

Job Hadsell Has Operated Store In Same Location For 51 Years

When you run a country store long enough in a rural community, you know the best and the worst of everybody. If you grow more and more tolerant with folks, instead of becoming annoyed with their vagaries, you become eventually the heart of the community, with its joys and sorrows brought to your doorstep.

That's the way it is with Job Hadsell. For fifty-one years he has been in the general store business in Beaumont, with two years ad-

ditional in LaGrange when he was a young man, fresh from two years of school teaching.

The school teaching experience brought up some reminiscences which have a bearing upon present day modes of thought and trends in education.

Mr. Hadsell cut a wedge of black skinned cheese and laid it on the scales, while he pursued his train of thought. Then he wrapped it and marked 65 cents on the paper, but not before we had broken off a

crumb and eaten it hungrily. Mr. Hadsell has the best black-skinned cheese anywhere hereabouts, or maybe it just tastes better because he cuts it and wraps it. Same way with his eggs. Maybe they are, no larger or browner than anybody else's eggs, but they always seem a bit fresher, their mat surface a little rosier, their yolks a little richer.

Mr. Hadsell agreed that it was pretty good cheese. Then he went on to say that he sometimes thought children nowadays didn't leave school as well prepared for real life as they used to when they graduated from the one-room school house.

After all, he said, it is the teachers who make the school, and a teacher who can inspire a child will inspire it, whether the instruction is given in a one-room school, a twenty-room school or on a stump in the pine woods.

We quoted the current thought that it was bad for children not to be kept in their own age group.

That, said Mr. Hadsell, always struck him as an odd conclusion. Children, he went on, are normally in a mixed age group. A normal family does not consist entirely of four-year olds, or ten-year olds, or eighteen year olds. If it did, nobody would ever learn anything. You have to have something to reach for if you are to grow.

In the old schools, he reflected, the younger students absorbed something from the older ones, not because they particularly wanted to, but because recitations were going on all about them. When a child reached the age where he studied fractions, fractions were no mystery to him because he had been exposed to them subconsciously ever since he read his first primer.

Sometimes, he said, the schools had rough characters in them, big boys who were not going to learn anything and dared the teacher to teach them. He recalls that one of these kept a "chaw" of tobacco in his cheek, and when he got too full for words, he would spit on the floor. The teacher warned him, and the next time he disciplined him, and from that time forward there was no more tobacco and no more trouble. The smaller children took mental notes, and it was a very peaceful year with everybody buckling down to business and turning in good examinations.

Mr. Hadsell carries on his Justice of the Peace activities from the same roll-top desk where he makes out his invoices and renders his bills. He has been a Justice for more than twenty years, but he always tries to talk people out of going to law if it is possible, showing them that nobody gains by a lawsuit. When it is a question of a traffic violation, he has no choice. The offender has to be fined, or jailed, or both, and a report sent to Harrisburg.

He has had a good many public offices, so many in fact that he has lost track of them. They include Town Clerk, County Commissioner, and Treasurer of Monroe Township. And he was Superintendent of the Union Sunday School in Beaumont for a long time, resigning the post ten years ago.

Mr. Hadsell has a big apple orchard on the old homestead where his wife, the former Emma Richards, was born and raised. There are about a thousand trees, some going, some coming, some maturing, and it looks like a pretty fair crop this year. Mr. Hadsell's son Wayne handles the orchard from spraying to marketing. There are some dairy cows, too, with milk going to Harter's Dairy through Butch Smith.

How about bugs? Are they worse now than they used to be? We wanted to know.

Well, they are and they aren't, was the answer to that.

Over in LeGrange, where young Hadsell was brought up and where Uncle Ben Hall had an apple orchard, there used to be a plague of green measuring worms that moved into the riverside orchards every spring at high-water time and made lacework of every leaf on the trees unless discouraged with Paris Green. You don't see those worms anymore, he said, but you have to spray several times a year for other things.

An apple orchard, he says, just about supports itself, and the farm pays its own expenses, but that is about all you can expect these days.

Mrs. Hadsell has always been as much interested in the store as her husband. Sometimes it is Mrs. Hadsell who weighs out bananas and the black-skin cheese and counts out the brown eggs while Mr. Hadsell estimates a customer's size in terms of blue denim overalls, or passes the time of day with himself.

Gale Clark, a neighboring farmer who knows as much about prices in the store as Mr. Hadsell does. And young Mrs. Wayne Hadsell, attractive mother of six small children, opens the case to weigh out a pound of sliced ham. The store is a family affair as well as the heart

of the neighborhood.

