

LATAH LEGACY

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Growing Up in Latah County

Bless or Blast Those Birds!

Yea, Good Old Days!

Woodland Roofs of Our Pioneers

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The cover photo shows second-generation pioneer Alma Lauder Keeling at work on the roof of her brother's barn, Thanksgiving Day, 1914. She had just graduated from Moscow High School. The barn was on Ralph Lauder's homestead in eastern Oregon.

The Latah County Historical Society, a non-profit organization, was incorporated under the laws of the State of Idaho in 1973 as the Latah County Museum Society, Inc. In 1985 the Articles of Incorporation were amended to change the name to its present one.

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Growing Up in Latah County

James Bramblet

Introduction

My purpose in writing is to show what it was like back in the 1920s and 30s, to live on a farm with no running water or electricity, and to attend a one-room school. Most people alive today have no knowledge of such a life, and in a few years, those who do will all be dead. Historically we know there was such a time, but what were the feelings and emotions that accompanied such a life style?

Where we lived

The story begins in a small farm house on Big Bear Ridge, just a few miles above Kendrick, Idaho. I was born on March 2, 1924, not in a hospital, but in my parents' bedroom. In those days that was the way birthing took place. My older brother tells me that \$25 was the standard doctor's fee for this service. (Medical costs were already getting out of hand.)

Aunt Maud, my father's oldest sister, came with her suitcase and disappeared into my parents' room. When she came out she was holding me in her arms. My two older brothers and sister assumed she brought me in her suitcase. My brothers later found that was not

true, but my sister, who is now in her 70s, still believes it. She was three at the time, and she says she remembers seeing Aunt Maud lift me out of her valise. The adults involved are no longer living, and my brothers and sister don't remember seeing a doctor. I always assumed there was one until a few years ago. When I sent to Boise for my birth certificate they informed me that there was none on file. Since doctors always filled out birth certificates, it is very possible that Aunt Maud was the only attendant.

The first place I remember living was on Camas Prairie near Craigmont, Idaho. My grandfather Kittrell had owned a wheat ranch there, and after he died my grandmother continued to live in the house. She hired a man to farm the 240 acres of prime wheat land. A small house was moved in for him, but his work did not please my grandmother, so she invited my father to take over the farm. She got a certain percentage of the crop each year.

When I was two years old we moved into the small house, and my father built two more bedrooms to make room for our family. Grandma lived in what we called "the big house,"



Fern, Mamma, Everdalden, Grandma Kittrell, Glenn Kittrell, Jimmie, Lyle, Ross Kittrell, Aunt Virgie, Wilma Kittrell, and Uncle Virgil at the "Big House" about 1927

which was only about fifty yards from our house. When I was eight years old, Grandma died, and we moved into the big house. When I was about twelve years old, the farm was sold, and my mother's share of the selling price was used to make a down payment on a farm on Texas Ridge, near Deary, Idaho. The events I will describe took place on one of these two sites or in the neighborhoods around them.

My grandfather Kittrell, who died in May 1920, before I was born, had developed the Camas Prairie farm. I knew my grandma very well. Grandma and Grandpa had a large family, and Grandpa tended to build large buildings.

The big house in which Grandma lived had a living room, a large dining room, a large kitchen adjoined by a pantry, and a well-insulated cellar. There were two downstairs bedrooms and a full upstairs, which had two finished bedrooms and a very large unfinished room that was intended to be four more bedrooms. There were two large porches. The back porch wrapped around one side and part of the front of the house. A door opened onto it from the dining room and another from the kitchen. It was completely enclosed with screen.

There was a drilled well under the back porch with a pump on the porch where we got our water. There was also a front porch most of the way along the front and all along the other side of the house, with a shed roof supported by large decorated wooden posts. Between the two porches was a large bay window in the dining room where the table was located.

The smaller house, where we lived until Grandma died, was not nearly so grand. It was fairly small. My father added two bedrooms on the side and there were also two bedrooms upstairs. Other than that, there were just two rooms, one of which served as a combination kitchen-dining room and the other as a living room. The downstairs was finished with boards and wallpaper and the upstairs was unfinished, with all the studs and rafters exposed. You could look up and see the under side of the shingles. The downstairs floor was wood, over which we put linoleum, leaving a strip of bare wood around the edge. The upstairs just had the wooden floor with some rag rugs my mother had made, scattered here and there.

About fifty yards below our house was the barn. It had been built by Grandpa Kittrell, and he always made things big and elaborate. Farm-

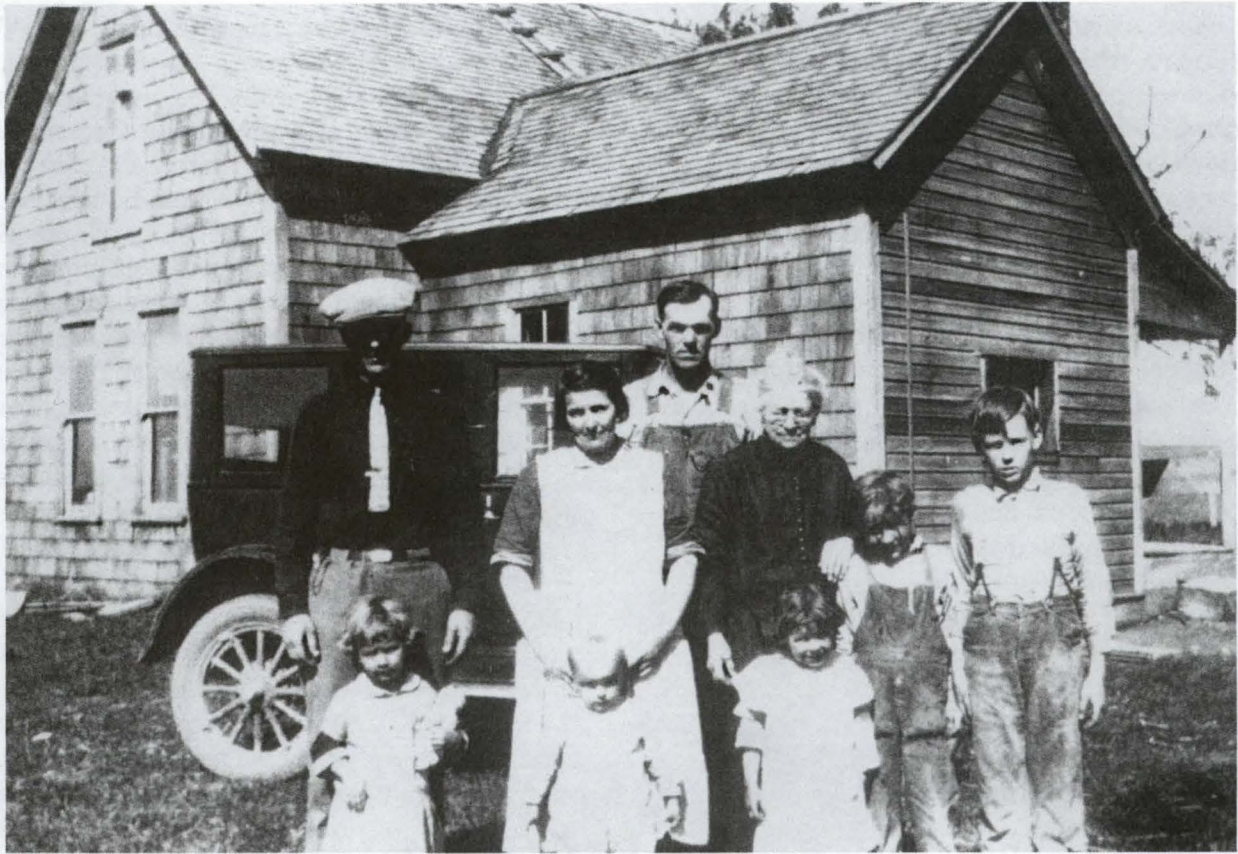
ing must have been more prosperous in his day, for he always had money for building and enlarging. The barn had stalls for horses on one side and stalls for milk cows on the other side. There were at least ten stalls on each side, and in between was a large open space for storing equipment and machinery. A stairway led to a large upstairs loft where the hay was stored.

Over the mangers were openings through which we threw hay down to the animals. There was a mechanical device for lifting the hay from the hay wagon up into the loft. Grandpa had also installed a very large scale, where you could weigh a horse or a load of hay. It was the only one like it in the community, and neighbors used to come over and use it when they needed to weigh something large.

There were numerous other buildings on the place. There was a granary between the pasture and the wheat field, but we hardly used it because farming methods had changed so that grain was no longer stored, but instead hauled directly to town when harvested. There was also a very small house below the barn that we used for a chicken house. It had been used for a house by the Kittrell family when they first moved there, until Grandpa built the big house.

Grandma had her own chickens that she kept separate from ours, and she had her own smaller chicken house near the barn. Near the big house was a well-built woodshed for storing firewood. The only source of heat for cooking and heating was wood. There was another building, called a smokehouse, where Grandpa had smoked and stored hams and bacon. We used it for storage, and my father built a small smoke house. We stored root vegetables and fruit in an underground cellar to keep them from freezing as the temperature remained the same summer and winter, cool but not freezing. Then, of course, there was the outhouse or toilet. As farm houses then did not have running water or sewers, the outhouse was inevitable.

When I was twelve, Grandma's children sold the farm, and we moved to another farm on Texas Ridge, about six miles from Deary, Idaho. We had a barn, a large house and various other outbuildings there, also. Things were somewhat different on Texas Ridge because the growing season was longer and winters not so severe. We could raise cucumbers, beans, cantaloupes, and many things we couldn't raise up on Craig Mountain.



The House on Big Bear Ridge with Eldon, Betty Rose Kittrell, Mamma, Jimmie, Papa, Grandma Kittrell, Fern, Lyle, and Everdalden in front of Eldon's new car

The cold weather and the strong winter winds made it difficult to keep warm. The heating stove in our living room wasn't very efficient, and it was often too warm near it and too cold on the other side of the room. Also, whenever we went outside, we had to be dressed warmly. When winter came, each member of the family got two sets of winter underwear. These were made of flannel, usually white or grey, with long sleeves to the wrist and long legs to the ankles. They buttoned down the front and had a flap in the back with buttons on three sides of the flap. Little children couldn't handle all those buttons, and I remember many times running in from the outside with flap flying in the breeze for Mamma to button me.

Every Saturday night when we had our baths, we changed into clean underwear, and the other pair was washed on Monday for the next week. On washday there were always seven pairs of underwear, the size of each member of the family, hanging on the line. When we put on our wool socks, we pulled them up over the legs of the underwear. Then we dressed in warm clothing, and when we went

outside, we added a warm coat, a stocking cap, mittens and rubber boots that came halfway to the knee. These boots were worn on the outside of our pant legs, so we were ready for any kind of weather or deep snow. When you first donned your winter underwear in the fall, it really felt cozy. But when spring came and the weather got warmer, the real experience was when you first took off your long underwear. You felt like running and jumping, and as light as a feather. It seemed as though you could jump over any obstacle, no matter how high.

During my high school days it became fashionable for young people to leave their overshoes unbuckled in order to make a flapping noise when they walked. This wasn't very practical, but was done purely for effect. Young people, then as now, were much like sheep, and if one jumped over a cliff, all the rest followed.

