and get out of chores, and places where I could play without someone bothering me. My favorite place in those days was underneath the front porch where there was about a three foot "crawl-way" with lattice work hiding it from the street. It was always dry but hot in the summer and cold in the winter. The entire area must have been eight or ten feet wide and about thirty feet long. I had a small iron truck and several other toys so I made roads leading to several "oil wells."

When we first moved there, the town had no sewer (it was constructed in another three or four years) so every house had a septic tank for waste water. The hotel needed a large tank. There were several "wild cat" oil wells being drilled in andr around the town all looking for the "black gold" hence my interest in oil well drilling. Following in the footsteps of my brother, I recall making a toy rig in the back yard I drilled down through the top of the septic tank where I hit gas. Needless to say I had to close it off. We did have one bathroom with a tub on the second floor which served all the

guests as well as the family. We also had a two-hole privy in the back yard and about fifty feet from the hotel. The walk-way to he privy was lined with lilac bushes (but I still like lilacs).

The town of Wakefield was located on a fairly large hill sloping to the east where it stopped at the railroad tracks and the Republican River. During the dry part of the year the river was rather small but, its headwaters are in the mountains near Denver, Colorado and melting snows in the spring caused the water to rise and often rather severe floods covering the entire valley would come, a distance of three miles or so. After the water receded, we woud go out into the valley and catch large cat fish trapped in the small pools of standing water. In 1935 there was a flood that filled the river so full it washed out all bridges for approximately 150 miles. I spent that summer of 1935 working for the State Highway Department "driving" what was called a big 60 Cat (Catapillar tractor) pulling a 10 foot Adams Grader being operated by a friend of mine. We built roads and access ramps to the new bridges being built. What a monster that cat was, the four cylinders were each about 10 inches in diameter and their boom, boom, boom could be heard for miles. It would push over a tree twelve or so inches in diameter and not even slow down. The first mile of road we built was later rebuilt but we did get to be fairly good as each mile was completed. But I digress.

A branch of the Union Pacific railroad ran along the west bank of the river between it and the town, There was usually one short passenger and mail train every day plus several longer freight trains. One of our delights as a kid was to go down to the train depot and watch the trains come in. There was nearly always a "hobo" or two riding the rods of the freight trains and we would jeer at them. During harvest time the freights nearly always had to have two engines to pull the 50 to 60 heavily loaded grain cars being taken to Kansas City or some such romantic sounding place far to the east. Throughout the year though the freights usualy had a number of stock cars filled with noisy, smelly, bawling cattle heading for the stock yards in Kansas City and you could almost tell that the livestock didn't want to make the trip. Even Wakefield had a small stock pen where the ranchers and farmers would bring their stock in for shipping and every other day or so they would load out a car or two of cattle and horses for the eastern market. The stockmen always shoveled several inches of sand on the stock car floors before loading to protect the feet of the stock. This meant there was always a large sandpile near the loading area and we used to play in it until we were run off by the the loading boss. There was also a large grain elevator near the tracks which would send

a car or two of wheat, corn, or oats almost daily. But during harvest time there would be not just one but a number of cars going out. It was a busy little secondary railroad.

The only school house in Wakefield at that time was a three story red brick building that housed the primary grades as well as the highschool students. It was located on the very top of the hill to the west of the town with the town's water tower just across the road to the south. The first floor, partly below ground level, housed the so called laboratories, the home economics rooms, and the athletic facilities but the school had no gymnasium. The second floor had four large rooms for the primary grades, two grades to a room. The high school rooms, study hall, and class rooms took up all the top floor.

I entered the second grade room early in the fall period, and was I scared as there were at least fifteen to twenty kids in there almost all about my age. I had never seen so many kids in one group before. Although Wakefield was a small town there were many farms nearby and the kids from the farms swelled the school population. It took me several weeks to get used to the recess periods when all eight grades would be out on the playground. The lower four grades had one side of the school yard for their play and the upper four grades had another. This was supposed to reduce conflicts. All it did for me was to make me feel put down because I couldn't play with older children. I usually wound up teasing the children and getting into difficulties with the teachers.

There was little in the way of play-ground equipment for the younger students and none for the upper classes. The younger ones could enjoy two or three tall swings, a chinning bar, and one small merry-go-round on which I sometimes got sick from spinning round and round. In the fall or spring months, several kids would bring a football or a baseball and bat and these got lots of use. In the winter when snow was on the ground, snowball fights were sometimes quite severe.

I have a very poor memory of these lower grades except that I soon found that I could not memorize little ditties and sayings that the teachers were so often giving us to learn. I usually could get through the first line but no further. I never could understand the reason for my inability to memorize because I nearly always had a perfect spelling paper. I recall once in the fourth or fifth grade handing in a spelling paper after the teacher had pronounced the words she wanted us to spell. For the life of me I didn't know how to spell "spelling" so I wrote "spellering" on the paper - which I got from the title of the spelling book, was "SPELLER" I just added the "ing". This inability to memorize was to cause me all sorts of trouble later in high school and in college courses such as math and chemistry. It seems strange to me

that I always thought of school as a boring time even though I went year after year getting little certificates saying that I had not been tardy or absent even once during the year. The three grades of third, fourth, and fifth are almost a blank in my memory. I must have been just marking time and paying little attention to anything in school because nothing happened of any importance that I can remember.

Living in the hotel was quite an experience in those early years. There were two men and their wives living in the hotel. I will omit their names purposely. They were sort of small time oil well "promoters" but they never seemed to be doing anything. Several other people (all bachelors) lived in the hotel and among them I remember an Irishman named Clarence Bell. We called him Ding Ding. He owned a small farm across the river. When I was eight or nine I spent a lot of time with him on his farm planting sweet potatoes or harvesting Irish potatoes, or cutting and storing hay in the barn. Another "live-in" was an Englishman named Jim Caffereta who was about the fourth son of some English Lord. He lived in America on family money. He soon moved into a one room building but continued to have all his meals with us. He later became so feeble we took his meals down to him and I usually was picked for this task. How I hated to do this as he was usually in dire need of a bath, clean clothes and a big broom and shovel for his room. He hung on for a year or so before he died. I recall that because I helped him in his last days, I was given his pocket watch. It was a good one in a case. I later traded the watch for a wrist watch at the local jewelers. The wrist watch did not like the beating I gave it and it did not last long. Still another "live-in" was Jim Fadeley. He had a small farm nearby and went back and forth every day. All I remember about him was for his entire breakfast he asked to have one or two cups of coffee which he would completely fill with crumbled salt crackers. Another person I recall was a fellow by the name of Gus Wishwell but that is about all I remember of him except that he used to tell me that if I ate lots of puffed wheat I could float on water. There was nearly always a salesman or two who came in by train, stayed a day or two, then left by train.

One of the highlights of these younger days was the oyster suppers put on by the members of the Eastern Star and Masonic Lodges once a year or so. We always used a large copper boiler that mother used to boil sheets to get them white. The boiler was about two feet long, a foot wide, and about eighteen inches high. It took a lot of milk and oysters to fill it. When the oysters were cooked we ate the stew with lots of crackers and bread. I used to eat until I would get sick.

I did lots of exploring during those years. The hotel had a linen chute running from the third floor to the basement. My brother and I soon found that we could crawl into the chute on the third floor and by jamming our legs and backs against the sides, we could gradually lower ourselves down the chute clear to the basement where a large box was placed to catch the dirty linen. Fire escapes were not known in that hotel but each room had a rope firmly attached to the window and by putting the loop on the rope around one's chest, and by using the rope and pulleys, you could lower yourself to the ground. How I loved that. I generally had a bedroom to myself on the top floor and I often went to my room, down the outside using the rope and pulleys, then off to the river. We had an airedale dog who went everywhere we did. He seemed to know each time we went off because he was always right behind even though we had not called him. He knew that in the summer, we nearly always went swimming and he loved the water.

Both banks of the river supported a heavy growth of large cottonwood, sycamore, elm and other deciduous trees extending back several hundred or so feet from the actual river. It was really a riparian paradise with long grape vines hanging from the trees, thick underbrush, and a wide variety of squirrels, rabbits, and birds. The soil in the valley was rather sandy loam and quite rich. Being sandy made it easy to dig so my brother and I used to dig a hole eight or so feet in diameter and because there were always fallen branches from the trees, we could roof over these pits and make an underground house. We also could nearly always find an old stove-pipe so we made a fire over wich we could roast corn in season, or cook a rabbit we sometimes caught. One of our favorite tricks was to sneak up on someone's dugout when they had a fire going and drop a chunk of carbide down the stove pipe. It created quite a stir when it exploded. Carbide, in case you are wondering what it was, was the basis for lanterns on the buggies and cars before battery lights were common. The hills around Wakefield were of limestone rocks and, some of the thin layers of this stone would explode when heated just right. This river area served as a sort of a "public park" for us kids.

Those were good years though and they left their imprint on me. Most of the farm kids brought their lunch to school and sat around telling tall tales but I always ran home to eat, Once I was carrying some regular matches in my hip pocket for some reason or other and in running I slipped and fell on my rear. This set off the matches and I burned a big hole in my pants, plus a large burned patch on my rump. Another time I was running home and I had a sharp pencil in my shirt pocket with the point sticking out. I tripped and in falling I rammed the pencil into my face just below my right eye. The tip broke off and stayed in my flesh. It is still there today. I quit

carrying pencils that way.

It was about the fourth or fifth grade that one fall day several of us brats took our lunch down to a nearby creek where we built a little fire for the fun of it. Well, dry leaves nearby caught fire and the first thing we new we had a real fire going. We threw dirt and stamped like the very devil before we could get it out. For a bit I thought we were going to have a real fire on our hands. We never tried that again.

