

A PLAGUE OF GRASSHOPPERS

Taken from the Kinsley Library Oral Histories

Buford Brodbeck: Born 1925

The worst thing I ever remember on the carnival, was one year the grasshoppers.... We were playing Guymon, Oklahoma. I wasn't very big, and my dad had me up on the platforms at the merry-go-round sweeping the dead grasshoppers off the steps 'cause if you'd step on them and they'd be slick!



Gordon Coats: Born 1927

One year (grasshoppers) plagued real bad. They ate everything, even wood. Back then when they built the telephone lines, they had those old long phones that you rang. They had those two big batteries in them. They were six or eight inches long and two or three inches in diameter. They just used cottonwood limbs or whatever they could stick two wires on. (*The grasshoppers ate the limbs.*)

Kenny Dupree: Born 1926

Then along about '37 or '38 we had grasshopper plagues. The grasshoppers would come in by the billions, and they ate every ounce of limbs off the trees, all the grass off the ditches. There were no weeds in the ditches; they ate it all. They took over for two years. The shop used to mix poison and put it out, but that was a waste of time. But that went on for about two years, the grasshoppers. And then along about that time, the farmers all grew turkeys, and they fed on these grasshoppers and whatever else they ate....every farmer had turkeys. I'll always remember that.

Joan: So when they would come through, you would lose your garden?

You lost everything that was green. All the leaves off the trees was gone; all the gardens was gone. The roadside ditches was clean. ... It was July and August. It was bad.

Edward Scheufler: Born 1927

My memory of that is of it being so dry; we had lots of those large yellow grasshoppers. The telephone poles were just lined, clear to the top, and they followed the shade around as the sun went around. My dad would always have corks in his water jugs, and they would completely eat the cork stop out of the jug.

LeRoy Sparke: Born 1929

The grasshoppers came through. We were on the way out to Colorado Springs to see my grandparents one time, and I couldn't believe it. Out here along the border, they were just sticking on the buildings. Just a mass of them sticking on the buildings. There were so many of them. They ate the bark off of everything. There wasn't anything there; they just cleaned it!

Robert Stach: 1925-2011

The grasshoppers were, there was the dust and the grasshoppers in the houses; you couldn't leave the windows open at all.