

Passing Down the Memories



A Folklore Sharing Project
Lincoln Chapter
American Historical Society of Germans from Russia

First Episode
May, 2000

Time is running out! The immigrants who remember Russia have passed away. Day after day, the obituaries signal the passing of their children as well – the first generation of American-born.

How important it is, therefore, to record and preserve the stories of that first generation.

In a sense, those children who grew up in immigrant families lived dual lives. They inherited the German dialect of their parents, and the German-Russian culture of their community, yet they lived and made their way in the new environment with its English language and American lifestyle.

They were the unique products of two worlds.

The uniqueness of their experience in the first part of the 20th century needs to be remembered. The stories that are told in the following pages tell of the “growing up” years of this first generation of German-Russians in the North and South Bottoms of Lincoln, Nebraska.

No attempt has been made to verify or corroborate the exact truth of the incidents and people whose stories are being told.

This is oral history, the stories passed down to us from the memories of those who lived the history.

And – in that sense – all of this is true, because it reflects the true life experiences of the people telling the stories.

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**Thanks to all who attended the Folklore Sharing Afternoon,
and to those who contributed their stories.**

By doing so, you have preserved an important part of history.

Folklore Committee, AHSGR Lincoln Chapter
May, 2000
Editor/Transcriber, Allison Rye
Larry Schenkel
Norma Somerheiser

Folklore Sharing Afternoon Lincoln Chapter April 30, 2000

Norma Somerheiser: When these areas were communities within a larger city, and you could hear as much German as English spoken, we had some pretty good times growing up, and I think it's worth recording. What we'd like you to do is to share some stories, and we will try to compile them into a booklet.

Jake Sinner: I've got a lot of stories about the North Bottoms. In the North Bottoms, people went to the beet fields. We had to find the girls to play with us, and it was terrible. We could hardly make up a baseball team.

When we went to the service, there were 11 of us at one time, and they were all from Claremont and New Hampshire. One of them didn't pass, but the others all went to Leavenworth together, and were all drafted there in early 1942.

Other things that happened there – we did have a newspaper printed down there by a fellow by the name of Kapeller. He wrote all about the fellows that went to the service, when they were married, and things like that – whether they had children, who was killed (and a lot of them were killed, of course). There are still copies of that paper around, if you would like to look at them.

The other thing is that I had to go down south to get my wife. I don't know how many of you remember how many grocery stores were on F Street. They had porches on all of them, and going down there, I had to "double-time it" sometimes because there were a lot of bullies sitting out there, and there weren't any girls sitting with them – all guys. In the evening when I'd go home, I'd take the high track, the Denver track, about 9th and S. I'd go "double-time" all the way down through the depot – had to get out of there! I'd go down underneath the viaduct on 10th Street, and there were two hobo houses. I don't know if you remember them. They were slowly burning them down, because they'd take wood out of them to cook with and keep warm. So eventually there weren't any houses left.

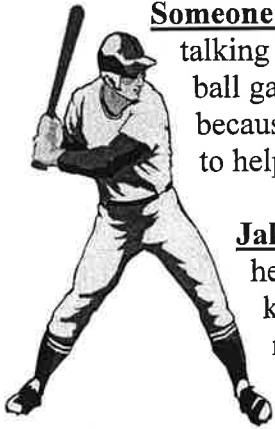
My mother said (in German) "The bums will get you." And I said (also in German), "Mama, I can run fast enough to get away." At that time I only weighed about 160 pounds. That's what I weighed when we got married. We finally did get married, and it's been 59 years now – pretty good record, I think, with the same woman.

Also, I think we had it over the South Bottoms, because we had at least four baseball diamonds. We used to have some real ball games. I was bat boy a long time. If they were short a guy, I'd get a chance to play. They'd stick me in center field or right field – that's where they would stick me. We were playing a colored team. The pitcher's name was Tam. They were all black



fellows. People like George Sauer, Herzog, Henry Bauer, Al Bauer, Chief Bauer, and three of the Hegels. They were all good ball players. You could see some real pro stuff going on.

Football was the same way. Boy, on Sundays, it was either football or baseball. That's where all the entertainment was – on the other side of the Welfare Hall.



Someone else from the group: Along this line, about a month ago, I was talking to this lady, and she recalled some things about the North Bottoms ball games. She says that those teams from the North Bottoms always won, because if they were in danger of losing, everybody jumped off the bench to help them.

Jake: Let me tell you about this Tam guy. He was a pitcher. One time he threw a curve, and I tried to get out of the way, but it hit me, knocked me out, and they carried me home, across the alley. My mother fixed that with tape – we didn't even go to the doctor. Even now, you can hardly see that – it's right in the eyebrow. But that was the end of my baseball.

Lillian Loos: Eddie likes to write down things he remembers, and we have many, many pages that he's written about the North Bottoms. They lived at 834 North 8th Street, and this is what they called the Bulldog Ring. So I'd like to read something Eddie wrote. He couldn't be here this afternoon.

Eddie Loos (read by Lillian): Now as I remember, I think of friends and their nicknames. Many of them I did not know personally but knew of them. They were older or before my time, but I remember people talking. How many of these people got their nicknames I do not know. Some got these nicknames for things they did or things they did not do, color of their hair, size, etc., and the nicknames stuck.

In the last house in what we called the Bulldog Ring on 6th Street, lived my cousins Conrad and Jacob Loos. Now as we grew older, Conrad became Doc, and Jacob became Yeck. That was way over 50 years ago, and still is today.

Next door to Conrad and Jacob lived their cousin Conrad Loos, who was called Oonk, and Big Coon on the Railroad. His brother Edward was called Little Eddie.

Down around the corner, and down the street, lived Leslie and Kenneth Burback. Leslie was called Spuds and Kenneth was called Shep.

Next to them, an old bachelor lived, whose name was Bill, and we called him Peanuts. There was a Loos family next door to Bill Peanuts, and oldest boy, John, was called Coots, and his brother, Jacob was called Shotgun. A younger brother, Sam, who was just a little fellow, got a spanking from the school principal. I don't know what he did, but the

older guys would ask him if he got the rubber hose, and he would say, "No, I got the ruler," meaning, of course, the ruler. He was very young then.

Then there was the Fink family. The oldest boy, Dan, was called Dolla. He was called that all his days in Lincoln. Just across the street was the Kildau family, and the oldest boy, whose name was Alex, was called Big Gack and the younger one, Harry, was called Little Gack. Next door lived the Glantz family, and one of the boys was nicknamed Gander. Next to them lived the Schwindt family, and oldest was called Army Schwindt. Next to them lived the Kreick family, and Jacob was called Ketsy, meaning kitten. Kreick's corner was where we would catch the freight house engine and ride up to Hall Tower. Then we would meet the south Lincoln girls in the F Street Park.

When I write about these times as I remember them, it is not to poke fun at anyone or belittle anyone. It is done in fun as I remember the old days.

Next to Kreick's was the Miller family. Adam was called Hodge and Emmanuel was called Monny. Next to Miller's lived Jake Schleuger, who we called Shloogy.

We had so many good times, it's hard to remember them all. We spent many happy hours at the tile yards on 9th Street. We had a big sand pile to jump on. We also spent many nights under the street lights. Usually there were a gang of us guys.

Next door to us on 8th Street lived my cousins, the Burbachs. John was called Huns. Incidentally, he was killed in World War II in France. His brother, Edward, was called Burby, and William was called Buck or Veely, and Robert was called Crow.

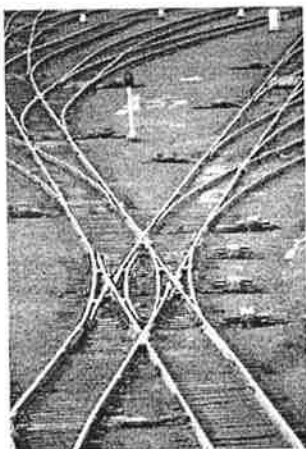
The Niederhaus family lived on 7th Street. We called John Rusty or Red. His brother, Emmanuel, was called Mon, and George was called Stachel. He was a prisoner of war during World War II.

On 8th and Y Street lived the Bauer family. Reuben was Bubb and Henry was called Chief. He played quarterback for Nebraska. Next to Bauers lived George Niederhaus, who was called Funny Niederhaus. He was quite an ice skater. Next to George lived Bernard Weideman, who we called Bud, and Wilber, who was called Juney. Next to them lived Joseph Will, who we called Seph or Shusya. The brother Riefert was Johnny Swi. Further down the street lived Louis Schwartz, called Blackie.

Then on 9th Street was another Michael family. Victor was called Tweet. Further south on 9th Street lived Adam Schwindt, who we called Curly. Then there was Al Shutrum, who we called Al Cucumber. He was a fruit peddler.

Some of the games we played were Football Drive, Tippy, Matka, Run Sheep Run, Red Rover, Fight the Country, Sheeney, Pump Pump Pullaway, Follow the Arrow, and I Draw the Magic Circle.

Some of the pranks were rolling old tires down the 10th Street viaduct and watch for the cops, dumping outhouses and soaping windows on Halloween, or putting sparrows in screen doors, then knocking on the people's door and run, stealing apples or pears from fruit trees, stealing corn from Charley Tavlinsky's field, or running his horses. Just ornery pranks. Also, we would ride the pushcar and big wheel pumpcar on the Railroad and change street signs. Jakey Kreick was a big guy, and he used to grab hold of one of the signs and say, "This is a dutka," as he pulled it out or turned it around.



I remember the times we used to go to the Salt Creek Railroad Bridge and build forts on both sides of the creek, made from cardboard boxes that we picked up at the city dump not too far away. One night, we had the bright idea that we would shoot burning arrows across the creek at each other. Then, before we went home, we set some of the boxes on fire, and put them in the creek, and floated them down the creek and went home.

Later that night, we saw smoke coming from the bridge where we had our forts. We found out later that some of the boxes floated next to the railroad bridge pillars that supported the bridge. These pillars were made of large creosoted timbers, and how they did burn! It's good we didn't get caught, as we would

have been in deep trouble!

Another place we spent a lot of good times, was at Oak Lake in the winter time, ice skating. On Sunday afternoons we had hockey games at Oak Lake. We had great times. We had a lot of good skaters.

My brother John Loos was called Shon or Big John. My brother Adam, we called Junior, and my brother, Richard, was Brother, or Bo. Me, Eddie, they called Big Ed. Wilbur Weideman told me a story his grandfather told him. In those days, the people of the church would call the men and women brother or sister in place of their first names. One day, his grandfather Gottlieb Schleicher, called Adam Loos, my dad. Richard answered the phone, and when his grandfather asked to speak to Brother Loos, Richard said. "This is Brother Loos."

Other nicknames were:

Richard Haar	<i>Whitey</i>
Bill Splinter	<i>Splivvy</i>
Pauline Loos	<i>Leeney</i>
Katherine (Kildau) Johnson	<i>Tootie</i>
Marie Miller	<i>Mareesha</i>
Robert Schleuger	<i>Dubby or Junior</i>
Dorothy (Glantz)	<i>Dots</i>
Michael	
Wilma (Knaub) Weber	<i>Wimpy</i>

Robert Reifschneider	<i>Wienercutter</i>
Christine Splinter	<i>Vessy</i>
Virginia (Loos) Thaller	<i>Since</i>
Mollie (Hahn) Grasmick	<i>Tootie</i>
Lillian (Geier) Loos	<i>Tootsie</i>
Delores (Glantz) Barowski	<i>Susie</i>
Esther (Geier) Rohn	<i>Aadda</i>
Florence (Hahn) Kennedy	<i>Honey</i>

Jake Sinner: My wife is first cousin to these people! (Laughter)

Ed Schwartzkopf: I just want to tell these folks. I just can't believe what you guys used to do – that was terrible. (More laughter)

Jake: That was the Bulldog Ring.

Ed: About the South Bottoms, I asked a number of people today, but they weren't able to be here. So I got to thinking about our German-Russian heritage, and number one, the big, big priority was your family and friends.



Number two was church. Every Wednesday was prayer meeting, and every Sunday afternoon as well. So I would be in prayer meeting right now!

(Folklore sharing afternoon was on Sunday, April 30, 2000.) I have fond memories of the way they used to designate who was going to interpret a certain passage in the Bible. They used to have some hot arguments; people lost friends because of the positions they held. What I enjoyed most of all was the little ladies that came with their halzduchs, but also in their hands they had handkerchiefs – and remember the little pink and white mints? I used to get a lot of those; I didn't hesitate to go to prayer meeting. There are still prayer meetings going on now.

Well, next was school. School meant a lot to us, and I just can't say enough for the teachers we had. They really cared about us. They spent extra time with us, and also would have night school for our parents to help them get their citizenship.

Recreation – F Street Park! Great place. It was a much steeper hill when we were growing up. We used to sled down there all the way to C and D Streets.

Our homes had sidewalks made out of little bricks or wood. The streets were made of dirt, and that was our playground. We were always out on that dirt street, and played, played, played we did.

Also, Salt Creek was a great recreational area for us. We could go fishing, and especially when we had a really hard rain, and the muddy, so the fish would come up for club 'em! We'd come home with a could be. They were big carp!



creek would rise. And the water was oxygen, and we'd go along there and big string of fish, just as proud as we

We had two swimming holes – one was a carp hole, and it was closer to where you lived, LeRoy. I think you had a relative or two drowned there. That was a very sad time, and I think it was the only time I remember anybody drowned in Salt Creek. But we had a swimming hole that had sand, on about Washington Street, and we called that the Sand Hole.

But no matter how careful we were.... In those days, we didn't have shorts and t-shirts. We had BVD's, and we couldn't get into those BVD's without getting dirt on them, and when we got home, our mothers always knew what we had been doing. We got scolded, and sometimes got a swat or two on the fanny.

Then in the winter time, we would skate, and it was great skating on Salt Creek. We'd skate all the way southwest, behind the State Mental Hospital, onto Haines Branch Creek. We had a ball, and saw a lot of wildlife – not human wildlife, but animal wildlife. (Others remembered Johnnie Sell, who was a good ice skater.) There was a natural lake in Epworth Park that they had really enlarged with man-made equipment, and there was always a lot of activity going on out there. LeRoy, you were a little late, but I imagine you took some adventurous tours out there to see what was still remaining of Epworth Park.



So – that's what we did when we were growing up.

What kinds of games did we play? Well, let me see here. At a convention in 1987, I decided to write up a little resume of the things we used to play. (It's included in this booklet of memories – See Table of Contents.) Games our parents and grandparents played. None of these had batteries. Didn't have to worry about batteries running down. As long as yours wasn't run down, you were all right. So I started out, and somebody mentioned Matka - what we called it. And we used to have a little picnic with this group, Jake, till about six-seven years ago, and we played Matka up in the park. And played some other games. But for that, you could have as many people on each side as you wanted to, could be male or female, and the field was about 50 feet wide, and the length was about 150 feet. We had a great time. We used a tennis ball for a rag ball. The batter would get up there, throw the ball up, and hit it; then he'd run, and try to get by the goal down at the other end, about 150 feet, and then run back. You'd get the bases loaded, and get to running. And, Jake, that ball did sting, when it hit you in the right place, didn't it?

Jake: Yes.

LeRoy: "That's how you got them out. Threw the ball and hit them with the ball."
(Laughter)

Ed: Yes, Yes, Yes. And the bat was just a broomstick.

LeRoy: That's all we ever had - broomsticks.

Ed: So you'd need to have very good eye coordination and reflexes. Then we had tops, and we called them spike tops. We used to file the point even sharper. One guy would throw his top, and spin it, and the rest of us would stand there and try to hit it and split the top with their top – hit it and split it open. We spent a lot of time doing that.

Then we had a scoot-mobile – made out of old roller skates (all you needed was one skate) and orange crates. We had a couple of 2 x 4's – one vertical and one horizontal. Nailed the orange crate in there so you had shelves for your toys, and rolled that around. (He showed a picture of it.) And you just kind of ride it like a scooter.

Somebody mentioned skating on a sidewalk, and also sparrows. We had a fellow who got a sidewalk, and didn't want anybody roller skating on his sidewalk. Well, what do you think he got, anyway? Sparrows started nesting after dark, in the corner of his porch. We would go up and catch a sparrow or two, open his screen door, put a couple in there, knock on the door, and hide in the bushes. Then we'd watch him chasing them around his living room. That was a reimbursement for not letting us skate on his sidewalk. It was not malicious, unless it hit a light or something, or knocking over a lamp. We had a lot of fun doing that.



Slingshots – we made a lot of slingshots. Most of you are familiar with a slingshot. And in those days, you had real rubber inner tubes, so that rubber really was flexible, and you could kill birds and so on. I remember the first one I made, and I shot, and I hit a robin, right in the side. And I saw that robin fall down and die. I never used that slingshot again. I was so sad because I killed a robin with that slingshot. Those were used a lot.

