



*Memoirs of Max and Amy Atkinson*  
*Written in 1969*





*Amy Neiswanger Atkinson*

1898 to 1983



*Max Atkinson*

1897 to 1972





## MEMOIRS OF AMY NEISWANGER ATKINSON

The first thing that I can remember is the day of my folk's auction sale some time in January 1901, out in Frontier County, Nebraska. They had homesteaded eighteen miles northwest of Cambridge, Nebraska in 1885, three and a half miles from a country town named Freedom. It consisted of a store and blacksmith shop and probably a post office in the store. My father had a barber shop in a corner of the store for several years. On Saturday afternoons and into the night he would work as

long as there was any business.

My folks built a sod house in which all of us children were born except my oldest brother, Clyde. He was born in Cambridge. They had some very difficult years out there. There was very seldom enough rainfall for their crops, so my father got a job in the Burlington railroad shop in McCook, Nebraska and we moved there in January 1901.

As I said, the first I can remember was the day of the sale when my brother, Clyde, took me out to the sod stable to say good-bye to a colt named Twilight. I cried because I didn't want her sold.



Clyde Neiswanger

In McCook we lived in a house with lots of trees around it, a very pretty place as I remember. The railroad tracks were only about a block from our house and my brother, Harley, and I used to put pins, crossed, on the track for the train to run over them and smash them together making what we called "scissors." Our mother stopped that procedure when she found out about it.

My father was not too satisfied with his work in the railroad shop and wanted to get back to the farm. His brother-in-law, Schuyler (pronounced "skyler") Caldwell had a farm at Bladen, Nebraska and was very dissatisfied with the renter so he and my father got together and the result was we moved to Bladen in August 1901 so my father could plant fall wheat. We lived in a house in Bladen for a month or so which I vaguely remember. My father then hired out to a bachelor farmer to shuck his corn and work for him that winter. We moved in with him. He boarded with us and my mother also boarded the school teacher. The bachelor's name was Bill Morrow and the school Teacher, John Crop. I remember both of them very well; I suppose because apparently they were both fond of children and I was at the age that they made a lot over me. I had several story books that I knew by heart and John Crop used to take me on his lap to read them to me and he would deliberately make mistakes so that I would correct him. I didn't think that he was a very smart teacher!

We moved onto my uncle's place the first of March. I felt so sorry for Bill Morrow having to live alone and cook his meals that I told him that when I grew up I was going to marry him so I could cook for him. Ten or twelve years later my sister Alta met him and he told her that he remembered my promise but he never tried to get me to fulfill it. He was quite wealthy and Alta told me he would be a good catch, he wouldn't livelong and then I would have his money.

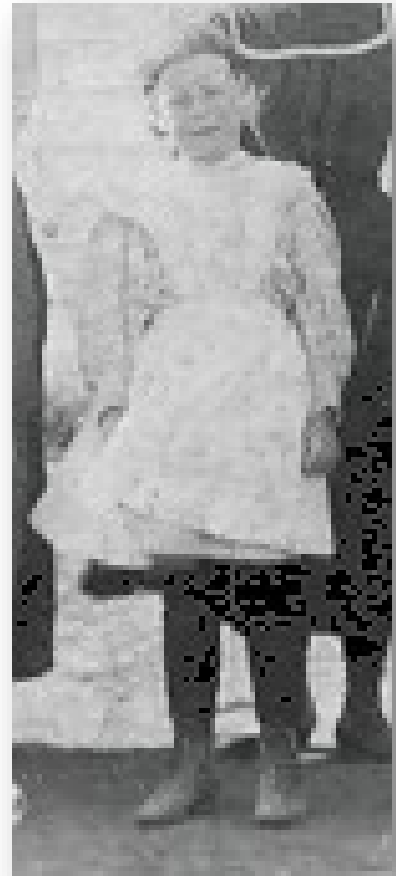
While we still lived on his place we were going to visit my uncle, Jake Moore, on Sunday and were going in an old spring wagon of Bill Morrow's. When we were about half way there the spring wagon broke apart in the middle. Our cousin, Maud Moore, had gone home with us the afternoon before when we were in town and she and my two sisters were sitting in the back seat with me on their laps. When the spring wagon broke everything fell to the middle and I, being on top, was at the bottom of the pile. This happened about the middle of the morning and I was unconscious until about the middle of the afternoon. My father left us there by the side of the road while he went back and got the lumber wagon to go on in.

