 last bundle on and no snake and I said, "I guess I must have lost him coming in." Up along the northern part of the state was a lot of rattlesnakes then but down here they had got pretty well thinned out by that time and didn't bother much. Those days we threshed with horse power threshing machines, 8 and 10 horse power. The horses were hitched on a "sweep" so that they would go around in a circle and in the center of the circle was a little platform that would turn around with the sweep. A man stood on this platform and he had a long whip so that he could make the horses keep pulling. That was usually my job and on a cold day I would about freeze standing there. Some of the horses would pull right along and others you had to keep at all the time. This sweep was connected with the threshing machine with a long tumbling rod. This rod was laid on the ground and the horses would have to step over it each time they passed it. This rod caused us a lot of trouble for if we didn't keep the straw away from it it would twist the straw right around it and we would have to stop the machine to cut it off. The thresher was about like the one we have now but there wasn't a ~~knif~~ blow stacker like we now have. They had a long shoot running out behine the machine, they called it a straw carrier, whith a belt in it that would carry the straw up when the machine was running. That belt used to bother quite a little with the straw getting piled up in it. There were usually two men in the straw pile pitching the straw away and sometimes if the farmer didn't want to save the straw he would hitch a horse to an old rail and then throw this rail into the straw pile and the horse would drag the straw away. It generally took two men to feed the machine, one to cut bands and the other to put the grain in. Then the steamers come on which give plenty of power. Today the horse power is gone and also the hand binding, throw it onto a platform and away it goes. One winter I

 stayed with my uncle up in Minnesota and he had a "tread-mill" threshing outfit that he had brought out from New York with him. The tread was worked by two horses that were fastened in it and they had to keep walking up hill but they didn't get anyplace. As they walked the tread would keep going back of them and that furnished the power. He had all of his grain in the barn, everything, machine and all, and when he wanted to thresh some grain he would put the horses in the treadmill and start them to going. I would pitch the grain onto a platform, pitch the straw away after it was threshed, and feed the machine, he would be cutting the bundles when it was in bundles, but usually when the grain was in the barn it wasn't bound. We would thresh until we got enough for a week or two feed and then we'd quit. The grain would all be on the floor under the machine and then we had to rake it out, shovel it up and get the chaff out with a little fanning mill. The Barhites south of town here had one of these little outfits of their own. In the early days they had a good many little treadmills for doing the churning and the likes of that. They were first run by a dog but the dog wasn't a success for when it would get tired it would quit and lay down. Then they got to using a sheep and it went better.

It was along late in the spring one afternoon along towards night it begin to snow. It quit snowing along in the evening. Grandfather Alden came over to our house. He says to father, "Let's go 'coon hunting tomorrow." Father says, "All right, where'l we go?" Oh, he says, "Up the river four or five miles and we've got to start early because the snow wont stay on the ground but a little while, it'll soon melt when the sun comes out." Father put some hay in the wagon anf father had a dog and I had a dog and grandfather didn't have any dog, they were just dogs, one was part bulldog and the other just cur. I

232. crawled into the hay when we started out in the morning and went to sleept. When we got upto our destination on the sun was just coming up. Drove out into the woods a little ways. Father says, "I guess we'll leave our team here." So we unhitched the team and turned them around to the back end of the wagon where they could eat hay. He took his axe and we started. Grandfather says, "I've been tracking a coon up to this big tree and I can't find any tracks where he's left the tree and I believe the 'coon is in this tree." There was quite a hole in one of the big limbs. Well, father says, "The only way to find out is to cut the tree down." So he went to work chopping. Grandfather got me a stick about four feet long, a nice little club, took me out towards another big tree. He says, "When that tree falls a coon may leave his hole and start for this tree here." But when the tree fell the coon didn't start. Father got up on this big limb where the hole was. He see the hole went down, so he cut a slab out about three or four feet below the entrance to the hole and there lay the coon with his back to the hole, outside. This hole was about three feet from the ground and father picked up the cur dog so that he could see the 'coon but he wouldn't have nothing to do with him, he wasn't after 'coons, that dog wasn't. Then father picked up the other dog, this was my dog, and he was interested in 'coons, and begin to smell around in the coon's fur. The first thing father knew the 'coon whirled around real quick and got the dog by the nose and father thought the 'coon was coming out so he dropped the dog and then the coon let go of the dog's nose. Just as soon as the dog's feet hit the ground he jumped up and grabbed the coon by the belly, that was the bulldog part of him, and he throwed that coon right over his head into the brush and the 'coon started right for me and the dog after the 'coon. Father threw his axe at the 'coon, mised the coon entirely and it took a side sweep at

 the dog, but it never stopped the dog and they both kept coming right at me, I stood my ground where grandfather had put me. I took a shot at the 'coon with my club. I missed the coon and hit the dog on the back of his neck and that kinda stopped him for a minute but he soon gathered and the coon was going for a hickory tree. Just before he got to the tree the dog grabbed him and they had it there for a minute or two but the dog hung right to him. It was a free for all fracas for a few minutes but after a while the 'coon's head got around where father could baste it one with the club and that laid it out. The dog stayed with the 'coon for a while and rested up a bit for he was pretty well chawed up, both ears split, and otherwise cutup. The other dog just looked on, he hadn't lost any coon and wasn't going to hunt any. After it was over it tickled father and grandfather the way I had hit at the coon and hit the dog instead, I didn't lead the game far enough when I was taking aim at it. I must of been eight or nine years old then. The sun was up by that time and had melted the snow off so we couldn't track any more coon so we quit and come back home. That was my first 'coon hunt. When we got back to the wagon the horses had eaten most of the hay and father threw the coon in, I climbed in and my dog jumped in after me but the other dog wouldn't get in. My dog lay down with the coon and about the next thing I knew was father saying that I better get out, I had gone to sleep again and slept all the way home. Grandfather weighed the 'coon and said it weighed about 20 lbs. which made it an awful big 'coon.