We used to take spools, and put a button on each end and a rubber band in the center. You'd wind it up, and you'd notch the spool so it would get traction and stuff. We spent a lot of time with these – never wore out the batteries. Never wore out the rubber bands.

We all had our shooters – three and four shot shooters, made out of inner tubes. Even the girls had them. Rubber guns – didn't really get hurt with them. But you could make different models – double loaders, etc. Lots of fun. No cost to your family. No batteries.

I didn't hear anyone mention stilts. Oh, how we loved stilts! What you did was get a 2 x 2, or even a 1 x 2, and nail a triangular piece on, for the older fellows you'd put it up higher, and lower for the younger fellows. You started out about 8 or 10 inches, and you walked around. Clowns wear them now, but we were way ahead of them, and had a great time.

We had whirligigs with propellers. Took a corncob, and put three or four feathers in it.

We used tin cans. We liked the Carnation cream cans, punched a couple of holes in them and put a string through, and then we'd walk around with those tin cans – clop, clop, clop! Lots of fun.

We made whistles out of branches of trees – cut a notch in it and pull out the pulp. We had a lot of fun making whistles. The nice part was – it didn't cost anything.

We had our own telephones with a string, and a can on each end. We thought we were hearing through the string, even though we were just talking loud enough to hear each other.

We made these whirligigs. I still make them for kids, and they still love them. You pull them, let them go back, and you get them so they whistle by drilling holes in them.

Jake: I've known this guy longer than anybody else here. We used to hustle papers downtown. You had to have your corner – sometimes a bully would try to kick you off your corner. Ed was my protector.



Ed: As soon as school was out, we'd race downtown and start selling papers. We had special issues, and they would be pink. Extra! Extra! Read all about it! I had a kind of commercial district between O and Q, and I was amazed at the number of people who did not get the paper at home, but waited for us to come to buy the paper. They wanted the latest news.

LeRoy Butherus: I'm bringing up later generations! I was six years younger than my youngest brother. My oldest brother was in college (his name was Carl, but we called him Collie), and then my sister was Ella (or Illa). The next one was Harry, who died of leukemia when he was 16. He was probably the best athlete of the family. And then came Art (everybody called him Atchie), and I was six years younger than Art.

But there are a number of stories that I remember. Some of them were hearsay, some that I knew about. One that I remember in particular that I heard about later was about my brother Art and Harry. They were pretty close in age, about a year and a half apart, and wherever Harry went, Art had to go with him. But we had cousins who lived up next to Friedens Church, on D street, (Diegels), and they had a bunch just about like us. The oldest one was Rumold, and they called him Boom. The next one was Siegfried, and we called him Biff. The younger one was Albert, and they called him Bang. So we had Boom, Biff and Bang!

Art and Harry were good friends with Siegfried (Biff) and Albert (Bang). They used to go up there behind Diegels, behind the church there between D and E streets. There were a bunch of garages there that had dirt floors in them, and in the winter especially they used to go into those garages and play marbles. One day they didn't come home for dinner. Dad, of course, worked hard all day as a cement man, and he had to go get them. He walked up to get them, got them out of the garage, and as they were walking home, Harry said, "I didn't have a watch, so I didn't know what time it was." Dad would say, "Was willst du? Ein goldnes Uhr? (Do you want a gold watch?)," (and, again in German), "Yes, Yes, I'd like a golden uhr (watch)." Harry didn't get a golden uhr; he got something else!

Another story I will relate: I, being the *kindt*, the older kids kind of had to look after me, and Ella and the Callaway kids used to take care of me a lot. Anyway, Mom worked in the evenings, cleaning an office building. Dad was often out of town, building houses in

little towns around Lincoln, and Ella was in charge. Mom would get the dinner ready before she went to work about 4:00. Ella was in charge of seeing we had dinner, and every night after dinner, and Ella cleaned up and washed dishes, and either Harry or Art had to dry. They cried about that a lot, but one of them always ended up doing it. The one who **didn't** dry the dishes had to look after me.



One day, after dinner, Art took me with a bunch of his buddies (I just followed along behind). On that nice, sunny summer evening, we ate an early dinner. We climbed down into the sewer about 3rd, 4th, 5th and I think it was C Street, and the sewer ran all the way down to Salt Creek. They used to crawl down there and walk all the way down to Salt Creek, get out and come home. Well, when they started, it was real small and they had to bend over to walk, and I could pretty much stand up. There was always a little water running down the middle, and we would straddle the water. But I couldn't reach very far, and the closer we got to Salt Creek, the little stream in the middle got wider! And when they got me out, I was drenched, shoes and everything, all the way up to my waist! They took me home and Mom got off work and she said, "How'd LeRoy get all wet?" And they talked me into telling Mom that somebody was watering, and the water was running down into the gutter, and I played in the water!

One thing I'd like to point out about the school. I can remember, over at Park School, if my brothers and I got into trouble at school, and they got a whupping at school, and they came home and Dad found out about it, they got a harder whupping at home.

Ed: No, no, I'll vouch for him. Everything he says is true! (Laughter)

LeRoy: He taught me everything I know! (And more laughter!)

Delores: My mother is 93 now, and can remember when she was a young girl. Some of you will remember Adam Krieger, the wrestler. He was definitely German Russian, and is related to me on both my grandparents (the Giebelhaus grandparents), on the Schwindt side and on the Giebelhaus side. And Mother said she could remember when the boys, John and Adam, who were brothers, would practice their wrestling, and they would bring mats out into the front yard and the neighborhood kids used to gather around to watch them practice their wrestling. Every time they would go for a wrestling event, Mrs. Krieger would come out and cry. You were saying what they would do to the Model A Fords, throw the tires out there. My dad said he could remember Adam and John Krieger, for strength training, would tie ropes on the ends of the old cars and pull them. That was for their strength training for wrestling.

The other story I have was about a lady from the South Bottoms. This was about the 1908 flood, and when I was working here at AHSGR, this lady brought this big picture in of four little children. One of them was her. She said during the 1908 flood, a rowboat came to get her and her three siblings out of the house, and when they left, the boat tipped over, and she said, "I can remember when I was in the water, and I looked up, and an angel was

there.” (Still gives me goosebumps). “That angel told me to hang onto that boat, and I did. That’s how I survived.” She was the only one of those four children who survived. That picture is still here somewhere in storage.

Bud Dietrich: Since we’re telling wrestling stories, you remember John Pesek? Living out in York? I guess he had kind of a mean streak in him, and back then there weren’t too many women that drove cars. But there were a few of them around. They’d be driving down the street in their Model T, and of course, those Model T’s, they weren’t very heavy. He’d throw himself in front of the car, and they’d drive over him. Scared the living heck out of them. So one guy put chains on his Model T, and they drove over him, and it just peeled all the hide off of him! And that was the last time he did that!



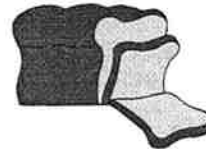
Phil Dinges: Years ago when they had electric trolley cars, they’d go down 10th Street and over to New Hampshire and 14th Street. At 14th Street, they’d turn around. He’d have to get out and change the trolley connection. We’d sneak up when he was reversing the seats, and pull the trolley connection off the wire. He’d put it back on, and we’d do the same thing. We’d laugh, and he’d chase us.

Frieda Alt: These stories are all about men. We haven’t heard any stories about the girls.



One of the men: Sounds like the girls were all angels....

Frieda Alt: We were always in the kitchen!



Delores: I have another story that my dad said. We were talking about some things. These were boys who were older than he was, and he would be 93 years old now, too. He said he remembered the kids watching the older boys out on 10th Street, and when an old car would come by, they’d actually run out there and stop that car by hanging on to it. Get all around it and hang on to it till they actually stopped it.

LeRoy Butherus: We used to play in the street all the time. We’d knock out the street lights so we could play in the dark. If someone complained or called the police, we would get some manure in a paper sack, take it up on the porch by the front door, light it on fire, knock and run away! They’d come out and see that and immediately start stomping on it!

Someone else (lady): Your brother Carl and I were always in the same room at school, and Miss O’Connor allowed our classroom to go to second floor east, and they were putting up a little doll on top of the State Capitol. I wondered why they were putting up that little doll.

Ed: When they brought that statue in, they brought it right up K Street. They had a railroad that went right to the basement of the Capitol.

LeRoy: We never went into the dining room or living room unless we had company coming. The only radio we had was in the dining room, and we'd sit on the floor and listen to the fight. Joe Lewis was fighting. We had to take our shoes off, didn't touch anything.

Norma Somerheiser: Remember when radios had the antenna wire and the ground wire that went out the window. Mr. _____ used to live around 4th and G. He got a new radio, put his wire out there, grounded it. He'd sit down in the evening to read the paper, and he'd get the radio program all tuned in nice, and my cousins would go around and rub those two wires together, and make all kinds of static. He'd put the paper down, and fiddle around and get her going again. They waited until he sat down and did it again. One night, he put his paper down quietly and shuffled off toward the kitchen. The only trouble was, he just kept on going out the back door and around the house. He didn't lay a hand on them, he just said, "Ya, there's two Dietze's and a Burbach here." And they knew what would happen when they got home.

Judy Runion: Our people were superstitious. They used to say you should always leave a house by the same door through which you entered.

For every stitch you put in on a Sunday, you would take out two the next day.

There were also people in the community who were "brauchers" (faith healers). One lady had a very bad headache, fever, and sore throat. They called for help from the braucher. When she came, after asking a few questions, she did a series of incantations which nobody in the room could hear well enough to fully understand. All they could hear her say, was, "Vater, Sohn, und Heilige Geist." While speaking she had also moved her hands over the patient, as though drawing the pain or evil out or away from her body. This particular lady swore that the braucher cured her malady immediately, because a little frog appeared in the healer's handkerchief when she said the last "Heilige Geist."

Memories Ruth Wertz Nuss April-May, 2000

My father was born in Beideck, Russia, of German parents. He was 18 years old when he came to Kansas from Galveston, Texas via Baltimore, Maryland. (This was after the Titanic sunk.) He was sponsored by his brother-in-law George and Doris, in Marysville, Kansas. Soon he came to Lincoln, as information spread that the railroad was hiring.

He met Mamma and married. They had six children, and lived most of their lives in Lincoln. They spoke German to each other in their household. My oldest sister knew only German when she started school. Mamma was born in North Lincoln. However, she attended Raymond Country School.

The railroad strike in the 1920's caused many families to move to Chicago, our family included. In the early 1930's, our family returned after also living in Colorado. I was placed in Park School's second grade.

Not being familiar with current events, I was surprised that Miss Mary O'Conner allowed my class to go to the second floor/east to watch the Sower being raised to the dome of the State Capitol Building. Everyone was excited, but to me it looked like a little doll. Several flatbed railroad cars brought the Sower to the west side of the Capitol.

In school, in the 5th grade, we recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag in the morning and said Taps at 3:15 p.m. Gooch's Mill was served by railroad cars on tracks on 5th Street. The area west of 5th from A to South Street was wide open space.

The circus set up there every summer. Early in the morning, the railroad cars appeared. Many Lincoln people came to the area, on foot, to watch the circus unload. The elephants were visible and put to work. Soon traffic jams added to the excitement. Residents allowed parking on their lawns for a 75¢ fee. Band music filled the air. The circus was in town for one matinee and one evening show. Then the whole process was reversed. Tents were lowered and things were packed in their assigned place. We lived at 5th and B Street at that time.

The Lincoln Country Club originally was in the area of 7th and Washington Streets. Earl E. May Seed Co. and KMA and KFOR radio set up in this building in the early 1930's. Radio was a new method of communication. Kids' Hour was a big event. Talented children were selected to sing or play a musical instrument.

Few families had cars. Everyone walked. The street car ran on 10th Street from O Street to South Street. Ornery boys would pull down the pole and greased wheel which carried current from an overhead wire to the electrically driven trolley vehicle. This usually occurred at 10th and South Street while the conductor was adjusting the seats.

F Street Park was a busy place. City Parks and Rec had Miss Winters supervise Arts and Crafts. She was in charge of Balls and Bats and other equipment. A small shed for storage of equipment was made of stone. There were no restrooms. Years ago this park

was called Lincoln Park. A band stand was located in the center. Many people attended the concerts, including my parents, before they were married.

In the fall both the Lancaster County and State Fairs took place. FFA and 4-H groups took an active part. It always rained during Fair Week. Momma won ribbons for White Bread, Angel Food Cake, and Quilts.

Our parents were very strict. We were allowed to play dominoes, which actually was math. Dad would swim with us. He also ice-skated Russian style.

At the time the University of Nebraska stadium was built (about 1922), houses in that area were removed. Many houses at 5th and B Streets were from this deal, ours included. A basement was dug and the house foundation was placed over the basement. Carpenters and water, electric and gas men completed the job. Most German-Russian families lived in the basement, and upstairs living rooms were show places. Our house had beautiful oak floors.

The new University of Nebraska stadium cornerstone was laid June 1, 1923. The uncompleted stadium was dedicated on October 20, 1923. The stadium is a memorial to the 60,000 Nebraska men who served in World War I – boys who fought for the great cause. At the dedication, the flag was flown at half mast. The bugle sounded. Firing a salute solemnized the occasion.

Approximately 70,000 cubic yards of dirt was excavated to level the stadium field. The new field runs north and south. The old field ran east and west, surrounded by a wooden fence. Just how many German Russians worked on the construction of the stadium will never be known. My farmer Grandpa watched a game in the old stadium after he had delivered a load of hay. His wagon was "tall", and he could see over the fence. (Not a planned thing.)

Many housewives could not speak much English, so a child would go shopping with Mother, downtown to buy fabric for quilts. Every housewife was an active quilter. My mother always asked if the fabric was colorfast! In World War I, the United States had a poor color process for fabric.

Now Saturday was cleaning and baking day. Each child was assigned certain duties. The mother baked white and rye bread, dina (thin) Kuchen and runzas. Sunday was a day of rest. Church in the morning for all. Prayer meeting in the afternoon and evenings for older people. Oh, how they could sing from memory!

Our groceries were ordered to a clerk who came to your house between 8-9 o'clock. By 11:30, they were delivered to your kitchen table. Amen's grocery store had a horse-drawn wagon for deliveries. Ice was delivered in blocks of 50 lbs. And 100 lbs. If we children forgot to empty the drip pan under the ice box, the kitchen floor was flooded!

When a family had chicken pox, the City Health Officer tacked a sign on the house – the quarantine lasted about ten days. The children then returned to school after the sign was removed.

In Russia, camels were beasts of burden. A horse and a camel were hitched together to plow a field. Camels also produced brown-colored wool. Housewives in Russia made thick quilts for warmth in the winter. Lauren Wilhelm's mother loaned her camel wool quilt to AHSGR Museum (the white house) for several months. German Russians did not breed camels.

All children were born at home. When a new baby arrived in your block, every household was involved. Women took turns delivering huge pots of home-made chicken noodle soup and freshly baked bread. Now days they call it "Meals on Wheels." Pre-schoolers were absorbed with other children. This bonding was never forgotten. The baby was baptized in church within a month.

Frieden's Lutheran Church had a bell tower. When someone died, the bells tolled to announce the death, and sounded the age of the person, one stroke at a time. People would count the strokes and try to think who was seriously ill on or about that age. If it was a young person, people were very concerned. Was there an accident? Very few people had telephones.

Women were homemakers; however, they worked in private homes as housekeepers. Many valuable contacts were made through this connection. Our people were ambitious, law-abiding citizens.

Dr. Hattie Plum Williams was the wife of an attorney in Lincoln. She was the first person to study in depth "Germans from Russia" in English. She did research in 24 archives in Germany. She visited many homes in north Lincoln, and took a school census. She taught "Beetfield Children" for one year in an elementary school. Thomas and Hattie Williams had no children. She was chairman of the Sociology Department at the University of Nebraska. She was born in Iowa in 1878, and died in 1963.

A mother died, and Hattie Plum Williams indicated she would adopt the little 3-1/2 year old daughter. The father refused, but thanked her for her love and interest. He married again, and the little girl and stepmother were compatible. The girl loved her stepmother and her stepmother loved her.

There were many Protestant churches in "south" Lincoln:

Ebenezer – 8th and B
Friedens – 6th and B
Zion – 9th and D
First German – 1st and F
Redeemer English Lutheran – 12th and D
Trinity Lutheran – 13th and H and parochial school
A church at 4th and F was torn down years ago.
Immanuel – 8th and D and parochial school

Years ago, a small white wooden mission church (and school?) at about 1st and J became Immanuel Lutheran church and school at 8th and D. This unique brick building now houses A to Z Printing Company. The school children received a good education – reading, writing and 'rithmetic in German. No sports or frills. It was called the "German School" and had grades 1 through 8. At one time, this church/school was the largest

German church/school south of the Platte River in Nebraska (Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod). The four classrooms had oak floors. The open stairway led to the upstairs sanctuary, where the men sat on one side (east) and the women sat on the west side. The altar was on the north wall. A raised platform on the south side was for a choir and a pump organ. German immigrants came to Lincoln and immediately joined the Immanuel church. After people learned English, they often joined other churches in other neighborhoods.