I started to school in the fall of 1904. Joe Baker was our teacher and a very good one. There were two or three very mean boys in school which had caused the lady teacher, the year before, a lot of trouble but he could really handle them. One day some of us small children were playing outside and two of these boys started snow balling us. They made the snow



**School Age Amy**

**Early 1900s**



**This picture was in the same cigar box with the carefully preserved pictures of her best friend Maysel.**

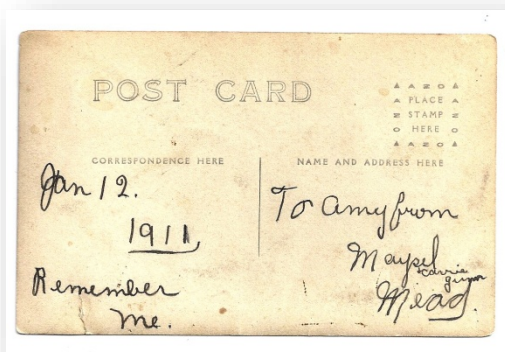
balls very hard and one of them hit me on the head and about knocked me out. Joe Baker grabbed each of them by the back of their coat collar and took them in the school house and slammed them down in their seats. They were not able to leave the room the rest of that day.



My first day in school I learned to draw a box and a ball, also how to spell and print both words. We walked 1 ½ miles to school and I remember I was extremely tired that first day when we got home. I went to sleep as soon as we got home and had to be wakened to eat supper.

There were seven beginners that year. We had double seats and Maysel Mead and I sat together for six years except sometimes we got to whispering too much and were separated for awhile.

Maysel Mead





Billy the Duck, with the geese, two of the working farm horses  
and Amy's father Sherman Neiswanger

We had a fifteen minute recess the middle of the morning and the middle of the afternoon and an hour at noon. In the spring and fall we sometimes played baseball but more often such game as "Andy over the School House," "Pull-Away," "Hide and Seek," or "Sheep My Pen." When there was snow on the ground we played "Fox and Goose" or went sliding on a pond which was in a field across the road from the school house. When the weather was too bad to play outside we sometimes had "ciphor downs" or "spell downs" or a game called "Clap-in and Clap-out." There were always about thirty in our school, all grades, from first through eighth.

From the time I can remember I had pets of various kinds. The first was a duck which my mother gave me when I was two years old. They say I used to lie down on the floor with the baby duck under my chin and we would both go to sleep that way. I thought her baby chattering sounded like she said "pettie duck" so that is what I named her. She lived to be nine years old and then some animal killed her one night. I made a pet of one of her sons, named Billy, which I had until he died when I was a sophomore in high school. One of our neighbors gave me two baby geese the same year that Billy was hatched and I raised the three of them together. Both of the goslings turned out to be ganders but another neighbor lady traded me a female goose for one of the ganders so I raised geese for several years. I sold the young ones about Thanksgiving time and that is the way I got my money to buy Christmas presents.

The old gander was quite vicious, when he was teased at least, and I used to like to tease him. I would hold a galvanized bushel basket in front of me and he would take hold of the edge of it with his beak and flop it. He made dents in the basket. Sometimes he would manage to get around or under the basket and get a hold of me and flop. That wasn't so good. When a gander bites he takes hold and twists so it nearly takes a piece out. Billy the Duck would take my part. He would grab the gander by the neck with his bill and the gander would back off. Then Billy would come jabbering tome to be petted and praised or sometimes I would take him to the grainery and get him some corn. He used to go out and sit by the side of the road about the time I would be coming home from school and when he would see me coming he would come to meet me. I gave him anything that I might have left in my lunch pail.



Myrtle



Myrtle

My sister Alta was scared to death of the old gander. We didn't have an indoor bathroom in those days but an outhouse. It was an hundred feet or so from the house and the gander used to chase her to or from it. I also had a goat that she was very much afraid of too and between the gander and goat, she had a pretty hard time. I'm sure that they both knew that she was afraid of them especially the goat and they loved to chase her. We had to carry water from the well, which was about 200 feet from the house. One day Alta was just leaving the well with two pails full of water when the goat



saw her and came charging at her. She threw both pails of water down and just made it to the house before he caught up with her. I had to go get the water.

I had a red timber squirrel that was a very nice pet too. He liked to take a kernel of corn or a nut and run up on someone's shoulder to eat it. One day he ran up on my father's shoulder and he turned his head and blew in the squirrel's face. The squirrel didn't like that at all and as quick as lightning he grabbed my father in one nostril and with one foot and the edge of his eye with the other and made both of them bleed. My sister, Myrtle, had a fish aquarium with wax ducks floating on top. The squirrel would fish them out and chew them up much to Myrtle's disgust. My mother was the only one in the family who was in sympathy with me and my pets.



Myrtle

I had a dog, Carlo, which I hitched to my little wagon and hauled cobs from the cob pile to the house. We had a cob box behind the kitchen stove which I was supposed to keep filled. Carlo liked to chase buggies when they went passed and one day when I had him hitched to the wagon, a team and buggy came passed. He took off after it, scattering cobs until finally the wagon tipped over and stopped him. The neighbor who he started to chase thought it a great joke and teased me about my "run-away" for quite awhile.

I made a pet of a baby mule and taught him to shake hands. When he was two or three years old, when my father and brother were breaking him to drive, they had a hard time to get him up to the tongue of the wagon. When they finally did he put up his foot to shake hands then stood still while they hitched him and an old horse to the wagon.

