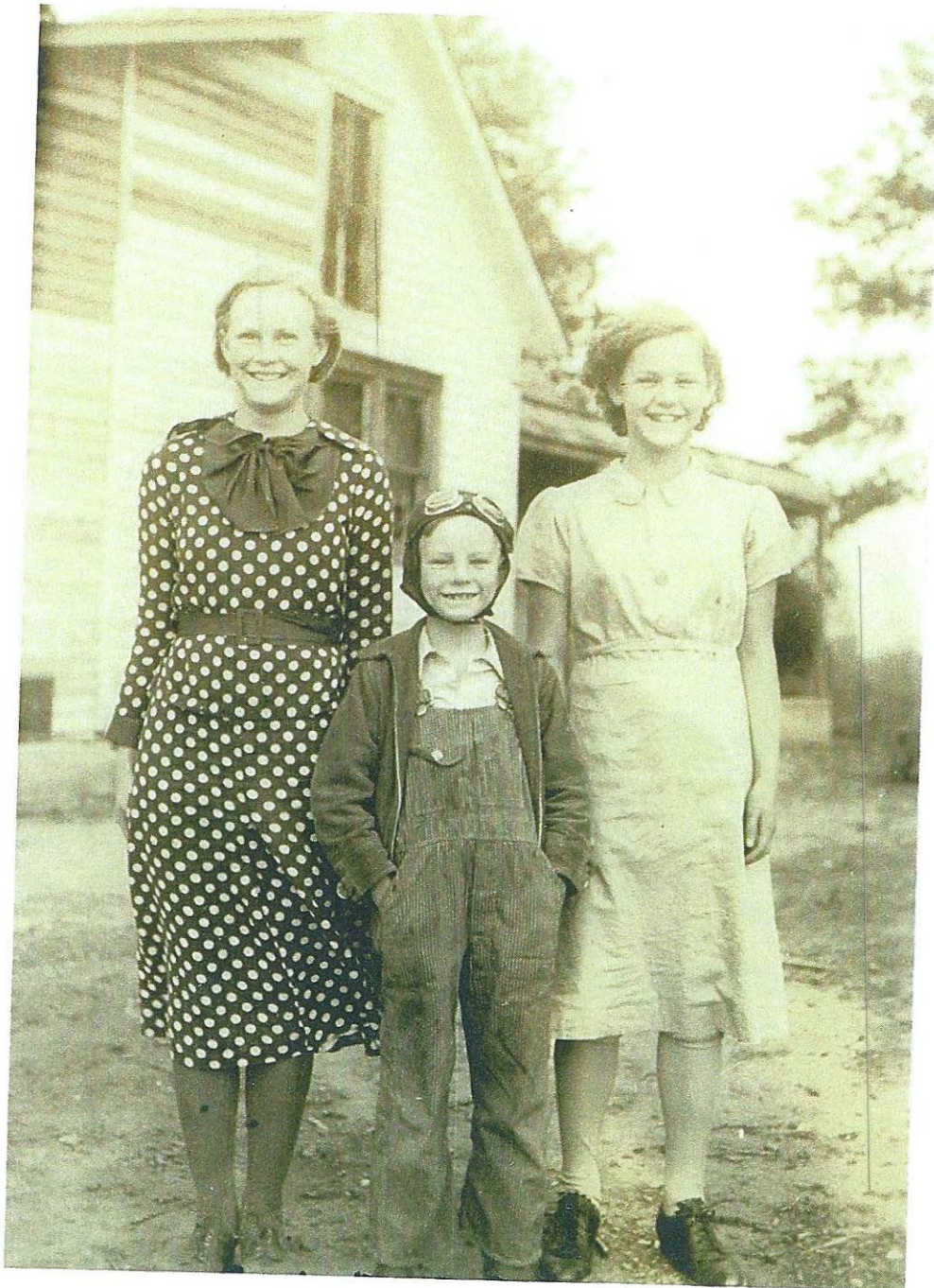


# Childhood Memories

*Wineva Spickard Pederson*



## Childhood Memories by Wineva Spickard Pederson

I was born Winifred Wineva Spickard, third child of John and Onetta Mae (Mageehon) Spickard. That was a good family to be born into! Many times my father ask us to take care of our "good name." It was more like a reprimand then, when I seemed bent on destroying or at least deeply tarnishing it! As an adult I came to understand and appreciate the value of having a "good name" as a gift of birth. Dad wasn't given to long explanations or perhaps I wasn't an attentive listener, anyhow, I grew from six years old to maturity at Spickard, Missouri and was only vaguely aware, during those years, of the historic connection of our family to the town name. I did, sometimes, during my high school years, take advantage of Dad's little joke: when queried if the town was named after me, I'd answer, "No, it was named first, I'm not that old"

