

*fastest. Still down on our knees we would delight in watching the tumblebug. We would find his small hole in the ground, get a small straw or twig, spit on it and put it down the hole to attract the tumblebug out of his hole. Once out of the hole, the tumblebug would head straight for some cow, pig or horse manure, get into it, then make a marble out of it and roll it all the way back to his hole. We wouldn't see that tumblebug again until it had eaten the marble up and was ready for more.*

*We also played with the tumblebugs, spending hours chasing them with shingles from the roof of the house or barn. June bugs that we captured with jars provided entertainment too. We would tie a long string to one of their legs and let them fly for hours or until their leg came off. We would even tie string around the necks of snakes and race them. There were a lot of poisonous snakes, water moccasins, copperheads and rattlers. We knew which ones to play with.*

*When we played in the fields, a lot of the smaller farm animals like the baby horses, goats and pigs played along with us. We had special ponds where the boys would go swimming. My favorite was a lily pond with beautiful lilies everywhere. It was approximately 100 square feet [he may have meant 100 feet by 100 feet—square feet would have been too small to match his description] surrounded by tall trees with muscadine vines all over them. We would swim and sunbathe in the mud until it dried all over our bodies. Then we would march like stiff-legged monsters back into the water and play for hours. When we got hungry we would reach up and eat wild grapes and muscadines.*

*The day usually caught up with us there at the pond and we'd have to race home in time for a bath before supper. I would always get sleepy before my bath but I never got out of taking it.*

*I can remember how strict my mother was about cleanliness, of the house and of my personal things. She always wanted me and dad to be neat. She was a thorough housekeeper. Why she even kept the yard swept clean. She had chickens, ducks, geese, little kittens, dogs and baby pigs as pets. But the yard stayed clean.*

*Not to be outdone, my father, John Wesley Burns, was in the cleaning business too. He took clothes from the neighbors which he then cleaned and pressed. I remember one day when he had finished pressing and had placed the hot iron out on the edge of the porch to cool, I decided to play with it. While I didn't burn myself as well*