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Written in 1967
(see p. 55)

THE DEATH OF AN ERA.

The Story of a Kansas Boy of the 1880s.

CHAPTER 1.
Backgound in General.

At last the spirit moves me.

For a long time my children and grand children have been urging me to commit to paper the tales of the olden days with which I amused their childhood. Now I yield to their urging, or more perhaps to indulge an old man's vanity; in recounting the days of my own youth.

I was born on February 2nd., 1881 in the little town of Longton, in Elk County Kansas. Not that this date is one of world shaking importance; but we have to commence somewhere and perhaps that is as good as any.

To understand a people, I have always said; you must know something about their environment. In this, as far as the midwest is concerened, America, east of Indiana, is as profoundly ignorant as they are of the tribal customs and ethics of an inhabitant of Mars.

In the first place one speaks of the great plains, and the easterner at once visualizes a vas tarea of flat, baren and uninteresting desert as far as the eye can reach. That is not realy true of any part of the plains, but least of all of the eastern part of Kansas. There the seene is not much different from that of the Missouri Ozarks, though the hills have been smoothed out a bit, and timber is found only along the streams. The hills themselves were in that day, and to some extent stillare clothed in blue stem grass; a tall strong grass, so tall that a rider going thru it on horse back, was hidden until only his body from the waist up, and his horses head, was visible. This grass was so rich in sugar that it was possible to produ ce cattle ready for market just by a summers grazing. One of the finest sights, was and still is, the cattle upon a thousand hills. Now only white face or Angus, then the many hued long horn, red, white, roan, spotted, lank, rangy and fleet of foot.

My home was only about 15 miles off the first Chisholm trail but since the coming of partly sufficient rail transportations the herds were no longer driven overland, but were shipped in train load after train load, from Texas to Kansas for the summers graze.

These wild herds were always interesting. And their unloading and handling was always full of excitement. From the trains they were

unloaded into pens; and to restrain them required a sturdy construction. The fences about these pens were made of two inch lumber, braced and cross braced and from eight to ten feet high, usualy with a foot board so that an obseerver could stand and see clearly the work in thepens. It was nothing to see a wild Texas steer attempt to jump out; and in a few occasions, impossible as it might seem, I have seen them succeed. And small wonder.

From the pen into which they were unloaded from the car, they had to pass one at a time through a narrow chute one side of which was movable, so that it could be pressed in against the animal; Then men swarmed about him. The long, vicious horns were sawed off, one man to each horn, another man applied the ranch man's brand, and bulls were castrated. The whole operation took about two minutes.

Some of the other affairs at the pens were less bloddy. Our saddle stock came mostly from the wild herds in Wyoming and Montana. When a load of ponies arrived we realy did have sport. You could buy a ponly for five dollars, and then give a wrangler five dollars more to ride him. Vastly different from our present day rodeos, which are it's illegitimate offspring, the purpose was not to madden and ruin a horse; but to train him and make him a useful companion. He was ridden to a stand still and was then turned over to his new owner. Of course for quite a while he had to be rebroken every morning, but eventually he settled down into his work and liked it. The old time cow pony realy loved working cattle. My own favorite mount in my teens was a little "flea bitten" pony, abouy 14 hands high and with the letter "T" almost as big as she was mranded on her right shoulder.Used as a cutting horse, that is to separate some particular animal and bring it out of the herd, and she was in her glory. Put her at some particular beast , guiding her until she had seen the one you wanted, then you need guide only by swaying your body. Teeth snapping, she was after that poor steer, and squrim and twist as he might, there was no avoiding her guidance. My complaint of the modern rodeo, is that it is inhumanly cruel and useless. In place of training his as a friend, the horse is tortured until frantic with pain and then goaded by some prize grabbing acrobat is steered about the

ring, spanish spurs gouging and cutting him at every jump , and a flank strap of narrow cutting leather drawn taught around his flanks until he is in agony. The object not, as I said, to train, but to torture and make a noble and naturally gentle animal into a furious demon.

Usualy my home was in towns; but even when not living on a ranch, as we some times did; my playmates and school mates were largely ranch children. We learned to ride early and well, and often accompanied drives, not as paid drovers, but just for the sport of it and were usualy assigned to the dusty post of drag. Even when robbed of their horns a means of lessening fight damage in the herds, these long horns were mean and ornery, and woe be to the foolish man who got into a bunch of them on foot without ready means of escape. I well recollect one summer day when my older brother went hunting and did not return as expected, to the great alarm of my parents. He came dragging in about nine o'clock reporting he had been chased by the cattle, and had to take refuge in a tree, and stay there until long after sun down, waiting for them to go to their usual bedding ground, so it would be safe for him to come down from his perch.

I have mentioned how high the blue stem grew. It was burned off early each spring to give the new grass a chanceto emerge and one of the most spectacular sights was to watch long lines of flames, some times ten or more miles in length, marching across the hills. At that time roads were not laid out. You went on a bee line wherever you wished. And every traveler, whether he smoked or not, carried with him a little bundle of matches. These to be able to start a back fire in case one was suddenly caught in the path of an approaching prarie fire; which might well be fatal to both horse and rider as the flames sweeping through the tangle of long grass would reach as high as twenty feet from the ground. The safety measure was to take a match and start a fire down wind and so burn off a patch into which you could ride in safety before the main fire reached you. And these matches! Our modern kitchen match had not yet been introduced. What we carried was a sulphur match, about the same length as our present match, but tipped on the end with a little patch of phosphorous , followed up the stem for about a quarter of its length

with sulphur. You lit them by striking the phosphorous tip until it blazed and ignited the sulphur, then you waited until the fire had quit burning blue and turned red and it was ready for use. In all this time the sulphur had been sending up stinking fumes, like the atmosphere of tophet.

These were days of great change. The last two decades of the nineteen century and the first decade of the twentieth, was a transition period. The old wild west, which was never as wild as the dime novels, the horse operas and the TV writers would have us believe; had calmed down. In my boyhood I personally knew many of the old time pioneer characters, but in my day, they had become respected and quiet citizens. And to me, as a boy they appeared no different than a grown man would be to a boy today. In fact most of the tales told of those frontier days are rediculous to one who was a part of them. I have often said that if a woman had gone on the streets dressed as pictured on the TV she would have been arrested and run out of town. Of all the women in all the westerns, I have found only one woman who always dressed as a woman of that era dressed. That is Miss. Kitty in gunsmoke. She has always been above reproach. Stretch pants such as some of the screen pretties wear , manish attire in general would have stamped the wearer , if she was let to wear them at all, as a person of ill repute. In fact it was at this time that a lady doctor in New York assumed men's attire to make it easier in her work, and was given a jail term as a recompense. In fact at one time the state of Kansas handled this flair officialy. There was solemnly and duly enacted a statute, passed by house and senate and duly signed by the governor, which required all skirts to extend at least three inches below the patella (keen cap).

Kansas was in 1880 embarking upon its dream of prohibition. The saloon had dissapeared, and the thirsty soul could find his only relief in a trip down an alley and into the back door of the livery stable or some other secret place, This strictness was gradualy eroded until by 1902 at the coming of Carrie Nation the state was alost wide open. P.C., that is Post Carrie the state took on another of its sanctimonious eras. It was a criminal offense even to posess liqour of any sort, even

purchased in adjoining and wet Missouri. This sanctimonious attitude was specially a product of certain political figures who made fine campaign MATERIAL out of their dryness. In fact it was the common saying that one certain Sheriff in Shawnee County Kansas was so dry he had to prime his throat if he wanted to spit.

My father was never a man to believe in a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. It was his sincere belief that it was at the end of a railroad. As a result his business travelled westward with the traveling of railway construction and my family got to see most of the towns in southeastrn Kansas. One of our stops was at Thayer; of which more at a later time.

I have told you that the true old west was not at all like the modern image. But the men and women of that age were far more heroic, though not as glamourous as the synthetic variety. The cowboy was simply a farm hand on horseback; and not too much different from any other farm labourer. He had to put up with hardships, but then so did every one. Food was scarce, except for some kinds of game, and hard to come by. Most people raised, cured and preserved their fruits, meats and vegetables. Running water, electricity, telephones and the like were not only unknown, but undreamed of. Ice was a luxury you sometines found in the larger towns. But with it all, home life was good. The family gathered about a table of an evening. That table was usually stocked with pop corn, apples or taffey. One of the group could read aloud to the rest, or there was always Euchre or Pitch or perhaps dominoes or checkers. A boy could meet a lady on the street and recognize her as his mother , and remember her good night the night before. Would we could say the same today.

