

172. "Charley, where's your fiddle?" We'll have a little dance. George, call for any dance you want and we'll dance it." I thought of all the old dances and thought of the old French Four and he says, "All right, we'll show you how to dance that without any calling." The music started and he started too. The four couples were made up of all Birdsalls, the old man, three girls and four boys, one of the boys had to dance as a girl. They hadn't made but one or two changes before the old man kicked his slippers off, they made one or two more changes and the old gentleman set down in a chair. He says, "Em, pull my stockings off." That made him with nothing on his feet, barefooted, but he kept right on dancing and it was a bitter cold night too.

We used to get a great many pickerel through the ice up at Wall Lake by spearing them through holes. The biggest one gotten there that I know of Charley Birdsall got through the ice and it weighed sixteen pounds. Most of the spears at that time were made out of broken pitchforks, either three or four tined. They were heated and barbs put on the tines and they made darned good spears. When the tines were heated they were driven together so that they wouldn't be so wide apart that they would slip on each side of the fish but if they were too close together the fish would often times twist itself off from them. If you would hit a fish along in the back where it could wiggle from both ends it would often twist and tear itself loose before we could get it out and the best place to hit it was around the gills for it was harder for them to tear loose when hit there. Sometimes in spearing in a river where there was a current we would make a miscue and hit it in the tail and sometimes we would get it but most generally we wouldn't. During the summer we would spear them from boats at night by using a "jack-light" to see by. We had a pole in the front end of the boat about six or seven feet high and an iron

173. rod fastened to that, then bent so that it would stick out about two feet over the front of the boat. It was bent at the end to make a hook of it so that our "jack" wouldn't fall off. We had a wire basket fixed and a bail on it so that we could hang it over this iron rod and a ball of candle wick about six inches through, and a can of kerosene oil. We would drop the ball of wicking in a pail with a little kerosene oil in it and it would soak up the oil. We would get the ball pretty well saturated with the kerosene oil. We generally had a little hook. We'd generally raise the pail up under the wire basket and then take the hook to lift the candle wicking into the basket, that would keep the oil from dropping onto the boat as we carried it back and forth, it got dirty enough anyhow. Light a match and set the ball to going. Then we was ready for business. One fellow in the stern of the boat, about two fellows in the front of the boat, one on each side, of course we couldn't get clear to the front end. We'd paddle along slow and watch for fish. Take along in three or four feet of water you could see the bottom plain. We used to get some awful nice fish them nights but they are gone now. We would see the fish itself generally laying on the bottom with their heads up stream against the current, don't know as I ever saw one laying crossways of the current, and they were generally laying still. We fished this way on the river here also, both up river and down river. Up the river above Olsen's spring the water was only about two feet deep and we would go up river and down and back again. We would generally stay until about twelve o'clock. We used to get anywhere from five to twenty fish and they wasn't small ones either. We used to have a lot of fun with the mushrats coming around the light swimming under water and we wouldn't try to kill them but would drop the spear on them and give them a little prod. We couldn't fish that way on windy nights for the wind would

174. roughen the water so that we couldn't see through it, it had to be a still night. One night Orange Cleveland and myself were down the river just below Baldon's in the deep hole, there was two boats of us, Cleveland in one boat and I in another. I don't know how many we got that night but the two boats of us must have gotten 500 or 600 pounds of fish, they were mostly pickerel but there were a lot of black bass in with them too. I know my partner and myself divided equally between us what we got and after I got home I salted down over a hundred pounds of fish and we had a lot of fresh fish too. We about lived on fish that winter and we were darned glad to get them too. This may be called a fish story but I have told it so many times I am commencing to believe it myself. We spent most all night at this fishing and it was in the early winter of 1835. Up in this part of the country we called them spears but down in the Indian Territory they called the same things gigs.

There were a lot of fish then and during the winter the whole town would fish through the ice and in the summer would go out in boats or along the shore. There was no law then to prohibit us from catching fish in any way or any amount. Now there is a law prohibiting and no fish.

The ~~###~~ first dam was made out of brush, logs, dirt and rocks and it would settle and leave low spots in it. Along in the fall of about 1858 when the fish were going back down stream into deep water they would come to the dam and would try to get over it, the water wasn't running over the dam at the time, and they couldn't always make it but would have to slide back, once in a while one would get over far enough so that it couldn't get back. Fish would run nights but wouldn't in the daytime, so mornings everybody who wanted to would go out and pick up fish. Those that were too lazy to bait a

175. hook would go out and pick them up. I says to my sister, "Let's you and I go fishing tomorrow morning on the dam." and she says, "All right. Next morning way long before daylight we woke up and away we went for the dam fishing. It was an awful dark morning and we had to cross the millrace on a log. When we got over onto the dam we could hear fish flopping around then and we picked up a few, we kept picking them up as fast as we could see them and was throwing them over into one of these sink holes in the dam. As it got lighter we had a good trade in fish, we got a lot of fish, we was busy anyhow. They was one old fish came in there, it was an old daddy <sup>it must have weighed 15 or 16 lbs.</sup> and sister and I couldn't hold him it was too slippery for us but she had a little woolen shawl on across her shoulders. We rolled him into that and then we could handle him, that shawl was pretty sliny when we got the fish to where we could dump him. It got later and the fish kinda quit running, father came down to the dam and hollered breakfast and we went to breakfast. He said, "Children, how many fish have you got?" We estimated out cetch anywhere from about one wagon box full to about two, we were just guessing at it. So, after breakfast he took our wash tub, it was an old fashioned one, bigger than anything we've got now and went down to the dam. He set the tub down by the side of our fish and went to sorting them over. Any fish that would weight up to three or four pounds he would throw back into the river, they were little ones and we didn't care anything about them, but the bigger ones from five pounds up he kept. So he kept a sorting them that way, throwing the big ones in and the little ones out, until he got tired of sorting them that way so he went to picking out the big ones and throwing them into the tub. When he got the tub all he could pile on with them big ones he says, "Children, throw the rest back in the river." That sinkhole wher we had the fish in there wasn't