One night, after Harry Alden got here, grandfather said he wanted some skumk hides for a vest he says, a jacket, so one bright, moonlight evening grandfather and Uncle Harry and myself, Harry's dogs and my dogs we went over north of town a little ways, over in Furry's fields. We heard the dogs barking andwe went over where they were and they had

 a skumk cornered. So i says, "Waite a few minutes till we see how this fight comes out." So I get around pretty close and says to my dog, "Take 'im." My dog grabbed him right by the back of the neck, the other dog grabbed him by his back, he was a young skunk, but it wasn't but a very short time until they had him nearly skinned. So gradfather he got mad. He says, "I wont hunt with you damn fools any more." and he started for home. Uncle and I set thee and visited a while and then we went home. Grandfather didn't think we used him just right that night on the skunk deal and we never went hunting them any more.

Grandfather had set his traps down among his buildings somewhere, I don't know where, and he had caught a skunk in it. He had it fastened to about a fifteen foot pole, the trap. He came over to our house and go me to come over and shoot his skunk. It was quite dark so he got hold of the end of the pole and started to lead him out in the cornfield We got out in the cornfiled a little ways and says, "This is fur enough, George." So he held the lanter up so I could get a good sight on it. Now he says, "The head is right towards you, now hurry up." I knew darned sight better, it wasn't. So I shot the skunk right where he told me to. I shot histale off ### right close to his body and the bullet went on into the back end of the body. That ended my skunk deal with him for after that he shot his own skunks.

In the early day there must have been along about '60 grandfather Alden had a little lime kiln started right in back of where the Library is now but it didn't amount to anything. Father owned that piece of ground right back of Jurgensen's store. In those days it was all bluffs all along the river there and father went to work and built a lime kiln and the back of it was the native stone bank cut down square and then the rest of it was built out around. Then he walled up the sides and ends with the common lime stone and mostly clay for mortor

235. and the outside of the walls were banked up with dirt to keep the heat in. When he laid up the walls he gradually drew them in towards the top, more of an egg shape like on top. Then he would build a little arch of the limestone on the inside of that, laying this little arch up loose, without any binder, to be used for a flue in which to burn wood. Then on top of this little arch he would dump perhaps forty or fifty loads of the limestone rock. He would quarry this rock right out of the bank there, he wouldn't use the shelly rock but would get down to where it was good, solid lime rock. He would load it into a wagon and then drive around up on top of the bank where he could dump it into the kiln and as he was dumping it in he would sometimes get down in it and throw the rock into the corners and pile it up tighter so he could get more in and keep at it until he got it full. There was a little door through the outside wall the size of the little arch inside and through this door he would fill the little arch full of wood and start it burning and he kept it firing and burning until the arch would break and settle down so that he couldn't get any more fuel in to burn. There was no regular chimney but the smoke would come up right through ### between the rocks and this smoke and flame would heat the rocks so that in three or four days the flame would be coming out through the top. The water that was in the rocks would be turned into steam, you could see the steam coming out too, and when the rocks got dried out they would begin to break and crumble up and egentually go into lime. The rocks on top never would get hot enough to make lime. When they got hot enough to settle and put out the fire father would put a piece of iron up in front of the door where he put the wood in and he had some pieces of sheet iron he would put over the top to hold the heat in and keep the rain out. The thick walls on the side would have gotten so hot that it would keep hot for quite a while but as

 he could he would go in through this opening in front and get the lime out. He had a box that would hold just a bushel and he would shovel the lime into that for a measure. At the bottom it was pure lime but as he would take it out the top rocks that weren't entirely burned would fall down and he would have to throw them out. He would sell it right at the kiln and the farmers, and other people would come for a bushel or two or three and take it home to be used for patching. In those days cement was unheard of here and all stonework was laid up with the lime mortor and the houses were plastered with it altogether. Sometimes if he couldn't sell all of it right out of the kiln he would have to load it into his wagon and haul it around up on top and store it where it was dry for down at the kiln besides the danger of the rain falling into the kiln he had to watch out for the high water in the river for if the river would raise and run into the kiln the water and the lime didn't mix very well. Sometimes he could leave it in there long enough so that it would get dry and then when he went in to shovel it out this dry lime dust would fill the air in there and he would have to do a lot of coughing. I don't know how much lime he would get out of each batch of stone but it was several wagon loads, it would depend on how much lime there was in the rock and how long he could keep his fire burning. I think he got about fifty cents a bushel for it right there at the kiln. He would keep it burning night and day right along until his arch fell in, there was a man there all the time day and night for the wood wouldn't last long and more had to be put in all thetime. The outside wall was built of good, heavy rock and being laid up with clay that wouldn't burn it stood there for a good long time. At each burning some of the wall rock would be burned on the inside but not enough to damage the wall any. After he quit burning the lime this outside wall stood there a good, long time. There was a good road

dug around the hill right on our own lot so that they could drive down around in front of the kiln ad haul the rock or lime out. Grandfather Alden built the first lime kiln here but it was a dinky little thing and didn't amount to much. After the first kiln was burned the whole darn thing, wall and all, fell in and he went out of the lime business. Father being a stone mason by trade saw the demand for lime so he went into the business and burned it for several years until Ad. Wells put in several big lime kilns at Iowa Falls along the big banks just below where the mill was and he could make and sell it cheaper than father could, and he made enough so that he could have some on hand all the time, so father went out of the business.

