

This same swamp would freeze over in winter to varying depths. Ice thickness ranged from about one inch to one foot depending on the location. At night, big kids would often build a large fire on the ice for warmth and illumination.

Our farm property had a boot shape wherein the toe pointed west and the longer leg part pointed south. An irrigation ditch formed our northern border. Our two holed out house was located adjacent to that ditch. It was there that my father taught me how to crumple up the torn out pages of the Sears Roebuck catalog as a replacement for expensive toilet tissue.

This ditch would also freeze over in winter. I had some dull ice skates given to me by a neighbor. Somehow, I also had access to a dull file. I spent hours trying to sharpen the bottom of the ice skates runners which were very rounded, but the file was as dull as the skates. I experienced many falls because the runners would not bite into the ice. Even so, I did have fun. I could get on the frozen ditch and skate all the way down it to the frozen swamp.

One day during daylight I was skating with my freckle faced, red headed friend, Max Dana on the swamp. He kept daring me to skate on an area of springy ice. Springy ice was only about one inch thick and had spots where water was actually on top of the ice. I don't know why I took his dare but I ventured out. Suddenly I realized that my moving weight was making a wave in the ice and the ice was cracking under my skates. I was no stranger to prayers since I had been in the habit of saying them morning and evening. I believe that Heavenly Father actually rescued me from a freezing death in the icy water at that time.

I did love ice skating as did other members of the student body at the Marriott School. Our school principle, Floyd Barnett, also liked to skate. He made it possible by flooding the baseball diamond behind the school from a near by irrigation ditch. He would often extend our scheduled recesses to an hour on favorable days. I remember well those memorable days.