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PRESENTS

# *Frankly Speaking Notes . . .*

Published as time and opportunity permit, usually a few times a week.

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Ed Smithson, Editor

## **LIVING WITH MEMORIES**

(This is first in a series of articles on this subject.)

**(Editor's Note: I started on the subject some weeks ago and realized pretty soon there was more than one article involved, so many things kept coming to mind. I then decided to make it a series of articles. Hope you enjoy them. As we get older our "thinker" don't work as well and our "forgetter" works overtime sometimes. In spite of all that, I shall proceed.)**

There is a notion out there that most old people are sad and lonely, living only with their memories. While I must admit that I have run into one of two of these folks, I am here to tell you that it is not so for the vast majority of the aged.

There is another notion out there that old folks do not want to be a "burden" to their children. With that I will certainly concur. Why that is the case is somewhat of a "puzzlement" (as my Grandfather would say) to me. I don't know why we should feel that way. We took care of our children for many years when they were growing up, so it seems natural to me that the children would take care of us when we grow old. In fact, while I have heard many parents express the sentiment of not wanting to be a burden, I have yet to hear the children claim that such is the case.

Scripture tells to remember a lot of things so I suppose it is acceptable to remember things that have happened to us, especially as it relates to our service to the Lord. I shall not write about ALL that I remember.

**I REMEMBER GROWING UP ON THE FARM.** We lived on a 220 acre farm in Pittsburg County Oklahoma, 15 miles west of McAlester. Dad bought the farm when I was quite young so all I remember was the farm. We lived in a five room house, three rooms the same size with a kitchen and dining room and back porch. My parents were common people. It was a good farm but this was during the depression and dust bowl. I think dad had finished the eighth grade and I don't know how far mama got in school.

I used to joke about us being poor and it was really no joke. Children generally are unable to determine and understand being poor, so we did not dwell on it. It was a good farm, with 100 acres of bottomland, but in the 30's and 40's there was not a lot of money to be made on a farm. Besides, there were 11 mouths to feed, including mother and dad.

I have never complained about my upbringing. There were times in the dust bowl days when we didn't have enough to eat but we got by. It also made us appreciate what we had when we got more.

Like a lot of poor folks, my folks did not think we had clothes good enough to go to church, so we didn't go in my early years. As I arrived at 12 or 13 we worked in the hayfield that summer and made some money. Mama determined that the first thing to be done with it would be to buy "Sunday clothes" as she called them. Nothing fancy, mind you, she made dresses for herself and the girls from flour sacks and for the boys it was kaki pants and a white shirt. Now we were really dressed, and oh yeah, a new pair of shoes that could also double as work shoes later

We lived five miles from the nearest church and had no transportation until the war broke out. We went to church with a team and wagon so it took quite a while to make it to the building. Sometimes we would take lunch and stay over for the evening service and it was late when we got home. We still had to do the chores, milk the cows, feed the hogs, turn the stock out to pasture.

**I remember my parents.** My mother was a large framed woman but was tall and slender. I don't know that she ever owned a "store bought dress" in her life. But the thing I remember most about her were the smells of the kitchen, fresh baked bread, fried chicken and apple and rhubarb pie. She was a great cook. I suppose all mothers were back in those days.

My dad was a big man, over 6 ft and a stern taskmaster. He did not believe in "sparing the rod." From the time I can first remember I can tell you every whipping I got from him, and believe you me it would be considered "child abuse" today. He believed in the proverb "[Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; But the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.](#)" (Proverbs 22:15) but I have known for many years now that he did what was right. I could write a lot about the folks but I will stop here.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Smithson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

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January 26, 2011