This was a great place when the kiln was burning nights for the young people to come. There was no railroad nor nothin' across the river from the kiln, just a corn field, and some one of the young folks would go across the river and get an armfull of roasting ears and bring them back and roast them in the kiln by sticking the ears on a stick and then sticking them in where the heat was. The one doing the roasting could stand at one side of the opening hwere it wasn't so hot. Sometimes they would lay the ears on the hot wood coals and roast them that way. They would eat these roastel ears without fixtures but if anybody was lucky enough to have some salt with them that made them better. That was quite a treat in those days to have a "party" like that.

The stage coaches that run through here was what was called "Troy" coaches because they was made in Troy, New York. There was no springs about them, the bottom of the coach itself was kinda rounding and they set on strips of leather about four or five inches wide, two rows of them of about a dozen thicknesses of leather, anyway there was enough thicknesses of the leather to hold the coach, its nine passengers and driver if it was filled and their baggage besides. The straps run lengthways of the coach. There was a "boot" on the back end of the coach to put the heavy baggage on and then there was a canvas that came over the trunks and fastened down solid so they couldn't slide off, then there was a low railing around the top of the coach where they put their lighter things, valises and the likes of that, and the mail was carried right back of the driver's feet and under his seat, the sacks were. There was always a "way" book put in the driver's seat and that was to keep track of the passengers and everything else. There was three seats inside the coach, one at each end and one through the center and each seat would hold about three passengers without crowding but they could crowd four in a seat. Now the company's horses was all supposed to be matched, they was matched so that the four horses to each coach were either all blacks, or grays, or whites, or some other color. Then there was a little "one-horse" coach called a "Jerky" drawn by two horses that held about six passengers and made just the same as the big coaches. The drivers would all have to set out in front with no protection and it used to be pretty cold driving across the prairie in the winter, the rest of the coach was glassed in for protection from the weather, but there was no heat on the inside except the body heat of the passengers. When the snow would come they would abandon the coaches and use bob-sleds, light runners. They'd have about three or four seats in them but no

239. protection on it outside, no cover on it, but the company had plenty of buffalo robes for them. There used to be a little swearing about cold feet as they were going across the prairies, that was amongst the men, and you hardly ever heard a whimper out of the women or babies, there weren't so many women and children traveling in the winter but there was quite a lot of travel though. When the snow went off and they hitched onto the big coaches the roads was awful bad. They used to say that at the worst places in the raad they would carry a man and a rail to help pry the coach out of the mud but they always got through if they did come in a little late. They "Jerkys" were used on the west end more but they were kept in reserve at most stations for it say fifteen passengers came in and wanted to go west the big coach couldn't carry them all so they would hitch up a lighter coach to go along with the big one and take the overflow. The summer that I drove from Fort Dodge to Humbolt they used the little "Jerkys" there, they used them on all the side lines. My father started driving from down east somewhere, New Hartford or some place along there, I don't know where but I do remember being down to Ackley with him a lot. The stage started from the end of the railroad whereever it was and as the railroad was extended west the stage line would be taken off from that part of the run. The cold part of the staging was on the driver. It didn't make any difference which way the wind was or how cold it was he had to set right up there and take the breeze but they were all dressed warm, as warm as they could. The hands bothered them the most, handling the lines they couldn't keep their hands very warm. They wore gloves for they couldn't handle the four lines very well with mittens. Now, father had a pair of leggings made out of buffalo hide and he had them big enough so he could put on heavy woolen stockings and then pull these buffalo leggings over them. These leggings ######## were a

regular overshoe and legging too, that is they were made to take place of the boots they generally wore and were long enough to come up the full length of the leg and then they had loops on top that would be fastened around a belt that would be fastened around his body to keep them up. These leggings had the hair on them and he could put enough clothing inside them to that his feet always kept warm. They used to have to go night and day and father told me that he hated a thunder storm at night worse than he did a snow storm. The lightning was so dazzling to his eyes so that he couldn't see, kind of blinded him like, and he drove through a great many thunder storms after dark. Sometimes he used to think the wind would blow his old coach over. The lightning used to bother his horses a little, it would scare them and they would dodge. His team were all blacks. The way a farmer would hitch four horses to a wagon would be to put the heavy horses next to the wagon and the lighter ones out in front but on the stages it was the other way for in rough places when the coach would roll back it would lift the tongue up and with the heavy horses out in front they would help hold it down, they being hitched to the end of the tongue, and it wouldn't be so apt to knock the heavier ones down out infront as it was the lighter ones. They had all good horses through this part of the country, they were around 1200 or 1300 pound horses, we had no real heavy horses then. The stage line was divided up in sections and at one time father drove from Iowa Falls to Hawley, now Blairsbur, then the next day he'd go from Hawley to Webster City, then lay over a day there at Webster, and the next day he'd take the coach to Hawley and the next day from Hawley to Iowa Falls, then lay over a day. That is he would take to coach to his first lay-up place where another driver would hitch his team onto the coach and take it to the next changing place and father would wait there until the next day's coach

