

# **JAMES LUTHER {Luke} SMIRES**

*15 February 1887-15 December 1973*

I was born Feb. 15, 1887 in the hills of Clay County, Tennessee, one mile of Monroe County, Kentucky. The Tennessee and Kentucky line ran through my Grandmother Rush's Spring. I have dipped water out of the center of the spring and drank from both states at the same time. Uncle James Thomas Rush built a store and post office about fifty yards from Grandmother's spring on the Kentucky side, named it Boles Kentucky. My great Grandfather Denham came from Virginia on horseback in about 1800 found a cave spring in the big woods on the Tennessee side. The next spring he came back and built a two story log house (2-18 X 20 rooms and an 8 ft. hall). Great grandfather topped the oak and beach trees around the hill cave spring. He gave Grandmother Smires (Denham) the old home in about 1870. Grandfather and Grandmother Smires gave father (Jacob) the old home about 1895. Father had 2 oxen he plowed with and hitched to a two wheel ox cart and hauled fire wood and fence rails. Father worked for fifty cents a day when he could find a job and trapped coons, opossums and polecats for the hides and traded them for things we had to have. He fattened hogs for meat and raised sheep for wool. When the sheep were sheared, the wool was carded by hand cards, spun by a spinning wheel into thread. Mother, Rachel Rush Smires, wove cloth on wood looms for our clothes and knitted our socks from the sheep wool. They had a large apple orchard and dried apples, planted corn for bread. Father was a syrup maker. He raised a large cane patch and put up three or four 50 gallon barrels of syrup. Our way of travel was a two wheel ox wagon, horseback, or walk. The oak boards great grandfather covered the house with were moss covered and on the house when father sold it in 1903.

In my early days I remember the times I almost lost my life. My first time was in the fall of 1890 when my oldest sister, Locey, was born. Mother hired a girl to stay with her to look after me. I was three years old. The first evening the girl went in the kitchen and I ran away to a mill pond about one hundred yards from the house. When I came to the pond a calf was grazing on the dam and I climbed up to him; he backed up; I followed him and when he stopped I rubbed his little head; he looked mad and backed up again. This time I scratched his head he said bah-- and butted me in the belly so hard I landed on my back in the mill pond. When I was going over the dam I gave a loud scream. The girl had missed me and was out looking for me. She heard me scream and ran and pulled me out and saved my life. I will never forget the calf and the girl.

This time I was almost choked to death. In the summer of 1891, late one evening Mother was going to fasten some young chickens in coops. I was following her; she looked back told me I had better stay in the house it was getting dark. I tuned up to cry so she told me to come on. On our way to the hen house through a large grape arbor we had to go under, the grapes were

hanging down in large bunches and they looked good. I stopped and reached for one; Mother told me to not pull them they were not ripe and would choke me. When she was fastening the coops and her back was turned; I pulled one and put it in my mouth; she saw me. I tried to swallow it. I was choked. she ran to me; beat me on the back but it wouldn't come out. She thought I was choked to death, She grabbed me by the feet and held me upside down and gave me some big shakes and out it came. She said "if you had stayed in the house as I told you----".

In the summer of 1894, Father told Mother he would hitch the two oxen to the ox wagon and carry us to church. The wagon had two large wheels and the bed was about 4 feet wide and 10 feet long; bolted to the axle in the center. There were no sides or anything to keep us on. It was a beautiful Sunday morning and Mother spread a quilt down. She, my two sisters and I sat down on it. She said she wished it had some sides because she was afraid of it. Dad said he would walk and drive the oxen. He drove them with one line and a bull whip. When we came to the church he tried to find a shade for the oxen. When we came out the oxen were in the sun and very hot. He untied them and started home. They were so thirsty he could hardly drive them as they wanted to run away. When we came to an old sage field they broke loose and ran away with us. When we hit a bump, up we would go. Mother had a time keeping us on and she was screaming that we would be killed. Dad was running as fast as he could but he couldn't catch them. They hit a side ditch and we hit a bump and slid back into the center again. We were really making some racket with all of kids crying and mother screaming. This old field was down grade and at the lower side there was a creek. The oxen smelt the water and they made a run for it as fast as they could run. You cannot guess how hard it was to stay on a flat bottom bed wagon on a quilt. Some how Mother had her arms around us and kept us together. When they came to the creek they went in with us on the wagon. When Father got there Mother told him to hurry and get us out before they drowned us and to wade in and carry us out. This I will never forget. This was our last ride to church on an ox wagon.

In 1894, father hired Tom Potter, his boyhood friend to haul fence rails on the ox wagon to fence a large apple orchard. Tom came by the house with the last load of rails, he stopped for a drink of water. I asked Mother to let me go with Mr. Potter and she said that she was afraid I would get hurt. Tom told her he would take care of me and he put me on the back. When he unloaded he sat me back on the back and started back a near way through a large patch of weeds. Our hens were in them and they flushed up in the oxens' faces and scared them. The oxen turned and were running to a large ditch. Mr. Potter ran ahead of them popping his whip and turned them. They hit a bump; up I went and I would slide to the front. I was having a hard time keeping on. Mother heard the noise and ran out hollering to Mr. Potter to stop them or I would be killed. They headed for the highway he ran ahead of them and turned them to the house. In front of the house was a large wood pile and they headed for it. When they started around it one wheel started up on the

wood and he ran around the woodpile and got them. I slid down a straddle of a standard that held the rails on with both legs sticking through the spokes of the wheel. One more jump and I would have lost my legs. Mother climbed up and pulled me out. My ride to church a few months before and this ride was my last ride on an ox wagon.

We lived close to a school. One day I slipped off at noon to the playground where the kids were playing. Two little boys were scrapping, one little boy was doing some big cursing. This was my first to hear. I stayed a few minutes and went back to the house. When I walked in I began to spit out the big curse words I had heard the boy say and Mother grabbed me and wanted to know where I had heard this ugly stuff. I told her a boy at school was saying it. She said she would stop me from saying it any more; she went into the kitchen and came back with an old case knife; put her finger in my mouth and pulled out my tongue. She put the knife on my tongue and I was scared. She let my tongue go and I promised never to say it any more. That broke me until this day.

Our neighbor built a large stock pond. He invited Father and Mr. Potter over to swim. I asked Mother if I could go with them and she said she was afraid I would get drowned. They told her that they would look after me and she said for me to stay out of the water and I could go. When we came to the pond, Father was first in and he asked Mr. Potter to watch me so he could swim some. In he went. I asked Mr. Potter if I could wade in the shallow water. There were big stumps and the water was muddy so you could not see the deep holes and no one was there to tell us. I was having a good time in the shallow water. Mr. Potter wanted to swim some and said for me not to get in the deep water while he was swimming. Although he was swimming close to me he had his back turned when I walked off in a deep stump hole. I went under and when I came up I slapped the water and Mr. Potter heard me. He got to me as I went under the third time and pulled me out and saved my life.

At our old home in Tennessee in about 1892, Father built a large log barn on top of a hill about 150 yards from our house. One day I slipped off from Mother, went up the mountain trail to the barn and in the barnyard there was a double persimmon tree. The birds were in it and I wanted one so I thought I could climb up and catch me a bird. I climbed up about 6 feet and began to slip down. The opening between the two trees was just wide enough for my foot. I tried it and my foot was fastened and I couldn't get loose. I turned loose with my left hand and tried to pull my foot loose, I gave a pull. My right hand came loose and I fell backwards. My head was about 4 feet from the ground and it almost scared the life out of me. I was doing some loud crying and calling Mother. She finally heard me and my Aunt lived about the same distance and she heard me about the same time Mother did. I heard Mother tell her to come and help her get me down. Up the trail they came calling to me to be still or I would fall and brake my neck. They were calling to each other as they ran. They didn't know how they were going to get me down. Finally they got to me and I was yelling bloody murder. They

would push my body up and my leg would bend and my foot wouldn't come out. Mother told Aunt to go in the barn and see if she could find something. She found a large box and she climbed on it. Mother pushed my body up while she got my foot loose. They stood me on the ground and asked what I was after. I told them birds. Mother dusted the seat of my pants and that was the last time I tried to climb a tree to catch a bird.

When I was a "Doctor". In the fall of 1894, Uncle Keelin Smires moved across the trail from us. They had two boys and one girl. In our family was two girls, Locey and Lucy, and myself. I was the oldest. The first morning Aunt Minnie came to see us and brought the kids. Mother and Aunt Minnie told me that I was the oldest and they wanted me to look after the children and go play. I carried those three and my two sisters up the hill to a playhouse under a big beach tree. I told them to be seated and I asked them how they felt. They said they were not feeling good so I told them I would be their doctor. I told them to stick their tongues out and they did. I told them that I gathered wintergreen for Mother when we had colds and she made tea out of it and cured us. So I went up the hill to find them some medicine. On my way up the hill I came to a cliff where some sheep had slept and there were a lot of pills on the ground. I pulled a large grape leaf and gathered some pills. I went back to the spring and got a gourd of water and came back to them. I told them I had found them some pills and for them to take one each. They said they wouldn't, that they were sheep pills and they would not take them. I told them I was their doctor and they would have to. They put one each in their mouths and I gave them water. They got choked and began to cry. Mother heard them and called them to the house. She wanted to know what I was doing to them and they told her I was their doctor and was giving them sheep pills. She shamed me and told us to play in the house. I thought I had gotten off light. She said she was going to gather the eggs and when she came back she stood by me, pulled my head back and put some black stuff in my mouth. She said she wanted me to see how it tasted. I have never been a Doctor again.