176. enough water in to keep them alive. I bet there were a lot of fish that Nett and I threw back in that weighed six and eight pounds each. Nett and I caught all the fish that came in that morning whether they weighed a pound or more. When the tub got full we couldn't carry it so we left it out on the dam and when anybody would come to the mill that day father would tell them to go out and help themselves to fish. I don't know who got our big one. When fish were plentiful that way we didn't care much for them but now we would like to have any of them, even those that we threw away. I used to like those that weighed about five or six pounds for they were just good size for frying. I was fishing most of the time so we had fish to eat most of the time. When I would come up with a string sometimes father would take one or all of them and give them to somebody that he thought would like them. One day I come up with a string of fish and he sent me down to Clarks. He told me to go down and give them to Mrs. Clark, they lived down where Pritchard's store is now. Clark was the brick man, he was making brick here. He had built a little addition on out of brick to the back side of the house and the kitchen floor was about four or five inches above the main floor so there was a drop down into the main house. I went to the back door and knocked and somebody hollered, "Come in." And as I stepped in I fell in, it was lower down than I expected, and away went my fish on the floor. They had a parrot, I had never seen one before, and it was the parrot that had hollered to come in. It was a great parrot to swear and when I fell down it let out an oath and I lit out the back door for it scared me. They got the fish and I got out. Later the parrot and I got to be good friends but I didn't like it very well and kept away from it for it wasn't my kind of game.

A few years later I was fishing down the river and two gentlemen

177. and a boy came to where I was fishing. They were all dressed up fine and had hats and gloves. I had a hat and a hickory shirt and pants rolled up. I had three or four pickerel and one of the gentlemen said, "what will you take for those fish." I shook my head that I didn't want to sell them. That's the first offer I ever had to buy fish, always before I had given them to anybody that wanted them. One of the gentlemen said to the others, It is after eleven, let's go to dinner." As they turned away I says, to them, "Gentlemen, if you want those fish you are welcome to them." They said they would like them and was willing to pay me for them. How were you going to put price on the fish when there were so many. I found out later that they were Dave Merrill and his son Al and Silas Pierce. They took the fish and I got paid for them later in different ways. I got more fish before I got back up town, I was fishing along the banks just below where the old stone blacksmith shop is when they came to me, there were no buildings along there then. This was in the late Sixties for they had come on the railroad to Iowa Falls and then had walked up here.

The first pair of skates I bought I got down to Mattox, who lived in the house on top of the hill above Idlewild. He had a pair of iron skates. In them days the blacksmith would make the iron part of the skates and we would put the wood on ourselves. One of the boys had some skate irons and he would sell them to me for twenty cents, so I walked down there and all the money I had was fifteen cents. I gave him his choice to keep the skates or give them to me for my fifteen cents and he took my fifteen cents. I put the wood on the skates, on the runners, and skated on them all that winter and in the spring I sold them for twentyfive cents. ~~The front part of the runners where the wood went~~

178. The iron part as made by the blacksmith was the runner with two uprights part way back from each end. On top of these uprights were # plates put sidewise to the runner part and in these plates were holes for screws to go through to fasten the wood part to the iron part. the wood part was made to fit the size of the shoe and then screwed onto the "T" shaped part of the iron. Then there were two holes morticed through the wood, one under the front of the heel and the other under the ball of the foot through which straps were put and the skates were fastened on with these straps. The front straps just went over the ball of the foot and fastened but the heel straps were brought to the back of the heel and crossed and then brought around to the front of the ankle and fastened. The two straps fastened this way made it so the skate couldn't slip. If the strap got too loose and couldn't be fastened tight enough to keep the skate from slipping a wooden wedge was put under the strap along the side of the foot to make it tight enough. The front part of the iron runners were curved up some, some more than others and some even going up to the shoe. On some of the fancier skates there was an iron acorn on the tip of the curved part to make it look nice. The first winter my straps were mostly ropes cause I couldn't buy any straps. Sometimes it was hard to get the ropes tight enough without a wedge but if it was a cold and freezing day they darned soon got tight enough for they would get wet and shrink and freeze that way. At night I would put the ropes by the fire and by morning they were dry again. The wood was usually willow or basswood or some other softer wood so that it would be easier to mortice the holes through but sometimes they were of oak or other hard wood. They were usually an inch or an inch and a half thick so there would be plenty of thickness to get the hole through, which was first bored through with a bit and then take a small chisel and

179. cut the holes out larger. In them days every carpenter knew what a mortice was and had tools to do it with. We didn't have skates for style in them days, we had them for durability. A year or two later there was an improvement in skates in that we could buy them already made with the wood part fastened on and smoothed up to look pretty. the next improvement was a little iron plate set right in your heel in which therewas a little slot and the heel was hollowed out above this slot. On the top of the upright part of the skate at the heel <sup>iron</sup> was a plate that your heel would rest on and in the middle of it was a projection about a half inch high "T" shaped. The front part of the skate was still a piece of wood fastened on with the straps as before. When you went to put your skate on you could go out on the river and set down on a piece of ice and take your jackknife and dig the dirt out of the hole in the heel and then insert the "T" shaped projection of the skate into it. When the projection was put in the hole in the heel the skate was at right angles to the foot and then the skate was twisted back to fit the foot and that fastened the projection into the heel so that it wouldn't come out. We thought that was a great improvement for it knocked the whey out of the strap for the back end of the skate but that didn't last long until the clamp skates came. We generally had good skating until snow came, everybody was out skating, old and young, big and little. Our main skating was on the pond here but sometimes we would go way up the river and sometimes down to the Falls. We used to have games on the ice, our main game was "shinny" and a good many shins were knocked too. We never would buy a shinny stick, the woods had to furnish them, just a crooked stick that we could knock a little clunk of wood, or something, with. We used to play "crack-the-whip" too. With that we would five or six or maybe ten get hold of hands with a good skater at one end and he'd



180. start out and go eight or ten rods with all following and then he'd stop sudden and give a jerk to snap the whip and sometimes the one at the other end would get jerked end over end and sometimes they would break holt and all go into a huddle. We would skate nights and have big bonfires all along the river and would most generally have a big log to sit down on around the fire. That was a good winter sport for us kids.