My parents met and married very shortly after World War I. My mother's family may have been somewhat better off financially, more aristocratic, or perhaps just more reserved--whatever that means. By chance, both were members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), but in different congregations. They married in Grundy County; Missouri, but moved immediately to Neosho, Kansas. The first ten years of marriage were spent there, near Walnut, Kansas. These were happy years for them, four children were born, post-war years were good economically and they were able to start accumulating some of their furnishings and livestock. They rented a farm from Mr. Conard, acquired a herd of dairy cows and sold bottled milk. Mom had always liked helping with field work and chores as a girl at home so to help with milking and chores. When babies were born, there was a "hired-girl" to help with babies and housework. There were close friends--like and Bertha Smith--they did things with us, such as coon hunting. The children, Nova, Evelyn, and I started to school at Science Hill rural school. My nickname for Evelyn was Cess, a babyish pronunciation of Sis and I felt embarrassed to use that name among the schoolmates, but shy about changing to use her name. Our house was back from the road "up the lane a ways" so we met the Shook children at the end of the lane and

walked with them to Fager's (they were Catholic, so Mom didn't exactly approve of them), then we all walked together to school. I don't know how many children were in those families, but several, and they were especially good to me because I wasn't yet 5 years old when school opened. The older ones would carry me on their backs part of the way to school. Never, did we three children attend school in the same year because tragedy had already struck our family. In April 1928, the oldest son, Nova, was drowned in a little stream near that home. Mom was pregnant at that time with the youngest of our family, John Carr. He was born in October 1928. I have never begun to comprehend all the ways that the tragedy of that death shaped the lives of my parents, especially my mother. She seemed tense and always fearful of further loss.

The drowning was the first of several accidents that affected the Spickard family. In 1929, my grandfather, Roy, was in an automobile accident which broke his neck and caused him to be hospitalized for over a year. That and the stockmarket crash brought about the loss of their farm, machinery, and everything. Grandpa's family and our family all moved back to Missouri--back to Spickard, where there were other relatives and we sort of got together to endure through the Depression years of the thirties. Dad rented a farm from great grandma Moore. It had a square four room house: a kitchen, where we cooked, ate, and washed; a livingroom; and two bedrooms. A portion of the smaller bedroom was walled off to make space for a pantry and a small closet. Dad farmed with a team of horses: Maud, a mottled roan; and Pet, a salt and pepper grey. They continued to milk several cows, but separated the milk and sold the cream, and used the skim milk for hog and chicken feed. The milking and other chores had to be done every morning and evening and took about three or four hours every day. We had a rubber-tired wagon that was our means of transportation part of the time. Other times we had a Model T Ford car and could make trips to Grandma and Grandpa Mageehon's at Galt (about 20 miles away). When roads weren't muddy, we could go "cross-country", a much shorter route, but that meant going over some steep hills. Usually the old Ford would go only about half way up a hill, then all three children and Mom had to get out and push. That usually resulted in Mom "having it in the back" for the next several days. It also may have contributed to

the prolapsed uterus for which she was finally hospitalized and had corrected' with surgery. While Mom was hospitalized, her mother, Grandma Mageehon and bachelor brother, Kenneth, took care of us kids. They thought our eating habits were terrible. We always took more sorghum and jelly on our plates than we could eat and I'd pour thick cream on the hot oatmeal, then it would be so sticky and stringy I couldn't eat it.