(My piecing a quilt). The winter of 1894 was very cold and I had to stay inside. I asked Mother for some quilt scraps. I wanted to piece a quilt. I ran out of scraps and couldn't find any more. One day mother told me to go to the store at Boles, Kentucky for something. I had to go through a mile of woods of large trees. A large opossum crossed my trail and I took after him. He was a little faster than I. He came to a large chestnut tree and started to climb when I came to the tree he was up about four feet. I caught him by the tail. He was as stout as I and I thought I would lose him. I gave him a side swing and pulled him down. I got him by the neck and carried him to Uncle Jim's store. He looked at him and told me to carry him up to grandmother and she would help me skin him and he would buy the hide. She helped me and I carried the hide to him. He gave me 15 cents for it. I told him I didn't want the money but I wanted some cloth to finish my quilt. He asked me what a boy was doing piecing quilts. I told him it was so cold that I had to stay in and had to do something. He said I'll be dogged. He gave me three yards

of calico at 5 cents a yard. I started home and was glad that the opossum helped me finish my quilt. When I got home I ran in the house and showed Ma the cloth. She wanted to know how I got it. I told her about the opossum and that Grandmother had helped me skin him and Uncle gave me the cloth for it. When I finished the top, my sister Locey quilted it for me. I kept it for years. This was my last quilt top to piece.

In 1897 I found something in a paper that I wanted to sell. I dropped my pen and tried to catch it; the point stuck in my hand and I got blood poisoning. I almost lost my hand. Mother finally cured it and when my plasters came, I had time to sell them while my hand was getting well.

My fall on the ice. The winter of 1895 was very cold and the pools were frozen. The snow was about four inches deep and our friend Turner Moss came to see if Father would go rabbit hunting. Father said yes we would go by the pond and see if we could do some skating. I asked Mother if I could go and she said if Dad would keep me off the ice. They hunted a little while then headed for the pond. Father walked on the ice to see if they could skate some. They could skate about twenty feet and it was so slick that they wouldn't let me on it. They wanted to skate across the pond. They had to get me by the hand so I could run and jump on the ice. Then Mr. Moss was the first across and Dad told me to go around to the other side and not to get on the ice until he ran and jumped on it and went across. Then he told me to come. They went over a little rise and couldn't see me. I thought it would be easier to skate across. I was by myself and I tried to skate. I went out on land about ten feet and ran and jumped on it as they did. I was okay for about fifteen feet then my legs began to cross I was going so fast. I went up in the air came down on my left cheek bone and cracked the ice just like I had hit it with a hammer. It knocked me out for a little bit. I could hear Dad calling me to come on. I left the ice, walked around the pond and down a hill. When I caught up, Dad looked at me and said, "I see you tried to skate". Your mother will tan you when she sees that black cheek. When I got home my cheek was really black. Mother said I see you didn't mind me that is what you get for not minding me. My cheek stayed black for about three months.

In the fall of 1896. Father sold our old Tennessee farm to a man on credit and we moved to Smith Grove, Warren County, Kentucky by wagon. Father rented a farm from Mr. John Ellis; his hobby was orchards and strawberry fields. We moved into an old home at the foot of the Pilot Knobs. A ten acre orchard came up around the house. He had every kind of fruit; apples, all kinds of plums, peaches grafted on plum trees; one limb was plums the next limb peaches. He had prunes, all kinds of cherries; one cherry tree was two feet through and spread out and made a large shade. When the cherries were ripe you couldn't hold the large branches in your hand. Mr. Ellis asked father if he could hire me to help him cut and pile corn stalks and keep him company. I was small and only seven years old and talked a lot and that was what he wanted. He gave me five cents a day. The first five days he gave me five nickels. I was proud of them. I was with him every day that he came to work. It was easy helping him graft trees, set out strawberries, and

help him haul strawberries to the depot to ship. He had a large tobacco barn two stories high; tobacco hanging from the top to the bottom. When a rain came up we would go to the tobacco barn where he made his cigars. He had about one hundred hens around the barn and would go to the north east corner to get his tobacco. I asked him why? He said the chickens didn't roost there. I told him I would keep them out, but he said no son they make me a lot of money. When they started packing the large barrels, tobacco and hen manure was loaded in with nice tobacco on top. When it was shipped no one know where it came from. I told a friend that they made snuff out of it. He had his lip full. You should have seen him spit it out.

I learned to shoot in the fall of 1898. The man father sold the old home and farm to could not pay for it. Father had to take it back. We had to move back to Tennessee. It was hard for me to leave Mr. Ellis. The second year , he had given me ten cents a day. When we got back home, fire had burned all the fences around two fields. Dad had a job making rails and fencing. Father had a muzzle loading shot gun. One day all the folks were gone and I wanted to know how to shoot and knew the gun was not loaded. I got the powder horn, the bottle of shot, a box of caps, and some paper for gun wadding. I had watched dad load it, so I loaded it and went out to shoot something. Some blue jays were in the trees and on my first shot I killed one. I killed about six. I had learned to load and shoot the gun. The next day I killed a squirrel. That did it, I was read for anything.

The time I nearly broke my neck. One morning I took the gun and went hunting in a strip of woods near the house. The trees were very large chestnut, white oak and poplar. I came near a large chestnut stump; it was hollow and broken off about fifteen feet up. At the bottom was an opening about fifteen inches from the ground and came to a point about two feet up and was about three inches thick. As I was passing it, I saw something more inside; it looked white. I looked in; it was dark inside the big opening. I thought it was a rabbit; I had to get on my knees to look in. I couldn't see anything so I put my head inside; for a second I couldn't see. When I could see four white things came at me with their mouths open, blowing and coming at me. I jumped up on my feet. My neck got caught and I couldn't get it out. I was almost scared to death with those things looking me in the eyes. I pulled so hard I thought I would break my neck. I began to holler for help as loud as I could holler. It scared them they backed up and I dropped on my knees, pushed my body down and got my head out. I was glad I didn't break my neck, and they didn't get my eyes. I got a long stick and finally raked one out to see what it was. They were half grown buzzards. I saw what it was; I had been taught to never kill a buzzard so I let him go. This stopped my hunting; I started for home. On the way I thought I would go get my boy friend; he was a brave little bully not afraid of anything. I put my gun up, went to his house, called him and told him I had found something in the woods I wanted him to see. He wanted to know what it was; I told him to come with me and I would show him. He said I'd have to tell him or he wouldn't go. I told him I had thought it was a rabbit. We came to the big

stump. I told him it was inside and he got down and peeped in. He said he didn't see anything; I told him to put his head in if he wanted to see. He said he wouldn't. I said Rice, I didn't think you were afraid of anything. He said he wasn't; he put his head in; it took a second before he could see. They came at him as they had me. He jumped up; his neck fastened; I thought he would kill himself. I pushed his body down and got his head out. I started to run and he got a stick and raked one out. I told him what they were; he killed them. We started home and he was getting mad. I told him that if he wouldn't tell mother I would give him my knife and marbles. We traded; we never told anyone.

In 1895, father owned a fast saddle horse. I rode him one day to Boles, Kentucky for something and went up to Grandmother Rush's. Harley Moore, my cousin, was living with grandmother. He told me he wanted to learn to ride. He was eleven years of age and had never ridden a horse. One day he came to our farm so I could teach him to ride. I got on and told him to get on behind me; we were bare back. I let the horse go a little fast and he couldn't stay on and he pulled me off. We hit the ground hard. I got on again and told him that I would take him to a sandy field. When we came to it, I let the horse out a little; he pulled me off again. I told him that I would teach him by himself. I put him on and led the horse until he learned to sit on the horse. He said to give him the reins that he thought he knew how. He let the horse out a little and off he came broadside. He fell off a few times before he learned to stay on. I had a time teaching him to guide the horse. He said the horse knew how to go, but he didn't. I finally taught him. The next day we rode again; he told me to get on behind him and hold so he could go fast. We had a large pasture and when the cows didn't come up to be milked I had to go get them. Mother told us to go get the cows. Harley got on and I got on behind him. He was in the saddle and we were having a good time. He was telling me how proud he was that he had learned to ride. We came to an old field and were going up a little hill when we heard the cow bell. He let the horse out fast and went under a large scrub oak. There was a large limb down low and the horse ducked his head and went under and wedged Harley back on top of me. It stopped the horse and I told Harley to ease me the bridle reins and I would try to back him up or else we would be killed. I finally got us out and we were nearly mashed to death. This was my last ride with him.