Speaking of a boy and his mother, I always remember how I hated to go shopping with my mother, but I always had to go and carry the bundles. Mother needed both hands, one to hold her parasol and the other to hold her long skirts out of the dust. Those skirts were not unusualy long, but the general fashion of the time. I remember how a waggish barber whose shop was in a corner building, taught his parrot a nasty trick that caused a lot of local amusement and mugh emrarasment to

visiting ladies. It was considered a shame if a woman in crossing a street pulled her skirthem to expose any of her nether limbs above the ankle bone. The visiting ladies were enraged, as they crossed the street to hear a raucous voice, screaming "Show your leg! show your leg." only to discover when they looke around that the words came from a parrot whose cage hung in the barber shop door. .

Well, I have gotten myself safely born, which after all in those days of few doctors and no hospitals was a not inconsiderable feat; I have given you a few hints of the times; bursting with energy, wild with ambition; utterly convinced of the manifest destiny of our nation; and not suffering from any of the gloomy premonitions that destiny has imposed upon us at this day.

Now I think I'll proceed to special instances, which are of course the things I told my children.

CHAPTER 2.
The town of Thayer.

The little village of Thayer, in the eighteen seventies, was just a group of three or four hundred people, standing rather barren, just about seventy five miles northwest of the southeast corner of the State of Kansas. Typically, it consisted of a number of small frame houses, three or four rooms, and on some the paint already almost sanded off by the dusts of the Kansas winds. The business district if it cou d be called such, was a group of four or five false front, one story frame buildings. Board walks ran along the store frints and in some places were also in fron of the better homes. Other places the walk way was a path, fairly good in good weather, otherwise deep in dust or slippery in wet.

It was to this village that my father brought my mother after their marriage. Here he had a general store, and they rented a four room house. They were a bit better than average in their home, for since screens had not yet been invented,or at least not marketed in the west, in summer time every home was fly infested. I can remember for months later diners were protected by a small boy standing at the table and waiving a branch of some kind, peach if possible, for it was light ane thickly leavef. I even performed that service myself at

times.

However, in the Thayer house father had made a frame which he covered with mousquity net, and mother had tacked mousquito netting over the windows so they could be raised and admit the air.

The events I am about to record happened before my time; but so much have I heard them discussed, that they have become as it were a part of my own memory.

Summer of 1874 began with a promise of good crops and propituous weather. The field crops were well along, corn laid bye, trees heavy with hald grown fruit. There was no hint of disaster.

Brother Bill was 6 months old, and as usual he was playing on a folded blanket right in front of the open door, where he could have the benefit of whatever breezed were stirring.

Suddenly mother was surprised at his shouting and laughing; so much that she stepped to the door herself. On looking, at first she could see nothing, then high in the sky she caught sight of what at first looked like a black cloud approaching. Bitts of the cloud broke off and hurtled earthward; far diffreently than any cloud she had ever seen before. And then it began. The bombardment of the house at first like hail stones, then with a continuous hum; and the netting on the doors and windows were covered with insects. The grashoppers had arrived.

This was the firs year that Kansas had had to endure this pest. There was damage now and then of crops by heavy infestations of hoppers, but this was an invasion of an army. Everything was edible. They chewed to shreds of handles of tools left outside, where they had been wet with perspiration. They davoured the peaches on th trees , together with the foliage, leaving them naked speach stones dangling on the nakel boughs. Crops vanished from the fields, as though mowed. The only thing that seemed to prosper was poultry. Never were there such fat hens and turkeys, nor so many eggs. Otherwise the years labout was a total loss. There was no feed for live stock. There was no wheat or corn for meal. Messages of distress flew east, and Kansas Relief stations were set up in many places. A few farmers, like my grandfather, who was farming

near Thayer, had the foresight, as soon as the blue stem which, after the hoppers had run their cycle, put forth new growth. As soon as this grass was high enough to mow, they went forth on the open prarie and mowed and cured the hay, and filled their mows, and stacked in stack after stack outside and that winter their stock wintered well. But they were too few by far, and in most instances horses and cattle died of hunger.

Kansans were taught what it meant to ask charity, or rather to be forced to accept it, for many and astonishing were the things that were in the relief barrels of clothing. Some of it must have been reposing in attics since the Mexican war. One group in the east purchased and sent to Thayer a barrel of salt meat. It was most gladly recieved and served with relish on many tables, only to discover at the bottom of the barrel, a horse hoof with the shoe still firmly nailed thereto.

No Kansan whose family endured this plague will ever forget the tales that were told about it, nor the suffering it caused.

The other matter which in a way made Thayer famous or perhaps infamous was the fact that it was the nearest town of any consequence to the tavern operated by the Bender family. With that tavern was connected as lurid a piece of sensational news as was ever dreamed by Nick Carter or any of the other writers of the dime novel era.

At this time, emigration toward the west was still quite largely by wagon. Travel by rail was expensive and many places unobtainable. The covered wagons in use at that time were not the huge Conestoga wagons of the traders trains. They were simple farm wagons, two side boards high, and with a canvas cover. There were four bent wooden bows slipped into sets of slots on the outside of the wagon box, and over these were stretched the strong, white canvas, securely tied down at the sides and with a draw string that could close either or both ends. The drivers seat could be placed inside this cover, or by moving it forward to the front end of the wagon, and the driver using a foot board attached to the front, he could be outside and the inside front closed. This was a preferred way; for most of these emigrants had to bring with them

household goods, as much as they posessed; some farm tools, perhaps a plough tied on one side; a crate of chickens fastened at the back end and a cow trailing at the end of a rope. Naturally progress was slow and night stops frequent. To accomodate such travelers, some farmers put up additional room and accepted guests for the night.

The Bender place was such a tavern. A large, rough, frame house of one huge room, on the first floor, divided by a curtain stretched across it midway, one end serving as a living and dining room and the other as a kitchen. The up stairs held one large room used as a combination bed room for the family, and the other as a room for travelers. There was a shed room at one side which could also be called into service if needed, but was usually used as a storage place.

The family were german, the mother and father speaking with a pronounced accent. There was a grown son and daughter. They had obtained a great reputation for piety, for it was almost a constant sight to see papa Bender, sitting in a kitchen chair tilted back against the wall close to the front door, and with a german bible open before his apparently deeply interested eyes.

The tavern was on a much travelled road leading between teo important towns, Parsons, and Neodesha, about midway, and was well located to catch travelers on their first night out from Parsons on their westward treck. There was nothing thought of this place, other than many of its like, until more and more people traveling west failed to arrive at their destination. They could be traced as far as Parsons, and then the trail went blank.

So persistent grew these rumours that attention was directed ever more sharpley at the Benders. One mancoming from the East was so persistent that the Benders took flight. They were there one day and the next gone. Immediate investigation showed the yard at the Benders tavern to be a well occupied burying ground. Some of the victims were identified; some were not; and many more who had dissapeared were never found.

Nor were the Benders ever heard of again; and their complete

dissapearance was one of the most highly discussed mysteries of the time, not only locally but throughout the united states. How they could so completly dissapear was beyond compreehension, with all the publicity given them and their crimes.

The wounds on the victims led to the supposition that their death had occurred in this manner:

The dining table was placed quite close to the curtain dividing the room and the guest would be seated with his back to the curtain so that when he would lean back a trifle it would push back onto the curtain. While mama and papa and sister Kateentertained the guest brother would slip into the kitchen and when the guest leaned back and his head bulged the curtain brother would crush it with a conveniently placed sledge hammer.

As I said, no one ever knew what became of the Benders. But there has arisen of late years a legened, reasonable in its sound, that the citizens of Neodesha formed a posse and started to the Bender place, and met them as they attempted to escape. That complete and summary justice was done on the spot; the Bender property destroyed and scattered and that their evil remains now repose in some spot near the scene of their crimes; truly unloved, but not forgotten.

This may be a grizzley way to commence these tales. But they will give you a glimpse of the real bad men of that day; not heroic rascals marching bravely to face a show down and possible death; but sording beasts, much as now, slinking through the night and striking from the rear.

Chapter III

Early recollections.