For two or three years when I was somewhere around 4 to 7 years old I had a baby chicken cemetery. I fenced off an area about 10 or 12 feet square, driving stakes in the ground and using binder twine for wire. All the baby chicks that died I put in any kind of a little box I could find or wrapped them in paper and buried them. I gathered wild flowers to decorate their graves. I drove small boards in the ground at the head of each grave with the date of their death.

We didn't have any very close neighbors so all summer I had to play alone. My brother, Harley, who was next older than I, was six years old when I was born. My brothers and sisters were gone from home before I was very old. Harley was home for quite a while but he did most of the farming and my father did carpentering. I used to fix a lunch and take to the field

to Harley in the middle of the morning and the middle of the afternoon during the summer. An hour or so before he came in from the field both at noon and night I put grain in the horses' feed boxes and hay in the mangers.

I would always rather work outside than inside so after Harley left home I worked in the field quite a little. I helped cultivate corn. I ran a one row cultivator and my father a two row. The summer that I was twelve years old my father had to go help a neighbor one day right in the midst of his fall plowing. I loved to work with horses so I persuaded him to let me plow that day. He was plowing with a two bottom plow with five horses, three hitched to the plow and two in the lead. He worried about me but I got along fine and enjoyed it.

Sherman and Nancy  
Neiswanger





Sherman and Nancy  
Neiswanger  
with their daughter Amy



In late August when I was twelve my sister Alta had typhoid fever out in Julesburg, Colorado where she had been working. My mother sent out to take care of her leaving me to do all the housework. I was the only one left at home then. She was gone for more than a month. While she was gone we had threshers and the crew of three stayed at our place all night. I had to get breakfast for them alone. My father never helped with the house work. Two neighbor ladies came and got dinner for them. My father was helping other neighbors thresh for a week or more and was gone from early in the morning about 7:30 or 8:00 o'clock until after dark at night. I did all the chores, fed the pigs, calves and chickens; put the hay and grain for the horses and milked three cows and separated the milk. In the house, of course, I did the washing with a hand powered machine, ironing with irons which had to be heated on the cook stove, also churned butter and baked bread.

One afternoon when I was alone a band of gypsies came past. There were about 6 or 7 covered wagons of them. They always stopped at every place to beg or steal if no one was at home. I was always scared to death of them. When I saw them coming I first thought I would hide and pretend that no one was at home but I knew if I did they would steal something so I hooked the screen door and set the rifle by the side of the door; it was not loaded. Usually they were very persistent but this time a woman came to the door and started begging for various things. I told her no. She must have sensed how very frightened I was and took pity on me because she left pretty quick.

When my mother and Alta came home Alta couldn't walk for several weeks. I would drag her, in a rocking chair, out onto the porch and help her in a wheelbarrow and wheel her around. I missed the first six weeks of school that year, in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Then in February and March that same year my brother Harley had appendicitis and I had to miss six more weeks to help at home, as a result I didn't pass the state examinations in two subjects and had to take the 8<sup>th</sup> grade the next year.

Harley had an attack of appendicitis in the fall but the doctor advised against an operation then. He had been working in Grand Island but came home with my mother and Alta when they came from Colorado and stayed home then. Some time in late February I think it was, he had a very severe attack one Sunday morning. My mother called the doctor from Bladen. It had started snowing early that morning and by the time the doctor got there it was too bad for him to go back. He was not much of a doctor but apparently was a very good nurse. Somehow he got Harley a little more comfortable for most of the day but about ten that night the pain became very severe. The doctors later figured that the appendix broke at that time. The Bladen doctor, Dr. Koehler, called a doctor from Campbell, 5 ½ miles away and a surgeon

about 20 miles away. The surgeon started out right away and didn't reach our place until about 4 o'clock the next afternoon. They wore out several teams of horses, would stop and trade horses at different farms along the way. Crews of men shoveled snow along the way to get them through. It was the worst blizzard that I ever saw. The surgeon picked up the doctor from Campbell and the three doctors operated on Harley on the dining room table. The surgeon told the folks later that when he found how bad Harley's condition was that he didn't think there was a chance of his living and he was tempted to just sew him up without doing anything. The appendix had broken and localized then broken again so that any place that he put his hand in he got a hand full of pus. He did clean Harley out good and packed him with a lot of gauze which had to be changed every day and repacked. Dr. Koehler stayed for ten days and took care of him. My brother, Clyde, came and took care of him after the doctor left. It was several months before he was well again but he did survive and is 77 years old now.

When I was ten years old there was an epidemic of diphtheria in our school. One girl died. She was the first case. Two other girls, sisters, came down with it next and their mother and baby brother got it when the girls were about over it and both the mother and the baby died. I had it and they didn't think that I would live for awhile but I did. I was in bed a long time. For several days they swabbed my throat out, with a terrible teasing medicine, every half hour.