When we were going across at the foot of the Big Horn Mountains our road ran along the foot of a ridge and way off to the left of us along on the ridge, there was a path there, there was a flock of buffaloes. Perhaps a half a mile ahead of us they crossed our road. They were heading for water. When we see them coming Fred Sperry, Irv. Whitney and myself went us and set down just a little ways from the trail where the buffalo was coming. They kept a coming closter and closter and soon Whitney says, "Give me that gun, Fred. # I'll kill the biggest bull in the herd." There was one old fellow way behind following along. Generally when the Buffalo start that way they go on a lope, they don't walk along. So when the old bull came along Irv. took a shot at it and he stoped and throwed up his head and it was a question with us fellows which way that bull was going, coming our way or going the other, but he turned to the left and as he was ~~#####~~ going over the brow of the hill there was a fellow laying there in the grass waiting for the buffalo to go by and this man saw the bull coming and he jumped up and ran. The bull didn't turn to the right or left but kept going right straight along. The man jumped a dry ravine just a little way ahead of him but the bull was so near dead he couldn't jump it. So we three went down there and looked at the old fellow lying there dead in the ditch. Whitney wanted some tallow to grease his wagon with so he rolled him over and took out

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131. one of his kidneys, they was just covered with tallow. Mr. Whitney said to this fellow, "You must of shot pretty good at that fellow." "Yes," he said, "I did, I shot him twice in the head and once in the side." Whitney said, "Where's your gun?" Well, he didn't know, he'd lost it. He'd lost his hat, and one shoe and his revolver, and I don't suppose the bull saw him at all, he wasn't after him. Well, Mr. Whitney said, "There's your animal, you may have it" and walked off and left it, and the wolves got the benefit of it. By the time we got back to the wagons the buffalo had crossed the road and there lay seven dead buffalo right near the road, and not an ounce of meat taken out of any of them. There was eight dead there, the one Irv. killed and the seven others, that was killed just for cussed ugliness so they could say they had killed a buffalo when~~t~~ they got home.

Mr. Bailey, our old hunter, had heard you couldn't shoot a buffalo square in the forehead and and hurt it for the ball wouldn't penetrate the skul for the hair was so long and those old bulls with their bellering and pawing filled their hair with dirt and it made a regular mat of it so that the ball, they were all muzzle loaders then, would twist up in the hair and wouldn't go through. He crawled up a ditch to where there was some lying down. He got opposite of them, then he waited for an old bull to turn around so that he could get a good shot at it. He turned his head around and Bailey shot him. The old fellow jumped up, shook his head, and went to eating. You could see a light colored streak where the ball had torn some of the dirt and hair off the skull. That was the first and last one he tried to shoot between the eyes.

182. My stepmother's folks lived down in the souther part of Missouri, down in Jasper County. My folks took it in their heads that they would go down there visiting. Father had two small horses, ponies they were, they were heavy with foal, and a stallion. He had a light wagon and they fixed up a cover on it and started. They got down to Jasper County where her folks lived and they stayed there all summer. During the summer he traded the stallion for a pair of mules, came back late in the fall. My time was out with the man I was working for, crops all in, corn all husked, and everything and he didn't want a hired man, so I came home. Father said he would give me the two mares and the two colts if I would go and get them. During this time one of the mares died. The old mares were worth about \$35.00 or \$40.00 apiece and the yearlings worth about \$25.00 apiece, so I thought if I got the three of them up here I would get \$75.00 or \$80.00 out of them, so I told him I would go and get them. Al Merrill took me to Ackley, where I had to take the south train. Our grist mill was not running then, froze in, and the steam mill at Ackley was doing business right along. Al wanted a load of ground feed. He went down to Ackley and I couldn't get out of there until evening. He got his load and started home. Snow was deep and good sledding. I went over to the depot to get my ticket and I told the agent where I wanted to go and he said he had three different routes I could go over to get to Joplin, Mo., and there was no difference in the price, all the same. I said, "I am in no hurry give me the longest route." I guess he did as I wanted him to, went out to the western part of the state and then south to St. Jo, Mo. I don't know, I changed cars two or three times but made good connection anyway. At St. Jo I had quite a little wait there and they were outting up ice, dozens of teams there on the river putting up ice. I was setting in the car watching those ice men and a young fellow came in and set down in the seat right in front of me. He acted kind of

183. funny as though he was lost. The conductor came in and looked at our tickets. He said to the young fellow, "You're going to Ft. Scott." and he said "Yes." Then he looked at mine and he said "You'll have to stay in Ft. Scott tonight." This young fellow kept looking at me and talking to me but I didn't have much to say to him, I didn't like him. He said "My folks owned a farm out near St. Jo and they sold out and bought a farm near Ft. Scott. I've been working on a farm and when my time was out I'm going down and see my folks. And say Mister, this is the first time I was ever on the cars." I couldn't hardly believe him but it was late in the evening when we got to Ft. Scott and he didn't know where his folks lived around Ft. Scott, so he said "I'll have to stay here in the depot tonight." There was a policeman around the depot there and I went up to him and told him I wanted to go to a hotel, not a high priced hotel, just a comfortable hotel, and he said "I'll show you one in just a few minutes, I have to go right by there." So he took us up to a nice comfortable, clean hotel. I went in to the clerk and said I wanted a room. He said he hadn't only one room left and guessed we boys could sleep together tonight, couldn't we. My partner spoke right up and said, "Of course we can." So I said here goes anyhow, I don't know whether you're a fool or whether you aint. So when we went into our room and went to undressing he said, "Have you got a revolver?" and I said "no", and I didn't either. He said "I bought a new one just before I left home. If you had one what would you do with it?" I said "I'd hang it up on that nail there in the wall." He said, "That's a damned good place for it, I'm afraid of it " and hung it up. We went to bed and the first thing I saw in the morning was that revolver hanging there on that nail. He said, "I've got two sisters, young ladies, out home and I wish you would go out with me and we'd have a good time." One of our old town people, Fred Schultz, was running a brewery in