Rev. Baeder was the pastor for many years. He knew English and German, French, and probably Hebrew and Greek. He and his family never accepted social dinner invitations to parishioners' homes. Religion was serious and only business. One time, he did attend a wedding reception dinner at the 1st and F hall to say the prayer. After the meal, the men went outdoors. Some smoked cigars, the treat of the groom. Rev. Baeder had a long white beard. We children were so afraid if he smoked a cigar, it would catch his beard on fire! He was a kind and gentle person, and died in 1934.

The congregation built a church in 1950 at 11th and Plum Streets. They no longer have a parochial school. A pre-school is located in the Sunday School rooms.

Here are the lyrics to TAPS:

(the early version)

Day is done
Gone the sun
From the lakes
From the hills
From the sky
All is well
Safely rest
God is nigh.

Fading light
Dims the sight
And a star
Gems the sky,
Gleaming bright
From a far
Drawing nigh,
Falls the night.

Fading light
Dims the site
And a star
Gleaming brite
From a far
Drawing nigh
Fall the night.

Dear one, rest!
In the west
Sable night
Lulls the day on her breast
Sweet, good night!
Now away
To thy rest.

Thanks and praise
For our days
Neath the sun
Neath the stars
Neath the sky
As we go
This we know
God is nigh.

Love, sweet dreams!
Lo, the beams
Of the light
Fairy moon kiss
The streams.
Love, good night!
Ah, so soon!
Peaceful dreams!

(U.S. Army Bugle Call
Information from the Book of World
Famous Music)

Remembering "C" Street -Anonymous-

In the late 1920's and early 1930's, it wasn't hard to find playmates if you lived on C Street between 4th and 5th Streets. You see, there were 32 kids living on that one block then.

We played with our "gang." "Gang" meant we played with other kids in the same age group. This gave everyone an equal chance when we played popular street games such as Run Sheep Run, Darby Out, Hot Beans, and a big favorite, Tippy.

In the spring, we made kites out of newspaper and sticks, held together with paste we made out of flour and water. We flew our kites along 5th Street, beside the tracks. It took a lot of skill to get a kite up and keep it out of the wires that ran parallel to 5th Street, or the "road," as we called it then.

When we were older, we played softball and football. F Street Park was a great place to hang out with friends. It wasn't hard to find enough guys for a softball or football game. Some good athletes played there. Although none were too shabby, several stood out; Paul Amen and the Baker boys, I remember.

One of our guys became an excellent pitcher in the Lincoln AAA City Softball League. He threw a rise ball, a pretty tough pitch to hit.

Many lasting friendships were made on that block. Yes, it's great to remember growing up on C Street.

Lillian (Geier) Loos
May, 2000

How could I not write some of my best memories of my childhood? Playing baseball in the street, which was dirt and very few cars were around. Also, in the evening, playing Red Rover Red Rover, Run Sheep Run, Hide and Seek, etc., with neighborhood kids. Roller skating down the sidewalks (those that had cement sidewalks). Getting in trouble for skating on Niederhaus's sidewalks. Later, going to the roller skating arena on O Street and Capital Beach. Capital Beach brings back many memories. Fun Day, Grocer and Butcher's Picnic, Swimming, then in later years, King's Ballroom.

Hayward playground and the Fair Grounds also bring back some wonderful memories. Doing cartwheels. Can you picture me doing cartwheels down the sidewalk? Wow. I can't now, but I did. Shirley and Jane Will should remember that. They did the same thing. The State Fair was a time to remember staying all day, every day with little or no money, but having a great time.

Many speak of the beet fields. When I was a kid, we went to the beet fields out west, too. But my memories of the beet fields was just having a lot of fun, because I was too young to work beets. I did know all about how to do it, but my Dad got sick and passed away, so I never had to get into the hard work.

Bored wasn't in our vocabulary. We had our church and Sunday School. I am very thankful I had a Christian upbringing. The rest of the time it was good work ethics and good times. I wouldn't trade it for anything.

Eddie Loos

May, 2000

I remember we were behind Kreick's barn. A gang of us and Jakey Kreick were playing. We made the spears out of sunflower stalks. I don't know to this day who threw that spear, but it went through Jakey's cheek. We used those big lids from kettles for sheilds, but someone got Jake. I don't think it left a scar, though.

I also remember Jakey pulling up street signs, saying, "This is a *dutka*." The signs were changed and people got confused.

I remember how we hung around Kreick's corner waiting for the switch crew to get done with the freight house and head out to the yards. That's when we would grab them and ride up to Hall Tower. That left us only a few blocks to walk to F Street Park to meet the girls of south Lincoln.

There was another guy who hung out on Kreick's corner. I'm speaking of John Bauer. He would watch for hours. He knew all those old switchmen by name. He got a big kick out of Clarence Milligan. John really enjoyed this. I still remember when I was working the midnight shift, John would come over and say, "Eddie, take me to the shoemaker." Then I would say, "We'll have to stop and have a beer." That's what John wanted to hear. But I always paid, and that didn't make John mad either. He'd say, "Yeah, we'll stop at Harry Grassmick." John was from good people, and I miss him.

I remember once when Adam Miller and I tried to catch Henry's milk wagon. Adam fell and the wagon ran over his elbow. From then on, Henry let us ride in the wagon behind the horse. We really thought we were something. While Henry walked carrying milk door to door, we rode first class in the little wagon. How important we felt to ride in the wagon! The guys were shocked to see Adam and me riding inside the milk wagon.

I remember Adam Alles who peddled spices and herbs. He had a grocery store up south, and was not afraid to open his mouth. There was another man who peddled spices. He lived by the Wyuka Cemetery. His name was Mr. Ernst. He was the Watkins man.

Then we had Ike Polsky, a fruit peddler, and Tony Scolaro and Al "Cucumber" Shutrum, who were also fruit peddlers. We also had fish peddlers. Mr. Strasheim hauled coal for the people in the winter, and then in the summer he would go to collect for the coal he had delivered.

There was John who delivered the ice. Boy, if we could get a little chunk of ice, that was really a treat.

We had Benny and Sam, who were the junk men. It seems there was always someone delivering or peddling something. Those were exciting times. Never a dull moment.

Not only did we live in North Lincoln, but for us kids it was the best part of Lincoln. We were close to Hayward School, Immanuel Church, St. John's Congregational Church, St. John's Evangelical Church, and Salem Church. In the North Bottoms, we had ten grocery stores, were close to two feed mills, and two large railroad depots. We had access to the Planing Mill, which gave us scrap lumber for school projects. From the junkyard nearby, we could find all the parts needed to repair our roller skates, scooters and wagons. We were just a skip away from the Coliseum, and only a few blocks away from the Fair Grounds.

Sometimes in the evening, we would go junking at the dump just a few blocks away. After they would burn at the dump, we would go and gather up all the copper, brass and aluminum we could find. We would always make enough money to pay our way into the Colonial Theater for the great cowboy shows. In the summer, we would spend many happy hours at the Tileyard playing in the tons and tons of sand there, and it didn't cost a cent. I can still remember when we sold whiskey bottles and fruit nectar bottles to old man Finklestine. Some brought as much as a penny each.

During the fall season, we could go any night after school to watch the Huskers' football practice. Coach Bible was very good to us boys. He would let us sit in on meetings with the players, while he talked to them and gave them instructions, as long as we were quiet and behaved. The players were also generous to us kids. They would give us black and white tape, cleats, and little bars of soap. We would go to all the pep rallies. They built a platform at the stadium, and the players would all talk about how bad they were going to beat their opponents. These were great times in the evening.

We always had something to do. We could go down under the viaduct and visit with the Hobos. I've seen as many as 70-75 men there at one time. These were man on the move, searching for work. This was during the Great Depression, when the freight trains were full of hobos when they left town. Just across the tracks from our house was the Lincoln Mill, and on their platform sat as many as 30 or more at times waiting to catch the Missouri Pacific local heading to Union, NE. We also had access to the Freighthouse Team track. Many times they would set cars in there with good watermelons. It wasn't long until the people were there helping themselves. It was the same way with cars half full of ice. This was during the Great Depression, and a sight I will never forget!

In those days, the Railroad was all steam, and the coal tenders were filled to the top. Much of the coal fell along the tracks. People would walk down the tracks and pick up this coal. Also, when a freight train would stop, there were some who would unload coal while the train was stopped. I saw a lot of this as a boy. The men called it the Midnight Lump.

We had a table out in the yard for the Hobos who came through town. My dad would not turn any man away who was hungry. My dad was very sincere that these men would get something to eat. Often I heard him make remarks about this.

Our Part of Town

Hal Bauer – May, 2000

For a starter, many years ago there was a grade school (Longfellow School) at about first and K or L Street. At that time, most of that area was occupied by Mexican people, but there never seemed to be any trouble between them and the German people who lived there. Most of the two groups worked for the Burlington Railroad, so they got along real good.

There was also a church in that neighborhood. I believe it was the First Church Of Zion, and later they built a new church on F street, between 4th and 5th, on the south side of the street. Later, they left this location, and built a new church at 9th and D Street. The location on F Street later was occupied by two houses.

There was also a company that made dishes and tile at about 1st and K Street. I didn't know it at the time, but learned of it a few years ago when some archaeologists and the University did a lot of digging there, and found many pieces. I am not sure if they ever found any whole pitchers or dishes.

There was a boiler works at G Street, between 1st and west of there, about a half block. We could hear them pounding the pipes, cleaning the flues of rust and scale by pounding them with hammers. I went to get a job there one time, but did not get it. I was either too young or too small. This business was owned by a Mr. Luedtke.

The church at 1st and F street was built and supervised by Mr. Gottfred Schumacher. Don't know if he actually designed it or not, but he did supervise the building.

There were a number of businesses in the neighborhood years ago. Adolph Lebsack had a dry goods store at about 320 F Street, selling shoes, clothing, overalls, and material for sewing. At that time, the ladies did do a lot of sewing rather than buying dresses and so forth in town.

Next to Lebsack was the hardware store run by George Strasheim? I remember that Coonie Bernhardt worked there, and I bought some .22 rifle shells there one time. I remember that when I shot the shells in my rifle, I could see them flying, because they were so old and weak. I told this to Coonie, but he wouldn't believe me, until one day we were out hunting. I shot at a jack rabbit on a hill from us, and told him to shoot at him. He did, and then admitted seeing the bullets.

Next was the office of George Stroh, Sr., who sold insurance and so forth, and also was instrumental in bringing people over from Russia, along with H.J. Amen.

Mr. H.J. Amen had the grocery store on 2nd and F Street. Later Rudy opened a gas station, and also had a coal yard along with it. They delivered coal, and Mr. George Kaufman was their main deliveryman, along with Jake Michel who delivered there for a while, too.

Mr. George Bauer had a grocery store at 4th and F Street, and they also sold hay, oats, chicken feed and so forth. In those days, almost every family had a cow or chickens. Mr. Bauer also had a coal yard.

Next up the street was the Lebsack grocery store. I remember that Fred Lebsack was a very good writer or penman.

Across the tracks at 5th and F was another coal yard owned by Mr. George Strasheim, and he also had two big tanks of oil. His daughter Martha ran the accounts in their office.

At 6th and F Street, there was another coal yard, owned by Wagenleitner and Dreith. After their business was closed, the office was taken over by Mr. George Stroh and his son George, Jr. They continued selling insurance of different kinds, and real estate. This corner is now owned by Ted Foltz, who has a small garden, and also did some work in repairing mowers and so forth.

I also remember that Harry Amen and I were in the same class. One day, while being lined up to be dismissed from Park School, the fire department went down F Street. I said, "Harry, that is your store." Sure enough, we went down F Street and the store was burning. Some of the firemen got permission from the Amens to take some of the smoked bologna along to the station. It had been hung in the ice box, and nothing was wrong with it.

Park School was sort of up on a hill at 7th and 8th and F Street. There was also a row of houses from 6th to 7th, and from F to G Street. Our janitor, Mr. Ernst, lived in one of the houses on F Street. I remember that he had a sharp pen knife, and he sharpened all the pencils by hand, and did a very neat job of it. He also had a hand bell about eight inches in diameter, that he rang to start the school every morning.

There was a church at 6th and F Street. We tried to look into it, but the interior was always dark, and I don't remember ever seeing any services there. We called it a Catholic church, but never did find out just what it was.

On the corner of 6th and F Street was a large cistern that held water for the city. It had a wooden top, so I never did go onto it. There was also a water pumping station, and said to be electric generating station at 7th and F Street. One of the boys threw a wire over some exposed wires at the station, and was electrocuted.

Albers had a store and living quarters at 5th and D Street. At that time, for a penny you could buy two or three pieces of candy. I remember buying penny sacks of pink popcorn, which tasted very good. This store was later taken over by the Burlington strikers and was run by Mr. Wilhelm.

Jake Albert had a store at 5th and C Street. John Dell had a store at 7th and B Street. It is still there, but occupied by a business selling antiques and so forth. John Dietz had living quarters at 5th Street, between D and C, and also had a bakery there. He, in my opinion,

was the originator of the Butter Rolls, as we knew them then, and we did buy quite a bit of baked goods from them.

There was a church/school combination at 8th and D Street. We called the kids "German School Kids," but they seemed as well educated as anyone else, and I do know that they all did learn to write good. The building later was taken over by the American Forward organization. It was also owned at one time by an interior decorator named Johnson. He allowed our south Salt Creek organization to use the building for meetings. It changed hands a number of times, and is now the A to Z Printing Company.

Another church at 8th and B Street, was known as Amen's church. He had supplied most of the money needed to build it. On 9th and C, there is the Quinn Chapel, a negro church, but they welcome anyone who wants to come there. Friedens Church is said to be the first one built in our area, and I know they had three good bells in the belfry. On Saturday night at 5:00, my grandfather Bauer would have two of the boys in the neighborhood help ring the bells. I helped a few times by ringing the small bell, and in the winter time, it was real cold up there. You had to climb a ladder of about 40 feet, and it was best not to look down – it was scary.

I remember, too, that a few times herds of cattle were run down F Street. I am not sure, but believe they were unloaded on the Rock Island tracks east of town, and then herded down to the Burlington on the west end.

Many of the people in the area went to the beet fields to work during the summer. The Burlington would bring in box cars and passenger cars to 6th and F Street, where the people would bring their clothing and whatever they needed, and put it in the box cars. When it was time, they got in the passenger cars, and were hauled to western Nebraska. Toward the end of summer, Amen's store would drive out with a load of summer sausage and other supplies, and sell it to the beet fielders. It did not need to be cash, as whatever the bill was would be added to what they owed in the books at the store.

Adam Alles had a small house in the north end of his lot at 402 E Street. It was rented to some people, and when they moved, he made it a headquarters for his business of going house to house selling coffee, tea and sewing materials. Later he moved to the store they had on 6th street between C and D Streets. There, he also sold candy, novelties and ice cream. Later, his brothers took it over and sold beer there. It was a popular hangout for the young guys.

John Floth, at 301 F Street, had a small building right next to his house. It started out as a barber shop, and later John put in tables and chairs and had an ice cream parlor. We went there almost every night and played "Shoot the Moon" dominoes. When you won a game, you got a candy bar or could save up enough to buy a pint or more of ice cream.

Jake Strackbein had a beer joint in the building at about 143 F Street. There had also been a small store owned by Duffy Amen, rented to a Mexican man who sold cigarettes, tobacco and so forth.

The hardware store on 3rd and F Street later became a beer joint too, with some dancing being done on certain nights.

Hank and John Lebsack had a tavern in the building right west of what is now the Salvation Army Building. This was during the war, and when a troop train came into the station, their business was really good. As far as I know, they and their brother Eddie all served. I got to meet Eddie at a Red Cross Club in Paris France.

There was also a store on 1st and K Street, owned by Mr. Garcia, catering mostly to the Mexican people in the neighborhood. Was this later the Garcia-Damian grocery??

Friedens Church had what was supposed to be a pipe organ. Mr. George Bauer was the man who did the pumping to enable the organist to play. Emma Lebsack was the organist that I remember. My grandfather Bauer had his special seat in the front of the church, and he started all the songs. Someone later complained about this, and he had to quit the practice of starting the songs. It hurt him, but he did make the best of it.

Mr. Bauer also came to our house on Sunday afternoon, when we would play dominoes, at least during the winter or bad days. During the summer, when it was nice, we would play horseshoes. He would bring "peffer mans kuchelian" and give us each whatever color we wanted, pink or white. The white were pretty strong, so I always took a pink.