While the river served as a swimming hole in the summer, it also served as a skating rink during the winter when ice would form sometimes, completely sealing in the water. I recall several times skating as far down the river as Milford, a small town about ten miles down stream. To say I skated is perhaps misleading as I had very weak ankles and so I usually skated on my shoes rather than on the skates. One of our winter pastimes was to go watch the men as they stored ice in the butcher shop's "ice house". The ice house was a building dug rather deep in the ground and lined with thick stone walls up to a point four or five feet above ground. When the creeks would freeze during the winter to a depth of 12 to 15 inches, the butcher would hire a gang of men to go to that part of the creek chosen for its thickest and cleanest ice. Here they would saw the ice in blocks of about eighteen inches by thirty six inches. Blocks of ice this size would weigh several hundred pounds so to get them in the wagons for hauling to town, they would put down a long wooden chute extending from the water up to the height of the wagon bed. They had a long chain with a hook on one end, the other end was attached to the harness of a team of horses who pulled the ice up the bank and into the wagons. After hauling the ice into town to the ice house, the men used a block and tackle rig similar to the one used in the hay barns, to lower the blocks into the ice house. A thick layer of straw was used to insulate the ice as much as possible. Some of the ice would last for two or more years if need be. This was the source of ice we had for our "ice boxes" in the houses. When I was in highschool, I would sometimes cut school and work the ice harvest. There was an ice manufacturing plant in Clay Center, our county seat, about twenty miles northwest of Wakefield. The butcher owned a small truck which he would send to Clay Center to haul clean ice back for icing drinks and other uses needing pure ice water. This ice was expensive so we utilized this ice only when pure ice was called for.

During the summers of these early years, I sometimes talked my Mom into having me driven over to her brother's farm near Oakhill where I would spend a week or so. My cousin, the youngest member of his family of six, was about my age so we got along quite well. My aunt died when Harry was born and

Uncle Hugh never remarried. The oldest girl, Nellie, took over the house and ran the place. We roamed the country-side, went fishing in their pond which was stocked with what we called sun fish, and really did a bit of work around the farm. One of the chores we nearly always had thrust upon us was to "drag the roads" for several miles around that general area. My uncle had a "drag" as it was called which was simply two steel plates about eight feet long, ten inches high that were firmly welded to a steel frame about two feet apart. The "drag", pulled crosswise by a team of horses was supposed to smooth out the high spots in the road and fill in some of the ruts. Roads in those days were simply graded from the local ground and when it rained they often became quagmires especially in low spots. Wagons or cars coming along later would leave deep ruts and so the "drag" was supposed to help smooth out the rough spots. Once when my Dad was home, we were going to visit Mom's other brother, Spence, and his family in Lawrence, Kansas about 120 miles east of us. We had a new Ford Touring car which on the level ground could probably make 35 miles per hour. We drove to Manhattan where we got on the main highway going east and west across Kansas. It started to rain and soon the road became quite soft and muddy in spite of the layer of gravel that had been put on the road bed. The only paved streets in those days were in some of the larger cities. We finally arrived a few miles out of Topeka, Kansas about three hours later where the car really bogged down and could go no further. A farmer came along in a buggy, and piled all of us in except Dad who had to stay with the car. The man drove us to the train station in Topeka where we took a train back home. We never got to Lawrence but we kids thought it quite an adventure.

The hotel was steam heated in the winter-time. We had a coal burning furnace in the basement where the steam was generated and was "pressure" carried by numerous pipes to radiators in each room in the hotel. My brother Marion got up about 4:30 A.M. or so and restoaked the fire. Later Harold did this job. The fire was never allowed to go out because it took far too long to get it going again and to get the water heated. Sometimes though a certain amount of steam was trapped in the pipes overnight and it would condense into water. When the steam hit those traps in the morning, the pipes would growl and bang something fierce. I must have been about ten or so when I decided that I could relieve my brothers of that chore since I was usually up and around by that time of the morning. I rather liked the chore as it did take a bit of work to keep the steam pressure just right - too little pressure and the hotel never got heated - too high a pressure and every safety valve would go off with a nice screetch which was a bit disturbing. I must confess that I kept an old corncob pipe hidden in the furnace room and I used to fill it with coffee

and have a grand smoke early in the morning.

We had a large washing machine in the basement where mother did all the laundry. This machine was a perforated barrel which lay on its long axis in a big tub and was turned by an electric motor and pulley. There was an opening about a foot square in the center of the drum to put in the dirty clothes to be washed. One day mother was doing the laundry when we heard her scream and we rushed to the basement to find her draped over the machine. We had to disengage the pulley to rotate the tub back to where she could get her arm free. She was wearing a ring and it had caught on one of the perforations of the drum. It almost tore off her finger so she had a very sore hand for a long time. We soon got rid of that machine and bought a more standard type. The washer had a large wringer on one side of the tub and as often as she could catch me, Mom had me turning the hand cranked wringer - what a job.

One year Dad and Marion decided to take a contract to build a house for a farmer near town. I must have been nine or ten but large enough to help out so I spent a lot of time running errands and handing tools to them while they worked. It was good experience for me and I got a first hand knowledge of carpentry and so forth watching them work.

The Wakefield area was rich in bird life especially in the summer time. My two favorite birds were the robins and the house wrens. I made bird house after bird house for the wrens and once I actually had a pair of wrens occupy one but usually the houses just hung in the trees until they fell apart. Making the small houses gave me a knowledge of how to use a saw, and hammer, and I learned that the right size nail was important to keep the boards from splitting. The robins were what I called friendly birds, they paid little attention to people and loved to follow the lawn mower when one was cutting grass - they got lots of bugs that way without hunting. One summer I watched a pair of robins building a new nest high in a tree. Papa robin would bring in grass, twigs, and other materials . One morning though he brought a long string in his beak and the string got tangled in a tree branch. In trying to get it free, he got the string wraped around his neck and he hung himself. I couldn't reach him to get the string off so the poor thing just hung there for days.

One fall my older sisters decided to hold a Halloween party and they spent days getting everything ready for ir It was held in the large basement room where they set up booths for the fortune teller, the ghost, and so forth. My favorite part of the party was that they made dozens and dozens of good cake donuts fried in hot, deep fat which they slid over

broomsticks and you could have as many as you wanted to eat. That large basement room had a big double door leading to the alleyway along side of the hotel. You could, if you wanted to, drive a car into the basement. Later that night, Dad came driving in and was supposed to stop outside the doors. He claimed that his foot slipped and he hit the gas so the car came crashing in though the doors. It was a mess but we pushed the car back out and cleaned up the boards - and the party went on.

My first year in the seventh grade, as well as the second year in the same grade and my year in the eighth were probably the worst years of my scholastic life. I know without any doubt that I had two of the worst teachers possible. Oh yes, we had a single teacher (a woman, poor soul) for the seventh grade, and a sort of man for the eighth grade. The man really ran both grades. They were both despised by nearly all the students so we went completely out of our way to make everything difficult for them. We learned that by eating certain vegetables such as raw turnips, the class room would take on a most pecular odor. Five or six of this "gang" quickly learned how to make the neatest spit-ball tubes which we could easily hide - no one was safe from attack. The man would roam around the room during study periods with a ruler in his hand and, anyone caught doing anything, would get a rap across their hands. He would occasionally rap someone over the head with a book - I know because I was hit several times. At the end of my seventh year the two of them must have liked me well enough to keep me in that grade for another year. That is the only reason I have ever thought probable anyway. But I endured going through the same dull routine a second time never hesitating to let them know how I felt by continuing to be my obnoxious self.

My years from nine through twelve, were , as I recall, when I was at my (best) worst. I believe I was fairly typical. Nearly all boys of those I knew at that age were dirty in mind and body, coarse in language, mean in temperament, egotistical in their thinking, braggarts at heart, dare-develish in actions, and a big pain in the butt. I believe that I was an ideal example of such a person (animal). As I recall, I could probably have taken part in a "black face" play without having to put on any make-up or shoe blacking. (One year I got a bar of soap and a wash cloth for a Christmas present which I left on my desk as a reminder). I was tending furnace at that time and there was a lot of coal black around, and I was shining shoes in the barber shop on Saturdays (this was another job I inherited from Harold) which left my hands quite covered with shoe polish.

All in all, I was probably a real mess. During those

years I could never sit still, I was never tired, and I was always hungry even within an hour after a meal. I'll always remember the roast beef meals with lots of brown roast gravy and mashed potatoes, and the cans of sueet pudding with lots of lemon sauce to pour over the pudding. The pudding, was from an old English recipe. Mother cooked the pudding by placing the cans in boiling water. She used the big copper boiler for the task and it took a half day to prepare and properly cook the pudding.

There was no "play ground" equipment at school for the upper grades so during recess periods and lunch hour we played baseball and football. I recall that our greatest ambition was to hit a ball far enough to break one of the windows in the school building (no one ever did even though we came close sometimes.

During my freshman year in highschool I made up for the bad years in the seventh and eigth grades. It was the opposite from the last two grades in grammer school. There were a number of good teachers, and I was busy with football in the fall, basketball in the winter, and baseball and track in the spring. I was a true runt during my freshman year in football - I only weighed about 120 pounds fully suited. It was such a small school that we never had enough players for two full teams so every once in awhile I got to play - enough that I was awarded a football letter at the end of the season and glory be, my Mom bought me a school sweater and sewed on the letter for me. Later that winter, I let a girl talk me into letting her wear it for a few days. I had a devil of a time getting it back after several weeks. I did love sports, especially the contact type where I could bounce off the big guys and even occasionally set them on their big rears. I paid for it though. Early in the season I was hit so hard on my left thigh that it split open the muscles and I had a rigid left leg for about one month. I got to play the last two games only. I was the kicker for the team and did all the punting needed. The next fall in a game with our neighboring team, I went to punt and our right halfback backed up too far and I kicked him in the rear instead of the ball. I fairly well smashed my right ankle. The only doctoring it received was to be taped tight for several weeks but I hobbled around without the use of even a crutch. I wound up the freshman year also winning letters in basketball, baseball and track. Our basketball team had no gymnasium in which to play so the school rented an empty store building which was long and narrow - centainly nothing like a basketball court should be. We had fun though and once in a great while we actuallly won a game or two. I'll never forget my third year in track. The coach took several of us to a state meet at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. It rained nearly all the day

but the track meet went on. I was running the high hurdles and low and behold, I won the race for the simple reason that I was the only runner who was not disqualified for knocking down too many hurdles - the track was a muddy mess. I guess I won by default. I did enjoy the classes though, and the relative freedom of attendance; in fact I think I must have missed at least a full quarter of the classes that year. My grades must have held up though even with five full courses as I recall the principle asking me to just apply myself a bit more and I could easily be valedictorian (I think he told that to all the boys). I recall telling him that all I wanted were grades good enough to get me in college and no more. I was having too much fun. I knew even at that time that I wanted much more than just a high school education. I must have wanted out quite bad because I and two girls decided to finish high school in three years instead of the usual four, and we did.

