

Not all stories are published as soon as they are written and some take longer to write than others. **Robert McCloskey** spent a full year writing the 1,142 words in *Make Way for Ducklings*. **E.B. White** thought about and revised *Stuart Little* for nearly 15 years. But *Where the Red Fern Grows*, by Wilson Rawls, is the only children's book I know that was completely burned before publication because of embarrassment by its author—after he'd spent nearly 20 years writing it!

Along with *Call of the Wild*, by Jack London, and Eric Knight's *Lassie Come-Home*, *Where the Red Fern Grows* is one of the great American dog stories. And like those other books, *Red Fern* is about far more than a dog. It's about a boy and his overwhelming dream to own a dog, it's about family life in the rural Ozark mountains in the early part of this century, and it's about hunting—which means it's about death, too.

But as much as anything it is about (Woodrow) Wilson Rawls, who said the book—with one or two exceptions—is a portrait of his boyhood in dirt-poor Scrapper, Oklahoma. There were no schools available, so Wilson's mother taught her son and daughters at home as best she could. When the family moved to an area with schools, he attended for a few years until the Great Depression struck and he dropped out.

But during the years when his mother taught school at home, she'd made a practice of reading to her children. At first young "Woody" wasn't too interested in the books.

Cover of Rawls
compact disc

He thought all books
were *girl* stories
until . . .



"I thought all books were about 'Little Red Riding Hood' and 'Chicken Little'—*girl* stories!" he said. "Then one day Mama brought home a book that changed my life. It was a story about a man and a dog—Jack London's *Call of the Wild*."

"After we finished reading the book, Mama gave it to me. It was my first real treasure and I carried it with me wherever I went and read it every chance I got." Climbing river banks and chasing raccoons through the woods, he began to dream of writing a book like *Call of the Wild*. But being too poor to even buy paper and pencils, he never dreamed that



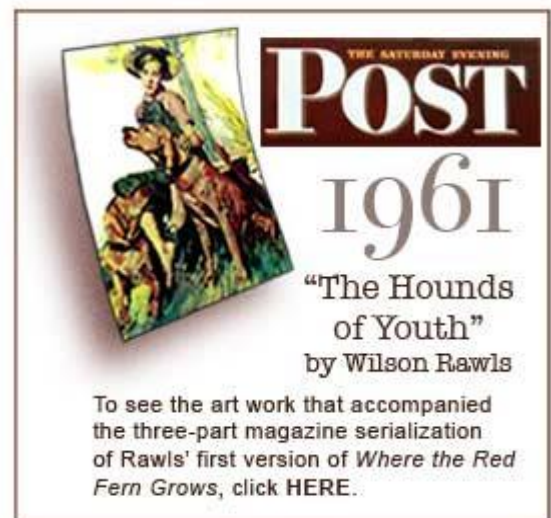
someday there would be thousands of children who would carry his book around as though it, too, was a treasure.

Beginning as a teenager, "Woody" bounced from place to place as an itinerant carpenter and handyman. He worked on construction jobs in South America and Canada, the Alcan Highway in Alaska. And along the way he began to write stories. But without formal classroom training, his spelling and grammar kept them unsold. Each one represented a broken dream and was hidden away in a trunk.

And then, just before he finally married and, not wanting Sophie, his wife-to-be, to know about his failed dreams, he took the old manuscripts from the trunk and burned them. Eventually his wife learned of the burned manuscripts and asked him to write one of them again. Hesitantly, he rewrote *Where the Red Fern Grows*—35,000 words—in three weeks of non-stop unpunctuated writing. When he was done, he left the house, unable to witness Sophie's disappointment. Hours later, he telephoned for her opinion.

"Woody, this is marvelous. Come home and work on it some more and we'll send it to a publisher," she said. Since Sophie had formal education, she polished up Woody's spelling and grammar and together they ventured into publishing.

Their first triumph was in selling it to the *Saturday Evening Post*, where *Lassie Come-Home* had been serialized 20 years earlier. Rawls work was serialized in three parts and when Doubleday editors saw it they recognized the potential for a book. At first it sold very slowly and almost went out of print—largely because it was being marketed as an **adult** novel, not children's. But once teachers and students experienced it, they began a word-of-mouth publicity campaign in the late '60s that boosted sales and, with the arrival of the Bantam paperback edition, it has been a perennial favorite ever since.



