

# ***FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT AND HOBBIES***

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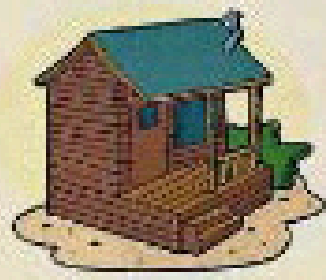
Games and hobbies cost little or nothing to get as we created most of it from things that were readily available. This included birthday and Christmas gifts as well.

My father had some kind of wood in his hands carving something constantly. If I had kept some of the miniature furniture he made for our cardboard dollhouses, it would probably be worth a small fortune today. He also made small chests of drawers to be used as jewelry boxes by the older girls. He created authentic looking log cabins and some early army forts mounted on pieces of plywood. Our plywood checker boards with the squares painted on them worked just fine with the checkers cut out of old broom handles and painted red and black.

Card games played around a big square table provided many an evening and Sunday afternoon entertainment. When my youngest daughter was five years old, my father taught her to play canasta, she was a very perceptive child. The first time she won a game from him, he changed the rules. She said, "Mom, I'm not going to play cards with Grandpa anymore, because he cheats". He did too.

Horseshoes in the back yard came to be a Sunday afternoon pastime. Uncles and cousins often took part.

Refreshments for the checker, card and horseshoe parties were huge pans of popcorn and glasses of iced tea. Well, cold tea anyway, we didn't have any ice.



Looking down at the marina, I see the many vessels docked there. Years ago there was no marina, just a lot of fishing boats tied up along the riverbank. Clammers used many of these small boats; they went out on the river to look for clam beds. The clams were harvested for the shell, used to make buttons. Some large and many small button factories sprang up all over the town. Circles cut out of the shells were ground down smooth and holes bored in them. A German immigrant who came to Muscatine in the early 1900's invented the button cutting machine. The meat of the clams was not wasted, it was fried, made into chowder and any other way people could think to prepare them. Muscatine at one time was known as the pearl button capital of the world. Little by little the supply of clams depleted down to nothing. There are still button factories here but the buttons are all cut out of plastics.

Although I was born in Muscatine, we lived in the small town of Wilton, for a few years. After moving back to Muscatine we first moved to the south end of town where I attended the old Garfield school. To get uptown, a distance of several miles, we took a shortcut, walking up the railroad track, [it was shorter and also forbidden]. At that time many trains went through the town. We later relocated to East Hill, and lived several places until we moved to Second Street Hill where my folks lived the rest of their days.