Frances Inman, #302 Parkview Apts, 820 4th St, Havre--interview 12 July '82

16--father homesteaded near Fresno (MT), mother unhappy about it. Lost homestead.

39--1 yr college in S Dak to qualify to teach school.

58--Havre district didn't want to take care of rural schools; gave her school cast-off books, had to fight for broom and dust pan, ld of coal

90--started school yr early, with her sister; grad'd at 16. Was teaching at 18 or so.

99--factions in school: Swedes and Slavs (?). They'd fight, she'd "get right in the middle of them and pull them apart." 116--began letting one faction out for recess at a time.

130--Inmans bought a relinquishment. Came to her family's place for Sunday dinner, kids of the 2 families began pairing off. Ready to leave, Burt's mother told him he'd better kiss his little girl friend goodbye, Frances hid within --wrapped in--her mother's skirts.

Frances Inman/2

179--bought a house in Fresno, moved it to farm; house slipped partly off during move, they were out of luck for the night.

190--family she was staying with as teacher wanted to go to Calif., leave a hired man; "wouldn't have been proper" for her to be there alone with hired man--"they would have canned the teacher if that had happened"--so they talked Burt and her into getting married and living there.

198--B's parents' house burned just before wedding: he had to buy 2 wedding rings, 2 marriage licenses, 2 suits...

205--B "had an awful time" getting job on Fresno dam; he stopped crews from driving heavy eqpmt thru their yard, unless he got a job.

225--constcn town at dam

246--B went with contractors to build road in NDak; she took care of field work; went out in '29 Dodge, fueled up tractor, ran it.

tiny
275--grasshoppers appeared in furrows. She had to get eqpmt for poison spreader: Model T chassis, 55-gal barrel. Also had to care for her 2-yr-old son. Friend got poison for her at fairgrounds; long lines waiting.

→ 308--She spread the poison, pulling in soft grnd with '29 Dodge sedan. Hoppers wd eat each other. Car got hot with the load.

--She added afterwards: while farming, put her 2-yr-old in car at field edge, checked him each round.

June 3, 1983

Frances Swan
Parkview apts #302
Havre 59501

Dear Ivan,

I was surprised and happy to hear from you. I'm glad your book is coming along O.K. When you get it published, I hope I can find a copy. I have forgotten the title of it, but I suppose Dean Vaupel knows..

When I was driving the tractor, I wore blue jeans.. At that time they were called bibless overalls. I very seldom wore a dress, in the daytime, unless I was sent to town for repairs or groceries. When Bert got home from work, he went to the field and I had chores to do, milk cows, care for the chickens, pigs, etc. I wore a scarf on my head and if the sun was shining too hot, I put on an old straw hat over the scarf.. I probably looked funny, b ut there was no one there to see me. If anyone came to the field, they could take me as I was. You see Bert and I did all the work by ourselves.. We couldn't afford a hired man.

While I was driving the tractor, John stayed in the car.. He had toys to play with and I stopped every round.. Sometimes, he took a nap. He was used to playing alone and was a good boy. When I look back on those days, it seems impossible, but one had to do what one had to do, to get the work done.. John was a good boy and big for his age, and always semmed so grown up.

The first school I taught, as I said, was in the Havre District. There was where I had a hard time getting books, as they were partial to the city schools. I had so many students and it was my first school, I didn't have any extra time to read to pupils.. However, this school was closed at Christmas time.. The children were bussed to Havre. As I had a contract, the District had to give me another school.. The only one available was 45 miles north of Havre on the Canadian Line.. There I had only five pupils and more time.. This was a summer school which started in January and ran thru July.. Here I usually read ½ hour to the pupils in the afternoon before they were excused to go home. I read such books as Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer, Little Women, and stories about the Alger Boys.. I just stayed there one year.. They wanted me to come back but there were not enough kids to make it interesting. The next school was four miles from my home. There I had all eight grades. There were several big boys, bigger than I was and almost as old.. There was a group of Scandinavian descent and a group of Russian and Czechoslavakians. The families spoke Russian at home, so when I spoke to the younger ones in English, they answered me in Russian.. They didn't know why I couldn't understand them.. The big boys would fight during recess, and often I would have to get in the middle of it and pull them apart. I finally ended up by keeping one group in at the first recess and the other group in at the last recess.. Each group got a half hour at noon to eat their lunch.. I rode horseback from home to school which got pretty bad in the winter.. I was pretty cold by the time I got my horse put away, built a fire in the old potbellied stove, and got things ready for school to start. Most schools had barns to keep the horses in, as many of the kids had to ride or drive to school.. Needless to say I stayed there just one year. Then my next school, was 15 miles northwest of Havre on the Wildhorse Trail.. Here I had between twelve and twenty students.. I stayed here five years.. Then I got married.. Sometimes, I read short stories to them, but again, it depended on the extra time I had. Sometimes, I would let some of the older pupils do the reading to give them practice..