Wilson Rawls wrote one more book, *Summer of the Monkeys* (Doubleday/Dell) before he died in 1984 at the age of 71. Like *Red Fern*, it has legions of followers. *Where the Red Fern Grows* is also available as a recorded book. The film of the book was narrated briefly by Wilson Rawls in the 1970s, but he had nothing to do with the movie/video sequel or with the new video, neither of which have enjoyed critical success.

Causes of the Great Depression

Introduction

The Great Depression was a global financial crisis that consumed most of the developed world throughout the 1930s. While the first real indications of its onset can be seen at the end of 1929, most countries did not feel its true effects until 1930 or later. When it ended also varied from country to country but signs of recovery were seen in the late 1930s, with things looking up for most economies by 1940.

Importantly, although the Wall Street Crash – which took place in October 1929 – is often seen as an interchangeable term for the Great Depression, this event is simply one of the causes. The Great Depression may have come soon after the collapse of the stock market but this does not mean it happened because of it; there are many other factors at play that resulted in a more far-reaching economic crisis.

Overproduction

One of the critical faults that led to the Great Depression was overproduction. This was not just a problem in industrial manufacturing, but also an agricultural issue. From as early as the middle of the 1920s, American farmers were producing far more food than the population was consuming. As farmers expanded their production to aid the war effort during [WWI](#) they also mechanized their techniques, a process which both improved their output but also cost a lot of money, putting farmers into debt. Furthermore, land prices for many farmers dropped by as much as 40 per cent – as a result, the agricultural system began to fail throughout the 20s, leaving large sections of the population with little money and no work. Thus, as demand dropped with increasing supply, the price of products fell, in turn leaving the over-expanded farmers short-changed and farms often foreclosed. This saw unemployment rise and food production fall by the end of the 1920s.

While agriculture struggled, industry soared in the decade preceding the Wall Street Crash. In the 'boom' period before the 'bust', a lot of people were buying things like cars, household appliances and consumer products. Importantly, however, these purchases were often made on credit. And as production continued apace the market quickly dried up; too many products were being produced with too few people earning enough money to buy them – the factory workers themselves, for example, could not afford the goods coming out of the factories they worked in. The economic crisis that soon would engulf Europe for reasons to be explained, meant that goods could not be sold across the Atlantic either, leaving America's industries to create an unsustainable surplus of products.



African Americans line up for food in flood-hit Louisville at the height of the Great Depression in 1937

Wall Street Crash

Black Tuesday – 29 October 1929 – was the day the US stock market crashed, an event which

profoundly resonated not just in America but around the developed world. The boom of the stock market, one of the first real examples of modern capitalist economy, was largely built around speculation; investors would typically buy stock that they believed was going to rise quickly and when it did they would sell their stocks. Furthermore, many people bought stocks on credit – the investor only required to have five per cent of the value of the stocks they bought, with the rest being supplied by a loan – this buying on credit is otherwise known as ‘buying on margin’.

In March 1929, when many of the middle classes who had a lot invested in the market, suddenly became nervous and sold their stock, there was a mini-crash. This highlighted the weak foundations of Wall Street.

While the market recovered to record highs in early September 1929, it was not to last – on 20 September the London Stock Exchange crashed again and this truly tested the nerve of investors. A month later, on 24 October, mass panic saw the market lose 11 per cent of its value before trading had even begun. This resulted in a perpetuating state of panic and in the following five days until Black Tuesday (29 October) people sold their stock in massive quantities– on Black Monday and Black Tuesday alone the market lost \$30 billion, triggering a collapse of the stock market and with it much of America’s economic structure.

International impact of the Depression

European recession

As America witnessed a turbulent decade of boom and bust in the 1920s and early 30s, Europe too suffered from its own economic problems.

Most of the economies were left crippled by the effects of WWI, which had seen the workforces depleted and large amounts of debt incurred, mainly owed to the US. When America's economy faltered and it needed money to prevent its ongoing deflation, it called on Britain and France (among other countries) to repay their debts while also making Germany pay the war reparations it had been left with as a result of the Treaty of Versailles.

The fragile economies of Western Europe were not able to survive without the money they had relied on from the US. As lending from across the Atlantic stopped and President Herbert Hoover requested the debts to be repaid, these European economies suffered a similar fate as their wartime allies. None of these countries were able to buy America's consumer goods, a problem exacerbated by the fact that America raised tariffs on imports to an all-time high, which all but ended world trade at a time when trade and economic stimulus was needed the most.