I had several very good teachers in high school. My best courses were in history, music appreciation, english, civics, and art work. We had sort of a drama group and we put on several plays. I usually got the comic parts because I could never remember the lines and had to continuously ask for cues. I even sang several solos which went over big because I don't have a musical ear and can't and never could carry a tune.

The people of Wakefield were almost all of English origin. Nearby were many small towns of other European origins: French, Swedish, Russian, German, Polish, and so forth. Some of them were so pure in ethnic origin that they taught their schools in their native tongues. It wasn't until 1936 as I recall that the state of Kansas passed laws requiring that all teaching be conducted in English only. I used to like visiting their schools for sports and to learn some of their cultural ways that were so different from my own.

By the time I was ten or so years of age, I was good at driving a team of horses or mules so I worked summers and sometimes in the fall. I worked for various farmers around the town cutting, raking, and storing hay; discing and cultivating fields, and other odd jobs around their farms. By the time I was fifteen, I was working with a thrashing crew the same as any other hand. That was hard work. Combines had not yet come into existance so the fields of wheat, oats, rye, and other grains when ripe had to be cut with a binder. Binders had a sort of mowing machine in front and as the grain was cut four or five inches off the ground, it would fall back on a wide revolving belt which carried it into the binder. When a certain amount of grain reached the binding machine it was tied by heavy twine in a bundle about ten or twelve inches in diameter and dumped out on the ground. Later we would come

back and stand the bundles on end forming a shock of twelve or so bundles. This airing allowed the grain to mature properly and not get mouldy or rot. This job I hated with a passion as it was truly hot, back-breaking work but it was a necessary part of the harvest. The sun would glance off the grain stubble almost like a mirror so no matter what type of hat you wore, your face would get a nice sun-tan under the hat. One summer I worked for a farmer who had two full sections of wheat (640 acres to a section). I started in one corner of the field and as far as I could see, there was nothing but a stubble field thickly dotted with bundles. As evening came on I started to the house but turned and looked back at tha day's work. I hadn't made a dent in the field and was I discouraged. Several days later I was joined by six other workers and the job went much faster.

After the grain had thoroughly dried and hardened in the shocks, the threshing crew pulled into the field and set up for threshing. The threshing crew was generally made up of twelve to fifteen neighboring farmers each one contributing a team, a hay-rack, and a man to do the loading and unloading of the bundles. They would go from farm to farm thrashing each ones' grain. Usually one farmer in the group would own the tractor and the separating machine and he was the boss of the crew. The separater was powered by a tractor with a large pulley wheel on its side two feet or so in diameter, and connected to the thrashing machine by a belt thirty or so feet away. In the early days, tractors were steam driven and coal or wood fired but they were dangerous as sparks would sometimes come out the smoke stack and the operator had to be quick to douse with water any fire which started. My Grandfather Hulse owned and operated such a rig. Several of the old timers told me of one or two fires that had occurred. They said all they could do was unhitch their teams and run like hell because the fires spread almost as fast as if someone poured gasoline on the field. If the straw stacks were allowed to get too big while thrashing, sometimes later in the winter or spring, a mould would develop in them due to a lack of oxygen, and the stack would catch fire from spontaneous combustion and smoulder for days.

The first summer I was with a crew, I worked for a Swiss farmer who also owned the tractor and (separater) thrasher. His oldest boy ran the tractor and was the thrasher boss. He had a big Rumley tractor and a large 36-inch separator and it kept us hopping to keep it fed. I had a fairly large hay-rack and a team of mules to do the heavy work. The bundles had to be laid in with the grain ends toward the center of the rack to keep from sliding off. The hay-racks were about 15 feet long and about 8 feet wide and extended up about eight feet. They held a lot of bundles and it took time to load one out,

go back to the separator and pitch them all into the feeder. Then go back to the field for another load, and so on from early morning till dark. Then to the barn where the mules had to be groomed and fed. After that we were fed. I must say that no farmer ever skimped on the meals served the threshing crew. I don't believe I was ever more hungry than I was at that time. Breakfast lasted me until about ten o'clok, and lunch lasted until about four then I starved until the next meal. Sometimes the farmer would bring out a lot of bottled beer after dinner - it was always home-brew as this was in the days of prohibition. Threshing usually lasted several long hard weeks unless interrupted by rains when we had to lay off until the grain dried out. My first summer was a night-mare of sore muscles, aching back and sunburn in trying to keep up with season hardened veterans of the farming profession. I managed to break three or four pitchfork handles that summer. I tried to get too many bundles of wheat on one fork and to lift it up I laid into the handle too hard, snapping it in the middle. The boss later showed me how to do it right and I stopped breaking pitchforks.

In picking up the bundled grain, one had to be careful as snakes and rodents liked to hide in the cool shocks. I soon learned to put my trouser legs in the top of my boots to keep the mice from scampering up the inside of my pants which happened several times before I wised up. Usually the snakes were the harmless bull snakes but once in a while there would be a rattler. If the snake was too close to the mules (or horses) they often tended to bolt and cause damaage to the hay rack and even themselves. We kept a weary eye out for the rattlers. One day I was feeling rather mean so I killed a large bull snake and when I went in to unload, I slipped away and coiled the snake up on the seat of the tractor knowing that the Boss was really afraid of snakes. He finally climbed back into the tractor and went to sit down when he saw the snake, he jumped almost landing on the speeding belt. That scared the devil out of me and I quit trying to play such mean tricks.

Working with the threshing crew was good experience though and it helped me get another job later on. One of the farmers where we threshed grain, decided that since his hay barn was full, he would bale this crop of alfalfa and keep it for sale later in the season. So he hired me to gather up the baled alfalfa in the fields and haul them into his storage barn using his flat-bed Ford truck. To get the hay baled, they first had to mow the alfalfa using a two-horse drawn mower (very few farmers used tractors in those days). There is no smell like that of newly mown alfalfa. After the cut hay had laid in the sun a few days and properly cured, they used a winnowing rake to rake the hay into a long line of mounded

material. The hay baler then straddled the winnow and raked it up into the baler where after a proper amount of hay, approximately 90 pounds per bale, two strands of wire were tied around the long axis and the bale was then dumped on the ground usually about 20 to 30 feet apart. The bales had to be lifted off the ground and thrown on the bed of the truck; not an easy job since the get a full load you had to go up in the air nine or ten feet. I used a very sharp hook with a smooth stirrup handle. I soon learned that if I picked up one end of the bale, rested it against my stomack, then reached over with the hook and dug it in the other end, I could easily lift the bale and giving it a proper shove with my hands, send it high in the air making it fall exactly where I wanted it to go. I though that it was fun making the bales fall properly in a criss-cross fashion so they would not fall off on the way to the storage barn.

The following summer I spent in Joplin, Missouri. Dad had a contract to plaster a school house in that city so the entire family went down. We had moved out of the hotel at that time and were living in a group of rooms over a dry goods store. Both Harold and I had become quite good at plastering so Dad got us a job helping on the school house. I felt quite good about it as I was drawing a man's wages of $4 per day. All of us thoroughly enjoyed Joplin and the surrounding Ozark mountains. We drove down to Fayettville (spelling) once and I could not see how people wanted to live in such a hilly place. It was beautiful but you were always going up hill or down - never on the level. Since the entire family was there, the house we rented right across the street from the school building was a bit crowded and I slept on the ground over by the school building. One day the construction crew was putting on the stone coping along the top of the outside wall of the third story. They were using a large tripod to hoist the blocks into position as they weighed several hundred pounds. That day someone goofed and the block slipped crushing a man trying to place it properly. I heard some one yell and I looked up to see the tripod, block and man dragged off the roof and fall to the ground about fifteen or so feet from where I was standing. This was my first eye-witness account of a fatal accident. Needless to say, I did not sleep on the school yard again.

I forget which summer it was but somewhere along about this time, not having a thing to do, I applied to the CMTC (Citizen's Military Training Camp) at Fort Levenworth, Kansas, for a two weeks training session. I was accepted and Marion drove me down. We were issued standard military clothing and as usual nothing fit properly. Eight of us "soldiers" lived in a big tent with a wooden floor. I believe that there were probably a thousand or so green kids from around the state

attending the camp. We had regular army officers and training personnel - and they put us through the paces. I even had a two day duty as KP where I washed the dining room floor, washed the tin dishes, and other sundry kitchen police duties. We each had a 30-30 Winchester rifle which we had to keep clean. We had target practice several times each week. I learned that a 30-30 had a duce of a wallop when fired improperly. I believe that I even hit the target once of twice while shooting. I enjoyed the experience though and to follow up, during my first summer after moving to Clay Center, two other friends who had also been at the CMTC camp, and I drove to Salina to sign in for the Marine Corps. They were full at that time and they asked us to come back the next month when they would have several openings. We went back to Clay Center and I got sort of a job so I never joined the vaunted corps.

The next summer, I was out of high school by this time, Dad was working on a school house in the town of Industry, a small town about 20 miles southwest of Wakefield. Harold and I were working with him on this job. We were about two-thirds through when another job came through and Dad left to go to it. He left us to finish up there. He had had a fellow helping him for several years and Dad left him to continue with us. The fellow got very mad and upset when he found he had to work for two teen aged kids so he up and quit. Harold and I had to finish the job by ourselves. Dad's new job in Topeka turned out to be a disaster for all. The depression hit hard and ready money was impossible to be found. The banks were closed tight and almost no money changed hands. No one received any money for the work already done and it left us with almost no cash on hand.