That first year we lived in Missouri, Evelyn had lots of ear infections and it was determined she must have a tonsilectomy. They had my tonsils removed at the' same time so I wouldn't develop the same problems. Dad took Mom and we girls to Trenton where we spent the night at the rooming house where Mom's Uncle Nova lived, then entered the hospital early next morning. I can't recall if we stayed at the hospital afterwards. I recall the cost was \$30 each~ or both, I'm not sure. For me, it worked, I never had any major throat, ear, or sinus infections!

There were good times too, those depression years, while we lived on Grandma Moore's farm: Ma's Place. We children had a road for our trike and wagon that went all the way around the smokehouse, under a big locust tree--we built playhouses under the tree. I left my doll out and the hogs chewed it up; I hardly cared. We climbed in the old cherry tree and chewed its sap and learned to skin-the-cat on a limb of the apple tree. We argued over whose turn to walk down the lane to the mail box and whose turn to wash the cream separator. There were good hills for

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sledding and some little ponds and creeks for skating. We went through the field to school so long as the creek water was low (which was most of the time those drought years). When it wasn't, we had to walk all the way around the road and that was over two miles. The folks would invite one or another of the neighbors for Sunday dinner or they would invite us if it was their turn. In winter they played pitch or shared oyster stew. Dad really enjoyed the get-togethers. In summer there were last-day-of-school dinners and some picnics and sometimes a fish fry or ice cream supper. On summer Saturday nights we always went to town for the home talent shows or free movi~s sponsored by the local merchants. When the movie or program was over, Mom would go to the grocery store and do her "tradin", then we'd sit in the store and visit til it closed or go to the car (or wagon) and wait til

Dad was ready to go home. Dad spent his time Saturday evening "loafin" in the barber shop or sitting with the men on the curb or a sidewalk bench. I don't think he ever went to a tavern--to a pool hall sometimes, maybe. I was always amazed that we sat in the dark of the car waiting and would see someone coming down the street, Mom could tell if it was Dad "by the way he walked". We would get very impatient waiting, but Mom would say "He had to stay till the last dog's hung." Dad had another irritating habit. He would finish chores or whatever and clean up to go to town, then sit in the car and wait for Mom and the rest of us. Mom was never ready to go till much later so Dad sat in the car and occasionally honked and Mom, in the house, tried to hurry, but couldn't--it just wasn't her nature, she said--so she fumed. She invariably wished his next wife would be a "speed demon" (and she was a demon, I'm not sure how speedy).

During my growing years, I had lots of contact with grandparents and aunts and uncles and cousins. Until 1939, my brothers and sister and I were the only grandchildren of the Mageehons. Grandpa and Grandma always had us stay with them for two or three weeks as soon as school was out. Mom's brother Kenneth and Sister Dana were still living at home so we learned from them too. Lots of things were special at their house; they had electric lights and a radio. I heard popular music there for the first time and Amos and Andy and Fibber McGee and Molly. Their house was big with three bedroom upstairs that were a little scary to sleep in. Grandma and Dana did lots of sweeping and cleaning and dusting and ironing and taught us some too. There was a little filling station near their house called Toonerville. Grandpa gave us pennies to go buy candy sometimes. Grandma and Grandpa Spickard lived in Spickard from 1930 on and she worked very hard; Grandpa was left paralyzed on one side from the accident. He walked with a crutch, but could no longer work. Grandma was an excellent gardener and could and did can and preserve everything. They kept a cow to milk for their use and a little to sell. She would make butter ahead and salt it down for use when the cow was dry. Later, when I was in high school and after, I spent lots of time with Grandma doing her washing and Mom's washings together and helping her with whatever she had to do. Any time I stopped she'd say, "I'm so glad you come. I been wanting you to fix that old door or do some little job." She had a

way of needing every member of her large family and after Grandpa was gone, she tried to visit all her children and grandchildren. Family was most important to her and she made us know it.

I continue to stand amazed and praise God for the multitude of blessings He continually allows me: the blessings of heritage that I have touched on in this writing, and all the years since that have been and continue to be blessed by the love and care of a near-perfect husband and children and grandchildren that carry the promise of eternity.

*Written for Aunt Ruth Spickard Spaulding's Family Album  
by Wineva Spickard Pederson  
1985*

*Copies of the book were given to Eve, Denny, Sally, Steve & Alan.*



*Evelyn, Wineva and John Spickard with 4-H cow.*