I'm sorry I didn't get this in the mail sooner.. I've been busy.. I took two courses at the Senior Center, one in oil painting and one in Montana History.. I am enclosing a copy of the article I wrote for the History class.. Thought you might be interested.. If there is nothing you can use, discard it.. I also enclose a copy of a theme I wrote when I first went to college..

I'm sorry I'm so late in answering your letter.. I've been busy with graduations.. Just had a grandson graduate from Highschool and another from Junior High.. Now, I'm getting ready to go to Missoula, where a granddaughter is getting her degree..

Haven't had much time to get much done on the story of my life, but have written a few articles, which someday I hope to use..

I read "The House of Sky" and really enjoyed it.. Best of luck on your new book.

Sincerely,

Frances

Dear Frances-- 17 June '83

This is just a quick line, as we're trying to get the car packed to head for Montana in the morning. But I did want to thank you, both for the letter and the two articles. It's really very good material, and I hope you'll keep on with your courses and your writing.

It's doubtful that I'll make it as far as Havre this summer--I'm mostly going to be around Helena, using the Historical Society library. So, this is to wish you a good summer, and thank you once more for the help you've provided. I'll be in touch if any questions occur to me, or if I come across something which might be of interest to you.

very best

I wrote this as a theme, in my first year at College.. Thought you would like to read it.. You have to excuse my typing, as I had only one year in my Freshman year in Hi-School, and I make lots of mistakes..

MY AUTOBIGRAPHY

I was born in Britt, Iowa, December 2, 1908. My arrival can best be expressed by quoting from a letter which I received from my mother on my eighteenth birthday. She said "If you receive this on your birthday, which I hope you will, it will be just eighteen years ago tonight at , twelve o'clock since they tucked a little bundle of bawling humanity under the "kivers" with me and told me it was a brand new girl. Upon investigating, I found "it" had a very red face, a stub nose, and an abundance of dark hair which noone thought of calling red until about a year later. No one but "its" mother would ever have dreamed of calling "it" handsome, but it suited me fine and always has. To be exact you were born at 12:05, but the nurse declared the clock was fast and turned it back six minutes so you and your father could have your birthdays together. You had one admirer from the first, andthat was your sister, Evelyn. She wasn't quite two years old and had a new doll buggy that she wouldn't let any of the others touch. On this memorable night, she was called in to take a look at her baby sister. You must have suited her fine, for she marched over and got her buggy and told the nurse to put you in. There she insisted on your staying."

About this time the land in Montana was opened up for homesteading. Three years after my birth, my parents decided to move out and take up a homestead. My father went out first and built the house. About three months later, my mother followed with my two sisters and me. We landed in Havre, Montana at 10:30 A.M., on a bright spring morning. My father met us at the station with a light spring wagon and a team of mules. There was a spring seat in the front. Behind this there was just room for our baggage. Father and Mother were in the seat with me sitting on Mother's lap. My two sisters sat on the trunk in the back. Thus we started out for our new home on the prairie, fifteen

miles from town.. Little did we suspect the experiences we were to have before night..

Mules are noted for their peculiar habits, and our mules, Jack and Jenny", were no exception.. We turned a corner, and directly in front of was a train.. Jack snorted, and off across the prairie he went with Jenny following(I forget to mention that at this time there no fences).. We were headed toward home, and all had gone well, we would soon have been there.. But, Alas! one trace broke. Immediately, the wagon tongue dropped and ran into the ground.. The wagon capsized.. We were all pretty badly shaken up, when the wagon tipped over. In due time, we got things ready and started again.. When we were five miles from home, the mules started running away again.. We let them run because they were headed toward home.. By the time we reached home, our opinion of Montana had lowered considerably.

Our first few years in Montana were prosperous ones, although we lacked many of our former conveniences.. My sister and I amused ourselves by playing with the farm animals.. Our favorite sport was driving calves. We each had a team, and by ransacking old rubbage piles and finding pieces of broken harness and ropes, we succeeded in making a harness for each calf.. When these calves were hitched to our sleds, we found they made excellent substitutes for driving horses. Other children may have thought us queer, but Evelyn and I were contented..

In 1916, the post office at Fresno was established.. This was only one half mile from our ranch.. Soon after, a store, a cafe, a saloon, an elevator, a lumber yard, and a few resident houses were constructed.. In 1920, a two-story High School was built.

