

At the Alexander family reunion in July 2004, Arlie Alexander (grandson of Pop's brother, Arlie) brought to me a hand anvil almost identical to the one Pop had. He had inherited it from Leslie Alexander, his father. We showed it to Wayne Alexander, son of Fred, and he said his father had had one like it. The sons of Charlie and Harry said they had no memory of ever seeing such an object among their fathers' things.

A Final Word from Joe

One summer day, many years after I had left Piatt County, I was visiting relatives and happened to drive slowly through White Heath in late morning. The sun was shining and my window was down. As I passed the town pump I saw Joe Fisher and Jake Dunn sitting on a bench in the shade, and I lifted my arm and called out a casual "Hi!" Both men stared back, but neither said anything or waved. Jake could not be expected to recognize me, but Joe's reaction bothered me a little. I backed up, got out, and walked over to them, looking at Joe and saying in mock truculence, "Don't you speak to your friends anymore?"

Jake flashed his gold tooth, but Joe looked slightly embarrassed, stared straight ahead, moved his cud a little, and said stubbornly, "I do when I know 'em."

I said, "Well, you ought to know me. You and I ran racks together on the threshing run of 1944, and we were the only ones with teams that year."

Joe's face broke into a grin at that, and he said sheepishly, "Aww, you're Dale's boy!"

No one had addressed me that way for a long time, and it was strange to feel the old thrill of pride. Simultaneously I realized that the chances of receiving that particular compliment are diminishing rapidly. Some sad day I will know, finally, that it cannot happen again.

Memory of memory
In actions, thoughts, ideals
A fanning web of intricacy
Immeasurable.

