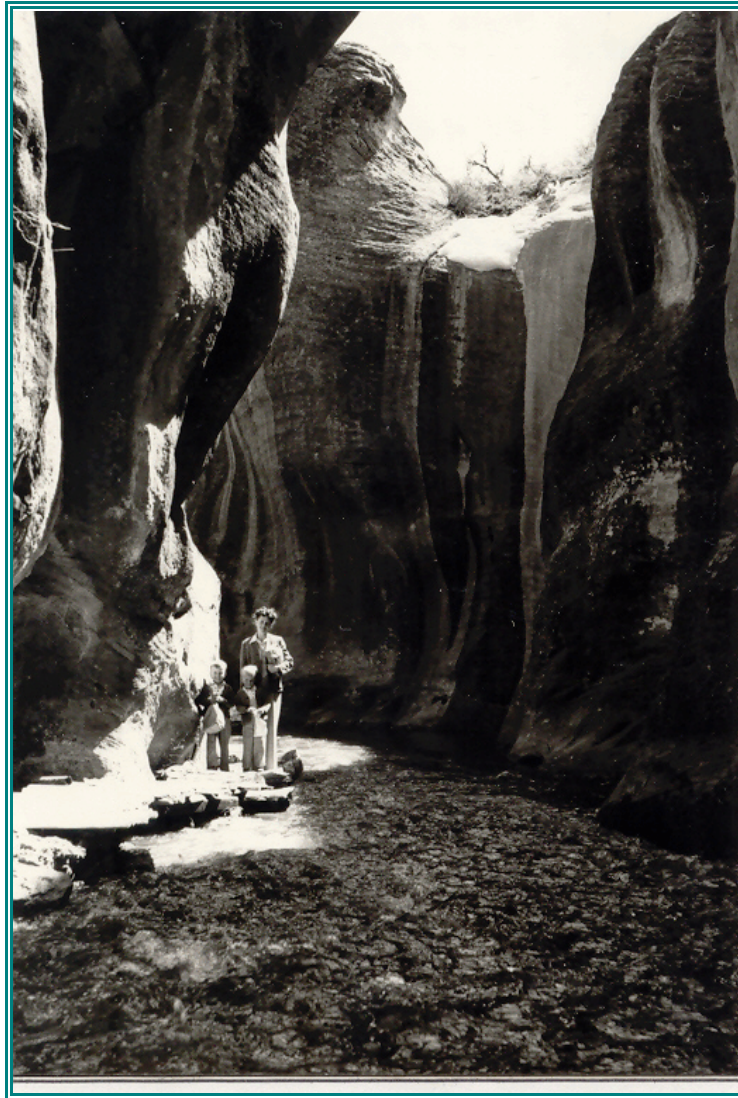


# UPHILL - BOTH WAYS®



Volume 7 - Vernal, Utah 1946-51

James R. Jensen

5324 SW 153<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

Beaverton, OR 9700

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Sorry again for the bad font in image subtitles - bug! Let me know if you need to know what something is and I'll decode it - sorry = too much time

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## Introduction

Dad is now back from the war, we are now out of the garage in Naples, and in our own house on the 2 acre farm south of Vernal. This volume is a heavily illustrated view of what it was like to be a little kid on that little farm outside of a little town, between the ages of 5 and 9. Remember to think of this era -Naples and Vernal- as the time I lived and grew up on a farm. Real country farm. I am a farm boy, still. Oh, there is a heavy patina of education and so on, but if you rub deeply enough, you find a red neck. I am a farm boy first of all. Understand that and you will understand some of the things about me that are otherwise confusing. I find in my politics in particular that I am a redneck. For example, my favorite photo on Yahoo.com of the aftermath of 9/11 was the image of a forest-green, late model pickup truck with darkened windows. On the front was a single word in bold black, "REVENGE". Yep, I get it. My politics are pretty basic and visceral. My country, right or wrong, thank you, and as they said during the Viet Nam War about the USA, "Love it - or Leave it!"

You will come away from reading this volume with a deeper sense of the quality of my childhood than you would have imagined possible. The internet is what made it possible. Not since Guttenberg's invention of moveable type has there been a millennial shift in technology that provided such profound different possibilities to 'everyman' to access more information. You and I have benefitted enormously. This kind of production would not have been possible 10 years ago.

Let me say more about the images included. [Try and stop me.] I have inserted an enormous number of bits and pieces of 1940's Americana. The purpose of throwing so many images at you is to try to create a broad sense of the social, political, economic and social climate I lived in. Little kids are blasted with a bewildering array of data streams that they generally ignore because they are incomprehensible. But many of these streams flow through these little brains and lay down sediment that is incorporated into the foundation of the world view that little kid is constructing. One of the most obvious data streams is advertising, a critical part of the engine of US prosperity and life. I've thrown in a large number of advertisements from the Internet, always citing the URL in the caption to (1) protect me from a copyright action and (2) allow you to access the sites because there are vast numbers of other relevant images that I simply cannot include in this thing which has grown too large already. Madison Avenue, for better or worse, has been a substantial portion of the framework of our daily American lives as you know from your own childhoods when you were bombarded by ads for "Star Wars" gear, "Care Bears", candies, toys, etc.



These images provide you a rich visual representation of the things that I describe in words. Pictures are indeed worth a thousand words, more actually, because the total impact of a photo cannot be equaled by a description of the same thing, regardless of the length of the description. As I flip through this volume, just looking at the pictures, I personally feel a sense of nostalgia, of familiarity, a sense of "Ah ha! I'd forgotten that!" I hope that you have a comparable experience.

The range of the images is extravagant and posed a problem about where to insert them. Sometimes they fit neatly into a personal anecdote, other times they are simply inserted at what seems to be an appropriate -or opportune, not the same thing- point. There are images of governmental matters, pictures of the farm and things on it, school report cards and school pictures, ads, movies, songs, toys, movie stars, soaps, foods and so on are intended to provide to you. On the one hand, I could have chosen to just drop individual items randomly throughout the text trying thereby to create the atmosphere in which I lived, where these things did pop up here and there, randomly, disjointedly. On the other hand, I could collect sets of like images and insert them as groups with some commentary about each. Ultimately, I have used both treatments.

