

Out of the Life of Robert F. Gaut



The Fight of the Bumble Bees

by Robert Gaut

I was in the sixth grade attending an old-fashioned, one-roomed country school about 1942. There were six of us boys in the same grade. Since in those years the school had only swings and seesaws for recreational equipment, we rowdy boys went looking for our excitement elsewhere.



I don't know how it started but we began waging war with the local bumblebees. We would hurriedly eat lunch and then go off to fight the bees.



Quite often we wouldn't get back to school by the time it was expected so we would have to line up to take our punishment with the board of education. The teacher seemed completely unaware of swollen eyes and other evidence of bee wars, which should have been punishment enough.

How did we find those bee nests? It was the unspoken duty of every boy to scout the fields and find those nests. Here was the method of attack. Two boys would stand over the nest and when they had worked up enough courage they would stir up the nest and the fight was on. The weapons of war were weeds tied together which weren't always enough to win the battle. One time a bee sat on my chin and stung me repeatedly while I was fighting off others and running like crazy to get out of the battle. These bee battles were just a few of the troubles we found ourselves in as ornery Oklahoma farm boys.

A Second Theft

by Robert Gaut

When I was seven years old, I received for Christmas a pair of brown jersey gloves with leather gauntlets and fringe from an aunt and uncle. They came through the mail. My family lived on a farm in northeast Oklahoma and the aunt and uncle owned and operated a clothing store in Wichita, Kansas. I was the youngest of seven children: one sister just older than I and five older brothers. This occurred in 1936, in the heart of the great depression. My mother had died two years earlier and she was a sister to the aunt that had sent me the gloves and several things for my sister. It was quite a thrill to receive something new in the "dirty thirties" because several brothers before me had worn everything I received.

I was very proud of those jersey gloves with gauntlets and fringe. But my joy was short-lived. The very-first day I wore them to school they disappeared. Several days later a classmate from a family that was well known as thieves came to school wearing a pair of gloves that were just like the ones I'd had. I wasn't able to prove they were mine, so they were gone forever.

Now, fast-forward to 1952 and the place where I had my first full time job. I had become a Christian and I was trying to "win the world for Jesus." That little boy who I suspected of stealing my wonderful gloves now came to be one of my workmates as a grown-up young man. I felt it was my Christian duty to invite him to church. In the back, of my "Christian mind" I was thinking that maybe he would repent of his sins and confess that he had stolen my gloves.

He told me he didn't have nice enough clothes to wear to church. I still had the nice suit of clothes that my father had bought for me to wear to my high school graduation, so I gave it to him. It looked better on him than it had on me. He came to church once wearing the suit, but never came again. I have thought through the years that with some people you just can't win.

I am now 79 years old and have spent most of my life in special ministry and have discovered that even if Jesus asks you to give away all you have, if you do it with a heart of love for Him, you just can't lose. "If you do it for the least of these, my brothers, you have done it unto me" (Matthew 26: 40b).

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