I finished highschool in May of 1931. This year was the worst of the depression in that part of the country and there was no type of job to be found. I recall that I borrowed a suit from Harold to wear for our graduation ceremony. We had a hard time digging up enough money to pay for the graduating picture and the invitations to the ceremony and the dinner which followed. The high school did not have any type of gymnasium or hall so the ceremony was held in the basement hall of the Congregational Church. For this occasion I asked a girl for one of the few dates I actually had all through school. I was afraid of being turned down so I pretended I thought girls were a real nuisance so I had only asked one or two out for a date. Besides Wakefield had no place to take a girl except a drugstore and I had no money to spend on a date. Of the two girls who had finished high school within three years. I asked one of them for a date and a class friend asked the other. The friend borrowed his father's Ford coupe and we rode down towards Junction City. We stopped in a school yard where we "played" on the swings and teeter boards for a long

time. We finally got back home about four or so in the morning.

Later that year for some reason I never knew, the folks decided to move to Clay Center, about 20 miles north, which was the county seat and had a population of about 5,000 or so. My younger sister Ailene was the one most effected as she was in her Junior year in High School.

This was probably the worst year of the depression in that part of the country. There were few jobs to be had and no one had spare cash. After Rooseveldt was elected president in 1932, he immediately closed all banks tight. You could not draw out money no matter what. And there went the last of our meager savings.

One thing I did like about Clay Center was that the Episcopal Church had a full-time minister. This was my religous period in life. I had started in this religous fervor before we left Wakefield. I don't remember exactly when I started going to church even though I had gone to Bible School in the Methodist Church for a period of time when I was younger. One of my class mates in high school was the youngest girl in her family. Her oldest brother was an Episcopal minister and her older sister was going to the Episcopal seminary. They were trying to get a full time minister for the small church in Wakefield but the congregation was too few in number so all they could do was to have a visiting minister about every two weeks. Anyway Mother went to church and I started going with her. For a short period of my life I was quite interested in the church and the ministry. After moving to Clay Center, I spent lots of time working in the YPSL (Young People's Service League - quite widespread through that part of the country). We had quite a group of young people and I sort of kept them together. Every summer the Episcopal Bishop in Topeka held a two week retreat for a limited number of YPSL members from over the entire state and I was invited to go. There were all sorts of activities even biblical studies. It was mostly though devoted to church activities and administration. I learned enough to know that the church was not for me as a career and my interest soon faded fast.

I applied to a number of colleges that year but all required more money for entrance than I could possibly gather. It would be three years before I could accumulate enough money to enter Kansas University at Lawrence. So I spent my "free" time (24 hours a day) trying to keep out of trouble. I would sometimes find short term jobs that lasted a day or some that lasted several months. After all this time, the sequence is quite confused so I can only say a few words about each even though the order is mixed. That first winter in Clay Center

was something I would like to forget. Once in awhile Jim and I, or Marion and I, would take the shot gun and go rabbit hunting. One really cold winter day, Jim and I came upon a dozen or so chickens huddled together under some bushes near the river. So we took some home and had a good fried chicken session. That house had a large pear tree in the yard, and the pears were truly wonderful. We found an old wooden barrel in the shed so we picked pears, wrapped each one individually in newspaper and carefully stored them in the barrel which we put in the cellar. The lasted all winter and very few of them spoiled and of those that did, the newspaper kept them from contaminating others.

The next fall, I believe it was, several of us "old grads" formed a football team. We played several games against teams from Fort Riley and Fort Leavenworth. They were rugged but we had fun even though our bruizes were great and our muscles no longer flexible.

Jobs over the next several years are sort of mixed up in my mind so I will simply say a few words about each not trying to keep them in order. I took up boxing as I heard that they were paying five dollars a bout in Topeka and Kansas City. I was to have my first bout that next spring but several weeks before I developed a horrible belly-ache. It went on and on and I drank gallons of soda water to help ease the pain. I walked and walked as it was the only way I could get any relief. It finally went away and I forgot about it. However about a month or two later Mother was down with a bad headache and I was sitting on her bed talking and when I went to get up, I couldn't. Then the pain hit like a big sledge hammer and I doubled up into a ball. I recall Marion sort of helping me to the car then the short drive to the hospital. I sort of recall the doctor leaning over me and saying that they would have to operate. I kept telling them not to start yet as I was still awake. I woke up the next morning with the entire family gathered around the bed muttering about my still being alive. I learned later that my appendix had burst earlier when I had the horrible belly-ache and that gangrene had fairly well eaten my insides. Apppendicitis was a bad thing in those days and many people died from it. Anyway for several days I knew very little as they kept me rather spaced out with morphine about every fifteen or so minutes. They poured gallons of warm water down me so the urnal bottle was always full. Someone in my graduating class in Wakefield got together with all the others and one morning I received a big graveside (hah) tub of sweet peas. That odor along with the horrible odor of gangrene was enough to keep everyone from my room but I had to stay in it. It took me years to be able to smell sweet peas without getting a sick feeling. I finally wound up with three big tubes in my lower right abdomen and when the nurses changed dressings I would pull out the tubes and see my insides

working. So being my obstinate self, I fooled everyone and lived through it. After several weeks in the hospital the doctor told me to go home and keep quiet. I'll never forget the withdrawal from all the morphine. I knew I was laying on the bed but I would get dizzy and start falling, falling, and falling end over end but never landing anywhere. After the tubes fell out, I still had holes in my belly so I had to change dressing often. The doctor had given me a wide belly corset to wear which kept the dressing in place and helped my stomach muscles stiffen.

I had one job that lasted for several months in serving as a waiter and short order cook in an all-night resturant; Quick's Cafe if I remember rightly. I started work at seven in the evening and quit at seven in the morning - all for the sum of two dollars a week plus my meals. A regular cook stayed until midnight then I was alone until seven in the morning. There always seemed to be someone in during the night time from the railroad, Swift packing plant, or one of the other business houses. I remember winning a bet of a dollar one night with a big, heavy set fellow. I bet him I could lift him off the floor without touching him with my hands. All I had to do was have him place his elbows against my chest and put his hands behind my neck and tense his arm muscles. I bent my back and low and behold his feet came off the floor. He was a bit dumbfounded but he paid up.

I had one job which I did not like much with Swift and Company in their poultry plant in Clay Center. Each Spring the plant would gear up for the packing season when all the young frying chickens would be available for market. They would get in many thousands of them, feed them for a week or two then run them through the processing area where they were killed, plucked, cleaned and frozen. I worked in the feeding area (my brother Harold worked in the freezer area where he said he was always frozen) for several months; ye Gods what a smelly, miserable job it was to feed the things in their cages then clean the cages twice a day. We had a large freight elevator for movingp heavy equipment from one floor to another. It has a pull-down cage door which did not go to the floor. One day one of the workmen got on the elevstor and not watching his feet, he hit the up button and when the cage reached the next floor, it cut off his shoe at the toes with his toes still in the shoe.

The railroad tracks ran alongside the packing plant and everytime a train went by, we were treated to a long drawn-out rumble. One day during a rumble there was an extremely loud clanging and grinding so I ran to the window to see what was going on. A tank-car had derailed and several other tank-cars had also left the tracks and piled up. The horrible part was that some black man had been riding the cars and had been

caught between two of the tanks. He was crushed flat and probably never knew what happened. It took the railroad people some time to bring in heavy cranes and lift the cars apart before they could get the fellow clear.

For some reason or other I was called into the office one day and asked if I would take a buying route to various creameries in towns west of Clay Center. Everything was set up between the creameries and the main office so it made my job much easier. Every Saturday morning I would leave with a flat-bed truck and several dozen chicken crates, several dozen large egg crates, and cream cans tied on the bed. I would stop at the creamery, make whatever arrangement were necessary for returning late that night to pick up what butter, eggs, cream, and chickens the creamery would take in on that Saturday. I would go to 12 or 15 towns doing the same until late in the evening when I would retrace the route, pick up the goods left by the creamery man, write out and leave a check for the amount listed on the sales slip he prepared. This could sometimes run into hundreds of dollars or even more. The chickens were always young pullets weighing not over a pound or a pound and a quarter. They had to be loaded just right or many would suffocate during the ride back to Clay. The eggs had to be carefully handled even in their packing crates. All in all it was quite a load. I would get back to Clay early Sunday morning, unload the truck and stagger home to sleep until late in the day. During the week I would take the truck to nearby towns to pick up goods purchased directly by the head office. One day, as I recall, I drove to a nearby town creamery and picked up a special load of eggs and butter. I gave them a check for $9,000 which in those days was one whopping amount of money.

In the Spring of 1934 (I recall the date because that summer I saved enough to enter the University at Lawrence) the State Highway Commission decided to do a major job on clearing up a nasty corner and road at the edge of Clay. The contractor for the job purchased five new GMC dump trucks from a dealer in Kansas City. He drove the five us down to the Kansas City where we spent the night then the next morning early we went to the dealer's yard to get the trucks. They were quite large ones holding about five cubic yards of material - but they did not have cabs or windshields. I remember that I was a bit aprehensive as it was quite cloudy and felt like rain. I was the last in the convoy and I had to keep up with the rest. As these trucks were for heavy duty road construction, the would only make about 25 to 30 miles per hour but being new, we only drove at about 20. Near Topeks it started to rain and it rained, and it rained. I was soon completely soaked and cold. I had a hard time seeing the truck ahead of me but we did not stop. We finally arrived in Clay Center about nine o'clock in the evening where the rain

finally let up and we parked the trucks in the constrction yard.

