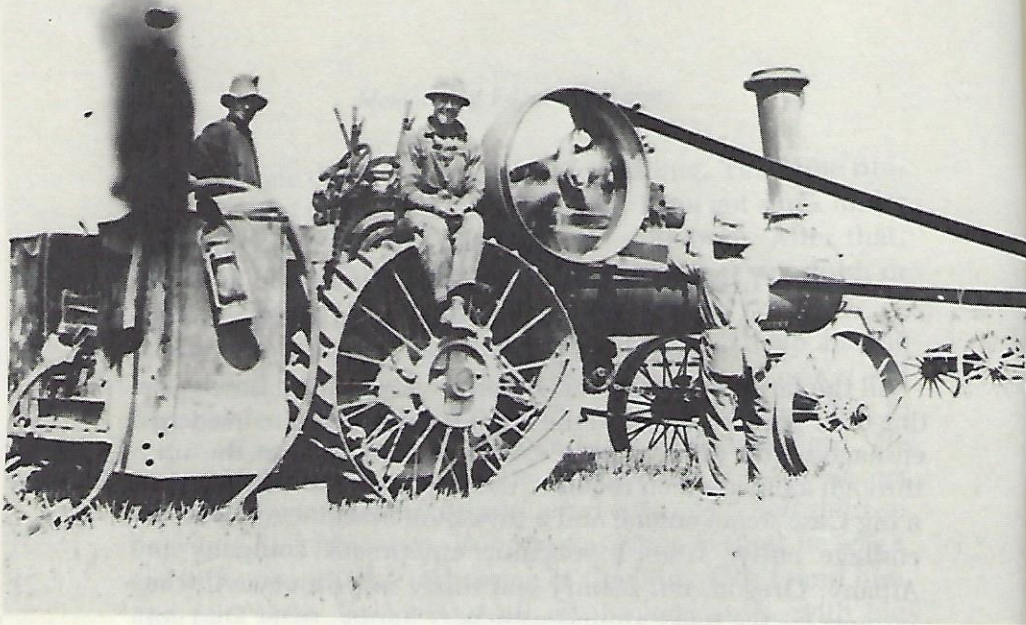


BUYING THE STEAM ENGINE AND THRASHING MACHINE

All the farmers around there were having a hard time getting their grain thrashed in the fall. Dad was going to need an ensilage cutter to cut up the corn and blow it into the silo through a pipe, which required lots of power. So Dad bought a big Case steam engine and a thrashing machine and a new ensilage cutter from a machine equipment company in Albany, Oregon, our county seat thirty miles away. All the farmers for ten miles around were very happy. After Dad got the silo filled he took this thrashing outfit out to thrash for all the farmers. He had a crew of fourteen men and two women who were the cooks. With the steam engine and the thrashing machine, there was a water wagon, six bundle wagons and the cook wagon.

The cook wagon had seats that folded out on the sides for the men to climb up and sit on to eat. At the back of the cook wagon was a mirror and wash stand and four or five ten-gallon cans of water. The steps led up into the middle of the wagon, where the cook stove was across the front and a counter space, covered with white oil cloth, on each side where the men ate. On a shelf under the counter is where all the dishes, silverware, etc. were and along the bottom was where all the groceries and supplies were stored. This wagon was covered with canvas and the canvas sides could be pulled out and staked to make shade for the men while they were eating.

These two women had a big job baking bread, pies and cakes and cooking all the food for breakfast, dinner and supper. They also made sandwiches etc. for a snack at nine in the morning and four in the afternoon for all the men who started



Steam Engine

Cook Wagon



working at 6:30 AM and never stop night. Think of the job these women move from one farm to the other pulling to break or scatter all over and still. The women slept on the floor in the

The men would unharness their wagons and feed them. All the men used canvas. They would put them over the straw which made a good soft straw bed. Sometimes an old farmer would have the straw stack at night and they would be comfortable, especially if you woke up hearing to your bed. I don't think anybody would sleep in a bed but some were too close for comfort who wanted to make a good impression. I guess it was always a good idea to talk them out of hot water to shave. I guess it was always a good idea to have a steam engine. I guess it was always a good idea to have an engineer who would blow the steam whistle when they know it was quitting time for the day.

Every once in a while when the steam engine was getting the hand pump primed to pull water from the creek or would get stuck in the mud, the engineer would blow the whistle three times and the men would take their team and go help get the steam engine out. It was way late in the fall when Dad and I went to the kids for people miles around the valley. The kids had kept things going and the farm.

That winter in December a man came to the farm with a black and white pinto pony and said he would board for the winter. He was a lot of help. He was along fine with everybody and liked to talk much to say about himself except

working at 6:30 AM and never stopped until seven or eight at night. Think of the job these women had when they had to move from one farm to the other putting things away so as not to break or scatter all over and still have meals ready on time. The women slept on the floor in the cook wagon.

The men would unharness their horses and tie them to the wagons and feed them. All the men had bed rolls wrapped in canvas. They would put them out around the straw stack which made a good soft straw bed. The only bad part was sometimes an old farmer would have his cows running around the straw stack at night and they would get too close for comfort, especially if you woke up hearing a *splat splat* noise close to your bed. I don't think anybody ever got a cow pile on their bed but some were too close for comfort. Some of the men who wanted to make a good impression with the cook had to talk them out of hot water to shave or get hot water from the steam engine. I guess it was always a happy sound when the engineer would blow the steam whistle a long blast letting them know it was quitting time for the day.

Every once in a while when the water boy had a hard time getting the hand pump primed to pump the water wagon full from the creek or would get stuck in the creek and couldn't get back in time for the steam engine's water, the engineer would blow the whistle three times and some of the other men would take their team and go help get the water wagon in a hurry. It was way late in the fall when Dad got home after thrashing for people miles around the valley. In the meantime Mom and the kids had kept things going and all the work done around the farm.

That winter in December a man came riding in on a nice black and white pinto pony and said he would like to work for his room and board for the winter. Dad was happy to have him and he was a lot of help. His name was Jim and he got along fine with everybody and liked the kids. He never had much to say about himself except when Dad ask him how the

pony got one eye poked out. He said he stole the pony from an Indian camp in Eastern Oregon and was riding nights to get away, and somehow the pony got an eye poked out by some brush.

The next spring when Jim got ready to leave he gave the pony to us. She was very gentle and we all liked her very much. I don't know if Dad gave Jim any money for the pony or not but we named her Betsy. Dad bought another pony about the same size as Betsy, only he was a strawberry roan. We named him Dan.



Betsy the Pony

PLAYING MUSIC AT HO

Earl was sixteen years old and a bit inclined to be a little on the chubby side. He learned how to chord on the organ which was in Iowa. It was a very pretty organ with the top up high on the organ. Earl also played and learned a lot of tunes from the old organ graph with a morning-glory horn. "Preacher and the Bear." Earl was present when one of the neighbors had a house party. There were cards, have party games and singing. Their songs were "In the Parlor," "In and Out the Window," "Falling Down," "Skip to My Lu," "Changing Chairs," "Who has the Time?" They would dance a waltz, circle two and four. They always had lots of food to eat.

When we had a party at our house, we would go to eat with them. Oh Boy! I guess it was a pitter-patter. This was the only time we could be in there. The rest of the time we were except when we had company on Sunday.

Dad bought a nice new one-seater with wheels and a set of buggy harness. The harness had shiny spots with patent-leather red tassels on the bridles and celluloid for Earl. He was starting to go all over the day night to second on organs and play at the house parties.

There was a blind man name Sid living north of us. He played the violin.