Much has been said as to the ammount of recollection of a child. Some claim that nothing is realy remebered before the fifth year; that what seems to be remembered are occurrances that have been frequently discussed in the family, and a memory built up in that way. To this I cannot agree. My very earliest recollection is of a hot summer day, and my lying upon a quilt spread under a tall pine tree. How I lay there and wondered if that tree held up the clouds, as it seemed to do. Now I know that we left the farm where this occurred when I was between three and four years old. My parents built a house in town and I can remember riding there in my baby carriage and still see the fringe on the canopy top fluttering in the breeze. And between the memory of the pine tree and our removal to rhe new house lies another memory.

At this time I was the owner of a black and tan rat terrier named Frankie; and I was inordinatly proud of him and his exploits. His ratting ability was well known. I remember that at one time the oldest livery barn was being torn down to give room for a newer one. Thes barns all had heavy wooden floors, and under the floors were always colonies of rats. The crew doing the wrecking asked my brother and I to bring Frankie to see what he could do, to care for the game when the floor was torn up.

When the first plank was pulled up the rats began to scurry out in every direction, and Frankie went into action. He didnt tarry over one victim when there was danger of another escaping, but he'd sieze one by the back of the neck, give it a quick bite and shake and throw it down and proceed to the next.He kept that up until the entire floor had been pulled up; and they gathered up of his victims a full wheel barrow load.

However, my last experience with Frankie was a much sadder affair.

Our farm was divided by the Elk river, a stream of considerable size; and the farm house stood not far from the river bank, with the barn still nearer , so as to be easily accessible for stock water. This made it convenient for that purposes but there were draw

to this too.

But the place was a wonderful play ground for two small boys and their dog. Brother Bill was 10 and I was three that summer. We would go some times to the barn and tilt the feed barrels and let Frankie take care of any rats or mice that might be hidden there. This particular day Bill tilted the barrell and I stooped down to peer under and drive out anything thereunder. This time it was not a rat, but a huge copperhead snake, coiled and ready to strike. It could not have missed my face but for one thing; Frankie saw, and in place of beating a hasty retreat as he might have done, jumped for the snakes head just as it lunged at me. He was bitten savagely in the face. Brother Bill dropped the barrel on the snake which had come part way out from under, and pinioned it until he could get a hoe and kill it. But poor Frankie was already feeling the effects of the deadly venom. We tried every remedy but there was no help. For a long time the grave of little Frankie was a place to which I went quite regularly with floral tributes.

Small towns of that day had few amusements. After we moved from the farm, we were often put to it to find a pass time. But one thing was always welcome. Longton was the terminal town on the Howard Branch Railroad. Trains, or so we called them, though usualy made up of just one passenger car and a combination smoking car and express car, and a small engine, of the type now shown in the television program called Iron Horse. But that was a link with the big, unknown outside world They would come to the station, uncouple the cars and run the little engine onto a turn tanle, and turn it around by man power for the trip back. Sunday afternoons we would be on hand. We came to know the crew and some times the engineer would let us ride in the engine cab during the turning process, and even let us put a hand on the magic throttle and help him .

My only run away experience was to sneak off one afternoon and go to the depot; where my mother, guessing my destination when she missed me, found me snuggly ensconced on the fireman's seat in the cab. I said that was my first run away. I was most thoroughly convinced on my return home, that such an experien ce was not worth the cost. That was the time

when parents honestly believed that to spare the rod was to spoil the child. And I can't recollect where we ever loved them less because of their correction.

Some times my parents used good commonsense psychology by leting us do the things we threatened and suffer the consequences. I can well remember one such instance.

My father was at that time in the hardward and implement business and had many country trips to see after the proper handling of the machinery, and the like. It was my delight to get a chance to ride along. For these trips he used a single horse between the shafts of a road cart. This was a two wheeled vehicle entered from the back by a step on the axle. It was very light and easy to chandle and was capable of geting around in places that a four wheeled rig could have a hard time in making.

One hot summer day I was on one of these trips and on the return knowing we had to cross a slough where there was always a plaes that horses wanted to drink, I mentioned to my father that as hot as it was old Charlie would certainly want to stop. The place was only a short way out of town and I now realize that father was in a hurry and didn't want to stop. At that he said "Art, I'll bet you a dollar against what's in your piggy bank that he won't drink." Aha.' thinks I. Here's a chance to make a dollar easily; so I accepted the bet. What father did was when we came to the slough ford, was to leave Carlie's head held up by th the check rain, and drive directly on through. To say that I was outrage is a comparativly mild expression. I shouted "You didn't play fair! I hate you and I'm not riding another step with you! " I whirled around and crawled over the low rail on the road cart seat and dropped to the ground and sat down. Father never hesitated, but kept on jogging along;,and one thing etched on my memory never to fade is the sight of father calmly jogging away and geting smaller and smaller. I couldn't stand it any longer, and bursting into tears I ran t op speed toward the retreating cart. Father must have been expecting me, for I hadn't taken m many steps until he turned around and drove back for me. I climed aboare and neither of us said anything; but I learned quite sharply that it is always advisabel to consider your conduct beforehand.

I realize full well, that to many, these simple tales of which I write,will fseem trivial and unimportant. Trivial they are of course, but unimpoarant, no. All our lives are a woven patern of trivial things. To so few is it given to accomplish any act of world importance. But woof and web of life, its seemingly trivial affairs, make up and shape the evolution of society. A wrong stitch here and a wrong tension there, can well warp and twist the pattern of the whole. Let us always hope that the pattern of what you esteem our trivial affairs may blend into and achieve the purpose of the great weaver.

One of these trivial things I will always remember was my first horde back ride. Of course at that time every one rode and drove horses. So it was as natural for a child to yearn to ride as it is at present for him to wish to guide a car or steer an airplane.

My grandfather was a breeder and seller of horses. His ideal horse was one that was shapely, not too large and clumsy, fit for riding or driving either one, and of a tracticable disposition. With that wish his choice fell upon the sturdy, reliable Morgan. This horse originated from a sire that had been used in logging operations in New England. He stood 14½ to 15 hands, was most frequently bright bay, with flowing black mane and tail, and with a beautifully clean cut head, with small, alert ears. By some mischance oneof his colts was foaled a pureewhite albino. She was a filly, unusualy attractive and grandfather decided to keep her for his own use. She became a family pet and served principally as a buggy and saddle horse, doing light work. And she gained a deeper place in our hearts when one winter afternoon she brought my mothers little sister home through a sudden blizzard where there were no rodes to guide, and only her instinct coupled with the help of the Dalmatian dog which usualy accompanied her brought her home against the blizzard [redacted], when every animal instinct would have prompted her to turn tail and drift with the wind. So Kit, for that was her name, became not only a pet but a family here.

No one who has never lived on the early planes can concieve of those sudden storms. Down from the North they'd sweep, driving stinging pellets of icy snow straight before themmwiping out all land marks, making it even difficult to breathe and piling mountains of drifts over fence and field. There was nothing to break their force. The land was mostly open and unfenced, There was timber only along the streams, and even about the prarie homes there were no trees as yet, save a few struggling cotton woods brought from the creek bank and kept alive by barrel after barrel of water poured at their feet. These same winds later were the scouring winds which swept naked the dust bowl; when avaricious mankind and foolish national advice, denuded the high planes to plant wheat killing the native grasses, and leaving the farms open to destruction.

But I deviate from my tale. got

I started to speak of the old white mare "Kit" and ran off the track with other recollections.

It was a warm Sunday afternoon in early spring. Father had brought Kit around onto the front yard an let her nibble on the springing grass. I was four that February; and I felt myself quite grown up. So I began my plea to be allowed a ride. Kit was perfectly safe for any one. She had not an ounce of meanness in her any place. I would run about her and cling to her neck or fore leg with perfect impunity. So I got my permission. Father picked me up and sat me on Kit's back. I looked down and the ground seemed miles away. Father started leading my mount around the yard. I clung to the mane as tight as possible. But it was no use. In spite of my fright or perhaps because of it, I felt my self losing balance and suddenly I was lying on my back on the ground with Kit looking around at me in mild surprise, wondering what new style of horsemanship this was.

In spite of theearly failure, my enthusiasm for riding was not dulled. It was only a few years later that I had my own horse and was riding everywhere. And I rode that horse without a saddle, seated indian fashion on a folded blanket KEPT in place by a circingle, or belt around the horse.

