I was born at Taylortown (Dunkard), and when I was about a year and a half old the family moved to the ancestral Garard home at Garards Fort. I went along, of course, but apparently with some reluctance, for it has been reliably and often stated in my presence that I traversed the entire length of the only street in the village yelling at the top of my voice.

The process of moving, however, was not designed to produce euphoria. Breaking camp in one house, loading the wagons, riding ten miles in a road wagon that crept up the hills was no picnic; neither was the unloading and placing the furniture in the new house. It was a strenuous day for all concerned, especially for an infant of nineteen months. What they did with me during the loading and unloading is lost to history, but I suspect that one of my sisters was assigned to me as security agent.

At the time of moving I was wearing an ankle-length dress, for all infants began their careers in dresses. For boys the dresses lasted until about the fourth year — the year of the first haircut. For girls the dresses were forever; I never saw a girl or a woman in pants in early Greene County.

How well I remember my first pair of pants. My oldest sister Dell had married John Will Minor, and they had a son Floyd just five months younger than I. They lived in Mapletown and often spent Sunday with us. On this memorable occasion Floyd was in pants and Dell had made a pair for me. I hung around the men while they unhitched the horse. Then John and Dad took my dress off in the barn and put on the pants. The idea was to surprise the rest of the family and it sure did that. I remember how proud I was of the pants, especially the pockets. I suppose a shirt went along with the pants but I have no recollection of it. The pants just came to my knees; all boys wore knee pants until they were well into their teens.

With this article, Dr. Garard concludes his reminiscences of rural Greene County at the turn of the century.—Editor
My costumes were common throughout the county, but because of the universal desire of mothers to keep their sons as young as possible, the date of the first haircut or change in costume varied from family to family, especially in the case of the first born. But I was number ten, and the idea was to get me along as fast as possible. I was in overalls at ten and long pants at fourteen.

I recall the first day I went to school. The schoolhouse was in the village about a quarter of a mile away. Jess (my brother Justus) said he would take me because he wanted to talk to Hatfield. John Hatfield was the teacher and what Jess wanted to talk to him about I never knew. But, whatever it was, Jess introduced me to Hatfield, who was very cordial and I liked him at once. Jess told him that I was to go home for dinner and for him to give me my cap and tell me when to go. Hatfield agreed to that, but I felt hurt during this arrangement for I certainly did not need to be told when to go to dinner.

There were rows of hooks on the wall, and Jess had hung my cap on one of them far above my reach, so I could see that I needed help to get it. My presence did not seem to be required further so I strolled out to watch the activities of the children who had gathered, many of whom I knew. Jess left in a few minutes which did not disturb me for I felt that I could get along all right without any further help from him.

There was a bell on top of the schoolhouse that served not only to assemble the scholars, but also served the farmers for a mile or so around as a clock, for they all knew the school hours. When the bell rang the scholars flocked into the schoolroom. I followed along and was given a seat near the front where the small seats were.

After a time we were dismissed, and I asked an older boy, Clyde Flenniken, to give me my cap. He obliged, and we all went outside. I went over the stile into the road and started for home. Clyde saw me and asked me where I was going. I said I was going to dinner, whereupon he explained that this was just recess and that it was not dinner time yet. I believe that was the only thing I learned at school that day. When noon came I waited for Hatfield to give me my cap; I did not intend to make the same mistake twice in the same day. I soon learned that there was a recess of fifteen minutes in the middle of each morning and afternoon.

When school was not in session, I continually pestered mother for permission to go play with the neighbors. The next farm up the road belonged to Neut Biddle who had a girl and three boys. The girl was a teenager; one of the boys was older than I, one my age,
and one younger. The boys were all congenial playmates and occasionally the girl would join us in a ballgame. Mother would give her permission sometimes for me to visit them. There were two reasons for her reluctance: one was that she was afraid I would annoy Mrs. Biddle, although she was always very cordial to me; the other reason was easier to understand—I had to be home in case she needed a spool of thread or some other item from the store, or the men in the field needed a jug of water. I had a stone (earthenware) jug that held a half gallon. There were two small spouts on opposite shoulders and a bail of the same material fused securely into the wall of the jug. This unusual handle made the jug much easier to carry than the common jugs with their earlike handles. Of course it was heavy, especially for a six-year-old, because of the thickness of the ceramic material, but it did keep the water cooler than a metal pail could.

