

Pertinent facts in life of Jasper Ole Hassler (including reminiscences) for his sons and just for record, if ever needed.

Born May 14, 1884 in farm house on NW 1/4 of NW 1/4 Twp. 23N R5E in Butler County, MO, about one and a half miles west of Harviell (population 100?).

Father owned two forty-acre squares of land (1/4 mi. square) cornering with each other in NE - SW direction on opposite sides of N-S section line. House on NE forty about 150 yd. south of NW corner facing west on a ridge which sloped down fairly steeply toward the north. First barn about 110 yd. south on the next (low) ridge. This forty was the beginning of a farm which later became 120 acres. To the north to the west (and south and west of the SW forty) there were dense woods. We could see only one neighbor's house from ours—and the schoolhouse, diagonally across the home forty.

Father was a farmer and county schoolteacher. He and mother had both lost their first spouses. I had three half brothers, ten to 17 years older than I (Joe and Walter Gardner and Robert L. Hassler) and a sister Nelle four years my senior.

Faint early recollections:

Earliest was funeral of my baby brother Oliver—just a faint memory of a coffin and a corpse in the house (there was no undertaking parlor). I was 2 years 5 mo. old

Remember also the sawmill across road (west and north) at foot of ridge—and mother buying for 140 dollars the cut over 40 acres when mill moved. Recall our filling up old mill well, my playing on old sawdust pile and our use for animal shelters of the old building (shacks for workers' families and a big company rooming and boarding house. This money was her share of her first husband's estate, the farm (in Ripley county) going to Joe and Walter. This made our farm an L-shaped 120 acres. On north side an east-west section line road led to Harviell on the east and Bethel church (and beyond) on the west. Faintly remember when the north-south road was extended north from our property toward Poplar Bluff (right through the timber).

When very young (certainly under six) I recall coasting down hill with others, having a spill and biting a big gash in the top of my tongue. It is there yet. I also faintly recall the first location of Bethel Church which was moved very early in my life to a new building at a section corner one mile west of our home. That newer building no longer exists.

Vivid early recollections:

When about 4 years old followed my father as he hurried to the Maple Hill schoolhouse (he was the teacher) begging him to get me some persimmons off a tree about 100 yards south of the house at the roadside. He said, "No!" and told me to go back to the house. I was stubborn (a Hassler trait) and bawled, "Get me 'simmons! Get me simmons!" Mother came for me and switched me all the way back to the house. THAT I REMEMBER!

Also remember disobeying my father's orders not to swing on the front gate. The hinge broke and so did several switches. I think I never disobeyed my father again. My mother tried to do all the whipping because she thought my father whipped too hard. I understand what she meant.

There was a mixed rain-snow the day Cleveland was elected in 1892. My father said it was the tears of the Republicans over their defeat. He was counting his chickens before they hatched but he was right. I remember how he twisted a Biblical expression by referring often to "Republicans and sinners." How I thrilled to read of Bryan's famous "cross of gold" speech immediately after it was made. Headline on our Democratic newspaper (twice a week by mail from St. Louis) after the election (1896) was GRAND OLD MISSOURI GIVES BRYAN 40,000 MAJORITY. Too many other states were not so grand.

At age of ten was given first independent plowing job. With a one-horse turning plow (6-inch furrow) I was sent to plow a three-acre field by myself. And was I proud!

A tornado early in the spring when I was 10 or 11 partly wrecked the barn south of the house. We build new barn across road west of house in fall of 1896. I was 12. We had free privilege to go into the lumber-company-owned swamp land a few miles south and cut up old fallen cypress trees for lumber and shingles. Out of logs 3 to 4 feet in diameter we cut 2-foot (cylindrical) blocks, hauled them home, split and "rove" them into shingles, then tapered by flattening one end of each shingle with a "drawing knife". Full-length logs were cut and hauled to a sawmill which, for a percentage of the lumber, sawed the boards we used for the siding. Cypress was the only wood in the barn exposed to the weather.