184. Ft. Scott. I had an hour or two before train time and I thought I would go down and see him. I knew I could find out more about where the brewery was by a negro than I could by a white man and I saw an intelligent looking negro talking along the street and I said, "Can you tell me where Fred Schultz's brewery is?" "Sure" he says. He started to tell me so many blocks one way and then so many blocks another way and then he stopped. He said, "You see that path down there in the ravine?" and I said "Yessir" "Well," he says, "You go into that path and follow it and it will take you right into the back end of the brewery." So I did and I found Mr. Schultz there and we went up to his house and visited with his wife and children and my friend stuck right to me all the way around. He said, "Come on, George, I'm going up to the city with a load of beer." I got up to the depot a little ahead of time. My friend begged me again to go out with him to see his folks but I said no. Train pulled out and I started, went to Joplin and from there over to Carthage. That ended my railroad travel, then I had to go twelve miles north. I went to inquiring around to see if there was anybody from that neighborhood that I could ride with. I run across a man that was going right up to the town where my folks lived. I asked him if I could ride and he said certainly. So we got to the little town about sundown, it was getting dusk when we got there. My people lived about a mile out of town. I went out there, went to the house and knocked. They had two grown daughters and two boys staying at home, so one of the girls came to the door when I knocked. I said, "Hi lo, Emma." stuck out my hand and she grabbed it and she said "George Bigelow." We shook hands all around and the old man said, "I wont go tomorrow!" I said "Was you going away, Mi. Sheldon?" and he said "Yes," I was going down on the Grand River in the Territory fishing." I said, "What is the matter with me getting right in the wagon with you and going fishing too?" "Good for you"

133. he said. One of the boys said, "Look out for the old man for if he gets drunk he'll keep you out a week." We started out early in the morning and got over to Joplin just in the early evening. He had a friend there and we stayed all night with the friend. Got up in the morning and old man Sheldon got a drink or two. When he got to the little town of Neosho we stopped and he got another drink or two, then we crossed the line into the Indian Territory then and headed for Grand River. We got down there an hour or two before sundown, found the <sup>(the fishing camp)</sup> camp all right. Three or four days before that the fishermen had rolled up everything and went up to Neosho and got drunk. They rolled their nests and seines up and hung them up in the trees so the hogs wouldn't get in them and tear them all to pieces. They also rolled their blankets and other things up and hung them up too. Then they pulled up the stakes around their tents and tied the flaps up to the top so that it would leave the bottom open so that the hogs could go right through under the tents and not tear them to pieces. The Indians had taken the big seine down when the men were away and made a draw with it, pulled it up on the sand, took what fish they wanted, and left the rest right in the seine, then they threwed the seine together and piled it up and left it right there on the ground and the wild cats and Coon had take the rest of the fish out, but in getting the fish out they had cut the fish all to the dickens. After the men got back they had just about got the net fixed when we got there. The boss, by the name of Brown, put the big net in a boat, folding it back and forth on itself so that when the boat went out he could keep playing the net off the top of the pile until it was all out. He staked the first end to the shore and he said to me, "Can you row a boat?" and I said, "Yes, I can" and he said, "Get in then." "Row out 25 or 30 feet here in a little circle and then go back to shore." I probably took a 50 foot circle. We

136. pulled back to shore and when we got back he pulled in the net what was loose and begun to swear. He said, "We ain't got a fish in this net that's fit to eat." and I said, "Why?" and he said, "There's no meat about them, they're all bone." There was a Norwegan waiting for fish with a new wagon with a ten inch top box on it. Mr. Brown says to this Norwegian, "Do you want these fish?" If you do you'r welcome to them and if you don't I'll raise the net and let them go." The Norwegian said "I been take 'em." The men got hold of his wagon and backed it down right close to the net. Brown gave him a dip net and says, "Now go to it," and he filled that wagon all he could pile on and it didn't look to me as if he'd made a hole in the fish that was in the net then. The biggest ones wouldn't weigh over a pound and they were all light colored. I took one, dressed it and fried it for my supper. I couldn't eat it, the man told me the truth when he said it was too bony to eat. I says, "What does that man want of those fish?" he says, "Either fertilizer or feed them to the hogs." So he raised the net and let all the rest of the little ones swim away. We was setting around the camp fire that night telling stories. Course, the fetched a little to dring with them when they came from Neosho and that was what my partner liked. Mr. Brown says he attended a prize fight once clear up in Iowa and he went on telling the details about it. I says, "Mr. Brown, just a moment," and he stopped. "I says, "Your prize fight was back of Browning's saloon in Webster City." He jumped right up and says, "That's right, what do you know about it?" I says I went to work in the Illinois Central in the spring scraping, commenced right on the banks of the South Fork of the Iowa. I said Benton, Brown and Douglas had several miles to grade. He says, "That's right, I was foreman on a good many of them riles." Then he wanted to know all about this country up here that I knew anything about, he didn't

187. like it down there very well. He wanted me to stay there longer and fish with him but I says, "No, when Mr. Sheldon goes back I go with him. He says, "We wont fish very much tomorrow, not before night anyhow." So I took my gun in the morning and started out. During the day I jumpe five deer but never got a shot, hadn't seen a house and hadn't had a drink of water all day. I knew my directions, I knew where I wanted to go. I said I was east of our camp but I don't know whether I am five miles east of it or ten miles. I came over a knoll and down in a little valley I saw a little log house. I went down there and knock- at the door. A woman came to the door and opend it. I noticed a rag carpet on the floor and two little girls, I should judge 7 Or 8 years old. I made my wants known and she went and got me a gourd of water. I told her where I wanted to go and asked her how fur it was. She says there's a road runs right along the side of the prairie here and it is seven miles by the road or six miles by the trail and if y<sup>e</sup> youre not afraid you'd better go by the trail, and then she grinned. She said the trail starts in when you get to the timber right here. So when I got to the trail I took the trail and let the road go to save a mile. It was all white oak timber all through there. Once in a while there would be quite a little ways where it would be all open over the path, the leaves stay on all winter. It was a well beaten trail but in places it was awful dark and every once in a little while I could hear a wild cat jump off from a limb. I could hear them running off through the leaves. I heard several before I got through that trail. I pulled both hammers up on my gun and I says that the first thing I meet in this path is going to get a charge of shot. They were all abed when I got back to camp and I got me a chunk of jonny cake and a cup of water, had a wagon box to sleep in and a buffalo robe was all the bedding I had. In the night I got a little cold and



188: I woke up. I raised up to see how the fire was and there set a wild cat on a stump just a little ways on the other side of the fire. I reached over careful for my gun, it lay right beside me, but when I moved he moved off into the brush.