I played jumping the big fire. Father owned two farms in 1898. He rented one to Mr. Craget who had two girls, Nettie and Bell and two boys, Barlow, 16 years old and Bunco, 12 years old. The boys came by one morning going to the hill field to cut some dead trees that had blown down. It was in February and cool. They told me to come in the evening and they would have a big fire about 3 o'clock. I went to see them and they had the wood piled and a big fire. We were watching the big blaze and Barlow, the older boy said "I will back you boys out jumping through the big blaze". We asked him how? He said we could put the hand stick, one end on the ground, spring up, hold our breath and go through. I told him his brother was only 12 and I was only 10 and he was 16 and for him to try it and if he could we would try it. He

put his stick on the ground jumped up and went through. I told Bunco he was next oldest to try it; he went through. I was next, I made it. We thought it as a lot of fun to jump through a big sheet of fire for some time. I told the boys I was going home and was not feeling good on the way home. I thought of a knife grandfather said he had dropped when was working in the top story. He said it was between the weather board and logs. The house was a log house, the rooms were sealed, no one would try to take the bottom board off to get it. It had been lost about 50 years. I told mother I was going to get it. I got the tools and went to work. I was not feeling good. I would work a little and lay down to rest. Mother came in the room and saw I was sick. She told me to wait until father came home that he would help me then she went out. I went to work; finally the plank came off; I found the long lost knife and was I proud of it. I had supper and went to bed early and was sick.

I was sick in bed about 3 months. The next morning after I found my knife I had a high fever and couldn't get up. I didn't tell mother about jumping the fire. We lived up in the hills and no doctors close. Mother was my doctor. Her medicine was calomel, castor oil and salts for about two months. I was getting weaker and losing weight. Mother turned me on a sheet in about two and one half months. I had got so light she could lift me like a baby. I was skin and bones. The last two weeks of the third month I didn't know anything. Mother sent father into town to get me some fever powders. She began giving them every hour and I began to get a little better. When I came to one day, I heard them talking. Mother said she had given me up before she got the powders. I would sleep and talk a lot. One evening the chickens were in the front yard in front of the door. Mother told my two sister to go scare them away that they would have me talking again. I had come to and thought I would have a little fun. I began to talk about that time the old rooster jumped on the door steps and crowed loud. I opened my eyes and looked around. The old rooster had brought me to. I looked up and my mother was looking at me; I gave her a little smile; she grabbed me and said you are going to get well. When father came home she told him I was better and going to get well. I told them the rooster woke me up. In three months I began to set up. When I could walk I went to Mr. Cragets. They had borrowed our horse. I wanted to ride him. They helped me on and I let him out a little ways and back. They helped me down and it made me sick. I went home and took to bed. My back kept me in bed for three weeks this time. I didn't ride again until I was well.

In the late summer I was well again. Barlow and I would go to the woods to dig ginseng, a medicine root very scarce. When we found some we dried it and carried it to the store and traded it for little things we wanted. The price was five dollars a pound. One day a man told Barlow that there was a lot of ginseng in the Brimstone hills. He told Barlow if he went to the hills to take his big dog along. There were a lot of wild cats and catamounts in the hills. We decided to tell no one that we were going ginseng digging in the hills. We left early one Sunday morning. He brought his big dog to chase cats if we found any. We were walking for about five miles. Finally we came to

them and started down. It was so steep we had to hold to bushes and trees. When we were about one fourth mile down our dog got on the trail of something and left us. Barlow would call him but he wouldn't come back. Barlow said we should have left him home for the good he was doing us. We kept going down and he kept calling. We were about a mile down when something screamed like a woman. It was screaming very fast. Barlow said lets get out of here before it eats us. The hill was so steep we had to catch a bush to pull us. It was very slow. My hat wouldn't stay on and the screams were getting closer. Our dog had trailed the cat to his den and it was after him. I couldn't keep up with Barlow because I was so weak from being sick. Finally the dog passed me and I called him to stay with me but he would not stop. I knew I was a goner by myself. Everything got quite and I finally made it to the top to a large field. Barlow and the dog were clear across it. I hollered for him to stop and wait for me. This was my last time to go ginseng digging on Sunday. We never told anyone and we thought it was good enough for us.

The spring of 1901. My Mother died. She left my two sisters and I. The youngest was seven and the other was eleven and I was thirteen. Father's mother was living, she came and stayed with us. One day she told me if I could make some cider she would bake gingerbread. Then we would have gingerbread and cider. I took my ax to the woods and cut down a popular tree that was about 18 inches through. I cut it about three feet long, burst it open and dug out a trough and carried it home. I went back and cut the other piece of log off and hued it off to fit the trough. Then I got a pole about ten feet long, carried them to the log corn crib under a large walnut tree. We had three apple orchards. I would go to one and get some big ripe apples and then to the other one and get sweet apples to sweeten the cider. I put them in my trough and beat them with a mall I had made. The corn crib was off the ground about 18 inches. I put my trough on some flat rocks; put my block on the crushed apples, put my long pole under the edge of the crib and sat down on it. This mashed the cider out. I took a cup and put it in a large pitcher carried it to our cave spring and set it on some rocks where we kept our milk and butter so it would be cold for dinner.

In the fall the large walnut tree would have a lot of large walnuts. I made a mallet to beat the hulls off. When dried I stored them in the corn crib. One day I had been some place and took a short cut across some fields. The chestnuts were ripe and I came by a chestnut tree that no one had been to. The ground was covered with big chestnuts. I picked up my hat full and piled them on the ground. I had a large pile. Then I pulled my drawers off and took my shoe strings and tied around the bottom of the legs and filled them full. I put them astride my shoulder and carried them home. My drawers were full of chestnuts when I got there grandmother had a laugh.

Maple Syrup. Father married again. Grandmother went back to her daughter in the fall of 1903. Father sold the old Tennessee farm for cash and bought 160 acres on the Kentucky side. A lot of sugar maple trees were on the farm. I made troughs out of buckeye trees and dried them in the summer. In

February when the trees began to thaw I hauled my troughs to the woods. I put two troughs to each tree and bored two holes about three feet from the ground 6 inches apart slanting. I drove two spikes I had made from elder in the trees; placed my troughs under them. In a little while the maple sap would begin to drip. Up in the day when it was warm it would run a little stream. My troughs would hold about three gallons. I would tap in the morning, by evening I would hitch two horses to a sled with two fifty gallon barrels on it and go empty my troughs of maple syrup and haul them to the house. We had about three thirty gallon kettles. I emptied mine and my stepmother and two sisters built fires around the kettles and cooked the thirty gallons of juice down to two gallons of syrup. If you wanted maple sugar you cooked it down to about three quarts, then poured it in saucers and let it get cold. It was a sugar loaf and it was very good. We kids ate it for candy and we ate the syrup on hot biscuits with cow butter. About seventy acres of woods were covered with large white oak trees. Father sold the oak timber to a stave mill to make whiskey barrels. The trees were cut in lengths about 40 inches long. The bark was peeled off and busted? in bolts, then corded. Father contracted to haul them to the mill to be cut into staves then shipped to Louisville, Kentucky to be made into barrels and filled with whiskey.

In the summer of 1904, our neighbor Mr. Sims and father bought a portable syrup mill to be moved to the farmer's cane patch and made their syrup. They made all the syrup close to home. When they couldn't come home at night they turned the mill over to Mr. Sims' son. The Sims boy was 22 and a syrup maker. One day a farmer moved our mill back close to home. Sims was getting homesick and he had a wife and baby. The young farmer left the cane patch, came to the mill and told us how to make his syrup. He had a fine lot of cane when he left us. Mr. Sims said that did it, I can't make his syrup and I am going home. He left me with the hillbilly to make syrup. I made my fire under the pan and had my juice on cooking. He brought a load of cane and wanted to know where Sims was. I told him he had quit me and gone home. He asked me if I could make syrup and I told him I was a helper and would try. He said he would stay and see and I ran my first batch and it was pretty. He said I see you can and he went back to the cane patch and was pleased with my syrup. The next hill farmer came to move the mill to his patch. He wanted to know where the man was that made syrup. I told him he had gone home and he said you are a kid; can you make syrup. I told him I had just made this patch; try some of the syrup. He tasted it and said it was good so he moved me. I made him good syrup too. When we were through making a farmer came and moved the mill about five miles from home and he had some fine cane. I got the mill ready to go by noon. He took me to lunch. The wife was no cook, everything was half done and there were no screens on the windows. The flies were on the food and I couldn't eat it. I had a glass of milk and a piece of bread. At supper it was the same. I would take a piece of bread to go to the mill and eat syrup and bread. I stayed two days then I quit and started walking home. I was so weak I would sit down

and rest. I finally made I home and told father I was through making syrup. I haven't made syrup since.