Today most of the farmhouses are gone, and just a few farmers live in town and farm huge areas with large, efficient equipment. I remember the area as a collection of farms of two or three hundred acres, each with a farmhouse with a family living in it. Somewhere in the

middle was a one-room schoolhouse where we all attended school for nine months out of the year. The school in our community was called the Kittrell School because Grandpa Kittrell had donated the land for the first school, which had since been moved, but retained the name. I attended that school for my first six grades and a similar one on Texas Ridge, called the Elwood School, for grades 7 and 8. In those days there was no such thing as a kindergarten.

In our country community everyone knew everyone else. Strangers seldom came around, so people never locked their doors when they were away. Of course, we were never gone for long as the cows had to be milked twice a day, and all the animals had to be fed. People in our community did not steal things, and since there were few strangers, we did not fear for our belongings.

Neighbors also helped each other as needed, without thought of remuneration. In times of emergency there were always neighbors to lend a hand. Social events and work tended to blend together. Many people would bring their hogs together for a day of butchering, or the ladies would get together for a quilting bee. When someone moved out of the community, each lady would make a piece of a quilt based around some theme, such as flowers, and each piece had the name of the family making it. When all was ready, a going-away party was held where the pieces were sewn together, and the quilt was mounted on quilting frames and quilted. This became a permanent keepsake to let them know their old friends and neighbors cared for them.

My father was Jewell Mathew Bramblet. He was the youngest child of Mathew and Eliza Bramblet, and was born June 11, 1884. Grandpa Bramblet, who had been a Baptist preacher, died in 1924, the same year I was born. My father had an older brother and four older sisters. We always called our father "Papa,"

which was unusual even in that day.

Papa was a large man, six feet tall and weighing about 200 pounds. He wasn't fat, but was very muscular and physically strong. I always thought of him as the epitome of strength, both physically and morally. When he was younger he had done some boxing. My Uncle Bob Regan once told me that he had seen him knock a man out with one punch in the boxing ring. We always had boxing gloves around, and Papa gave us pointers on how to use them. Fortunately, he was a very gentle and kind man, and I never saw him act aggressively toward anyone. He did expect his children to obey him, however, and he set very high standards of conduct for us.

Swearing was not allowed in our home, not even words like "gee" or "darn." About the strongest word we were allowed to use was "fiddlesticks." Although he had only gone to school through the eighth grade, his knowledge was on a par with a high school graduate today. He read a lot and often read out loud to the family during the long winter evenings, especially before radio. He didn't marry until he was thirty, and I wasn't born for another ten years, so I never knew him till he was middle aged. Papa died in 1954 when he was seventy years of age.

My mother, Effie Lillian Kittrell, was born July 29, 1891. She was very different

from papa. She was short and had a tendency to put on weight. She was a caring, fun-loving person and very generous. When she had the money, she liked to buy things for her children and even for the neighbors' children. Unfortunately, she had very serious physical problems such as high blood pressure and kidney disease. In those days the doctors could not do much for these ailments, so she just had to live with them. She was often sick, but when she was well she was really a lot of fun. Papa was always patient with her and treated her like a



*Jewell and Effie Bramblet
with baby Fern*

queen. When I was 18 her kidneys completely failed, and she died at the age of 51 in 1942, the same year I graduated from high school.

Mamma and Papa were never very rich in this world's goods, but they were honest, hard-working people who left their children with a heritage much greater than worldly goods. They were poor, not only because farming was unprofitable during the depression, but because they were generous to a fault. Anyone in need was helped if it was possible. Anyone who came at mealtime was asked to eat with us, even peddlers.

The Watkins man seemed to come at supper time, and I'm sure he arranged his schedule that way. He would eat with us and then leave us a jar of mustard. This was a special treat, because mustard was something we never bought. One evening a man on a bicycle came selling doctor books. He stayed all night, and we bought his doctor book and his bicycle and he left the next morning on foot. That was the first bicycle we ever had, and it really changed my life from that of a horseman to that of a cyclist. Money, to my parents, was not for saving, but for spending, and that is probably why it was usually scarce.

My oldest brother, the oldest child in the family, was born August 15, 1915. He was named Everett Eldon after my father's only brother and one of my mother's brothers. He was called by both names, but by the time I came along, childish tongues had reduced it to one word, "Everalden." It was quite awhile before I realized his name was really two words. People who knew him later in life only knew him as Everett Bramblet.

Everett is big and tall like our father. He grew up to be a fine-looking man, but when he was born he was so long, lanky, and homely that they called him "Abe." Just five months before, Mamma's sister Mildred had given birth to a cute little baby girl, named Flora. It is reported that my mother expected the same and when she saw Everett, she cried. She should have realized that if she married a big bruiser like Papa, her children might be like that, too.

I am nine years younger than Everett. By the time I was old enough to remember, he seemed like a grown person and almost like another parent. He always had a creative mind and was interested in many things, such as radios and cars. When radio arrived he learned all he could

about it and eventually got his amateur short-wave license and talked to people all over the world. When the neighbors' radios wore out, they gave them to him, and he used the parts to make other radios and his own homemade transmitter. At first he used Morse code and later a microphone. Some of the neighbors could hear him on their radios, but they didn't complain much, because what he had to say was more interesting than the regular announcers.

One time he and his cousin, Glenn Kittrell, decided to build their own phone line between their houses. The Kittrells lived about two miles away. They used the barbed wire fences, and insulated and made connections as they went. They had to cross two roads where they nailed a long stick to the fence posts on each side of the road and ran a wire high enough for traffic to pass under. These were country roads where there was very little traffic, and mostly horses at that. It did have to be high enough for a load of hay to pass under. Periodically they checked the line with their two phones, and if it didn't work, they checked the connections.

Everett sometimes gave me false information just as a joke, and in my ignorance I thought it was true. One time I asked him where the glass nest eggs came from, and he told me that once a year the rooster laid a glass egg. That seemed reasonable to me, as I didn't see much use for those noisy fellows who were always chasing the hens around and annoying them. This explained why we kept them. When I told Papa about it, he, of course, set me straight.

When Everett was attending the University of Idaho and taking electrical engineering, he came home and told us about a new invention which was a combination radio and moving picture show. He said that they already had the technology, but didn't have the stations built yet. I thought it might be another glass egg story, but it turned out to be true. We didn't know what to call it then, but we now call it television.

Everett didn't finish at the university because of illness. Instead of a career in electrical engineering, he went to Bible school and became a preacher. His creative mind helped him in developing very interesting sermons over a period of about fifty years. He is now retired and in his eighties.

My second brother, Jewell Lyle, was born July 15, 1917, in Maxville, Montana, a small

mining town where Papa was working in the copper mines. Jim McCoy, who was married to Papa's sister, Mary, was a mining engineer and had gotten the job for him. The McCoy's lived in the same little town. As there was no doctor in the town, Lyle was born without one. Lyle always had to work hard in order to keep up with Everett, so he became an excellent student. After graduating from high school in Craigmont, he went to Portland, Oregon, to attend the Multnomah School of the Bible. He later became a successful pastor and established many new churches.

While Lyle was in Portland, the family moved from Craigmont to the farm on Texas Ridge. On June 21, 1921, Mamma got her cute little girl, Fern; I was born three years later.

During the long evenings, before radio or television, Papa used to read books to the family. They were usually Zane Grey or Tarzan books, so Fern and I weren't old enough to appreciate them. Our playing was usually noisy, so they made us sit in chairs and be quiet. Our chairs were put far enough apart so we couldn't reach each other.

When I was ten or so I was a very grubby little guy who played with various animals such as snakes and frogs. I didn't care a whit what I looked or smelled like. Since Fern was becoming a teenager, she became concerned about her dirty little brother. She sent away to Montgomery Ward for some new clothes for me, including shoes, socks, and all. She didn't have money of her own so she used mine. I don't remember how she got it away from me. Anyway, when the new clothes came, and I saw how much better I looked with shiny shoes and clean pressed clothes, I was thankful for her leadership.

When we moved from Camas Prairie to Texas Ridge, Fern was a sophomore in high school. She didn't want to leave her friends, and shortly after we arrived she made the statement, "I'm glad I won't have to live all my life on Texas Ridge." As it turned out, she married a local boy and when the farm was sold and we all moved, she was still there. Papa made arrangements with the Millers for Fern to ride to high school (about six miles away) with Volney Miller, who was already driving his car. When Volney was asked what the girl he was going to bring to school looked like, he answered, "I have never seen her. I don't know what I'm getting into." As it turned out he was getting into quite

a bit. Fern and Volney celebrated their 56th wedding anniversary in 1995.

My little sister, Mary, was born on January 15, 1930, in the little house we lived in on Camas Prairie. When Mamma became very sick after Mary, Fern and I were sent to stay with Mamma's oldest sister, Leona and her husband Clifford Belknap. I don't know how long we were away from home, but it seemed like forever. When we got home again my older brothers and Mamma and Papa seemed like strangers. I'm still not really sure they brought us back to the right family.

For six years I had been the youngest in the family, but now there was one younger than I. I was so used to being the little brother, that I'm afraid I never learned how to be a good big brother. Mary was an interesting little tyke who often did things on the spur of the moment without thinking through the results. One time she was sitting on my mother's lap in the front seat of the car. Everett was driving, and for some reason Mary reached down and turned off the key, and it came out in her hand. When she saw what she had done, she threw it out the window. The car stopped, and since we didn't have another key we all searched along the roadside for it. Luckily, we finally found the key and went on our way.

A group of Nez Perce Indians used to come by our house every year on their way to a Christian camp meeting near Winchester. Many of the them were Christians, influenced by Henry Spalding, missionary to the Nez Perce from 1836 to 1847. Someone in our family told Mary that she had fallen out of an Indian's wagon and by the time we found her the Indians were gone, so we decided to keep her. She didn't realize that Indians don't have blond hair and blue eyes. She cried until Mamma assured her it was a big lie.

There were certain days when non-Indians were allowed to attend the Indian camp meeting, and we used to go on occasion. Besides preaching services, they had various games for the children. I used to run races with the boys and was the only white boy in the race. I could outrun most of my white friends, but I couldn't outrun those little Indian boys. One day while we were there Mary disappeared. She was only two or three years old, so we hunted for her in great desperation. When we found her, she was in one of the tepees talking to two Indian women. They were laughing and playing with her

and having a good time. As we led her away she said, "I was just talking to the squawks."

No running water

There have been many discussions about which modern inventions have most affected people's lives. The automobile, the telephone, the television, or more lately, the computer have been suggested as the most life-changing. In my experience, however, there is no doubt that the improvement that has changed my life the most is water piped into the house. Both on Camas Prairie and Texas Ridge we did not have this luxury. I never lived where there was water in the house until I left home and went to college.

Building a house was easier before running water required plumbing and electricity required wiring. All you had to do was frame the building and put on a roof. There were no building inspectors or other government interference. Building in that day was all "pro-choice." In every case, however, you had to think about having access to water. The house Grandpa built had a drilled well under the back porch. Our house was only about 50 yards away so we carried our water from the pump on Grandma's porch. We used a lot of water for washing clothes, bathing, etc., so carrying water was a regular chore. Occasionally during the summer the well would go dry and then we had to carry water from a spring one hundred yards or more below the house.

