

THRESHING ON THE FARM

Threshing on the farm was great days. Great because of the fantastic meals served by the wives of the farmers. I can still remember the last meal and where it was, and I was not very old. But I grew up some and instead of carrying water to the hands, I became a hand.

The process began with the planting of the wheat and watching it grow into the golden harvest. The old wheat binder would bind together a bundle of wheat and then we walked through the wheat fields gathering these bundles and standing them up into a large shock (about 12-15 bundles).

Then came time for the threshing. This was a time best described as a threshing ring where several farmers in our area gathered together for several days on one of their farms to thresh their wheat. Everybody helped everybody.

The big old threshing machine was pulled onto each farm by a big steam engine and was placed in a location where each farmer wanted his straw to be blown. While this was happening, the farmers with several wagons pulled by horses would go to the wheat fields and load the bundles onto the wagons. They would then drive the "BIG" loads of wheat bundles to the threshing machine.

At the threshing machine, each wagon load was pulled up as close as possible to the off-loading chute and the bundles were thrown off directly into the chute with the head of the bundle going in first. (The head of the bundle was the part with the grain.)

The bundles went into the threshing machine where the grain was separated and the straw was blown out and into an eventual big stack. The separated grain flowed out of the machine and was caught in sacks or in wagon loads.

Then the best part happened---the big meals. I just can't seem to get past these big meals. You'd remember them too if you had been there.

Some of the highlights which I remember, which I am sure everyone involved remembers, was the job of loading (stacking) the wheat onto the wagons out in the fields. I eventually got old enough that this became one of my jobs. What I remember is that they, those who pitched it onto the wagons, just kept pitching and pitching until the wagon was so loaded and so high that I became very concerned that I would get it to the thresher without it turning over.

You have to remember that the fields were rough with ruts and furrows from plowing and the driving of each wagon pulled by horses was sometimes a rather frightening experience. But I never once spilled a load. But I still remember to this day the feeling.

Another important aspect of this event was how the farmers all worked together, day after day, until all the farmers' wheat had been threshed. It was a special time of caring and sharing, of knowing what true community fellowship was really like.

The world of today is far different and will probably never know the true meaning of sharing an experience like a "threshing crew" or sharing a threshing dinner.

Today we are too busy to ever know again the meaning of sharing a relationship with such importance. They not only worked together, they were a community together.

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April 21,2008