In 1917, my father bought us an old Indian pony, which we named Penny, because of the many small red spots on his back.. After that we were always

Known as "the two Thomas Kids". We were never seen without Penny, and Penny was never seen without us. At almost any time of day, Penny could be seen hopping across the prairie at a rickety sort of gallop with Evelyn sitting in the saddle and me sitting behind, hanging on for dear life. My two braids were always bobbing up and down, keeping time to the horses hops. Penny took us to school, he took us after the mail, he took us after the cows; he even took us to Sunday School.

Then came the hard years. The drowth killed most of the grain. What little was left from the drowth, was eaten by the cutworms and grasshoppers. Every year added more bad luck. Hard times increased. The War made prices soar so high that it was almost impossible to live. Somehow, we managed to live through it.

All this time, I had been attending a country school. In 1921, I graduated from the eighth grade. The following fall, I started in the Fresno High School. I went here for two years. My last two years were spent at the Havre High School. I graduated from this school in 1926, being at the head of a class of seventy three students. Now, I am attending school at the Northern State Teacher's College at Aberdeen, South Dakota.

Although, I am having a wonderful time now, I shall always consider the days I spent on the prairie in Montana to be the happiest days of my life.

Written by Frances Thomas Inman

Cattle/Homesteader (Puncher and Plow)

As is true in any undeveloped country, the first pioneers came to Montana as trappers, fur traders, gold seekers, and adventurers. The trappers and fur traders were accustomed to eating wild game. With the coming of the prospectors and miners, the demand for meat grew, as the population grew, and the buffalo herds diminished.

Nelson Story had the first Texas Trail Drive in 1866, when he brought to Montana 600 head of Longhorns. Within a decade they were joined by other trail herds. There was a steady stream of Longhorns pouring onto the northern ranges from Texas. By 1880, there was an estimated count of 275,000 cattle in Montana Territory. In 1883, the U.S.Department of Agriculture estimated that there were 600,000 cattle on the range.

Like the mining business, the cattle business required capital, thus the big cattle companies were formed.

In 1885, a bad winter to the south had forced some 200,000 more cattle northward to better ranges. The ranges were crowded with cattle. The summer of 1886 was hot and dry. There were a good many range fires. The price of cattle had dropped, so most Montana cattlemen held off Eastern Shipment, waiting a fair price. The fall rains did not come and the grass was thin. Then in November, the storms came howling from the North. The winter was bitter and the snow was deep. By March, when the chinook winds came, a large share of the cattle had died. One cattle company, which began the winter with 27,000 head, had 250 left by spring. It was this bad winter that prompted Charles M. Russell to paint his famous "Waiting for a Chinook."

A new and different kind of cattle industry arose from these ruins. The days of the open range were gone. The ranchers bred up their herds so they had better stock. The railroads had put an end to the long cattle drives, and barbed wire fences forced the rancher to be more self-contained.

The railroads, through consistent campaigns had brought in the "Sod Buster". The Homestead Act of 1862, provided that a man could have 160 acres of land for a $10.00 filing fee, provided he took 5 years to "Prove Up" on his land. But this Act was conceived by Legislators from a humid region, so the Homestead Act was amended throughout the years. Finally, in 1909, the Enlarged Homestead Act was passed. It expanded the acres from 160 to 320 acres. In 1912, they reduced the time necessary to "Prove Up" from 5 years to 3 years and permitted 5 months absence from a claim each year.

Through the advertising of James J. Hill and the Great Northern Railroad, my father, Frank Thomas, decided he would try his hand at homesteading in Montana. This was a mistake as he had little knowledge of farming. He had run a dray line in Britt, Iowa, where we lived. My mother had lived in town all her life and knew nothing of the hardships of country living. They had a sale and sold all their possessions, that they weren't taking to Montana. In March 1911, my father loaded the furniture, a few horses, two mules, a couple of cows and hay to feed the animals, into a box car. This car was called an Imigrant Car and was furnished free by the Great Northern Railroad. At each division point, the animals were unloaded so they could get water.

My mother , my two sisters, Evelyn and Bessie, and I were to stay in Britt with relatives until my father built a homestead shack and got ready to send for the family. My father had two brothers, Charlie and Oscar Thomas, who had come to Montana in 1910. They

had homesteaded south of Fresno, so my Dad stayed with tham until he got the house built. This was 3/4 mile southeast of Fresno.

In March 1912, he sent back to Iowa for his family. We arrived in Havre, shortly, and were soon in our new home on the prairie. Life on the prairie was hard. Wood was scarce. My Dad hauled old railroad ties. They could not be sawed because of the dirt and the gravel in them. Chopping with an axe was hard, but we managed to keep the wood box full. On the days my mother baked bread and ironed clothes, we were sent to the railroad tracks to gather lumps of coal that had fallen off the coal cars. Sometimes we gathered "cow chips" for supplemental fuel. For winter fuel, my Dad hauled coal from a coal mine at the west side of Havre on old Hiway 2, then called the "Roosevelt Highway".