Waterboy was my first job. It began as soon as I was able to carry a half gallon of water and lasted until I was big enough to be one of the workmen. Even then I was often sent to the well or to a spring for water when the jug we had taken with us was empty. I was the one who could be most easily spared from whatever we were doing.

I cannot recall the order in which chores were assigned to me, but there were several others that I acquired during my waterboy period. Some of them were ad hoc assignments, that is, the job was not repeated, at least not at regular intervals. For example, a lot of burdocks grew in the backyard. They were big, ugly, smelly plants that produced burrs that stuck to the dog and the rest of us when we came near them. In one of my idle moments mother presented me with an old butcher knife and a bottle of crude oil, which was our name for native petroleum. At ground level the weeds had a stalk as thick as a broomstick, and my instructions were to cut the stalk off at ground level and put a little oil on the stump. Where mother got her horticultural ideas I never knew, but the one treatment put us out of the burdock business.

A more persistent task of my early years was pulling weeds for the hogs. There was a variation late in the season when I picked up fallen apples for the hogs instead of the weeds. I was given a bushel basket and told to go to the garden, fill the basket with pursley, and take it to the hogs. The correct name of the plant was purslane, a common weed in cultivated areas of Pennsylvania. The leaves were smaller than a fingernail but fleshy, and the red, fleshy stalks looked like earthworms sprawled on the ground. My operation, which was
often inspected to see if the basket were full, served two purposes; it freed the garden of weeds and it gave the hogs a salad to chomp on in their spare time — of which they always seemed to have more than I had.

I recall vividly another task that proved to be repetitive at long intervals and one that my sisters always praised highly. In the corner of the front yard beyond the woodpile there was a damp area that grew a patch of horseradish. I had seen Dad dig up the fleshy roots and so I knew how to do it. Mother asked me to dig up a few of the roots and wash them. Then she gave me a pan and a grater and told me to go out on the front porch and grate them. Those who have never grated horseradish will never fully understand why all the unusual praise, but from the first scrape to the last the roots give off a colorless, penetrating vapor that attacks the nose and eyes, and the operation is carried out amid a flood of tears. My most critical sisters bragged about how well I did the job.

When I was about ten years old I was given an ad hoc job that came near being my last. There was a section of pasture about 100 yards wide and 550 long that came down to the road near the barn. Above this corridor the field spread out into a pasture of many acres. In the middle of the large area there was a watering trough. The field was always occupied by cows and horses, but at the time of this event there was also a ram in the field.

The men were working on the Anderson farm across the road, and at dinner time Dad told me to go up and clean out the watering trough. He also told me to be careful about the sheep because it was cross. He was not really cross, but he had been raised as a pet and spoiled by the children in the family that raised him.

I said that I was not afraid of the sheep, and besides, I would take a club along. Dad had recently walked several miles and had cut himself a walking stick from a green hickory sapling. It was over an inch in diameter at the large end and very heavy for its size.

After the men had gone back to work, I took the walking stick, went through the garden to the pasture and up along the fence towards the spring. It was a rail fence, and in the last corner before it turned south lay the sheep. He seemed very lonely and got up and came over to rub against me as a cat does. He had no horns, and I could feel the hard skull beneath the short, greasy wool. I tried to go on, but he kept rubbing against me so I could not make any progress. I got tired of that shortly and hit him over the head with my club.
He seemed to take that as a personal affront for he backed off about ten feet, made me a bow and charged. He weighed more than I did and, at a conservative estimate, he knocked me a good ten feet. I let out a yell that brought the men and the dog, although they were not in sight because the land along the road was higher than it was where they were working. But they realized the situation instantly. I got up just as the ram charged a second time and was knocked another ten feet and nearer the fence.