Stage

came along and he would hitch onto that and go to the next station so that the coatch was always going unless it tipped over, and then they stopped for a while. If the weather was bitter cold the passengers would get out while they were changing horses and drivers and go into the barns to get warm and sometimes would lay over until the next coach came along. They had to stop and change horses about every so far or the horses wouldn't stand up to the hard work. Every driver had his own team (the company owned the horses but the driver was given that one team, four horses, to drive and look after) and he had to take care of them whenever they were in the barns as well as on the road. Each driver carried a two bushel sack with him so that ########## he would have his halters and rubbing rags and other tools that he wante with him. Each driver was proud of his own team and tried to keep it in better shape than the other drivers did theirs. All the stages carried mail sacks and the mail that came in on the trains during the night would be taken by the stages, like if it got into Iowa Falls during the night the postoffices here at Alden and Hawley wouldn't be open at night so the stage driver would have to carry it clear through to Webster City, getting there early in the morning, and then it would be sent back on the down stage during the day, the driver had to be responsible for this mail. On good going they tried to average about seven miles an hour. They tried to make their changing stations about twenty miles apart but some were longer and some were shorter, from Iowa Falls to Hawley they called about 23 miles and from Hawley to Webster City about thirteen miles and then from Webster City to Fort Dodge about twenty miles. Even when the stages were running through here without stopping to change teams and drivers the stage company had a barn here, where Leonard Orpin now lives, where they kept extra horses and equipment so that they could make a change if

 nemessary. Later they got the run just from Iowa Falls to here and back again, that is one driver and his team would bring the stage up here, take his team off and another driver would hitch on and take the stage to the next stop and the driver that came up from Iowa Falls would wait here until the down stage came in and then he would hitch on and take it back to Iowa Falls. Even if the company didn't own their own barn they rented one so that they could have a stopping place to keep their horses. The short runs like the above #### were usually made when the weather was bad so that they could have the fresh horses to take the stage trhough faster. The company sold their barn later and rented barns by the hotels; for a while the barn at the Alden House, Where Tome Hiday lives, was used and later the barn back of the present hotel was used, they tried to get a barn not too far away from the postoffice. If the weather was good the passengers would all get out of the stage at the postoffice and wait there until the change of teams was made and then the stage would drive back and pick them up but if the weather was bad they would stay in the stage or go into the hotel to get warmed up if it was cold. When the stage was coming in you could usually tell who the driver was by the team. Father liked his team of blacks a lot better than the whites or creams for the blacks were easier to keep clean and shiny than a lighter colored horse.

As the trains kept coming farther west they had to take off the stage lines that were running where the train went and this threw a lot of the men out of the work but they kept the oldest men on the work, giving them new routes. One day one of the agents came to ## father and told him that he would put me on the route between Ft. Dodge and Dakota City driving a two horse Jerky, and of course I was willing to take that. I would go up one day and then come back the

next day. There were two of us on that route, a stage going each way every day. After driving there about a month the Stage Agent came to father and told him that he wanted him to go to Ft. Dodge and take the four wagons, four mules on a wagon, hauling freight from Boone to Ft. Dodge and turn one of the teams over to me and he take one and get two drivers for the other two teams. He wanted father to be the wagon boss, to take the entire charge of the four outfits. At that time the Chicago & NorthwesternRailroad was in Boone and that was nearer Ft. Dodge than anyplace where the Illinois Central was extended to and the freight for Ft. Dodge was shipped there so that the haul would be shorter. I am not sure but that it was Moingona where we got our freight, which is the next town west of Boone. Father had to receipt for all the freight that was to go to Ft. Dodge and then it was loaded into the four wagons, that is he took the freight for the firms that had given him their orders to get their freight for them. There were private outfits hauling for some of the merchants would haul their own fright. The four wagons that father had charge of would all go together and it took two days to go from Boone to Ft. Dodge, or four days for the round trip. Father turned over one team to me, they were the poorest team in the whole outfit, that is in flesh, and I was notified that the off wheel mule would be good a week to kick at me once and she was a great mule for her ears were going all the time when she was walking they was a flopping and the bridle strap had worn her ears till they was all raw and when they'd put the bridle on her she'd fight like a dog. I got a couple of short straps with a snap in each end and I took her halter and tied it back in her hair so it wouldn't touch her ears and then I took the bit put it into the short straps that I had got and then when I wanted to harnes her I'd snap that into the rings