In 1908 when William Jennings Byron ran for president against William Howard Taft most of our neighborhood were strong republicans. My folks were neither strong for either party but tried to vote for the man they thought was the better. At school most of the children chanted a little rhyme, "Taft rides a white horse, Bryan rides a mule, Taft is a white man, Bryan is a fool." It made me so mad. Several years later, in the summer of 1914 I think it was, he spoke at the Pawnee City Chautauqua which we attended. He was a good speaker and also, I believe, a very good man.

Speaking of Chautauqua's, they were a very good source of entertainment and education in those days. It was held for a full week starting on Sunday and ending Saturday night. There were both afternoon and evening programs. All the business places closed for it and practically everyone went. It was held at the auditorium at the fair grounds which probably seated 1500 people and it was full at every session. Several families would camp at the fair grounds in tents for that week. There were stands where refreshments could be bought. There were a large variety of programs, speakers on serious topics, comedians, artists who could really draw, bands and various musical programs. There were sessions in the morning for the children also. The Chautauqua's were put on by a company. The one here was the Horner Chautauqua Company.

While we still lived on the farm near Bladen and attended the Methodist Church we had Sunday school picnics every summer. We lived four miles west of Bladen and the picnic was usually held at a grove southeast of town. Harley always took a hayrack full of kids. We would leave home about eight in the morning and not get back until after dark. We left the picnic place at nearly sundown and sang songs all the way back to town. It was lots of fun.

In the winter time we had sleighing parties. Harley and I would pick up all of the kids in the neighborhood and we usually had a party at some home or some times just a sleighing party.

About 1906 or 1908 John Baker, the brother of my first grad teacher, brought a car, a Reo (I'm not sure of the spelling.) He was the livery man at Bladen and hauled traveling men between Bladen and Campbell. We lived on the road between the two places. There was a very steep hill west of our place and many times we saw the traveling men get out and push up the hill. Several times when I was walking home from school John stopped and picked me up. It was really a thrill. We seemed to just fly over several little hills which were just east of our place. I suppose it went about 25 miles an hour. He bought it just before the county fair and took people for rides around the race track at 10 or 25 cents each. My father took me and my cousin, Elta Moore, for a ride.

About this same time there was a flying machine "on exhibition" at the fair. We had to pay 10 cents to see it. It was about like a giant box kite. It was supposed to make a flight but it didn't. In 1913 there was an airplane at the Pawnee County Fair that did fly. It was the first I ever saw in flight.

For several years there were balloon ascensions at the fair and usually they sent dogs up in the basket under the balloon, sometimes a man. I remember several times of crying because I didn't like dogs treated like that. They also had dogs climb a high ladder and jump into a net which I disapproved of also.

There was a small circus that came to Bladen every summer for several years. It traveled in horse drawn wagons and went past our place. They had a big elephant that helped push the heavy wagons up the steep hills. It was always a great thrill when they came passed. We always went to the circus. My favorites were the dog acts and an educated pony named Cupid. He could add, subtract and pick up color cards that any one in the audience chose.

Decoration Day was always a big day. The day before my mother and I would go to Plansview Cemetery to put flowers on her parents graves.



Nathaniel Harpley Moore  
and Amy Ireland Moore

Nancy Moore Neiswanger  
and her seated sister





We lived four miles west of town and the cemetery was about 2 ½ miles southeast of town. There were speeches and singing both mornings and afternoons at the city hall. I don't remember that the morning sessions were so bad but the afternoons were usually so hot and the room was packed making it extremely uncomfortable. Bessie Streiker, an old maid school teacher, always gave Lincoln's Gettysburg address and then a long winded speech that seemed to last forever.

There was a prairie dog town southeast of Bladen on the road to the cemetery that always fascinated me. It was in a pasture and covered about an acre or two. It was full of mounds and the prairie dogs would pop in and out of the holes. They had a very shrill little bark. I always wanted to stop and watch them.

We didn't have mattresses as we know them today but had straw ticks. Each fall after threshing time the straw ticks were always emptied and washed then filled with new straw. Oat straw was softer and better than wheat straw. The ticks were left open for about 2/3 of the length in the middle of the top and pinned together with safety pins. This was so that it could be opened up to stir the straw to fluff it up, which we did every week or two. We had a feather bed on top of the straw tick which had to be shook up and poked every morning. Bed making was much more work then than it is now. My mother never considered that a bed was properly made unless all the covers were taken off every morning and the feather bed shook up and leveled off nicely. I usually just "spread up" (as she called it) my bed during the week and only took it all apart on Saturdays when we changed the sheets.

