

BACK IN TIME

Some memories of my past that spans several years are expressed in a poem, which I wrote in 1989. Because of the overall theme of life, let me say, I think my expressed thoughts in this poem are timely and are set forth below. Read and enjoy my take on life as lived by the poor country boy some of the times of his life.

When my thoughts go back to years gone by, I think of so many things...some of which make me cry.

Memories of things which happened, (and not all were good), but we were blessed so many ways that I understood.

My grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins--so many I couldn't count. When we got together, we all could not get in the house.

The many things we did together as family, you wouldn't believe, it included picking up pecans and hickory nuts to raking up leaves.

We always had a garden, chickens, and a milk cow. My daddy said I had to do the milking because he never learned how.

Summer, winter, spring, or fall--it didn't matter the season. There were always things to do, and my daddy always had a good reason.

Back in the late twenties, the thirties, and forties too, sharecroppers had it rough, I'm here to tell you.

"From sunup to sundown" was what my daddy would say when we'd harness'em up and hitch'em up at the beginning of a day.

There was old "Tom" and "George," the favorite mule team of my dad, and when George died, old Tom sure was sad.

Tom just hung his head down and would not eat a bite, he was grieving for George and my daddy said that Tom was a pitiful sight.

We'd plow those fields, disk, harrow, and plant, we'd fertilize, and cultivate, taking care to chop out all the crabgrass.

When crops were laid-by you'd think we'd be able to rest for a few days. Oh, no! There were fences to mend and the baling of hay.

Before winter's cold, and the dirt roads became too muddy to pass, there was stove-wood that had to be cut, split and neatly stacked.

Cleaning out the barn and hauling out the "dumpings" from mules and cows and their unused hay, the use of a manure fork with a strong back and muscles was the only way.

Late summer, and early fall; "Let's pick that cotton" was my daddy's call. Picking by hand and dragging a nine-foot cotton sack was our only way of getting it all back.

The countryside where we lived was between the IC and the GM & O railroad tracks, and even today when I hear a train whistle, it calls me back.

Back to the days when my daddy and I walked behind "them" plows, he to me was the greatest of men and I just a boy learning how.

When summer came and days were hot, dusty, and oh! So long, it seemed that dinnertime wasn't ever going to come.

It wasn't until that freight-train whistled for Greenwood Crossing that my daddy would say, "Let's take 'em out," then we'd drop the traces of them old mules and head 'em toward the house.

We'd eat lunch (we called it dinner) then we'd take about thirty minutes just lying around, and then back to the field for the afternoon to do the same things until the sun went down.

Back in those times when things were so tough and not going right, you could be guilty of not seeing those which shown so bright.

Those, which truly did outshine the sun, moon, and all the others of whom I'm speaking, are my two sisters and my precious mother.

They shared the bad times working just as hard as any man. It is the way families do in hard times--each does whatever he can.

Nineteen thirty-six, things sure did seem to be better than the others, and in December, just before Christmas that year my sisters and I were blessed with a blond curly-headed brother.

We all grew up and I was the first to go. Like most young men there were answers I wanted to know.

So with a bus ticket and forty dollars in my hand, I said to my daddy, "Look, Daddy, I want to be my own man."

Eighteen years old when I left home on that June day, and it was sad to my daddy's heart as I went away.

I broke my daddy's heart, as I look back on that day, you see; because since that time I've had the same thing happen to me.

Reflecting back in time is good therapy for me; memories of the past were reflections that came to be.

Good times or bad are just parts of life which make us what we are; we profit from experiences in life, so to speak, as we reach for the stars. "You all keep reaching"

By: *William T. Richardson, Jr.*