After we moved to Texas Ridge, the situation was different and we had what was called a cistern. A cistern is simply a large cement jug under the ground. The cistern was about twenty feet deep and ten or twelve feet wide with a narrower opening at the top. The top was boarded over with a lid you lifted to dip water out with a bucket and rope. Since it was underground the water was always cool and did not freeze in the winter. The quality of cistern water was not as good as the well and spring water we were used to on Camas Prairie. The cistern was near the house so we didn't have to carry the water very far, but it was periodically used up and then we had to haul water to fill it again. This job largely fell to me. I used a stone boat pulled by two horses with two fifty gallon barrels upright on it. A stone boat is a low sled with heavy beams as runners. Since it is low it is convenient for removing stones from a field and also for dipping water into the barrels. The

water was hauled from Lundstrom's spring which was almost a mile away. This was a very fine spring that filled as fast as you could dip or pump it out. Almost the entire community hauled their water from this spring. Needless to say, it took many trips at one hundred gallons a trip.

The first time we emptied the cistern we decided we should clean the inside of it. Since I was the smallest boy, I was sent down by ladder to dip the last water into a bucket so someone could pull it up. That first time I found a lot of weird things at the bottom. Some one had lost his pipe as he was pulling up water and someone his lower teeth. They were all still there as well as numerous other items that had fallen from people's pockets. After it was complete empty, I scrubbed the sides and bottom thoroughly and we started all over again. After that, cleaning the cistern was a yearly chore.

Since we did not have any kind of refrigeration, the cistern was also used to keep things cool. During the summer, fresh milk was lowered into the cistern after the morning milking, and by noon we had cold milk to drink. One time, about a gallon of milk was accidentally spilled. At first it didn't seem to affect the taste of the water, but after a few days, when the milk began to sour, the taste of the water became unbearable. We had to dip all the water out and refill the cistern with fresh water.

One day a salesman came selling what he called a "radium rock." He said that if it were kept in the bottom of our water bucket, it would completely change the water. This special water would not only taste better, it would also improve our health and practically make supermen of us. I don't know whether Papa believed his line or if he just felt sorry for him. Anyway we bought the stone and put it in the water bucket.

It was a nice smooth brown stone with a hole in the middle, resembling a small grindstone. It was about six inches in diameter and about an inch and a half thick. It did make the water much softer. The water in our area was rather hard and now it tasted somewhat better and the soap lathered better. I looked up what radium is, and whatever was in the rock, I'm confident it wasn't radium. It didn't make supermen of us, but all five are still alive and the oldest is eighty. The rock was a nuisance in the water bucket, so we decided to just drop it into the cistern. By the time we moved we had forgotten

about it, so who knows where it is now, giving off its magical rays.

Because we didn't have faucets, there was a shelf by the back door where a fresh bucket of water was kept with a dipper. Beside the bucket was a washpan for washing hands and face. Nearby was a roller towel which was moved to a clean, dry spot when used. Everybody drank out of the same dipper and we didn't seem to worry about spreading germs. There was also a holder for each family member's toothbrush. We mostly didn't have toothpaste, but used either salt or soda. The shelf was near the back door so that after washing, the waste water could easily be thrown outside.

Every Saturday night everyone took a bath, whether they needed to or not. Water was heated on the wood range in a large copper boiler and then was put in a round wash tub, and cold water was added until the temperature was right. Small children sat down in the tub and Mamma washed them thoroughly, including the head, which she scrubbed with great gusto. It seemed unnecessarily rough at the time, but I suppose our heads got pretty dirty doing our various farm jobs. As we got too big for the tub, it became necessary to sit on a kitchen chair with our feet in the tub and wash ourselves the best we could. Since water was so hard to come by, the cleanest child, usually a girl, was bathed first and the same water was used again, sometimes several times. To modern people this probably sounds very unsanitary, which it was, but for some reason we had less sickness than most people do today. When there was a contagious disease, however, it swept through the family and the community like wildfire.

Since there was no water piped into the house, it was necessary to have an outside toilet or a privy. This was a small, square structure with a bench on one side with holes, usually two, cut in the top. Some were built with a lower section with a small hole for small children so their feet would touch the floor. Ours

never had this luxury, however. The building was placed over a rectangular hole dug in the ground about four feet deep. When the hole got full, another was dug nearby, the building was moved, and the old hole covered with dirt. This building was always located some distance from the house, but not too far. It was important that the prevailing winds blew the odors away from the house and that the building be "out back" and as inconspicuous as possible. It was sometimes referred to as the "outhouse." In our home it was simply called the "toilet." The door always swung in rather than out, because in the winter, snow piled up during the night, and if the door swung in, you could simply step over the accumulated snow. Also, if the lock was broken, you could keep your foot against it for privacy.

A one-room country school

When I was a boy all the children in our community attended public school. Although I have spent most of my life teaching and administering private Christian schools, I had never heard of anything other than public schools until I was in college. Every rural community had a one-room school which every child in the community attended from grades one through eight. The nearest town or village had a high school which most children



The Elwood School on Texas Ridge

attended from grades nine through twelve. Some students dropped out of school after grade eight, helped on the farm, and usually grew up to be farmers.

As there was no kindergarten, children started to school when they were six years of age. My birthday is in March, so I was actually six and a half when I started. Since my older brothers and sister were in school, I was very anxious to start, but I realize now that the year when I was five was a good time to be with Mamma or Grandma, asking questions that had no answers. They usually answered with "cause" and I would then ask, "cause why?" Grandma sometimes called me James K. Polk. I never knew till later that James K. Polk was a president. I thought she meant I was poky, so I

hurried as fast as I could so she wouldn't call me that.

I finally started to school in September of 1930. The rest of the world was in the throes of the great depression, but I went off to school as happy as a lark. I carried my own lunch bucket just like the big kids. There was no such thing as a school lunch program, but we seemed to eat pretty well. I will admit, though, that I always came home from school with a ravenous appetite. There were three of us in the first grade, my cousin, Wilma Kittrell, Irene Buttrey, and myself, and about 20 children in the entire school. One teacher taught all eight grades, which must have been a very taxing job. I can recall many things about the school, especially recess, but as hard as I try I can't remember much about the teaching methods.

The teacher had a bench near her desk, and she would say, "Third grade spelling," and all the third grade students would bring their spelling books and sit on the bench. At that point my memory fails me, and I have no idea what we did during those sessions. We must have learned reading by the phonics method because I remember sounding out words when I read. We all learned to read very well, and there

was no such thing as remedial reading in those days. As soon as I learned to read, I became an avid reader. The school library was a bookcase with perhaps one hundred or so books. I read almost everything, but certain ones were so interesting that I read them over and over again. One was entitled, *Chinook, the Sled Dog*; another was *Scar Neck* about a wild stallion that had been shot in the neck when he was a colt. I read those two books so many times I practically had them memorized. I also remember reading *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and other classics. I didn't know they were classics at the time, but I just liked to read. My third grade teacher saw that I was reading when I should have been doing my schoolwork, so she made a rule that I couldn't check out a book until all my assignments were completed.

I also remember sitting in the front row and listening in when another grade was discussing their lessons. Sometimes it was so interesting that I couldn't help but chime in once in awhile, especially if one of my siblings was in the class and I could tell some juicy family secret. For instance, one time Lyle was swatting flies that were trapped on the inside of the window, and



First and second grades at Kendrick School

Everett told me that he was eating them. Lyle overheard the conversation and put on an act as though it were true. When I was in the first grade, Lyle's class in health and physiology was discussing how flies carry filth and disease. I piped up and said, "Lyle eats them!" Shortly after that the teacher moved me to the back of the room.

With only one teacher for all eight grades, you would think we would have the same teacher year after year. As it happened, we had a different teacher almost every year. They were mostly young women, fresh out of the normal school located in Lewiston. Normal school was the term they used for teachers' college. Both Mamma and Aunt Mildred had gone there when it was only two years old. They graduated from the eighth grade, went two years to normal school, and started teaching. This seems like very inadequate preparation, but it must be remembered that what was learned in the first eight grades was comparable to what is learned today in twelve grades.

In the Kittrell School the student body was mostly girls. The boys were divided into two distinct groups. The little boys included myself, Jimmy Buttrey, who was a grade behind me, and Ardell Bean, who was a grade ahead of me. The big boys were four eighth graders. These were Wayne Tautfest, Darrell Broker, Bobby Holmes, and my cousin Glen Kittrell. Because of the age difference, it didn't work very well for us to play together except when we had games that included the entire school.

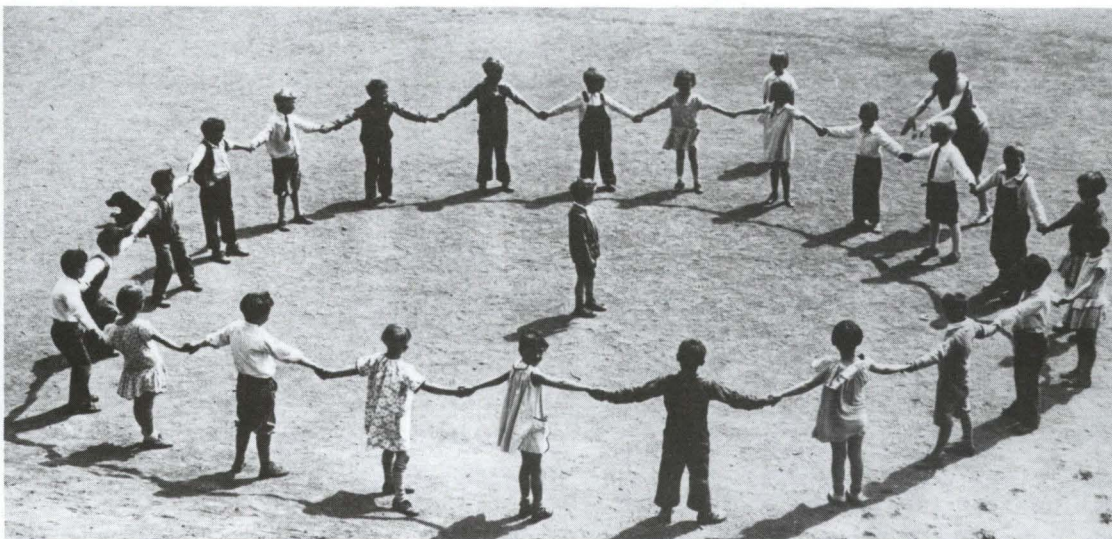
One winter day we three little boys were playing in the field below the school. It was one of these crisp winter days when the sun shines brightly even though the ground is covered with snow. There was a little creek running through the field, and we were busily building a snow bridge over the creek. The other students were playing in the school yard, but the playground noises did not carry to us. After a while the teacher came out on the porch and rang a handbell for everyone to come in. We saw her ring the bell, but couldn't hear it. We then had a philosophical discussion about whether you have to pay attention to a bell you can't hear. After all, bells are for hearing, not for seeing. But if you know the bell is ringing, and see all the children running into the school, shouldn't you respond as well? Anyway, the philosophy that bells are for hearing and not for seeing won out and we

stayed where we were. We expected someone to come and get us, but it didn't happen for a long time. About an hour later, one of the eighth grade boys came running across the field to tell us with great glee that we were in a lot of trouble.

