

During the 1940's and 50's, I was growing up on a small farm in a very rural area in southeastern Ohio. The county's total population was less than 14,000. The only significant town had 3,000 people. Our life style was very modest as was most of the community. However, we seemed to have everything we needed, not necessarily everything we would like. Our farm, like everyone else's was fairly self sufficient. As I look back, this basic life style was a blessing and not a hardship. Life lessons taught by my parents were more by example than by words. Family, church and community were the priorities. Material "goodies" weren't the main focus. Relationships with extended family, church family and neighbors were very important. We knew all the neighboring farm families very well and could count on each other as anyone might need. At Deerfield Presbyterian Church, the VBS and youth fellowship programs were amazingly good. The county 4-H clubs were great ways to connect and learn. The life values that my parents lived by were largely without distraction and seemed to be normal to me. As I moved on from that environment, I grew to appreciate the values and blessings of that life. I've tried to live up to those values over the years. When I stumble, I try to "get back on the horse". I marvel at the lives that my parents and neighbors lived.

Gary Hivnor