Early the next morning we were back at the yard going over the trucks, filling them with gas and lubricating all movable parts. We then drove to the road site where a large catipillar shovel was waiting. Without further ado, the lead truck backed into the area and the shovel operator began filling the truck with dirt and broken concrete. As the last driver I had to wait my turn watching how the other drivers manaaged to back in. I managed to get my truck into proper position the very first time which no one else had been able to do. I got along fine with the shovel operator and other people on the job until one day I had a run-in with the straw bass. He was formerly from Wakefield and I had known him earlier. He was a small fellow with a chip on his shoulder but he knew his job. I had learned to carry a four foot long two-by-four in the seat because once in awhile the rear gate on the dumpster would lock up with dirt and the piece of timer could be used to pry it open. One day the straw boss had had a bad night or something but that day he was much worse than ever, swearing at every one and raising a fuss all the time. I had trouble getting the truck into proper position with the shovel because of broken pavement and this seemed to set off the man. He came roaring over to me swearing a blue streak and shaking his fist. I got out of the truck with the two-by-four in my hand and when the fellow began getting too close, I raised it up and told him if he didn't shut up I would lay the damn board on top of his head (I was mad). He backed off though and from tha time on, we got along quite well.

Much of the prairie through Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas had been plowed and turned into wheat and corn fields. A drought had been getting more and more severe in the early 1930's and water became scarce except in the permanent streams and these were few and far between. Crops died and grass burned with the hot sun. Strong winds picked up the loose soil and and carried it far down wind. Hardest hit by this drought was the Panhandle area of southwest Kansas, west Oklahoma, and northwest Texas. This area was soon termed "The Dust Bowl" by the media. Wind piled the dust into drifts sometimes as high as six to eight feet. Many farms were abandoned by the share-cropers who piled their belongings onto their cars and trucks and migrated far west, mostly into California, these people became known as "Okies." The winds carried the dust as far east as Missouri and Arkansas. Later, while working in the main Library at the University of Kansas in Lawrence the dust was so bad that we could not see across the large reading hall even with all the lights burning. The dust was so fine that it filtered into the smallest of cracks around doors and windows and settled on everything in the house. At times it would be so thick that we had to burn

lights all day. Driving on the roads was often quite hazardous because of lack of visibility.

I worked most of the summer of 1934 driving a truck for the construction firm long after all the others had left. By the end of the summer I had managed to save about $50 which was enough to start me at the University in Lawrence that fall. So one morning in mid September, I went down to the train depot in Clay Cernter to take the train to Lawrence since I had several large bundles of clothes etc. There must have been about eight other KU bound people also waiting so we had a nice ride.

Lawrence was a fairly small town of about 15,000 people and its main income was from the University of Kansas lacated on the hill (Mount Oread) to the west of the town. There were approximately 3,000 students attending KU which had a good reputation in several fields such law, engineering, geology, physics, as well as in music and other arts.

Mother had called her brother in Lawrence earlier and made arrangements for me to stay with them until I could find my own place. I was there for four or five days before I managed to find a job with a college professor and her mother who had a house about a mile and a half from the University and just a few blocks from the Haskell Institute, the well known Indian School. I got quite mad when I went to leave my uncle's place as my aunt charged me $1 a day for the time I was with them. The professor had a large three story home and for my room and breakfast, I was to keep up the place doing odd jobs such as tending the fireplace and mowing the grass, or shoveling snow from the walks when needed. The professor was a single woman in her fifties and taught Greek and Latin. I later took a year of Greek under her and what a year that was, I hated to have her find out just how stupid I really was.

For some unremembered reason or other, I had failed to take high school geometry (but I had taken College algebra) so I had to take it through the University by correspondence work and what a job that was. I also found a Saturday job with one of the professors working for ten cents an hour - and I fonnd a job with the reserve book room in the main University library also at ten cents an hour. All this enabled me to keep from starving though. I also found a private home which took in student boarders and they were willing for me to have lunch and dinner with them at a very reasonable rate although I am unable to recall just how much it was. I rather foolishly tried out for the freshman football squad and was doing quite well until I found that my class work was taking a beating from all the outside hours. Since I was really there for an

education, I decided that football took too much time so I quit.

At that time KU had the policy that all students during their first two years had to take two courses in six major fields in the arts and sciences. The beginning courses were all taught by the heads of the departments who were exceptionally good teachers and I thoroughly enjoyed them. The laboratory classes had assistants helping but only helping. As I recall, I took english, psychology, sociology, biology, chemistry, and geology ,the latter of which I had designated as my major field of study. While I thoroughly enjoyed all the classes, the geology courses were the most appealing. There were only about twenty five freshmen majors that fall and since it was our major, it was taught by one of the most innovative professors I have ever had. The first day of class, he spent the entire hour explaining what we would be doing, what books and equipment we would need. He brought out a large topographic map of the surrounding area and assigned each student a five square mile area within the boundary of the map. Our job was to find the bench marks in our assigned area, map all the rock outcrops, identify the fossils, and write a report on the work. We first had to find the bench marks for the sections covered, then we had the use of a hand level to get the thickness of each rock outcrop. The area was marked by low rolling hills of limestone, sandstone, and some shale The professor would help only if needed but he was always glad to explain a tough problem should we ask. The class did not meet again until one week befor the end of the semester when we turned in our final reports. It was one of the best courses I ever took and I learned much under his guidance.

KU had a sort of dress code at that time. Freshmen and sophomores men were not allowed to wear corduroy pants and freshmen had to wear a red beanie. Girls were not allowed to wear trousers except when during the winter when snow and sleet would be falling and they could then wear boots and jodhpurs. As the university was on the top of the rather tall hill, the wind was always a problem especially during the winter months. The winter weather was nearly always terrible - I recall using ice-skates for several weeks when it would rain then freeze until several inches of ice were on the ground. The people living on the hillslope going up to the University would string ropes along the curbside trees so you could help pull yourself uphill using the rope.

I was very happy to see the end of winter, the emd of my freshman year -- and the end of this abbreviated biograpy.