We arrived in the classroom with very wet mittens and shoes and feeling somewhat apprehensive. The teacher decided to discontinue classes for the rest of the afternoon and conduct a trial to see if we were guilty of truancy. She was the judge, and she appointed an eighth grade boy as prosecutor and another as legal counsel for the defense. The rest of the students were the jury. Our defense attorney didn't believe that we couldn't hear the bell, but we stuck to our story. During the trial a student was sent out to where we had been playing and the bell was rung again. By then the air currents had changed and the bell was heard clearly. Everybody assumed we made up the story about the silent bell. The jury all voted guilty, and did so with huge smiles on their faces. Our punishment was to make up the time by staying in for recess for a week. This seemed terribly severe at first, but as it turned out the teacher went out to play with the children and we found ways to have as much fun inside as they did outside.

Many of the games played at recess included all the kids. The favorite game was gray wolf. There was a designated base where we all covered our eyes while one person, the wolf, hid. After a suitable length of time we all shouted, "Here we come, ready or not!" and we cautiously went out to seek the wolf. If he could jump out of his hiding place and touch any of us before we got back to the base, the ones he touched would also be wolves and they would all hide the next time. This continued until everyone was caught. Sometimes a wolf would get to the base and guard it while the other wolves chased down the poor victims.

Other games were kick the can; steal sticks; mother, may I; beckon, beckon; and numerous others, the names of which I can no longer remember. Some games, such as fox and geese, were only suitable in the winter when there was snow on the ground. The school building was excellent for playing "anti-over," and of course the big kids played baseball. Softball hadn't been invented yet, so we usually used a tennis



Children playing a circle game at recess at Russell School in Moscow

ball as it didn't hurt quite as much. Also baseballs kept wearing out and were expensive to replace. We also played regular tackle football. One of our young teachers had learned to play basketball in normal school, so she had someone put up two baskets, one at each end of the school room. All the desks were moved back and we learned to play basketball. She only knew girls' rules so that's what we learned, with a dividing line in the middle which guards and forwards couldn't cross. We didn't complain because we didn't know the difference between girls' and boys' rules. Boys and girls all played together and we had a great time.

As far as I can remember, discipline was not a problem in the country school. While the teacher was working with one group, the rest of us worked quietly at our desks. The teacher was definitely in charge, and we knew that if we got into trouble our parents would hear about it. There was a different attitude about obedience and children's rights. It was firmly fixed in our minds that disobedience meant punishment, murder meant execution, and stealing meant jail time. Every student had both a mother and a father except Bobby Homes who lived with his father and older sister. Divorce was almost unheard of. Spankings were practically unknown at school, and the only one I know of happened to me. One day on the playground the four eighth grade boys were playing with a basketball. The little boys wanted to play with them and kept asking them for the ball. Finally Darrell Broker got disgusted and threw it to me very hard. I couldn't handle it and it went

through my hands, hitting me in the stomach and knocking the wind out of me. I was very angry, and when I opened my eyes there was a rock just the right size. I threw it at Darrell. The rock hit him in the temple, cutting a gash and causing a great stir on the playground. The teacher lectured me quite a while, but I didn't get spanked. The next day Papa visited the school and told the teacher if I did anything like that again to give me a spanking. A few weeks later I did something much less serious and sure enough Miss Sweeny gave me a spanking. She took me to the woodshed, which was attached to the school. I decided I wasn't going to cry, but she just kept on whacking until I did. Once I started I couldn't stop. I later heard Papa tell Mamma that he didn't mean for her to spank me over just any little thing. I understood, however, that it was really for hurting Darrell. He was a nice boy and I was sorry I had hurt him.

In those days the local community ran the schools. Every year there was an election for school board members. The school building was also used for Sunday School, which wasn't a problem, but there was another group that wanted to use it on Saturday night for dancing. People complained about this because some who attended got drunk, got into fights, and damaged things. They also left whiskey bottles lying around, which was considered morally damaging to children who might find them. At every election there were the pro-dance and the anti-dance people. As I remember, the anti-dance people always won. There were certain state

rules that had to be followed and about once a year the country superintendent would visit the school to see how things were going. Basically, however, the school board ran the school. The only professional educator was the teacher, and she was often still very young and fresh out of normal school. She was really a hired girl who did what the board told her to do. Besides teaching, she had to start the fire in the morning and do most of the janitor work. We boys usually carried the wood in from the woodshed.

One year measles swept through our community during the school year. This was the old fashioned, red measles that really lays you low for about two weeks. One day my cousin Wilma and I were the only two students in school. It happened to be Valentine's Day, so the teacher let us make valentines all day. Wilma was the better artist and I was better at making up little poems, so between us we turned out a really outstanding stack of valentines. As least we thought so. I was one of the last ones to get the measles, and I was very sick.

When I returned to school, the teacher called me aside to tell me that the board had made a new rule that no one could return to school without a doctor's written statement that he was no longer contagious. She wrote a note to that effect and I trudged back home and gave it to Papa. The doctor was seven miles away in Craigmont. Papa would have to harness the team, drive the seven miles, have the doctor examine me, and return home. This would pretty well use up the entire day and take him away from his work, which was cutting a supply of wood for the winter. He didn't say anything to me, but just took me out into the woods with him to cut wood. This was fine with me and much more fun than going to school.

That year the chairman of the school board was Uncle Virgil. He came to see Papa about why he wouldn't comply. Papa thought that since I was the last one in the community to have measles, there wasn't anyone left to give it to, so the board's ruling was unnecessary and he wasn't going to waste a day of work going to town to see the doctor. Papa was normally a congenial man, but when he made up his mind about something, he wasn't easy to change. Uncle Virgil was a mild-mannered man, and probably a little afraid of his big brother-in-law. The next day Uncle Virgil went to town and got a permit from the doctor. I returned to school

the next day. As far as I know Papa and Uncle Virgil remained good friends.

During my summer before seventh grade, we moved from Camas Prairie to Texas Ridge. Here the situation was somewhat different. We had a man teacher named Mr. Robinson. Also, the school was nearly all boys. There were only three girls, and one of them was my little sister Mary. The other two were also little girls. The next year a family moved in with several older girls which, to my surprise, made life much more interesting. There were several other boys in the seventh grade, but I don't believe there were any eighth graders that year.

When I moved to this school something strange happened to me. I had been a very ordinary student, and all of a sudden I was the best student. At the time I thought it was some kind of metamorphosis, but now I realize it must have been a difference in the schools. Anyway, I liked being at the head of the class, winning most of the spelling bees and being called on to help other students when they needed it. I made some very good, lifelong friends in this school. Eldon "Tuppy" Baker was one grade behind me and smaller, but he was a very good athlete. He could run almost as fast as I and was a better baseball player. He became the pitcher and I the catcher on our baseball team. Tuppy was killed in World War II.

In the seventh and eighth grades, sports became more important in my life. Every recess we played baseball, not softball, but regular old hardball. In the eighth grade the Steiger family moved into the community, and they had several girls who played ball with us. The seventh grade girl was Amelia and the eighth grade girl was Alvina. These girls were very good players. They threw just like boys and could bat and hit as well as anybody. Our teacher scheduled a baseball game with the Deary Grade School. There were a lot of them, and mostly they were bigger than we were. They were used to playing softball, but were willing to play baseball with us. We beat them very badly. The pitcher was embarrassed to pitch to our girls, especially when they hit the ball over the outfielders. At a return game in Deary we played softball. We still won, but it was much closer.

Every year the Deary Grade School sponsored a track meet and invited all the schools around to participate. Even though our school was small, as individuals we had as good a

chance to win as anyone. Alvina and Amelia got first and second in the girls' baseball throw. I won both the 50 and 100 yard dashes, and Tuppy would have won the pole vault, but while he was practicing he broke his arm and couldn't compete. Anyway, we had a very good time and came home feeling pretty good about ourselves.

In those days, in order to enter high school, every student had to pass a state achievement test. This test was not given by our teacher but by the county superintendent of schools in Deary. Our teachers had no idea what was on the test, so they could only prepare us in a general way. All the students in Elwood School passed, but some just barely. Students who didn't pass could take it again, but if they didn't pass the second time, they either had to repeat the eighth grade or drop out of school.

Every country school had a barn. It was just one long building with stalls for the horses that the students rode to school. Our house was about a mile from the school, and we sometimes rode a horse, but mostly we walked. Some students had further to go so there were nearly always some horses in the barn.

During really bad weather parents often brought their children in a horse-drawn buggy or sleigh. After I acquired a bicycle I found it much handier to ride than a horse. Bicycles don't have to be caught from the pasture, bridled, fed and cleaned up after. Humans seem to always want what they don't have. Since we were so used to horses we wanted bicycles. Modern children are used to bicycles and would

love to have horses.

Work on the farm

One of the first things I remember in my early days on the farm was learning to work. On the farm there are jobs called chores. These were things that had to be done twice a day, morning and evening. A very small child can feed the chickens or the rabbits and gather the eggs. Feeding the larger animals required forking the hay, and you had to be larger to do that. Slopping the hogs required someone large enough to carry a full five-gallon bucket, and the pigpen was always a goodly distance from the house, because of odor. We always had a number of calves that were kept separate from the cows until they were weaned (forgot about nursing their mother) and these calves had to be fed, which first involved teaching them to drink from a bucket. The trick was to let them suck your finger and then put your hand into a bucket of warm milk. Gradually you removed your finger and they would continue to drink the milk. After a few days they were looking for a bucket of milk instead of something to suck. Hungry calves are rambunctious, and the bucket has to be held firmly to keep them from knocking it over and spilling the milk.

By far the most important chore was milking the cows. Selling cream was a source of ongoing income while waiting for the wheat harvest, the main source of income. Also, if cows aren't milked regularly, their bags become distended and they become very uncomfortable. Eventually



Martin Bergerson milking cows on his homestead. His wife Elizabeth Marie, is in the background.

they will dry up and stop giving milk if not milked regularly. The milking machine was first marketed in 1918, but we had never heard of it, and even if we had, we didn't have electricity or the money to buy it. When I was in the first grade, my two older brothers and Papa went out to milk the cows every morning and every evening, while I did my piddly little chores. I couldn't wait to milk like the big boys. We had one very gentle cow, and I persuaded Papa to teach me how to milk her. You squeeze the top of the teat with your thumb and first finger and then one by one squeeze with the other fingers, forcing the milk out. If you don't do it correctly, you just force the milk back up into the bag.

My hands were pretty small, but after some practice I was able to get the milk to come. When I thought I had all the milk, Papa would come and finish her off. We called it stripping. After about a week I got so good at it that he didn't check any more. At least not while I was around. After a few weeks of proudly going out to milk with the big boys, I got tired and decided to quit. To my surprise, they wouldn't let me. They liked not having to milk that one cow. I also learned a valuable lesson, that learning to do a job carries with it a certain responsibility.

Repeatedly squeezing a cow's teat, causes the muscles of your forearms to get very tired. Eventually these muscles get stronger, and you don't notice the strain quite so much. Those who milk in their youth have strong grips for the rest of their lives.