Memoir ends here

## High School Graduation Pictures

Max Atkinson  
Amy Neiswanger





**Wedding Picture  
1918**

**Young Married Couple with  
their pets  
including Dub the Sheep  
as a lamb**



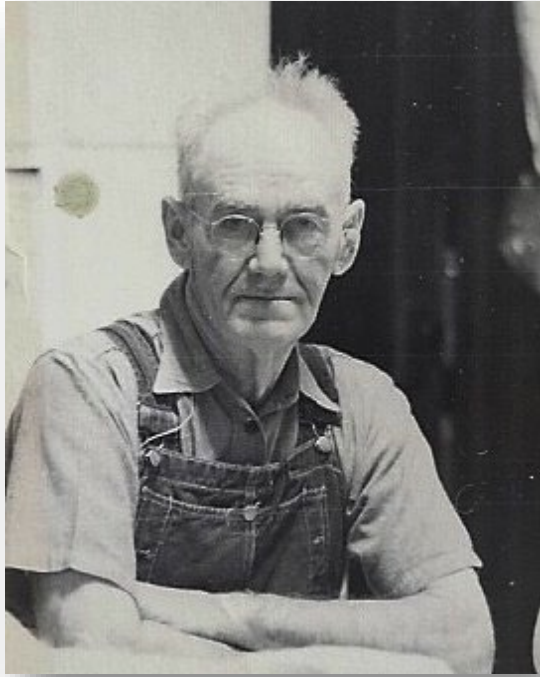
**Dub the Sheep  
and some horses**



**Amy holding her  
first born child,  
Dan, in front of the  
“barn” house they  
lived in. Note Dub  
the Sheep at her  
side.**

**Nancy Neiswanger  
driving a team of  
mules (?)**





## MEMOIRS OF MAX ATKINSON

The first I remember was when my father put my mother and I on the train to visit my mother's father at Paola, Kansas. I was two or three years old. I was sick on the train and remember seeing the train tracks go past when I vomited in the stool. The stools on the trains were just open clear down in those days. We also visited my Aunt Kate Deago (sp?) Here son, George, had a marble toy that I played with. The marbles were put in at the top and ran back and forth, back and forth, and ended up at the bottom.

We lived two miles northwest of Pawnee City and my brother Maurice and Cousin Harold

Bechtol and I went  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile west every day to get the mail. Bechtol's lived  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile north of us. One day when we went after the mail we got into some nettles by the road and we went back home and got hoes to try to cut them out but they proved to be too big a project. The nettles were there for thirty years after that!

My father and the neighbor west of us, Frank Bennett, had some trouble. My father kept matches in his shop so one day we took some matches and lit some tall grass about one third of the way to this neighbor's house to try to burn him out. Uncle Charles' hired man put it out.

We had a hired man who would make a hole in each end of an egg and suck the raw egg out. Maurice got me to try it once only he took a rotten egg from under a sitting hen. She had stolen her nest in the woodpile. I never cared for eggs much after that.

We had a hired girl, Jessie Hansen, that we children were scared to death of. She wouldn't allow us in the house or even on the porch unless our parents were around.

We had a blue enameled cook stove that had a fire box in the front and the oven in the back with a door on each side, open clear through.



Mildred, Maurice and Max  
Atkinson

My father had an orchard across the railroad track east of our house and kept rabbit traps up there. Maurice and I went up every morning to take the rabbits out. Sometimes they would bite us. One day there was a skunk in one of the traps. We didn't know what it was so went back and told our father and he went up and shot it. He let it out of the trap before he shot it and just after he shot it our dog, Jack, grabbed it and we had plenty of perfume around the place for some time.

A little before I can remember my grandparents, my folks and the Bechtol's put in telephones. For each telephone there were two lines. They put the lines down along the railroad track on gnarly hedge posts. When the wind blew hard the lines would wrap up and Dad had to go down and straighten them out. When he thought he had them straightened out he would signal to Mom and if the phone worked she would wave a large white cloth.



Max's paternal grandparents (JC and Polly Peckham Atkinson) and their children. The tallest boy (between his parents and standing in the back) is Max's father John Edwin Atkinson (known as Ed.) Left to right: Charles Arthur, Jenny (in back), Maude (in front), Jessie Daisy, Polly, John Edwin ("Ed"), Estelle, JC, and Annie Laurie



Above: Max's father, John Edwin ("Ed) Atkinson on his death bed.  
He died of cancer

Below: Max's mother, Bertha ("Bird") Brayman Atkinson. (left and center) To the right: Max's maternal grandmother: Hannah Coonradt Brayman



In 1900, my folks bought about eleven acres just outside the north city limits of Pawnee City and built a house there that winter. We moved in early in the spring of 1901.

My father had a nursery there and had hitching racks out front. The hitching racks were posts with poles between to tie the horses to. After Maurice started to school I took a long board and put it across the poles, put a rock on one end and tetter-tottered by myself.

My first year in school Maurice got the measles and we were quarantined. While he was sick there was a sleet and rain storm that covered the ground with ice. Mildred and I had a lot of fun sliding.