in her halter and then I'd be already for the rest of the harness then. 'Twasn't long before her ears got well and then I had no trouble with her at all after that. She never hurt me a particle, I kept away from the fighting end. I think that the reason father got that job was the the mule drivers had been regular brutes and abused the mules and father was a good hand with horses and would take care of them. We had orders of twomill burrs and I don't know what they'd weigh but probably about 1500 or 2000 pounds apiece, they were heavy, and father put them on my wagon. He had two heavy timbers and he put one on each side of the wagon, lengthways of the wagon, then they loaded those two burrs on my wagon. So I drove out of the way and we loaded the other wagons up and then we started. When we got to Ft. Dodge of course I had to take them to the mill. Quite a winding road down around the hills to the mill. I drove up along side the door of the mill and I knew I'd have to back up to unload them. The miller had help there to unload them. I knew he didn't like the looks of the driver cause he was pretty small, so I swung my team off, pulled the wagon out a ways from the mill, unhitched my leaders and drove them out of the way, then I backed the wagon up with the wheel mules and the miller just stood there and looked at me and never said a word. When I got back to the platform all the miller said was "Young man, you did a good job." Then the went to work and unloaded them, they couldn't use any iron bars on them, they had to use all wooden levers to raise them and work them, fraid of chipping the stone. I was glad when the stones was off the wagon cause I knew if we ever tipped over we couldn't get them back on again. I drove until fall when it was getting late and then they put someone else in my place and I came home. I think the mink was getting pretty ripe by that time and I kinda wanted to get home. Amongst the drivers the ivory ring was the ornaments and I think I have got five of my

rings left, they would usually have about six rings to a set. Our rings in them days would cost us from seventy five cents to a dollar apiece. After we got acquainted, my team and myself, the mules were just like kids for they would go along the street gawking andthe first thing they knew they would run into a hitching post or something. Some times I was like the mules and was gauking too and sometimes I would just let them go and see where they would go. The man that drove them before me drove them with a whip but I never had a whip along with me. A great many people thinks a mule don't know anything but I think they are smart.

Wall Lake, Wright County. Burns and myself used to go up there every fall and spring trapping, it was mostly mushrats. We set our traps along the edge of the water on the rat house and staked them as fur out as the chain would let us so when the rat got caught he'd most invariably jump off the aidge into the water and dive and get tangled up in the moss and dwown, that is what we wanted him to do. Well, it was getting along late in the fall and our traps begin to freeze in a little, bother us, and we run out of kerosene oil and it was two miles over to a little country store, that would make a four mile trip for a little kerosene oil. My partner wasa little bit grouchy and he says, "What in hell are we going to do for light tonight?" Well I didn't say anything but I kept a thinking what I was going to do. He went his way in the morning and I went my way. We was gone to noon, came back with our rats, between us we would probably have from 75 to a hundred rats each day, we would pile the rats up there and leave them until night before we would skin them. If anybody disputed our count they were there and could count them themselves. Right after dinner Burns would go one way on the dredge ditch and I would go the other. We were after skunk and mink on the

 dredge ditch and occasionally we would get a rat. Well I hurried home and got in there before Burns did. I picked up a little can, it was clean. I took it into the tent and got me a rag and twisted it up, tied a good big knot in the rags about an inch from the end, then I filled up my can about half full with skunk oil, we had about a gallon of skunk oil that I had tried out from the skunk fat that I had cut off from the skunk when I skinned them and had tried out in an old dish that I had there. When we had opened the can we hadn't taken the top clear off so that when I had put the skunk oil and the wick in the can I bent the top back over the can so that it pressed against the wick and wouldn't let the wick slip back into the can. I lit it and it made a nice blaze, good light, no smoke and no smell. Even if it had smelled we couldn't have smelled it for our ridge pole of the tent hung full of rats that we had skinned, on one side of the floor was our bed, near it was where we ate and had our stove and in another corner is where we skinned all our fur, so that we had quite a mixture of smells all the time and a little more wouldn't have made and difference. It was dark when Burns got there but the light was still burning. He stepped into the tent and looked and he says, "What the hell, Bill." That was his by-word. He says, "I never saw anything like that before. No more lanterns as long as the skunk grease holds out." It did give a better light than the lantern. We got along nicely, the weather brightened up a little and didn't freeze so much but still the nights was getting pretty cold and our traps was freezing in. One evening the wind whipped into the northeast and begin to rain and sleet, freeze. I says, "Burns lets pick up our traps tomorrow ang go home." He says, "All right."

Well, in the morning I went down to the farmhouse to get a pail of water, told the farmer that I wanted him to come up and get our stuff in the morning and take us to Blairsburg, there we could

 take the train for home. I went right back to the tent and got my gun, got in my boat, picked up my punch pole, and everything was covered with ice and was still a freezing. I started for my traps shoving along from rat house to rat house, picking up my traps, and I got clear up to the north end and I had got my traps all picked up, I probably had 50 or 60 that morning, we usually had 80 or 90 apiece out but I had picked up some before when it had started freezing. I knew we was going home the next day and I wanted a few ducks to take home with me. I shoved my boat along by a bunch of reeds, I wanted to turn my boat around so I could #### run the point of my boat into the reeds. It seemed as if the air was full of ducks. I set my punch pole in right near the end of my boat, down into the mud, and I give it a good hard pull to throw the end around and the pole slipped off the end of the boat and the boat didn't go but I did, right over backwards into the lake, all ice of course. As I went backwards I caught the side of the boat with both hands and when I stopped my heals was over on the boat and I was setting down in the water hanging onto the boat. I had to get my legs off the side of the boat. Well, by the time I got back into the boat I had both hip boots full of water and I was wet clear up to the waist. I pulled my boots off and poured the water out of them, rubbed my hands down along my pants legs to push the water down them, took one of my stockings off and wrung it out, before I could get it back onto my foot it begun to freeze. I got it back on, put my boots on and jumped up and grabbed my gun. I killed seven ducks just as fast as I could shoot there. By that time I was getting pretty cold. I laid my gun down and picked up my punch pole, picked up my ducks and started for camp. I had pretty near a half a mile to go but I made her all right, got to the camp in good shape. I went into the old tent. Our stove was about 18 inches square and about 3 feet long