Water was scarce. My Dad dug several wells by hand but they all turned out dry, so he dug a cistern and lined it with cement. The Great Northern built resevoirs along the tracks to supply water for water tanks, which were on trestles. They had spouts that filled the coal burning engines. There was one big resevoir at Burnham with a pumping station. There was also one, 1 mile east of Fresno. These resevoirs were a boon to homesteaders as water was hauled from them to fill the cisterns. Sometimes the resevoir would go dry. Then, water was hauled from Milk River. For drinking water, Evelyn and I hauled water from a neighbor's place with a horse and buggy. We filled a 10 gallon can, took it home, and put it in the cave to keep it cool. Most of the homesteaders had caves for storm cellars because of the tornados they were used to in the east. Many times, a storm would come up in the night, my mother would wake us up, we'd grab a blanket and down in the cave we would go. We'd have a time getting to sleep, with the musty smell of the cave, and the odor

of potatoes, carrots, etc. Just as we would get to sleep, the storm would blow over and back in the house we would go.
In, 1917, my father bought us an old Indian pony, which we called Penny because of the red spots on his rump. Now, he would have been an Appaloosa. After that, we were never seen without Penny and Penny was never seen without us. At almost any time of day, Penny could be seen hopping across the prairie at a rickety sort of gallop with Evelyn sitting in the saddle and me sitting behind, hanging on for dear life, my two braids bobbing up and down, keeping time to Penny's hops. Penny took us to school; he took us after the mail; he took us after the cows; he even took us to Sunday School.

The years 1916-1917 were good years. We had good crops. Then in 1918, the drouth came. In 1919, day after day, it was clear and hot. To the ravages of drought, there now came the danger of fire. Then came the hail storms, grasshoppers and cutworms. There had been a homesteader's shack on almost every half section of land. In 1919, there were some three thousand destitute farmers. Then the great exodus began. On the railroads that brought them, they departed by the hundreds, only this time many of them rode the rods.

It was in 1920, that the winds were the worst. There was no grass to hold the soil. The plow had destroyed it. Now, most of the top soil blew away. The tumble weeds piled up against the fences and tore them down.

Finally, my Dad had to go through Bankruptcy. That was one of the saddest times of my life, to stand and watch all our favorite animals being sold at the auction. At least, they didn't sell Penny, for he had died of old age, a few years before.

I will tell you a little about the old town of Fresno. It was a small town, 15 miles west of Havre. In 1916, the population was estimated at 75. There was a post office, a general store, a hardware store, a harness shop, a lumberyard, a livery stable, a large implement house, two cafes, a real estate office, a hotel and saloon, two churches, a good school, a dance hall called "Dreamland", a newspaper called the "Fresno Centenial", and a bank. At that time this bank was the smallest national bank in the U.S. There ~~there~~ was a depot with a depot agent. The "Skidoo" left Havre in the morning, went to Shelby, and came back in the evening. Many a time, the cowboys would come riding by our place in the P.M., leave their horses in our barn, and take the train to Havre; My Dad would take care of their horses until they got back. The one I remember most was Howard Kidman. He had a big Roman Nose. He had a black shiny horse, branded V-D. Our brand was V-T. There was a lot of horse rustling and my sis and I were afraid he would steal our horses and change the brand. Then there was Andy Avry. We called him the "Happy Man" because he loved kids, and always stopped on his way by to talk to us. My Dad was friends with the cowboys, Jack Edwards, Ray Ellis, Clayton Jolly, Ray Noble, and "Long" George" Francis, and many others. Marie Dumont (Buckskin Mary) later married to Tom Gibson, lived on Milk River, just north of us, with her three children. She rode in the rodeos in the summer. At one time she rode in Madison Square Garden. She even performed in London.

Our life on the homestead was hard but we did have some good times. Evelyn and I amused ourselves by playing with the farm animals. Our favorite sport was driving calves. We made makeshift harnesses out of scraps and hitched them to our sleds.

Neighbors took turns entertaining. Often, on Saturday night, we would hear wagons and buggies pull into our yard. We'd move the furniture out of one room.

We had a piano and some would bring guitars and violins. We would have a dance. The women all brougt food for midnight lunch. Often we danced 'til daylight. Sometimes they stayed for breakfast.