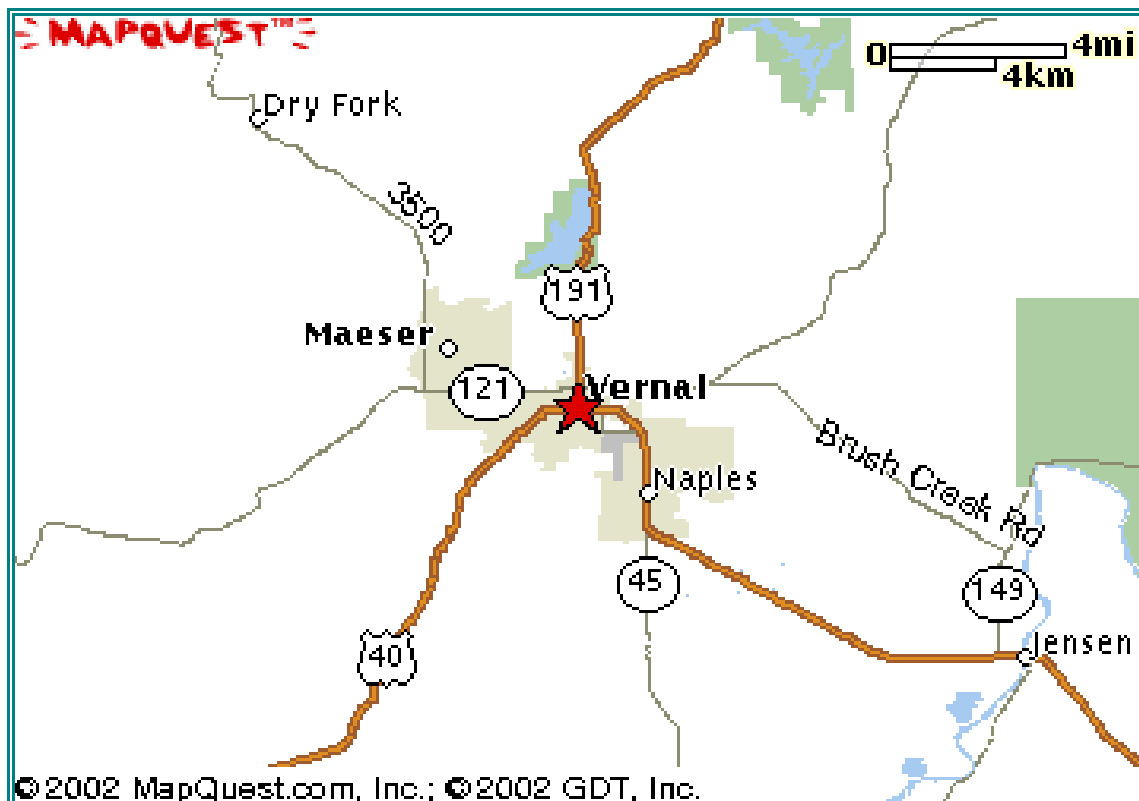
Several collections of images do show up because I feared that the random placement of so many images might distract you from the stories of my life, which after all, is the point of this exercise. For example, rather than scatter 18 comic strip characters randomly through the text, I corral them into a single table, colored images of the characters in the right column with brief comments about them in the same row in the left column. In this instance, the use of a table with rows and columns had the added advantage of creating the same visual sense of comic strips created by several frames in a row. Other collection are made just to spare you the disorientation that would come if each image were thrown at you randomly.

Happy reading.

## Vernal, Utah

Welcome to Vernal where I did 4 years. On a 2 acre farm. We, i.e. mom, Dickie and I,

have just finished the lengthy stay in Grandpa Merrell's garage out in Naples - see the map for locations. Dad is through doing things for WW II and has decided he should come home and live with his wife and children after all. An imminently



Map navigation icons: a square with an X, a diamond with an X, a vertical bar with an X, a left arrow, a right arrow, a double left arrow, a double right arrow, a circle with a dot, a diamond with a dot, and a square with an X.

sensible thing for him to do, though there were consequences of his absence and his return that I mentioned in Volume 1 which will be mentioned again below as they arise. Mom said that after dad came home, the four of us stayed several more months in Naples in the 2-room garage. During that time, dad and mom scrounged up enough cash to get a mortgage -probably offering their first-born as security- to buy the old Ashton Place out on the south west side of Vernal, located in the map above near the tip of the bottom left point of the red star in the center of Vernal. Lately mom told me that they actually made a very small down payment. Perhaps it was a consequence of the wartime economy. Dad wasn't a veteran so didn't have access to the GI Bill that soldiers had, but the whole economy was abnormal as a result of the war effort so perhaps banks were more creative in making loans. Just to get a stream of income

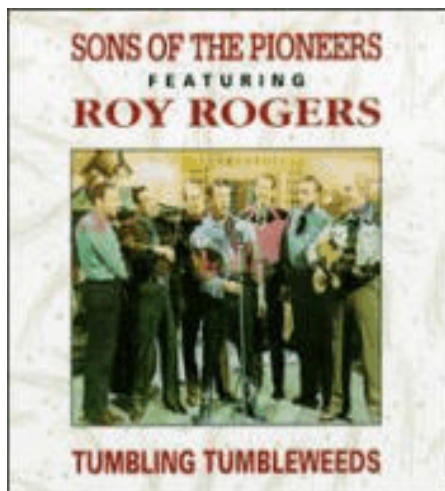
from land that other wise yielded nothing.

Vernal could have been the topic of a Willa Cather book like *My Antónia*. I visualized Vernal when I read that book, and subsequently persuaded dad to read it - no mean task- which he did and with comparable results. He loved it. The principal family in the book was Slavic rather than Scandinavian, but the use of ethnic terms like "square heads" was familiar. My dad talked about Swedes as "square heads". For him "swedes" were rutabagas. Vernal is a small farming town with its share of Scandinavians, located and isolated in the Uintah Basin in the northeast corner of the state of Utah, adjacent to Wyoming to the north and Colorado to the east - though I didn't know that at the time. Too busy with local explorations. The Colorado state line is about 40 miles distant from the town.

The basin is hot and dry in the summer and bitterly cold in the winter. Few trees except for the willows and cottonwoods and always along creeks and streams. Sagebrush and rabbit brush, with tumbleweeds abound. This pesky plant was the subject of a song I loved to hear on the scratchy old radio, "Tumbling Tumbleweeds". It was sung by Roy



Tumbleweed, "Russian thistle" caught on a barbed wire fence.



Rogers and the Sons of the Pioneers, something

else I understood something about. I've ordered the song on a CD for you because you need to listen to it about now to get a flavor for what radio entertainment was like. It's on CD now but not much better quality than I remember. All the songs are familiar and you need to hear them to feel what I felt when I was a little kid there in that dry valley on this small dry farm. "Cool Clear Water" is on this CD as well.

I just received it today. Brings backs the sense of the time. The music that came from the small scratchy radio -the one I pointed out in Volume 1 in a photo of the baby in the apartment- was much inferior in quality to any modern transistor radio. It was all we had so was appreciated for what it was - free music we could capture from the air at home on



the farm. Part of the problem with the quality of the music from the radio was that the records of the era were 78 rpm, with better quality than the original Edison wax recordings but not as good as the 45 rpms that came into vogue in the early '50's and the 33 rpm's that followed. Another problem with the quality of the music from the radio was the quality of the transmissions of the little radio station. The final problem with quality involved the quality of the 3 inch speaker in the radio. It was small and was generations old compared to what you know.

These old radios were built around vacuum tubes, something you've not experienced. You live in the era of transistors and integrated circuits and microelectronics. But these radios relied on enormously large tubes of glass with things inside that performed the necessary tasks to be radios. This is what the inside looked like, the size of a loaf of bread - not the tiny thing you hold in one hand in stick in your shirt pocket.



The only radio station that we could pull in regularly was the local station that is still alive in Vernal, though greatly improved, was KVEL. Its fare was naturally country-oriented and I remember a few of the songs I heard, one of the most memorable starting with a verse I am still unable to locate:

**"Oh, I won't go huntin' with you Jake, but I'll go chasin' women.  
Now put those hounds back in the pen and quit yur silly grinnin'."**

Haven't a clue who sung it, nor did I comprehend what I was hearing, but it was representative of what we listened to. In our house, listening to the radio was actually a controlled activity that was measured out sort of like a reward by mom. We couldn't just go up and turn it on. We needed permission which was not always forthcoming. The only valid reason I can think of was a valid reason -if it was the reason- the cost of electricity. These tube radios did draw a lot of power.