The idea was that if I realy wanted to be proficient rider I must develope the grip of my legs so as to maintain my balance and have a seat that would be comfortable both to me and my mount. We did this for so long, that I was later able to ride for quite a time simply by holding the horses sides with my knees, not touching either stirrup of saddle seat. I got my first saddle on my 14th. birthday; but even after that it was frequently too much trouble to put it on and I'd take my seat bareback as before.

We take a journey.

It was fall in Kansas. If you ever have lived there or visited there in that season you will know what I mean, when I say there never, anywhere, were more perfect days. There is always a bit of sadness in the passing of summer. What in the dawn of the year we had planned and anticipated so often can be only partly accomplished; and we know the approaching days will be cold and unpleasant. It seems that in the plains states autumn tries her hardest to console us for what we have missed and reconcile us to what must come.

This is the season of the year when roads and hill sides are flaming woodlands aglow with the red of oak and yellow of maple and cotton wood. But shumac, describe it when Professor Carruth of Kansas University did it so much better. In his words,

> A mist on the dim horizon , the infinite, tender sky,
> The rich brown tints of the corn fields
> And the wild geese winging high,
> And over the upland and lowland the glory of goldenrod.
> Some of us call it Autumn,
> Others call it God.

And as you went along through the country you might well meet rows of farm wagons loaded with sorghum cane, journeying to the sorghum mill. For most every farmer always included a patch of cane in his crops to be sure of molasses for his cornbread, and for the ginger cookies, and for what was some times called "Long sweetenin" in contrast to brown sugar (we had no granulated sugar), which was locallycalled "Short sweetnin". The cane mills were simple affairs, out in the open,. A crusher was operated by horse power; the horse hitched to a long arm extending out some where about 15 feet from a geer wheel which was operated by the horse walking round and round in a never ending circle. The geer wheel activated the crusher rollers, between which the cane was fed, a stalk at a time.The juice ran off and was caught in a long pan, and from there on was heated to reduce and thicken and the greenish scum that rose to be skimmed off. When about as thick as light honey it was packed in jugs or other container and set aside for winter. One of our great sports was a taffy pull. Good way for boys and girls to spend an evening together, and for hand to touch hand, which was quite a thrill. In those days girls had not cheated themselves by making themselves playthings. Well, again I digress. We would take the sorghum molasses and boil it down to a candy

stage, and then, hands slicked with butter two of us would take a lump of the mixture, which had cooled only a trifle. You wanted to moove fast and would too, without any prompting. The molasses was pulled out between the makers and as it began to droop the ends were slapped together and it was pulled again. This was kept up until it began to sugar, and then it was cut into sticks and set aside to throughly cool. I don't know how I might feel now; but there was a day when I felt sorghum taffy was the ultimate in goodness. In another way, the cane was a great delicacy to me. To get the fresh stalk and peel off the hard outside skin and cut the inner core into chewing lengths. That was a natural sweet with its own special taste.

Well, came one of those falls and as usual that time of the year my father wanted to do some camping out. This year however was to be a bit different. My mother had a brother practicing dentistry in Parsons, a large town about a four days journey by wagon from Longton.

It always amuses me to see the driving done in some of our television shows. Horses going at a dead run, up hill and down. How one could expect a buggy or wagon to hold together is beyond me. And the riders setting out on a trip at a gallop. No horse could have stood an hour of such handling; and any vehicle would have fallen in pieces about the third jump. Driving horses were usualy driven at a trot and with slight intervals of rest could cover from twenty to thirty miles a day HITCHED to a carriage or twenty or less with a loaded wagon. A rider who was used to the trail did not want a fancy gated horse, they were too tiring. What was prized was ahorse that would fox-trot, a slow, easy shuffling trot that was easy on both the rider and the horse. I don't suppose that the fancy breeders have left a fox trotter in existance.

Great preparation was made for our journey. A new wagon was brought home from the store, bows were fitted and set in place; a wagon cover was fastened over them and the bed was loaded with the necessaries for at least three days out of doors. Mother and father would sleep in the wagon, and as the days and nights were still warm, Bill and I would take our rest on a pallet under the wagon. Horse feed also was loaded, and as our buggy horses were a bit light for that work, father bought a special team. We hitched early for a quick start and were on our way before sun up. A short

distance from home we had to ford the Elk river, which was quite a large stream. Right in the middle of the waters one of the new horses balked. And no ammount of urging could make him pull another inch. Of all the faults of horse flesh this is the worst. Some horses seem to be naturally balky; some become so from abuse, from being put to a heavier load than they can pull and whipped when they fail; and in timbered country by being stumped. You have often heard the expression well I'm stumped, havent you? Well this is a true fact. In driving over cleared land, some times the front of a wagon would pass over a stump that had been cut too high and the rear axle would catch and hold the wagon immovable. If the driver is too persistent and keeps urging his team after they knoe they are licked, it is nothing uncommon for one to give up, and never thereafter be willing to pull against a load of any consequence.

There was nothing for father to do but to step out on the wagon tongue and unhitch the balky animal and ride him back to town. I never knew how he was able to get it done so quickly, but in almost no time he was back with a new horse, and our team gave us no trouble thereafter.

There was nothing particular to remember about our trip to Parsons. All went well, the delightdul weathercontinued; and we had a happy visit, of which I remeber but little. But the journey back is another matter. We had been out only part of the first day, when there came upon us one of the early nasty, chill fall rains from which there was no escape. We simply had to slog on under the loweing sky and make a wet camp at night fall We all hiddled in the wagon, like herring in a ban, tried to eat cold food, and to sleep as motionless as possible so as not to disturb the others. Another danger was, that while the canvas shed water beautifuly, if you happened to press your head against it, or anynother object for that matter, a leak would at once start where the canvas was touched . So by and large we had a miserable night and after a miserable attempt at breakfast we broke camp and journeyed on. My father vowed solemnly that he'd find a house to sleep in before another night fall. The sun came out and dried us off and the world looked bright again. Remember that houses were few and far between in those days.You could ride for hours and see no sign of human habitation, so we felt we might have to rough it another night, and looked forward to it with considerable annoyance.

We traveled well in spite of the softened ground, until about four in the afternoon the skies began to darken, and the wind rose and we had all the reason to expect another down pour. Then to our surprise on topping a hill, we saw in the valley BELOW about a mile away a new farm house and a little distance from it a shed barn. No one was in the yard, but a thin trail of smoke rose from the chimney so we felt assured there was some one at home. We drove as rapidly as possible to the front of the house, there was no fence around it, and were greeted warmly by a pleasant appearing young farmer. [redacted] Tow headed youngsters peered around him from the door and we could hear other childish voices from within. Father told him of our plight and asked for lodging, which was offered at once. Father told the man that we would be no trouble; that we could sleep in the shed, and that we had out own food, to which he sharply replied that any man who stopped at his place stayed in the house, ate his food and shared his dompany, take it or leave it. Stoping overnight in this way was a more or less common practice, where distances were long and accomodations far between. Also the having of company could be quite a treat to the host, especially his wife and children, far as they were out on the lonly prarie.

And now after all this talking, comes the part for which I realy told this tale.

Supper was soon ready and were were invited to sit down an partake. The table was made of planks laid across saw horses, and the chairs were boxes and nail kegs. The house was almost bare of any furniture except home made, but it was bright and clean as were the faces of the seven children who shared their food with us. The Father sat at one end of the table, mother at the other with my parents, my brother and I at one side and the children of the house at the other. No excuse was made for the barenness of the house. The owner took pride in what he had accomplished. Simple and good. The fare was simple and good too. In two or three places along the table , within easy reach of the diner, were pans heaped full of steaming, crusty corn bread. At mothers place was a huge crock of butter milk and at father's a like crock of sweet milk. Within easy reach were plates of fresh country butter. This may seem slim fare to you; but to any one who is realy hungry there is no finer dish than hot buttered corn bread and milk. We all fell to with ardour. One little boy would hold out his mug and say "Sweet milk pap" and another to the mother with "Butter milk mam" and so through the evening meal until

it all was eaten. During the meal my mother had to keep nudging me now an then to make me quit stairing at methods wholy new to me.

We spent the night on pallets on the floor and rose refreshed to another meal of corn bread and butter, this time with coffe with cream so thick it would scareely pour. After we had hooked up, father offered to pay the man and was sharply told that his hospitality was not for hire, but if we ever came that way again, not to fail to stop in and visit.

As we drove away, father said to my mother "Deedie, there is a family I am going to watch, just to see what could come out of such circumstances." This promise he kept and to our delight, by the time I was grown man one of those boys was president of a large bank and another one a member of Congress.