Milking morning and evening is a regular and demanding job. When the weather is good it isn't so bad, but sometimes it is very cold or snowing and blowing. Sometimes the rain is coming down in sheets and the trip from the house to the barn is a real adventure. Since we lived in the northern part of Idaho, the winter months meant darkness both morning and evening when we went out to milk. We had to carry a kerosene lantern for light and all the buckets we planned to fill. The lantern would be hung in the back of the stalls on a wooden peg, but it really didn't make much light.

Some of the cows had a tendency to kick if they didn't like the way you milked them or if their teats were a little sore. We put hobbles around their back legs which to keep them from kicking, but only used them when absolutely necessary because they were uncomfortable. By placing your head firmly in the cow's flank you

could usually discourage her from kicking.

The milking stools we used were made with just one leg, and our two legs formed the other parts of a three-legged stool. This arrangement helped us move quickly if a cow became fractious. We gripped the bucket between our legs so we could milk with both hands. It was dangerous to set the bucket on the ground, as the cow was apt to tip it over. We always had several cats in the barn, and they would come around begging for warm milk. Sometimes I would send a stream of milk toward them, and they would drink it right out of the air, and then lick themselves to get what had splattered on other parts of their anatomy.

Sometimes in the summer we milked out in the barnyard where it was more pleasant. But some cows had to be milked in the barn because they wouldn't stand still and had to be put in a stanchion. A stanchion was a wooden device that kept the cow's head over the manger. I used to go barefoot in the summer and one evening when I was milking my gentle old cow outside, she stepped over onto my bare foot and wouldn't move. I beat on her side and screamed at her, but she just kept chewing her cud. I suppose she wondered what was the matter with that crazy kid. Papa heard the ruckus and came and pushed her off my foot. The ground was fairly soft, so my foot went down under hers, but as long as her considerable weight was on it, I couldn't pull it out. My foot was only bruised and scratched.

When milking was finished, the job with the milk was not yet done. The milk had to be carried to the house, strained through a fine cloth, and put through the separator. The separator was an ingenious machine that separated the cream from the milk. Before people had separators they let the milk sit until the lighter cream rose to the top to be skimmed off. This is where the name, "skimmed milk" came from. Skimming the milk was not nearly as efficient as using the separator. The separator had a large container on top where the warm, fresh milk was poured. It had a handle which you had to turn faster and faster and it turned a cone-shaped metal bowl very rapidly. The handle had a little bell on it, and when you turned the handle fast enough the ball in the bell was held out by centrifugal force, and the bell stopped ringing. You then knew you were going fast enough for the machine to work properly. You then

turned on a spigot which released the milk into the spinning metal cone. Since milk is heavier than cream, it is thrown by centrifugal force to the outside of the bowl and the lighter cream remains in the center. The milk runs out one spout into a container and the cream out the other spout into another one.

The separator had to be dismantled each day and the parts washed carefully in hot water. Mamma or Fern did this, and Fern remembers that she hated this job. The separator was very efficient, as the milk looked very much like the "fat-free" milk you buy today. We fed the separated milk to the calves and pigs and put the cream into a five-gallon can. When the can was full, we put it out by the main road to be picked up by the creamery. The creamery paid us regularly for the cream according to the butter-fat content. Unfortunately, we drank whole milk and sometimes added a little cream to make it richer. We also used whole cream and whipping cream. All this cholesterol from cream, eggs, pork, beef, and other things we had in abundance, gradually plugged up my arteries. By the time I was sixty, I began to have angina or heart pain.

We also used some of the cream to make our own butter. This was not a daily chore and could be done any time during the day or the long winter evenings. We put the cream into a churn and stirred it until the butter formed. There were several types of churns, but the one we used the most was a narrow container about two feet tall, with a lid that had a hole in the middle. A wooden stick about the size of a broom handle with a wooden cross nailed to the bottom fit through the hole. With the lid on tightly, we moved the wooden handle up and down until the butter formed. This was a lazy job that could be done with one hand while you held a book or magazine in the other. After the butter formed, we poured off the buttermilk and worked the butter with a butter paddle until all the buttermilk was squeezed out. We added a little salt as we churned. Mamma was expert at this job, and I don't remember anyone else ever doing it.

During the winter, when the cows spent the night in the barn, another regular chore was scooping up the manure they had deposited during the night and hauling it to the manure pile. By spring the manure pile had grown to a good size and was spread on the garden or a nearby field. My father used what was called a

fresno, a large scoop pulled by two horses. He would scoop up about a cubic yard of manure, and when the horses had pulled it to the garden or field, he would push up on the two handles and dump it into a pile. By the time he had moved the entire pile, there were many smaller piles. My job was to spread it around evenly with a manure fork. He never let me use the fresno because dumping it was dangerous if you didn't know what you were doing.

Mamma and Fern did the work inside the house, and by the time we had finished the morning chores, they had breakfast ready. By then we were really hungry. We always had a very hearty breakfast, either homemade biscuits or pancakes along with fried eggs, bacon or ham, and oatmeal or ground wheat mush. Cooked cereal was always called mush.

Another regular chore, especially during the winter, was keeping the woodboxes full. There was a large woodbox in the kitchen beside the kitchen stove and another in the living room near the heating stove. Papa or one of the older boys split the wood in the woodshed, and the younger children carried it to the woodboxes. We younger children were not allowed to use the ax for obvious reasons, although when I got older, I learned to chop wood. Making sure you chop the wood and not yourself is an exacting science. The kitchen wood had to be cut small enough to go into the firebox of the range, but the wood for the heating stove could be larger. In fact the large knots that couldn't easily be split made the best heater-stove wood as they burned longer and hotter. Cutting and carrying wood was usually done in late afternoon but before dark.

When the morning chores were done, we either got ready and went to school or, in the summer, began whatever job to be done that day. These jobs varied depending on the season and the individual's age and capabilities. The first job in the spring was plowing the fields. Papa did this while we were still in school. He used what was called a gang plow which had two steel blades, each fourteen inches wide with one a little behind and beside the other. Each round, the plow threw dirt into the furrow that was left the last round. Six horses pulled the plow, with three just in front and three more in front of them. The two horses on the right knew they had to walk in the furrow, so keeping the horses in line after the first round wasn't diffi-

cult. Papa sat on the plow's seat. When you only cover 28 inches each time you go around an 80-acre field, it takes a long time. When I came home from school, I always checked to see how much Papa had plowed that day. You could tell by how much fresh earth had been turned up. As I recall, it took two or three weeks to plow the entire field. We also had a small walking plow with only one plowshare which was used for smaller areas like the garden.

We had three, 80-acre fields, but only two were used for wheat and we only plowed one of them each year. This is because we summer-fallowed, which meant we only got a crop from one of the two fields each year. Whichever field Papa was plowing in the spring, the other had been planted to winter wheat the autumn before. This wheat came up a few inches in the fall and then lay dormant under the snow all winter. When it warmed up in the spring, it began to grow. It was mature and ready to harvest by July.

The field that was plowed in the spring had to be worked all summer to keep down the weeds and preserve the moisture. This was mostly done with the harrow. The harrow was a square metal frame with metal spikes attached that penetrated the earth about six or eight inches. The squares were about five feet wide, and when three of them were attached together, it made a harrow 15 feet wide. A team of four horses could easily pull it across the field. The harrow broke up the clods and smoothed out the soil. Harrowing the land periodically during the summer kept the weeds down and stirred the soil to preserve the moisture. After each summer rain we harrowed the field again. Harrowing went much faster than plowing because each round covered so much more space. After school was out, harrowing was often my job when I got to be about ten years old. We had one big, gentle (perhaps lazy) horse which had been trained to walk behind the harrow and not step in it. I would ride him and drive the team around and around the field. Papa usually made the first round because he was afraid I might carelessly let the harrow hook onto the fence that surrounded the field and take out a section. When I was a little older we sometimes fastened a board on top of the harrow where I could stand and drive the horses. I have also walked behind the harrow, but it is very exhausting walking in the soft dirt all day.

This horse was sometimes slower than the others, and if I couldn't urge him along fast enough, I would hook the reins, which were fastened together, over the saddle horn, and this would slow the team. But I wasn't strong enough to hold them back if they really wanted to go. One time I hooked the reins over the saddlehorn, but they missed and slipped over the horse's head. I knew the team would go faster and faster and eventually break into a run as they headed for the barn. A runaway team can do a lot of damage to themselves and whatever they run into, so I dived off the horse, ran as fast as I could, fell down on the dragging reins, and let the horses drag me until they stopped.

After that I was more careful, but little boys *do* get sleepy in the hot sun on a gently swaying horse, hour after hour. An 80-acre field is a large field. The first round was a mile and a half, and of course each round got a little shorter. When you are on the back side you are a long ways from home and you feel like you are really on your own. It was not strenuous work, just long and monotonous. While I was harrowing, Papa, Everett, and Lyle were doing other jobs that were too strenuous for one my age, such as shocking grain bundles or pitching hay. On the farm there was plenty of work for everyone.

By the time I got old enough to shock grain, farming methods had changed and grain was cut with a combine. It was called a combine because it combined two steps of cutting and threshing. I did get involved in haying, however. When we lived on Camas Prairie, the hay was in bundles. Each year when the wheat was maturing and had headed out, but was still green, Papa would cut a swath around the edge with the binder. This way the first round of the combine would not knock down a lot of wheat. There had to be room for the main body of the machine to travel with the sickle out into the standing grain. The binder was an ingenious machine that cut the grain, and when enough had gathered to make a bundle, it would put binder twine around it, tie a knot, cut off the string, and kick the bundle out onto a carrier. I tried and tried to see how it tied that knot, but it did it so fast I couldn't see how. The bundles were tied very tightly so they didn't fall apart, and they were all the same size. Periodically Papa would trip the carrier and the bundles would fall onto the



At Gold Creek on the George Harris place about 1915. The two boys on the left are identified as Everett and Ray Harris.

ground. Each round they were tripped in the same place so that someone could come along and set them up on shocks. A shock was a lot of bundles standing up on end, leaning together with the grain sticking up. Thus if it rained they would not mold. As soon as the shocks were dry, they would be pitched onto a wagon, hauled to the barn, and stored in the haymow for winter feed. We always planted part of the third field to oats and cut it when still green for hay. The oat hay was better fodder for the milk cows than wheat hay.

One problem with the binder was that if the standing grain was really heavy, the horses had to move fast so the binder wouldn't plug up. My horse was always slow, and he slowed down the rest of the team. My job was to ride him with a hand whip, and when Papa shouted, I would bring it down across the horse's rump to increase his speed. If the binder plugged up, Papa had to stop, clean it out, and then back up the team to get good momentum before attacking the heavy stand of grain. Some people used a long whip called a black snake for this purpose, but Papa seemed to prefer to have me do it.

When we moved to Texas Ridge, haying was quite different because we had alfalfa hay instead of wheat and oats. Alfalfa hay is cut with a mowing machine and then raked into windrows and piled into loose shocks with a hayfork. When it is thoroughly dried, it is pitched onto a wagon and hauled to the barn

where it is lifted into the barn with a derrick. A single horse pulled the hay into the loft. It usually took five or six lifts to bring up an entire load. My first job was to lead the horse when told and to stop him when someone shouted from the loft. Later I was up in the loft, moving the hay around so more could be fitted in. Fern was then drafted to lead the horse, which she did rather reluctantly, as it didn't seem like girls' work. By the time Fern got married, Mary was old enough to lead the horse.