Early Religious Training:

Parents were members of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, one mile west. There was "preaching" once a month on Sunday after a business meeting and sermon the day before.

Sunday school organized each spring was expected to die when cold weather came at end of autumn. Three classes: adults, young people and "the card class" --so called because our literature consisted of highly colored Bible picture on one side of a 3x5 card, accompanied by the "golden text" and some explanation of the lesson with questions and answers on the other side. All classes had same lesson—one of them Paul's visit to Athens and address on Mars Hill (Acts 17) and our golden text to be memorized—"Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare, I unto you". This for 4, 5, 6 year olds!

This religious training was supplemented by the lessons in McGuffey's Readers, most of which ended with a statement of the moral. An, most of all, I had God-fearing parents who taught me above all things—INTEGRITY!

We had occasional "protracted meetings" at the church. (Now called revival meetings by Baptists, gospel meetings by some denominations and preaching missions by others.) At one of those meetings (Aug. 1, 1900) I confessed Christ as my saviour. Most vivid recollection is my mother's shouting and praising God for minute after minute when I returned home to tell her. (She was not well enough to attend church that night.) She had always nursed a secret hope I would become a preacher. Held back from joining church until I could study the Bible and make my own decision. (My mother's folks were all Methodists and she had joined the Baptist church after marrying my father.) While a Fairdealing H.S. (among my mother's people) I was very active in the Methodist church, S.S., Epworth League and revival meetings. After one year of Christian experience I joined Bethel Baptist Church—being baptized in Cane Creek (Aug. 4, '01) about two miles north of our home.

In April while I was at Fairdealing the Methodist preacher asked me to go to one of the Methodist "outposts" on his circuit called Pleasant Hill, about a mile from J. H. Ward's home—and organize and conduct an afternoon Sunday school. Used one of Uncle Reynard's horses (I boarded at my uncle's) to ride the 5 or 6 miles each Sunday. Naturally I was chosen Superintendent (I was almost 17) and a 14-year-old daughter of J. H. Ward (Zetta) was elected Secretary. More about this later.

Miscellaneous Memories of Early Years:

My hunting and fishing experiences were limited. Weather that prevented working on the farm was not good fishing weather, so I didn't get to do as much as I wished. We had an old muzzle-loader rifle and a 10-gauge muzzle loader shotgun. Can't recall ever killing anything with either, though I hunted squirrels some on the farm. Can never forget crawling through grass to shoot at crow with old shotgun. Pushed gun through rail fence (lying on my face) and forgot to hold breech firmly to my shoulder. What a recoil that old-timer had! Crow not damaged, but I could hardly get my right arm up high enough to comb my hair for a week. I made numerous traps and caught rabbits.

Two weeks before I was 14, Commodore Dewey captured Manila. The heroic deeds of our navy during that summer so inspired me and my playmate from an adjoining farm that we whittled out ships and maneuvered them on our stock pond. I was also impelled to write a poem about Dewey's great victory. (It is on page 100 of my diary marked I.) I read it as a literary contribution at a meeting of the Maple Hill Literary society—which was an extracurricular activity of the school and of which I was president.

In my diary I recorded my physical measurements at age 15 (May 14, 1899). Height 5' 2.75", weight 125 lb.

As my father and I returned home one day with a wagon load of shingle blocks, I had the misfortune to fall on my back under the wagon as I tried to board it from the side while it was in motion. A rear wheel passed over my right leg, crossing over the groin. Though I missed some school, hobbling on crutches for a time, there were no noticeable crippling effects through the years. Only medication was given at home on advice of a country

doctor. I was 12 1/2 years old at the time. Later: At age 83 an x-ray taken by Dr. Akia (?) disclosed a partial separation of the hip joint. The tendon stretched.

On one of my dad's last visits, he retold this story to me. He told how his dad rushed to him and said, "Oh, Jasper, I wouldn't have had this happen to you for anything in the world. I love you!" Dad choked up as he ended by saying, "That's the only time I ever heard him say he loved me." (Who wrote this paragraph? Earl?)