I often enjoy telling this tale to the young men and women of today who wail about their lack of opportunity. After all, opportunity is made, not given.

The rest of the trip was uneventful, save that the afternoon of the day in,was spent in another fall rain, with mist blowing through the openings at the end of the cover, and trickling from rope ends and fretting the horses. Even my father's yellow Fish Brand slicker couldnt turn the wet, and we all arrived home wet and discouraged., and vowing never again to take such a vacation. Imust have felt differently at the time than I do now, for I remember telling my grandmother, who lived next door that I never again wanted such a trip. Now as I rememberit, it was great fun. What a wonderful thing is the ability to forget. Thank God we have selective memories which hold and review to us the happy and pleasant times. How sad it would be if all the troubles were remembered as poignantly as the pleasant.

CHAPTER V.

FUN ON THE FARM.

The early winter following our covered wagon trip, my father sold his store, and purchased a large ranch a few miles from town.

For that earn the place was well improved. A log house of ample size was in excellent condition. This was built in what was called a "two pen" construction. That is a large square pen, or building of logs was put up, and then another of the same size was built at a distance of ten or fifteen feet from the other and a roof was put over it all, leaving a roofed passageway between the two pens. This passage way was called a "dog trot". Just why I never understood, unles it was because this shady spot was aparticular favorite of the household dogs on a hot summer day. This house had been built of large trees and the pens were about twenty four feet square, and it was built two stories high so that there was a large room up and down in each pen. These four large rooms had been divided, to provide a living room and kitchen in one, two bed rooms in the other pen and four up stairs bed rooms. My grandfather and grandmother , and my mother and father and we two boys together with a colored girl helper occupied the house and for our simple needs and rather few furnishings we found ample space.

At about fifty yards from the house was a large log barn. The house yard was surrounded by a dry stone wall which was a constant nuisance as rabbits were always taking refuge among the crannies and the dogs were knocking over the stones trying to get them our. [illegible]

[illegible]

Elkriver ran almost straight about a quarter of a mile north of our house and a large, ever flowing creek came in from the southeast running to the back of our house a bout 200 feet, the creek joining theriver about a half mile east of our house. Back of the house there was a wide depression or slough which was flooded deeply in wet weather. At the point where the creek and river join stood the small, white country school. The road from town crossed the Elk near the school house and passed on west past our front door. Thus our buildings and the school were on what could be called a wet weather island.

It was shortly after we moved to the ranch that I passed my fifth birthday, when for me a wonderful thing happened.

Before this time I had dressed as all small boys under five were dressed, that is kilts, and a shirt and jacket, and with long hair like a girls. At five I was supposed to be "breached" that is to get into the short trousers which I would wear until I was thirteen. Long trousers were never used by boys under that age. With many sighs and tears my mother finaly yielded to custom and cut off my long golden curls; and laid them tenderly away as keep sakes. I was half sorry they had been clipped whan I saw how it saddened my mother. But such a new experience couldn't long be dimmed and soon I was as joyful as I had been in anticipation.

When father was negotiating the purchase of the ranch he had discovered a large deposit of an excellent brick - making clay, and he had it planned to have enough brick molded and burnt on the place to build both a house and a barn. At that time brick were hand made. The man who did the work mixed the clay, moulded the brick in wooden moulds, set them aside to dry and when dried built them into a pile above a huge pile of fire wood, which was then "fired" and the brick baked.

To do this work we employed four moulders and handlers early in the spring. They made enough brick for an eight room house, and for a barn adequate to care for our horses and equipment. All summer long these men worked; and fed at our table, and the women of the family had the task of preparing the food. At last they were done. Dead timber had been felled and piled, and over the piles rose two huge heaps of sun dried brick. It was a time of general rejoicing. And that night came one of those sudden downpours. Out of banks came the creek and the river. All of our land was flooded and where the piles of brick had stood rose two mounds of sticky yellow mud . The summers work, the expenses and the makers wages all melted and gone. With that set back there was no money left to start another project so we just stayed on in the old log home.

The area around our home and the immediate buildings was about twenty acres in extent. All this was heavily wooded and up and down the streams the ground was always covered with trees. Game was plentiful, and brother Bill who was now twelve decided to learn to hunt. Some where or other he got hold of a muzzle loading shot gun; and just to show how differently obedience was regarded by the children of that day,

whenever Bill wanted to hunt he had to load the gun in the kitchen where mother could oversee the process. She was afraid to let him carry his powde ball and caps, so after he shot once, if he wanted to shoot again he had to tramp back home to reload. I don't quite see that sort of obedience now, and I am sure that Bill never cheated by hiding out some of his amunition. He was, for his age, a fair marksman and we frequently had squirrel or duck to add to our reglar menu.

Back of our house the creek on the near side, had an abrupt bank dropping twenty feet or more to a narrow shelf about two feet above normal water. This spot was at a slight bend in the creek and the water for some yeards was from six to ten feet deep. As a result this made a sort of pool where fish would be quite plentiful. Brother Bill cut stair steps down this high bank to the shelf and made himself what for a young boy was an ideal fishing spot. But to my deep dissapointment I was forbidden to follow. The water was so deep, that mother feared I might miss my step and fall in an drown. But Bill supplied many a meal of red horse, sucker, cat and perch and now and then a misguided bass.

One thing that amuses me now as I said earlier, was the misconception of people now a days of the character and nature of the cow hands. We had many on the ranch and I was just at the age to tag along and pester. Most of them would shoo me off; but one boy who was, as I remember it, about eighteen years of age was more considerate. In fact I think he rather enjoyed pranking with me. I remember one summer day when we were together and he was doing some work in the yard, I stayed close to him for a while, then went to my mother and inquired "Mama, what makes Charley smell so funny?" "Hush, don't let him hear you," she answered, "It's just that not all people like us take baths. Charley's just a bit careless, I guess." Rather a far cry form the wild and wooly dandy on the TV screen.

After the first flood that ruined our dreams of a brick home we watched the streams with careful eye. Our neighbors poo poohed the idea of another flood, assuring us there had been nothing like it in the preceeding twenty years. And then the storm came.

It started with the sky turning a sickly green, and then darkening till daylight was almost blotted out. From our doorway we could hear

the streams beginning to roar.

With past experience to urge us, my parents and grandparents soon prepared to get out. The horses and cattle were loosed from the barn so they could care for themselves. Father hitched a big team of mules we used in heavy farm work, to a three seated light wagon. All the family got in save grandfather who went ahead riding Kit so as to be able to open the gates which led to the road. By the time the team was hitched and we were ready to start mother carried me to the wagon through water reaching almost to the hub of the wheels. We were worried about being able to cross the slough to get to the higher ground, and we did barely make it, the water lapping at the wagon bed, and when grandfather followed us, Kit had to swim part of the way across. We went up the hill to the west of our ranch to a neighbor whose home stood about half way up the hill. The house was built on two levels, the upper or main part level with the road, and a kitchen and dining room at a lower level down t the hill. After supper in the dining room we went up stairs to the "sitting room" and were visiting and chatting, when we heard a resounding crash from down stairs. Peering down we could see that the water had risen enough to flood the two down stairs rooms and tip over the table with the supper dishes, some of which together with some of the furniture were floating merrily about the room as the water rose.

Well, all we could do was to hitch up again and with the neighbors now with us, drive further west to the top of the hill where flooding was impossible.

We just escaped in time, for in a few hours the house where we had stopped was there no more. We found shelter at the first ranch atop the hill, and the house was realy running over with escapees. Most of us slept on pallets on the floor; and from my place, all night long I could hear the roaring of the streams, like continuous distant thunder.

When the water finaly receeded in a couple of days, and we were able to get back we found utter havoc. Not only was all our furniture soake and some broken, but the whole house was filled a foot or more deep with mud, which stank to high heavens. The only thing we could do was to shovel out the mess and sort out what things were still usable and wash, and then shovel and wash and then shovel and wash some more.

Not o nly WERE our household goods ruined, but over half our hogs and cattle had been drowned. We would find them now and then hanging twenty feet above ground, with their necks caught in the fork of some large tree; and the creek and river banks were strewn with carcases. We stayed there the rest of the summer and we never did get rid of the sour stench of that mud. After two such experiences father decided he had enough ranching for this time any way and sold the ranch and he and grandfather bought back the store and were in business again, several thousands of dollars poorer than we were BEFORE. And worst of all the hardship of cleaning up, and of living as we had to thereafter ruined mother's health, which slowly declined until after a few years she became almos a total invalid and remained so most of her after life.