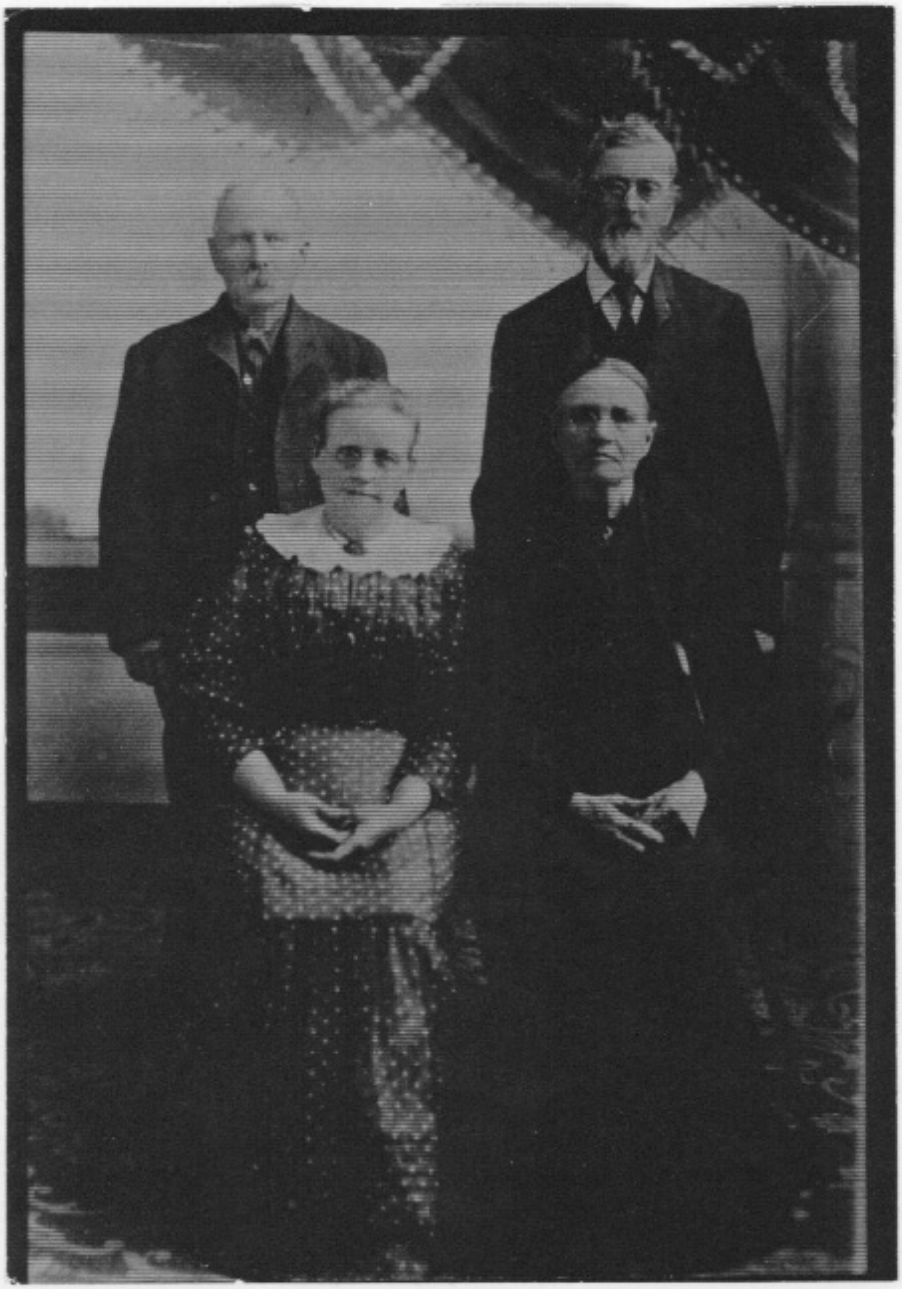
Grandparents of Terah L. Smiley

Right

[redacted]: Catherine A. (Muck) Smiley 1838-1916
Riley M. Smiley 1842-1914

Left

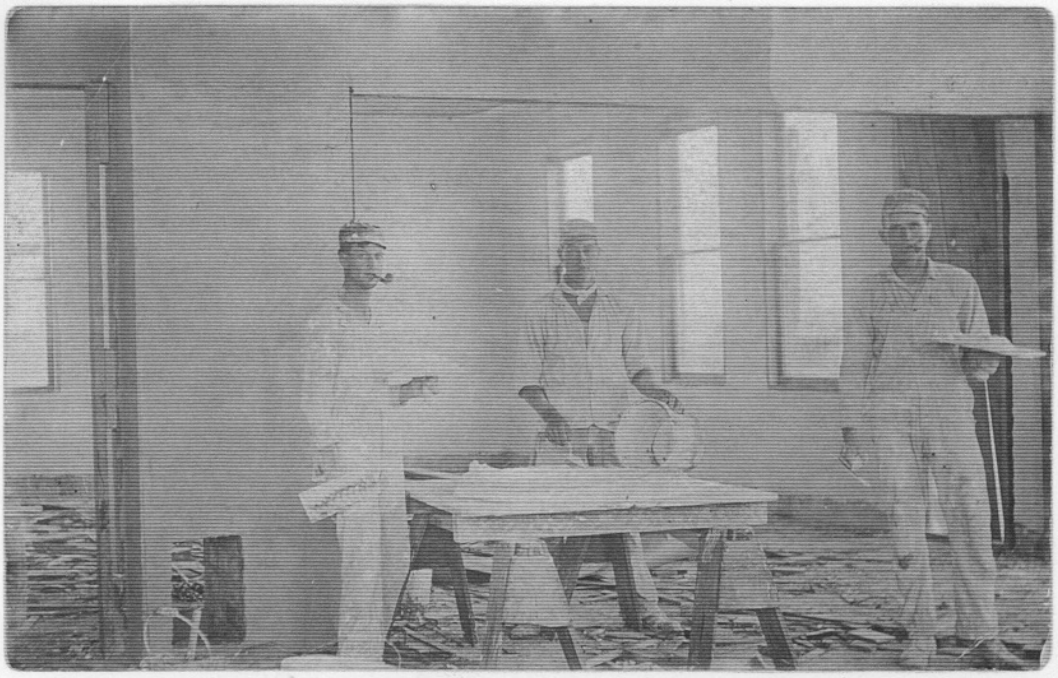
~~Right~~: Eliza Ann (Callahan) Huls 1855-1915
Ezariah F. Huls 1838-1916



Top: Frances Evangelina "Lina" Huls (Mother Smiley) at 8 months. Born 13 October, 1881; died 6 August, 1957

Center: "Lina" Huls at 17 years

Bottom: Terah E. (Dad) Smiley, on the left, and plastering crew, about 1900. Dad Smiley was born November 4, 1880 and died May 1, 1960



Top: T. E. (Dad) Smiley in his Woodman Lodge uniform. About 1900

Bottom: The Huls sisters. Angelina at top, Pearl lower left, and Myrtle on the right.

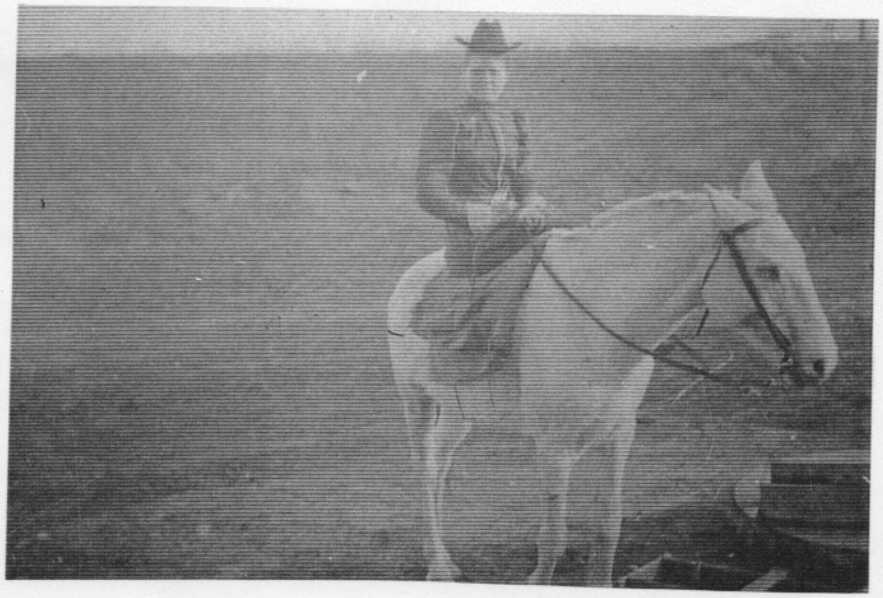
Top: Tsk, Tsk. From left to right - T. E. Smiley (Dad), Lina and Pearl Huls, Mrs. Hugh Huls, and Hugh Huls (Lina's brother).
Oh yes, the non-smoking dog

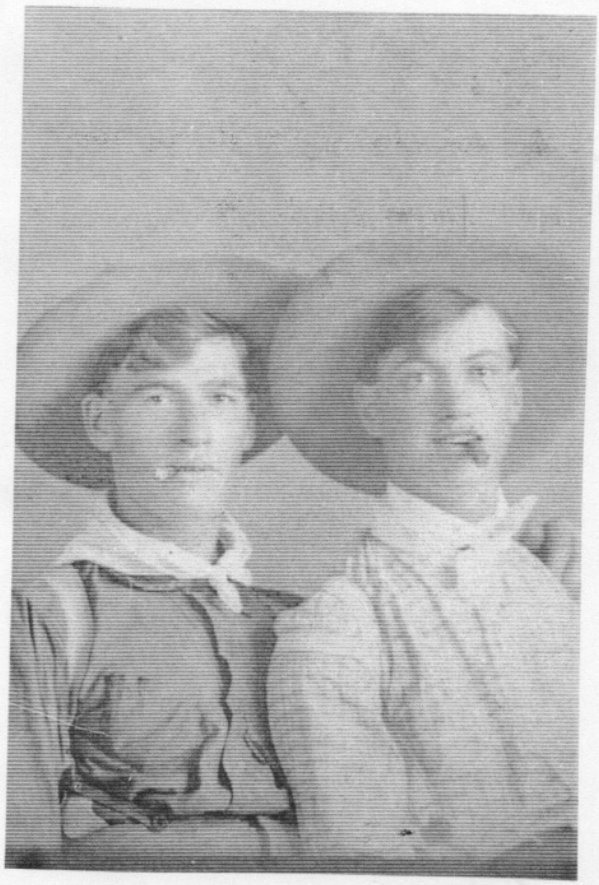
Bottom: T. E. Smiley's family. Left to right rear, T. E. Smiley, Frank and Marshal
Left to right front, Sue, Rose, Lillie, and Nanny

Top: Lina (Mon Smiley) on her white steed

Lower left: T. E. (Dad) Smiley and Frank Siem who later became brother-in-law

Lower right: Lina (Mom Smiley) at 18 or so

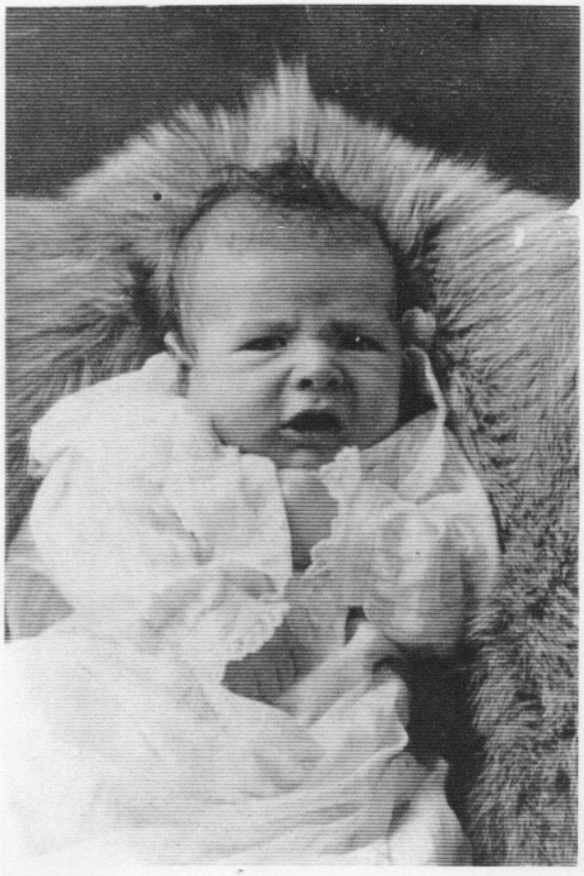




Top left: Paul, Our parent's first born in 1902. He died at 2 and a half months from whooping cough

Top right: Marion on left and Frances on right. Family was living in Clay Center, Nebraska at that time.