For some unknown reason these blows did not hurt, but the ground was hard and dry and I got some scratches. The third attack left me close to the fence and although the first two charges seemed funny, this one did not, for I suddenly realized that if he hit me against the fence it might be the end of the story. The dog was coming fast and the men were not far behind but I got up as quickly as I could and started to climb the fence. I reached the third rail just as the sheep hit the fence a scant four inches below my feet.

By the time the dog had arrived I had reached the top of the fence and there he stood looking up at me with his tongue hanging out and his tail wagging. He and I were great pals.

The ram had just bumped his head on the fence and was in a bad humor, so he took careful aim and charged the dog who stepped nimbly aside and nipped the sheep's hind leg as he went by — something I had not thought of doing. The dog nonchalantly resumed his admiration of me while the sheep decided on a second try and was bitten on the other leg for his trouble. The dog apparently got tired of this nonsense and chased the sheep up across the field with a nip at a hind leg at about every other jump. After a hundred yards or so he decided that was adequate and returned to see what he could do for me.

By this time Will had arrived and I assured him that I was not hurt and was ready to go on with the project if the dog would go along, but he told me to go back to the house and let mother look me over. Dad and Jess had turned back as soon as they saw that I had reached the top of the fence.

I retrieved my club, climbed the fence and returned to the house through a cornfield. Mother examined me and attended to my scratches and I was ready to return to my assignment, but she also vetoed the idea. I do not know who cleaned that watering trough but it was not I.

I was mortified by how much smarter the dog was than I was, for that evening Jess explained what I should have been told in the
first place. When a sheep charges, he lowers his head and cannot see what is in front of him so he goes in a straight line, consequently, if the target moves to one side he simply goes by until he begins to wonder what became of his target, then turns around and takes a new aim.

Life and work on the farm was full of hazards. We had a large, brown mare that had been frightened in her youth and a rider could not carry anything on her that made a noise. She ran off with my brother twice, once when he was carrying a bag of nails and once when he had a small paper package. As far as we knew the object had to make a noise.

On one occasion, when I was about thirteen, I was going for the cows; they were up on the hill above the spring in the pasture just mentioned. Dad told me to take a bridle and bring in the mare also. She was near the cows in an area from which the timber had just been cut. She had another stain on her character — she was "breachy." Most of the fences around the pasture were not over four feet high and she seemed to think that the grass was greener on the other side, consequently, she wore a yoke, which consisted of a four-inch board that hung from her neck by a strap. On the lower end of the board was a short crosspiece tapering to a point so that it would catch a rail of the fence if she attempted to jump. Such a yoke was a nuisance to a horse; it banged against the knees when the horse walked and dragged along the ground when it grazed.

I put the bridle on the mare, took off the yoke, got up on a stump and mounted with the yoke across in front of me. The dog had come to help me with the cows and stood by while I made my arrangements with the mare. I turned her head towards the cows, but she had other ideas, she whirled around and ran full tilt down the hill. I had no saddle, and for a boy to ride a big mare bareback at racing speed is no mean feat. I realized the trouble at once and threw the yoke but she kept on going. If I pulled on the reins, I just slid forward. I held to her mane and dug in my heels the best I could but realized that sooner or later I was going to fall off.

There had been a sawmill by the spring and there was still a slab pile there. The mare was heading towards that and I did not care to land on any slabs so I threw a leg over and jumped. She was still running hard and I sailed through the air like a glider and came down flat on my front. I must have been made of rubber in my youth for I was not hurt aside from my feelings and a few scratches. The blow knocked me unconscious and I came to with the dog licking me
in the face. I was too weak to push him away but soon recovered. I must have been out for only a few seconds for Dad had seen me jump and had started towards me but did not get more than a hundred yards or so.

Dennis, the dog, was delighted at my recovery and so he and I went back up the hill to retrieve the yoke and fetch the cows. On the trip down I also retrieved the mare who was serenely eating grass not far from where I had abandoned her. Dennis was all for chastising her, but I objected and led her the rest of the way in. An interesting side-light is that I cannot recall ever hearing the incident mentioned by any member of the family.