One more thing happened before we left the farm that too left its lasting impression in my memory. I told you how we all loved the mare Kit. I would go to the barn and pet her through the craks between the logs and bring her treats of grass or fruit, and now and then a bite of sugar. I had said good bye to her that way one late evening, and the next morning was early at the barn, and looking through the ~~creek~~ CRACK I saw Kit lying in a funny, stretched out position. Sensing something wrong I called my father and on entering he found that our old friend had slept in the night and quietly slipped away. It was my first experience with death, and I was only partly comforted when grandfather said he would give me for my very own Kit's son Don. But Don and I grew up together and he finally years later went to college with me. He must have been at least 25 years old when he took me on my final buggy ride. I and my college sweet heart WENT FOR a drive with him about town, and returning home that evening he was watered and fet his grain and a full manger of hay. The next morning when I went out to feed, his manger was clean and his feed box without a bite left in it, and Don lay there, as his mother had before him, gone to the green pastures and cool streams that make the heaven of our best and most faithful friend. With him ended a strain of horses that had been in our family since the civil war.

CHAPTER VI.

The Writing School.

Any of you ever hear of such a thing as a writing school?

I doubt it. But in the days prior to the general use of a type writer when all correspondence had to be by hand, to write a legible script was quite an accomplishment.

Even in large offices all matter had to be writen by hand and if a copy was desired they were written in a special ink called copy ink. Copies were made then by using a permanently bound book of very thin blank paper. The letter or other paper to be copied was placed in the book under a blank sheet, and over the blank sheet was placed a cloth dipped in water and run through a roller wringer. The book was then closed and put in a press where it was pushed shup with considerable force. This press was comprised of two metal plated, the top plate movable and capable of being screwed down and when time had been given, and the press was opened and the original, slightly damp and wrinkeled, had been removed the formerly blank sheet would have a very perfect copy . These books when filled, were indexed and placed in the office records.

At that time and even after type writers came into general use, this wet copy was the only way a copy could be made. So there were two sorts of type writer ribbons in use, one inked with "record" ink and the other with "copy ink." As late as the last years of the first decade of the twentieth century carbon copying was so little understood, and so little used, that in order to use a carbon copy in evidence, the lawyer offering the same was compelled to put an expert on the stand to prove how the carbon copy was obtained and how one could tell such a copy from the original by theblurring and easy rubbing out of a carbon copy. Then too, until the first world war a great many stenographers were men rather than women. All type writers were blind, that is the paper was face down UNDER the CARRIAGE rather than face up over it. To see what he had written the typist had to swing up the whole carriage and peer under it. It was not until about nineteen five that visible type writers came into general use.

Writing was taught in schools, and every grade,at least once a day would have it's writing class. Each student had a copy book, with usualy a row of model letters at the top, and some bit of religious philosophy or business or moral teaching which the student had to copy, many times over,

then hand his book in for criticism and grading. Perhaps it will seem oldf fashioned, but when I see the books with "Run, John Run,. See John Run! See Jane watch!" and other such bits of great significance, I can well understand the modern teen agers attitude toward life. After you had writen "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches" fifty times or more, that thought would be stamped on your perception from that day onward.

But these lessons in the regular school did not suffice. So there grew up a class of itinerant teachers, men who had remarkable skill with a pen, who would go about from town to town and hold a night school in one of the higher grade school rooms. This school was usualy for a two week duration, meeting every night from about seven to nine o'clock.

As I said,these teachers were men of high skill in chirography, and in addition to their teaching would prepare calling cards for the ladies, dance cards, if there was a dance in the offing, or any other bit of fancy writing that was desired. Their pay for these jobs and the tuition paid by each pupil, usualy five dollars for the two weeks, provided them with an ample income; quite a bit better than the average local teacher. Their productions while overly "fancy" were in the main gracefuly and skilfully done. One of their tricks was to draw elaborate pictures at once sweep of the pen, without lifitingit from the surface of the paper. Frequent subjects were birds at rest and in flight, for the curves and smothness of a birds shape rendered it especially useful for such drawings.

Each student had to provide his own illumination, which was a wax candle, stuck into a home made holder and set at the right upper corner of the school desk. With a candle burning brightly at each desk, the light was more than ample to people whose idea of a brilliant light was a coal oil lamp.

These teachers all used the Spencerian System, so called. This was a very graceful script, slanted to the right at about a fifteen degree angle. When done by a professional, this could be very clear and legible. And as further ornamentation, it was proper to shade the letters. For doing this even at that time the old timers preferred a goose quill pen,cut precisely to each individuals preferred shap. For this purpose a small knife, very sharp of edge was carried, hence the name "pen-knife" for any such small knife became common usage. Most of us however, were satisfied with a steel pen, of which there were three forms in general use,; the "Stub," which was a very

short, blunt point and was usualy used for coarse writing and for rapidity, because, blunt as it was, the point woud not stick into the paper which the other two some times did. The second was a "Falcon" , shaped something like a spear head, and was the point most in general use by men. The third was a "Spencerian," very fine of point, used for producing small letters and delicatly shaped. This was frequently used to make entries in records where only a small space was allowed for the article or thing to be writen. This was also the type of pen usualy used by ladies in their personal correspondence. For in that as in all else the woman desired to appear to be truly feminine.

The shading was produced by puting heavier pressure on the pen at any point where a thicker line was desired.

Attuned with the shaping of the letters , and the precision sought for, there was also a formality about the matter written. Certain phrases had an almost universal use. One such phrase, among the ladies was "With pleasure I take my pen in hand to inform you of ----------". I know one letter of that sort which I saw in that time long past, which began with the rather gruesome statement "With pleasure I take my pen in hand to inform you of our dear mothers death".

After the Spencerian system was no longer in use came the era of the vertical, in which the letters were all supposed to be completly erect, then came the "back hand" slanting the letter to the left, and finaly what we now call writing with the letter slanted as though jumbled by a cyclone, and leaving more to the imagination than they impart of certain knowledge. For penmanship, like any other talent, unused will atrophy; and I a quite sure the days of beautifuly writen themes is of the past.

These writing schools were not confined to young people; but were attended by old and young, for many of the older people had so little formal education that they siezed upon any opportunity to improve themselves. It was no unusual thing to see parents, children, and grand parents attending the same class, and with some of the adults having a sad time of it trying to squeese their ample proportions into the narrow space between seat and desk. These schools were my introduction to teaching outside the home; as I did not attend public school until my ninth year. My mother being a former school teacher , started me out and covered the first three grades at home.

So these writing schools, which I was able to attend gave me some of the skills which I might not have otherwise recieved. But then our whole family attended , mother, father and brother Bill as well as I. And this was about the first time in my life that I became realy aware of a girl. She was a little sprite of about my own age, and I verily believe the very last person in the United State or possibly the world to wear pantalets. If you dont know what these were, they were leg coverings, one for each leg, extending about three inches below the knee cap covered with ruffles, and with the top secured some times by elastic, some times by ties, under the skirt about half way up the thigh. This of course I have only knowledge of at second hand.

These events now bring us to a time we sought another home, of which more at a later time.

CHAPTER VII.
NEW SCENES AND GREENER PASTURES.

There were a number of reasons which, combined, induced our removal from my birthplace. One of these arose from the prohibition ammendment to the Kansas Constitution which had been recently adopted, outlawing the saloon and PROHIBITING the sale of alcoholic beverages except for medicinal purposes upon the prescription of a licensed physician. My family were strongly in favour of the ammendment and my father campaigned for it with all his energy and ability. This was contrary to the sentiment of a great majority of the people in this area at that time. and as a result my faters's business suffered a sharp decline. In fact he and my grandfather were at a point where, if they cleaned up their business obligations little or nothing would be left. In addition to this was the matter of education for my brother and I.

Longton had only grade schools, with indifferent teaching quality. Several citizens, father included had tried to start and operate an academy but that proved unsuccesful. High Schools were just coming into operation and were usualy a one or two teacher affair, in a couple of rooms in the grade school building. Some fifty miles to the north of us was the town of Eureka, a county seat of good size, with good publich schools, including a rather primative high school. But it was also the home of the Southern Kansas Academy, a school maintained by the Congregational Church for the purpose of preparing leaders for the foreign mission field.