European economies collapsed when they were already struggling to rebuild themselves; unemployment levels rose, products became overproduced with fewer people able to buy them, the value fell, and deflation ensued as the economic structure collapsed in on itself. This pattern, first seen in America, spread to much of the developed world.

Hoover's failures

The the Great Depression was the result of a multitude of socio-economic factors over a number of years, not one single event. As such, the finger of blame has often been pointed at Herbert Hoover, President of the US from 1929-1933. Hoover's policies and actions – and he did work hard to try find a solution to the economic problems – are often argued to have worsened the issue around the world, with not enough being done to prevent the crisis in America getting to the scale it did. Moreover, his decisions then impacted on other Western countries, which is what brought the depression to a truly 'great' level.

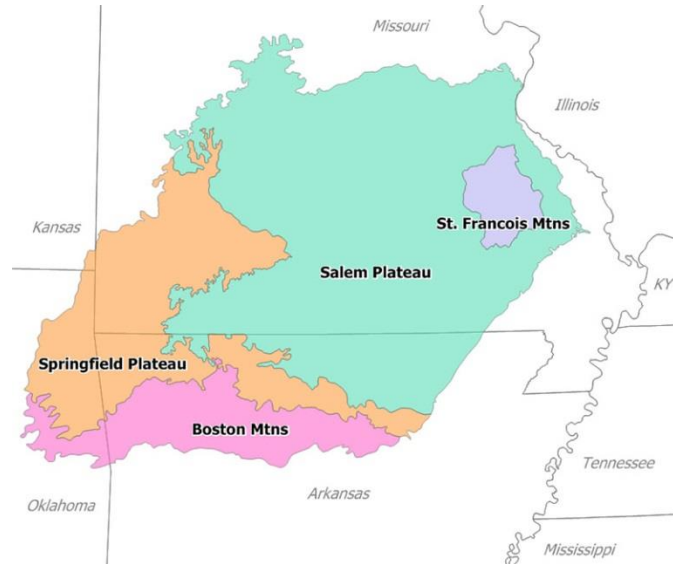
Although he did try launching initiatives and investing money back into schemes to encourage lending and unemployment –something he often is not credited with enough – these tend to be seen as being too little, too late. His decision to increase tariffs on imports through the Smoot-Hawley tariff stifled trade with other countries and shrank the size of the market American manufacturers could sell to. Furthermore, under Hoover the federal government raised its discount rate, making credit even harder to come by. Other actions he took also came too late – plans made in 1932 could not do enough to bail out banks and put people back in work as the depression had fully taken effect.

The gold standard

The decision to return to and then stick with the gold standard after WWI by Western nations is often cited as a key factor in the outbreak of the Great Depression. The gold standard is a system in which money is fixed against an actual amount of gold. In order for it to work, countries need to maintain high interest rates to attract international investors who bought foreign assets with gold. When this stops, as it did at the start of the 1930s, governments often must abandon the gold standard to prevent deflation from worsening – but when this decision had to be made by all countries in order to maintain fixed exchange rates it wasn't, and the delay in abandoning the gold standard let economic problems worsen and the size and scale of the Great Depression increased.

The Ozarks

The Ozarks, also referred to as the Ozark Mountains, Ozarks Mountain Country, covers much of the southern half of Missouri and an extensive portion of northwestern and north central Arkansas. The region also extends westward into northeastern Oklahoma and extreme southeastern Kansas.



Although referred to as the Ozark Mountains, the region is actually a high and deeply dissected plateau. Geologically, the area is a broad dome around the Saint Francois Mountains. The Ozark Highlands area, covering nearly 47,000 square is by far the most extensive mountainous region between the Appalachians and the Rocky Mountains.

Traditional economic activity



Sly Mill, a grist and saw mill on Spring River in the Springfield Plateau, c. 1860

The Ozarks contain ore deposits of lead, zinc, iron and barite. Many of these deposits have been depleted by historic mining activities, but much remains and is currently being mined in the Lead Belt of southeast Missouri. Historically the lead belt around the Saint Francois Mountains and the Tri-state district lead-zinc mining area around Joplin, Missouri, have been very important sources of metals. Mining practices common in the early 20th century left significant abandoned underground mine problems and heavy metal contamination in topsoil and groundwater in the Tri-state district.