In the fall of 1905 I decided to come to Texas. In the Spring of 1905, father was still hauling stave bolts. I was to farm when I had my ground ready to plant corn, father took off and helped me plant. The land was very fertile and the corn was very good. When it was too wet to plow, I would go to the stave mill and work. When I made enough money I bought two one year old yearlings and we had a good pasture so they were fat by fall.

Father's mother was in Texas visiting a son in Dennison and a son at Daingerfield. She returned home in early fall and told us about Texas. I got the fever and told dad I was going to Texas December 1, 1905. In a few days he had the fever. He told me he would rent the farm to Mr. Copeland. He and Mr. Copeland traded on Dec. 4th. He put on a public sale and sold everything but the farm. On Dec. 5th a wagon train took us to Glasco to take the train to Texas. The next day we were on our way. The third day we were in Jefferson, Texas. We missed our train again as we had missed it at Glasco on the first day. We had to stay over until 10:00 that evening for our train to Daingerfield. About dark, the depot agent told father if were going to stay in the depot to go out and get anything we needed before dark. He said someone was waiting for a train a few weeks ago and a few days later they were found in the river. He asked dad if he had anything to protect us with. Our family was my self, two sisters, step mother, half brother, half sister and father. After he was gone I asked what he was going do. He said bar the door and stay in. He said he would feel better if he had a gun and I told him I had one-a thirty eight. He wanted to know where I had got it and I told him a boy at the sale had the gun and wanted to sell it. He said that with all the cowboys and Indians in Texas that I would need it so I bought it. Dad said he felt better after he saw it, but that I had to get rid of it when we got to Daingerfield.

I thought we would get rich growing cotton. My Uncle J. K. Smires, his wife, two boys and one girl came to Daingerfield in the fall of 1904. We came Dec. 11, 1905. Father and Uncle rented a big farm from Jim Jenkins at Jenkins, Texas. I though we would get rich growing cotton. I decided differently when we picked and sold our cotton in the fall and we were \$240 in the red. Father bought a farm from Mr. D. B. Tomberlin about one and one fourth miles east of Hughes Springs. We moved to Hughes Springs the first of December 1906. I helped father on the farm. Mr. W. L. Tomberlain taught me to make cross ties. When I could not plow, I would make rail road cross ties for spending money. Two years later I was 21 years old and I told father I was through farming. He told me he had rented some land from Mr. J. C. Dobson for me to farm. He said some sprouts were on it and it needed cutting. One day I took a grubbing hoe and went to see; there were too many sprouts. I went to the house and told father to tell Mr. Dobson to rent it to some one else.

I came to town. Some one told me there was a job open at the Katy Railroad dining station. Pop and Mother Hogan were the managers. I went in and talked to Mother Hogan who was Dutch. She asked my name and I told her Smires. She said Dutch and they are good workers so she hired me

and put me to washing dishes. In a week I was cooking and I cooked for seven months. I thought I wanted to rail road so I quit cooking and got a job at the round house on the day shift. For six days the next week I worked a day and night. Then I worked three shifts in a row. I began September 1 and I quit September 15th. I put in 30 days in fifteen. I had enough round house railroading. I went home and went to bed for about a week and slept except for meals.

My first job selling enlarged pictures. Father's sister came from Kentucky to see us and stayed a few months. She enlarged pictures and gave me a job going to homes to see if they had a picture they wanted enlarged. I took a roll of pictures to show them and see if they wanted pastel or tinted pictures. I walked the first day and made six dollars. I was very proud of this picture business. When I had a bunch of pictures, Auntie mailed them to Kizer Art Co., Chicago, Ill. They made an outline of them on a card 16X20. She finished the picture. She bought the frames from Kizer. She took the outlines and finished them pastel or tinted the way the customers wanted them. We had to have glass 16X20 before we put them in the frame. We lived in the country so I walked to Hughes Springs to buy 30 glasses. They did not have them so I caught the 10:30 train to Daingerfield. I found them at Conner Brothers. There were 20 glasses to a box. the boxes were so bulky I couldn't carry them. They took them out of the boxes and wrapped them in heavy paper. They were so heavy I could hardly carry them. They wanted to know what I wanted with so much glass. I finally got home and we put the glass and pictures in the frames. I delivered them in father's one horse wagon. Most places they paid me in silver and it was so heavy it nearly pulled my pants off. The pictures and frames were \$3.50 each. I would carry 10 to 12 pictures at a time. I remember one day I called on Mr. Sam Newby. He was on the porch. I told him I was taking orders for enlarging pictures and he said "son last week I kicked a picture man down the steps". I said my name is Luther Smires and I live near Hughes Springs. He said that is different if you live here. I told him my Aunt did the work and he gave me an order.

My next job was the J. E. McBrady Co., Chicago, Ill. When Aunt Susan went back home to Kentucky, I was out of a job. Aunt Susan had Kizer Art Co. to mail me samples of pictures to enlarge from. I sold a lot of pictures and frames for Kizer. When the picture business got dull, a man came to see me. He wanted me to sell the J. E. McBrady Products. I took the line and began to sell toilet goods. After a few weeks they added jewelry and groceries to the line. I sold a lot of all of the line. In a few months I had sold so much they gave me a job appointing agents to work for them.

In 1911 we had a recession and business was dull so I quit McBrady Co. A friend of mine, Guin Nesbitt was working for Stegar Lumber Co. at Avinger, Texas. He got me a job grading lumber at \$1.50 a day. They didn't pay money we had to take orders to R. H. Rhine Store for the things we needed. It took about all we make to buy our overalls and gloves and pay our board.

The Shreveport Fair was on and the Railroad put on an excursion from Greenville to Shreveport. From Avinger a round trip was \$1.75. We mill boys wanted to go so our boss called Mr. Stegar at Bonham and told him he sent us shed boys \$3.50 each at the fair gate. We paid 50 cents to get in and we saw the fair with the \$1.25 and had a real good time. When something happened at the mill everybody would run. One day they gave the run whistle and everyone left the shed. I walked up within about six feet of the twin boilers and just then they blew up. The crown sheet and flues blew out and I thought I was killed. There was so much steam that I couldn't see. The next time I was first out. On Saturday evening Guin and I started walking home down the railroad track. The local stopped to pick up a car and Guin said lets find a place to hide and ride home. We climbed in a car of cross ties and hid on top of them. They started up, downhill it was so rough that we had to climb down. Guin said that if it wrecks, they won't find a piece of us. It was my last time to steal a ride.

I quit saw milling and went back to making cross ties. I worked for Stegar Lumber Company for seven months and I had seven dollars coming. I took an order to Rhines Store and bought a pair of shoes in the show window and a two dollar shirt, then walked the railroad track home. My shoes were too little so I sold them to Guin two years later. He paid me for them. That was my last saw milling.

In the Spring of 1912 the depression was about over and times were getting better. I was in town one day when I met Mr. Brad Tomberlain, my old Tennessee friend. He told me he had a farm and a lot of cross tie timber was on it. It was about five miles from our home and he wanted me to come and board with him and make cross ties. Monday morning I was in the tie woods cutting my trees down, scaling, hacking and hewing the timber was good and easy. The first few days I made 20 ties a day. The second week I stepped up to 25 ties a day. He paid me 12 cents a tie and when I finished my 25 I would go in and chat with Mr. Tomberlain on a bench under a big oak tree in the edge of his yard. One day he gave me a broom and said sweep the place off and I will go see if I can find my croquette set and we will play croquette. Most every evening he would come to the woods to see when I was going to be through so we could go play. I would have my twenty five made about four thirty. On our way he would kid me. A trail ran through the woods where I was working and one evening when he came out I asked him what had made the trail. He said about a mile off a woman and a bunch of children lived there and they had made the trail. He said I should watch for them when I had no clothes on. In August it was hot and I had never seen anyone but Mr. Tomberlain so I worked in my jumper and shoes. One evening I was hewing a log up on the trail and someone made a lot of noise slapping and squealing behind me. I thought it was the woman and kids. I ran away and hid behind some bushes and looked out. Mr. Tomberlain was rolling on the ground. I stayed with Mr. Tomberlain three months and made him 1500 cross ties. His wife was an extra good cook. I was working and

playing hard and I loved the good food. I enjoyed my stay with Mr. and Mrs. Tomberlain.