There were quite a few boys in the neighborhood about Maurice's and my ages. We would go over to Simm's pasture and play ball or gather at our place and play hide-the-paddle. We all ganged up on Dewey Simms for some reason and the one who had it told some of the others where it was. When Dewey came around there someone would grab it and start to paddle him. In the winter when there was snow on the ground we would take our sleds over to Simm's pasture, which was about a block from our place, or to Rape's about ¼ mile where there was a much longer hill.

The main occupation on Sunday afternoon was going to the Burlington depot to watch the trains come in. Two trains met here about three o'clock, one from the east and one from the west.

Dad built a green house about 1911 and people would come up to see it. One Sunday afternoon two girls came up, one a red-headed girl about my age. I didn't know who they were but some time later when I was sick the same two girls came up and asked about me. I have always remembered their visit and that red-headed girl. She didn't... but later we were married.

In school we played about the same games that Grandma mentions only there were a lot more of us, probably about 40 in each grade and four grades played together mostly.

When I was in the fifth grade, Lucy Van Horne was the teacher. One afternoon Lucy told Willie McGuire and I to go to the superintendent's office. I always thought the superintendent was a big bully. When we got there my brother Maurice and Mike Van Horne were there. Mike was Lucy's little brother. He was a grade below us.

The first thing Mr. Crocker, the superintendent, did was to get a strap about 2 inches wide and 2 ½ to 3 feet long and lay it across his leg. He asked us our names. Maurice told his name but I was so scared that all I could say was that I was his brother. He asked us why we had been



picking on that little boy, meaning Mike. None of us but Mike knew what it was all about. Mr. Crocker sent me after Ernest Atkinson (my cousin) and I went back to my home room. Later I remembered that Harold Bechtol and I had been rooster fighting one afternoon on the playground and Willie McGuire horned in. Just about the time the bell rang Mike Van Horne jumped on Willie's back. I don't know what ever happened after that but that evening in the post office Mike was laughing about it and Willie said "You were trying to get me whipped!"

From the time I can remember the Burlington had stock freights through here every Sunday afternoon. About the time we were teenagers, Harold Bechtol, Maurice and I would jump on the ladder on the side of the cars and ride a ways, then jump off. I wouldn't want any of our children or grandchildren to do it!



Wooden Flute Max played in high school.

I never cared for school and from the time I was in the 9th grade and on up I stayed home to help with work about half the time during the spring and fall. I didn't have any trouble keeping up except I dropped second year German in the spring of 1916.

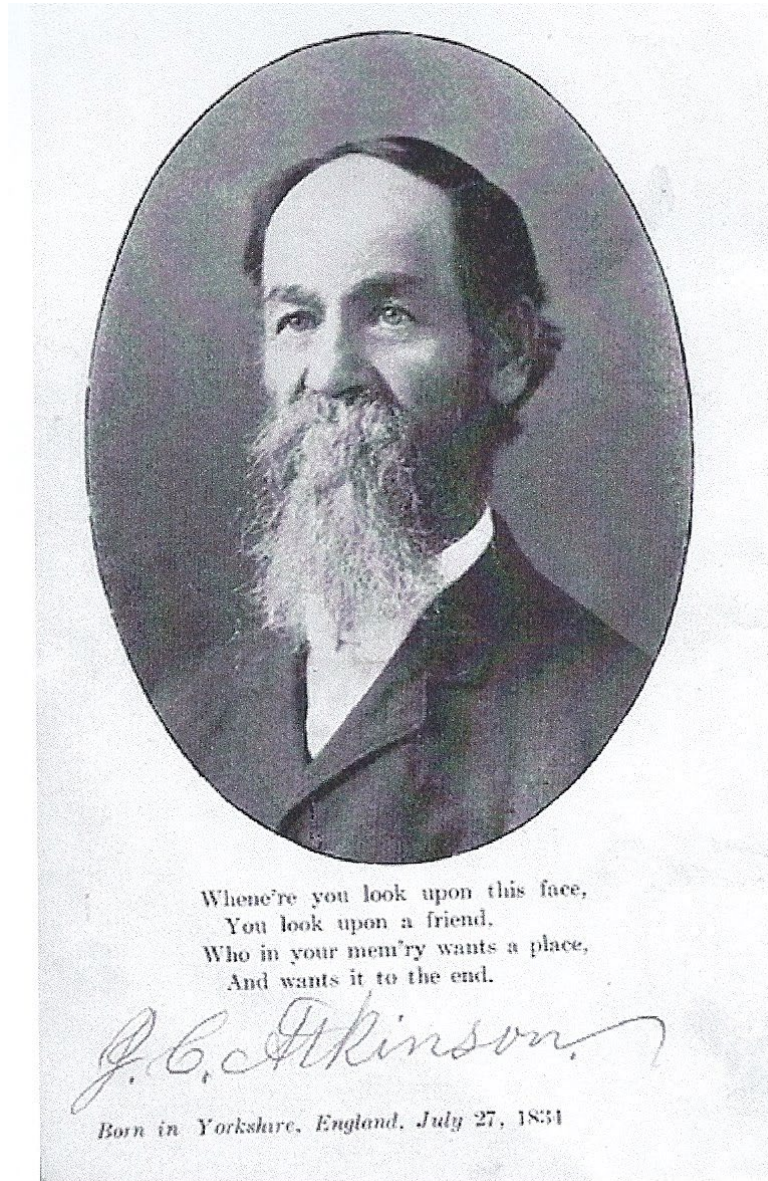
My father had an apple orchard and every fall we had two or three thousand bushels of apples to pick. One bright fall day when I was hauling apples I saw a mirage. It was about 7 ½ miles away from me and I could clearly see the feathers on the chickens. That is the only real mirage I have ever seen. Another time, Dad and I saw what he said was a waterspout but it may have been a tornado. It was probably 40 or more miles away and looked less than two feet across and extended from the ground up to us for as far as we could see. That is the only waterspout or tornado that I ever saw. It looked like a very long black rope twisting around. We didn't see it come down or break up. It seemed to be mostly clear that day.

