Recreation or Play Time

I suppose all kid think of nothing but playing, and my growing up was the same. As I think back on those days I remember there were known games and there were creative games. I think I enjoy playing most when mother would play with us.

There were never any store bought toys except maybe on Xmas. There might be a Tom Mix or Lone Ranger cap gun for me and a doll for each of the girls. The girls all way got a black doll. Mother would help the girl make clothes for them. That was good for the girls because it taught them to sew. I'm sure it help Ruth. The size of family she had, she had to make clothes. She still do a lot of sewing. I don't no about Bessie Lee. She didn't take time to do anything but tear up and stir up trouble.

In winter when we could not go outside, or after school, we play jacks, pitty pat cards, and dominoes. We had Chinese checkers. All five of us would play at once. My Dad and I would play checkers while my mother and sisters play jacks. Some time we could get mother to play hide in seek. If there were snow we get old tubs, tires, boxes and use for sled. We would push each other and slide down the hill behind our house. If the water in the stream was froze hard enough we would skate on the icy stream. There was a lot more snow then now.

During the spring and summer it were plenty of outside game we did. We play stick ball. Mother would stuff rag in a sock. We would use broom stick for bat. We choose side—two against two. We call it stick ball or rag ball.

We would use old tires, what we call casings, ball ourself up into the casing and the other would roll us down a hill. We would take chopping hoe and push around like it was a car or truck. We made swing on a tree limb with rope or chain and tire. We climb trees—me and Bessie Lee. Ruth was more of a
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house girl. We did not have much trouble finding thing to do with Bessie Lee. She was tough as boot leather and would do any thing or get into any thing. Bessie Lee was the type that Mother had to watch her like a chickin watch a hawk. Bessie and I would catch grass hopper, tie the thread on their legs and hook a penny match box, and play like the grass hopper is a horse and the box a wagon. We would put as much dirt in the box as the grass hopper could pull. We catch butter fly, tie a string and paper on the leg, and turn it aloose and watch it fly away. We would take coat hanger and stiff wire, bend a hook in
the wire and roll little iron wheels. We would swing like monkey and play Tarzan in the mule barn. We play tag. One would touch the other, and the other had to tag you back or tag some one else. It was all way more fun when there were more kids just to see who got the last tag.

At night we would catch lightning bug and smear them on the wall or a post to make it look like a town. We would give the town a name. Depending on how many lightning bug you smear up would be the name of the town—like Plano, Dallas, McKinney, and so on. The bugs would die when we smeared them but the light would last a while.

Fishing was a good recreation, and us kids could play in the water, take small flat rock and throw them on the water to make them skate or skip on to see which one could make them go the farthest.

The older men like my Dad would have dog races. Men would gather together with gray hounds, go where the jack rabbit were, find one setting in the bed, line the dog up, and some one would ease up to the rabbit and scare it up. When it got a distance away the men would have made their bets and off the dog would go. When they unsnap the chain everybody would be hollering, Sick em, Go get em. There were much fun to have as a family.

Some of the best fun as a group was 19th June and picnic. There were plenty of kid to play with, ball game, racing, swimming, who could eat corn on the cob fastest, spitting water melon seeds. There were no prizes—just fun. When the country families got together it was friendly, and a lot to gossip about after the eating. Men got together for cards, dominoes, checkers, shooting at target with .22 rifles to see who could shoot the best. I think my Dad all way won.

The women would get together and me, I was the nosy type. I try to play with kids and slip around to see and hear
what the older one were talking about. The women would be saying thing like this, Girl, did you see so and so with so and so? Or, Child, did you no so and so is having another baby and it ain’t his either? Well, whose is it? I don’t no. It could be any body. She all way flirting with some body.

The men, on the other hand, would talk boxing, base ball, or how hard they would work harvesting grain in order to go to the June Teenth Shang Dang (good party). Some would say, Man, that white man work the hell out of us last week.

There was one big farm owner in the area would all way wait until just before June Teenth to start harvest grain just so the colored hands on his farm could not go to June Teenth.

There were all way a lot of fun at the June Teenth until some of the suppose to be city slick party goers drop in half drunk and try to start trouble, cursing, loud talk and just be known as plain old hell raising. Some time there would be fight brake out. It would not last long. The farm men would run them off. The June Teenth Shang Dang were held down in Dr. Dye woods along the White Rock Creek. The June Teenth finally play out until recent years whin the Blacks have started it going again.