

2003

## WHEAT HARVESTING

Since some of you have been kind enough to suggest that I write some more memories, I've chosen the harvesting of wheat on our farm. I always thought the golden wheat fields were especially lovely as they ripened and no less when they were bundled in neat "shocks" in preparation for their final appointment with the threshing machine. Neighboring farmers helped their neighbors in harvesting the crops, taking turns. When it was our turn, my sisters and I watched excitedly for the arrival of the great threshing machine. At last it came puffing down the lane, preceded and followed by many horse drawn wagons filled with sweaty overall clad workers. It was like a great black monster belching out black smoke as it lumbered slowly to its place beside the barn.

The men in the fields tore apart the shocks of wheat and tossed them into the wagons where they were taken to be "threshed", the golden grains being separated from the chaff. The grains filled bags that were to be emptied into the prepared bin, while the chaff formed a barn size golden stack.

It was our pleasant task to ride our horses taking jugs of water to the workers in the field. At noon the men took turns coming to the house to eat in the dining room where there was a long table seating ten or twelve hungry men. In the yard under the trees were tubs of water, soap and towels where they could refresh themselves.

Inside the kitchen Mother with the help of a few neighbor women prepared and served the meals. There was plenty of fresh vegetables Mother had picked from the garden, fried chicken, and possibly roast beef, and several kinds of pie. All of which took several days ahead of time to prepare.

It would be several days before Dad would let us slide down the straw stack until it "settled", usually after a rain. There would be squeals of laughter as we tumbled down the stack. It was so much fun!

Sometimes we liked to play in the fresh filled bin of wheat, a practice Dad frowned on. Mom would sometimes take some of the fresh grains, grind them and cook them into a delicious cereal, served of course with sugar and rich cream.

At the end of the harvest season the farmers took turns hosting an ice-cream social. Of course we looked forward to that. One time it was held at the county “poor house”, the first and only time I visited there. I felt a little embarrassed meeting some of the residents. I had so much and they so little.

I don't know whether wheat is harvested today anyway like I've described it, but I doubt it! Times change! But it makes a pleasant memory!

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