Cafe job. In December 1912, I was on my way to Dennison, Texas, and stopped at Greenville, Texas. A railroad man told me a job was open at the Becom Cafe and to see Mr. Becom. I saw Mr. Becom and told him I was on my way to Dennison. He said to come to see him when I came back. When I came back in three days, he gave me a job hashing. It was a nice place to work. It had a cold drink bar in the front and everything was okay except the water. I could not drink it. For three days I drank tea, milk and cold drinks. I was almost starved for water. One morning I took a trash can out back and there was a well bucket and rope. I let the bucket down, drew up the bucket of water. It smelled good so I tasted it. It was rain water in a cistern. I drank all I could hold and I was feeling fine. I went back through the kitchen and told the Negro cook that I had been starved for a drink and had found some good water in the back yard. He said you didn't drink the water in the old cistern did you? I said yes it was good. He said \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ old dead geese are in it. I had my belly full of goose water. I tried to spit it up but couldn't. That evening some railroad men came in from home and asked me how I liked my job. I told them okay all but the water and I was going home to get a drink. They were on the work train and had two tanks of water. They told me to go get all I wanted. They moved in two weeks and the boys on the local came in. I told them I was going home in the morning and they told me to be at the crossing about seven and I could ride home with them. The train was long and when the caboose got to me they were going fast. I caught it with my right hand, my suitcase was in my left and my feet were on the rails. I finally threw my suitcase on so I caught with both hands and got on and saved my legs.

My friend, Guin Nesbitt was braking on the L and N railroad. I didn't have a job so I asked him if he could get me a job braking. He told me to come in the morning and go with him to see how I liked it first. He was on the local and it stopped at each station to unload or pick up freight or set out a box car or pick one up. When we got to Shreveport I told him I liked the work fine. The next morning we were on our way to Hughes Springs and we had a lot of work. It was getting dark when we got to Jefferson. It was very dark when we got to Avinger. He and I set out a car of feed at Rhines Warehouse. He told me to go up and set the brakes. He went to another siding to set out a car. It was pitch dark when I had the brakes set and I caught the stirrups on the end of the box car. I thought I was near the ground. I could not see that I was about four feet up. I jumped down; one foot caught on the side of a cross tie the other one caught on the side of the other tie and it threw both ankles out. They were sprained so bad and I had to crawl down the track about 25 yards to the depot. I crawled up on a loading buggy and I didn't know how I would get home as it was about 1 1/2 miles. At the car I had left was a lot of shouting, someone was hollering. Guin came running by me and said some lets see who has been killed. I was so excited I forgot about my sprains. I jumped down so had on the board walk it put both ankles back

in place again. Some Negroes had been braking in cars (set out). They were watching this one when they tried to break in this one they shot them up. One was not hurt, but the other one was a cripple all his life. I told Guin if they had not shot the Negroes he would have had to carry me home. This trip stopped my railroading.

When I was 26 years old I had been a farmer, a cook and hasher, a railroad cross tie maker, saw mill worker, a railroad worker, a pictures salesman for Kizer's Art Co., Chicago Ill., sold Mr. J. E. McBrady's face lotions, jewelry and groceries and had sold suits for two wholesale companies--the last was for J. L. Taylor of Chicago.

I had thought I wouldn't ever marry anyone, but I met a pretty little blue eyed girl, Elizabeth Stiles. I changed my mind. My old friend D. B. Tomberlain was the law and he married us October 26, 1913. I had saved a little when I was making cross ties early in 1914. The railroad shut the tie job down for two years. I was out of work. Mr. Hodge, a neighbor, came to see me. He told me he was moving away and would give me the house rent and half of the money I got for the peach crop. He had a nice orchard. I told Mr. Hodge that I would take the place. When the peaches were ripe I had \$150 cash. I borrowed father's one horse wagon and loaded five bushels on and started to town to see if I could sell them. I came to the road to town as a man came up in a cargo car. He stopped and said, "Bud you have some nice peaches; how much a bushel do you want for them? I told him a dollar a bushel and he took them all. I went back to the orchard and picked five more bushes and took them to town and sold them. People came to the orchard and bought them as fast as I could pick them. I sold peaches and apples to my part to get us by until January 1, 1915.

I couldn't find any work to keep myself, wife and baby from starving. A few years back Mr. Jim Dobson told me he wanted me to clear his land some time. I told him okay when he was ready. He died later and we didn't get to trade.

Clearing land for 75 cents a day. By January 1, 1915 I had about spent my peach money and I couldn't find a job anywhere. I thought of a piece of land Mr. Jim Dobson wanted cleared before he died. I went down to see Mr. Clark Dobson, Jim's brother on Feb. 1, 1915. I told him that Mr. Jim had told me last year that he wanted me to clear the land where I had been making ties but that he had died before we had traded and that I had to have a job. I told him I would like to clear it for him. He said that he didn't have the money. I told him I didn't have to have money that I would take it at the store that I had to have food. He wanted to know how much his brother would have paid per acre to read for plowing. I told him \$3.50 per acre. He said I will give you that if you will take it in orders to Cloninger's Store as he had an account with them. I was also to move in his rent house and he would give me free rent and I could work the land that I cleared. He would furnish everything and give me half of everything I made. That evening, Feb. 1, I began clearing the land. It was easy to clear and that Friday he came over on horse back to see what I had cleared. He stepped it off and said you are doing good. I told

him I had to have some groceries and he wanted to know how much. I told him \$4.00. He wrote me an order to Clonniger's Store. Saturday evening I took my order to get the groceries. I'd walked to the store and Mr. Clonniger met me. I told him I was clearing land for Mr. Dobson and he was to pay me in orders to your store for groceries. He took the order and looked at it and said Dobson doesn't have any money to pay us, but he has a lot of land. he said okay maybe we can collect it. I took my groceries home and told my sweet little wife she would not have to starve if they kept taking our orders. I cleared eleven acres and worked from day light to dark. I burned it off sawed many logs and burned them. I had a blue place across my back. It stayed on me for over a year. I made 75 cents a day in orders and was glad to get it.

Back to the farm again. On April 1, 1915 I hitched a horse up and began plowing the land that I had cleared and fenced. I had made \$43.00 clearing and fencing in orders. We were living on about \$9.00 per month. Dad let us have a cow to milk as we had a good pasture and didn't have to buy any feed. I planted six acres in cotton and five in corn. My cotton was pretty. It looked like a bale to the acre. The last of May we had a tropical storm and the wind blew and it rained for three days. My cotton was large and the wind whipped it so hard that in ten days everything fell off. When it was looking good, I met my old friend Mr. Tomberlain in town and told him I would like to take my Masters Degree in the Masons. I needed \$22.00 and he said let us go to the bank. I will go on your note for it. We got the money and this was my first time to owe anyone. The storm revived my cotton after I had borrowed the money. When I picked my cotton, I made 660 pounds of seed cotton. My half was 330 pounds. I sold it and paid my note and I had one dollar left. My clearing orders had been taken up. I asked Mr. Dobson if I could clear some of his bottom pasture and that I would take it in orders. I cleared his pasture land and had enough in orders to get us by until the first of the year-1916. My orders were taken up and I found a little job. They paid me in cash \$4.50. This was my first cash since 1914. I rented the land I had cleared from Mr. Dobson; he also rented me four and a half acres of rich bottom land to plant in corn; the other in cotton. If I could find something to do to buy our food. I didn't know how I was going to do it. I had never asked for credit except the \$22.00. I told my wife I didn't know where our food was coming from next year. There were no jobs as the depression was still on.

The tie job opened up and it had been closed for two years. On New Year's Day 1916, I had \$1.75 left of my \$4.50 job. I went to town to see if I could find some kind of work. When I saw men talking I would go near and listen to see if they were talking about any kind of work. I walked the streets all day and didn't find anything. In the evening I was hungry but I wouldn't spend any of my \$1.75. About four o'clock I went to the depot and some men were there. I didn't hear anything and I was disgusted and hungry. I didn't want to buy anything on credit so I started home. I had crossed the street where McMillan's Motor Company is now and I don't know why I crossed the street in front of A. L. Glasses Store but as I passed the door Mr. Glass saw me and called and said "Buddy, come here." I went in and he said the tie job opened

today. I was so carried away I didn't say anything for a minute. I asked him for a specification. He had the job took up; they spotted them and paid for them. I told him I would like to buy my groceries from him and he could take his pay out when he paid me for my ties. He said he would be glad to and that was my first thirty day credit. I thanked him, took my specification and crossed by Keaslers to the railroad track. It was about 4:30 in the afternoon. I had forgotten I was so hungry I was so proud. Down the tracks I went and when no one could see me I would run. It was a mile down the track to get home. I had my saw and axes sharp and my measuring stick and prize pole ready. I got my tools and began to cut the trees. I made \$1.13 before dark. I had my supper after dark and when Mr. Glass took my ties and I paid him I had \$75.00. I put it in the bank and went to plowing. On February 1, I was a happy lad.