 and it would take quite a chunk of wood. Before I had gone out on the lake I had put a big chunk of wood in the stove so that I had some good coals in it when I got back. I always kept some dry wood in the tent near the stove and I put some of that in and it wasn't long before I had a good, hot fire going. I took my pants and drawers off and wiped myself with a cloth and put on anotherpair of drawers and some dry stockings then I stepped up right straddle of the old stove. Burns came in about that time, I was standing there straddle of the stove. He says, "My, my hands are about froze." He looked up and says, "What the hell, Bill, is the matter with you?" So I told him, stove was getting too hot for me and I moved off, put on a pair of dry pants, a pair of good, heavy shoes, then I was already to go to work to get dinner. We got our dinner and then we started out for the dredge ditch to pick up our traps along it but there we didn't need any boat and I don't think I got anything, my traps weren't bothered. My traps was all on the same side of the ditch so I didn't need any boots. I think Burns got a rat or two that afternoon. Well, that night we packed up in good shape. We pulled our boats clear out up on the bank and locked the chains together. We got up pretty early in the morning, tent took down and rolled up, blankets rolled up, everything ready and the man come up with the wagon and we started for Blairsburg. It was an awful cold day but we got there all right and took the train for Alden. When we got down home here and come to open up our box of fur we found that a mink or two and some rats had been stolen. We surmised who had stolen them, he was the watchman at the depot here at that time and after finding out where he sold them and how much he had gotten for them we went to him and settled with him and he was glad to do it. We didn't have but a few mink and skunk but we had several hundred rat skins and got .35¢ each for them.

249. Every fall for a good many years Burns and I trapped there at Wall Lake. We usually had a team from here take us up there and when we were ready to come back we would walk about two miles to the nearest telephone and telephone to Groner to come up and get us but this one time it looked so stormy and bad that we didn't want to take the long ride across the prairie that we would have to take if Groner came after us.

The next fall we went back up there and we took a couple of partners with us, Charley McMillen and Luin Cox. We didn't have very good luck that fall, some way or other. We all had boats and plenty of traps. We caught quite a lot of fur but it wasn't anything extra. The next fall we went back up there but Charley didn't go with us, but Cox did and the law was out at 12 o'clock that night that we got there at the lake. There was other trappers there and they had been all over the lake sticking stakes in houses that they wanted to put traps on. That afternoon, or evening, Burns and Cox went clear up to the north end and there was a bunch of houses that wasn't staked and they staked 50 houses. After dark they went back and started setting traps for the law was out at 12 o'clock and they had a right to trap then, and then they took some extra traps with them, about ten, so I stayed up that night and kept fire in the old stove and made a good, big pot of coffee. The boys got back about one o'clock or a little later that night. They had a cup of coffee and a lunch and we laid down. We got up by five and had a bite to eat and they left for their traps before six. When they came back they had 60 rats with them, they much have had 70 traps out or else they borrowed some other trappers rats but they didn't do that though even if some of the other trappers did do that. We thought that was a pretty good ketch. Ididn't go out that morning but stayed to be chief cook and bottle washer. Well, we done

 so well the boys wanted to celebrate a little. Cox fixed up the doses, I didn't pay no attention to it. As quick as I took a swallow of mine I see there was more whiskey to it than I was used to, I see it had gone to my head and my head begun to whirl but not very bad though, I knew what I was doing and it wasn't long before my head cleared up. I know that Cox and Burns was quite talkative and I presume likely I was too for a while. We got a pretty good ketch of fur and came home, everybody satisfied. We would usually go up there as soon as the law was open to permit trapping, around the 15th of October, and stay there as long as the weather would permit until it froze up so that the traps would freeze in and the rats couldn't spring them when they stepped on the pan.

When Burns and I was up there trapping I says to Burns I want to send a card so I'll go down to the farmhouse, take a card down and send it home, the mail box is about a half a mile the other side of the farmhouse and I'll go down and see if anybody is going over to the mailbox in the morning. If they are it'll save me about a mile for the trip. I says to Fred 'I811 slip down while youtre getting supper." I knew we had a lot of rats to skin that evening so I hurried right along to the house and knocked and a woman just opend the door so she could peek out. She says, "Come in." I says, "No, I've got a card I want to send out to the mail box if some of you folks are going down in the morning." She opened the door a little wider and says, "Come in." They occupied one part of the farmhouse and some trappers the other part. She says, "The Jones's are drunker than lords and Charley (that's her husband) is in with them fellows. I'm scart about to death" So I set down in a chair and pretty soon Charley come in and he was laughing just as hard as he could laugh. She says, "There's Mr. Bigelow back of the door." Charley says they had an awful hot fire in