Almost every night, there would be a gathering at 431 E Street, playing pitch, or Schaf Kopf, Coonie Kammercell from 8th and H Street, Chris Loos from 9th and Sumner, Pete Grass from 3rd and E Street, Uncle Henry, Al Stoehr, and in the summer time the same gang pitched horseshoes. These games were all played free; that is, no gambling went on, and no drinking.

Mr. And Mrs. Bill Coates bought the house from John Floth and the little store became the home of our cousin Robert Amend. He lived there many years, and Mrs. Coates also gave Robert some meals, or took part of her cooking over to him, and his rent was also cheap, at that time.

There was a store on 9th and G Street, selling groceries, etc. When the store closed, it became a business house for a number of different businesses, and the upstairs has always been apartments or living quarters.

The Scheidt Coal and Lumber Company was located at 5th and Washington, selling lumber and coal and so forth. This location is now owned by Jack McKinney, who has a garbage collection business, and also a haven for horseshoe pitchers. He has some very nice outdoor courts and also an indoor court. Some well known pitchers had appeared at his place.

The Strasheim brothers, Fred and Henry or Eugene, had a grocery store on the corner of 10th and South Street. Later, they had a store on 9th, between O and N, on the west side of the street.

C.H. Bauer had a general market on the corner of 9th and N Street. He made paint, sold groceries and also had a coffee roasting business, with a large drum into which he put a few hundred pounds of green coffee, and then started it roasting. When there was no wind to dissipate it, the air would be full of blue smoke, with a good coffee smell. He later moved to Chicago, and died there, but was buried here in Lincoln.

The small grocery store at about 530 C Street, had a small area in back, where Mr. John Bretzer had his shoe repair shop. The store was first owned by Strasheim and Scheidt, then later was owned by Bernhardt. The store is set up like a real grocery store now, by the AHSGR organization. Some of the shoe repair tools are also on display there.

Marie Willis and Mr. Amen were running the Amen store by themselves for quite awhile. After store closed, the city and county took over the front part, for storing voting booths and other supplies. The AHSGR added a metal building to the south end, for storing books, and supplies of all kinds.

I remember, too, a small store on the east side of the alley running north and south on E Street, between 8th and 9th Street. One day, the teachers gave two of us a list, and we went and got the groceries for the teachers. It took us quite awhile to get into the school. The class right in the room next to the door let us stand out there, rather than coming and opening the door or something to let us in. The store was run by Mr. Wambold, as far as I can learn.

A store at 1245 South 9th in the 1916 directory was listed as A V Downey, and the 1935 directory was listed as Adolph Sell.

Uncle Henry Amend had a shoe repair shop at 228 F Street, and for awhile John Ariolla, a young Mexican jewelry maker, had a bench in one corner. As far as I know, he also repaired watches.

Frieda Fink Johnson Remembers

May, 2000

Brehm's store had a gum ball machine. It was a man, and when you put a penny into his outstretched hand, he turned, the hand raised, and when he turned to face you again, the gum ball miraculously appeared in his other hand. The gum tasted terrible, but it was well worth a penny just to watch the machine work.

Brehm's had a candy counter a mile long. I loved to go there, and look and look at all of the different things you could buy, but it was so hard to decide how to spend that one penny. My favorite was dumbbell suckers. A dumbbell was a good buy; you got two pieces of candy, one on each end of a stick.

One day on my way to school (Hayward), I stopped in at Brehm's and there lying on the floor in front of the counter, was a five dollar bill. Some people came into the store just then, so I stepped on it, and debated with myself about keeping it. I remembered what my folks always told me about not taking what did not belong to me. I gave the five dollar bill to Mr. Brehm, and he gave me some dumbbells as a reward.

I remember when bologna was called "minced ham," and it tasted so good. It was a real treat to have a minced ham sandwich. I didn't like runzas, so my grandmother would let me get some minced ham for supper while they ate runzas. That was my idea of gourmet, then.

My grandmother was a midwife. We had a fence around our yard, with a gate. They always said babies came in those yellow railroad cars that were sometimes parked on the tracks near where we lived. One day, I saw some of those cars there, and I saw my grandmother coming with her little suitcase, and I wouldn't let her in the gate. I told her I knew she was coming because of those cars on the tracks, and we had enough babies! Well, we had another baby the next day.... I asked my grandmother why she didn't get another job. I thought this was the only mother she was helping deliver babies.

After the baby was born, everyday, neighbors took turns bringing chicken noodle soup, and other foods to our house. One brought sponge cake with chocolate frosting, and it was delicious. My grandmother would come to the house to care for the mother and tend to the baby for ten days after a baby was born, and she charged \$10.00. To do this for my mother, while she was in "Kindbedt," she walked from 10th and Charleston to 7th and Vine, every day! Can you believe that?

My grandfather had a good job. He worked for Schneider, the tailor, downtown. He took the streetcar every day. That's why I got to live with them. When he got off the streetcar on 10th Street, I could meet him, and he always had something for me. When it rained, my grandmother would say, "Get down there with the umbrella." He was a dapper man; he was a tailor and dressed well, wore a gold chain, too. He walked with a cane. We never knew what happened to his leg, and he never talked about it.

My grandmother was probably the sweetest woman on earth. I had a bed all to myself. She made a kind of beer. She came to my room in the morning sometimes, with a little glass of this, and said, "Hertzya, trink nur das, es ist gut fur dich," and I would always say, "Na." She thought this was healthy, I guess. I could never down that stuff. I didn't need a tonic, I was always full of pep.

Do you remember the Tip-Top Bakery? They gave you coupons in the bread, and sometimes they would give you two. You could get a scooter if you saved up. You could also cash them in. Sometimes my grandmother would give me two of them, without my grandfather's knowledge, and I would get dumbbells.

Remember those "Russa Kandies?" They don't make them anymore. Miller and Paine used to carry them. They were tart fruit flavored hard candy with a soft fruit filling. The wrapper had a picture of a Russian wearing a black hat. The cherry ones were best.

J C Penney's store was fun to go to, and watch the tubes carry money overhead to the cashier on the mezzanine. It took a long time to make a sale; if they made a mistake, the clerk had to start the whole process over. Can you imagine anybody having the patience to shop like that now?

My grandparents bought my shoes at Wells and Frost because they would last. Fogelson's had a red hat in the window one time that I really wanted, and my grandparents said no, because I needed new dress shoes, and wanted black patent leather ones, and that hat was expensive - \$6.95. One night my grandfather got off the streetcar, and he had something behind his back, and it was the red hat! I was so happy, I hugged and hugged him. Later they got me the shoes.

We played squeeze at school in the winter, when it was really cold. We'd stand in a corner of the building, maybe 25 or 30 of us. Usually, the bigger boys were at the front. You had to do it together. The idea was to get as close to the building as you could, so someone would yell "Squeeze!" and everyone would move back toward the wall at once. We didn't have the money to buy toys and games, so we made our own fun.

THE SOUTH BOTTOMS – THE “GAS HOUSE” AREA

John “Jeff” George

May, 2000

These episodes are written in no particular order and cover only my span of residence in the “Gas House” area up until about 1936, at which time my family pulled up roots and moved farther South to 8th and Garfield Streets. You may use them in any way you wish and omit any deemed not usable. No names are given here, as I believe they are not important to the stories. The stories are true as well as can be remembered at eighty plus years.

This region was bounded on the North by “O” Street, which at one time was streetcar tracks leading to the Burlington round house and the Capitol Beach area. A loose South border was J Street and railroad tracks. The east boundary was 2nd Street and railroad tracks, while the west boundary was Salt Creek.

Important buildings were: Longfellow Elementary School, Iowa-Nebraska Light and Power Company Complex, The Lincoln Packing Company, Landis Field ball park, Lancaster County Repair Shops and Parking Yard, and Van Sickle Paint Manufacturing Company.

The whole area covered less than fifteen square blocks, and considering the relatively small area; it hosted many interesting happenings, some of major importance.

“Gas House” Whistles And Other Things

The start of the working day was announced by steam whistles at the Iowa-Nebraska Power Company and the Burlington round house. The whistles blew at 8:00 a.m., 12:00 noon, and 5:00 p.m., the end of the working day. These whistles were several miles apart, but it was amazing how they always sounded pretty much as one. The whistle blowers must have synchronized their watches and made allowances for sound travel. The whistle at the Iowa-Nebraska Power Company was activated at the machine shop, where as kids, we used to hang around because of the many interesting operations going on. If we behaved ourselves, one of us kids was given the honor of pulling the lanyard to blow the whistle. A great thrill! These same whistles warned us of the time we kids had to be home for meals, that is if we didn't want to eat a cold lunch or supper.

There were some cooling towers north of the building that controlled the temperatures of the generators by water. The water was sprayed in the air by large spray fountains and was warm. The spray fountains were enclosed in a louvered fence about ten feet high. In the cold months, we would occasionally remove our clothing, climb the fence, and do some “skinny dipping” in the concrete basins that were about three feet deep. In our exuberance, we made so much noise the area watchman would come up and threaten to call the cops, which made us scale the fence quickly, don our clothes and scoot. The “cops” never showed up, so I suppose he purposely forgot about it after he got back to a telephone.

During very windy days, the overspray from the cooling towers fell on some nearby coal and coke piles that were about thirty feet high, coating them with a thick, hard coating of ice. They provided us some super-wild coasting on sleds, toboggans, planks, and fold-down stove tops that we rescued from old gas stoves from the Company's salvage yard.

My First Swimming Lesson

If the winters had a lot of snow around the surrounding countryside, the spring melt-off drained into Salt Creek, which couldn't handle the drainage fast enough, causing the "Gas House" area to flood, partly because of the levees the railroad tracks were built on. If you ever drive through the area, you can still see some houses built on high foundations, which was done in hopes of outguessing the flood rise, an almost annual springtime event. I got my first swimming lesson during one of these floods. I was sitting alone on the front porch kicking my feet in the water, when I slipped and fell in. Yep, I was scared, but I managed to kick my way to the steps and back on the porch. My mother heard all the splashing and yelling and came out of the house. Of course I was completely drenched and to this day I can still remember the look of relief on her face when she realized what had happened. I still got that old "German" scolding, and was warned to stay clear of the edge of the porch.

The flood did not disrupt, by much, the order of business of the grocer on 2nd and F Streets. Order takers went out as usual in the morning by rowboat, raft, canoe or motorboat, and the groceries were delivered in the afternoon by the same means.

The Prairie

A meadow that was bounded by the railroad tracks on the North, the Salt Creek on the West, F Street on the South and West 1st Street on the East, was romantically called "The Prairie." It was the site of baseball games, football games and some famous floating crap games. The police had great sport raiding these games. The "crap shooters" usually posted lookouts at the entrances, paying them a quarter to keep an eye out for the cops. A shout of "1162" warned the players to get rid of any "evidence." The shout of "1162" was derived from the police cruiser which was a big black Dodge touring car, with the license plate number 1162. The shout of "1162" sent many youngsters scurrying if they were engaged in any sports bordering on rowdiness. The police seemed to enjoy these "raids," as I don't remember very many arrests being made, or "crap shooters" ever being arrested. This was great "Sunday Fun."

Baseball Season

Lincoln's "Big League" baseball park was Landis Field, which was located on the North side of "P" Street, between 1st and 3rd Street. Sunday was double-header day which caused some special problems for the gas house area, especially for residents on 1st Street. 1st Street was unpaved, and during dry spells became quite dusty, especially so on double-header days, when automobile traffic was very heavy because of increased attendance at the ball games.

At the end of the games, all traffic seemed to leave at once and, because of tie ups at the "O" Street viaduct and the "J" street crossing at 2nd Street, the traffic gravitated to 1st Street and on to

"F" Street. All this traffic caused a huge amount of dust, which aggravated the residents on 1st Street. Some would connect their hoses and spray water on the street causing some muddy spots, which aggravated the drivers, because most likely many of them had washed their cars for Sunday. The street was not paved until the early '40's, by which time the baseball franchises became defunct and events at Landis Field were rare.

Tent Weddings

A big event for the area was the Tent Wedding. Most homes were too small to host any sizeable gathering such as a big wedding reception. For such an occasion, a large tent with a wooden floor and bench seats was rented and set up on any empty lot. The wedding ceremony was likely held at the church on 1st and F Streets, and the reception and dance in the tent. Besides, you couldn't have beer at the church. Wedding ceremonies were sometimes held at the tent. There was always plenty of beer and food at these events, and during prohibition days there were enough batches of "home brew" in the neighborhood to keep everyone happy.

The dance orchestra invariably was a "pickup" crew of fiddles, accordion, or zither (or hackbrett), clarinet, trumpet, etc. A piano was sometimes moved in and a balalaika would show up. The dances were noisy and accompanied with a lot of foot stomping. Benches were arranged around the perimeter of the tent for watchers and resting dancers. The outline of the derrieres against the canvas made a great target for the young lads who came equipped with hatpins and flat boards.

After a wedding ceremony, the couple had to endure a "chivaree" which was a lot of noise made by tin barrels, tubs, buckets, horns, or anything that could make a big noise. The groom was required to "pay off" the noisemakers by doling out pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters. If there was a lump sum paid out, the oldest or biggest lad got his hands on the money and ran off with the musicians chasing him. As he ran off, the smallest kids would get tired and drop off leaving fewer persons to "divvy" with, which was of course, the whole idea behind this maneuver.

Longfellow Elementary School

Longfellow School was the only public school building in the "Gas House" area. It was located between 1st Street and West 1st Street and extended from J Street to nearly L Street. It was a red brick building and serviced all grades from kindergarten through 6th grade. Longfellow was the hub for many neighborhood activities. Night classes taught our parents the American language and helped them pass the necessary requirements to obtain their Citizenship papers to become proud, full-fledged American Citizens. No pressures here for a second language...they wanted to be Americans, and they forsook their "old country" ways.

The Longfellow playground provided space for neighborhood baseball games and served as a gathering place for the youth and their many activities. It also provided means for a rather dangerous activity. Some of the brickwork consisted of insets about 2" deep up the outside walls. These insets were meant to be decorative but they also provided toe and finger holds that enabled us to scale the two stories, clamber over a ledge and get inside the school through a trap, and exit

the building through any of the building doors. Surprisingly no one ever fell down from the building. There weren't very many practitioners of this "sport" and I don't know if the school system ever became aware of this activity.

One winter, the school furnace exploded, which forced the school to shut down. The explosion occurred at night so no students or teachers were endangered. The only occupant was the night janitor, who escaped injury. The school was never rebuilt, and all students were shunted to Park School. The site of the school is now occupied by a trucking company. (Ed Neylon's)

The "J" Street Railroad Tracks

The railroad tracks paralleling "J" Street were laid on a built up levee necessitating a semi-steep ramp on 1st Street to handle vehicular traffic. This ramp caused some problems for some trucks, especially the long bed Model T trucks used for hauling pipe, lumber, and other items with long length. The Model T trucks were fairly light weight on their front ends, and when the trucks drove up the ramp, the load in back would cause the truck's front end to raise in the air, leaving the truck unable to move. The driver would have to clamber from the cab and take off part of his load to let the front back down to the street. The driver's embarrassment was a great delight for the onlookers.

Two tunnels were built under the tracks to enable foot traffic to walk along 1st Street when freight trains blocked traffic. The women would not use the tunnels at night because of fear of the hobos that slept in the tunnels at night. They would then use the street to get across the tracks. This was a problem when it rained, because the street was unpaved and would get to be a muddy mess.

On the 2nd Street crossing, the ramp was not as steep, but vehicles crossing the tracks at this point would get a severe jouncing because of the tracks. A group of us youngsters were sitting on the front porch of one of the houses facing J Street, when an ice cream company pick-up truck came speeding by. When he crossed the tracks, an insulated ice cream container got bounced from his truck, unbeknownst to him. He kept speeding on his way to the ice cream plant. We waited to see if he would come back for his container, but after a long interval, we picked up the container and found about two gallons of ice cream inside. One of the boys went into his house and came out with a handful of tablespoons. We got rid of the ice cream in short order, and put the container back in the street where we found it. Several hours later, the driver came back and found his container. After checking to see if it was full or empty, he asked us if we knew anything about the empty container. Of course our answer was an emphatic "NO!"

Raising Pigs and Stuffing Sausages

During the late 20's and early 30's (depression years), when such things were still permissible, some families in the "Gas House" area raised hogs for the purpose of slaughter, to provide meat during the winter months. Most of the hog went into sausages, which were easiest to preserve. One family had a hog that grew to a rather large size. He became a sort of pet, especially for one of the sons and other kids. We had lots of fun riding him around the back yard. It was great sport, and I think the hog enjoyed this activity as much as we kids did. The fun times came to an end when the father announced that the hog was ready for slaughter, which greatly upset the son. He

pleaded with his dad not to go through with the slaughter, but his pleading fell on deaf ears. Yelling and crying and even cussing out his dad could not save the hog from its ordained demise. The butchering process went forward, and when it came time to dispose of the entrails, the father added insult to injury by giving the son the chore of getting rid of the entrails. He told his son to load them in a coaster wagon and haul them to the offal dump at Lincoln Packing Company, which was only about four blocks away. The boy swore that he'd never forgive his dad for this.