Not all activities on the farm were dangerous, but one never knew when danger threatened. One of the most frequent perils was the runaway horse or team of horses. Some horses were nervous and easily frightened. One might whirl around and upset a buggy or run straight ahead and wreck the vehicle against a tree or the railing of a bridge. One farmer was killed when his team ran away with a mowing machine; he was thrown in front of the cutter bar.

Cora, my youngest sister, had an adventure that might have been fatal. The Anderson place across the road was not farmed regularly and some of the fields were grown up in weeds and briars. Cora was there picking blackberries and when she lifted up a briar to get at the berries, there was a copperhead snake coiled ready to strike, whereupon Cora took off for home without bothering about the bucket of berries. Will went over that evening, killed the snake and recovered the pail of berries. The copperhead was our only poisonous snake, but it was likely to be encountered on any farm in the county.

Children were assigned regular tasks at the earliest possible age. They went to school for seven months of the year, from about September 1 to April 1. For that part of the year the tasks had to be something to do morning and evening. Then, too, children were drafted for all suitable farm tasks on Saturday and in the summer.

One of my earliest assignments was to bring in the cows morning and evening. The girls did the milking, but the cows were in a big pasture and, especially in the evening, they were very sure to be at the far end of the field. If they were not in sight, I could count on a trip of a mile or more to round them up and bring them in. They were inclined to scatter out and stop to eat, but Dennis took great delight in thwarting that and saved me many a step. He would bark, and if that did not impress a cow, he would bite her heel. He also knew when to stop, for if a cow is chased or excited she will not give up
her milk. I was the family cowboy as long as I lived on the farm and
did it all on foot except on those rare occasions when I had to bring
in a horse. One fortunate circumstance was that in the winter the
cows were in the barn and I did not have to search for them.

When I became big enough to carry a gallon of milk, I was
assigned the duty of feeding the calves. We usually had a few young
calves, sometimes only one. When they were weaned they were
penned up and had to be fed milk morning and evening. In our
family, at least, there was no escaping an assigned duty. I recall one
very cold Saturday in November. The creek was frozen over for the
first time that year and I spent all afternoon skating. I was so tired
I could scarcely walk the half mile home and it was almost dark when
I got there. Someone had brought in the coal and I conveniently for-
got to feed the calves. After supper when we were all gathered around
a cheerful fire in the living room, Dad suddenly said: “Did you feed
the calves?”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“I forgot it.”

“That’s funny to forget your regular work. You had better go
feed them.”

And so, on a cold, dark night I went out and fed the calves.
The experience was a great aid to my memory.

We burned soft coal, which weighs eighty pounds to the bushel.
A coal bucket full of coal probably weighed twenty-five pounds. Of
course, it did not have to be full but that meant more trips to the
coal house. I became the chief coal handler at an early age. We had
a stove for cooking and three grate fires for heating. Morning and
evening I serviced the fires. First I took a poker and rattled out the
ashes from the bottom of the grate, shoveled them into a coal bucket,
carried them out and dumped them on an ash pile behind the smoke-
house. That done, I filled the grates with all the coal they would hold: the big grate in the living room held about two bushels. The other two
were smaller but one of them was upstairs. Finally, there had
to be an extra bucketful for each fire.

The task I hated most of all was turning the grindstone. It is
amazing the number of cutting tools there are on a farm; there were
axes, hatchets, scythes, grain cradles, cutting bars for the mowing
machine, butcher knives, and some others that varied from farm to
farm.

Our grindstone was about two and a half feet in diameter with a
crank about a foot long. The stone was very fine grained so it made a very smooth edge but it also wore away the steel very slowly. The scythes and cutting bars had to be sharpened before the harvest and other tools at any time of the year. A rainy day might be an excuse for a grinding session.

In the spring when the turkey hens began to lay, they would do their best to "steal their nests," that is, they would sneak away and make their nests in some secret place at some distance from the house. This had to be thwarted for the crows, skunks, or other wild animals would destroy the eggs. The task of locating the turkey nests fell to Emma and me. Cora sometimes helped. The reason the girls were called in was that the turkeys began to lay before school was out. I was available only morning and evening most days but all day Saturday and Sunday. It was a tedious job, for if a hen knows she is being followed she will wander all over creation before she goes to the nest.