their stove. One of them got up to expain something to him and he lost his balance and set down right on the stovenand there he set. He says, "My God, that stove's hot." and he put both hands out to raise himself off the stove. And Charley says he heard his hands sizzle when he put his hands on the stove and he grabbed him by the coat collar and set him off the stove. Charley says, "I guess I'll go and milk." She says, "You'll not go as long as them drunks are in the other part of the house." Well, she got up and locked the door between the two rooms. Charley picked up his pail and he turned to me and says, "George, stay with my wife so I can milk." Well, she says, "All right, Mr. Bigelow, if you'll stay." So I'll go out and set down on the steps outside here. She openedn the door wide so she sould watch me. I hadn't been setting there but a very short time before one of them came out of the house, it was a side door he came out, and he started to go into Charley's room. I got up and says, What do you want?" He says, "I want to see Charley". Well, I says, "He's down milking and I'm waithng for him. You'd better go back into your room and stay there until he comes." He turned and went back into the house and the woman came to the door. She says, "Thank you, Mr. Bigelow." When Charley came up with his milk I started for camp and when I got back Burns had supper all ready. He says, "It took you a hell of a long time to go down to the farmhouse." Then I told him how I was detained. The man that set down on the stove I don't think set down anywhere else for a while. We were a little late about our work that night but we got through. Burns says,"You came up here to trap and not to entertain women."

I just came off the lake and there was a man standing there when I stepped to shore. He says, "I've got four fellows stranded out here in the lake." Well, I says, "Take my boat and go and get them." As

quick as he got into the boat I see that he didn't know anything about handling a boat. I says, "If you'll get out I'll get in and go and get your men." It was getting along towards dinner time and I was hurrying too. I shoved out into the lake quite a little ways and there was four of them standing in water waist deep but they was standing in a boat, the boat was sunk. I got pretty close to them and one of them made a dive for my boat and liked to have tipped me over. I says, "Now wait, you sons-of a -gun, if you tip me over we'll all wade out." I backed my boat right up against theirn so they could crawl in over the end. As quick as they got in they picked up a paddle and a punchpole to help me. I says, "Drop your punch poles, I can't do anything with this boat with you pushing it every way but the right way." and they did. I shoved it long to shore and they got out. One of them says, "Come down to the wagon and I'll fill you up with all the beer you can drink." I says I didn't want any of it. This man that was standing there and I says, Your boat is floating out there and you take mine and ### go and get it." I went and got a pail so he could dip the water out of the boat. He didn't want to go alone so I says, "Get in the boat and I'll go along with you then." I shoved my boat right along side of it and I see it was a twelve foot boat, about a two-passenger boat, and there was four in it and all drunk, no wonder it sank. So I went to dipping water and it wasn't but a short time until I had it all out. I put his gun over in the boat and I says, "Get in there and shove your boat to shore and I'm going to shore now." He says, "Mr., I wish you'd take my gun to shore with you." I shoved right along to shore, left his gun in my boat, took my gun and my furs that I had in there and went to camp. Dinner was all ready when I got there. I ate my dinner and came out of the tent and that poor devil had just got to shore then. That was along in the spring, about the first of April.

253. I was coming in off the lake one time and I heard a man holler and I looked around and I see a man standing up. He says, "Say, Mr., what kind of a boat have you got? Will it carry two more passengers?" I says, "Certainly it will." Well, he says, "Come over and get us damn fools, will you please?" He was awful good natured. He was a man I should judge weighed 200, and they was standing in water pretty near up to their arm pits. So I backed my boat up against them so they could crawl in at the end and when they got out of their boat it floated and I started to go and I see that one of them had a gun. I says, "Where's your other gun?" He says, "Down there in the bottom of the lake." One of them says, "We'll drag this boat to shore." I says, "No, we wont. We'll pull it up on this little rat house and leave it here and then you've got within 10 or 15 feet of where your gun is. Now go down to the farm house, you said you had dry clothes down there, and get a garden rake and another boat and then come up and get your gun." And the big fellow says, "By golly, I didn't think of that." They went down and changed and come back and got their gun and boat. Offered to pay me for my trouble and I told them they didn't owe me anything. I says, how did it happen you got ducked out there?" The good natured fellow says, "I was standing right at the aidge of the boat and my partner had shot at some ducks as they was coming by and my partner leaned out a little too far out over the edge of the boat when he shot and he fell out and the boat tipped right over and I fell out on the other side."

Cox started out one morning with a lot of decoy ducks, they were al wooden ducks. He found a good place to put his ducks out. He was throwing them out, placing them, and through some misshook or crook one of the weights dropped into the trigger guard of his gun and when he throwed the decoy out it shot the gun off and blowed a hole through the end of his boat just a few inches above the bottom. I guess he was a

 little excited. He hollered for help and the e was a couple of hunters but just a little ways from him. They came over and got him in their boat and they pulled him and his boat and decoys to shore.