Mr. Dobson furnished me again on the halves. I had my crop growing and it sure was pretty. I told Mr. Dobson we would have to have a new corn crib. I would build it out of pine logs hued like cross ties. I would hue the logs for a floor and the rafters of pine poles. All he would have to buy would be boards for the roof and nails. He gave me the job. I built it on to his barn. After I had finished it by myself, I told him we would need a cotton house to put cotton in before we took it to the gin. I told him we would build it out of pine poles. He had the pine poles and all he had to buy was the roof and nails. He said okay. I built it in the edge of the cotton field and the edge of the woods where there were a lot of pine poles. I had a good crop of corn and cotton and sweet potatoes. My tie making in January and we had butter and eggs to sell. I had a sweet potato bed and I sold \$15.00 of plants. I had enough money to hire two bales of cotton picked. I had 3 1/2 bales of cotton and fourteen loads of corn with an ear of corn under the side boards, two bottom beds of sweet potatoes and a fat hog. I sold my cotton, corn and potatoes and came to town and got a job cooking at the Wilson Cafe. I cooked day shift short orders. Each morning I baked all kinds of plate pies. A few days later I quit the farm and moved to town. That was my last farming 48 years ago. I cooked for the Wilson Cafe for 2 1/2 months. Mr. L. D. Keasler came to the cafe every evening for a piece of pie and a glass of milk. One day he asked me if I would like to work for Keasler and Company. I told him I couldn't leave the Wilson's until they got someone to take my place and I told him I would let him know later.

On December 22, 1916, Mr. Keasler came into the cafe for his pie and milk. He and I were the only ones in the cafe and he told me that his delivery boy, Tom Stacey, was quitting. He wanted to know what I had decided. I said Mr. Keasler, I know what you pay delivery boys and my wife, baby and I can't live on that. He said we start them off at \$25.00 a month and when they get on to the delivering we give them a raise. If you will take it, when you work 3 months I will put you in the house and give you a raise and you get everything at cost. I told him I would try it as soon as they could find a cook. On January 17, 1917, they hired one and on Monday, January 17, 1917, I went to the barn hitched 2 small mustangs, mean little ponies, to the delivery

wagon and began delivering for T. B. Keasler & Co. at \$25.00 per month. Two months later my second daughter was born. I walked in the store that morning that she was born and Mr. Keasler met me and asked me if I had a new arrival this morning and I said yes. He said I will put you in the house and give you a raise to \$35.00 per month. They sold Buck Cook stoves-quite a lot of them. One day a man from the factory came in and showed them how to demonstrate Buck stoves. He took the caps off and threw them on the floor then the other one and threw them on the first one real hard. He said threat them rough and if you can break any part the factory will replace it free. I was watching and a few days later a young married couple came in. One of the boys met them and they wanted to buy a cook stove. The boy called the clerk that had sold the most cook stoves. He showed them the stoves on the floor. They wanted a smaller stove and he took them under the balcony where the stoves were stored. In a little while they came out and told him they wanted to look around and they wanted to see some Bridge Bench Stoves across the street. I was near the door when they started out and I said you didn't buy a stove. They said we are going across the street to look at the Bridge Bench Stoves. I said I heard you tell the man the kind of stove you wanted and we have one in a crate under the balcony and if you will go around there I will show it to you. I am sure it is what you want. His wife said lets go look. I took them by the office where Mr. Keasler and Mr. Evans the bookkeeper were. I asked them if he showed them the one in the crate. They said no. I uncrated it and put the legs on and took the caps out. I said I want you to see what it is made out of. I threw 2 caps on the floor and took the other out and threw them very hard on the one on the floor. I kept throwing parts on the caps. I was making a lot of noise and it sounded like I was tearing the stove up. I said I want to show you how rough you can handle the stove and not hurt it. I said some stoves if you dropped a part it would break and the Buck Stove Co. will replace any part that breaks free of charge. The wife asked the price and I told them \$22.50. They bought it and I got the floor truck and loaded it. I came by the office and I was stepping high. We loaded it on his wagon then he paid me. I had been on the floor a week and I was up in the air- a country boy come to town and made a sale that the old head missed. I was ready for anything. The next day I was going to the grainery when I came to the office Mr. Keasler said you sold the stove yesterday. I said yes. He said I hear you and I give you a \$10.00 raise. I thanked him. When someone came in looking for a stove, the boys would call me and say, Luke, you show them the stoves. I hardly ever missed selling if they were ready to buy. I had the stove business and I was proud of Buck Stoves. I thought they were the only stoves made. When I went to work for Keasler's I was selling tailor made suits of clothes. For two years the boys in the country would come to our house after supper and I would measure them for a suit from J. L Taylor & Co., Chicago, Ill. When I hired to Mr. Keasler, I didn't tell him I was selling tailor made suits. After I would go home from the store, some of the boys would come to be measured for a suit. One day at noon I went to the express office and they had a suit for me. I went

by the store with it and Mr. Keasler saw me. When I came back from lunch he asked me if I was selling suits. I told him I was and had been for two years. He said if you will take over our National Tailor book and sell for us and drop yours, I will give you a ten dollar raise. I told him I would. I was working the hardware and grocery side. I brought his samples on the grocery side and put my table and samples in a corner at the opening going into the dry goods side. I began selling tailored suits. I measured five boys one day. I sold Mr. Sikes, 78 years old, his first tailored suit. I also sold Uncle Bob Wise 80 years old his first suit. I sold \$1500.00 of tailored suits the fall that I took his samples over. I worked for Keasler & Co. 31 years and 4 months.

By the next fall 1918, I was all over the house, hardware, groceries, stoves, suits, feed and dry goods. It was a lot more fun than farming. Business was good in 1918 and in 1919 cotton was selling for 40 to 45 cents a pound. In the fall of 1920, there was a slump, cotton was back to 18 cents a pound.

My wife's health was bad in 1923. I sold our home bought a 1923 Ford from Mr. Bill McMillan. On June 15, 1924, we left for Spur, Texas. Her sister lived there and her husband had died. He had a big cotton crop and I helped Wilford the older boy lay by the cotton. I rode a go-devil with 2 mules hitched to it. I plowed one row at a time and it as a lot of fun. Spur was about three miles from the cap rock. After we laid by the cotton, we would go to the cap rock and climb it. We found sea shells up on the cap. We found a spur of cap extending east about fifty yards. It was about sixty feet tall. The hot winds had blown for a week and all the grass on the south side was brown. On the north side the grass was pretty and green. The hot wind could not hit it. They lived on the Swinson Ranch and at night it was cool. The Ranchers slept in the yard. One night the wind go up and when I woke up in the morning a ring of sand was around me. In ten days we went to her brother's at Anson, Texas.

My wife's mother, father, brother and family lived at Anson, Texas and they all lived together. September the first I went to work for the Anson Spot Cash Grocery on the courthouse square. The boys were nice to work with and we found a place across the railroad track from Tom Stiles & family. In the yard was a mesquite tree and some kids had tied some ropes to an auto tire and made a swing. One evening my wife called me at the store and said come to the house one of our girls had fallen out of the swing and was hurt very bad. I told Mr. Pitard and he said go out the back door and down the railroad track it is a lot nearer. About half way there was a large cotton gin by the track and they were ginning cotton. I was worried about my little girl and the gin was making a lot of noise. A train began to toot toot and when I looked it as about 10 feet behind me. I gave a big jump and cleared the tracks flat on my belly as it passed me. When I could breathe, I got up and didn't get back on the track anymore. When I got home my wife said our little girl was okay and had just gotten the breath knocked out of her. I told her that the train that just passed had nearly knocked it out of me. We liked Anson fine all except the gyp water. It as very bad. One day when I had been working about

three weeks, we had a letter from my wife's brother's (George) wife, Daisy. She said she was in Keasler's Store last week and Mr. Keasler came to her and asked her how we were and how we liked West Texas. She told him we could hardly drink the gyp water. He told her to write us and tell me my job was still open that he had not hired anyone to take my place. I told Mr. Pitard I was quitting Oct. 1 to go back to T. B. Keasler & Co. Mr. Pitard offered me a \$25.00 raise to stay with him. We had been gone 3 1/2 months October the first and we loaded our little Ford and came back to Hughes Springs and T. B. Keasler & Co. (I was forty) The stay in West Texas had almost cured my wife. Her health was so bad before we left that she had to take medicine all the time. Our three little girls gathered up a half bushel of bottles where she had taken the medicine. I took them to the drug store and sold them. She had finished taking the medicine that she took with her to West Texas and that was all she ever took. The trip was worth a lot to us.

On October 2, 1924, we were back and Mr. Keasler gave me a raise to come back. Then in 1925 Mr. Pat Keasler had to quit because of his health and Mr. Keasler turned the buying of the hardware implements over to me. Also the grocery buying.

Coolidge was president and cotton was cheap when he took office, but it began to go up. I saw it go up \$10.00 a day until it was up to 35 cents a pound. In 1925, we got a 1/2 car of farm implements. It was time to farm. Aubie Phillips and Buster Hervey were working with me. We got the riding and walking cultivators, disc, harrows, grass diggers, middle busters and turning plows. George Stack unloaded, Aubie and Buster were putting them together. I was selling them as fast as they put them up. One day Buster came in with is finger bleeding. He said if I had to put up implements for a living I would quit now. Business was so good and I had taken over and wanted to make good . I would come to work at 6:30 a.m. and at lunch time there were so many to be waited on I never went to lunch. When I went to the grainery to load out something I would grab a cracker and a piece of cheese or candy. It was dark when I got home. I would eat a big supper.