Elementary Education (Ungraded country school)

We live in the Maple Hill school district. The one-room schoolhouse stood on a 2 1/2 acre plot adjoining our home forty diagonally across from the house toward the southeast. We walked less than half mile—first south, then east—to school.

Started to school in August after my fifth birthday. Had learned to read at home before starting. Father and three half-brothers were school teachers.

In third year at school was in "fourth reader class". Used McGuffey's Readers. (Have a reprinted copy among my books.) The "fourth" was the last in the program. Reading matter therein about the equivalent to reading matter used in seventh grade today. Sample lessons: a selection from the Sermon the Mount, one from Louisa Alcott's Little Men and standard poetry (no made- up, child-like) like "The Wreck of the Hesperus".

The fourth reader class also studied spelling (using highest graded text), penmanship, geography, grammar, physiology, U.S. history and arithmetic. For seven consecutive years I studied through all those subjects using the same text all that time in U.S. History (Barnes). I could name every bone in the human body (and most of them now). I can still name all the presidents and tell when each was elected. With nothing more to challenge me at the age of 15 I committed the Constitution of the United States to memory and could quote at random any Article, Section, Clause by number. I cannot do it now—it has changed. At about the same time while following a team in the field I made up and memorized an extended multiplication table up to 25 times 25. It has saved me much time since by using "short" instead of "long" division for the first 25 numbers. That knowledge has NOT changed!

At age of 11 after school term ended I continued working the problems in Ray's Arithmetic, Part 3, beyond the school's stopping place, until I finished all of them at home (an accomplishment sought because few people had ever done it in that locality), including problems in compound proportion, compound interest, partial payments (U.S. and "merchants" rules for computing amount due on note where random payments had been made on principal), successive commercial discounts, bank discount, taxes, mensuration, square root and cube root (without tables). But I learned nothing about music, art, drawing and manual arts.

Near the end of my 15th year (10th in school) I dropped out to help clear the forest off 15 acres on the northwest forty, splitting rails, (among other things) to build the fence

around it. In my diary entry for April 1, 1899 is the entry, "Split 240 rails today". Did not return to school the following year but went four and a half months in my 17th year, quitting in mid- January (1901) to go to Fairdealing High School (a private school supported wholly by tuition—all students beginners) for four and a half months to prepare for the examinations in June for a teacher's certificate. My next formal schooling was in the preparatory school (called the Academy) of Wm. Jewell College in 1903. Meanwhile, while teaching, I studied (alone) another 2nd year accounting and total first year Latin and Auc. Hix by Correspondence while working ??? in summers of 1902-03. (This handwritten part was not clear).

News Bulletin on Oklahoma Hasslers: Norman, OK 7/25-42

I suppose everybody is tired of repeated statements about my being so busy I cannot find time to write. Just the same, I have put in 175 hours at hard labor in 21 working days during the last three and a half weeks, painting my duplex (singlehanded). Besides this, I have carried on quite a bit of business connected with my job as chairman of the Math dept. of the U. of O. I am trying hard to hire some teachers I need and good ones are getting jobs at higher pay in civil service connected with the war effort or going into service. I have had considerable correspondence. Then I have also reviewed a MS for a proposed book which was referred to me by John Wiley & Sons to criticize (they pay for this service, of course) and they (and the author) wanted the work done as soon as possible. As a matter of fact, I have been decorating since vacation began, beginning first at our home. Two weeks ago I proposed to Zetta that I would write this "multicopy" sheet and have just now gotten to it. Zetta's sisters have had just one letter from her in five months. My brothers and sisters have suffered about the same delay.