I often think of the hardships, counting every drop of water, the baths on Saturday night by the kitchen stove, washing clothes on the washboard and saving the water to scrub the wooden kitchen floor. I remember the cold winters, when we girls carried heated flat irons to bed to keep our feet warm. In the morning, oftentimes, the snow would be drifted in on the bed, as we slept in an unfinished attic. There was a stove pipe running from the living room stove, up through the attic floor. This was connected with the brick chimney. In the morning, we hurried to get dressed by the heat of this stove pipe. I remember how we bundled up at night to go to the outhouse before going to bed. We didn't tarry long. I remember the good smells of home baked goods that my mother baked, days before the threshers arrived in the fall, and how exciting to see the big steam engine pulling the t hreshing machine into the yard. Sometimes, they were there for several days. We would watch the teams of horses with the hayracks hauling the bundles of grain to be pitched into the machine, and watching the grain pour out the spout into the grain wagon. After the threshers left, there was the big straw pile with its fluffy straw-a temptation to play in, but that was a no-no.

Maybe, they were the "Good Old Days", but weighing the good against the bad, modern day living seems pretty good to me.

Some of this material came from:

Montana, An uncommon Land by K. Ross Toole

Grit, Guts, and Gusto--A History of Montana--Published by the Hill County Bicentennial Committee

The Story of my Life, Simple as it has Been--by Del Trulson

May 27, '83

Dear Frances--

You may recall that I came by and talked to you last summer, for the sake of a novel I'm writing about Montana during the Depression. The book is coming along okay. I'm at a point now where I'm going back over last summer's interviews, and there are a few details I wonder if you could help me with, for accuracy's sake.

--While your husband was away on the contracting job and you were doing the field work, the plowing and so on: do you remember what kind of clothes you wore, driving the tractor and pulling the grasshopper-poison spreader and so on? Slacks, bib overalls, or simply a dress? (I ask because I remember my grandmother telling me, of when she worked in the hay field, that she wore bib overalls--but whenever she saw someone coming to visit, she scooted to the house and put on a dress!) What about wearing anything on your head--a kerchief, a hat, anything?

--In your rural-school teaching days: you mentioned that the Havre district provided you with cast-off books, and the like. Do you remember having any kind of reading session for your students--simply reading to them all, the combined grades, for "pleasure" a certain time each day? (Some rural-school teachers tell me they did this, others didn't; a friend of mine who teaches at a Hutterite colony says she still does it.) If you did so, can you remember any of the books you read aloud? Little House on the Prairie, anything like that?

--One final thing: you described to me having to take your two-year-old son to the field with you, and checking on him as you made each round of plowing or whatever. I think that's a wonderful story, of what a person can do when she has to. I don't, though, know a thing about the behavior of a two-year-old. Did he have toys or playthings to entertain himself--or talk to himself, at that age? I'm just searching for any detail of what you would find him doing, when you looked in on him after your round on the tractor.

These may sound like unusual questions, but I'm trying hard to give the details of life during the Depression. I do want to stress to you, again, that my book will be fiction, set in the Dupuyer country, so there'll be no identification of you in anything you tell me. I hope you're thriving--people tell me it was an open winter.

very best

Ivan

FRANCES INMAN
820 4TH ST #302
HAVRE MT 59501

June 18, 1985

Dear Ivan,

Hope this finds you and your family well,

I was sorting out some old material and found some letters I had written to Bert the year he was working in North Dakota and the grasshoppers were so bad. I wrote to him almost every day, as we had no phones at that time and he wanted to know how I was getting along. I typed parts of these letters--the parts I thought you would be interested in.. I realize that the material I gave you before isn't exactly like what is in these letters, but it was so long ago that I had forgotten.

Sincerely,

Frances L.

6 Aug. '85

Dear Frances--

I was in Montana--Helena mostly--when your packet of letter excerpts was mailed, and I've been deep in manuscript work since. So, this finally is the clear spot I've been looking for, to thank you as you deserve for that material.

Frances, it's really quite wonderful. Your letters give a picture of that time in a way that memory nor anything else really can. I hope you're continuing with some writing of your own about that period of your life. As for me, I'm delighted to have the excerpts as source material. I'm not sure when and where they'll get used, yet, but I'll check with you whenever that all comes clearer to me.

In the meantime, I'm whacking away at the homesteader novel. It turns out to be a large batch of work, but I guess that shouldn't surprise me. Carol and I were in Montana for about 3 weeks, so we saw a bit of the drought--terrific, isn't it. Far and away the driest I've ever seen that country.

Thanks greatly for staying in touch, and for typing the excerpts. I do hope that even if Montana isn't thriving, you are.

all best,

"The Year Of The Grasshoppers"
1940

Bert left, April 13, for North Dakota to work for the O'Neill's. They were working on Hiway 2, near Stanley, N. Dak.

April 20

I'm having trouble with the starter on the Old Dodge. Have to crank it.