In 1943 I found out what tobacco was doing to me. Keasler's had a big credit business in 1939. I began to have trouble with my tickets. We didn't have an adding machine. I would add mine and send them to the office. The next day the bookkeeper would bring some of them and tell me to read them and see if they were right. Sometimes I would charge them to the wrong person. I didn't know what was wrong with me. I would try to get them right, but they were getting worse and I was worried that I would have to quit or be fired. I was chewing and smoking tobacco. I couldn't believe it was my trouble. I took my paper and a cigarette and sat down at the radio. When I turned it on they were telling what tobacco would do to you. I didn't want to hear it so I turned it off. The next morning I had a bunch of tickets that the bookkeeper had brought for me to go over. I told Guy Goolsby, the bookkeeper that I didn't know what had happened to me that all the years back it had never happened. I was sure I would be fired. That evening I sat down to the radio and the same tobacco program came on. They said that the

good people who had used it would tell you that it would not hurt you. When You see a blue place on their lip you would ask what caused it and they would say cigarettes. This time I listened. They said when you had a little cough and couldn't get rid of it then you go to the doctor. He would take x-rays of your lungs and both lungs would be covered with nicotine except one small place. When that covers with nicotine you are dead. They said if you try to do something and it is all wrong; does that bother you? When I listened I didn't want to believe that tobacco was causing the trouble. I decided to quit for a while and see. The next day I told Rex Dudley and Ranchie Harris I had quit chewing and smoking. They asked why I quit. I told them it was quit or get fired. They both said they would quit with me as it was not doing them any good either. A few days later I found them smoking. I chewed bubble gum until it was no good.

In about three weeks I didn't get so many tickets back. In six weeks I didn't get any! I knew tobacco had been the cause. One day about two months later I went to the office to see Mr. Keasler about something, he lit a cigarette and he was coughing real hard. I asked him what was wrong. He said these old cigarettes are killing me. I asked why he didn't quit and he said he couldn't. I told him I had and I told him the day that he went on vacation he had brought me a bunch of tickets, then I decided to quit. I told him I was asking him to quit and he said that was all the pleasure he had and he couldn't quit. A few days later he told me he was trying to quit but he didn't until he was operated on. From that time until this day, August 6, 1963, I haven't used it any way and I never will again.

About 1941 Keasler & Co. put in a meat market. Ellis Stackpole was the market man for a year. He bought a cafe two doors from Keasler's Store and was to take over in two days. They didn't have a man to take over so Mr. Keasler asked me if I would take over. I told him I didn't know anything about a market. He said you have done everything else here and I want you to try it. It was Friday morning and Ellis was to leave on Monday. He told me to work with Ellis Friday and Saturday and that he would teach me. On Saturday at one o'clock there were so many people in the store that I left the market and went to help them in the store. I had one day and a half with Ellis. On Monday morning I took over. When I would get an order I would go to the cafe and ask Ellis where to get. He said I will give you my chart and it will tell you all the cuts. I stayed in the market one and a half years.

I went into business in 1946. Mr. J. D. Hooten was Keasler's dry goods man and he and I bought George Mayfield's Grocery and Market. I had JoJo McIntyre take my place at the market at Keasler's. We went across the street. I was the market man and Mr. Hooten sold groceries. My son Jimmy was the delivery boy. My daughter, Lenowise helped Mr. Hooten. We sold lots of meat and groceries and Mr. Hooten began to sell a lot on credit. We had too little money to sell on credit. The second month Mr. Hooten kept the books and he told me we were making \$500 a month each. Everything was okay except credit. When our three months were up, I told Mr. Hooten I would like to buy him out that I didn't like credit. He wouldn't sell but would buy

me out. I told him to set a price and I would give or take. He said for me to set the price and then I told him that he had said were making \$500 per month and we had worked three months so this would be \$1500 and we had paid \$2000 each for the stock so that would be \$3500. I would take that or give that. He said he would keep the store. I stayed with him and taught Paul Abernathy to take my place. When the month was up, I was out of a job. About three days later I met Guy Goolsby on the street. He was the manager of Keasler's. He wanted to know what I was doing and I told him nothing. He wanted to know if I would come back to Keasler's and work. I told him not at the price I was making when I quit. He said he would pay me more if I came back, we traded. One year later I quit again. Homer Goodson, my son-in-law, (Anna Mae, my oldest girl's husband) was building houses and he gave me a job. I helped him two months and we were building Cecil McPherson a house. One day Cecil came and asked me if I would work in his hardware store so he could go deer hunting. I had worked 31 years for T. B. Keasler. I had stayed in the house so long that I wanted out in the open for a while. I worked for Cecil McPhearson while he went deer hunting and I liked working for him. He hired me in the fall of 1948 and paid me more than Keasler's.

On February 10th and 11th of 1950, we had a lot of rain. On February 11th it rained hard all day and about seven in the evening Elmer Larson, another of my son-in-law's, came to the store. Mr. McPhearson told me that I had better go home with him. We were not doing anything as it was a dull Saturday so Elmer took me home. He lived next door and he parked his car on the west side of the house. I had sold my car and I told him to put it in the garage, but he said he was going to Sunday School and it would be slick out there. Our baby girl, Rosalie, was nine years old and sick with the flu so I stayed up until 10 and gave her medicine before I went to bed in the east bedroom. It was raining hard when I went to sleep but about eleven thirty I woke up and went to the west room as I was cold. We had a heater on to keep the dampness out. It was lightning a lot and had gotten warmer. I turned the heater off as Rosalie and my wife were asleep. I went to the north room to see if Jimmy had come from the show; he had not. I then went to bed again but it began to rain very hard and then it slacked a little. Then I never heard it rain so hard. The diesel train came by whistling and making a lot of noise then it was gone. It slacked up again about 11:50. I got up and went to my wife's room; they were still asleep; I went to Jimmy's room. He was not in. I started across the room to the bathroom when I came near the door the lights went out on the streets. Something hit the house; I knew it was a storm not a train. I stepped into the bathroom; the water heater was close to the dinning room door and it was making a lot of noise. The lightening was a solid flash. I caught the door knob and reached down to turn off the gas to the water heater. Just as I caught the turn off lever the wind hit from the east. The house went off the blocks and threw me on my back. I held to the door knob and jumped up to shut the door. Just as I got the door shut, it hit from the south. The roof and all the ceilings blew away. It sounded like about 50 men

tearing up a big tarp. I thought we would be killed. I was still holding the door knob when the house went off the blocks and the door didn't come open when the roof and ceilings went. I didn't feel the wind or anything. I opened the bathroom door to the dining room and looked out. It was very dark and I could see the ceiling in the bathroom and Jimmy's room. It had happened so fast it seemed like a dream. The noise and rain woke my wife and she called me and asked me if I was hurt. I said "no. Are you? Where is Rosie?" She said she had her under Jimmy's bed and they were alright. When the house went off the blocks, it broke the gas pipes off at the meter. It was making an awful noise. I thought we would be burned to death. The gas was coming from under the house. I asked Lizzie if she knew where my pipe wrench was. Everything was piled up and she couldn't get to me. I was in the dining room. She said it was on the china closet. The china closet was flat on the floor on its doors. The wrench was on top. I felt under the table and found it in the dark. I told her that I was going to see if I could get outside and turn the gas off before we were blown up. I couldn't get out and I started to hunt my shoes as I was walking on glass. All the window pains were out. I was standing in broken china. I finally found them--they were where I had left them before I went to bed. We had a sleeping porch on the south side of the house. It took the top off and took it about four hundred yards up the hill and wrapped it around a big oak tree. In a few minutes the volunteer fire boys were out helping. Hiram Ryle called us. He wanted to know if we were alright. He said I will get you out as soon as I can pry off a door. I wrapped a quilt around Rosie and took her and Lizzie to Audrey Reeder's. Audrey came back with me and all I had left was a well house and a chicken coop. I had a hen and twelve little chicks. The coop had blown over and the chicks were all hollering. Audrey helped me catch them so I could try to save them. In a few minutes a lot of men helped me put all the things that the rain would ruin in Jimmy's room as the ceiling was on it. We got two large tarps and covered them. Before Hiram got us out, I got into my wife's room in the dark as I was feeling for my shoes I got my hands in a lot of guts. I kept feeling of it and it was one of our large red hens. Something had cut her open. At first I thought it was a baby until I felt the feathers. At the foot of my wife's bed a 2 X 4 eight feet long with spikes through it was on the bed. The radio was on a table and it blew across the room and hit the wall and cracked the case. It was about 10 years old but when I turned it on it played. All I had to do was put on a new cord. A dresser was against the north wall. The dresser base was in the middle of the floor and the mirror was upside down against the wall and was rocking like a cradle. I told my wife I'd better get it before it fell. She had an electric ironer sitting by her bed with Rosie's medicine on it. It was in the middle of the floor upside down. My glasses were on the radio table on the west wall. My glasses were under the heater. A large waste paper can blew in and hit a spare bed and made a big dent in the side of the can and emptied the paper in my room. It ruined the can and broke the rails out of the foot and head of the bed. I am glad I was in the bathroom and not in my room. The car Elmer left in the yard was hit by a pecan tree; it broke the windshield. The