The turkeys came in for feeding and we aimed to be on hand when the meal was finished. The hens planned to get the egg production over as soon as possible and have the rest of the day free to eat bugs. I usually took a ball along to play with or sat on a fence and whistled or sang. Emma watched birds or examined the shrubbery; the hen had to be assured that we were there for some good reason that had nothing to do with her. She would walk along picking at the ground or the weeds as though she had nothing special on her mind. Our activities had to be something that enabled us to keep an eye on her. Very often she would elude us. If she were following a fence row, she would go through the fence and then we would have to wait a few minutes before we could do likewise; meanwhile she would speed up or go back to the other side.

Once we located the nest, we collected the eggs until the hen had finished laying and was ready to set. Then the eggs were returned to the nest. During the twenty-six days it took the eggs to hatch, the hen remained on the nest except for a short time each morning when she left to feed; she never let the eggs get cold.

Our trials were not yet over. As the end of the incubation period approached we had to go to the nest at least once a day, for as soon as the eggs hatched the hen would take her brood and wander off in any direction in search of food, but rarely towards the house. We apprehended her and her family and drove them to the feeding ground with the hope that she would return voluntarily and have her youngsters meet the offspring of her colleagues. Thus we assembled a flock
of turkeys. If they got too far away, some wild animal was likely to kill them, so it was necessary to go and fetch them home. Turkeys supplied our festive meals and the excess was a cash crop.

Sometimes, John and Dell came up for Sunday dinner and left Floyd until the next Sunday, which gave us an opportunity for adventure.

During one of these occasions, the men cut a field of hay next to the yard and mowed over a bumblebee nest not far from the house. Bees were a nuisance to both the men and the horses when the hay was being raked up, shocked, and hauled in. If one stung a horse it might run away. Floyd and I knew this and we undertook to destroy the nest. We also knew that bees are less active in the evening. After supper we took the dog and went to the nest with the intention of stomping it out, but the bees had not settled down for the night and some of them were flying around the nest. With the first stomp out came a host of recruits that seemed to blame the dog. He had long hair but they stung him as he jumped about on the nest and bit at the bees. Floyd and I picked off and fended off as many as we could and were both badly stung. But all three of us considered this a routine hazard of farming and did kill most of the bees and destroyed the nest. Dennis scratched his wounds, but Floyd and I got some relief from damp baking soda that mother applied. None of us was the worse for wear the next day. The men were very grateful for our services but expressed some doubt as to our sanity.

Some farmers had hives of honeybees, which were seldom troublesome, but there were four kinds of wild bees that were: bumblebees, yellow jackets, hornets, and wasps. The yellow jackets looked like honeybees, and like the bumblebees made their nests in the ground where there was good cover, such as a hayfield provided. They were a worse pest than the bumblebees; they flew very fast, stung very hard, and there were many of them in a nest.

I can recall only one personal encounter with yellow jackets. Mrs. Anderson had a meadow above our barn from which she sold the hay in the field. One year we bought the hay, and Will was mowing, but the hay was so heavy that the machine could not throw the cut hay away from that which had not been cut and Will could not see where the edge was. I followed along after the machine with a pitchfork throwing the hay over. He mowed through a yellow jackets' nest when I was just a few yards behind the machine and the bees emerged in full force just as I arrived. I was badly stung before I could get away or fight them off. Bee stings affect people differently;
some die from them, some are badly swollen for several days, and some suffer a sharp pain at the time but in an hour or so it is gone. I am in the last category.

Wasps and hornets make their nests of a paperlike material and attach them to wood in a sheltered place; the underside of a roof is a favorite location. Boys always seemed to be involved with these nests, partly because destroying them was a sport and partly because they interfered with work that boys had to do. For example, when the haymow was being filled, it was the boy's job to tramp the hay down, and the comb of the barn roof was generally lined with wasp or hornet nests.