April 22

Had a hard day today. Waited in town all day, to get the brakes fixed on the car. I had no one to help take care of Johnnie. Had to pick up the baby chicks and it was cold and raining hard. I was surely a wreck. As I got almost home, I saw a John Deere tractor going up the side road. I was scared when I got home and saw our tractor was gone. I went after it. I was surely mad. I was going to have the driver arrested, but then, Harold Blair came and explained. He said they had tipped over a Company Pickup and needed a tractor. I let him take it, but I still think it was a lot of nerve. Then, when I got home, the rain had run down the chimney and put the fire out in the brooder house. Here I was with the baby chicks so had to take care of that.

April 29

Still trying to get in the field, but too wet. Charles Schend is helping me. Norman Odden fixed the starter on the car. Cost me $2.00. I had another bad day yesterday. I have a bad cold. Your folks came here for dinner. They were here, when the Company Pickup(O'Neill's) came with Babe and Harold. They drove right out to the tractor. I went out to see what was going on. Babe said they wanted to take the tractor down to Fresno, to start two Euchlid's that they had sold. I said "no", but Babe said they would guarantee not to harm it and would pay me for the use of it. Babe finally talked me into it. Babe had to go to Fresno to get some gas. While he was gone, Harold was trying to adjust the clutch.

I blew up and told him, if they were going to use the tractor to leave his hands off things. Then your Dad came out. You know how I feel about him and his work around tractors. He was poking around in the magneto. I told him to get out of there and stay out. I told Babe, if he wanted that tractor to quit messing with things. Babe said they'd better go. Babe said they had sold the Euchlid's and he was going to Stanley. If Harold goes along, bet you'll not be able to live with him. You can always come home..

April 30

Didn't get in the field yet--still too muddy. Broke an axle on the old Dodge. Couldn't get one at the wrecking yards. They want $6.75 for a new one in Havre so ordered from Montgomery Ward for $1.98. Moisture got in the granary. Some of the wheat in the middle was sprouting. Must have gotten damp when the cover blew off. Charlie sacked up the sprouted wheat. Johnnie keeps pestering me--wants to see his Daddy.

May 2

Charlie started to seed yesterday P.M. I worked in the garden today. Put straw on the old garage floor so the baby chicks could go in there.

May 5

Charlie finished seeding the Banks today. Just got the outfit home and it started to rain. Poured rain from 4:30--kept it up all night.

May 6

Couldn't get the car started this morning. Changed batteries. Finally discovered it was the positive battery connection. Stuck a nail in it to fasten it tight. Now, it works fine. Some Mechanic, eh!

May 7

Another big rain last night. Water standing all over.. A little hail.

May 9

Started seeding again. I spent the weekend in Stanley. Johnnie and I went on the train.

May 21

Wheat is up nice and green.

May 24

Grasshoppers are getting thick. They are down in the furrows eating the wheat as it comes up. They are giving away poison at the fairgrounds. I guess it is compulsory to poison. Since the hoppers are all over the field and you are supposed to put on 20 lbs. to the acre, it would take quite a while to do it by hand. Most everyone makes a spreader out of old Model T car axles and a barrel. I looked around town. They want $15.00 for making one and I have to furnish the axle, wheels, angle iron, and barrel. There isn't a Model T car axle in town. Guess the hoppers have cleaned one field. They haven't hit The Banks yet.

May 25

The grasshopper situation hasn't changed much. They are hauling poison out by the truckload. They don't even sack it any more unless you want it that way. They have three shifts of WPA workers loading out poison at the Fairgrounds. They have to turn people away. Hav en't got a spreader yet.. I can get a Model T rear end at Herig's for $5.00. Seems a lot of money.. I'm going to get someone to haul a little poison Monday. Will try to spread it by hand. We have to go through the motions, as it is compulsory.

Just learned that Viola was married to Herbert (someone). Bert wants me to send another old hen. I try to send one every week with some homemade noodles, also try to bake a cake or some homemade fudge..

May 27

Went to look at the grasshopper situation. They are only on the Major Walker place. They've eaten every spear there. That should be poisoned or they'll move somewhere else. Charlie is bringing out a load of poison this morning.

15 sacks is all he could get. We can only poison a couple hours in the morning while it is cool.