When I was about five or six years old my Grandfather Atkinson built quite a large pond. It was in a park that he had made for the use of the public. The jeweler, Mr. Keon's wife was distraught about him building the pond because she had been panning out up to five dollars worth of gold each day along the creek bank and the pond ruined that. He had several deer in

the park and a pen of white rabbits. My uncle John Conover, put up ice in the winter from the pond to sell in the summer. Later he built a larger pond.

One year, the last day of school, a group of high school boys went swimming in the larger pond and one of them drowned. His mother tried to get the ponds declared a public nuisance but she admitted she had forbidden her son to go that day.

When I was about 11 or 12 years old my uncle Bert Bechtol had moved to town and was running a laundry. There was an abandoned creamery close to where they lived and Harold, Maurice and I used to play there. We would get inside the big churn which must have held about 600 gallons of cream and then one or ones outside would turn the churn. It turned around and at the same time tilted from end to end.



Max's paternal grandfather  
J.C. Atkinson

that there was a family consisting of a father, two sons and a daughter, all mostly grown, who had come from Georgia, had come as far as they had money to come, and they wanted work and some place to live. Undoubtedly the old man was a fugitive from justice. Dad let them move into our house at the farm. Jim, about 22 years old, had a knife wound in his neck. One

Soon after we moved to town the depot agent called one day and said

of our neighbor boys stayed all night with them once and he said the old man started shouting in the night. He supposed he had been dreaming of law enforcement officers closing in on him or something. He was about scared to death.

The younger son, Joe, got mixed up with a bunch of town kids. They had him watch while they broke into a store and stole some stuff. He was caught and sent to the penitentiary. The last we heard of him he had a shoe repair shop back in Georgia in his mother's kitchen. The girl pieced crazy quilts for the neighbors. She chewed tobacco and Maurice, Harold and I used to say that she "sits and knits and spits." The old man married a mentally deficient widow from Table Rock who had a mentally deficient child.

Some years later a man who ran the cream route for the old creamery told us that the old man threw the child in the well. The well wasn't more than 14 inches across. They apparently got him out because he was around after that. It was the same well that we used when we lived there after we were married.

When we were about 12 to 14 years old, or maybe less, and attended the Chautauqua, a lot of boys about my age would listen to the entertainment of the program but when there were speeches that we didn't care about we fooled around the rest of the evening. One evening we got a lot of discarded popcorn sacks and filled them with water and threw them at each other. Hiram Carmichael hit Lusetta Enslow right in the face with one and she ran to her mother in the auditorium crying "Mama, Mama" and immediately there were no boys around.



Charles Lindbergh with  
the Spirit of St. Louis

I don't remember for sure when I saw the first airplane flying but it must have been one that gave exhibition flights at the Pawnee County Fair in 1913. The next one was one in 1919 flying from Wymore to Humboldt. A little later Charles Lindbergh and a companion, who were attending an aeronautic school in Lincoln, came to the Pawnee County Fair to give exhibitions flights and take up passengers. They landed in Lipp's pasture north of town. We saw them every day but didn't know until later who they were.

It must have been about 1908, Pawnee City had a big Fourth of July celebration and contracted for a dirigible balloon. They filled it with gas near the south west part of the fairgrounds inside the race track. They used kegs of iron filings and some kind of acid to make the gas. Years later some of those iron filings were still there. The owner of the balloon went to town and told his helper not to do anything until he got back. In the meantime, some of the men on the committee urged the helper to fly it over town right now. Dad, Maurice and I were on our way to town and drove down to see the balloon. We got there just before he started the engine. It rose a little above the tree tops and traveled northwest about two blocks and then the engine stopped. It then floated south out of sight. The people didn't want to pay him but the owner had a contract that if he made one flight he would get paid so they had to pay although very few people saw it.