Speaking of "could pull in regularly", there is a phenomenon that you kids never really were bothered by when you listened to the radio. Because all of your radios were modern, and were FM. This phenomenon is the diurnal fluctuation of the ionosphere above the earth. I obviously didn't know that technical term in Vernal. But I did know that during the day when I turned the tuning knob from one side across to the other, KVEL came in loud and clear but hardly any other stations could



Naples, Rangeley and so on. We were a bunch of farmers isolated and independent out of necessity.

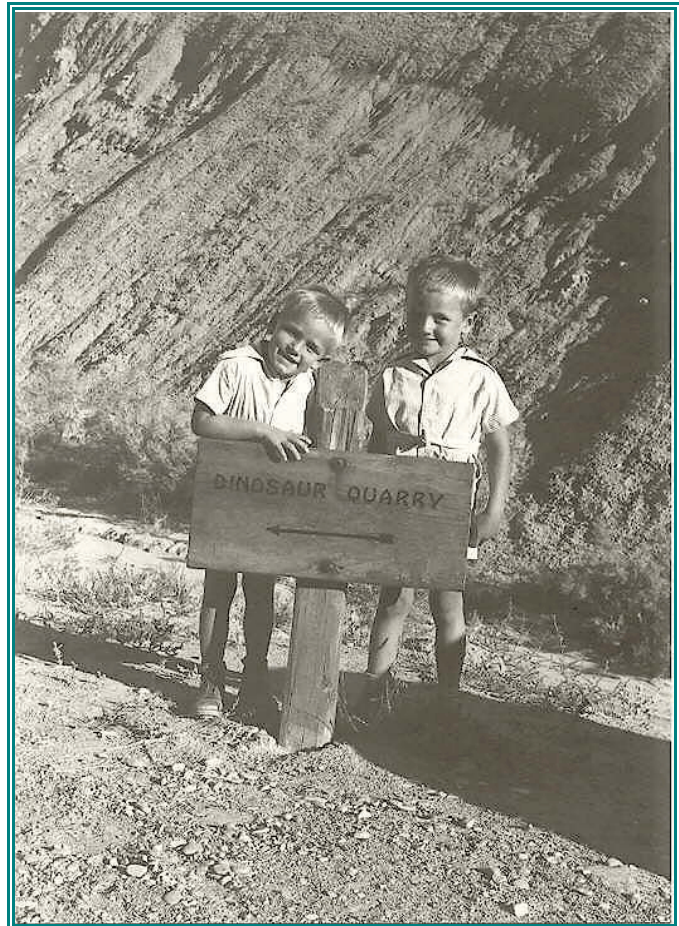
Naples, which is located a few miles southeast of Vernal is described in Volume 3, where I spent my early childhood in the safe harbor that Jim and Marie - and Dickie and I - returned to when the cash ran out, or when they wanted respite from Alaska. A few miles further east of Naples is the town of Jensen. The name "Jensen" had nothing to do with our family. Remember that dad, his dad, and his grand-dad were sole male survivors and that the grand-dad was the emigrant from Denmark who parked himself down there in the central desert. It puzzled me as a child to hear a town with my last name but no one remarked about it so I kept my question to my self - actually, I don't think I could have framed a question of any kind. I was simply puzzled that my name was on that tiny town of half a dozen buildings that sat on the west bank of the Greenriver at the west end of what seemed to be an enormous bridge. This is the bridge that we crossed over when we went into the mysterious east desert that we rarely traveled. Just on the east end of the bridge a small road turned south along the river. That's where we went to swim, the four of us, the last summer we were together in Vernal..

Note on the first map above the road just west of Jensen that takes off from US 40 and heads north up to the pale green block of real estate. That green block is the Dinosaur National Monument that is bordered on the south by the Greenriver. That road is the one we took many times to go to Split Mountain Gorge, or to go to the quarry where we hunted for sandstone concretions, or to picnic and hike around in the desert. On one of those walks with dad and uncle Ted [Mabel's husband, one of the nicest men I have had the good fortune of knowing in this life, who always treated me courteously and with consideration, a rarity amongst my uncles.] I found a sizeable fragment of remarkable rock. It was a curved-ish slab composed of a variety of minerals, powdery, different than other rocks with fascinating iridescent colors. I proudly took it to school for show-and-tell in third grade to be admired by my friends because I had personally found it out there in the desert. The other point about the road to the Quarry is that the road to the Sunshine Ranch of Volume One takes off to the west a few miles north of Jensen. I can't tell exactly in Figure 2 where the turn off was. I do know that it was short time after we turned north on the road to the Quarry. We then turned left again -west- to get to the Sunshine which was another short time down the road. I suppose the Sunshine Ranch doesn't exist any more.

Out there in the east desert during a hike, perhaps deer or rabbit hunting, dad and Uncle Ted found a pair of Ute metates [grind stones] that were sitting upside down on a narrow promontory. Just looked to the inexperienced eye like a pair of rough rocks. They knew, however, turned them over and saw that they were corn grinders. Indians in that region at least left them in place for use during the next year when the tribe returned during its annual circuit through the desert. The stones were too heavy to transport on foot or horseback. The abundant local sandstone in each camp location provided raw material to make new ones at each location. I have both of the metates today, one of them sitting on the front porch in Portland. Neighbor kids considered stealing it here shortly after we moved in. I could tell one morning that it had been moved far from its original position. Not something a cat or dog would do. Its weight probably discouraged them. They certainly had no clue what it was and they couldn't fence it for drug money. Tsk tsk such a time I live in.



The blue streak in Figure 1 that runs north and south through Jensen is the Greenriver. It bounds the southern edge of the Dinosaur National Monument which turns out to be classic example of a government boondoggle. Apparently, when I was a kid there in Vernal, I lived in a state of grace. For the simple undeserved reason that the Quarry which is filled with dinosaur bones was also the



headquarters of the governmental entity named "Dinosaur National Monument". Novel idea, isn't it. Have the center of attraction also be in the center of the park. It was appropriate. Don't need no college degree to figure that one out. So in the 'olden days', the Dinosaur National Monument headquarters was the quarry itself, located just north of Jensen and east of Vernal. In Utah. Note - "Utah".

Sometime in the 1960's as near as I recall, the senators from Utah and Colorado, mental giants both, got into a horse trade. Colorado would give something desirable to Utah if in return the State of Utah would sort of give up the 'ownership' of the "headquarters" of the Dinosaur National Monument to State of Colorado. We won't tell the locals about that for a while, you know. Obviously, these rocket scientists couldn't move the quarry over the river into Colorado, though I don't doubt they mutually considered it for a while. Probably even did a test run of the idea with the Army Corps of Engineers. In any event, Utah's senator eventually stupidly agreed to the trade. It may not have been stupid economically to agree to the trade, but it sure was stupid otherwise to agree to move the monument "headquarters" - a term that suddenly became an abstract concept divorced from the reality that the bones in a cliff with a museum built over it WAS the monument. The bones should have been HQ. The miracle of semantics. As miraculous as the science of statistics.

