

Good Deed Was Acknowledged

WE WERE LIVING near the railroad tracks in Knappa, Oregon in 1933 and saw a lot of young men walking the tracks, looking for work.

We called them bums, including some who had college educations but couldn't find work.

When they came to our house for a bit of food, my mother had a rule. If they offered to work, she would make them a sandwich. If they didn't want to work, they were out of luck.

One morning, there was a knock at the door. A young man wanted something to eat but did not offer to do any work. He hadn't had a shave or a haircut in a long time.

When Mom told him no, he asked if she would give him a piece of cotton with some alcohol on it because he had an infection on his ear.

Mom brought him in the house, sat him down and fed him some rolled oats, which is what we had for breakfast.

Then she looked at his ear, which was badly infected. Mom called the local store and asked if the freight truck had come in yet that day.

It hadn't arrived, so Mom told him to go to the store and hitch a ride on the truck so he could see a doctor in Astoria.

Later, we found out the doctor lanced his ear, treated the infection,

then called the local feed store and got him a job there

About 4 months later, there was another knock on our door—one from a clean-shaven young man with a haircut and new clothes. He wanted to give Mom \$40, a lot of money during the Great Depression.

He explained that he was the young man she had helped. Mom didn't take the money and told the man to use it to make a better life for himself.

My mom never got his name, but he told her the day he first appeared at our door was his lucky day. He had been working steadily and even had paid the doctor. He was debt-free and wanted to pay Mom for what she had done for him.

—Rex V., Sheridan, Oregon