garage I had asked him to put it in blew away. I found part of it. Jimmy had his bike and motor cycle in the garage. The bike was in some bushes across the street and the motor cycle was in a fig tree. A limb the size of my arm was sticking through the handle bars. The cycle was upside down. We cut the limb off and pulled it out. Jimmy put some gas in it and it was okay. The only thing wrong was the new windshield was torn off. I had pecan trees, and a large pear tree and peach trees. They were all piled up around the house--also trees that belonged to Mr. Russell. It was a mess and pieces of planks were in my yard. This happened on or two minutes before Sunday morning. It rained most of Sunday. On Monday morning, Mr. Mason and two other teachers came over with about 75 school boys. They divided the boys in groups, some cutting up trees, piling brush and burning it. They also stacked some of the wood for firewood. I borrowed a pickup and about four of us moved my furniture and clothes and stored them. We had a load of furniture taken to Homer Goodson's. Jimmy was driving and we had the tail gate down. I was standing on it. A Negro stopped us and wanted to buy the pile of wood so I sold it to him. Jimmy thought I was ready to go but I wasn't holding on to anything. He started up with a jerk and I landed on the hard oil road flat of my back. The Negro hollered stop, stop. Jimmy and the Negro helped me up and I told them when I got my breath the tornado didn't get me but I thought the fall would if a car had been behind us. I was working building my house back on February 15, 1950 (my birthday) when a lot of people and the Red Cross helped us. We moved in our new home the first week in April. I went back to work at McPherson's Hardware about three weeks later. Mr. Darby came in the store; he repaired refrigerators. I asked him if he knew someone that had closed out their grocery store and market. I was in the market for one; he said he thought he did and would be back in two days. He came one day and asked if I could get off at five o'clock. The next morning I told Mr. McPherson that I looking for a building and wanted to put it on the land I owned across from the school. He said that was a good place. The next morning Mr. Darby took me to McCloud. We found a slicing machine then we went to Atlanta. Mr. Chiles had closed and he had a meat block and walk in box. I bought them from his wife. She said she wanted to sell the building also. I told her I was going to build but she said she would sell cheaper than I could build and that Mr. Flipo would move it. We went to see him; he came and looked at it and said he could move it if he could get a permit. He said he would be back in 30 minutes. He said he could and it would cost \$150.00. I bought it and he moved it two weeks later. We went to Texarkana and bought a pair of scales, meat counter, and meat grinder. We came back to McCloud and bought the slicing machine. When we came home that evening we had bought a building and fixtures; everything but a butcher knife and steak beater. When they moved the building I left what I had bought in it. I bought our opening stock from Jefferson Wholesale. My son and I opened up May 12, 1950. Jimmy and I opened our doors to a nice line of groceries and meats. My daughter, Lenowise Larson, helped us. We started with a good business. From May 12, 1950 until January 1, 1951 we took

in \$21,118.68. In '52 we took in \$44,868.222 and in 1953 we took in over \$50,000.00. Jimmy went to work for Lone Star Steel and his wife, Carolyn, helped me. In September 1955, I sold out to Claud Stiles and wife. I retired at 68. On Sunday, July 4th, Jimmy and wife, Carolyn, Everett and Iomgene and their two boys, David and Gary, my wife, Lizzie, and my daughter, Rosalie, and I all headed for Tennessee and Kentucky. Everett had car trouble at Memphis, Tennessee. On Monday about 3 o'clock they had his car going so we went to Nashville to see the Grand Old Opera, the State Capitol and Andrew Jackson's old home. Then on to Red Boiling Springs and to the Pitcock Cemetery where my mother was buried in April 1901. It was by the old home place. The two story log home had burned. Then we went on to Moss, Tenn. We came back to Kentucky along the Cordell Hull Highway to Tompkinsville, Glasco, and Bolin Green. First we went by Smith Grove where we lived in 1896 to 1898. Then we went to Bolin Green. It had been fifty years since we came to Texas. On our way to Texas in 1905, we had come by a Cemetery about 25 miles from home; it was evening. They were burning someone. I thought I would never see this place again. We came by this place in the evening about the same time in 1955. They were cremating someone again. We were gone four days. Carolyn, Jimmy's wife and I opened the store on Thursday. It was very hot.

On Saturday I went to Keasler's Store for something Mrs. Lillian Stiles waited on me. I asked her if she would like to buy me out and she said she would. I told her to bring her husband, Claud, by the house. (Claud was Lizzie's nephew). We traded and they took over September 1, 1955. Claud was a car salesman for McMillan Motor Company. He would come to the store early in the morning and cut meat and put it on display before he went to work. Lillian can in then and took over. Their son Sonny was the delivery boy. In a week, he decided to play football and had to practice every afternoon. Lillian would take orders, lock the doors and deliver. She had to do the buying, check in merchandise and put it on the shelves. When I would go to the store she had deliveries I would do it for her. She had a two man job. One day I remember I was at the store and Lillian had five customers and some deliveries. I helped her with them. When we got them waited on I delivered for her. When I came back I said how do you do all this work. I said if you can't get some help I will buy it back. On Dec. 30 she said she wanted to sell so on Jan. 1 we started invoicing the stock. On January 2, Brother Reeder came over and hired her to work for him. The next day she went to work for Reeder Watson Funeral Home. In a few days I sold out all the stock and closed up. I sold the fixtures a piece at a time. My daughter and her husband, Lenowise and Elmer Larson, moved to California. They stored some things in the store. The other kids stored things they didn't need. I had a letter from Lenowise and she said to sell their things. The other kids said sell theirs also. I had never sold used furniture but I told them that I would if I could.

One day I put a lot of their stuff on the front and I sold everything in three days. It was July 3, 1956 and I decided I would stock used furniture. I

was in town and started home. I saw something in a window-- the store was closed and the man had gotten a job at Lone Star Steel Company. I asked the man next door who it belonged to and he said Mr. Don Harmon owned the building but that the man told him to sell the furniture for his rent. It was the morning of July 3rd. I went to Mr. Harmon's Store and asked him if the furniture was sold. He said no. I told him I would buy it next week when he had time. He said he was going to the post office in a few minutes for me to go back there and park. He came, unlocked the door, and I stepped in and began to look and check. I asked him how much for all of it. He told me and I told him I couldn't pay that much. He asked what I could give and I told him. He sold it to me. I told him I would go get a check and bring it to his store. I went and Rosie, my daughter, went and helped me move it. We had three pick up loads. On July 3, 1956 at noon, I began to sale new furniture and old furniture. I bought anything anyone had to sell. I bought and sold a lot of antiques. One of these old things was a bread tray 150 years old. Old guns, old telephones, two old Edison round record players. I remember part of the places people came by and bought things to take home. One from Modesto, California, Los Angeles, California, San Antonio, Houston, Corpus Christi, Grand Prairie, Dallas, Sulphur Springs, Winfield. Daingerfield, Naples, Omaha, Lone Star, Ore City, New Diana, Texarkana and Linden, Texas, Shrevesport, Louisiana, Alabama, London, England.

When I made a sale I would ask where they were from. I got a kick out of buying old things and redoing them. Wardrobes, Kitchen cabinets, dressers, wash stands, tables, chairs, beds and springs. I found two very old iron beds. The head boards were six feet tall. They were so heavy I could hardly carry them. I found six round tables and one was taken to Dallas, Texas, one to Mt. Vernon and four stayed here in Hughes Springs. I found old cast iron dinner kettles, wash kettles, tea kettles, old fry pans, and old clocks. I kept the grocery and market four years and 4 months and the new and used furniture 5 years and 3 months. I started selling out on September 1 and by September 27th I had sold out. On September 29, I sold my store to be moved to the Lake of the Pines.

I planted big gardens and canned in glass jars and put bags of food in the deep freeze. This year, 1963, I picked 45 quarts of berries, 25 quarts of plums, 15 quarts of peaches, 8 quarts of apples, 50 pint jars of tomatoes, 43 quarts of tomato sauce. In the deep freeze, we put 45 quarts of string beans, 20 quarts bags of peas, 50 ears of corn, 17 pints of strawberries, 15 bags of okra, 10 bags of squash.

On December 15, 1961, Mr. Williamson, the Hughes Springs School Superintendent came to see if I would service the school buses. At eight every morning I serviced the buses for three years. I haven't missed a morning since Dec. 15, 1961 through 1962 and June 1, 1963. In September 1964, I was selling used furniture again and I am still selling on February 14, 1969.