May 28

I'm so tired I can hardly write. Charlie and I went out and poisoned grasshoppers this morning. We had only 10 sacks and we put it all on. They have 30 or 40 trucks lined up all the time in there. It is almost impossible to get poison. Charlie and Anthony went in with their truck and got a load for Schend's and us. The hoppers are moving this morning into a strip of sod between two fields. We poisoned them and the east end of the Crested Wheat Grass. I drove the old Dodge and Charlie rode the hood with a tub of poison. He used a fire shovel to throw it out. Pretty Slow! Think I'll have a spreader made and I can do it myself. I went to Ray Parent's this P.M. They had a Model T rear end and wheels that they gave me (no rims or tires). I tried to get them to make it for me, but they were too busy. They have lots of hoppers over there. The ground just moves with them, even on the road. I guess Jay Pasma has lost 60 or 70 acres of wheat already. Stopped at Schoeborn's on the way home and they gave me a couple of rims for the wheels, so now, all I have to rustle are the tires, tubes, barrel, and angle iron. I worked all the rest of the day trying to get some angle iron off that old disc but I guess I'll have to wait for Charlie. I have my hands so crippled up I can hardly write. Charlie and Anthony left this morning at 8:30 for a load of poison and they aren't back yet. It is after 5:00, now.

May 29

Took the rear end to town today to have the spreader made. When I got it from Ray, it was all in pieces and rather than pay Charlie to put it together, I took it like it was to Herig's. He said he would furnish all the rest of the material and make it for $20.00. It will be ready tomorrow.

night. Haven't been able to get any more poison so won't be able to poison in the morning. They can't get sawdust fast enough to supply the demand. They are getting two carloads in tonight, so Charlie and Anthony are going in their truck in the morning early to see if they can get some. Think I'll keep Charlie until we run the spreader one morning. Then, maybe, I can do it myself. If the old Dodge gets too hard to start (it has to be cranked). maybe I'll have to use the good car.

May 31

I went in after the spreader and they hadn't started on it. They had one made according to government specifications for sale for $35.00 without the tires. They put the tires on it and sold it to me for $25.00. The hoppers are moving in on the Banks by droves. They are coming from Uncle Charlie's wheat stubble. We poisoned with the spreader this mornining and it surely works swell. We put 15 sacks on the first strip on the west. That is the only one they are bothering, yet. I'm going out tonight to see if it did any good. We ran out of poison and they have no more in town. We had to quit until they get some more. Can you see why I'm disgusted? But then, I'll probably feel better tomorrow.

June 3

Rained. Roads muddy. If it wasn't for the grasshoppers. it would look like a good country--but Oh Boy!. The grasshoppers are so thick, I don't think there is much chance of saving anything. We are putting out poison when we can get it. I guess Del Trulson wrote and told you about Ray Noble and Jimmie Melville drowning at Lake Fresno. He said he told you all the details. Ray's son had a sale, and sold off all of Ray's possessions. I went down but it rained so I came home early. Eggs are down to 10¢ a dozen. They say Gt. Falls pays 6¢ and they don't even want to buy them.

Our feed is getting short, so decided to can a few old hens. I'm going to kill some and pick them tonight and can them in the morning. Can't afford to buy feed at that price. I plan to keep a couple dozen hens to have eggs for ourselves and one to eat, now and then. I sent you a chicken for your Sunday dinner--also baked you a cake.

June 5

Another big rain last night. Wet and Muddy. Wheat looks pretty. If it keeps up much longer, the grasshoppers will eat only the leaves and we may get something. They are as thick as ever. I had company this morning. Your Dad came to see about using the poison spreader.. When I was chasing around the country looking for Model T parts, he didn't volunteered some of the old ones he has. Now, since I have this one and he sees us getting along so fast, he wants to help me and in return, I should help him and use my spreader. We can poison all we have to poison in three hours. If I get Charlie every other day or so, I would rather do that. Otherwise, I'd be over there practically every day. These tires don't amount to much. We'll be lucky if they last us, besides lending it to a neighbor. I told him about the tires and I hated to let it go. He went out and looked at it, then left, without coming back to the house. I know one tire is flat. It always is in the morning, but I pump it up and it lasts until I get through. It goes down again after it stands awhile. It is hard on things bouncing over the fields at 15 miles an hour. One piece of welding has broken already, but Charlie welded it. Let me know what you think.

June 6

My Dad came. We took the trailer in and each got 15 sacks of poison. Such a madhouse at the fairgrounds. We waited from 10:30 until 5:00 PM. Charlie and Anthony had gone in the night before at 5:00 PM and got their

load at 9:00 the next morning. They just let each person have 15 sacks. The hoppers haven't done much damage the last week--too cold and rainy. If we can hold off a week or two, we may have a chance. Poisoned the west strip on the Banks and made a round on the north end of all the strips next to the Hi-way. They haven't touched two strips yet. Poisoned east of the house and made a couple rounds on the south side of the Crested Wheat. That's all I intend to poison until I get another supply of poison. Have enough left to go over the same ground once more. Takes about three hours to go over that much ground. I think Major Walker's place is gone.. The Highway is one solid mass of grasshoppers, moving out of Uncle Charlie's stubble field. Friers are about ready to eat. Canned some more old hens..

