

## Down By The Berry Patch

### "Elbow"

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Elbow did odd jobs around the egg station. Daddy said he was a good worker but you had to be very exact when you gave him directions. He would do precisely what he was told to do. If he was told to sweep the saw dust he did just that. He'd sweep it and sweep it.....Then he needed to be told to put it in the dust pan and throw it away. I would never have been allowed to say it but it didn't stop me from thinking that he must have a small brain because he had a small head. In fact, he was a pretty small man. I'd look at him closely to see if he was really small or if it just looked that way because his clothes were too big. His pants were held up with a belt that wrapped around him and had a special hole punched far before the regular ones to pull it tight enough. A long chunk of the belt with the ordinary holes hung down the front of his pants. His sister came to our church and she was tiny, too. The way her hair stuck out made it look like it was attached to her hat.. Unlike Elbow, she was married. She lived with her husband at the edge of town. I could never imagine where Elbow lived.



Mother really shocked me one day. She brought me a beaded Indian pin from Albuquerque. I wanted to take it to school to share it but couldn't remember the name of the city it came from. What shocked me was when she said, "Just remember Elbow's dirty-Albuquerque." He was, but I never would have dreamed she would say something like that.

Sometimes Daddy and Uncle John killed and dressed chickens. Elbow was helping clean up after that job. He came to Daddy and said he was taking the cans of water into the bathroom to empty them and he accidentally dumped the lizards and gizzards into the toilet. "You don't have to worry though. I got them all out and put them back in the cans so you can still sell them."

I can't make this story longer because this is absolutely all I remember about Elbow.

It is actually a lot compared to what I remember about Jimmy Hessler. He lived above the Egg Station with his mother and little sister. He would ride his bike no handed and weave back and forth down the middle of Main Street calling out, "Me a nica boy! Me wee wee in your pocket!" He drowned on the Saginaw Bay in the same accident with Bruce Sweeney. His mother was Bruce's girlfriend. How can someone be your age and this is all you remember about him?

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Photo Caption: Women working at the Asa N Wilcox Egg Company where Elbow also worked. Asa is Rita's maternal grandfather.