When we were quite kids there was a little demand for cat hide. We used to pick up quite a number of cats and we would take them up ### to the island and there's where we'd skin 'em, throw the carcasses way back in the brush. The island wasn't inhabited much by fishermen In those days that island was a good deal longer and there was a good many big trees in it and during the winter there was a good deal of that wood cut off and it was then that the cat carcasses come to light. When they were found they called the island "Cat Island" and it has been called that ever since. One day I got after a black kitten, bout half grown. I took him up to the island and skinned him. That trip I was all alone. I says he's just about the size of a common mink. I stretched it like a mink and took good care of it and when it got dry I took the hide off from the board and I had a couple of mink hides and I took my two mink hides and cat hide over to Mr. L. H. Utley, he was buying fur. I laid them down on the counter and I says, "Mr. Utley, what are they worth?" "$2.50 apiece" he says. $7.50 for the three mink. He gave me the money and I walked out but I felt guilty though for the deal. My cat skin was worth about ten cents. He hung it up with some other fur he had there. I used to happen around to the store every evening to see how my cat skin was coming. I dropped in there one evening and the fur was gone. I says, "Mr. Utley, did you sell that fur I sold you?" "Oh, yes," he says, "It went right in with the rest of them." I says, "Did the fur buyer find andy fault with my fur?" "No," he says, "Your fur was handled all right." I says, "Mr. Utley, one of them minks was a cat skin." He says, "What." and begin to laugh. Well, he says, "I bought it for a mink skin and sold it for

 a mink skin." I says, "Now, we'll wait until the fur buyer comes around again and see if he has any grievance to make about the cat skin." So when he came around next time Mr. Utley told him about it. He says, "What's the difference, I bought it and paid for it and I sold it and got my pay, So I guess we are all even on the cat skin." That about ended our cat deal for it was getting late in the spring and we were getting tired of it.

Most always every fall, but sometimes in the spring, somebody would set the prairie afire and the heavy grass and in the sloughs and the rushes and the fire would burn like the dickens. You could see the fire better nights than you could day times but everybody in the neighborhood was out watching the prairie fires and what they called backfiring at that time, they'd start a fire way ahead of the other where they could control it and let it burn so that it would stop the main fire from coming any further. There used to be quite a lot of hay stacked on the prairies in the fall and they used to plow around the stacks, about a hundred feet from the stack they would plow about four times, then 25 or 30 feet from the plowing they'd plow about four times more around, that would leave a strip in between the plowings and then they'd set that strip afire and that would protect the hay if a heavy fire came along. Sometimes the fire would jump that backfire and then away'd go the hay. Most all of the stacking was done on high ground where there wasn't very much grass. Them days we had plenty of prairie but now them sloughs are all into corn. We never had very many bad prairie fires around here but sometimes if one would get started up around Williams and the wind was coming this way it would come down through there like the devil but they were watching all the time and when they saw one coming they would get out and start backfiring against it to try to keep it in control. Mother Button's mother was out fightin

256. a prairie fire near Iowa Falls and her dress caught afire and they had nothing they could put it out with so that it burned her so badly she died in just a few hours. Well, one night we was all called out to fight fire, fire was coming in from the north and we wanted to keep it out of the timber. The men and the boys was backfiring, doing the best they could and by good luck the wind changed and our backfire stopped the other so that it saved the timber. Fire running through the timber kills a lot of small stuff. Backfiring was about all they could do to stop a fire but if they were near a slough where they could get water they would take wet mops and use them some. Backfiring against the wind was a slow and dirty job and after several hours of fighting fire that way you would be mighty dirty. Fighting prairie fires was no place for dresses.

In town all they had to fight fires with was a bucket brigade. Somebody would get on the roof and someone else would hand him a bucket of water to throw onto the fire. They would make a line of men from the source of the water to the fire and as they filled the buckts with the water they would pass them from man to man until it got to the fire and the empty buckets would go back along the line the same way. Some of the buckets were about full when they got to the fire and others were almost empty for in their excitement and hurry they would spill a lot and would get about as wet as if they had fallen into the water. About the only danger there was was that sometimes the man on the roof would get excited and throw the empty bucket down and it would hit someone on the head.

The old building that we used for a restaurant, which is now standing back of the pool hall, was at one time used by a man by the name of George Nelson for a salloon. He traded, or sold, it to a stranger and one night just shortly afterwards this stranger stuffed

 the stairway with hay, he had all of his household goods moved out ready to leave, and then he set fire to the hay. He waited long enough until he though the hay was burned and the fire had a good start on the building before he gave the alarm. When the alarm was given everybody went there and the first ones that got there discovered what the trouble was for when they opened the stair door the found the hay smouldering for it had been packed in so tight that it hadn't burned and they pulled it out and put the fire out with about a bucket of water The stranger thought he could burn the building down and get the insuran ce but when he couldn't he pulled out the next day and we never saw him again.

Once when the Lighthall house, later owned by Van Voorhis, was on fire they was taking off the storm windows and as they would take them off I would take them and carried them way back into the raspberry bushes and piled them up so they wouldn't get broke and here came Hosier on the run right down through the raspberry bushes and he jumped right onto the pile of the storm windows and broke every oneof them.

One April Fools day Jim Hosier's house caught on fire and when they told him down town he wouldn't believe it but when he went home later he found his house burned to the ground.

One time Charley Rummel's barn caught on fire and he had a lot of hay in the mow and the men were up in there pitching out what they could to save it. We had our hand engine then for pumping water and was using the hose for throwing the water. Bill Masters was in the haymow and once when he leaned over to get a fork full of hay the stream of water caught him under the coat tail and the water came out under his coat collar. He straightened up and looked around and said, "Whoap, you put out the wrong fire that time."