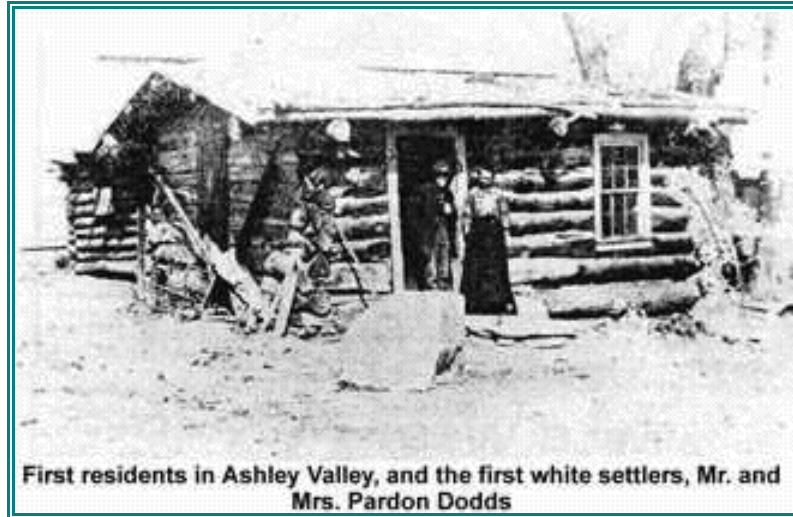
So. Today if you drive in either direction on US 40 hunting for the Dinosaur National Monument Headquarters, and follow the signs on the road, you will end up in the state of Colorado some 30 miles east of the actual quarry. At which time a benign mindless automaton looking remarkably like a human being in a uniform will tell you, "Oh, to see the quarry itself, you need to follow US 40 to blah blah..." as if it was entirely rational for the focus of the park, the thing it is named for, to be located in another state. And as if it was your own fault for being so stupid as to drive all the way over into Colorado when everyone and god knows the quarry is over there in the western sagebrush, overrun with rabbits about as smart as these park rangers. I just love bureaucrats. I am as bigoted as they are stupid. Grrr....

## History of Vernal

The City of Vernal has a website with this snapshot of itself:



"The location of the City of Vernal was first looked upon in 1776 by The Escalante Expedition. The Expedition was composed of ten men looking for a more direct route to Monterey, California. There is no further record of any white man visiting the area until 1825 when General Ashley came through leaving his name on both Creek and Valley.



First residents in Ashley Valley, and the first white settlers, Mr. and Mrs. Pardon Dodds

In 1876 Pardon Dodds and family built the first known cabin in Ashley Valley.

The Ashley Valley had several names before the present name of City, such as The Bench, because of its location away from the creek and lack of trees. The first people believed to live in the actual Vernal area were the Hatch family, during which time the city was called Jericho, then Hatchtown, then Ashley Center, and finally Vernal. "

<http://www.vernalcity.org/about/history.html>

Mrs. Dodd's log cabin, built the year before grandpa Merrell was born further north in Paradise in Cache County, looked much like the one on our farm. With two differences: ours was larger and it was raised off the ground. It had a porch two steps above ground-level. Mrs. Dodd's cabin was likely still standing when grandpa's oldest child Harold was born in 1903 in Jensen. FYI, he's still alive in 2002 so you better watch out or you'll live to be 100. His eyesight is bad but he goes fishing every week and walks down the road to see his brothers. I wasn't told this but imagine that the log cabin on the Ashton place was the original home for the homesteaders, and that it vacated when the "new" house -the one I lived in- was constructed. Henceforth, the log cabin was relegated to the status of grainery and general storehouse.

### Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid

Here's a better photo of Butch Cassidy and his Gang who hung out in the Vernal



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region. Grandpa Merrell said he personally saw the man and that he knew where Butch hung out. He claimed that Butch and his gang liked to hole up in one of the box canyons on the south side of Split Mountain where you all spent an afternoon in the "Split Mountain Gorge". A box canyon is a canyon that is only open on one end, a sort of cul de sac cut into a mountain. The advantage of a box canyon as a hideout for persons suitably outfitted with weapons and substantial supplies of food and water for themselves and their livestock is that it's pretty hard to get behind them and blast them out. And to go in after someone holed up in a box canyon through the front door is sort of like suicidal walk into an ambush. Butch and Co. Easily guarded the entrance and made it nearly impossible for anyone to get at him from above. Grandpa said that there was an old lady who lived alone in an adjacent box canyon.

You kids actually saw the canyon -one of those cuts in the mountain in the background of this image- from a distance the night we camped overnight above the Green River in the dry relentless wind with grandma and grandpa Jensen in their motor home when they took us out to see the "Jensen Quarry". You slept that night about where the photographer of this image was standing when he took this picture. There were actually three of these box canyons on the south side of the mountain.

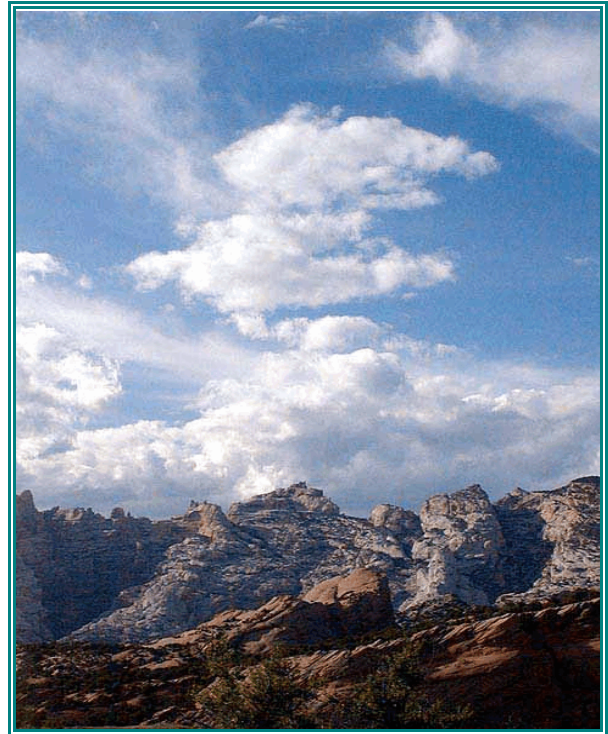


Figure 12 is a wider view of the area. The canyon Butch holed up in is located in the right third of the photo, where you see three parallel splits in the mountain. This appears to have been taken on US 40 on the way out of Naples toward Jensen. The view is