The store was not always in its present location. When Mr. Hadsell and his young wife first came to Beaumont, the store was in Sol Mc Connell's place, with the Grand Army of the Republic Hall on the second floor. Sol was an old soldier, veteran of the Civil War. Mr. Hadsell remembers a big pole raising there, with flag raising ceremonies.

This building burned down, its cellar walls are still visible. The present building had been vacant for perhaps a year when Mr. Hadsell took it over, but it had been used as a store long before, under management of Alpha Cook. James Scoville had also had a general store business there.

Since 1910 it has been Hadsell's place. The editor of The Dallas Post holds as one of his pleasant memories making the rounds of the country stores with his father, Walter Risley, who sold drygoods and notions all over northeastern Pennsylvania. It was Job Hadsell's store where he particularly enjoyed stopping recognizing in this mild mannered and courteously spoken man a depth of strength and integrity which is the heritage of American.

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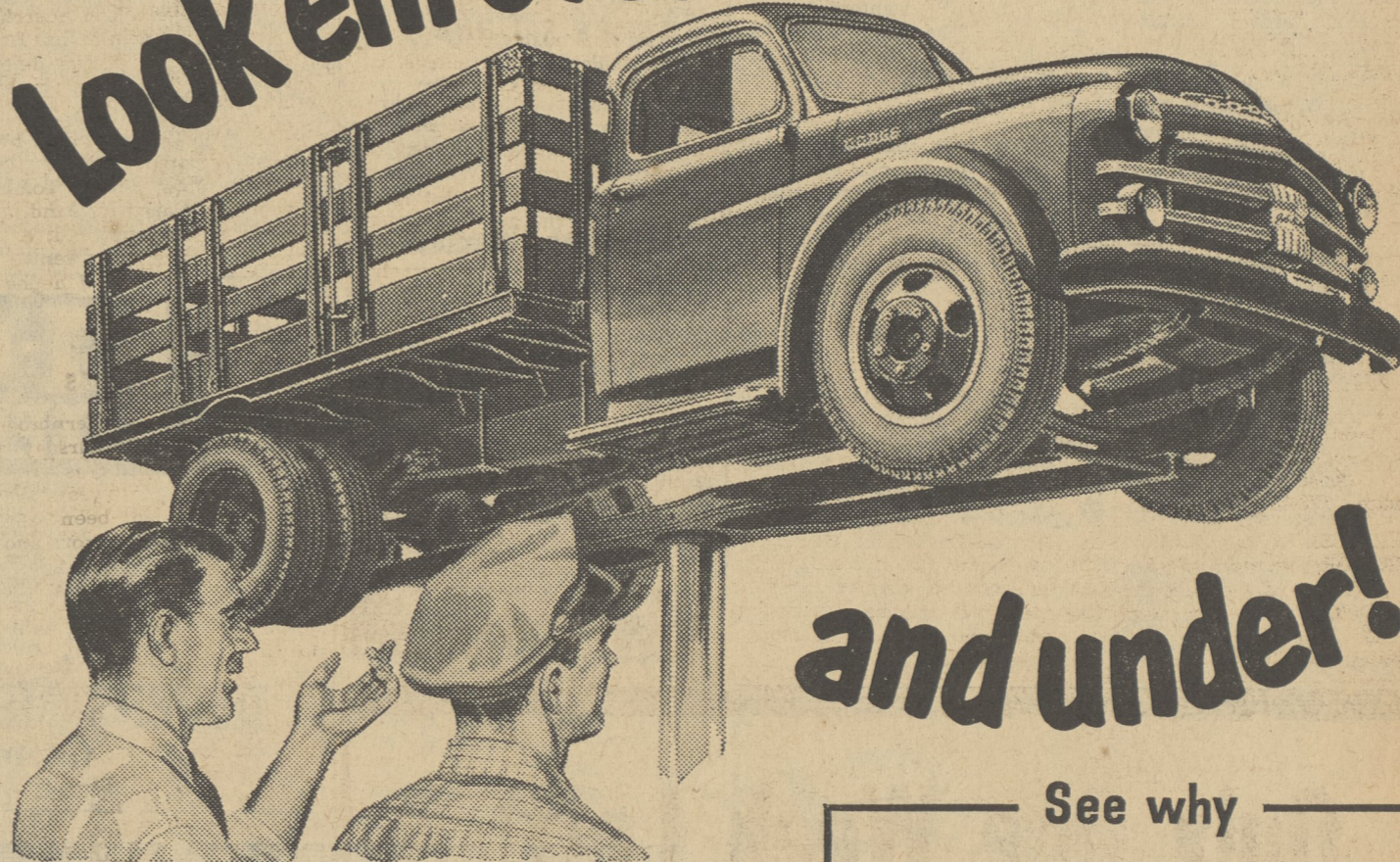
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