June 9

Had a nice rain yesterday. Drove around the fields this PM. The grasshoppers are thick on the 10 acres next the house and in the west strip on the Banks, a few on the ends of the north and south of the middle strip but none on the east. Will poison tomorrow if it doesn't rain. The Highway and the road to the Dam are covered with hoppers. They are moving North. They seem to be moving out of the wheat fields into the garden and to the North. They aren't eating much today--too cold. The grain furrows are full of dead hoppers. They say that the live ones eat the dead ones and are poisoned. For each dead one, I think there are a million live ones. They are growing so someday, I hope, they'll grow wings and fly away.

June 10

Poisoned all morning. Put out 24 sacks. Still looks hopeless. Last night the hoppers made the 10 acres by the house look sick. The State had five spreaders working this morning on the Hiway and the Section lines. The County Agent stopped this morning. He seems to think I have done a good job of poisoning. If they wouldn't keep moving in on me, I might

have a chance. Charlie is going to haul a load of poison this PM: They h ave gotten 17 carloads of sawdust in, in the last two nights. The County Agent said there was the heaviest infestation of hoppers in Hill County, that was ever known in the U.S. He said we had one of the worst fields he had seen, so you can see how we stand.

June 11

Your Dad hasn't been back to see about the spreader. Charlie brought 60 sacks of poison last night. The State has poisoned the Abe Crossen Forty and the pasture north of Major Walker's. I will poison again in the morning. I wish, if the hoppers were going to eat it all, they would get busy and do it, so I could stop spending money. Bob came last night so we went to the Farmer's Union Picnic at the Fort this PM.

June 12

Poisoned hoppers until noon. A couple more poisonings and I may have them licked unless another batch moves in. In every wheat row, there is a row of dead hoppers--in some places they lay in piles. They're only about ¼ as thick as they were and gradually thinning out. They haven't done any damage on the two east strips on the Banks but they have about 1/3 of this east of the house. That's the way it looks today, but tomorrow it may be worse than ever. The wheat is surely growing, what there is left. Your son is as brown as an Indian and so am I. You won't know us. He surely misses his Daddy and so do I.

June 13

Grasshoppers just the same.

June 14

Poisoned grasshoppers again this morning. Not so many left so unless more move in, I may have them licked. Have enough poison left to see me through. Charlie has hauled 75 sacks.

June 16

Grasshopper situation looks lots better, but will still keep pegging away. Have been getting along for some time without any help. This morning I drove all around the Banks. There's hardly a hopper where they were so thick, but they are moving in on the south of three strips. In the morning, I'll poison again. The slot that feeds the poison on the machine hasn't any catch to hold it. Someone should stand there and adjust it as you go along, b ut it is only tin and I can fasten it open, about half way, and get along.

June 17

Put out more poison this morning. The only place there are hoppers are on the sout h end of the strips. I cranked a long time on the old Dodge this morning. The vacuum tank kept going dry. It's pretty hard on a car bouncing around on loose ground with the load behind, or I'd use the good car. The hardest thing is lifting the poison sacks up to empty them into the barrel. If the hoppers don't get any worse, I'll get by. I'm tired and my hands have blisters on them from cranking the car.

June 18

Almost 11:AM. Just got in from spreading more poison. Surely am tired. It wouldn't be so bad, if I had a starter on the car and if that barrel wasn't so high. I do have a hard time getting the poison in the barrel. Hope the old Dodge holds out until the hoppers are gone. It's getting quite a knock in it.

June 23

Still plenty of hoppers, but they don't seem to be doing much harm. There are lots of them in the Oats and Crested Wheat. Quite a few of them have full grown wings, now, so maybe they will fly away. Will go out and poison again in the morning.

June 26

Pretty hot. Sure need rain. Haven't the heart to go out to look at the hoppers. They keep moving in. What's the use saving the grain for the

drowth. I've been pretty lucky getting ice from the trains, one or two chunks a day. The Engineer or the man in the caboose, throw off what ice they have left, as they will get a new supply when they get in Havre. This keeps my ice box full, most of the time.

June 30

Hot! Had fried chicken today. Surely tasted good.

Bert came home for over the Fourth of July weekend. He has just a couple weeks left, as the job on the Hiway by Stanley is almost finished.

July 8

Hottest day we've had. Worked on the Duckfoot today. Took off the old shovels and put the new ones on b ut didn't get all the bolts tightened.

The road job in North Dakota was finished the middle of July, so Bert came home. Don't remember how much grain we harvested that fall but it wasn't much.