William Jennings Bryan

My grandparents and parents were republicans until 1896 when William Jennings Bryan ran on the democratic ticket. My father believed in the same principles that Bryan did and was a democrat from that time on for the rest of his life. Bryan was a great orator and although he undoubtedly made some mistakes he is to be greatly admired for standing up for his convictions against strong opposition. He spoke at the Chautauqua here about 1914 or 1915 and he was about the only serious speaker that we kids listened to.

When I was about 11 or 12 years old Grandpa Atkinson, Uncle Charles Atkinson, Maurice and I came down to help clean out the ice pond. We sieved the fish out and put them in the other pond. When we went home they gave us a big string of cat fish to take home. We had been in the water

about up to our waists and were about as dirty as we could get. The water was very muddy. When we got to about where the post office is now, there were three women just ahead of us. One of them turned around and said "See those dirty.... Oh! Look at the fish!"

The first steam train engines that I remember were little four cylinder engines. Some of the last steam engines were eight cylinder engines.

Ten or twelve years ago the longest train that I ever saw here had used all its steam coming from Table Rock to Pawnee and the Pawnee fire trucks hauled water to it all day. It was too long for the side track and it had to go back and forth to let the passenger trains pass. They

had a new fireman on and the engineer had wasted a lot of steam to make more work for the fireman.

Once when we were going to California there were two double eight or ten cylinder engines on the mile long train pulling and the same on the back pushing.

When we lived on the farm there was a side track just north of our place. It was a very steep grade from some distance west of Pawnee to this side track. The long freight trains would cut into and take half the train to the side track and go back for the other half.

Memoir ends here .....

Max and his son,  
Gaylord, standing in  
front of the house in  
Pawnee City.

Gaylord is a sophomore  
in high school.





Amy with her two oldest children (Dan 2 and Vivian an infant) in front of the family's first house which was actually a barn with living quarters in one corner. Gaylord remembers the round slab of metal in front of the front door, clearly visible in the lower picture.



Sadly faded precious pictures.  
Left: The only picture we have of  
Amy holding Gaylord as an infant.

Above: Dan, Gaylord and Vivian.

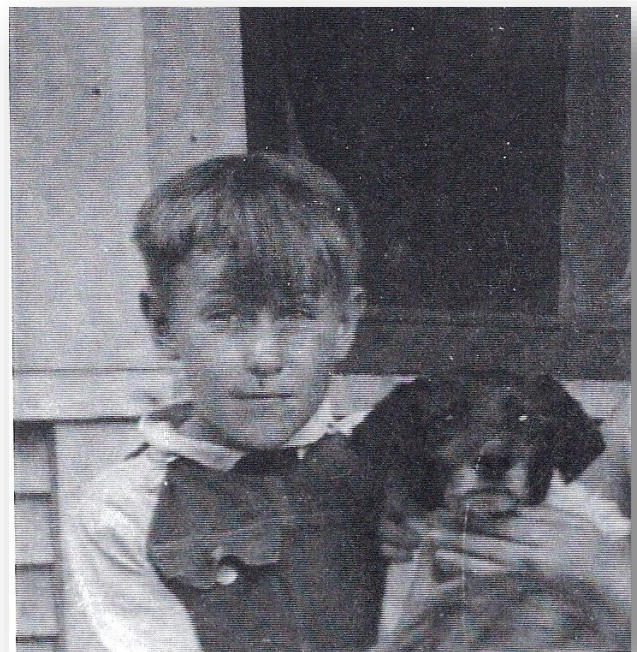
Below: Dan, Amy holding Wilma,  
Gaylord and Vivian





Above: Dan, Vivian holding Wilma, and Gaylord

Below: (Left and Right) Gaylord as a boy







A visit to Jean and Gene in Sunflower , Kansas

Left to Right: Dan, Amy, Wilma, Mildred, Max and Jean and Gene (Jean is Mildred's daughter)



Left: Max and Amy with Aunt Mildred Max's sister



Left: Max and Amy at their son Gaylord's wedding in Sept 1948



**Back Row L-R:**  
 Amy, David A,  
 Max and Tim B  
**Middle Row:**  
 Owen & Kristine  
 A-la, Kathy A,  
 Marjorie B,  
**Front Row:** Janet  
 A, Ellen A-la,  
 Phil B, Joyce A-la  
 and Barbara B

B = Binder  
 (Wilma's kids)

A-la = Atkinson  
 (Dan's kids)

A= Atkinson  
 Gaylord's kids

Above: Max and Amy with their  
 grandkids about 1959 (?)

Right: Holding Gaylord's daughter,  
 Kathie (about 1955)

Below: Max and Amy with Wilma's two  
 oldest children, Marjorie and Barbara





Left: Wedding  
Anniversary picnic, 40<sup>th</sup>?

Below left: the family  
home

Below Right: 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding  
Anniversary

Bottom left: At the nursing  
home (1970ish?)





Summer 1970: Amy, Gaylord's daughter Kathy, and Mildred

Amy visiting Gaylord in  
Kansas City after Max's death

