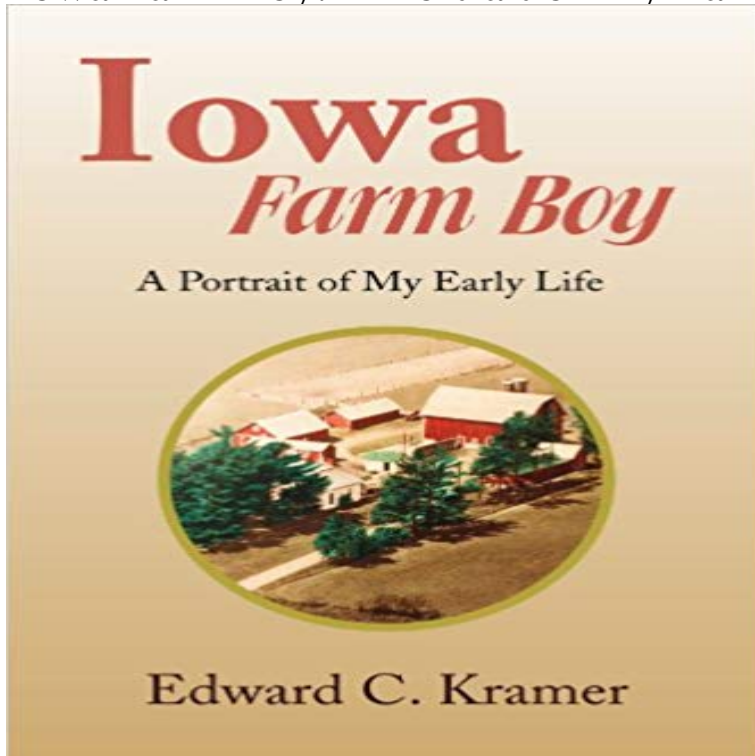


Iowa Farm Boy: A Portrait of My Early Life



Ed Kramer was born and raised on an Iowa farm during the last half of the 1930s. He was the youngest of four brothers, so they had a profound effect, in so many ways, on his early life. He attended a rural, one-room, country school for the first eight years of his life. He describes, in detail, what a typical country school looked like, and how it functioned. Many younger people today have no idea what it was like to have only one teacher for their first eight grades. The idea of having all eight grades in a one-room school-house boggles their minds even further!

Ed thoroughly enjoyed his farm experiences. He grew up in a difficult era of our country. He points out that the concept of the good ole days was not all true. Hardships and dangers abounded around every corner. Farming was a dangerous business. However, along with the dangers and hardships, there were so many fun and exciting times. Ed vividly describes threshing time on the farm. Many of the older generations will be able to relate to Ed's stories. Ed loved the outdoors and nature. He learned to adapt to, and live with, the outdoors and nature. Ed understood the need for mankind to appreciate the importance of both in our lives and the impact they leave on all of us.

This was very evident in his outdoor hobbies and experiences. What was it like to transition from country school to high school - going from a small school to a large school, and from a class size of four to one with thirty-two? What impact did sports have on Ed's life? So many teachers! What an adjustment that he had to make!

So many important decisions had to be made, and so little time. Life seemed to be moving fast now. Ed wanted to let his readers know what went through his mind, as he tried to cope with the many options available, in steering the future course for him. Should he listen to his brothers' advice? Should he follow in his brothers' footsteps? What process did he use to

arrive at a decision? College was another phase of Eds life. He had to decide what would be his major. What did he really want to do later in life? Again, so many more teachers, subjects and larger class size. It seemed like each phase of his life was on such a higher level. How did he feel having a brother as his professor? Did that help or hurt their relationship? He understands that each person has a different vision of what college would be like. He tries to point out some mistakes he made in college, so that others may avoid them.

Ed was fortunate to have had summer employment that paid his way through many of his college years. He understood that the cost of attending college was much less during his era. However, for his family, the cost was high. His summer employment happened to be in the forest service. That gave him the opportunity to extend his horizons. It meant going out on his own to execute, or perform, what he had learned in his earlier years. Now he could put his good Iowa work ethic to good use. He learned that hard work, patience and perseverance paid off. He accepted new responsibilities and assumed a leadership role that he never experienced before. Decisions are a part of everyday life. One of Eds most important decisions was to enter the military service. He tries to point out to his readers what a man or woman has to go through in the military. There will be good and bad days, as there are in any part of life. He mentioned before, that each phase of his life meant reaching out further to a higher level. Each phase prepared him for the next level. Each phase was a steppingstone to greater things to come. Ed wants his readers to understand that, even though growing up today is a lot different than when he grew up, there still are many similarities. Developing a good work ethic is still paramount today. Religious faith was important to Ed, as it carried

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