This was the school which I finaly attended and that it was succesful in producing missionaries is attested by the fact that from my own graduating class three went into the foreign mission field. Two of them Louis Fritz and his wife served many years as missionaries in Iran and the third a colored boy, served in Africa, and returning to the active ministry in this Country, became finaly Bishop John Gregg of the A.M.E.Church with his home in Kansas City Kansas and a record of great and noble service as a great preacher, but also more than that as a leader of his own people. Many a young colored man in that area, will to this day, declare that he recieved his inspiration and at times material help from Bishop Gregg. So, although he is gone now, his influence is still a matter with which to take account.Perhaps had more John Greggs been produced through the south there would be less turmoil today.

So the remenants of the stock in trade of the store were traded for an equity in a rather poor prarie farm near Eureka, which my grandfather too over and operated, together with a scanty store of ancient farm tools and a few plug horses. Like most german descended boys, my father had in his youth learned a trade. It was always considered best, that no matter what a man's vocation in life might be, he was best prepared to meet its dangers and perplexities if he had a good trade to fall back on in case of an emergency. So that in his youth my father had become a very expert sheet metal worker. With grandafter and grandmother on the farm and in a place to care for their own needs, father secured a job as a sheet metal worker in a local store, and with five dollars in change/, his entire fortune rented a house for his family, stored his tools and went to work.

This first job was a twelve hour day, six day a week affair at the wage of two dollars and fifty sents a day. That seems utterly rediculous today, but at that time was above average. Many unskilled workers were earning, and rearing a family on as little as fifty cents per diem. And the hours were not too bad, when the merchant opened his doors at six thirty in the morning and usualy kept them open until nine or after at night. Itwas in these long evenings that the chairs grouped about the cannon stove furnished a class room for political and religious discussions almost every night. If you don't know what a canon stove was, it was a huge , round affair, of a sort of bottle shape, staning over five feet high, and with a flat top on which there was usualy a pot of coffee simmering. These stoves when fired up were capable of pouring out a tremedous volume of heat, capable of warming a long store room to a point where it was livable any where in it, but most cozy a few feet from the source of warmth. These stoves stood, usualy over a open box about four feet square, filled with sand, which served not only to protect the floor from burning; but also was handy to recieve the overflow from "chawin terbaccer" and pipe ashes. Cigarettes were unknown, and only the lawyer, doctor and banker ever smoked cigars.

These stoves were especially desireable when they were in a general store where barrels of crackers, and pickles, and rounds of yellow sheese and other comestibles were handy. It was solid comfort for the villagers

to sit about the stove, chairs tilted back against a barrel or counter if possible and to indulge in lunch and aggifying. One of the special treats was to get the shallow lid off a hat box and break into it a half dozen eggs and a big box of cove oysters, scrable them together and serve them hot to the group. An expert could do this by quick kandling without more than slightly schorching the box lid.

The old country store - it was killed by specialized fancy groceries, saddle shops, hardware stores, clothing stores etc. and was thought a thing of the past. I can still catch the aroma of kerosene, new harness, apples and vegetables, , vinegar, and all the other items of the stock with an occasional interlarding of soft coal smoke! But/gone forever? Not a bit of it. The super market of today, which we regard as something quite recent, is but a revival of the old general store, brought up to date, and deprived of its comfortable, homey atmosphere for one of effieiency and cold merchandisin.

Father was never satisfied long to work for wages; and by rigid economy, within eighteen months had save enough to start another business venture of his own. I don't suppose the tale of that venture would be of interest to you; but there are a few tales I might reveal of the business methods of that day.

The store was a small frame building, witha false front, a la Dodge city; the front two thirds devoted to new and used furniture. And I must confess that far the larger oart of the stock was the used variety of rather questionale ancestry. The back room was a tin shop where the old set of tinners tools found their proper place.

The tin smith in the eighties, was a far different business than that of today. All the things done now were done then; but that was only a small part of the tin smith's product. In addition most household cooking utensils were had made in the shop. Pans, wash boilers, teak kettles and the like were all carefuly laid out, cut into pieces and assembled. Among one of the things in most demand in the summer were cans for canning vegetables and fruits. The Mason jar was unheard of. The cans were made in quart and half gallon sizes, with a top which fitted into a grove on the can and into which hot sealing wax was poured and allowed to harden. This wax was a

product largely composed of resin, and inthe heating process to prpare for the sealing gave off a pleasant piney smell and all summer long, going down the town streets you could tell where fruit was being canned by the aroma of the melting wax. When the season was at its height, the work would begin as early as it was possible to see and continue until far into the night. Fruit kept in these cans was fresh and wholesome when taken from the cellar shelves. At first the tinner made the entire can top and bottom, but after a few years ready made tops and bottoms were on the market which made the making of the can a simpler and easier matter. Another use for the half gallon cans was to solder a loop of tin about two thirds of the way from the top, solder the top in place so the can would be air tight, slipping a strap through the loops and trapping it to one's back as a water wing. They worked beautifully and a young swimmer was perfectly safe with them, unles he tried an experiment which I tried once, and strapped them to his feet. ~~Mine~~ MY FEET went up and my head went down and I well nigh drowned myself before I could get myself loose. The expert tinsmith was able to obtain a description and measurement of any vessel desires, and then take a compas and try square and marke the pieces out on a sheet of tin, cut them out and produce the exact vessel required. The sheet tin was much heavier and more durable than anything found today and a well made pan would last for many years.

In addition to the shop work there was always waiting, a flat roof to be covered with sheets of tin, soldered at the seams and nailed down. If kept painted such a roof would last for years. But if any one ever wished to get a first rate idea of Tophet let him try puting on a tin roof in the middle of August with a hundred degree Kansas sun so intense that the glaring sheets of tin would scorch a cloth dropped on them and left too long. I know all this because I some times helped in rush times in the shop and on the roof too. One great thing about such a tin roof I found in the one that covered my bed room, to hear the singing of the summer rain or the rattling of winter sleet and curl up in my bed in complete security. Another product of the shop were candle molds, candle sticks and lanterns. The Lanterns were just a perforated tin box with a bail on top, a door where a candle could be inserted in a candle stick inside. Lighted these made a fair light and didn't blow out. The candle molds were shaped to inserte a string or rag

for the molded variety. The other way candles were made were "dips" . A string was dipped into a pot of melted wax, or fat, tallow preferred drawn up and hung on a line and as soon as hardened partially, re-dipped and re-hung until the film of tallow added at each dip brought the candle to the desired size.

Father's store was on the Main Stree, just across the street from the Court House Square. Main street was a wide street and of course as all town streets at that time, wholy unpaved. At each crossing were cross walks of stone a little higher than the street level and reaching from wooden side walk to wooden side walk. Of course in the summer these streets would be a desert of powdery dust and in rainy or winter weather, when not frozen would be a sea of goo almost knee deep or hub deep to the horses, and every horse step come with a sucking plop. Kansas already had a marriage license law, and couples coming in frequently tied their horses to a hitch rack in front of father's store, and we would get a view of their coming and going for their license.

One day in early spring, when the ground had thawed and the moisture of winter snows had turned the surface into a lake of slop about as thick as a thin gravy, a one such a young couple came in and hitched. The young man was dressed uncomfortably in his Sunday's best and the bride to be was all frilly, long white dress, big straw hat with a stuffed bird perched, precariously, on top, white gloves, and as she got out of the wagon one could catch a flash of long white cotton stockings, and high buttoned patent leather shoes. She was carefuly piloted across the street and from the time it took for their return we well knew they had lingered to have the probate judge tie the knot. As they came across the street the groom this time marched proudly ahead, and the bride meekly followed. The groom untiled the team and climed up to the wagon seat and waited for his lady love to scramble aloft as best she could . Just as she was in the act of stepping from the wagon WHEEL HUB to the step on the side of the wagon bed, the team made a sudden lurch, and down she went, flat on her back in the mud which engulfed her almost completly. Never had a marriage started out more unpropitiously. She shook herself, wiped the mud out of her eyes, shook as much as possible out of her hair and off her battered finery; then climed aboard, and we could see them as they plodded down the road, she shaking her finger and the groom shivering as far across the wagon seat as he could.

Those were hard days for the Kansas farmer. Prices for farm products when there was any market at all, were disasterously low. Corn went begging at ten cents a bushel, wheat was often around forty cents or lower. The live stock, cattle and hogs were only a few cents a pound. You could buy enough steak for a dime to feed a family of five. Eggs were a nickle a dowen. Bread was five cents a loaf and milk a nickel a quart.