The next day before we got loaded up and started for home I watched the indians fishing quite a little. They had what they called a spear. These that we have here they call them "Gigs". Their spears were made with a handle, or shaft, about four feet long that had an iron ferrule, or socket fastened onto the end of it, something like the end of a hoe or rake handle, and then they had a little piece of iron about four inches long that was pointed ~~and~~ at one end and blunt on the other end so it would rest in the hollow end of the shaft. A hole was drilled through the center of this little piece and a rope run through it and knotted at the end so it wouldn't pull back through and then the other end was fastened to the shaft. The whole thing was very slender. When they would see a fish they would throw this spear as hard as they could, it would go clear through a thirty or forty pound cat fish twelve or fifteen feet away, and they had a rope fastened onto the end of the spear so they could pull it back to them. As the spear was pulled out of the fish this little piece at the end would come loose and go crosswise to the fish, leaving the short piece of rope through the fish, and it was almost impossible for the fish to tear through this and get away, where with our spears they would twist off and get away. When fishing one indian would paddle the canoe and the other one stand up in front ready to throw the spear. If he got his fish nothing would be said but if he missed they would all whoop and holler and have a good time about it.

They had three seines, a big seine, a trammel net, which is a net with pockets in it that the fish get in and get twisted up in and can't get back out; and a gill net, which is a seine with a bigger mesh in so that the fish can run their heads through but not their bodies and when they try to get back their gills catch so that they can't get out. The trammel net is so placed that the pockets in it are on the down river side so that when the fish go down river they run into the net and then follow along it until they come to one of the openings of the pockets, which they go into for they think it is a hole through the net. When the men seined they would put the trammel net on the down river side of one of the pools, the gill net on the up river side and then seine out the middle. This was so that when they started the seine in the middle a lot of the fish to get away would either go up or down the river and they would most likely get caught in the other nets. The Grand River, where we were, was a series of pools with falls or rapids in between and the pools were about a half mile apart. When the men would get one pool seined they would go on to the next. They would catch anywhere from five hundred to a thousand pounds of fish to a drawing. They would have buffalo, catfish and jackfish, which was a good deal like our northern pike, and black bass; they were the main fish but there were a lot of other and smaller kinds. Men came from all over the country after the fish and bought them at two cents a pound. They shipped a lot of the better fish to the eastern markets. The little fish and the kinds that weren't good to eat were sold by the wagon load for hog feed or fertilizer. Sometimes there were a dozen wagons lined up for loads of fish. The smaller fish, weighing two or three pounds, were more of a family size. There were more big catfish, weighing 75 or 80 pounds, than there were of any other kind but there were some big buffalo fish that weighed

190. a hundred pounds. They didn't get many of them but every once in a while they would get one where it had never been fished or seined before.

*See page 200*  
*Sheldon loading wagon*  
Sheldon got his load of eating fish, 400 or 500 pounds of them. They were all weighed there at the river, the men would dip the fish up into a basket that would hold about a hundred pounds and when it got to the proper weight they would dump it into the wagon and weigh another basket full, or until the purchaser got whatever amount he wanted. Sheldon had a box in the back end of his wagon and he threwed his fish in there. About all there was to it, they piled them in and hauled them out. It was in December and it was pretty cold nights so that the fish would get pretty cool during the night and then they would throw blankets over them to keep them cool during the day. When he got home he probably gave a lot of them away or sold them or something, I never knew what he done with them.

*Going back to 1910*  
We pulled out early in the morning and got as fur as Neosha, must of been along towards noon when we got there. The old gent got a few drinks and I got a lunch, then we started for Joplin. Got into Joplin just about dusk. We stayed with his friend that night. Next morning we got up and got our breakfast and started for Carthage but when we got up town the old gent had to have a drink. I says, "Sheldon I'll go on, you can pick me up on the road." Good roads and fifteen miles to Carthage, and I started out and walked pretty fast. I didn't see anything more of the old man till I'd got to Carthage and had a lunch and he drove into town pretty drunk. He said, "Hell, I didn't think you knew enough to follow that road clear through." Then we left the main road and went north to his place, about twelve miles, When we got to within a half a mile of his place then he had to go a mile east, a half a mile north, and then a mile back to his place.

191: I says, "Sheldon, let me out here and I'll walk across." "Allright"  
he says, and let me out and showed me the way and where to get through  
the Osage Orange hedges, they're mean things to get through, you can't  
crawl under or you can't get over them for their thorns, they're a  
good deal like our barberry bushes around here. When they make a  
hedge of them they grow something like willows around here and then they  
cut the tops off and stick these tops along under the bushes and along  
the ground where they just dry, they never rot, and with the thorns  
and all on them the divil couldn't get through them. When they are  
growing alone they get to be pretty good sized tress and they make  
wagon tongues, and other things out of them. Where I go't out of the  
wagon was a little country town.