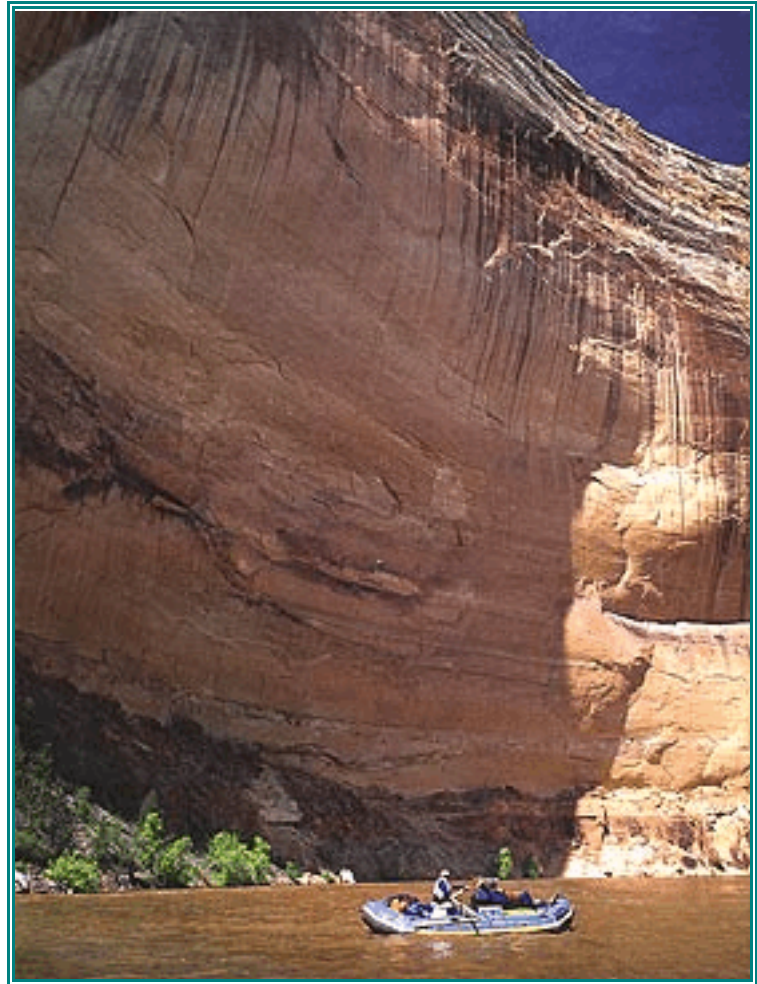




### Yampa and Greenriver River Runners

One of the prominent families in the region was the Hatch family that settled the area early. Seems that original settlers always have a leg up on those who follow, what with grabbing and holding the prime land and resources for parsimonious handling and extravagant sale prices later. The Hatches were prominent in my era and owned among other things oil-related businesses. Uncle Grant was involved in another of their business, one of the ancestors of what had blossomed into a major form of recreation in the west.

The Hatches took advantage of some of the remarkable local scenery. This image shows a quiet stretch of the Yampa in a small modern float boat, with spectacular overhanging sandstone cliffs. You all saw this dramatic type of canyon on that trip with Gma and Gpa when we visited Echo Canyon by the Dinosaur Quarry. The 5111 maroon photo album has a



lot of photos of you kids there - one of Tom with his body straight leaning impossibly sideways because he had worked his feet into the mud. Also some shots of the marvelous mud swallow nests. Spectacular real estate that rapids only emphasized apparently, though I don't know how they had time to look at it.

Hatch's first step to develop this rafting business was to purchase a few of the enormous bridge pontoons after WW II had ended. Remember that I moved to the Ashton Place only a year after WW II ended. There was an enormous amount of "war surplus " of every kind being unloaded across the county. Grandpa Jensen loved it. He would go to the auctions and spend hours hunting for whatever was there that

he needed that he didn't know he needed. It influenced many enterprises for a long time. Who would have guessed that the Army Corps of Engineers materiel would hatch -haha- a new business in Vernal as in river running.

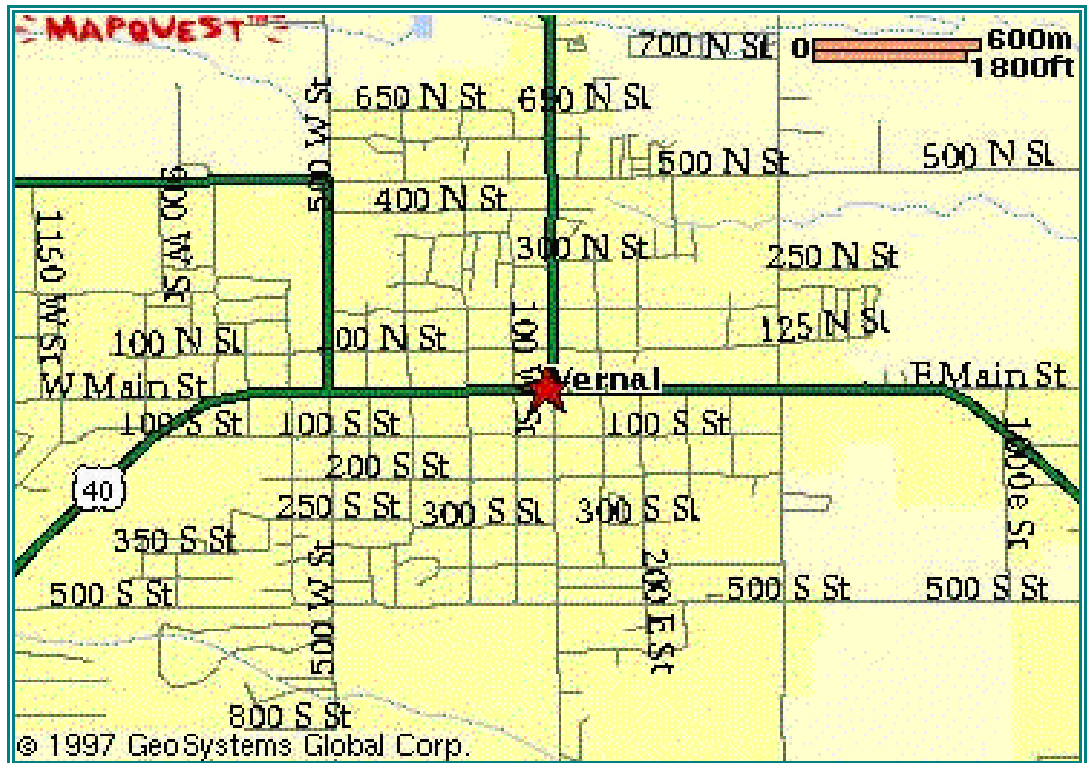
These pontoons were large, long, and narrow. They were outfitted by Hatch to run rapids on the Green

River, the Yampa and the Colorado. This image from the Korean War gives you a sense of the size and strength of these floats. I saw them and was mystified at their size. Tanks were driven across the bridge in this photo an hour after it was finished so they certainly stood up the task of floating a few people and a couple hundred pounds of gear down a river. After the rafts were outfitted for river running, people could buy an excursion through the



Yampa or the Green River. Grant signed up to be trained as one of the guides. I don't remember any particular story, but I was impressed and got goose bumps when he described his near-misses roaring down the river, crashing through enormous rapids in narrow canyons with vertical stone walls. I was simultaneously fascinated and horrified.

Anyway, Vernal is a little town out there in the eastern Utah desert in the Uintah Basin. The town map looks like this map today in Figure 15:



Central Elementary School is probably situated about 300 S. St. and the north-south street in the center as near as I can figure from this map and a 60 year old brain. Only the former is reliable. The Ashley Valley Market was probably located about 100 S. St. and 500 W. St. We used to walk there with mom to buy groceries before we got a car, a jaunt of about half a mile. Each way. The Ashton Place was probably around 800 S St. 500W.