Juvenile delinquency in farm families was unknown: the young were too busy to get into trouble and besides the parents stood for no foolishness. Those who lived near a village might join in halloween activities, which were a menace to their elders. They consisted mainly of three things: throwing corn, throwing cabbage, and misplacing property. The younger boys went to a nearby cornfield, stole a few ears of corn, and shelled them. With pockets full, they returned to the village and threw handfuls of corn against the windows. The hard grains made a terrific clatter against the glass and were not heavy enough to break it.

Any standing cabbage was collected by the older boys and thrown against front doors. They could and often did split a door panel, but the practice seems to have been widespread in the general area, for Sherwood Anderson describing his early days in Ohio said that his family got their winter supply of cabbage on halloween.

The worst nuisance was the displacement of property — anything loose was vulnerable. Only the older boys could manage this. One year the local doctor smeared asafetida on the big gate that closed the end of the driveway to his stable. The next day the gate was on top of a shed a mile away and the odor of asafetida just about caused dismissal of the school, which enabled the doctor to have his gate returned free of charge.

Some of the other villagers tried to thwart the demons and were often successful. Mr. Dulaney, an old gentleman in the village, had a light spring wagon which was always sure to be found at some distance from the village after halloween, probably on top of a fence. One halloween, he went out and lay down in the wagon. The spirits arrived as usual, and the wagon started down the village street. A short distance down the street there was a hill, not very long, not very steep, but the other side was long and much steeper. When the
boys got over the hill and down to the bottom, Mr. Dulaney rose up and said, "All right, boys, back we go." The boys were too surprised to run and they also knew that he knew who they were for there had been plenty of conversation. I think that they appreciated the joke and they also knew that if the constable were not interested, their parents were. And so they hauled Mr. Dulaney back over the hill to his lot and he locked the gate and went to bed.

Whatever the country boy may have lacked in Christmas presents, he was never at a loss for playthings. Not many boys in the county had fewer commercial toys than I, but I had a swing in the backyard and a homemade ball of cord or rags that I could throw against the barn or the wagon shed or simply toss it up and catch it when it came down. Then, I could always find a stick to throw for the dog to retrieve.

I had a pair of stilts that I inherited from the older siblings; in fact, I can remember Will walking on them when I was too small. They had been made from two saplings, one was ironwood and the other hickory. It must have taken a long search to find two saplings of the proper size, each with a branch of the right size and angle to make a step, which accounted for the different kinds of wood in the pair. But time is money only when you have an opportunity to get paid for it. Dad had made those stilts on which I whiled away so many hours walking about the yard between labor assignments.

I also had a sled and a cart that were homemade. The cart wheels had been made by sawing circles out of wide one-inch boards. They were equipped with steel tires that had no doubt been installed by some blacksmith. The center holes were reinforced by steel plates on the sides of the wheels.

The sled, made of one-inch boards, made many a trip down the long, steep hill on the Anderson farm across the run from the house. The cart served to haul weeds or apples to the pigs, apples for cider, the dog, or anything else that seemed to me to need transportation.

Every boy had a penknife with which to make some of his playthings. A pinwheel was simple. Whittle a stick of wood to the size of a lead pencil, cut a piece of heavy paper to a square about five or six inches on an edge. Cut from each corner to near the center. Get a pin from mother, then fold the paper from the corners to the center and fasten them to the stick with the pin. Hold the pinwheel in the face of the wind and it will rotate rapidly, or better still, run around the yard with it. It not only rotates rapidly but also uses up any excess energy in the boy.
The penknife was also useful in making a popgun or a squirt gun. Here the procedure was to find a straight piece of elder or sumac an inch in diameter and about ten inches long. Both species have a soft pith in the center that can be pushed out with a stiff wire, and a persistent effort will produce a tube over a quarter inch inside diameter and as smooth as a gun barrel. Next, find a straight stick slightly smaller than the tube and cut it to the proper length. Leave four inches for a handle and whittle the rest to a diameter less than that of the tube. Cut a notch or two near the front end of the plunger. Here you must bother mother again for soft yarn or wrapping cord. Wrap the string around the end of the plunger until it fits tightly in the tube. Now get a cork from a medicine bottle and you are in business. Withdraw the plunger to the rear of the tube and insert the cork in the front end. Now with a sudden push on the plunger the cork will leave the tube with a sharp pop and go several feet.

