

Reminiscences of my Father

Harold Marion Patterson Sr. was born 18 November 1921 in McGuffey Village, Hardin County, Ohio. At the age of 83, my Dad wrote down some of his earliest childhood memories shortly before he left us on 24 February 2005.

I pass them on to you as he wrote them, so that you could hear his voice in his own words.

1926

I remember when I was 5 years old we lived on a farm called Allie Morre. The house had rats in it. Dad would nail tin can lids over the rat holes in the house to keep the rats out. Dad worked on the farm husking corn for Allie Moore. The house was very cold. My two older sisters Katherine and Dorothy went to school at a school on the Stambaugh Farm. I remember Mom making a poltus from pepper, salt, sage and fat pork to put on my chest for my cold. Mary Ellen went bare foot in the snow with her training potty to set on top of a stump and go to potty. She was two and one half years old.

I remember when I was 5 ½ years old. We moved up to the marsh to a house on the Sheldon Farm. Kenneth was born. He cried a lot. I started to school and went to Stambaugh School. I remember the teacher was a man. He had a paddle with holes in it. I was real good!

I remember saving my cousin Rose Evelyn from drowning in a drainage ditch. We cooled our milk at the flowing well. Uncle Orsey, Moms brother, was married. His wife gave birth within four months. Uncle Orsey would sing this jingle (as I remember it)

Kemo Kimo Dearo Hi
Hi and a Ho and
A Hum Dum Periwinkle
Tic Tac Pitty Pat
Blue Eyed Pussy Cat
Sing Song Kitty and
Away we go

One of Eric Sheldon's coon dogs was loose when I went to take it home it pulled me down and dragged me all the way home through the muck. I remember Eric Sheldon's boys eating onions as though they were apples.

Uncle Charlie's girls came and lived in a tar paper shack behind our house. Wilma Alverth and Helen, they were wild. They would go out with boys and stay late and not be able to work. Uncle Charlie was angry at Dad and Mom. The girls had to go home.

1927

I remember when I was 6 years old we moved to a house on the Elgin Wilcox farm. I do not remember the name of the school. We had a garden between the house and road. I remember riding home from school on the running board of a car and jumping off as it was coming to a stop. I went rolling into the ditch along side of the road.

I remember Dad was making moonshine for Uncle Albert Clark. I also remember Dad quit smoking cigarettes and never started again (he lived to be 92).

I remember the presidential campaign. Herbert Hoover was the Republican candidate. Hoover, Hoover he's our man put Al Smith in a tobacco can.

Katherine was going to McGuffey to school. Dad had to help Uncle Elmer Patterson out in his pool hall. Uncle Elmer would go off on a drinking binge and stay for days.

1928

I remember when I was 7 years old we moved to a house on the marsh on the Ike Wilcox farm in Ohio. My brother Robert was born. I had the flu. I was very sick. I was out of my head. Mom told me I was trying to fight her.

Dad and Uncle Carl Clark was drinking in McGuffey Ohio, they were fighting with some Kentucky hillbillies. Uncle Carl was cut with a knife in the face. He could squirt water through a hole in his lower lip.

I remember Dad shooting killdeer across the road from our house. Also he would shoot red tail hawks from the straw stack in the field by our house.

I remember the day we got our smallpox vaccination. Mary Ellen went to school with us to get her vaccination. On the way home from school I took Mary with me to see a ditching machine at work. It was not a direct way home from school. When we got home way after the other kids Mom was waiting with a switch, so I just went up to her and turned around for her to whip me. It was not much of a whipping.

I remember them clipping the horse's manes. One horse jumped and was cut in the neck with the shears. They went up in the haymow and gathered cobwebs to stuff in the cut to stop the bleeding.

Ike Wilcox had coon dogs. He fed them cracklins. We kids would also eat them.

We farmed onions that summer. We also worked in the onion field for Loy Bowers. I made one dollar a day (10 hrs).

1929 – 1930

I remember when I was 8 years old. We lived in Michigan on the marsh on the Driggs farm. I do not remember going to school from there that spring. We moved to a tar paper shack on the Randall Farm. We planted a late crop of onions, carrots and cabbage. The onions did not bole good. They pulled the onions that did not bole and peddled them for green onions. A grocer named Fay Van Ness held a mortgage on the crop for our grocery bill. When the crop was harvested Fay Van Ness took the crop and stored it in a crib (it was wasted).

I remember when we were looking at the Randall Farm. It was windy. Kenneth was four. The wind blew his hat off and was blowing it towards the ditch, he hollered!
“Don’t blow in the ditch you son of a \$%\$#!”

We laughed a lot about that.