I went over to the house and they wanted to know where I had left  
the old gent and I told them and one of the boys said he'd come home  
tonight drunk, and he did. They had a son that was married and lived  
about a mile from their place, so I said I guessed I'd go over to see  
Miles, that's the boy's name. I went over and knocked at the door  
and a young woman came to the door, she had on a calico dress but she  
was neat and clean. I asked her if Mr. Sheldon was at home. She says,  
"No, he done gone and geared up the hosses and went away and I doan  
know where he went. I reckon he wont be gone long though. Come in."  
I went in and there was an old lady setting in a chair just on the  
other side of the room and everything was just as neat and clean as  
wax there in the house. She said, "I suppose this is Mr. Bigelow,  
isn't it?" and I said it was. So I got into conversation with the  
old lady and I says "I suppose you was down in this part of the country  
during the war?" She says, "Yes, about 50 miles east of Kansas City,  
and I had lots to contend with the bushwhackers. They stole pretty  
near everything I had, horses, wagon and all, they left me one cow.

no.  
Osage  
Orange  
hedges

5 miles  
Sheldon

192. I fixed up a harness for the old cow and made some fills for the wagon, hitched the old cow in, put the young ones in the wagon and started for Fort Scott. I led the old cow and the old cow pulled the wagon. I went over to Fort Scott and got some groceries, got back home all safe and sound, then I took my groceries and scattered them all through the hills, doesn't leave them in the house. Hardly a day but what there'd be a band of bushwhackers through that country. I had a sack of flour, I took a little out in a dish and then hid the sack. When those fellows 'd come they'd always look around to see what I had. That's the way I lived through the war. My man was killed in the Southern Army." The old lady said to me "Your country aint stony like this country is it?" I says, "No but we have plenty in places though, what we call 'nigger heads' great big round boulders. Down at Cedar Falls, about 50 miles east of us they built a church out of just one stone. There is a town about 25 miles west of us, and a good road, and I don't believe there's a stone in the road as big as a hen's egg." I said, "They claim that the big stones were brought there by the flood, I wasn't there during the flood and I don't know where they did come from." Come to find out the old lady was a good, old methodist. Miles came then, he introduced me to his wife and her mother, after I had been there an hour. I was getting along towards noon and I said I guessed I'd better be getting back. Mrs. Sheldon said I wasn't going back until after dinner. The two women asked me a thousand and one questions and I forgot what they did say. We had a nice dinner there.

When I got back to the old folks' there was a young fellow there that had come over with a pony. He said "I understand that you're looking around for a pony, saddle horse." That is what I was doing. He says, "I understand you've got a good shotgun. I'll give you this pony, saddle, bridle and all, for your shotgun." Well, that's just what

*new*  
*Lady*  
*coming*  
*over*

*looking*  
*for*  
*pony*

133. I wanted, my gun was a \$40.00 gun. I had a few cartridges and I gave  
*me* them to him and he took the gun and went away well pleased with the  
deal. I knew that when I got home that pony would fetch me \$30.00,  
and it did, I sold it to L. T. Beard for \$50.00 cash and kept the  
saddle and bridle and sold that to another party for \$5.00. The next  
*day* morning I got onto my pony and started for Dade County, where my  
friends all lived up there through that section of the country. It  
was about noon when I rode up to Tom Bailey's house and he was out  
in the yard breaking up some rotten wood. I said, "Mr. Bailey, can  
I get a bite to eat for myself and a little grain for my hoss?" He  
says, "There's the barn and the feed, go and put him in." I said  
"Wont you put him in?" and he said, "No, I wont." I knew he wouldn't.  
I got off from my horse and went up to him and said, "I guess, Mr.  
Bailey, you don't know me?" He said, "I reckon I don't." I says,  
"George Bigelow." And he throwed the old axe down and said, come  
on, lets go to the house." He sent his youngest boy out to take  
care of my pony and the women folks seemd to be glad to see me and  
they was a couple of Jones's girls over there visiting, they were  
young ladies. So we put in the afternoon visiting. Along the  
middle of the afternoon one of the girls said, "We're going down to  
the cave. Come on and go down with us." So I did and there was a  
log house near the entrance of the cave. One of the girls said, "We  
*can* buy some candles down there at that house." but when we got down  
there these folks didn't have any candles, they was out, but they'd  
lend us a lantern though. So we took that and started in. We didn't  
get a great ways in before we run into a little water along on the  
bottom of the cave and lots of little blind wrinkles, there eyes was  
white and they were littlilite of things. The next room we went into  
was probably 10 or 12 feet square, about a 7 foot ceiling. This room

134. was full of stalactites and stalagmites and some of the girls held  
*ms.* the lantern while I broke off a lot of them and filled my pockets full  
of them and I brought them home but they have disappeared one by one  
until I don't have any left. We went on farther back in the cave  
until our lantern got to smudging and smoking so that we couldn't do  
anything with it. The boy that was with us, he was carrying the  
*Cave* lantern, and when we started back he give the lantern a jerk out come  
the bottom of it. I had plenty of matches. I says, "Now, we're in for  
it." and one of the girls begin to cry. Well, I says, "don't cry,  
we'll get out of here in a short time." We hunted around until we  
found the bottom of the lantern, bottom up in a little water. I got  
it and squeezed the wick to get the water out and I had plenty of  
matches and dried out the wick and got the lantern to going and we  
got out of the cave safe and sound. Got back up to Mr. Failey's, then  
he wanted to show me where he'd got some rabbits a day or two before  
in the snow, him and the dog. It came a little snow storm and him and  
his dog started out rabbit hunting and the dog would run them into  
the stone wall fence and the dog and Failey would tear down the wall  
until they got the rabbit. We got fourteen rabbits and I asked him  
how many rods of fence he pulled down to get them and he said about a  
rod to a rabbit. He was right in the Ozarks and you couldn't dig a  
pothole for hitting rocks, and all the fences in his neighborhood  
were made up of stones, niggerheads and the likes of that, piled up in  
a wall so that the cattle couldn't get over them. They were laid up  
dry. A great many fences of that kind you will find in Massachusetts  
today and that ~~was~~ used to be my father's job back there was laying up  
this kind of fences. Failey said "Weghe (that's his boy) will put  
the wall back in the spring." Failey would never do any work himself,  
he didn't have to for if he was to do it it wouldn't be done but his