After the hay was unloaded, Papa and I took the wagon back out into the hayfield for another load. He pitched the hay up into the wagon, and I stayed on the wagon, moving the hay around to make room for more. Papa taught me how to do this, and I became quite an expert. He would brag to the neighbors about what a good loader I was, and of course this made me a more willing worker.

On Texas Ridge we had another money crop besides wheat, and that was dried beans. Raising beans brought on a new kind of work. Beans are planted in rows, far enough apart to be cultivated. The cultivator was pulled by two horses and straddled a row, throwing the dirt up around the row of plants. After cultivating there were a few weeds left between the plants which had to be hoed. On Camas Prairie I had hoed the garden, but that was a small job compared to hoeing a large field of beans. Hoeing a row that goes up a hill, down the other side, and

over another hill before you can see the end, seems never ending. When you do get to the end, you just turn around and start back on the next row. One year after we finished hoeing, Mr. Sandquist hired us to help his boys hoe. He paid us the standard wage of one dollar a day. This was more interesting than working at home because we were with Gene and Ernest Sandquist. I don't remember how many hours we worked, but it was all day. I later got a job cultivating beans for two dollars a day and felt I was really getting rich. It took me four days to finish the man's fields and then he never did pay me. He said Papa owed him eight dollars for some alfalfa seed.

When I was about fourteen I had gotten my growth spurt and felt as though I was a grown man. But Papa did not let me do certain jobs that he thought were too hard for me. I thought I was strong enough to pitch the hay on the wagon, but he didn't. One year when we had finished haying, one of our neighbors asked for some help to finish theirs. Papa sent me over to help. There were two families of men there, and both families happened to be rather small in stature. I was taller than most of them, so they put me out in the field pitching hay up onto the wagons. They ran two wagons, so that as soon as one was loaded, another one pulled right in behind it. At home we only used one, so we got a little rest driving from the field to the barn. I was very proud to be able to do this job, but it was a hot day, and as the day wore on I began to realize why Papa wouldn't let me pitch hay. I drank lots of water and sweated profusely. I managed to get through the day, but by quitting time I was getting pretty sick. When you help neighbors, it is customary for them to provide meals at noon and after work. I told them I wasn't hungry and started walking home, about 3/4 of a mile away. I stopped several times to vomit up the water, and when I got home I just lay on the couch and groaned. Mamma was a typical mother, and I could hear her chewing out Papa for sending me over there to work so hard. He explained that he thought they would put me up in the barn moving the hay back or driving a hay wagon and not out in the field pitching hay. He promised Mamma not to send me again unless he went with me. It made me appreciate Papa's care for me. He even did my chores for me that evening.

After haying and harvest, the field that had

been summer-fallowed had to be planted. This was done with a machine called a drill. The seed wheat was put into boxes located on top of the drill, and as the wheels turned, it was fed at just the right speed down between two disks that opened the ground letting the seed drop in. A short chain dragged behind each set of disks covering the grain with earth. The rows of wheat were about three inches apart. There was enough moisture in the ground to sprout the wheat and usually fall rains shortly followed.

The wheat would come up in the fall, and then lie under the snow all winter to begin growing again early in the spring. This was special winter wheat that had to go through a winter in order to produce properly. Oats and spring wheat had to be planted in the spring or they would die during the cold winter. Grain planted in the spring did not mature nearly as early as the fall crop.

Papa always did the drilling himself. This was partly because it was after school had started, but mainly because you had to be very careful not to overlap the last round and not to leave gaps between the rounds. When the grain began to come up, you could look up on the hill from the road and see exactly how expertly the drilling had been done. If it was carelessly done, the men of the community had a good laugh as they drove by. All the men knew this, so they were not about to be laughed at. When a mistake is made in drilling wheat, there is no way to undo it.

James Bramblet now lives in Tacoma, Washington. His story will be continued in the next issue.



James Bramblet at three years

Bless or Blast Those Birds!

Erma Burton Bower

My husband shot starlings! For the first two years I fought this, "hammer and tongs." A bird is a bird is a bird the same as a rose is a rose is a -!

Imagine me being married to a killer of birds! Me, who wouldn't order an expendable rooster beheaded for Sunday's dinner. Me, who wouldn't mash a spider without first carrying it out the door at least three times. Me, who often rescued mice from kittens, or threw the one fish back because I could not watch it die. Shooting starlings went against every principle I possessed. I believe in preserving all of Nature's creatures. "Live and let live" has been the law of my life. Imagine my horror every time I heard that shotgun blast! I envisioned black birds dropping like flies, feathers flying every which way.

My husband never shot in front of me, but my ears were trained to that unholy gunfire. He never missed, "Deadeye Charley." Ignoring the situation did not help the birds, but ostrich-like, I preferred to not see or hear. My trailer walls were thin enough to carry in every sound; even a raindrop made a plop. I had to pull my curtains and wear earplugs, or note the starlings falling. No amount of wheedling or badgering could stop my man from killing those birds. I tried everything from threatening to build a special house for them to leaving home myself. Nothing changed him.

"The (unprintable) starlings destroy the other birds," he argued.

"That is their nature," I insisted. "They can't help that they were born starlings."

"Then *I can* help it," was his final statement. Every time I heard that gun I went around

thinking unkind thoughts about my husband and mumbling in my head words that couldn't be spoken above a whisper. "Should I establish a private cemetery for starlings," I wondered.

Many articles have been written about this particular bird. Some of them say a starling can imitate other birds. If so, he will soon have to begin imitating the blue birds, the tree swallows, and the robins, not to mention the lowly sparrow. With the passing of time I have noted the passing of the birds. I cannot speak for the meadow larks, the killdeer, and the doves that grace our landscape, but I have no reason to feel that the starling would pass up such likely

targets. Their known prey are the birds who yearly nest in our cherry trees and in the houses we have so carefully put up for them. They no sooner set up housekeeping when the starlings begin their dirty work.

At first the intruders avoided the territory near our dwelling (they were swift, shy, and smart). Now they have grown bolder. In the early morning and evening hours they come to harass the nesting birds. Whether they are foraging for food or just exercising the cussed streak in their nature could be anybody's guess. Having long needle-sharp beaks, they reach far back into

each house, pulling out the nesters, the eggs, or the nestlings, as the case may be. This season they have even removed the nesting materials as fast as the dwellers can replace them. Thus, our birds have flown to more favorable localities. Having witnessed the destruction, despite all our efforts to prevent it and having listened to their gleeful racket while they destroy a nest, I have learned to despise the starlings even more than the boom of the gun that slays them.



Charlie Bower and Mary Butters

Just as every hunter is not a sportsman, some birds are not "birds." They are "barbarians!" Although I abhor killing I would humanely, if possible, eliminate every starling in this country.

"Charley!" I scream, "why aren't you out there shooting those blasted birds?"

With a sly look he answers, "Because you told me not to kill them."

I am not floundering in my own arguments.



*Erma Bower relaxing
in the kitchen, 1977*

"But that was last year," I retort. "This year they are destroying all our other birds."

"They were doing that last year, too," he tells me as he takes his leave.

Dejectedly I go about my housework, muttering between my teeth, "Darn birds! I'd like to feed them some starling sterilizer pills. Then I could pray to heaven that their blasted eggs wouldn't hatch."

Erma Burton Bower's collection of short pieces, including these two, have been published under the title, Semi-Orphans. We plan to publish more of these witty slices of farm life in subsequent issues.

Mrs. Bower, who died in June 1994 at the age of 85, was born in Princeton and lived all her life in Latah County. After the death of her first husband in 1961, she married Charles Bower and moved to Big Bear Ridge. Mr. Bower, who still lives on the ridge, is a long-time member and volunteer of the Latah County Historical Society.

Yea Good Old Days! Erma Burton Bower

The "good old days" never actually existed. Like the wonderful pies that grandmother used to make, they are leftover memories, accumulated during childhood, with all the unpleasant-ries deleted by the passing of years. The mind plays happy tricks on us, making us forget the long trek to the hilltop orchard in our bare feet to obtain the apples for grandmother's masterpiece; the wood we so laboriously cut and carried to heat the old iron oven in which it was baked. By the time it was served we kids were so famished that it became "food for the Gods" and as such, it was remembered.

Do you recall the innumerable trips we made with gallon lard buckets to the distant creek for water? Or sometimes it was to the backyard well where the old pump required the weight of two-and-a-half kids to depress the handle. The water came in dibs and dabs, taking forever to fill the bucket. Remember that ever-thirsty reservoir attached to the cook stove? We never could figure how so much cold water went into it and so little came out.

Then there was the hungry woodbox that worked on the same principle, and the ashbox

that worked in just the reverse. (How we dreaded emptying the ashes, as they got into our eyes and noses and made such a mess for us to clean up afterwards.)

My memories cling to that battered granite washbasin residing on an apple box outside the back door where work men and dirty kids were expected to wash up at mealtime. We tried to wash our faces first, before the water became too saturated with grime and lye soap, though we sometimes became half-frozen before our hands were considered clean enough to make a dash for the old roller towel hanging inside the kitchen door. Finding a clean, dry spot usually required the magic of a Houdini. Luckily a wet kid with his eyes full of lye soap is not very particular. A gunnysack would have served the purpose.

My fondest memories of the "good or bad, old days" are of the hours, when snuggled between handmade woolen comforters and a feather tick, I drowsily listened to the pitter patter of rain-drops on the roof so close above my head.

Those were the moments, the stuff that dreams are made of!



This photograph of a group dressed in their ordinary work clothes suggests real life and work on a farm. The photo is identified only as "Triplet Farm, 1910."

Two scenes of family life



These recently donated photographs depict different family themes. The one above was taken in 1905 or 1906 of the Whitney family. Traveling from Oregon to Idaho, for two years the family camped two miles north of Potlatch. To keep warm during the winter, they piled snow around the base of their canvas-topped cabin for insulation. In front, wearing a white shirt, is Manly Whitney holding the pet dog. In back stands Pearl Whitney Wood. Her son, Glen Wood, donated the photo.

The photo below, dated 1898, shows members of several families gathered for a work party. They are tearing worn-out clothing into strips to be woven into rag rugs. The site was in the Collins neighborhood of Whitman County. Jeanette Talbott donated this rare image.



The Woodland Roofs of our Pioneers

John B. Miller

My subject deals with the hand-split and hand-formed shakes and shingles (generally split from blocks of western cedar) that formed the roofs for our forebears of the early log cabins and other buildings in this part of Idaho. The discussion considers definitions, distinctive types, how they were made (methods, tools, equipment), and also certain specifics of use.

Preceding the shingle, and therefore first in use, was the shake. This statement and conclusion stems partly from origin and definition of the word *shake* and partly from thoughts about the isolation and living conditions of those who were early migrants to the forest regions.

What a shake is can be better understood from the dictionary definition: "A shingle split from a piece of log, usually three or four feet long" (Webster), and "a shingle or clapboard formed by splitting a short log (into a number of pieces)" (Random House). According to these definitions, a shake is always a split piece, while a shingle does not have this necessary requirement. To understand any further difference, if a further one is to be made, it becomes necessary to look at the purpose of the shake at the time of its origin, and then further to what pioneers were prone to regard the *shake* as compared to the *shingle*.

