Millie and Ed Diner

Whin I began to write this story, I was thinking and often wonder, Would any one or any body be interest in what really happen to black famlelys during the 1930s whin the Depression and dust bole? I thought my grand and grate grand kids might read a history book some day and would like to no what happen and how we made it through the thirties out on a farm ten miles north of Plano along Preston Road in Collin County.

Up until this day and time I've been through one Depression as a young boy who no how good gravy and home made biscus was. Down on the farm it was not about what or who you were, it was all about who had what and how much who had. I can remember very well what was in our kitchin or out in the garden, and chickin and turkey in the yard. I also can remember during those years of Depression, my home were like a farm house cafe the way folk would come and go or stop by and get some syrup and bread or a bowl of beans.

I remember a bus with about fifteen peoples on it turn over right at our gate where we turn onto Preston Road. It was about 1937 and the ground was cover with snow and it was cold. About 9:30 or 10:00 one night a knock on the door came. Dad answer and there stood a white man. Dad let him in, and he told us his bus had turn over but no body was hurt. So Dad went back to the bus with the man. And boy, was mom scared that the man was lying, and she really just did not no what to do. She got the gun and load it, huddle us kid in a corner, and watch the door, turning out the light. She said, I guess Eddie is OK. I don't hear no shooting.

Dad all way carried his pistol with him. Any way, a few minute later we hear a lot of talking. Then the knock on the door and a call came: Millie, open the door. It me—Eddie!

The door open and in walk fifteen white women and men,
half frozen to death. There were two or three kid and a baby. Mother started throwing more wood on the fire. Dad put a big pot of coffee on the living room stove. Mom went to the kitchin and got the cook stove going. By the time every body got warm, mom had the table set with egg, bacon, dry salt, sausage, and biscus. They all ate and Mom begin to place every body in a sleeping place. The kid pile in the bed with us, two or three men in my bed, and women in bed with mother. The rest sit up all night nodding in chairs.

Dad kept the fire and coffee going all night. The next day brake, Dad got out and caught a team of horses. He and the men went to set the bus back on the road, come back to the house, and ate breakfast. They took up a collection for Mom. The bus driver paid Dad twenty-five dollar and they left.

The reason I put this story here is to point out that mother never turn any one away from her door, especial whin they were hungry. And this is why I can give my mother and father high praises for being good providers. So, during the Depression we had and we gave. Because dad didn’t mind wrapping his holey boots with grass sacks and tromping out in the snow to kill some bird or squirrel or rabbit. Dad didn’t mind getting out and plowing in the freezing weather to make that dollar to pay for flour and meal to be ground for food. And Mom was no diffrence. She didn’t mind wrapping us kid up and go scrap the little cotton left on a burr, or walking for five mile to do house work for a cupple of doller.

So this is why we as a famley during the Depression was happy. I really consider those were some of the best day of my growing up years. Remember, there were no money during the Depression, but you don’t all way have to have money to help some one or take a can of food to the give away food bank at church for Buckner’s Orphans Home.

Time were tough for many farm and city people, but it was
peoples like mom and dad that kept a lot of people from getting “miss meal cramps.” So I don’t doubt that some where on that road to glory you might see a sign say:

Millie and Eddie Diner
Open around the clock

Menu for today
Breakfast
Bacon or sausage
Gravy with homemade biscus

Lunch
Red bean with fat back
Corn bread

Dinner
Black bird dumplin
Or rabbit stewe
Corn bread