Not that many people bought milk. Most families had one or two cows of their own. But what was sold, came to town in twenty gallon cans. The customer met the mild wagon with a pitcher or small tin pail, and the milkman ladelled out the required ammount with a long handled ladle holding a quart. Sanitation was unheard of. Just why one never was afflicted with a myriad of communicable diseases, is hard to understand.

But even with these low prices, many farmers were unable to survive. The rosy pictures painted by the land companies were only pretty on paper. The reality of the sod house, the desolate treeless prarie, the monotony and hardship, the dissapointment when they tried to sell their crops, and often had to haul them back to the farm for want of any market at all, broke the heart of many a settler. It was nothing unusual to see a farmer come to town, with all his goods loaded into his farm wagon, with all his family, leading a cow or two, perhaps with a crate of chickens alongside, and sell the whole outfit for train fare back home in the east. And the merchant who bought theses goods seldom made much on them, for he had as hard a time to dispose of them as had the farmer. It took real men and women to brave such rigours. As a matter of fact I have seen my own grandfather haul a load of ear corn to town, and being unable to sell it, take it back home and burn it in the kitchen stove in place of the purchased coal. Farmers, now-a-days who complain of the profit made by the "middle man", who from the way the name is mentioned must be a son of Belial fail to realize what it would mean to be as that time we were, without any middle man or any one else to sell to. At least at the present time there is a MARKET. I know of one very bad year when corn was down to a few cents a bushel, one enterprising man built long slat sheds on the right of way of the railroad, shed after shed, and filled them with the cheap corn, and a couple of years later sold it at close to a thousand per cent profit.

I know these tales are jumbled as to time of the occurrence; but I am more interested in picturing an era than I am in strict chronological order. One event happened in the fall of the year eighteen ninety/two that might be worth recounting. In my boyhood I was in a way blessed with two homes. My mother had an only sister, wife of a physician, living in Kansas City. They were childless, and I was always more or less a member of their household when it suited my fancy. That was the yesr of the second Cleveland-Harrison campaign for the presidencyand, I happened to be in Kansas City at the time of a grand Cleveland celebration. The President was to be present and to take part in a grand parade. The struggle between Harrison and Cleveland had been sharp for years. Cleveland was first elected following Chester A. Arthur; and was defeated at the end of his first term by Benjamin Harrison. Now at the end of the Harrison term he was fighting for a come back. History will tell you that he did the remarkable thing of replacing the man who unseated him. But that day in early autumn all was uncertainty. The town was in uproar. Jackson County, where Kansas City is located, had always been overwhelmingly Democratic as she still is. The streets were crowded, the horse cars hauling overflow loads, hackeny coaches bustling everywhere, and banners were waiving from every available place. To a nine year old, from the country this was a fairy land. The parade was to be held at night to allow the usual torch light procession. Soon after dark we could hear the bands blaring, and I rushed to the window to see it all. First there came mounted police, then a band, then hundreds of marchers, walking two abreast, each man holding a blazing smoking torch, then more bands and more marchers, and on and on, and finaly an open carriage and standing up, waiving his tall silk hat, was the President himself. That picture will never fade or grow dim. I can still see the heavy, but erect, mustachioed president, and feel the attraction of his personality and dignity, even to a small boy.

Another thing happened in the same ~~place~~ CITY, possibly a few years earlier. Kansas City had built, on the order of the Crystal Palace in London a building which was called the Exposition Hall, and every year there was held there what was realy an over grown country fair. This building was wholy of glass, and shaped somewhat like a Quonset Hut. It was long enough to hold large ~~crowds~~ EXHIBITS and many many people. It stood in its place long after the fairs were a thing of the past, until it was sadly vandalized and had to be torn down. There was a large stage at one end, erected at a height of about ten

feet from the floor, and on this wre musicians and entertainers of various sort. The day that I specially remember we were all enjoying band concerts by Pat Gilmore's band; the top ranking band of the nation. I was near the stand at the end of one number, when the conductor approached the stage railing asking for quiet, and announcing a solo by the band's first cornettist. A rather small, very slender young man stepped forward, and after a short prelude by the band started playing. Despite the fact that the hall was packed, that men were moving about, bargaining, and displaying their wares, suddenly all were silent and still. The silver tones rang with a lilt of triumph. In my memory this was one of the most beautiful instrumental offerings I ever heard. A day or two later I learned the name of the young soloist. It was John Phillip Sousa, who after Gilmore's death took over the band as director; and every one knows the rest of that story.

At that time Kansas City was in many respects small town like. But few of its streets were paved. Transportation was by horse drawn street cars and hacks. There were ordinances fixing the number who could crowd on a horse car so as not to over tax the team; but these ordinances were constantly defied by people in a hurry to go some where or a driver anxious to swell his reciepts. As a result every now and then a car would be stopped and the driver hauled off to the police station. The population of the city was approximatly a hundred thousand. Our home was at the foot of a steep hill that the horse cars had to climb for a distance of about three blocks to a turn around at the end. This hill was so steep that the car company had to keep extra teams at the foot of the hill to be hitched on ahead of the regular team and drag the car up the hill. Frequently I would sit at the window to watch this operation, and even then felt outraged at some of the treatment I saw given the horses. It was especially bad in slippery weather, when the drivers would whip the horses up the hill using a long cutting black snake whip when a few extra handfuls of oats under their skinny hides would have proved much better. Fortunatly it was not long until the cablecars replaced the horse drawn. I must tell you about these cable cars. Down, under ground, beneath an open slot running midway between the streat car rails ran a never ending cable, which recieved its energy from a power house, and was kept moving all during the day. The street cars were in a train, with an open grip car, ahead, and a drawing a closed car behind it. Seats in the

car were very popular in the summer but in cold weather the closed car with its coal burning stove won out. In a boxed off place in the middle of the grip car stood the Gripman. His duties were to operate a mong mechanism which ran from the grip car down thru the grip slot. By this he could take hold of the cable and the car would be carried along at whatever speed the cable was moving. To stop he released the grip and spun the hand brakes. This is the same device that exists now in SanFrancisco. Along the outer side of the grip car ran a n entrance step on each side. No one was supposed to ride on this step; but that was another rule not too much enforced. Tickets were taken up or fares paid to a conductor who operated from the rear of the closed car, and who made trips to the front when new passengers were taken aboard. There is a steep hill in Kansas City, runing a block on Ninth street from Main to Walnut. It was a delight to small an active boys to "hop" the step on the grip car at the foot of this hill and drop off at Walnut before a fare could be called for; walk down hill to Main and repeat the performance again. At that time we were deadly afraid of the conductor, and he did catch one or two at infrequent intervals; but they never got more than a lecture about the danger of falling under the wheels. Now as I look back, I can see the man was more concerned for our safety than he was for the loss of a fare, which was only a nickle to any part of town any way.

You could tell on what lines the cars went by the colour of a stripe running around just under the eves of each car. Yellow went out Troost, way way out into the country to Troost Park, ending at what is now about Linwood Boulevard. Green went out Eighth past the home where I was now staying. It was such a pretty little brick bungalo standing on a gentle terrace. I saw it a few years ago and it was the office of a junk yard, and all about it where I had played, were piles of broken machines and the odds and ends natural to such a place. The beautiful and stately elms along Forrest Avenue were all things of the past.

There is one thing more that sticks in my memory. The grip car was equipped with a gong atop, with a cord in reach of the Gripman. He would ring t is bell to announce his approach and as a warning to traffic. Ordinarily this bell gave a loud, clear ring. But in winter in a snow storm, snow would pile up on it and muffle it. I can still go to the front window of my memory and see the headlight of the cars coming, and hear the "Clandk,- THROUGH THE DRIVING SNOW

clank" of the muffled bell.

The streets in the winter were beautiful to me. Every one drove horses and when the snow came you could hear the ringing of the bells on the horses drawing the cutters which had replaced the buggies and carriages. In the summer time, Fifteenth Street, which they now call Truman road, was a popular place for recreation. It was at that time a very wide, dirt road; and Sunday afternoons all the young swains would get the best livery rig if they didnt have one of their own, take their best girl aboard an go to the neighborhood of Troost Ave., and race the other drivers along Fifteenth eastward.

But it's time to get back home from Kansas City and tell you more of the Eureka days, which Iis what I started out to do.