*Irilly  
getting  
rabbit  
from stone  
fence*

198. wife was a great worker. That evening I and the old folks set up pretty late and visited. The girls had one to bed and the boy he'd gone to bet too, so when I started to bed Mrs. Failey give me a candle and she said "You'll sleep right at the head of the stairs with Wayne." Well, I went up stairs and there wasn't a bedstead in the room and all the beds were on the floor, no partitions in the room either. My bed was right near the stairs, no railing around the stairs either, so I set my candle down on the upper step of the stair and undressed and crawled into bed. I knew that if I got to rolling around in the night I'd roll down stairs, so I set my candlestick way back out of the way so that if I did roll down stairs I wouldn't hit it. I went to sleep. It was a pretty warm night and not much ventilation. I woke up pretty early and I raised up and my friend was in a good many different shapes. So I took my duds and went down stairs part way and dressed. So after breakfast I got on my pony and went over to Jones's. It was the Pleasant Jones family that lived across the road and a little farther north than where the Cisens live now. I got over there and he was out doors leaning up against the mill fence. I got off my horse and introduced myself and he was glad to see me. I took dinner with them and visited with them a while and then went over to Peterson's, just a few miles from there. He was another one from here. Well, I went back to Bailey's and staid that night, bid them all good bye in the morning, got on my pony and started for Sheldons. It was getting along towards the first of February and I'd got to be a traveling for home. One of the Sheldon boys and a fellow by the name of Bob Goldson wanted to go with me. Rube Shelder had four young mules, four year olds, and Bob had just a saddle horse. I had two young horses and my saddle horse so it made eight horses in the bunch. One bright morning just a day or two afterward we started for Iowa. I says, "O, s, the fact is awful

*Mr,*

*Bailey's*

*sleeping  
up  
stairs*

*Jones*

*Peterson*

*Sheldons*

*starting  
for  
over*



196. short here in this country. In the afternoon one or the other of us  
*was* had to go ahead to find a place to stay, so the other two agreed to  
that. The first night out I had to go ahead. I found it pretty hard  
*coming back to Iowa* sledding before I could find a place to feed. So the next afternoon,  
I said "Which one of you boys is going out?" They were both of them  
bashful and afraid, so I started in and I had that job until I got clear  
home. One night we stopped to a preacher and I said, "Boys were going  
to get stung here for the highest price we've had to pay." and we did.  
I forgot what he charged us but it was double price anyhow. The further  
north we came the more feed there was in the country. One afternoon I  
had been riding quite a ways but I hadn't found anything. We stopped  
in a little crick, our stock was drinking there. There was a man come  
along with an old rattle trap of a wagon, him and his wife and driving  
a big span of mules on that old wagon. I asked him where I could get  
some feed for our stock. He said, "I've got plenty up to my place"  
and he'd swear about every other word. He said, "If you want to stay  
with me about a half a mile and I'll go off into the timber here but  
in the morning you can take a trail that goes over the hills and it  
will save you about two miles travel from going around the road. I said  
*The best wheater* "Boys, that's where I'm going to stay tonight." He'd drove on out of  
the way. We got there and he had lots of feed and I says, "Boys, feed  
'em all your stock will eat." He says, "I'll charge you just as much  
if you feed 'em as if you don't feed 'em." That night we went up to  
bed, it was a good sized room and he must have had five or six sacks of  
shelled seed corn in there. So I says, "Boys, I'll sleep here in this  
bed on the floor and you two can sleep in the bedstead." They was glad  
to do that. I hadn't more than hit the bed before I was sound asleep.  
The first thing I knew the old man hollered breakfast. I hollered,  
"Wait a minute and you can come in." and he said "What in hell do I

197. want to come in for." During the night the boys had gotten up and put two of the sacks of grain against the door so no one could come in for they were afraid of him. At the breakfast table I asked him what he was doing during the war. First part of the war he said he was running his damn niggers off to Texas and selling them and part of the time I was lying in jail up here in Lexington. I said, "They though they had a couse for putting you in there didn't they?" He said, "They claimed I was right in with the bushwhackers and I guess they was about right." So after breakfast he got onto a little black mare and said to me "Come on, and we'll go over the trail, it'll save you a couple of miles!" These two boys of mine dien't want to go, they was afraid he was going to run us into some trap. Got up on top of the hill and we could see the valley clear way down for miles. He says to me, "Come here" and I rode up beside of him. He says, "Do you see that white house way down there in the valley?" and I says "Yes." He says, "I'm going down there and getting drunker than Hell." He says "Goodby" and rode off.

We rode down to quite a river the e was there and it begin to rain, could up, bad weather, we had had good weather up to that time. I saw a man coming across the river with a team. I thought I'd wait until I see where he went and he started in way down below where we were standing, then he come diagonally across the river, came out where we were standing. I asked him how fur it was to Lexington. He says, "It's a right smart jump." I found out later it was twelve miles. Well, I went ahead and the other outfit followed me across, we got through all right. It kept raining, looked bad, the weather all, we got out a mile or two from the river I saw a farm house, a log house, and a stack of hay. I says, "Boys, I am going over and see if we can get in there tonight." I was getting pretty wet and didn't

*Ans.  
Crossing  
back to  
Lexington*

118. want to go any further. I rode into the yard and got off from my pony, went to the house and an old lady came to the door. I made my wants known. "Yes," she said, "we've got plenty of feed and room for you boys, that is, if you can make the change." She says, "There was a party stayed with us the other night and we couldn't make the change and they went off without paying us." I says, "Mother, lets go in and look our change over and see if we can make it." So we went in and I had change all right." She told me what it was, I've forgotten now what it was, it was reasonable anyhow, I laid the money down on the table. I says, "Mother, there's your money," and she says "It's not mine until tomorrow morning." Well, I says, "Let it lay there until tomorrow morning if you want to, I don't want it."