Come sausage-stuffing time, the boy got a certain revenge. Sausage stuffing time was usually a family or two family affair. Natural animal intestines were used as sausage casings and were obtained from the local grocer or from the Lincoln Packing Company. They came in buckets and were packed in a salt brine. A hand cranked meat grinder with a longish, tubular snout at the outlet end was used. The casing was pulled over the end while the meat was ground and forced into the casing. Every foot or so the casing was given a few twists marking the end of a sausage and the start of the next. The number of sausages obtained depended on the length of the casing.

At the end of this particular stuffing session, the adults retired to the front room for a repast of sandwiches, coffee, home brew, and "old country" reminiscences. We kids took over the stuffing area in the kitchen. The son of this story was playing with some short ends of sausage casing, which by this time were semi-dry, but still slimy and sticky, and he was tossing them up and down. He tossed one too high and it stuck to the ceiling. This seemed like great fun, so everyone tried it, which left quite a few of these casings stuck to the ceiling. The front room session finally ended and the visiting stuffers left for home. We kids didn't say anything about the newly decorated ceiling.

The following morning, the family was sitting at the breakfast table, when something plopped into the father's coffee cup. The ceiling decorations by this time had dried out enough so they began dropping from the ceiling. The father jumped up from his chair and was ready to give his son the razor strop treatment, but refrained when he saw the son had come out of his blue funk and was laughing uproariously. Happy to see him in good spirits again, he forgot about the razor strop and peace was again restored between the father and son. The son would never eat any of the sausage that was made from his pet.

Whippet Cars and Railroad Tunnels

The railroad tunnels were mentioned in another segment, but they provided for another amusing incident. One family in the area owned a "Whippet" 4-door sedan that was a forerunner of much later compact cars. The oldest boy of the family thought it would be fun to drive it through the longer of the two tunnels. He did a lot of careful measuring before attempting this stunt. Feeling particularly brave one day, he tried it and succeeded. It required very slow and careful driving, because there was only a bit more than one-half inch of side clearance on each side. He was an excellent driver, because he never scratched or dented the family car. For a nickel a ride, he would take some of us kids through the tunnel. This business kept him provided with Saturday matinee money.

Another of the neighborhood boys decided to go into the business also, but the originator of the stunt told him to make a lot of careful measurements to make sure he could do it. His

measurements were none too careful, because his first trip through the tunnel got him wedged in far enough so he couldn't get out of the vehicle unless he broke out the windshield or rear window. He measured across the front fenders, which was OK, but he hadn't measured across the mid-section of the passenger compartment, which was the car's widest point. He had to be pulled out with the aid of a wrecker. His dad made him pay for the wrecker service and the mending and painting of the car body. I don't know if the dad got full repayment for all the damage, but the boy went out of business fast!

Do any of you remember the "Whippet?" It was a lower cost version of the Durant. Still confused? Boy, you are not in my age group. I'll leave you with the mystery so you can do some research work on old automobiles.

Purloined Automobile Fuel

Two of the neighborhood boys came across an old jalopy, which was in barely running condition. \$2.00 completed the sales deal, and the boys managed to get it home to work on it. Being fairly bright and resourceful lads, they managed to get it running and purring like a kitten. One problem though, they could never keep enough gas in the tank to get much enjoyment out of their car, even with gas at less than 15 cents per gallon.

A solution to their problem was a huge tank of several thousand gallons of a distillate fuel that the "Gas House" used to operate some of their machinery and vehicles. The boys would sneak into the yards at night and fill up their tank, plus a couple of ten gallon gasoline cans and be set for a lot of driving for the most part of a week. The fuel left off a pungent odor out of the exhaust. Nobody reported the thefts to the "Company" because the area's thinking was, "If there was nothing life threatening in what they were doing, their sins would catch up with them very quickly."

After about a week of these thefts of fuel, the company checked their gauges and discovered that their tank was either leaking or someone was tapping it for unauthorized use of fuel. Finding the tank sound, they fitted the valve with a heavy lock. Our enterprising lads could not be deterred by anything as simple as a lock, so with a heavy hammer, they broke off the lock, taking the valve with it. They scurried off without filling their tank, but left an open tank disgorging hundreds of gallons per minute of this smelly fuel draining on the ground. It smelled up the whole neighborhood plus creating a big fire hazard.

Enter the police, who with some smart detective work, rounded up the two miscreants and won for them about three years in the Reformatory. After their release, World War II entered the picture, and the boys became good citizens by enlisting and serving their hitches until their discharge. I never knew what happened to one of the lads afterward, but the other lad built up a very profitable furniture and auto upholstery business in a small south-central town in Nebraska. He learned his business while serving his term in prison.

The Home Brew Barrage

One well remembered event for me was when our family resided in a small house on J Street between 1st and 2nd Street. We had some recently bottled home brew stacked in the cellar and invited some friends, as was the custom in those days. Every "bottler" was proud of his special batch. The guests were anxiously waiting for the "nectar" to be served, when from the cellar came a series of loud pops, accompanied by the aroma of beer. Inspection showed that the whole batch of beer had erupted, showering the cellar with broken bottles and sprayed foam.

There was always a heavy traffic of freight trains and switch engines that always kept things shook up. The bottled beer evidently could not withstand all that shaking up, so consequently "popped its cork," leaving the expectant guests with nothing to drink and the house reeking with a beer odor for weeks.

The Burning Cross

One evening after sunset, a touring car loaded with white-clad persons pulled into the alley that lead to the "Pasture." These hooded and masked persons were KKK. They erected a rather large wooden cross, wrapped it with rags and soaked it with kerosene. They proceeded to dance around the cross, chanting some unintelligible mumbo-jumbo, and fired a rifle into the air, and they then set fire to the cross. This attracted a lot of attention, especially us kids who had been playing "Cowboys and Indians" fully equipped with lariats, etc. One brave cowboy lassoed the burning cross, pulling it down and dragging it toward Salt Creek with a bunch of KKK's, Cowboys, and Indians following. The cross wound up in Salt Creek, and during this melee, the kids were snatching hoods and masks from the "entertainers." Some of the KKK's were recognized. This event put a halt to the KKK performing their rites in this area. The KKK tried to put a good face on their group by distributing food baskets to the most needy families...but never to any Mexican or colored families. That charitable they were not!

Cub Scout Meetings, Outdoor Spud Roasts & Slumgullion Fiesta

The "Gas House" supported a Boy Scout troop and also a Cub Scout pack. The Cub Scouts were younger boys who later became Boy Scouts. This is about the Cub Scout pack. Our leader was a Telephone Company executive interested in preparing young boys to become Boy Scouts. He was a great outdoorsman and taught us much about fishing, camping, hunting and anything pertaining to the Great Outdoors.

Councils were held in the basement of Longfellow School, which served as an auditorium, gym, concert hall, etc.. The basement was a daylight basement, well ventilated because of the large above ground windows. A typical meeting was arranged with the leader sitting on a high stool with the Pack seated in a circle around him. The circle was kept as small as possible, so everyone could hear the leader plainly. At one meeting, a strong odor was permeating the area and became so strong we had to open some of the windows. We discovered the odor came from one of the Mexican boys who had come to the meeting just after his supper of "frijoles," unleavened bread and hot peppers, with a fiery sauce. We caught him lifting his bottom from the floor and silently

breaking wind, which was the source of the odor. After the air was cleared, our leader continued his talk, but with much snickering throughout.

One evening, our leader asked the Pack if anyone knew what slumgullion was. Most of us knew, because we had seen hobos prepare it under the railroad bridge that spanned Salt Creek at West 1st and J Streets. He asked if we'd like to make some slumgullion on our next camping outing, to which we all heartily agreed. A list was made up of ingredients that could be used. We ended up with carrots, potatoes, German sausage, wieners, garden beans, canned beans, canned peas, and bulk peas, and anything else that was edible and cookable. The leader brought a steel tripod, a large iron kettle, and a stirring paddle. A fire was built under the kettle, which was half-filled with water. When the water came to a boil, all these ingredients were cut up if necessary and dumped into the kettle in the order prescribed by our leader. The order was important, and items that cooked quickly were put in last so they wouldn't over-cook. Salt and pepper were added and the leader, by tasting the mess, let us know when it was ready. This was one grand stew. When we had our fill, the leader sent one of the cubs to the railroad bridge to invite the hobos to supper. They seemed to come from everywhere and that stew disappeared very quickly. We never saw such a happy bunch of hungry men.

Outdoor Spud Roasts

The boys in the area would occasionally indulge in a "Spud Roast," which meant that wherever a good bonfire could be built, we enjoyed this epicure's delight. Everyone would bring the largest spud he could find from home, a shaker of salt, and maybe some butter, or most likely oleo. The fire would be built, and when large bed of red hot coals was built up, the spuds were tossed in. It was hard to tell when the spuds were done, but if they had a thick coating of charcoal, they were assumed ready for eating. Of course, we had to wait till they could be handled without burning our hands. The burned outer portion was peeled away, uncovering the steaming white inside of the spud. It was coated with butter or oleo, salted, and then eaten. To us there was nothing finer, not even anything that could be served at the finest restaurants in town. We couldn't even taste the charcoal that covered parts of the spud that came from our hands when we peeled them.

Doings Along The Salt Creek

The Salt Creek was the source of much entertainment and sports for the "Gas House" residents. It provided us with fishing, swimming holes, target shooting with .22-cal. rifles and air rifles, boating occasionally, and ice skating in the winter. A unique method of fishing was practiced when the creek had a moderate rise after some heavy rains. The water would become so muddy that the fish had trouble breathing through their gills, so they would rise in the water and stick their heads out of the water for air. Carp, because of their humped back shape were quickly recognizable, and we would swim out into the creek with a short club, such as a short baseball bat and give them a whack, which immobilized them so we could pick them up. We would go into the water wearing our overalls, which provided pockets for us to put the fish in. When our pockets were loaded, we went to the bank, unloaded, and went back in for more.

In the old days, the State Hospital dumped its flush water into Salt Creek until the Health Department put a stop to it. We could be swimming and someone would holler, "Hit the beach,

boys!" because he spotted some of this waste coming down the stream. Little "sausages" floating in the water gave the Creek the name S--t Creek, and it is still referred to by this name by some of the old timers.

During one session of high water, a rowboat complete with oars came floating down the creek. We, of course, captured it and had many days of fun with it. At night, we would corral it in a side channel that was a drainage ditch from the power plant. One day the boat was no longer there, so we surmised that someone made off with it or its owner finally heard about his wayward boat, and reclaimed it during the night.

Swimming holes were never stationary spots, because during high water the swifter current would fill them with silt and sand and we would have to scout around for another. They could be found at bends in the channel, where a new hole would be scoured out. In later years, the government straightened the channel, added some levees to prevent flooding, and also made us lose many swimming holes.

Black Bloomers

A weekly ritual in the "bottoms" was scrubbing the front porches. Saturday would bring out buckets of warm water, homemade lye soap, and scrub brushes. This chore was normally performed by the girls of the house. Skirts were tucked into their bloomers to keep them from dragging on a wet floor. In those days, most girls wore black bloomers that reached to their knees. The bloomers had elastic at the bottom of the legs, so everything was circumspect. The chore was a hands and knees job, so it could be quite a sight with all the black clad bottoms up in the air busily scrubbing away. They weren't all black, however, since every so often a white bottom with a GOOCH'S MILL logo (Gooch's Best printed on it) appeared. After the scrubbing was finished, the floor would be rinsed with buckets of clear water or hosed off with the garden hose. Clean porches presented themselves for Sunday.

Chicken Barns

Another Saturday morning ritual was cleaning out the chicken barn, a job that befell me. I detested this job, because it was very smelly and dusty. Even with all doors and windows open, it became hard to breathe in the barn after all that dung became stirred up. My dad always took care of whitewashing the walls and roosts which I was always thankful for. The chicken dung was always spread over the garden area after it was cleaned from the barn. I'll have to admit it was one of the greatest garden fertilizers around. It also provided the fattest earthworms for fishing bait.

Every so often, when I felt I couldn't stand the barn cleaning job, I would grab my fishing pole and head for the Salt Creek. When Dad came home from work (people worked on Saturdays in those days) and found the barn had not been cleaned, I would have to do it anyway, even after it got dark. As a sort of punishment, he would load the saw horse with an old railroad tie and make me saw it into six pieces for firewood. You can bet that sneaking away from the barn cleaning job was given a lot of forethought.

The Dummy and the Frightened Driver

One certain driver used to speed down 1st Street from the south, jouncing over the J Street tracks in an old Dodge touring car. He didn't pay much heed to kids in the street on bikes, or anything else for that matter. Someone came up with the bright idea of making a stuffed dummy and at night throwing it in front of the speeding car as he came over the tracks and down the ramp.

The dummy was made out of some old clothes, stuffed with rags and gunny sacks, and furnished with a head and hat. 1st Street was usually overgrown with tall weeds along the ditches that lined the street. Two fellows lay in wait for the speeder to come along at his usual time, by which time it was dark. As he reached the proper spot, they heaved the dummy in front of the car, which, of course, ran into it. The driver thought he had run over a pedestrian, and slammed his brakes and ran out of his car and ran to the "victim" hollering a lot of unintelligible words in dire panic, asking, "Are you hurt? I'm sorry, I didn't see you," as he bent over the "victim" to see if he was alive. The spectators sitting on the Longfellow School sidewalk ledge were laughing uproariously, when the driver discovered he had been the victim of a well planned prank. He was greatly relieved that he hadn't hurt or killed anyone, and drove off in a more sedate manner than was usual for him. It cured him of his speeding and thereafter when he came down 1st Street, driving more slowly and carefully, everyone would smile and wave at him and he smiled and waved back.

Time To Call It "QUITS"

It has been a joy to write about the lore, the "old days" of the "Gas House" area of Lincoln, which was home to so many of the German-Russian families. We were poor and happy. We survived the Great Depression and then went on to better things. We helped each other without a lot of crying in our "home brew," not expecting the government to baby sit us. This era will probably never be seen again. Those of us who lived through it came out stronger, and with World War II, became even stronger, and made Lincoln a wonderful place to live. "Our People" have made it thus, and we can be very proud!

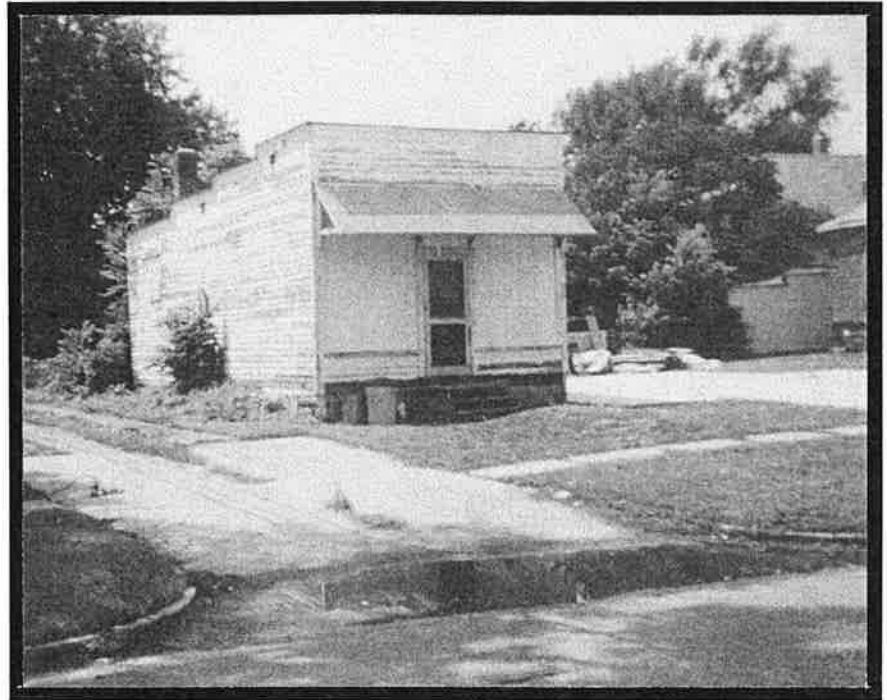
There are many other memories lurking in my mind that could probably show themselves, but I hope others can come up with their own reminiscences; funnier, more interesting, and better told. I hope my efforts have been worth the reading and that you have derived some enjoyment from them.