I remember a creek across the road that we played in, we had to climb a farmer’s fence to get the best swimming hole. He would chase us out. I remember I made a boat from a sheet of roofing tin. It would sink with two kids in it.

We moved to a house on the Riser Farm. I was 9 years old that fall. We went to school at the Lancaster school on US 112 between Clinton and Saline. We were very poor. The neighbors helped us out a lot with food, clothing and a sheep to eat. In the spring we helped clear some land towards Saline from where we lived. We farmed onions on that ground. We gathered tamarack from that ground to burn as firewood, cut it with a cross cut saw; me on one end and Dad on the other. My sister Katherine (17) started dating Roy Randall. My Uncle Jack Clark got out of prison at Milan Michigan and came to visit us. He was 17.

That fall we moved back to Ohio at Benton Ridge.

1931

I remember when I was 10 we lived near Benton Ridge. Went to school there. We farmed onions on the Aldrige farm we lived on. I rode and drove a large draft horse while Dad run the cultivator.

My sister Catherine was married.

I remember a lizard by the well pit. I hit it with a stick and broke its tail off. Later I saw it come back and get its tail.

My cousins and I got into Uncle Charlie’s chewing tobacco. I got very sick.

Our baby brother Robert had pneumonia. He was real sick.

We had sores called infantigo. We had to take cod liver oil.

Dad tried to catch a skunk. Got stunk up real bad.

In 1931 there were a lot of pheasants. We ate pheasant eggs, they were easy to find. The pheasants were so numerous the farmer paid Dad to destroy their nests. He would stomp them with his boots. I remember riding on a wagon with Dad. He would spear pheasants with a pitch fork from the wagon. They were so thick they would pull newly planted corn and eat it.

I remember walking with Dad on a Railroad track to a store at a place called Moffit Station.

We moved to a farm near the Blanchard River. Its banks were covered with oil from the refineries in Findlay. I remember looking for arrow heads on that farm after a rain.

I remember we would gather and can dandelion greens, dock and mustard. There was a storm with large hail. Dad went outside and held a comforter up by the picture window to keep it from being broke. We went to work on the marsh that summer. We stayed in the same tar paper shack that Uncle Charlie's girls stayed in. I was 11 that fall.

1932 - 1934

I remember when I was 11 we moved to a tar paper shack on a farm called Johnny Sorgham, farmed onions. Dad worked for a farmer on the upland called the Stoddard Farm. He made one dollar a day.

That fall we started school at Nigger Island. I was in the 4th grade. I remember trapping for muskrats in a drainage ditch. When I would get one it would be worth as much as a day's wages for Dad.

We moved up the road to a house on the upland called Lodia Wooley Farm. We still went to Nigger Island School. We got relief from the NRA. Food, clothes and a cow. Dad went to work on the WPA.

We boys would play in the woods. Ethyl Fay was born there that fall. We went to the red school. We bought a crooked nose sow for one dollar. She had six pigs. Before our cow freshened we would get skim milk from the farmer that farmed the Lodia Wooley farm. That fall Dad made a shelter for our cow from fence wire stuffed with straw. There was a ridge ran through the farm called the devil's backbone.

We made maple syrup and sugar two different springs. Dad put up new fences on that farm. We cleared a swale for a garden. It grew a real good garden. The farmer got part of the produce. We would load a two wheel cart and take it to him.

Our dog was named Sport. He would kill ground hogs. I remember burying a ground hog skin in the ash pile. Later when I dug it out it was clean. The hair was off. I oiled it and it made good leather. I cut it into shoe laces for my boots. Uncle Elmer's boys Chuck and Bob came to stay with us that summer.

1935 – Yelverton, Belle Center

1936 – Yelverton, Belle Center: Shaw and Kenton, worked for Will Cook, Shaw @ Round Head – worked farm and drove tractor

1937 – Timmerman, Round Head: Farmed Onions, broke arm

1938 – Rahal, worked for Johnson, drove tractor

1939 – Michigan, lived with Katherine and Roy, worked at woolen mill.

1940 – Got married, worked at mill. Lived on Blaisdale.

1941 – Registered for Draft. Lived at Evan's Lake, worked at mill.

1942 – Worked at mill, bought house trailer

1943 – Went in the Army, got divorced

1944 – Out of Army (*I have to add that my Dad was honorably discharged from the army with a Purple Heart which was earned when he was wounded in the action just leading up to the Battle of the Bulge.*)

1945 – Met Mary Jane

1947 – Got married to Mary Jane

My Dad was an amazing guy, and this is just a bit of his story.

Thanks for reading.

Harold Marion Patterson Jr.

November, 2011