**A**s I said above, I don't know how mom and dad raised enough money to put a down payment down on this two acre farm that was out on the west side of Vernal. They were so poor. Did they actually manage to save money from his Honolulu days, or did he work and save money after he returned? The latter is possible since we lived with grandpa and grandma so there was no rent, plus we probably ate for free. She says that she didn't work to earn money so I guess she didn't, but I harbor the suspicion that she did. Don't ask me to defend that suspicion because I can not. In any event, mom could save a penny forever if it suited her purposes so she is the one who probably made it happen. Dad is the lousiest

businessman I ever met.

The worst example of his poor businessmanship involved a 38 acre piece of desert land that he owned outside of Roosevelt. Somehow in 1953 -I specifically remember the event- he got on the trail of a 38 acre piece of land a few miles east of the town. This land was owned by an absentee landlord apparently, who didn't care about the land. I say that because I specifically remember that dad bought the land for \$2.00 an acre which represented the back taxes. Since the government doesn't pay taxes on the land it owns, then this land was owned by someone who should pay taxes. Who didn't. So dad anted up \$76.00 in 1953 -while we were frantically exploring the desert, hungry for dryness after the grey rainyness of sea-bound Seward- and got title to 38 acres of dry desert land. I don't remember the story why 2 acres were missing from this plot but it was interesting.

Whatever, that was a substantial sum of money but let's put the sum into context: in a few weeks, this same man blew basically our entire grub stake in Seattle on our way back to Seward over the grueling Alcan Highway. No sense, no perspective. Marie loved the man apparently and enabled his dysfunction. Dad spent \$600 lousy dollars out of his wallet, basically all of our remaining money, on picture frame molding that he "needed" in Seward to frame the pictures he was painting. We had hardly any money left over - except for gas. We were allowed to eat one watermelon jam sandwich every 6 hours for the last 3 days until we got back into Seward. I was famished by the time we arrived home. The man was incompetent as a businessman. But back to the story.....

This 38 acres contained two lovely small plateaus on it, the larger one being named Mobley Peak - I'm not sure of the spelling but remember its name and clearly remember the route to go out on it several times. I was proud. We owned this large piece of land. My dad bought it! The most interesting attribute of this piece of land was a kind of grass that had already gone to seed when we arrived. What was interesting about it was the fact that the 6 inch stems were hollow and inflated like long narrow balloons, pointed at each end. That was new to me. We tramped around this land several times before we returned. He drug some friends or relatives out there with him to look it over and give him their approval, which provided us the chance to explore the dang place. And we did with enthusiasm. So odd to find that the dry desolate parched desert could be a place of interest. It was, however, and Seward after two years had become boring with its lush vegetation and marvelous ocean. We loved this exploration in sage brush and rabbit brush and sand and sand stone and lizards and rabbits out there.

What dad finally did with this piece of land years was driven by his cupidity - look it up- and his lack of impulse control. He is famous for both traits in my private



book. The time came in the 1970's when he decided he wanted to take his Indian paintings on a road trip to show them off and earn thousands of dollars. He had decided that he was about to become an important Indian portraitist. [He had extravagantly invested \$600 in a self-serving, inaccurate brochure based in part on his imagined contribution that I was going to make from anthropology to his creations.] The only way he could take this trip was to get a large, i.e. LARGE, van that he would outfit with elaborate custom-built storage racks. So what did he do? He hunted in the classified ads until he found some poor schmuck who had a large used Dodge van. He contacted the man and arranged to go out and drive the dang thing. He concluded scientifically that this was precisely the van he needed for his enterprise of finally becoming famous. Fatuousity to the max. [Look it up - "fatuous"]. And what did he use for specie? [Look it up} This 38 acres of land.

THIRTY - EIGHT ACRES OF LAND for a damn beat up old green slightly scratched Dodge van. The man was astounded. He protested, "Are you sure you want to do this?" I was astounded. I am still astounded. I would have taken out a \$6,000 loan to buy the land from him just to preserve it for you kids. What in the name of Jesus would lead a man to trade 38 acres of land for an old van? What?! Absolutely no money sense. So I conclude that it was Mom who made the Ashton Place Purchase happen. He was constitutionally unable to do that. They got a mortgage from the Bank of Vernal, the same bank that was willing to give her a job in 1945 if she divorced dad. If you forget that detail, go back to Volume 3 and read some more. It's there. Grandpa and Grandma Merrell made the contact and arranged for a Teller's job for mom if she needed to support herself after divorcing James Alvin. He loved gma Merrell, but she wasn't that sure of him obviously.

Interestingly, Mom is totally unfamiliar with this story today. I probed her memory various ways and she has absolutely no remembrance of the land or the reason for the trade. Which surprises me. I have crystal clear memories of trips out to the land in 1953, of the Uranium boom that drove people in that era to buy up worthless land, and of visiting it with dad. Perhaps she never made those trips with us, so has no factual memory to dredge up. Nor does she remember anything about the trials of the trip with this forsaken green Dodge van down through the south when a front rotor failed and they were held up in New Orleans -or some such city- for days while the repair shop located a replacement somewhere in the US. She remembers none of it. Is that the result of her stroke? Or is it the result of the need to protect her psyche from one more painful remembrance of the stupidity of you know who. I sure don't know. But whatever, it was stupid, typical James A Jensen business sense. If you do those same stupid things, you can rationalize them by saying that you inherited his business ability.

In the city map, there are many roads that weren't there when I was a kid. Progress and all that. Mom and dad got a mortgage from the Bank of Vernal. She said the price of the two-acre place was on the order of 5 thousand dollars and that the bank did not require a large down payment like is needed today - which is only 10% today. That's probably why they could arrange the mortgage after dad had been back for only a few months. The farm was probably the residue of a homestead created by a hardy pioneer willing to wager his strength and determination against a climate unwilling to grant much of a harvest. 14 inches of precipitation isn't much water to raise crops and the winters were bitterly cold.

At the time we lived on it, the Ashton Place sat in miles and miles of pastures or farm lands, nearly isolated. The only trees on our side of the road other than the cottonwoods along the ditches on our own property were at least a quarter of a mile north or south of us. There were trees around the Watkins' place that was directly across the road from us, and around the house just south of them. We didn't know the family in that house which was strange under the circumstances. It was odd to not know who lived across the street, sort of spooky to a little kid. I don't recall seeing people moving about the place though I must have seen them sometime while I played in the big yard. To the north of us, there were no houses at all until you got into town which would have been about 200 S. St. Several hundred yards north of our house was the gulch lined with Buffalo Berry trees, willows and marsh grasses clinging to the narrow stream of water. That's where you found bull frogs, not in the marsh or irrigation canal and ditches. Between that creek and our place on our side of the road, there were just fields. Across the road on the north side of John Watkins' place there was the small Conoco tank farm and on the north side of the tank farm was a marsh that extended about half way up to the creek - "crik" as it was called in the local dialect.

To the south of our house on our side of the road, there were pastures for most of a mile all the way down to the Robert's home, a large two-story house. The field south of our place was farmed by Mr. Johnson who used horse-drawn implements the first year or so that we lived there, a hay rake and sickle bar pulled by wet horse-smelling horses that stood patiently at the end of a row in the hot sun occasionally tossing their heads and snorting. While he sat, he pulled his handkerchief from his hind pocket, shook out the bits of hay, and swiped at the sweat pouring down his neck from under his straw hat before turning the patient horse and going back the way they came. We couldn't see the Roberts' house to the south through the trees that were about half way between our houses because there was a large silage pit about the center with tallish sides and some trees. The Roberts family lived so far away that we didn't have much contact with those kids even though

there were several about our age. They are the ones who had a fawn that became a pest at our place.