*now  
coming  
back to  
Jowa*

Cleared up, a nice morning, and we got an early start. We crossed the Missouri River there at Lexington on a bridge and we kept a jogging along until way long in the afternoon. I saw a man drive into a feed yard with a load of cornfodder. Big nice white house and all the improvements seemed to be new around there. I told him what I wanted and he said "I'm out of feed and I went five miles and bought this load of cornfodder." I says, "What stock you got here?" "One cow" he says. He'd borrowed that team from a neighbor to get the cornfodder. I says, "How much did you pay for that corn fodder?" and he says, "Five Dollars and hauled it five miles." It was a big load of fodder. I says, "Can you get any more?" "Yes, but I haven't the money to pay for another load," he says. Well, I says, "See here, I'll give you \$5.00 for that load of fodder and you feed your cow out of it tonight and in the morning, then go back and get another load in the morning." He says, "I'll do it, I didn't have money enough to buy another load." I gave him the \$5.00 and he drove into the yard and our stock followed him in. We throwed a lot of it off

*Lexington*

*Wade*

Coming  
back  
1888

188. here and there for the stock to eat and he took a bundle of it and went in and fed his cow. Then I asked him if he could stay with him that night, us boys. "Oh, yes, he says, I've got plenty of room." We visited around the yard there and he wanted to know where we were going and we told him. He says, "I used to live in near Des Moines" and he was tickled to death to see somebody from Iowa. It was getting along towards sundown and he said wedge in the house and get a bite to eat. I see that they were a young couple and that evening we visited there for a long time. She seemed to be more interested in talking about Iowa than he was. The next morning when we pulled out she came to the door with a pan of apples and hollered to me and I filled up my overcoat pocket full of apples. She says, "I wish he was going back with you boys, if I ever get back to Iowa I will never come back down here again" and tears was in her eyes then. Nothing more happened all through the state there, there was plenty of feed. The last day out I wanted to get home, we'd got up to Rose Grove, on the Stank River, in south of Elairsburg, about 25 miles from Alden. It begin to rain and turn into snow, and the wind was offnorthwest so we would have to face it. So I says, "Boys, we're going to stay here tonight, we aint going any further." I got in with a farmer that I'd seen down here at the mill, I'd got acquainted with him that way. In the morning it was still raining and snowing. One of my colts had got pretty tired, pretty well jagged out, so I said "I'd like to leave that colt here with you and I'll come back and get it." So I did, I left it there. We'd got into a country I was acquainted with then. I struck right straight across the country and the boys followed me with the stock, and I struck the stage road at the crossing of the South Fork, then we had a road into Alden. It snowed and rained all day. We rode up to the old livery barn and turned out stock into the feed yard, they had

200. plenty of hay and grain there, then we three went over to Bigelows. We were living in a concrete house right back of Jurgensen's store, course, the folks was surprised to see us. Well, I hadn't been home but a day or two before I sold my pony to L. T. Beard for \$50.00 and the saddle and bridle for \$5.00 to another fellow. I got my two colts out to a farmer where there was plenty of feed, my two friends got jobs on farms.

(see page 190) You know a carp and sucker has quite a snout on them, a gristly nose, you know, and a buffalo fish is the same way. We'd generally take an axe and cut that snout off the buffalo, big and little, then we'd fry them. They wasn't first class but was pretty good though, and a change. The smaller fish were bony but the big fish were coarse and not very good anyway.

~~A few years <sup>This was on the fishing trip</sup> later I was hunting, in the Indian Territory, and there was an old indian came to my camp selling maple syrup, fifteen cents a quart. He didn't have quite a quart, he'd about sold out. I says, "What do you want for what you have got?" and he says ten cents. I took it and paid him for it. Now I says, "I know this is perfectly clean", which in my mind I thought I was lying. Now, I says, "Is it maple syrup or what is it?" He said "It is half maple and half box elder." I thanked him for the informatio and he walked off, but it was awful good tasting syrup.~~

Old Timmy Tomlinson, Will Keating, Bert LaPetra and myself started for St. Louis to the Fair in 1903. We got as far as Dubuque it was just early evening when we got there and we couldn't leave until 9 o'clock, so we went into a lunch counter and got a lunnh and they served beer with the lunnh. When the beer was gone I ordered some more. I says to the bartender, "Not for me, I got all that

201. some stuff I want." Kesting and LaPetra didn't have any sleeping  
car berth, they couldn't get any, but LaPetra and I, we had one. We  
went to the Pullman car sleeper and they went to the day coach. It  
was getting along towards morning when we got to St. Louis. I reached  
under the berth to get my stockings and the first one I got hold of  
was a lady's stocking. I held it up and said, "Bert, you've had a  
woman in bed here with us and I didn't know it." "Oh" he says, "I  
didn't either have a woman in here, but I couldn't sleep last night,  
my belly jiggled around so." I rolled that stocking all up and  
threw it across the aisle under another bed. It hadn't more than  
struck the floor until a lady hollered "thank you, I have been sitting  
here for an hour waiting for my husband, who is out in the smoker, to  
come back to find it so I could dress." It got back home before I  
did that we had a woman in bed with us, she had left one of her  
stockings in our bed. They way it got back was that the yard master  
in Ft. Dodge was in the same car with us and he learned our names, so  
that when he got home he told some of the Cox's and they told it down  
here. We stayed in St. Louis for three or four days and took in the  
sights. I says to Bert one morning, "Let's go south to Port Arthur."  
He says, "All right, we'll start right now." So we got our coats and  
started for the depot. Got down pretty near to the depot and I saw  
saw a sign over a door "Fish breakfast for 15¢ with choice of pie or  
ice cream." I says, "Bert, here's where I'm going to try a fish  
breakfast." He says, "That sounds good." They fetched us on  
a great big fish apiece, well cooked, bread and potatoes and coffee.  
The waiter come in and wanted to know which we'd have-ice cream or  
pie." Bert said he'd take pie and I said I'd take ice cream. My ice  
cream was just chilled, wasn't even froze and Bert's pie crust was so  
tough he couldn't cut it. I says, "Bert, I'll trade my ice cream for

St. Louis  
1901

fish  
break