Much of the area supports beef cattle ranching and dairy farming is common across the area. Dairy farms are usually cooperative affairs, with small farms selling to a corporate wholesaler

who packages product under a common brand for retail sales. Petroleum exploration and extraction also takes place in the Oklahoma portion of the Ozarks, as well as in the east half of the Boston Mountains in Arkansas. Logging of both softwood and hardwood timber species on both private land and in the National Forests has long been an important economic activity.

The majority of the Ozarks is forested; oak-hickory is the predominant type; Eastern Junipers are common, with stands of pine often seen in the southern range. Less than a quarter of the region has been cleared for pasture and cropland.

The numerous rivers and streams of the region saw hundreds of water powered timber and grist mills. Mills were important centers of culture and commerce; dispersed widely throughout the region, mills served local needs, often thriving within a few miles of another facility. Few Ozark mills relied on inefficient water wheels for power; most utilized a dam, millrace and water turbine.

Native American Presence

Cherokee County is a county located in the U.S. state of Oklahoma. As of the 2010 census, the population was 46,987. Its county seat is Tahlequah, which is also the capital of the Cherokee Nation,

According to a historian, Cherokee County was established in 1907. However, the *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, states that it was created from the Tahlequah District of the Cherokee Nation in 1906.^[3]

The Cherokee moved to this area as a result of the forced relocation brought about by the Indian Removal Act of 1830, also known as Trail Of Tears. The first significant settlements were at the site of Park Hill, where there was already a mission community, and Tahlequah, which became the seat of Cherokee government. However the Civil War divided the tribe and caused many of the early structures to be destroyed. Non-Indians began moving into the area illegally starting in the mid-1870s, and became the majority by the 1890s.^[3]

In 1851, the Cherokee Male Seminary opened in Tahlequah and the Cherokee Female Seminary opened in Park Hill. The latter burned down in 1887 and was rebuilt in Tahlequah. A 1910 fire destroyed the Male Seminary. The Female Seminary became Northeastern State Normal School after statehood in 1907 and is now part of Northeastern State University.^[3]

During 1901 – 1903, The Ozark and Cherokee Central Railway, which later became part of the St. Louis and San Francisco Railway was the first to build a track in the county. It boosted the shipment of farm products through the 1920s, but declined during the Great Depression. All rail service ceased in 1942

Your Ozarks Vacation Travel Guide

If you've never visited Southern Missouri and Northern Arkansas -- the Ozark Mountains -- you're in for a treat.

Of course, if you've been here and are planning another vacation, you know how much there is to do and see.

Southwest-- home of Springfield and Branson. Bass Pro Shops and the Springfield Cardinals. Wilson's Creek Battlefield National Park. Branson's Theater District. Dining, shopping, antiques, galleries. Caves, national forests, historic sites, fishing and water sports.

Northwest-- hills are higher and the roads are twistier than in Southern Missouri making them a natural for motorcycle and bike rides. Clean air, sparkling lakes and rivers, natural forest land, and cities and towns with appealing attractions, dining and lodging await you here. Eureka Springs with its Victorian architecture and art colony. Bentonville to Fayetteville, and all the excitement of the busy I-540 corridor communities. Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Lakes and rivers.

North Central -- a rural, timeless landscape embellished with rivers and lakes, historic sites, caves, and towns that offer amenities like dining and lodging, from the rustic to the luxurious. An outdoor enthusiast's dream.



The Ozark Plateaus are a heavily eroded dome of ancient sedimentary beds in southern Missouri, northern Arkansas and northeastern Oklahoma. They form a broader highlands province with the Ouachita Mountains just south across the Arkansas Valley. The gorge-cut hills and tables of the Ozarks, with their shortleaf pines, oaks and hickories, bears and waterfalls, offer some of the finest outdoor scenery and recreation in the country.

Mountains

The Ozark Plateaus and the adjoining Ouachita Mountains are the most significant highlands in the south-central U.S., highly reminiscent of portions of the Appalachians but with a delight all

their own. Deeply dissected plateaus define much of the Ozarks, with escarpments, knobs and crags among the striking landforms. The highest summits lie in the Boston Mountains of northern Arkansas and a small portion of adjacent Oklahoma -- peaks here reach about 2,500 feet in elevation. The Boston Mountains serve as headwaters for many of the region's great rivers. Northeast of the Boston Mountain range, in southeastern Missouri, the St. Francois Mountains include several domes and ridges above 1,500 feet.

