

## Memories of a Former Kid

By Bill Wade

(Condensed from a presentation that he gave in a local school)

I was born in 1923. We lived on a little “two mule farm.” We had no electric, bath, or running water. We had outside toilets and we used catalogue (pages) for toilet paper. I did not even own a tooth brush.

I was in the second grade in 1930 when a big depression hit our country. The shops and factories closed which meant that there were no jobs or ways to get money. Many people were going hungry. Lots of men left their families to go look for work. Our family had cows, pigs, and chickens. We raised a big garden, picked wild berries, and did some hunting so we never were hungry. My dad would make us work this big garden. I had no shoes to wear in the summer time. They cost \$2.00. I had to help harvest the wheat and oats in my bare feet. It hurt my feet and I said (that) if I could ever afford shoes I would never go barefoot, and (I) never do. My dad would take a lot of (food) to Warren, Ohio, to the (poor) section and give it away because the people were hungry. I thought he was stupid for doing that then, later I knew he was right.

My junior year, I worked on a turkey farm. I would get up about 5:00 AM, put the harnesses on a large team of work horses, and take a wagon load of feed to the turkey range. In (my) senior year it was dairy farm. I was the first kid in (my) class to own a car. I bought an old Chevy for \$35.00. I (had) sold a calf that I had raised for the money.

After graduation, with about 25 kids in my class, I got a job at a construction company for seventy-five cents an hour. It was dirty and hard work and after a couple of months I quit and joined the Navy. (I was in the Navy) for six years. I went to boot camp and after that to a Ford Motor Company school of engineering and machinists. I was there when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

When I finished the course, I was assigned to the Battleship U.S.S. New Mexico. I was in the engineering division and like it very much. I went to Pearl Harbor (and) what a mess it was. Black oil and debris was everywhere. (After that), the ship went out to the Fiji Islands so that we could protect Australia. From (there) we went to the Alution Islands to protect Alaska. While there, we destroyed the main Jap stronghold. The ship was involved in most all of the conflicts in the South Pacific. It was hit a number of times by Jap suicide planes who killed about one hundred sailors. It shot down approximately 25 suicide planes. The closest I came to getting killed was (while) playing cards on deck. A suicide plane came in shooting. We rolled under a big gun for cover and (plane) shot up our cards. After the war, I was on a destroyer and hunted hurricanes and performed rescue missions. I liked the Navy (and) got a good education by being in it.

During my working years, I had the chance to travel to numerous countries (and) to see how people in other parts of the world lived. Please believe me, there is no place in the world as good (or) nice as our country. America the beautiful, in lots of ways. Folks might gripe about the politics or the price of gasoline but just remember there is nothing perfect, but this is the best.

As you go on in life, there is going to be a big door in front of you. On the other side of that door is a wonderful life. Walk up to that door. Push it or kick it open and go through. Get your education and grasp the many wonderful opportunities this great land has to offer. God Bless You.

This is a poem that Bill Wade really liked. He would pour some of the coffee out of his cup and into the saucer to cool it off, then drink it from the saucer.

## Drinking From My Saucer

I've never made a fortune,  
It's probably too late now.  
Oh, but I don't worry about that much,  
'Cause I'm happy anyhow.

As I go along life's journey,  
I'm reaping better than I sowed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

Ain't got a lot of riches,  
Sometimes the going's rough.  
But I've got a friend in Jesus,  
And that makes me rich enough.

I thank God for all His Blessings on me,  
And the mercy that He's bestowed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

Oh sure, I've been thru some storms,  
And yes, I'm sure there were times when my,  
Well, my Faith must have got a little thin,  
But you know what it seemed like?  
One day all at once, those dark clouds broke,  
And that old sun, she started shinin' again.

So Lord, help me not to grumble and complain,  
About the tough rows I have hoed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

And if I should go on living,  
If the way gets steep and rough.  
I won't ask for other Blessings,  
'Cause I'm already Blessed enough.

May I never be too busy,  
To help another bear his load.  
And I'll keep drinking from my saucer, Lord,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

Yes, I'll keep drinkin' from my saucer, Lord,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

My Cup Has Overflowed.

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