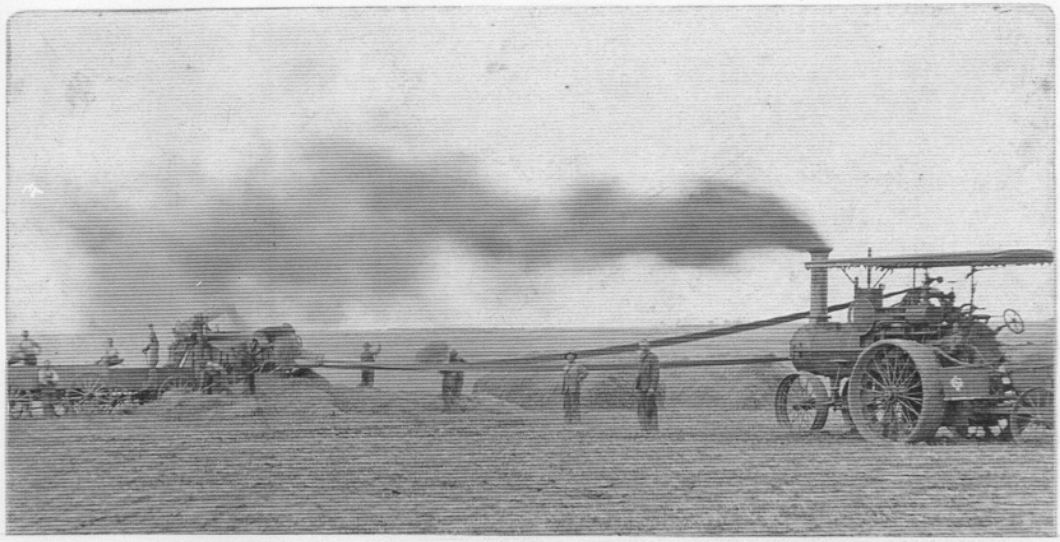
Bottom: Our farm house west of Oakhill, Kansas. Terah L. (me) and Ailene were born in this house

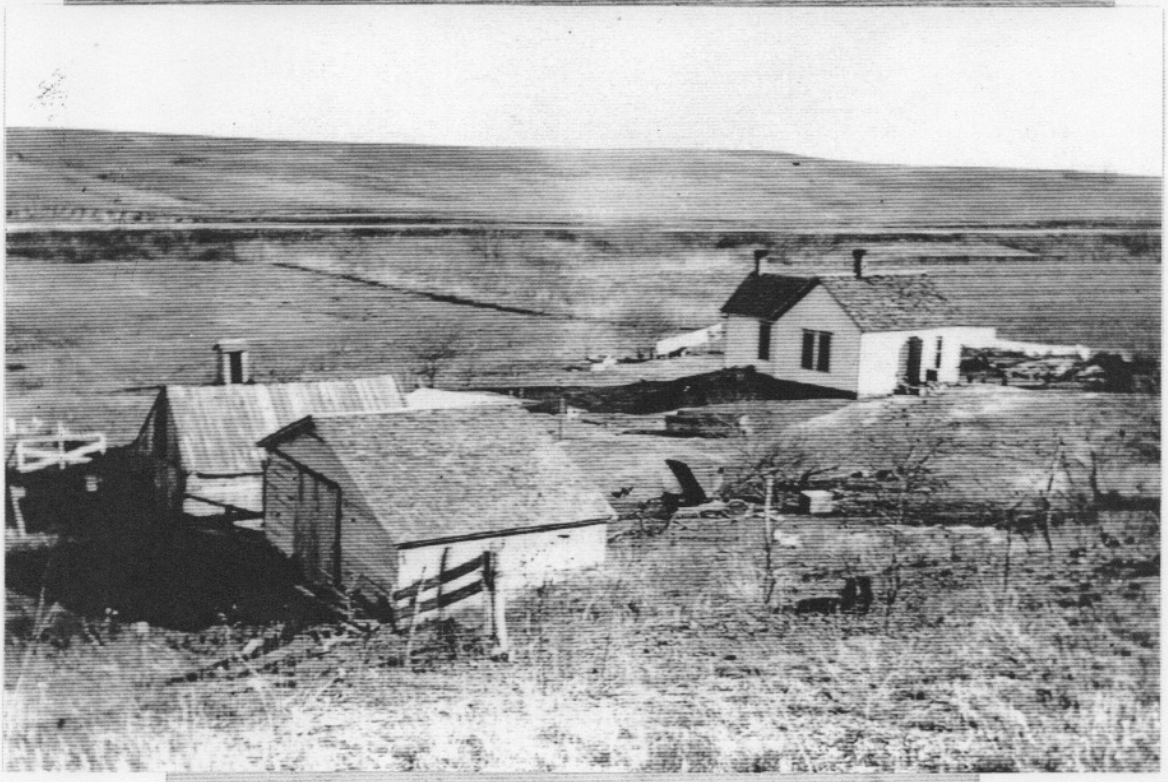


Top: Grandad Huls' thrashing oufit. The separator is on the left and the steam driven tractor on the right. The extra long belt between the two is to help reduce danger of fire caused by sparks from the coal fired tractor

Middle: The farm house near Longford, Kansas. The railroad track runs along the base of the rolling prairie in the background

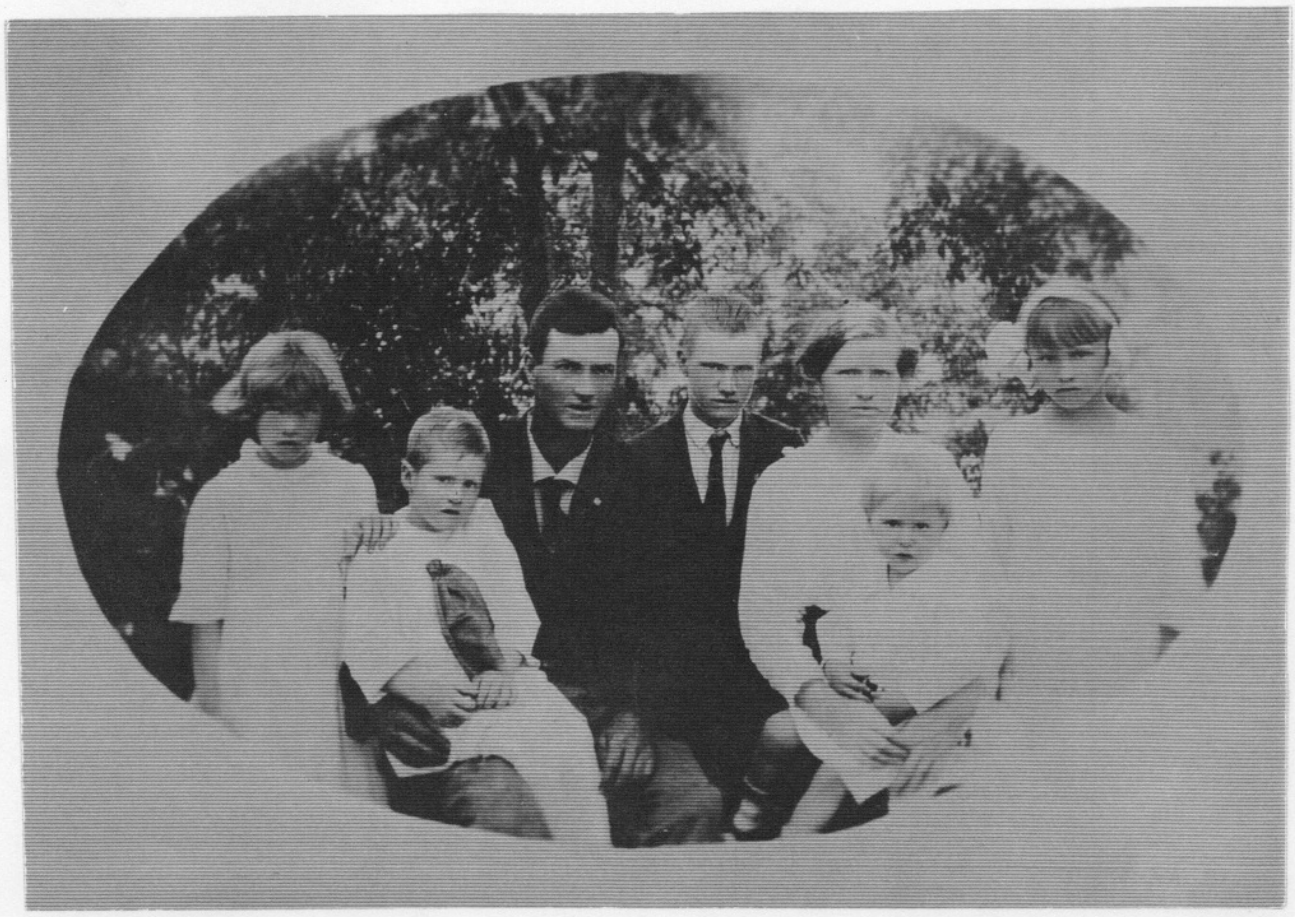
Bottom: Our first car. The government had bought up all the horses in the area and we had to have transportation Marion is driving and Chic is in the seat with him. Fran is in the back seat and Harold standing in front of her





Top: The Family about 1916. Left to right are Chic, Harold on Dad's lap, Marion, Mon with me on her lap and Fran

Bottom: The Longford farm. Harold on left, TLS (me) in center and Ailene on right



Top: The Oakhill farm. Fran on horse (as usual) in background. Harold in rear center of the four boys on the wheelbarrow with me in front of him. The other two were friends.

Bottom: From left to right - TLS (me) Fran, a cousin, Chic, and Harold with Ailene in front

Top: Going shopping in the winter time. Mom on the sled. Circa 1917

Center: Mom Smiley on the right next to Ailene then me (TLS) on the far left. Circa 1918

Bottom: Our early day convertable, Dad, Mom amd Ailene

Top: My cousins ~~uncles~~ Frand and Marshall Smiley with their mother ~~the Sisters~~. The cousins ~~uncles~~ were fresh from Germany following their return after World War I. Mom Smiley on far left

Bottom: Harold on left with TLS on the right wearing our Cousin's ~~uncle's~~ army hats.

Sisters Fran on left and Chic on right. About 1917 or 1918.

Mom Smiley at the laundromat, about 1917.

Our gas powered washer with Mom and Harold doing the honors. Note the privy in the right side.