Wilderness

The ruggedness of the Ozarks and their forests offer visitors premier wilderness adventure of the sort rare in other corners of the region. The U.S. Forest Service protects a number of roadless areas in the Mark Twain and the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests. In the Hercules-Glades Wilderness of Missouri, for example, you'll enjoy limestone gorges and prairies amid mixed woods. In the rugged oak-hickory forests of the Upper Buffalo Wilderness in Arkansas' Boston Mountains, you'll see evidence of former settlements in remote drainage areas.

Outdoor Recreation

The Ozarks beckon hikers, backpackers, campers, boaters and other outdoor enthusiasts. The Ozark Trail, still under construction, already offers more than 360 miles of hiking opportunities in the Ozarks of Missouri. It may eventually join with the similarly extensive Ozark Highlands Trail in Arkansas for a truly outstanding trekking network. Kayakers, canoeists and whitewater rafters have beautiful and wild rivers to cruise. The Buffalo River, which rises in the Boston Mountains and empties into the White River, is a federally designated national river, and one of the best destinations for wilderness boating.

Wildlife

The Ozark highlands provide substantial refuge for many animal species and offer good wildlife-watching opportunities for the sharp-eyed and diligent. Once virtually hunted to extinction in the area, American black bears have, with the help of reintroductions and other conservation efforts, rebounded into the healthy thousands. They roam the rugged breaks and plateaus, feasting on tree nuts, grubs, berries, shoots and the occasional piglet or fawn. Bobcats and coyotes are common and widespread carnivores, though often elusive. Feral hogs, descendents of both introduced European wild boar and free-roaming domestic pigs, are well established; they are the formidable, highly omnivorous "razorbacks" of local renown and infamy, posing a threat to a variety of native species. Elk graze in valley meadows along the Buffalo National River. As an important ecological frontier, the Ozarks shelter a few species more associated with the Southwest, including roadrunners and collared lizards.

Coonhounds



Redbone Coonhound
Owned By: Bob Girdner



Redbone Coonhound -
Tater
Age: 1 year, Owned By:
Shawna Carter



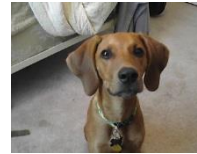
Redbone Coonhound -
Rusty
Age: 3 months, Owned
By: Felicia Lewellen



Redbone Coonhound -
Rusty
Age: 2 weeks, Owned
By:



Redbone Coonhound -
Dudley
Age: 1 year, Owned By:
Jason Lilly



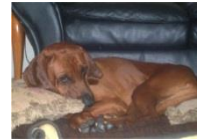
Redbone Coonhound -
Hunter
Age: 6 months, Owner:
Amanda & Billy Gaines



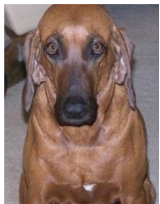
Redbone Coonhound -
Buddy
Age: 11 years, Owned
By: Gary Lindeen



Redbone Coonhound -
Rebel
Age: 8 months, Owned
By: Tom Collier



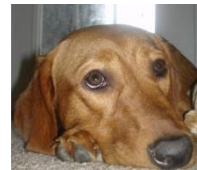
Redbone Coonhound -
Sam
Age: 3 years, Owned By:
Jessica Estes



Redbone Coonhound -
Ellie
Age: 4 years, Owned By:
Ian Mason



Redbone Coonhound -
Hogan
Age: 6 months, Owned
By: Hattie



Redbone Coonhound -
Candie
Age: 10 months, Owned
By: Jennifer Rich

Coon Hunting Terms

Babbler: A dog that barks as soon as it is released even when there is no scent or track.

Backtrack: Trailing a raccoon in the opposite direction which it is headed.

Bawl: The long drawn out bark of a coon hound.

Bay: The bawl or bark that a coon hound uses when it has game cornered on the ground.

Broke: A dog that will chase raccoons and nothing else. (Very rare if not non-existent!)

Caged coon: A live raccoon in a cage used to help train coon hound pups.

Changeover: The change in a coon hound's bark when it stops trailing and starts treeing.

Chop: Short bark, usually tree barking.

Close hunter: A dog that hunts within 100 yards of you.

Cold nosed: Referring to a dog that works old tracks.

Dam: Mother.

Deep Hunter: See "Wide hunter" below.

Finished Hound: Can mean either a fully trained dog , or a Grand Nite Champion.