JOHN GEORGE

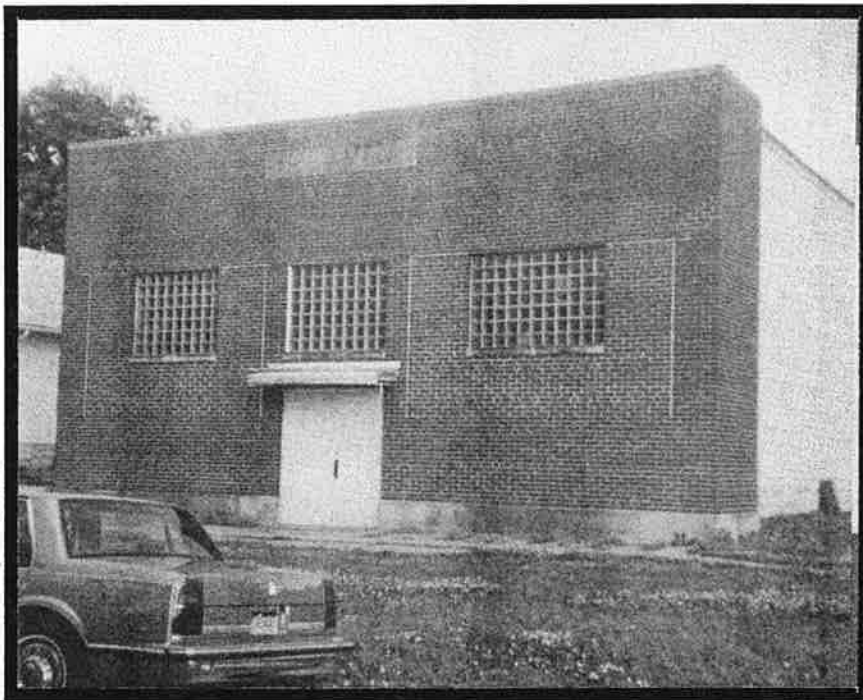
Alles Brothers Store

Located on South 6th Street adjacent to the alley between C & D Streets

Mr. Adam Alles first operated his business of selling coffee, teas, spices, sewing materials, and sundries door to door, from a small house in back of his home at 402 E Street. Mr. Alles and his brothers later built this building. It was the neighborhood saloon until the City of Lincoln passed a law that alcohol could not be sold in residential areas. Adam Alles continued selling school supplies, work gloves, candy, pop, ice cream and sundries here. The Alles brothers also roasted sunflower seeds, which were a big favorite of the many young fellows who used to congregate at Mr. Alles' store. For 5 cents you could enjoy a lot of cracking!



Henry J. Amen Grocery Store - 2nd and F Streets



Mr. Amen and his sons Rudy and Duffy operated this store. They sold groceries, produce, and fresh meats. They were noted for the homemade wurst they sold, both the fresh and smoked varieties.

Coal Yard – Near 2nd and F Streets

This coal yard was located just west of the Amen family's gas station on the North side of F Street. It was also operated by Rudy and Duffy Amen. The coal sheds were attached on the west side of the building.



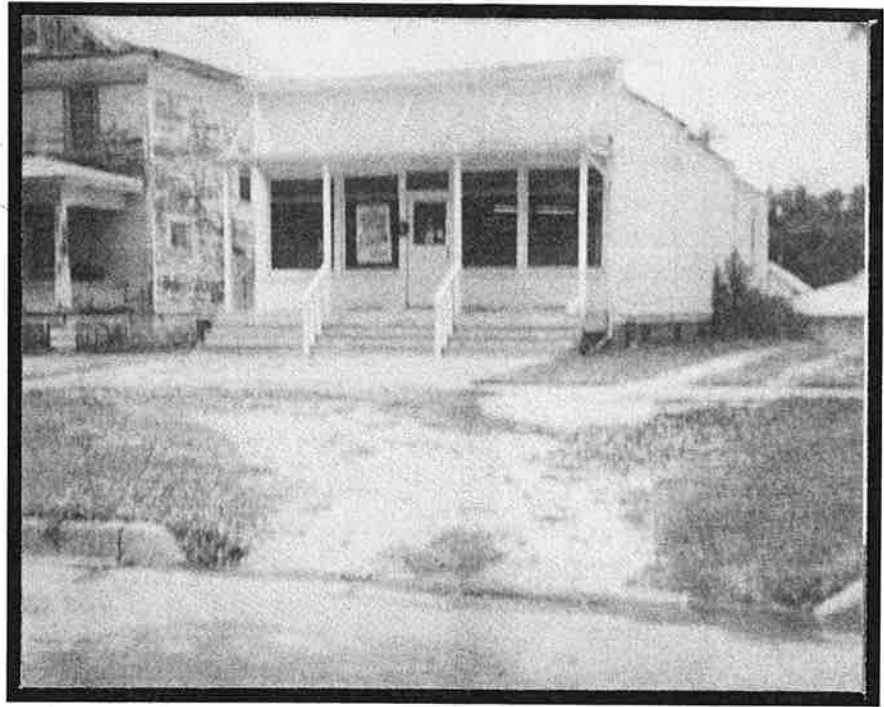
Gas Station – 2nd and F Streets



Rudy and Duffy Amen operated this gas station on the north side of F Street, across the street from the Amen grocery store.

John Dell Grocery Store – Near 7th and B Street

Mr. Dell operated this store assisted by family members. They sold groceries, meats, and produce. The store is presently being used by an antique dealer.



John Dietz - "Real Bread" Bakery – 1125 South 6th Street



This small building on South 6th Street was the home of the John Dietz family bakery. John's brother, Henry, worked for him, and his wife, Mary and his sister, Mollie, helped as needed. The sales room was at the front, and a large mixer and a huge oven, with a work space in between occupied the back third of the upper floor. Donuts and fried rolls were

made in a work room on the lower level. They were noted for their butter rolls. The sign on John's delivery truck read, "**John Dietz' Real Bread**"

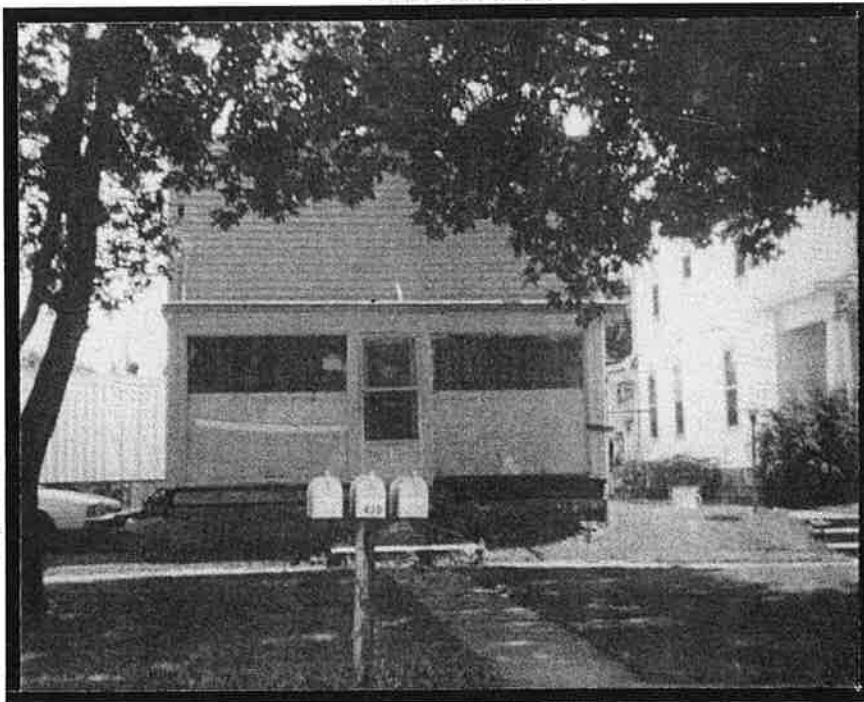
Ice Cream Parlor – 3rd and F Streets

This small building next to the home of John Floth on 3rd and F Streets first housed a barber shop. Later, Mr. Floth operated an ice cream parlor here.

Many men from the neighborhood enjoyed playing dominoes here. Players were awarded prizes, such as a candy bar, or they could save their prize like points, and spend the points on a pint of ice cream.



Lebsock Grocery Store – 441 F Street



Mr. J.J. Lebsock sold groceries, meats, and produce from this store at 5th and F Streets. Mr. Lebsock was active in Zion Church and the Brotherhood, and served as President of the Brotherhood for many years. He was an avid student of the Bible, and was often invited to address meetings of the Brotherhood in Nebraska, and as far away as Ritzville, Washington.

George Bauer Store – 402 F Street

Mr. Bauer sold groceries, hay, oats, and chicken feed from this store on the northeast corner of 4th and F Streets. There was also a coal yard in the back, adjacent to 4th Street. Bauer's store was later called, "The Drug," by the young men in the neighborhood who hung out there.

It was rumored that some of these young fellows liked to "shoot craps" in the back of the store. One young man was thought to be a sore loser, who when his losses built up, would quit the game, go home and call the police, then watch from the corner of 4th and G, and enjoy a good laugh when the police came and the other gamblers scattered to avoid being caught. This same fellow said he was actually more afraid of his father's wrath, if he found out that he had been gambling, then he was of being caught by the police.

This building is presently used by Reinhardt Brothers Plumbing and Heating Company.



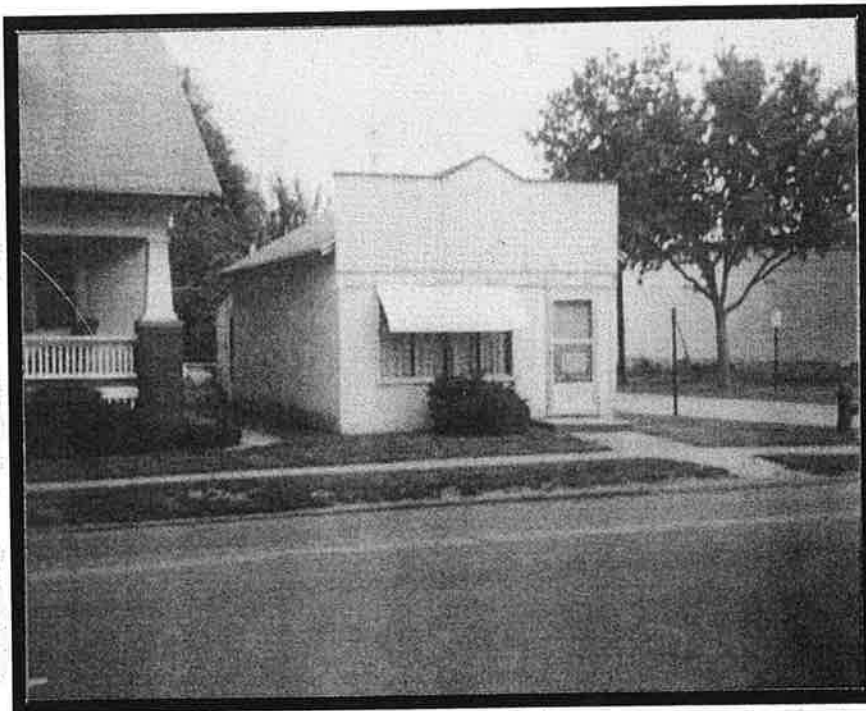
Wagenleitner & Dreith Coal Yard – 6th and F Streets

The coal sheds are no longer here, but this building was the office of the Wagenleitner and Dreith Coal Yard. The attached garage to the left of the main entrance still houses the scale on which the drivers weighed their truck-loads of coal before each delivery.



Mr. George Stroh and his son, George Stroh, Jr., took over this building when the coal yard closed, and conducted their real estate and insurance business here. Many of our people dealt with the Strohs because they could speak German, and could explain their transactions to them.

Nagel's Grocery Store – 14th between Charleston & New Hampshire



This small building is on the east side of 14th Street between Charleston and New Hampshire. It once housed Nagel's Grocery Store.

Maser's Grocery Store – 1125 North 10th Street

Maser's grocery store was founded in about 1925. They sold a full line of groceries, meats, and produce. In 1967, Norman and Beverly (Maser) Kissler moved their business, Kissler Office Equipment, into this building. The business is now known as Kissler Cash Register, Inc.



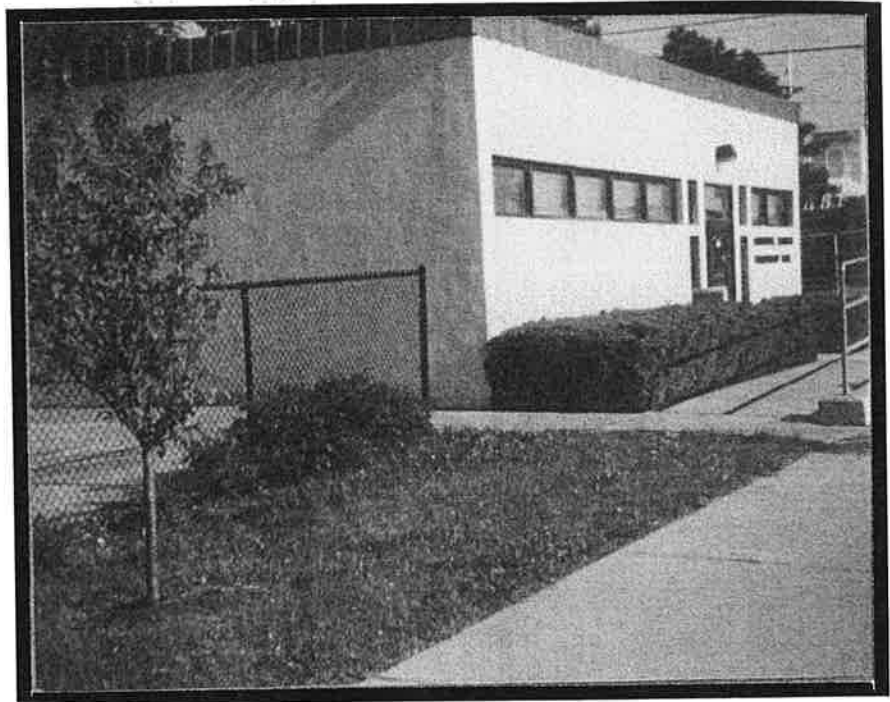
Reifschneider Grocery Store – 1317 North 10th Street



Henry Reifschneider operated this grocery store, selling produce, meats, and a full line of groceries. After Mr. Reifschneider closed his store, the building saw other uses, and is now George's Red Pepper Grill. Jacob Reifschneider operated the new Reifschneider's on the Northeast corner of 10th and Charleston. It is now "Shiner Food Mart."

Immanuel Church Fellowship Hall – 1120 North 10th Street

This building was formerly occupied by Cornhusker Heating and Air Conditioning Company, Inc. When Jake Sinner and Conrad Gabelhaus moved their growing business to a larger facility on Cornhusker Highway, Immanuel Church purchased the building and it is now the church's Fellowship Hall. For years, Immanuel church members made and sold thousands of runzas and other foods to hungry fans on Saturdays prior to University of Nebraska football games at the stadium nearby.



Spudettes Potato Chip Factory – Near 7th and Y Streets



This building near 7th and Y Streets once housed the Spudettes Potato Chip Factory. Very little is known about their product. The building has been converted to residential use.

Games our Parents and Grandparents Played

Originally Presented by Ed Schwartzkopf at the
AHSGR International Convention
Portland, Oregon, 1987

Reprinted by his permission

MOTTGA

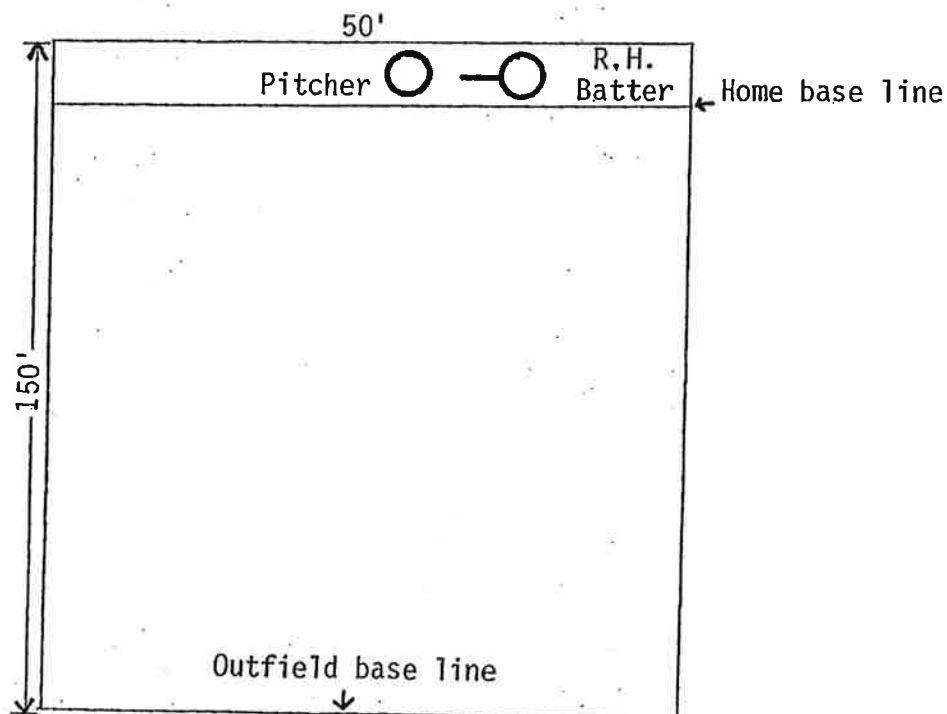
Equipment needed:

1. Broom stick - approximately 3' long
2. Tennis ball or similar size ball that is resilient
3. Field is flexible in size 50' wide, 150' long

Two teams are required. Captains are selected and they decide who chooses the first team member and then alternate in selecting team members until all interested players have been chosen. The team that had first choice in selecting team member now offers opposing captain choice of batting or fielding.

