

## Geneva County Great Depression To The Great War - Heritage book

Little good can be said about the 1930's, but there were some. Economically speaking, it was a very hard time. The "Great Depression" was in full swing throughout the 1930's . There were no jobs, with the exception of those the Government created. These were menial type jobs such as clearing waste land, working on road projects and some library documentation. Most of these jobs paid a wage of \$.50 per day, it beat nothing.

As to the good things that happened during this time, there were a few. One that I remember was the closeness of the family and friends. There was no television, and very few radios. People who had some idle time whiled it away in casual conversation. Great tales were told at such sessions, and therefore handed down to the next generation. Other activities were efforts of accomplishments. These entailed quilt making, peanut shelling, and candy making. In the fall cattle and hogs were butchered and processed for the coming year's meat. Neighbors would get together and the labor would be mixed with laughter from the conversation carried on during their labor. I suppose that it made the work less of an ordeal.

The kids that were too small to be of service, played at such games as marbles, skip-the-rope, or hide-and-go-seek. One of these games that adults also enjoyed, emanated out of necessity, simply because there was no money and the desire for entertainment did not diminish. The forces of invention took hold and the results was a game called fire-ball. The materials were simple and available at little or no cost. Our Mother would provide us with rags and twine from flour sacks that we would make into balls. Then for a nickel one could purchase a gallon of kerosene. The balls were then soaked in the kerosene for days, and then at the night of the celebration, the balls were set afire one at a time and thrown up and down the roadway until they burned away. They had a trail of flame that made one think of a meteor.

The days work was long and hard. The nights were for rest since tomorrow brought more of the same as the day before. Its hard to make today's kids understand living without air condition. They cannot understand that it became so hot that the metal bedstead would almost burn you to the touch.

Into such a life I was born. My first recollection was of the pleasantness of the life style that befell me. Sure the work was hard and there were things that my parents could not afford, but to a child these things did not matter. The world was great. My Mother and

Father were of the type that took great periods of time with us kids and therefore, life was a happy place.

However, life can change and things in life changes, my life was no different. I was thirteen when World War II began and my world turned upside down. So the whole world had changed and so you had too or be left behind. I knew that my world had changed when I watched as my older brother, Parker, joined the Navy. Not too long after, my Dad announced that the general merchandise store, Harris Brothers in my hometown of Slocomb, needed help to run their store. So, for the sum of \$3.00 per day, I took my first job away from the farm. My life would never be the same again.

The world of commerce became my world other than school and my continued work at the farm. You see, I only worked at the store on Saturday and holidays. In those days stores did not open for business on Sunday.

Many of my memories were created while working at that store. People, places, conversation, and knowledge that I gained while working at that store became all or a part of my formulation as a person. Gaining the confidence to meet and talk to people, I consider an ability I acquired from that experience. Another was the knowledge that no two people are the same in every respect. That you must deal with this aspect of life if you wish to acquire the confidence of the people. *Submitted by Max Kelly*