Grand Nite Champion: Title earned in UKC competitions.

Gyp: A female coon hound.

Handler: Person responsible for a dog in competition.

Hot nose: Dogs that will run fresh tracks.

Judge: Person keeping time and recording scores in a UKC competition.

Junk: Any game other than raccoons, also off game or trash.

Lay up: A raccoon that has been up in a tree for an extended period.

Locate: The bark a coon hound gives when ending his trail and picking the tree with the raccoon in it.

Off game: Anything other than raccoons, also junk or trash.

Open: To bark on track.

Pressure tree hound: A coon hound that will not leave a tree.

Poll Cat: Referring to a skunk.

Pup trainer: A straight, good natured coon hound that will allow pups to join in the hunt for raccoons.

Silent: A coon hound that does not bark on trail.

Sire: Father.

Slick Tree: A tree that a coon hound picked that has no raccoon in it.

Strike: The first bark that a coon hound lets out when a track is found.

Tight Mouth: A hound that does not bark much when running a track.

Tracking collar: A collar with a radio transmitter used to locate coon hounds when out of hearing or not barking.

Tree: To sit at the base of a tree and bark up.

UKC: United Kennel Club, primary registry for coon hounds.

Wedge Head: Referring to a possum

Wide hunter: A coon hound that searches wide areas (sometimes miles) looking for raccoon tracks.

School Days



One-room school, Lancaster County, Nebraska, October 1942. The caption says, "Nebraska's school system is very little consolidated." Photo by John Vachon for the FSA.

One-room schoolhouses were heated in winter by a wood or coal stove. And the long walk to the outhouse in winter was no fun!

At the beginning of a cold winter school day, the teacher put fuel in the wood stove and started a fire to warm the building. Next, the teacher pumped water into a drinking bucket for students. At the end of the day, the teacher cleaned and swept the schoolhouse.

Merna Bailey taught in York County for several years and usually rode a horse to school, until 1937 when she bought her first car. Merna did all those school chores in

addition to teaching.

In a one-room school, the students sat in rows by grade. Children in each class walked up and sat on a bench next to her. As she taught each class, all the other students (older and younger) heard all the lessons.

Children brought their lunches in gallon buckets, and played games in the schoolyard during lunch. Most children worked on the farm, but some looked for paying jobs off the farm. Alvin Apetz worked about 30 hours per week as a janitor while he attended high school. He was paid 20 cents per hour, "which was pretty good money in them days."

Each year, children started working in the fields as soon as the weather permitted and as soon as they were strong enough. Some kids, like Elroy Hoffman, couldn't finish school – family illness forced him to leave and begin farming.

Herman Goertzen also left school to help on the farm. His father suffered from pneumonia, so it became his job "to keep the farm running during the winter, especially... It was my job to stay home, and it wasn't that important to go to... school after eighth grade."

Children who lived in town, like Louise Dougherty, had many more educational opportunities than country children. Families with higher incomes were able to pay for their children to attend college.



York County school kids with their lunch pails. From left, Richard Regier, Carl Peters, Herman W. Goertzen, Ruben Friesen, Arlin Siebeck, Harry Regier and Merle Goertzen .

One man's story....

"Well, I started working for them [the Wessels family], I think I was about 13 years old, hauling grain for the threshing machine. And then, I wasn't very much older, I scooped corn for them, too, ear corn. When I was about 16 or 17 years old, I had a burst appendix. I was in the hospital for a month. And then I didn't heal up. The outside did, but the inside, I had a hernia. So, then I had another surgery, so I was about out for a year. I know that after that, in harvest time, we had oats and Dad was in the thresher with the Wessels, and the oats had smut, or whatever you call it. All I had to do was just load the grain wagons by the machines. And God, it got so dang – You could hardly stand to get your breath." Question: "From so much dust in the air?"

"Well, from that oats, from that smut there."

Question: "You kept working for them through your high school years?"

"I didn't go to high school. Well, I started high school, yeah. We was in the high school district. Now we moved that next spring. But, my sister got scarlet fever and we was quarantined for three weeks, and I had to help my Dad pick corn all that while. And when I went back to school, I didn't – I was so damn far behind I couldn't get caught up. Then we moved, and the house we moved on needed a lot of work on. He says, 'You better get the oats ground ready.'

"Well, I says, 'Then, I'm going to quit school.' And I did. I don't know if that was smart or not. I got this far anyway.