

The Prairie

place. It was all made of wood, except the tires and skeins, and the necessary bolts. The heavy wooden shafts were fixed so that one horse or ox could be hitched. The box could be tipped up to unload the load.

At a July 4th picnic held at our place, they had arranged for a horse race. Buggies or two-wheeled carts only, were allowed. Dad hitched old Frank on the dump cart and entered the race, just for the fun. It must have been quite a sight, the lighter rigs speeding down the stretch, with Dad lumbering along behind in his dump cart. Something like Ben Hur in his chariot.

There was a lot of excitement at this celebration, and they nearly hung a man. Dad had stretched a rope across the driveway between the trees. On this he had hung the flag, right in the middle. As the people entered they drove under it. Quite a crowd was present by midmorning, people coming from far and near. A stand was set up where firecrackers, cigars, and lemonade was sold.

Everybody brought a big lunch basket, plum full of all the goodies Ma could think of. Everyone who had an ice cream freezer brought it along. Dad had laid in a supply of ice. All were dressed up in their Sunday best. Things were really poppin, including the firecrackers. Even the sheriff was present.

Along about mid morning, three men in a lumber wagon drove in. One of these men had taken a snort or two, and was feeling his oats. I reckon he wanted to show off a bit. When they drove under the flag he reached up to tear it down, but he couldn't reach it. So they backed the team. He climbed on the seat and pulled it down. If a bomb had been dropped in the crowd it wouldn't have caused any more excitement.

A great many of the settlers were ex-soldiers of the Civil War. All the bitterness of that conflict wasn't forgotten. In seconds the three men were surrounded. Some one yelled, "let's hang him." Dad would furnish the rope. I reckon that he was as bitter as any. Just thirty-two years before he had went through a small edition of hell at the Battle of Gettysburg, where his Regiment lost eighty per cent of their men in one charge. A rope was brought, and no doubt a suitable tree found, but cooler heads prevailed and a tragedy was averted. He was loaded into a buggy and with the sheriff and another man as driver, taken to Worthington and lodged in jail to cool off. I reckon he was sober by that time. After