Pitcher facing batter tosses ball straight up approximately 3' in the air. The batter holding broom stick bat tries to hit the ball. He stays at bat until he hits the ball. If the ball is hit into the air (fly ball) and is caught by a fielder- batter is out and his team (1 out only) goes to the field and other team comes to bat. If the ball is hit on the ground- the batter must run and try to get to the outfield base line while the fielders try to get the ball and throw it at the batter trying to hit him or her with the ball. The fielders may throw the ball at the batter as many times as possible before batter reaches the outfield base without being hit by the ball. After batter reaches outfield base without being hit by the ball he must remain behind base line until the next batter hits the ball or he is able to sneak or steal home base without being hit by the ball. Each time a batter can safely reach outfield base and return to home base it counts as one score.

There is only one out- teams exchange position after each out- fielders come to bat, batters go to the field. There is no restriction on the number of people who can participate, just increase size of playing field.



TIPPEE

Equipment needed:

1. Broom stick approximately 3' long and striking end shaped as pictured:



- 1 - 4"-8" piece of broom stick pointed on the ends (as above)



The object of the game is to strike the pointed end of the Tippee with the bat's shaped end to make the Tippee flip into the air. While Tippee is in the air, hit as far as you can. The other persons playing the game must then guess how many steps you have hit the Tippee. These may be walking steps, running steps, a combination of running, walking or jumping. The person who guesses the nearest number of steps or combination thereof wins the game.

You can have as many variations of steps or striking or shoveling the Tippee.

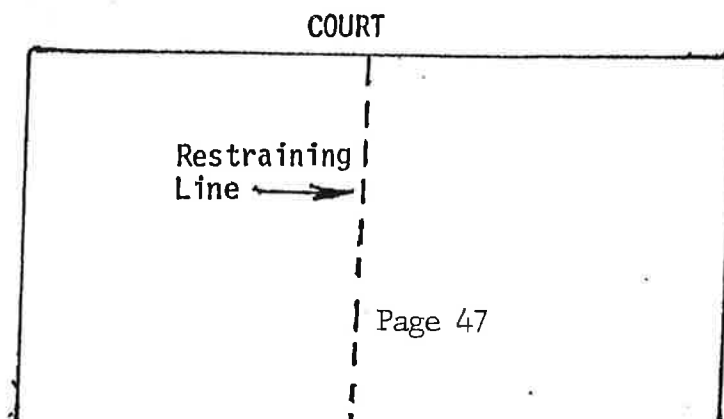
Excellent game for developing eye/hand coordination.

HASE JAGEN (Rabbit Chase)

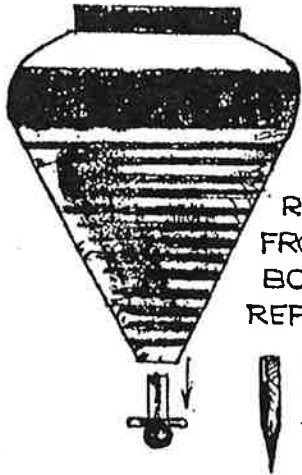
This game can best be played inside a fenced or walled area such as a tennis court, barn or garage.

There is no limit (restricted only by space available) to the number of participants. Select two captains who then choose, alternating, team members until all participants have been chosen. The open space or court is divided in half with a restraining line (chalk, string, rope or boards).

The object of the game is to throw a ball (volleyball is ideal) at opposing team members attempting to hit them and retiring them to the sideline for remainder of game. Any team member catching or picking up the ball may throw it at an opposing team member. The team that eliminates the most opposing team members wins the game.



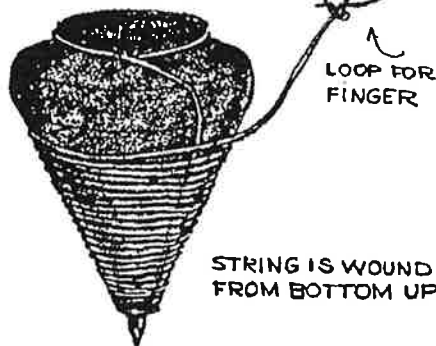
SPIKER TOP



REMOVE PEG FROM STORE-BOUGHT TOP & REPLACE WITH SHARPENED NAIL END

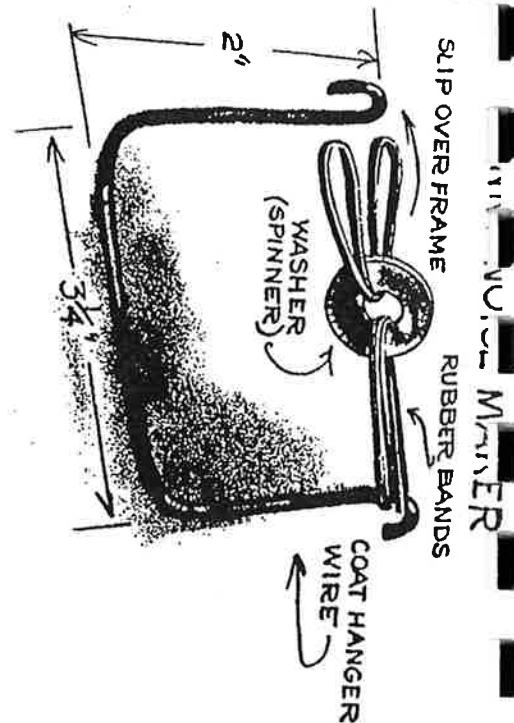


SPINNING STRING IS LOOPED AROUND TOP FLANGE, OVER KNOT, AND DOWN SIDE TO BOTTOM



STRING IS WOUND FROM BOTTOM UP

STRING IS ABOUT 36" LONG

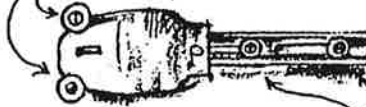


THE BASIC SCOOTMOBILE



HANDLEBAR
WHITTLE THE HAND GRIPS

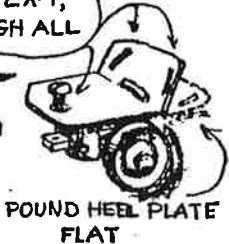
SCREWS WITH WASHERS FOR TOE



TO ATTACH TO RUNNING 2X4, PUT HEFTY SCREWS THROUGH ALL THOSE HANDY HOLES.

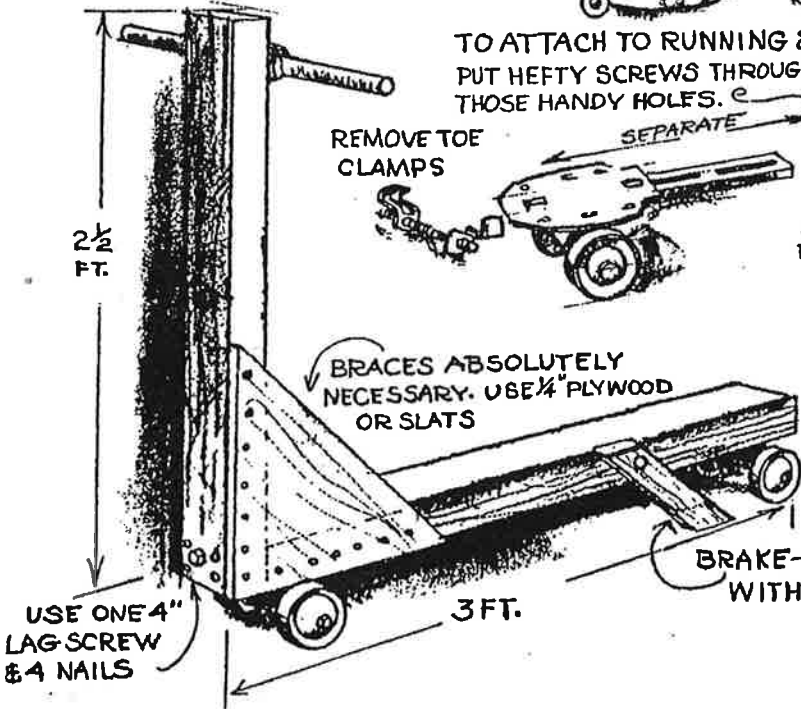
REMOVE TOE CLAMPS

SEPARATE

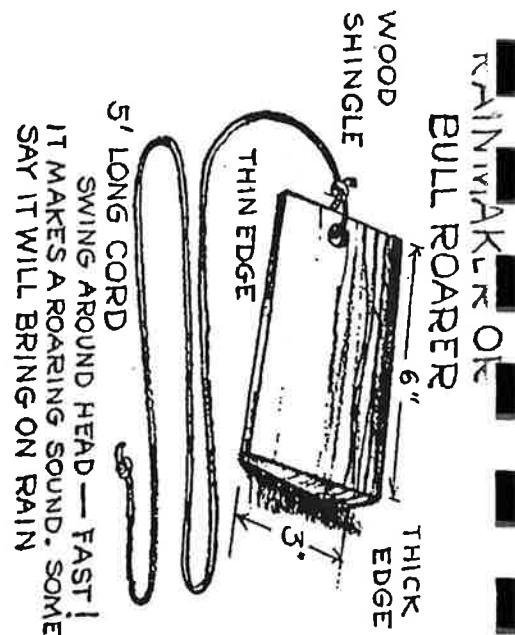


POUND HEEL PLATE FLAT

BRACES ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. USE 1/4" PLYWOOD OR SLATS

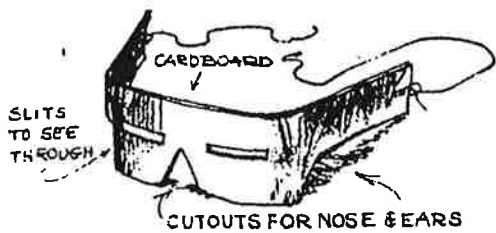


BRAKE - PRESS DOWN WITH YOUR HEEL

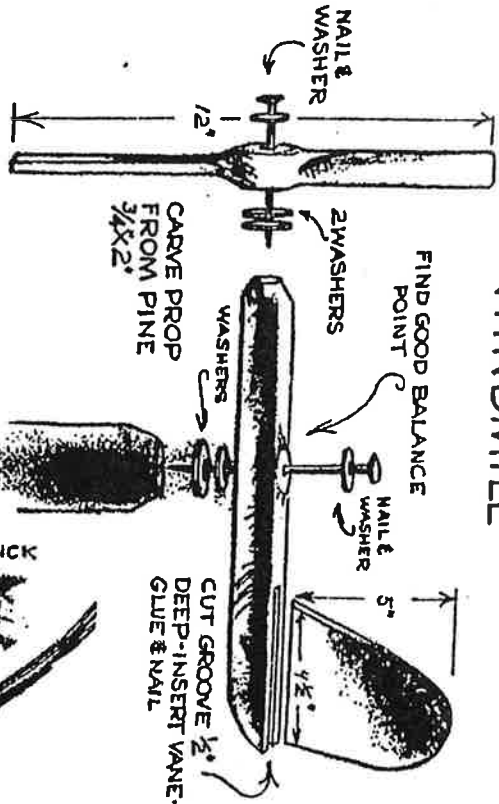
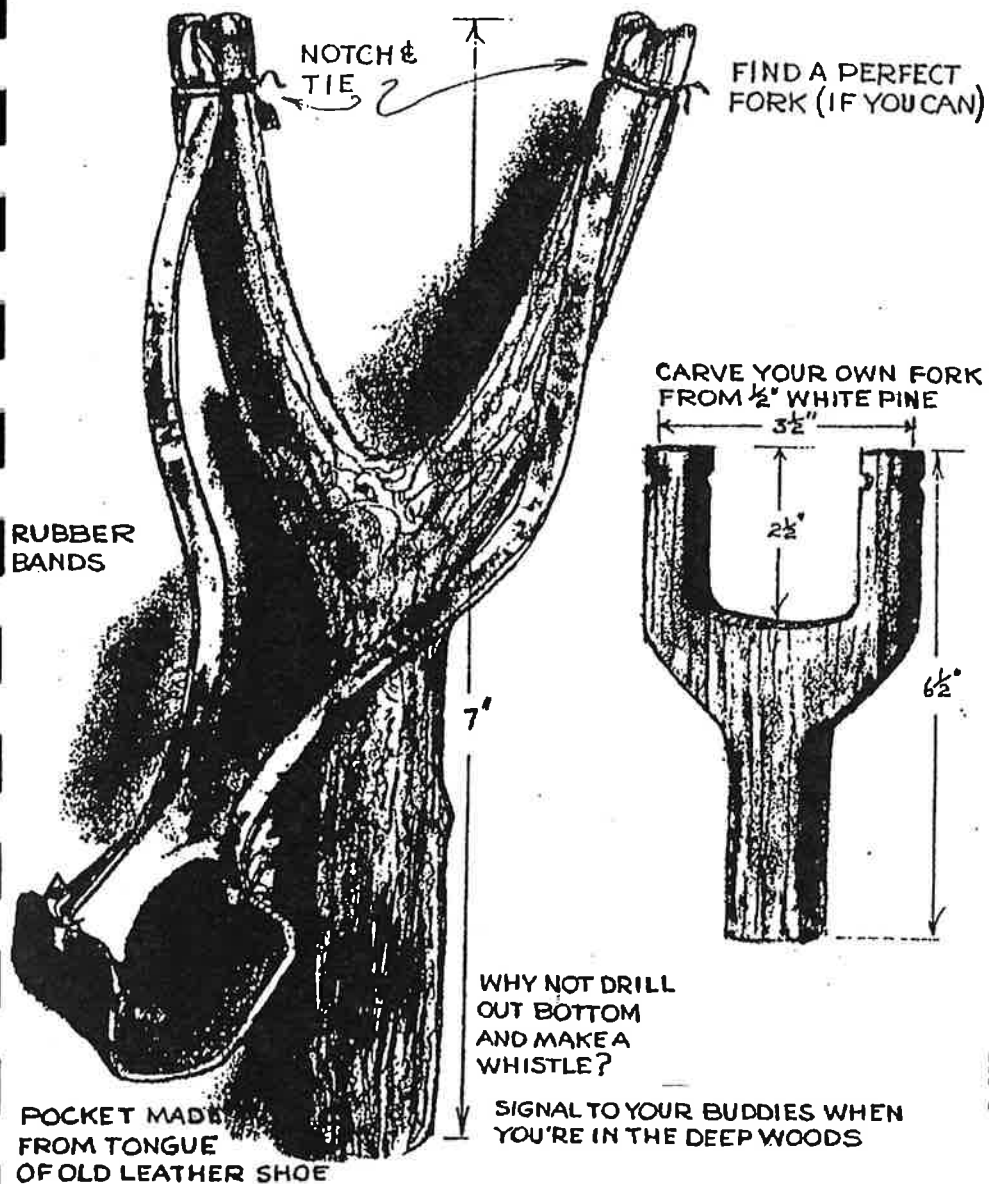
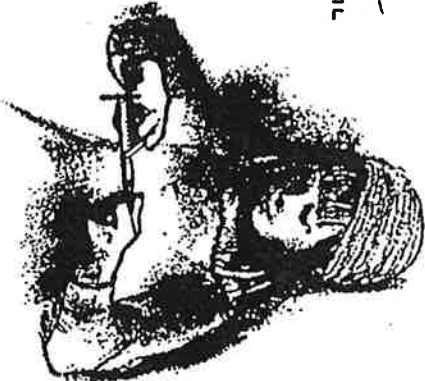
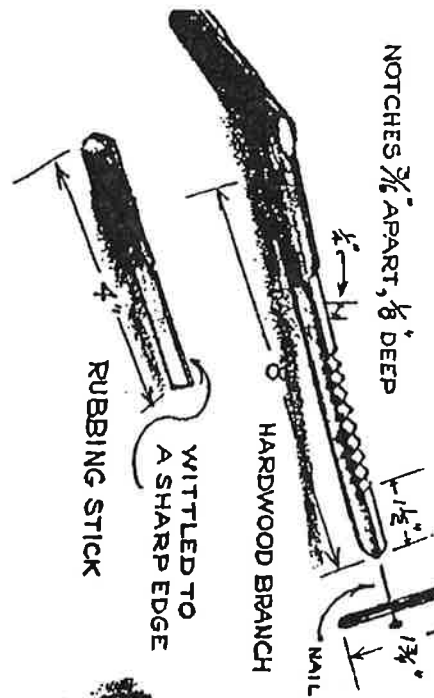