The squirt gun was the same as the popgun except for the front end. Cut a half inch from the plunger before it is whittled down to size and then dress it down to fit the front of the tube tightly. With a small, hot wire, burn a hole through the middle of the plug. Place the front end under water and withdraw the plunger. This fills the tube with water and a sudden thrust will throw a stream of water several feet.

These guns were very useful for surprising dogs, cats, and sisters. Surprising father, mother, and older brothers with such weapons was hazardous.

If there were running water near the house the boys made "waterwheels." This activity called for a board of soft wood such as store goods came in. One cut two strips an inch wide, a quarter-inch thick, and six to eight inches long. A square notch was cut halfway through the middle of each strip. The strips were then pressed together to make a firm cross. Two thin nails driven into the center of the cross from opposite sides made the axle. Then all that was needed was two forked sticks and a few stones to make a flume. A good waterwheel with an occasional adjustment would run until the brook went dry.

A seasonal project was the willow whistle. When the willows began to show buds in the spring, a twig about the thickness of a finger was cut into sections two to six inches long. The cambium layer was destroyed by tapping the twig with a stone or other hard object, and when that was well done the bark could be slipped off the twig. The large end was beveled like the mouthpiece of a clarinet and a plug cut from the debarked stick was made to fit the tube.
One side of it was shaved flat so that when it was inserted there would be space for the admission of air. A notch in the tube just in front of the plug completed the whistle. The size of the tube, the location of the notch, and the size of the air space above the plug all affected the quality of the whistle, so the average boy had to make several in order to get one to suit him. If he were very ambitious he cut a long tube, cut finger holes in it and made a flageolet. The holes produced different tones and any boy could devise a tune for his instrument even if he could not play those of other composers.

In the winter, the chief trouble with skating was that skates cost money; they could not be homemade. Our post office had been moved to Mr. Flenniken's store, and I went there every evening for the mail. A pair of skates attracted my attention and I wanted them badly. I knew the family finances were low, but when we gathered around the fire in the evening, I brought the subject up for discussion. There was a long debate, finally father, mother, and Will each contributed a quarter, and the next day I took my seventy-five cents down and bought the skates. They were a little too large for me, but they clamped tightly on the soles of my shoes.

There was a shallow pond in the hog lot across the road made by damming the brook up with loose stones to make a watering place for the animals. It was now frozen over and so I took my new skates and went down to the pond alone. I sat down on the bank and put on the skates, self-consciously, because the road was only fifty feet away and the house was just across the road.

Fortunately, there was nobody in sight. The first problem was to get to my feet with dignity. I struggled to my feet and at once learned something about skates. I turned my ankles so the sharp edge of the skates would cut into the ice, thinking that they would hold fast that way while I decided what to do next, but suddenly both feet shot forward and I sat down with authority. I looked about, but there was nobody in sight, which increased my confidence somewhat. I decided that balance must be what kept one upright on skates and scrambled to my feet. My second guess was right. I tried a few cautious strokes and found that it is easier to remain upright on skates when moving than when standing still. Before I was called to supper I could skate the length of the pond with maximum awkwardness.

After several days on the pond I was allowed to join the skaters on the creek. We played shinny, raced, or just skated back and forth. I gained a fair competence by watching my elders. The skaters were
teenage boys, with a few men up to thirty. I never saw a girl or a woman on skates in Greene County.

For a few of us there was swimming in summer, but as one ascended the creeks from the river, the swimming holes became fewer and fewer. Whiteley Creek at Garards Fort was accommodating. The mill dam backed the water up for a half mile for skating and two secluded spots provided swimming holes — bathing suits were unknown.

I think I have mentioned enough activities to show that in the life of a country boy there was scarcely a dull moment.