Top: The hotel in Wakefield where we were to live for the next 10 years. Taken in 1920

Bottom: Our first Christmas in the hotel, and our first flashlight picture. Me (TLS), Harold, and Ailene


COMMERCIAL
HOTEL

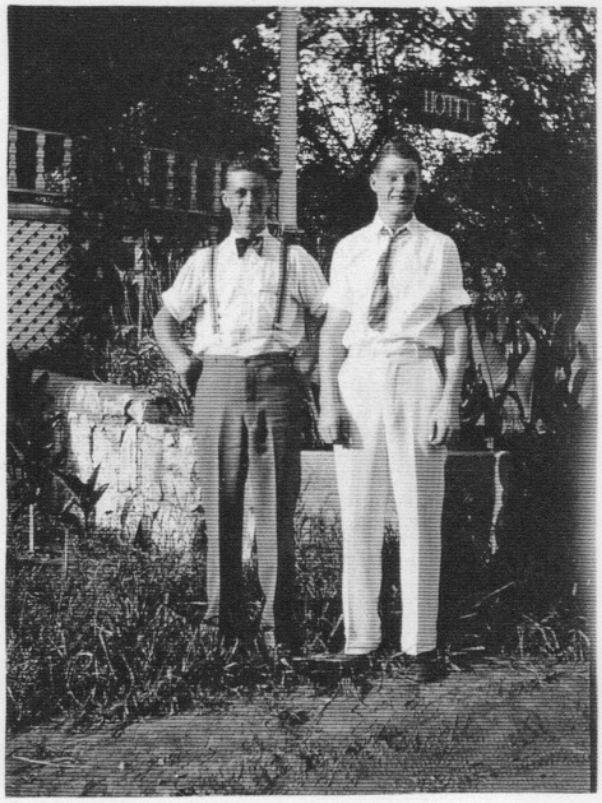
The third and fourth grade classes at the Wakefield school. Harold is fifth from the right in back row and TLS is second from left in front row

Top: Dad Smiley on the hotel porch about 1922 or 23.

Bottom: TLS (me) and a good friend (Mutt)

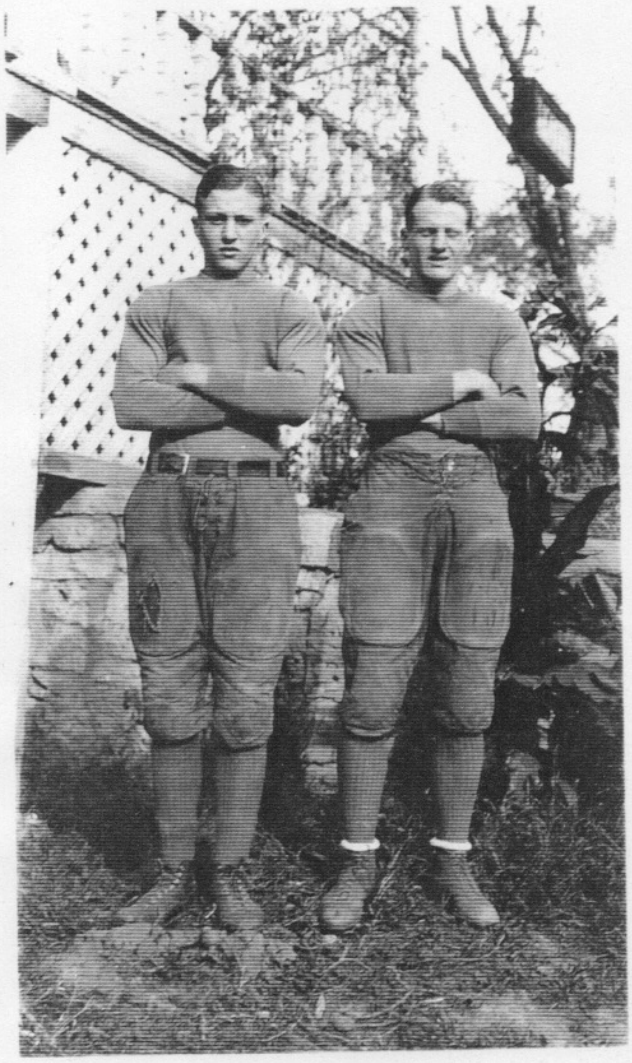
Top: Taken about 1920 on the lilac path to the privy. Fran made me that Uncle Sam costume for a parade.

Bottom: Harold and I, ca. 1828.



Left: Gladiators of 1930.

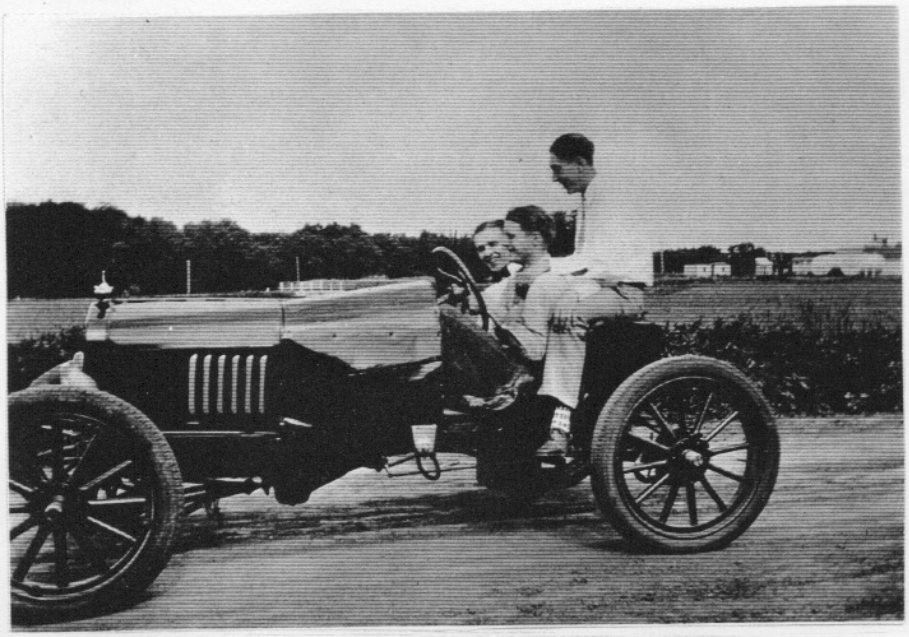
Right: TLS same day as on left

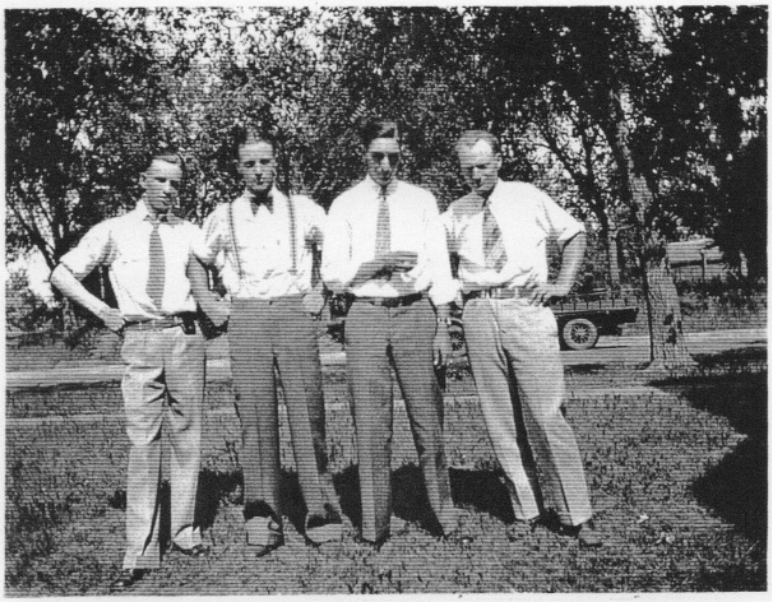


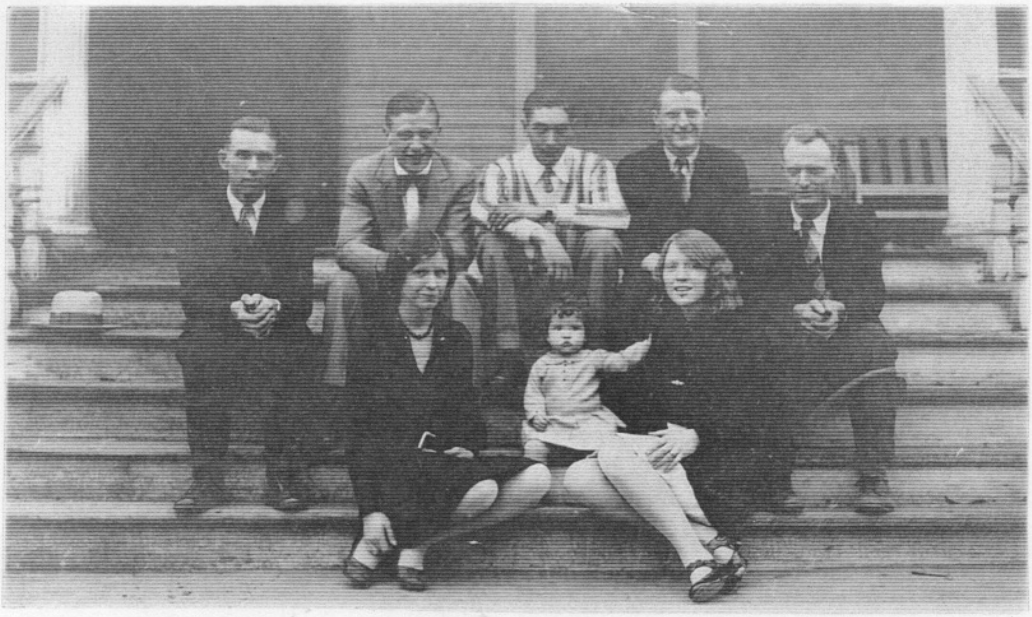
Top: Harold in his custom built car (from salvaged parts) with Jim beside him and Bud behind him

Center: About 1927 at the hotel. Jim on the laft, then me (TLS), Bud, and Marion on the right

Botton: On the hotel steps. Back row - Jim on left, then me (TLS), Bud, Harold, and Marion on the right. Fran on front row left, Frankie and her mother Chic on the right. Picture taken in 1929







Top: A fanily gathering in Salina in 1928. Me (TLS) on far left with Chic (Gfeller), Mom holding Frankie Gfeller, Ailene, Ester (Smiley), and Harold on the right. In front next to me is Fran (Miller), Jim Miller, Marion, and Bud Gfeller.

Bottom: Hams all. Jim Miller on left, then Bud Gfeller, Me (TLS), Marion , then Harold. Mom Smiley in the swing looking over the group with Frankie beside her.