These came about only after sawmills made lumber available. As a matter of fact neither was the hand-made shingle an option until there was lumber, because by their very nature, conventional shingles required some kind of an under-roof of closely spaced boards. There were other roofs, of course: tar or roofing paper, simple boards, and eventually galvanized sheet-iron.

Tar paper was an option if or when it was accessible. If a store building or bank was built with a flat roof or one with a very gentle slope, tar paper might be the only choice. Such roofs appeared in remote towns even at the turn of the century. However, tar paper roofs did not well endure the rigors of weather and other types of damage. They needed lots of maintenance — patch, and then patch again. There was yearly damage from sun, snow, and ice which caused the roofs to expand and contract. Snow shovels were a special enemy.

Tar paper was often used on the roofs of semi-permanent buildings such as those in logging camps. Yet, for early-day dwellings and log cabins in particular, a tar paper roof was a rare thing. Shakes or shingles were much more durable and free from trouble.

I remember a photograph of one very snugly built log cabin with a tar paper roof. Taken about 1906 at Camp 8 of the Potlatch Lumber Company near Bovill, this cabin was the family home of Homer Felton, a woods boss or camp foreman.

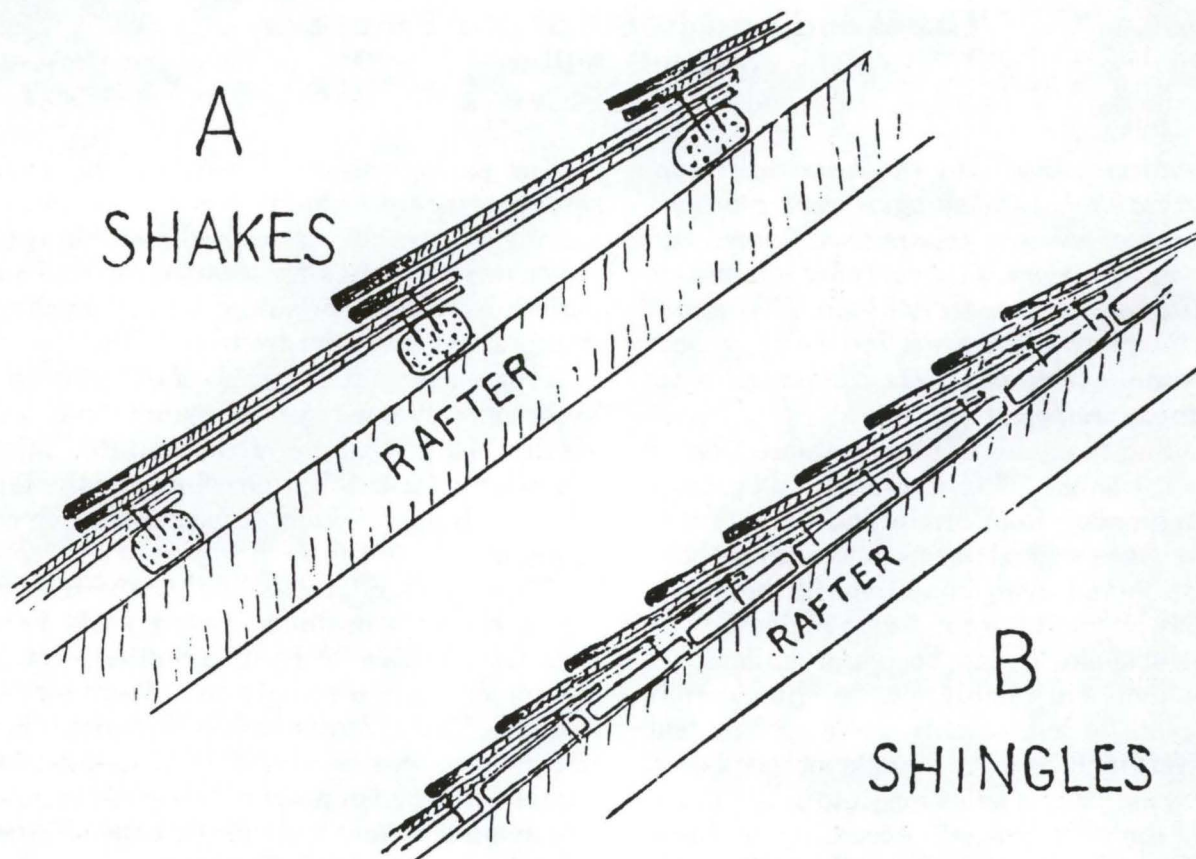
With an abundance of lumber available from the early day sawmills, board roofs became common. Almost without exception, however, these roofs were seen only on outbuildings such as sheds. Two layers of boards were necessary to make them weather tight. With cedar readily available, a man of practical mind, frugal habit, and available time would prefer expending some labor for a better roof of shakes.

In forested areas, cedar was always available and usually near at hand. In outlying areas where the only trees were pine and fir, roofing materials could have been split from pine. While I have not heard of this being done in Idaho, I know it was done in areas in the east, such as Wisconsin. Pine does not split so easily and beautifully as cedar, nor will it resist time and weather so well, but for a shorter number of years, it does the job. A good cedar roof will stay quite sound for 30, perhaps even 40 years.

Evolution: shake to shingle

For origins, we must go back in time to an early American frontier, to the people, their tools and cabins; to remote forests; to a time of hewn timbers but probably no lumber. Building tools included the axe, wedges and a maul for splitting logs, probably a hatchet and adz, possibly a saw and auger, but little else. Nails, if at hand, were handmade and use sparingly.

Placement of log walls came first, then the frame for a roof. This consisted of a ridgepole and, running parallel with the ridgepole and side walls, several longitudinal timbers. For practical reasons, these were determined by cabin size and were generally three feet or more apart. The roofs consisted of shakes, split slabs



There was a difference between old-time shake roofs and the shingle roof in lengths and how they were laid. The lengths are drawn to scale: shakes at 30 inches and shingles 20. A. Shakes usually spanned between horizontal stringer-type supports spaced 24 inches apart which, in turn, were held by walls and rafters. If rafters were widely spaced, the stringers would be thick and strong. If closely spaced, the stringers could be of lighter materials such as poles of conventional two-by-fours. B. Shingles were ordinarily laid on an under-roof of boards quite closely spaced, and each layer was set back from the one beneath. This drawing shows a set-back of 6 inches, a tight lay that provides three-layer thickness. The exposure could be increased to 8 or 9 inches, still providing a good roof. Drawn by author.

of wood laid in double layer, wall to timber, then to timber, and eventually to ridgepole. Split laboriously from logs with crude tools and then tied, pegged, or nailed to the supports, it was convenient that shakes be few in number and be long, thick and strong to support snow.

In early cabins of eastern America, wood floors were also made of split logs. Carefully fitted at the edges, the flat, split surfaces were then smoothed with an adz. My grandfather, John G. Miller, a woodworker, skilled adzman, and former resident of Deary, helped build such floors in the woods areas of Ohio and Indiana during the early 1850s.

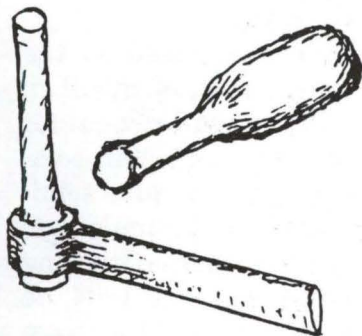
The split shakes and shingles of early Idaho forested areas developed as descendants of the generally longer, more crudely formed shakes identified with the earlier period of American history. This was made possible by better tools such as the crosscut saw and the froe (a cooper's

tool), and better materials including easily split cedar and abundant wire nails and lumber.

From cedar blocks

The material for early-day cedar shakes and shingles in Latah County and the surrounding region was sawn as blocks from the best, relatively limbless, lower section of a tree. Large cedar trees, as a consequence of flaring roots, have very broad stumps. Considerable taper and a tendency for twisted grain may continue upward for several feet. A length of this part, six or seven feet, might be split to posts. Then one generally found clear wood for shakes or shingles, quite often providing half a dozen or more of good, straight-grained blocks. Good timber, found in wet and shaded areas, would produce blocks ranging from 18 to 30 inches or more in diameter. The cut blocks were broken with a splitting maul into square-sided chunks

six or eight inches to a foot in size, and could be seasoned before final splitting to shakes or shingles.



At left is the steel-bladed froe with a mounted wooden handle. At right is the froe club, cut and hand-shaped from a pole or stout piece of tough wood.

The tool for splitting was the froe (or frow). As shown in the sketch, the froe was a thick blade of steel with a wooden handle extending upward at one end of the blade. Positioned properly on a cedar piece to separate a sheet of the desired thickness, it was driven

into the wood with a blow from a wooden club. Using leverage applied by rocking the handle forward and back, the froe was worked downward in the split until complete separation was achieved. As described in my book about northern Latah County, *The Trees Grew Tall*, page 34, there was an artful technique to this that helped the final product:

The shake of the homesteader was a uniform, beautiful sheet, carefully shived by hand from a cedar block, and often tapered by the artful use of the splitting froe. As the sheet was separated from the block, it was bent to attain the desired thickness and taper. If bent across the froe blade and toward the block, the split in the separating fiber bit more deeply into the wood, and the shake was thickened downward. If the shake seemed to be running thick, it was bent outward, away from the block. Excessive thickness was thus corrected.

One hand was on the froe handle leaving the other free to grasp the shake to bend it as desired. Turning the cedar block end for end after each split also helps taper the shake.

Cedar roofs, as they were

To settlers of the woods in early years of this century, shakes and shingles were different individuals. The shake, generally a longer piece split at about 30-inch lengths as compared to 20 inches for the shingle, was distinguished addi-

tionally by how it was laid: in double layer, 24 inches "to the weather." The shingle was laid with each tier (except the first two at roof edge) stepped back six, perhaps even eight or nine inches from the layer just beneath. The diagrams compare these schemes.

Shakes were made to span 24 inches between one supporting beam or stringer and the next above. Very little lumber, if any, was needed for this. The materials, hewn beams and poles, could be found in the forest. For sheds and outbuildings, nothing else was needed.

A shake roof was a fine roof, perfect in its ability to shed water. However, it was a poor shelter against cold, offering little resistance to the escape of warm air rising upward from the stove or fireplace. There was no good way, at roof or rafter level, to stop this loss. The solution was to put in pole joists above the living space to support a floor of boards or split slabs of wood. This would create a "loft" to store belongings. Spare clothes and bedding, supplies, canvas, empty sacks, even animal skins or hides could be spread there to improve warmth below. It also provided sleeping space.

The very nature of shingles demanded some kind of a board under the roof. Sawmills soon provided lumber, and the only obstacles were finding money to buy lumber and having the means to haul it. For many, shingles in lieu of shakes became an option. On the average, the shorter shingle had a better shape and was laid in a way to give a tighter and smoother roof.