SWING AROUND HEAD - FAST!
IT MAKES A ROARING SOUND. SOME SAY IT WILL BRING ON RAIN

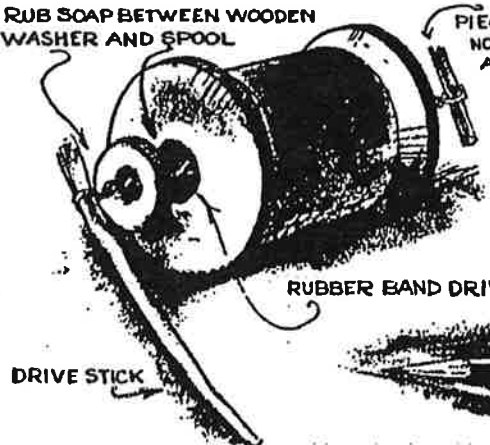
BATTLE VISOR



MAGIC PROPELLER OR ABERCAJABER

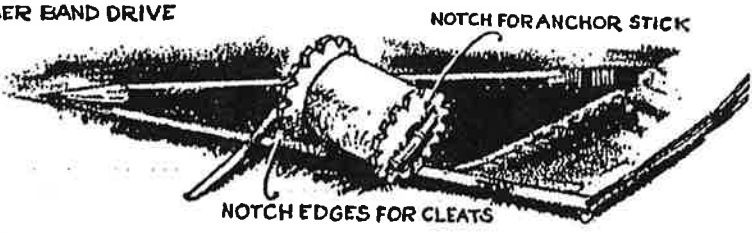


WINDMILL



SPOOL TRACTOR

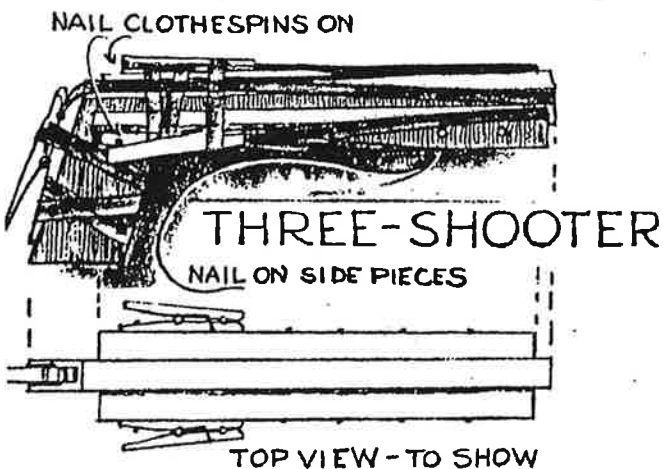
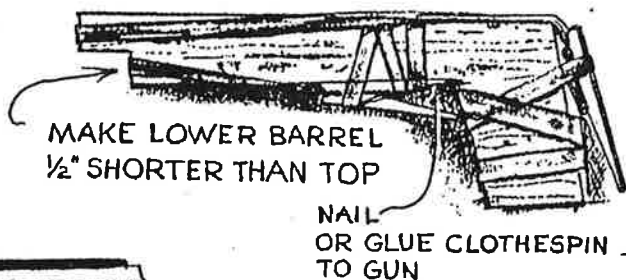
WIND IT UP, SET IT DOWN, IT WILL SLOWLY CLIMB OVER THINGS



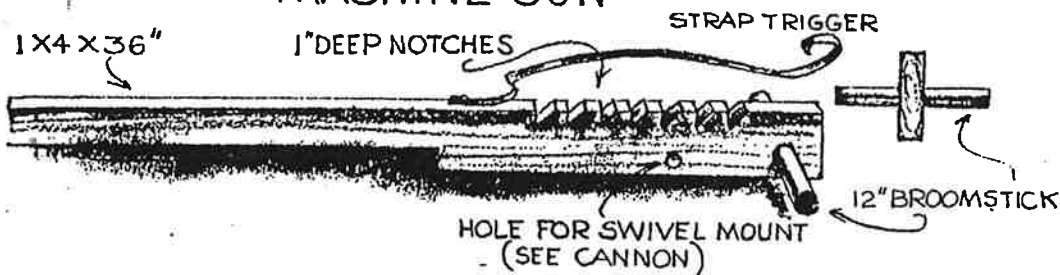
SPOOL TRACTOR

TOYS DISPLAYED DURING 1986 AHSGR INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

TWO-SHOOTER

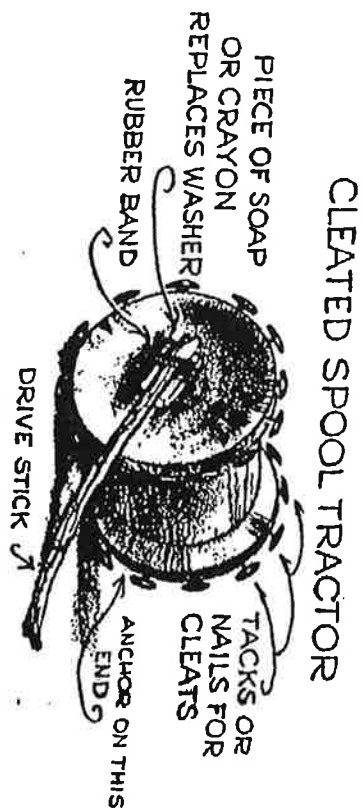
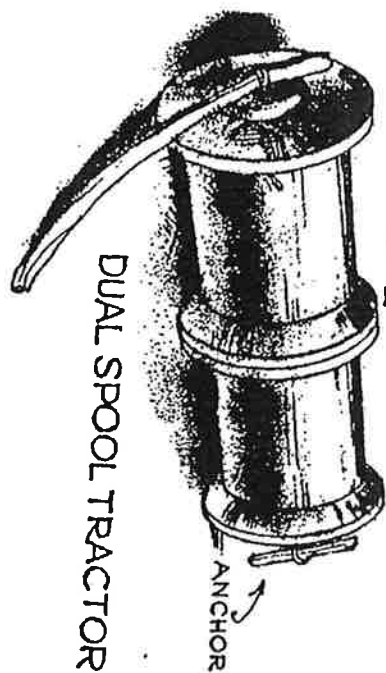
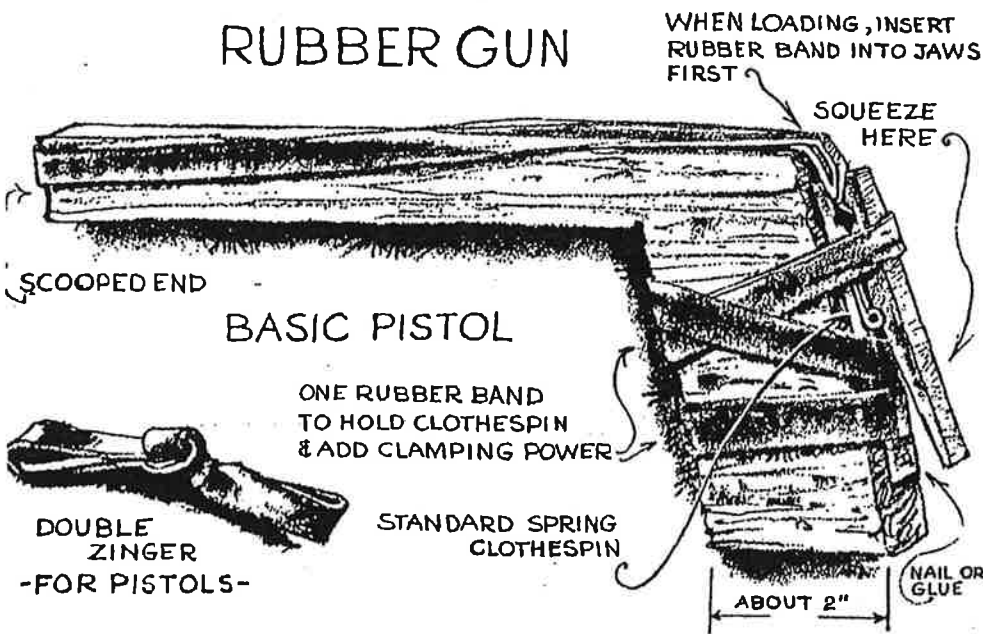


MACHINE GUN



MACHINE GUN

RUBBER GUN



STILTS

ADJUSTABLE
MODEL

2"x2" x 5'

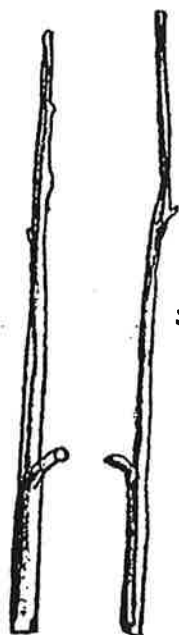
1"x2"
FLEXIBLE.
OK IF
YOU'RE
NOT TOO
BIG

SAPLING

HOLES
6" APART

3/8"x6" BOLT

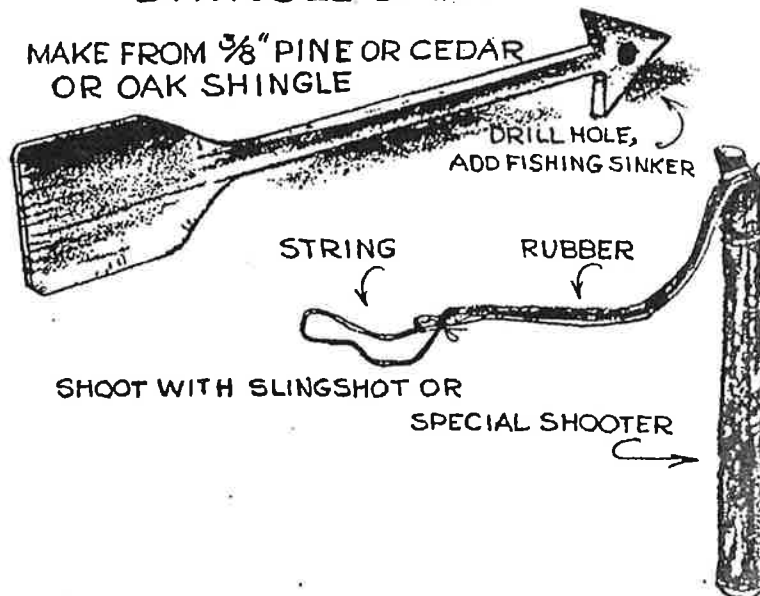
LAG-
SCREWS



SAPLINGS

STINGOLE DART

MAKE FROM 3/8" PINE OR CEDAR
OR OAK SHINGLE

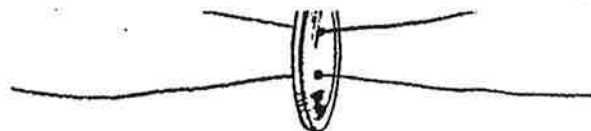


DRILL HOLE,
ADD FISHING SINKER

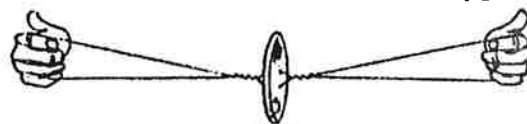
STRING

RUBBER

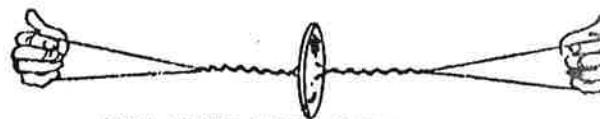
SHOOT WITH SLINGSHOT OR
SPECIAL SHOOTER



STRING GOES AROUND HANDS



RELAX TENSION, ROLL BUTTON A FEW TURNS



PULL HANDS APART - FIRMLY. AS SOON
AS STRING IS UNWOUND, RELAX TENSION AND
MOMENTUM WILL REWIND. REPEAT WITH RHYTHM

DRILL HOLE IN
CENTER - INSERT
STICK & GLUE IT



WHIRLIGIG
A PROP CARVE
FROM WOOD
WITH A SUCKE
STICK IN THE M

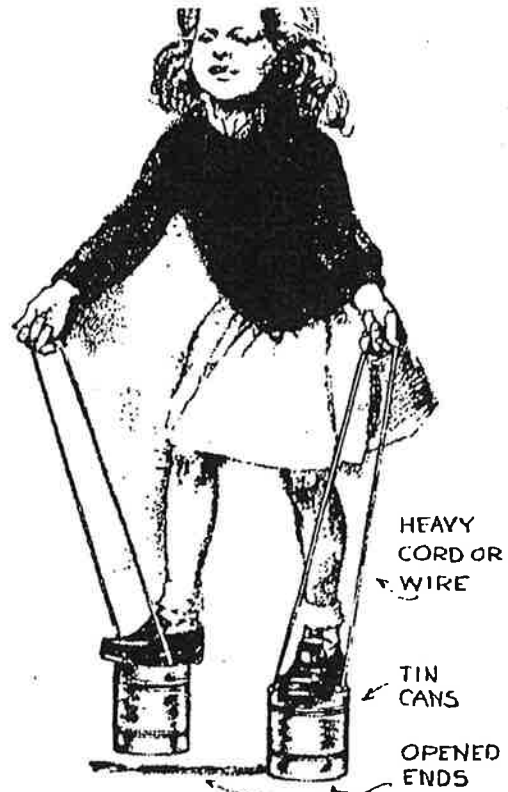
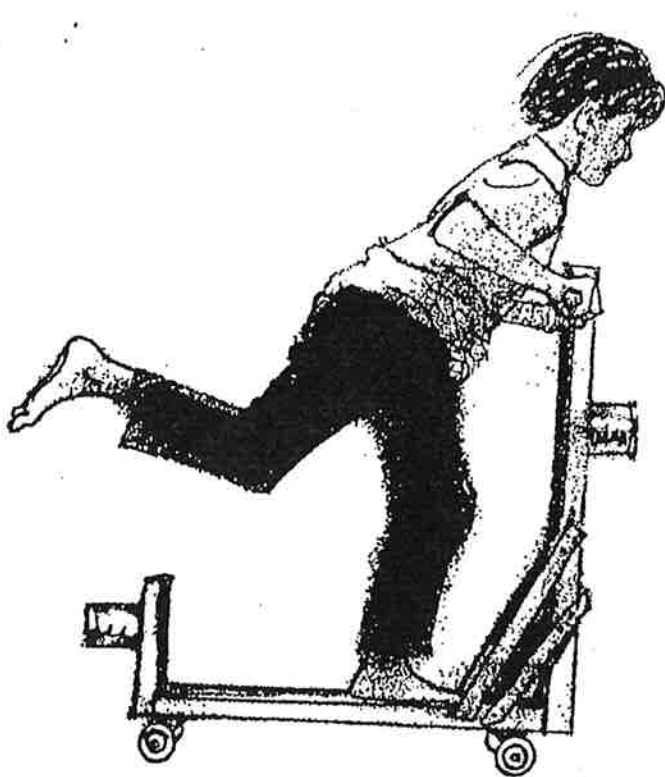
FLIES LIKE A
HELICOPTER



BREAK OFF 1/3 OF
SMALL END OF COB
PUSH IN 3 WING FEATHERS

THROW IT!

CORNCOB
WHIRLIGIG



HEAVY
CORD OR
WIRE

TIN
CANS

OPENED
ENDS

CUT NOTCH & RING



TOM WALKERS PLAIN WHISTLE

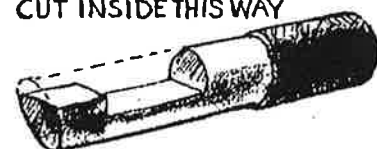
DRILL CENTER OUT OF ANY STICK

SLIDE BARK OFF WITH
TWIST



HALF-ROUND MOUTHPIECE
(SPLIT DOWEL OR TWIG) STOPS HERE

CUT INSIDE THIS WAY



SLIP BARK BACK ON AS
IT WAS

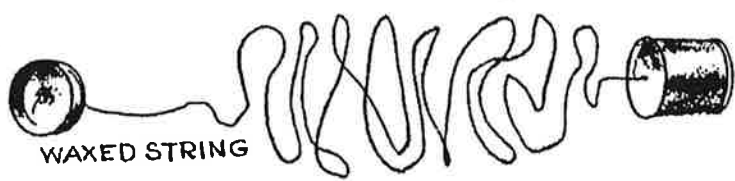


BLOW IT —

GREEN-WILLOW WHISTLE

TIN-CAN TELEPHONE

LARGE KNOT
INSIDE CAN



WAXED STRING



TIN-CAN TELEPHONE