Farming

One of the most beautiful thing I love about the farming was just about every part of the world I visit during the late forties and fifties, even some part of the world I saw in the sixties, the peoples were still using hand tool, ox and horses to work ther land. And that brought back my remember of those days of how we did our farming.

The large farm owner had lot of land any where from 200–300 acre or more. But only a portion were cleared enough for crops. During the winter men would clear trees. The bord’arc wood were hard and were use for house block, fence post and barn upright support. The farm worker used the soft wood for fire wood and halled it to Plano, sold it to make ends meet. In that way they could buy flour, sugar, garden seeds etc. Another thing, by more land being cleared it would mean more for the share cropper to have. Another good thing about it, the new land would produce great amount of crops. As the years pass on more land was cleared. Better crops were made. A lot of land was clear during the drought. I used to help saw the trees, stack wood into cords and drag bord’arc post and stack them.

I guess this is one reason I came back to the farm after growing up on the farm, clearing wood, tilling the rich soil and working the seed into the ground, watching them sprout through the earth. I don’t think there is nothing no more beautiful than watching a seed sprout, even with all the sweat that you put into the plants from working the tough ground to a soft smooth carpet like field. Even with the bloody hand that you would get from pulling the sharp blades of Johnson grass except a spot here and there that you would flat crop and dehead the grass and sack the tops. That mean you would cut the seeded heads of the grass, then chop and dig the grass up by the roots. That what you call flat chopping or flat weeding.
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Once you had chop and thin the rows of cotton or corn, it would out grow the grass. All you had to do is watch the beautiful growth until harvest.

This mean not only bloody fingers from the sharp burrs, but blister and bloody knees from crawling on the hot soft ground. Sometime knees slipping in dry crack, skin the side of the knees and legs. Even the bare toes would be blister from the hot dirt while on your knees to rest a tired aching back. Sometime no shoes or the toe worn out.

But all in all we made it. After all the harvest was over women would have time to go fishing and play or visit each
other, some time getting up early in the morning, get dinner ready, and walk for three or four miles to visit. Whin the women would get together you could hear thing like this. Child, I'm so glad all that cotton is out. I had to work like the dickens this year. And I'm show gonner enjoy this time of year and make my self a treat with the little extry money I made. This is one time I gonner get my self some new shoes and enough cloth to make me some thing decent to wear to church. It was hard work, but we made a good crop this year.

These was the good years in the late thirties after the dust and sand storms and coming out of the Depression. I remember Dad and my uncle and other men sitting around talking about how good the crops was this year. Dad would say, I guess Ray made some more this year. We went down to the mule barn last week. Ray bought two or three working mules and we breeded four mares. He said something about he might get a tractor. Some one would say, Is that right? Then my Uncle Ronney said, I don't care how many datburn tractor he get, I ain't gonner drive one of dem thing. I'll stick to my team.

Well, I can tell you this. As long as I can remember while Uncle Ronney was with Ray he did not drive a tractor. He move to Clint Haggard about the same time I and my famley left Ray. I visit Uncle Ronney in the middle fifties and he was still plowing with a team of mule. Any way Ray got the tractor and Dad was the only one drove the tractor, an Iron Lug Wheel Farmal. Dad learn me how to drive it and all summer I would brake ground with it.

The house work, yard work and garden work were left to the women and children, black or white. Also the chopping of the grassy field. While chopping, there may be one old man to keep the hoe sharp. Kid who hall the water was call the water boy. There used to be a song the worker sing about the water boy.
Hey, Water Boy
Where is dat water?
I'm so thirsty I can cry.
If you don't hurry Water Boy,
I may die.

Dad would plow the garden real good, completely
pulverizing it to a smooth silky like ground. But no men I no of
work the garden except to cover and dig the Irish potatoes with
the team of mule and with a one man middle buster. Mom
would all way open up the garden rows or punch holes in the
ground for the seed, and would all way let me put the seed out.
She said kids had a growing hand and she would show us kid
how to put seed out. Ruth was very good. Sometimes I put too
many out. Mom would give Bessie Lee one or two seed. She
would tell Bessie Lee, Girl, you get over yonder and set down
somewhere. I ain't got no seed to waste.

Once the seed was up we keep the weeds and grass out the
same way we did cotton and corn. And whin the garden were
ready to harvest, as I said before, Mom would say, Tomorrow is
garden day. Got to pick beans. So you kid got to get a good
night sleep. Next morning after breakfast and some time before
breakfast, off to the garden we go. Mom fix Dad coffee and
breakfast. We all got our little bucket and go. Once we got the
garden food gather, we usual wash it at the creek by the well
and spring on our way back to the house. Then start shelling
bean for canning purpose.

This was still the years before the forties and the garden
crops were just as good as the field. In fact most time the
garden were better because we took great care of each plant.
There is nothing as beautiful as planting a seed, then watch it
pop out of the ground—a sprig, to the first two leave, to the
bush, to the bud, to the bloom, to the fruit. The harvest part is gathering and preserving, cooking it to taste. The easy part is placing it on the table and eating it. That mean smacking down on a spoon full of fresh green bean and potatoes and licking your chops. Every time I think of the plant growing from seed to fruit, I think it is as beautiful as the birth of a baby and watching it grow to a successful young man or woman.