Zetta is apparently in the best of health. Her physical condition is as good as could be hoped for in a woman of 55. She is anxious to work—all the time—but too much work does tire her like it never has before. I have to hold her back. She is happy all the time and does not worry about anything. Everybody considers that the operation to remove the tumor from her brain was a complete success. Naturally, it will take some time yet for such an immense surgical wound on her brain to heal completely so that every part of the brain in that region will function exactly as before. Because of the wound being at the speech control center, she still has trouble with her talking. She has trouble selecting the correct word when close discrimination must be made between words of the same class, like the days of the week, units of time, denominating of measure, etc. She finds it hard to pronounce the harder-to-say words. Sometimes she gets stuck up in a sentence and just cannot go on at all. Then she stops, laughs it off, and tries to say it some other way. Such does not embarrass her at all. She finds it so difficult to spell she remarked last week that she would perhaps need to study spelling all over again. That explains why she cannot write a letter. It is easier for her to do all the housework for a day or two than to write a short letter.

Ray succeeded, after four weeks trying, in getting a job on a big naval construction project here about two miles from Norman as a painters apprentice (second year) at 70 cents per hour with the usual union rules for overtime, etc. He works ten hours each day

(2 hours overtime) and from 60 to 68 hours per week. He has worked on two of the four Sundays since he started. We have a big naval air training base being constructed north of town and a big mechanics training school south of town—also a big naval hospital at the latter place. There are 7500 workmen employed now and they are adding one to two hundred weekly. At present, it seems that we will make no vacation journeys this summer in any direction. We certainly will not travel on our tires!

Norman's firm has him in fort Wayne, Ind. now for a short time helping build a big defense plant, that is, strengthening the foundations by pumping cement into the porous substructure. He ius work 70 hours a week. Earl's company (Bell Telephone) is also short handed and he works long hours.

"Epitomically" (?) speaking, "The Oklahoma Hasslers are BUSY!"
J.O.H.

Activities of J. O. Hassler from 1907 to June, 1973:

I married the sweetheart of my youthful days on the last day of the month I graduated. We moved immediately to Douglas, Ariz., where I taught for four years in high school; then moved to Chicago to attend the university there but got an offer (at the end of the summer quarter) of an instructorship in the Univ. Kans. At the end of the year, my chance came to get into high school system of Chicago. I returned to teach there for eight years, the last few of which were at one of the junior colleges. By attending Chicago University in summer quarters (and getting part time off from the high school to attend some of the spring quarters) I got my M. S. degree in 1913 and my Ph.D. in 1915. I lived near the university, riding street cars to my work,. Oh, how I hate 'em! Accepted an associate professorship at Univ. of Okla in 1920, where I later became head of the department of mathematics and astronomy. In the "thirties" I spent one summer at Yerkes Observatory (at Lake Geneva, Wis.) and one at Harvard Observatory (in Cambridge, Mass.). It was work for me but a nice vacation for the part of my family that was with me each time. I was retired at age 70 as emeritus professor of math and astron. For nineteen years I have done practically nothing. When I quit, I quit!

During my active years I authored, or co-authored, seven textbooks in mathematics and the teaching of mathematics. Such is the life of a college teacher. It was more or less expected of me. It surely kept me busy.

We had four sons, three now living and married (one died at age ten) all graduates of OU, two electrical engineers and one statistician. The oldest (64) retires next Jan. and lives in Oklahoma City (only 30 minutes away—by auto) The youngest (51) lives in Kirkwood, MO (near St. Louis). The other is in the state of New York (Mt. Kisco). His wife is a school teacher; they have no children. My oldest grandson (44) lives in Phoenix and manages an "audio-specialty" firm of which he is part owner. His address, Guy, is Donald E. Hassler, 5714 N. 21st Street (85016). His zip code means he probably is not in your part of the city. His son, Tom Hassler, lives in Tempe and manages one of the stores. I have a married granddaughter living in Norman, four other grandchildren in

Kirkwood, a great grand daughter living in Norman and two other great grandchildren (besides Tom) living in Ariz. My youngest grandson has just finished his freshman year at W.J.C.

I have spent a total of fifty years as a teacher, beginning at age 17 in an ungraded country school before enrolling at Wm. Jewell.

For the next 12 years after my retirement except take care of my ailing wife who died in October 1966. Then I did nothing but take care of myself and my home until I sold it in 1968. I have since been living in a small rented apartment (duplex, with owner living in other part). I have absolutely nothing to do, which I like better than any job I ever had.