Across the road about a quarter mile south of our place was the Cooper Dairy. Two Cooper brothers owned and ran this place, and lived on the property with their families in two separate houses. I don't remember the names of any of the kids but they were the only ones close enough for us to see on a regular basis. It is interesting to look back today and see how geography itself dictated who our 'friends' were and the frequency of our contact with them. We spent a lot of time alone, being too little to have permission to wander freely on the road. We managed to get into a world of trouble on one of our excursions to one of the Cooper houses. I'll tell you about it later. It has to do with powdered sugar and graham crackers and mom.

We liked to visit the tiny tank farm across the road. It had 3 tanks and a paved lot for a huge tanker with hissing air brakes to park on while it emptied its load into the tanks. Later, a smaller tank truck came to the yard to fill up for local deliveries. We'd go over to the yard out of curiosity when the driver was filling this truck because there wasn't much else going on in the neighborhood. Indeed, the term "neighborhood" is too fancy for the farm country we were sitting in. This visit to the tank farm was the highlight of the week. This truck had a heavy chain hanging from the back of the frame. It dragged on the ground to bleed off static electricity, the theory being that this prevented explosions. I suspect today that that was really an advertising gimmick to get people to buy the chain. Tankers today don't have them.

We got to know the driver whose name was "Duane", as I recall, a nice man that we saw frequently in the summer. He looked like Uncle Grant, reddish wavy hair, and wore a green and black striped short-sleeved Conoco shirt with the logo on his shirt pocket. He was probably bored, too, so talked to us whenever we were allowed to wander over. You always got permission to cross the road, on the pain of something awful. No kidding. It was. Just try it one day and see what happens. You won't make that mistake again I can guarantee you. Duane always told us to be careful to not breathe the gas fumes because they would make us sick. I didn't understand that but believed him - just because he was bigger than me, an "adult". I did like the smell of gas and he could probably see that, hence the warnings. The tanker was built in compartments from front to back, probably three of them. On the top of the tank were the individual lids for each compartment. Duane would put on his leather gloves, climb up on top of the tanker, open one of the lids, swing the fill pipe from the storage tank over it and turn on the flow of gas. While he stood up there, he'd talk to us down on the ground. We could see the waves of gas fumes flowing out of the tank, and could stand in it to smell it.

On the next page is a map I drew a long time ago, like about 35 years ago, clear

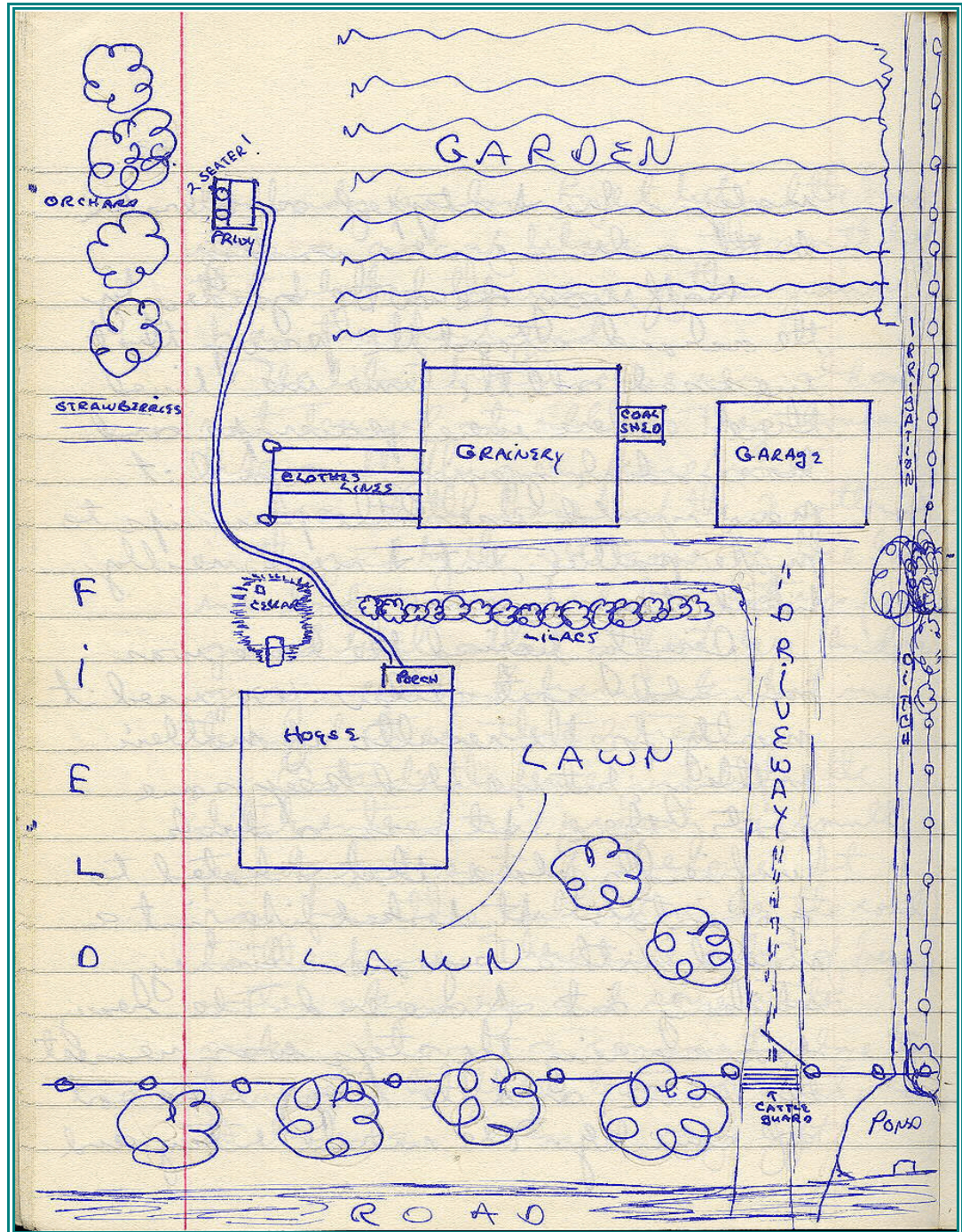
back in April 1966 while I was in the Amazon basin trying to figure out what I was about. Still don't know - don't you get too anxious to understand this life, please. Might disappoint yourself. I started writing a personal history -as I had started to do several times before- and managed to get 62 pages written before moving on to something else. The small, yellow, red and black plaid journal is in my things for your use later. The urge to write was partially a response to the boredom and loneliness of being out there without friends or family, speaking a foreign language, buried in an indifferent at best and hostile at worst culture that didn't have room for foreigners or a red-headed woman. They thought she was my sister and coveted her. The experience is a remarkable one, but like all adventures, it was pretty crappy while it was going on. I have had an urge my whole life to "tell my story" which now is pouring out on you. Thanks to Tom again for providing the setting in which the seed could grow. This is a great soporific I expect.