The shingle horse

There were a few perfectionists who favored the smooth appearance of neatly, tightly fit shingles split by hand. The shingle horse provided this. The surface of a sawed shingle produced by a sawmill was inherently rough and it was seldom cut exactly with the grain of the wood. This type of shingle readily absorbs water and its rough, rather "wooly" surface is more subject to the growth of fungus, an agent of decay. By contrast, the ridged grain of split wood is clean and hard, perfectly channels water, and better resists deterioration.

The shaping was accomplished by selective shaving away the wood, generally at the thin end only, to increase taper to achieve uniformity. The work, performed on a shingle horse, was done handily with a drawing knife, a perfect tool for the purpose. It took time, but not in

excessive amounts. At the end, when the shingles went on the roof, the fits were good, sorting was minimal, and trimming was scarcely needed. These well-shaped shingles were also placed in the decorative gables.

The general appearance and design and the method of using the shingle horse are shown in the illustration. Heavily built to support a seated man, the main piece was a thick plank or heavy timber about four inches thick and twelve wide. The legs were just long enough for a man to sit comfortably astride and have freedom of motion. Above the bench, strongly attached, was an inclined piece which would support the shingle. There was a strong lever through a slot in the bench, hinged at bench level on an iron pin. A "head" at the upper end of the lever curved into a jaw-like piece above the inclined piece, and served to clamp the shingle. The jaw was closed by the workman pressing his foot on the lever, and then was released with a spring or counterweight when the foot was lifted.

Even though present in woodland areas, the shingle horse was not a very usual object. The shake was everywhere. This was not true for the hand-made shingle, which was crafted only by a few who wanted them on the roofs and perhaps on decorative gables of well-built homes. I have personally used a shingle horse built by my father in about 1931. He built this to make shingles for a planned house on a farm he had just started in forested lands on the east fork of the Potlatch River, roughly two miles southeast of Bovill. This was his second shingle horse, for he had used one on his homestead around 1907.

Another shingle horse I know about was

The shingle horse in use. A lever with a strongly-built headpiece and jaw clamped the shingle in an inclined position with the thin end upward. Pressure on a foot-piece held the shingle firmly in place. A draw-knife was used for thinning and shaping. A spring or counterweight lifted the jaw when the work was completed. Drawn by author.



owned by Bill Boll, a former homesteader who worked for many years at Bovill as a skilled carpenter. I have a recollection that Pete Olson, a cedarmaker and part-time farmer, also had a shingle horse at his Bovill home.

My father occupied his homestead in the Ruby Creek area four miles south of Bovill in 1902. The first house, built as a requirement for "proving up," was the universal log cabin common to the homesteader. This cabin, plus semi-enclosed sheds hastily built as outbuildings, served for two or three years. After continuing working part time as a barber through 1904, he put up a building for use as a store at a crossroads that would become the town of Helmer. There, only four miles from his homestead, with his wife, brother Charlie, in-laws and eventually a partner to help, he was able to devote adequate time to business both at the store and the homestead.

A man named Steiner put in a mill at the homestead probably in 1906 to cut lumber from this and other nearby homesteads. With a supply of newly cut and seasoned lumber, he constructed a small but nicely built house for the family. This is where I was born in 1912.

My parents also bought land for a farm which became the Cedarview Dairy near the town of Bovill. They moved there in 1914. My father had lost his left leg from an accident in 1909, but that was not an absolute reason for abandoning the homestead. More than that, it was part of the general movement of people from forest homes to towns. Not enough children remained to justify operating rural, woodland schools. For my family, the eight-mile roundtrip journey from their homestead to a school in Bovill, through winter snow and over forest roads with steep mile-long climbs each way was impossibly difficult. They had also lost the Helmer store due to hard economic times. Then my family left the Cedarview Dairy and moved to property on the Little Meadow in 1930.

My family's first homestead cabin was located just within the western boundary of the claim near a spring. The hayshed and barn were 100 feet or so east of the original cabin, and

the buildings stood on a hillslope above the mill which was put in around 1906. The frame house was built about a year later, a little east of the original cabin, which became a chicken house. Some 300 yards northeast of the homesite along the road toward Bovill, a one-room schoolhouse was built, probably by my family. This served a community of nearby homesteaders and was administered through the county school system.

All the buildings except for the mill and the final frame house were built with shake roofs. The frame house had a roof of hand-split shingles that were shaved and shaped on a shingle horse. My Uncle Charlie did most of the carpentry on the house and probably made the shingles. The shingles on the gables had an intricate pattern of fan-like shapes.

On the Cedarview Dairy farm, shakes were used less extensively. Two of the main roofs were made of sawed shingles and the remaining roofs were made with shakes. The East Fork farm had roofs of hand-split cedar shakes or shingles, except for a central open haymow which was roofed with galvanized iron. There was a temporary house and other temporary buildings later replaced by permanent structures. The barn included two lean-to sections, one for cows and the other for horses and grain and a large pen for calves. Lumber and machinery were housed in a good shed.

The house was built in 1933, structurally complete enough to be comfortable through the winter. My father and I had prepared a large pile of hand-split shingles and built a shingle horse. Father spent many hours shaping these on the horse. Remembering the shingled gable his brother Charlie had made, he designed one that suited him, not so elegant as the other but still very individual.

How many shakes or shingles are needed for a farm of modest size? For my family's farm on the east fork of the Potlatch, we used at least 17,000 pieces. About half were hand-split shingles for the roof and gables of the house; the other pieces were shakes for the temporary structures and various outbuildings.

Then and now

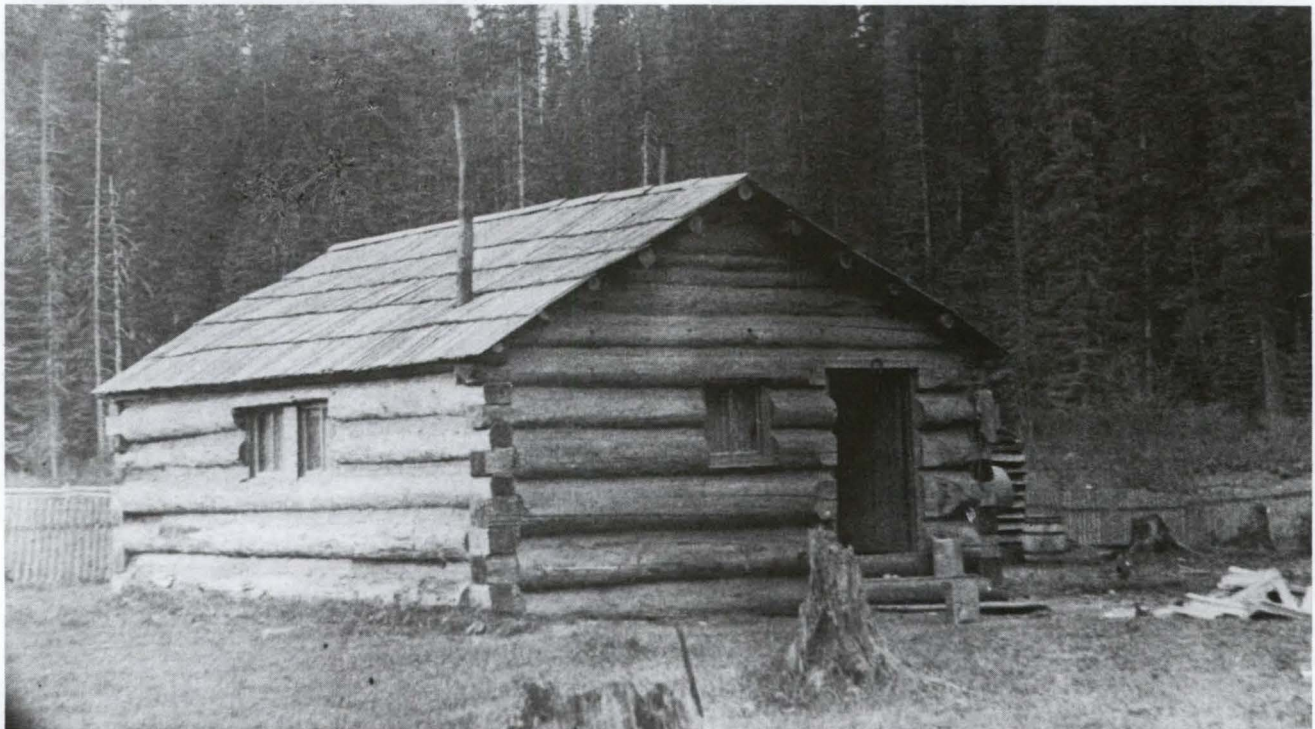
Around 1910, as more people moved from forested areas into towns, fewer built roofs of hand-split materials. In the 1930s, making handmade shake and shingle roofs virtually ended. The rustic appeal of split cedar remained even when most people had no access to cedar or were not disposed to split them by hand. To meet the demand for cedar roofing that simulated the hand-made type, machines were built to produce the modern shake. This shake, now in wide use, is usually 20 inches long. It is a hybrid to both shake and shingle and lain to the roof like shingles, with courses set back about 10 inches one to the next. Considering their ancestral origin and the wide variety of roofing materials called shingles, calling them shakes is best.



The William Miller home on the east fork of the Potlatch River, near Bovill in 1936.

John Miller, a lifetime member of the Latah County Historical Society, is the author of The Trees Grew Tall, a history of the forested areas of Latah County published in 1972. Mr. Miller grew up on his parents' homestead in the Bovill area and spent most of his working career as a field specialist in exploration geology. He has contributed several articles to the Latah Legacy and is a generous supporter.

Two log cabins with shake roofs



John Miller describes the above photograph as plainly showing the common method of laying shakes supported by horizontal stringers (poles or small logs), often supported in turn by a partition at mid-cabin. It is identified as the Dudley Hobbs cabin on Little Meadow, about 1914.

The photograph below is of a homestead cabin, possibly a timber and stone claim, on Moscow Mountain. The simple structure is embellished by decorative shingles and a trellis. The photograph's donor, Alma Lauder Keeling, noted on the back, "Mother had a beautiful flower garden by the porch. Folks who happened by the cabin many years later told us the flowers were still there and blooming." From the left are Mr. Lauder, Ralph and Alma Lauder in overalls, and their dog Topsy.



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In 1968 interested individuals organized the Latah County Historical Society to collect and preserve materials connected with the history of Latah County and to provide further knowledge of the history and traditions of the area. Every person, young or old, who is interested in the history of Latah County and who would like to assist in its preservation and interpretation is cordially invited to become a member. Subscriptions to this journal and a discount on books published by the Society are included in membership dues. Dues for the various classes of membership are as follows:

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The services of the Latah County Historical Society include maintaining the McConnell Mansion Museum with period rooms and changing exhibits; educational programs for youth and adults; preserving and cataloging materials on Latah County's history; operating a research library of historical and genealogical materials; collecting oral histories; publishing local history monographs; and sponsoring educational events and activities. Our mission is to collect and preserve artifacts, documents, photographs, diaries, and other items relating to the history of Latah County. These are added to the collections and made available to researchers as well as being preserved for future generations. If you have items to donate or lend for duplication, please contact us.

Our library and offices are located in Centennial Annex, 327 East Second St., Moscow. We are open Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon, and 1 to 5 p.m. The McConnell Mansion Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. Visits to the museum or research archives at other times can be arranged by calling (208) 882-1004. Admission is free to members and Donations are requested for non-members.