In any event, I managed to write regularly for a month or so and I'm surprised today at some of the things I said. Some things remind me of facts I had forgotten, but things that surprise me are ones that simply can not be true. That obviously surprises me because it would seem to a reasonable person that what was set down 35 years ago would be more accurate than what I remember today. But that is not so in several instances. I have found solid evidence to the contrary in some cases, or I simply know that I was wrong at the time. Why, I wonder, was I so far off base in memories at that time? Why did I write things that I know today are incorrect? I don't recall that I was stressed. I can't guess what was going on but it makes me very nervous about pronouncing that what I "clearly" remember today as being true as being the final word. Who knows. This is another example of the sort of thing I talked about earlier, the slipperiness of "Truth". I am no less committed to speaking truth today than I was back then, yet my memories from the two eras are contradictory. There is no way to resolve the differences. Fortunately, the discrepancies don't alter the general outline or texture of the experience of me.

### My Maps of the Ashton Place

As you are reading this volume about things I did on the farm, remember to refer back to this map of the property. Virtually everything you see in that diagram is

discussed in some manner below. It was the universe I lived in at that time, the one I expanded inside of and explored, where I tested limits and wondered about things I found. I obviously went other places but this little farm was where my consciousness really developed and



flowered, such a rich

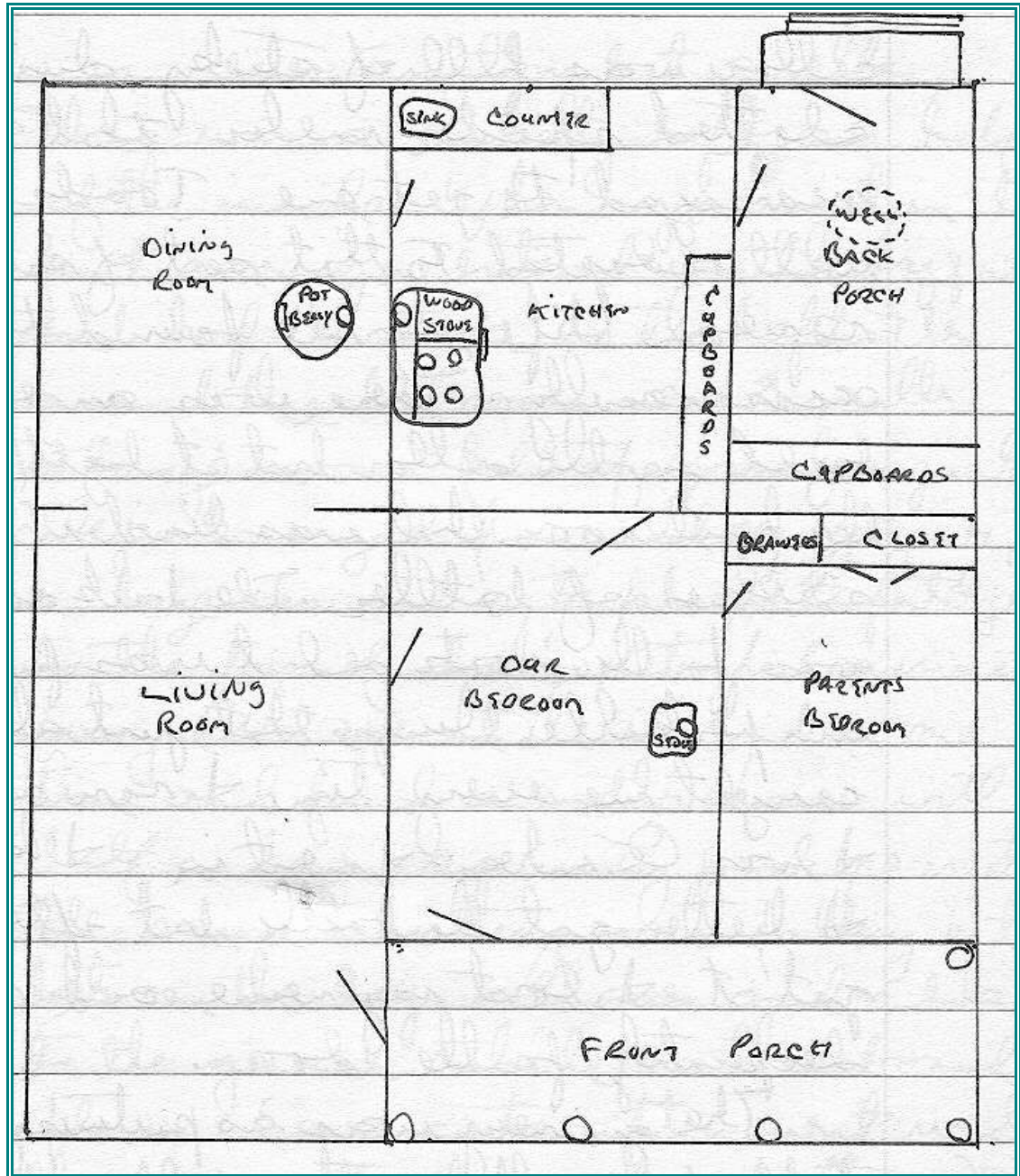
little place to become a human being with all of the freedom that a small farm

affords, with a wealth of things to see and explore and experience. A small stream in the form of irrigation canal across the road and a ditch on the south [right side of map], wildlife in the form of rabbits, skunks, frogs, snakes and insects, a variety of trees, fields, berries, and buildings. Life in a city or town does not offer the kinds of odd opportunities that are part of a farm life, some of which were sort of mystical.

Why, for example, was there a collection of half a dozen horse and cow skeletons lying on the other side of the barb wire fence at the east end of our property? They were so old that the flesh was long gone and the bones didn't smell. They were bleached white by years in the weather and sun. The surface of the bones were porous, indicated how long they had laid out exposed. Skulls of horses and cows with enormous teeth offered the challenge of extracting them. Different kinds of teeth. Probably affected Dickie's view of his place in the universe? The difficult questions were: why had these animals died? And why were the skeletons thrown right there, just over the fence, in a pile? That sort of mystery won't happen in town.

## House

By today's standards, our house was not large. This floor plan was also drawn



down there in the Amazon basin many years ago. There were two bed rooms, a living room, a dining room, a kitchen and an enclosed unheated back porch. Probably about 800-900 square feet. To this little kid, it seemed enormous at the time when

compared to the two-room garage we had been living in. I was particularly impressed with the height of the living and dining rooms in this house, probably because mom was too. There was a crown molding around the room a foot or so below the ceiling and that added to the sense of space. It was as tall as a tree. I was proud of the height of those rooms which were so tall. When other kids came to the house I swelled with pride at having such tall rooms for them to see. If mom let us go in those rooms. They were treated like "parlors". Nora Watkins had a real "parlor" and no one went into it except for visitors or the clergy or politicians -not much different it turns out- with a huge stuffed buffalo head hanging over the door across from a black horse-hair couch sitting below long mirror.

The only photo I can find of the Ashton place was taken of mom and Dickie. I think mom was modeling one of dresses she and dad made when they had their 'custom made hand-painted wearing apparel' business. The painted image shows over her legs. The vines on the house are Virginia creeper, a plant with lovely leaves which harbors all sorts of critturs. The windows on the left are the living room. Under the porch roof are the windows of our own bedroom.

I visited the Ashton house with you kids in the mid-80's with Gma and Gpa Jensen - just so that you could personally see where we had lived. I don't know whether it meant anything to you at the time, or whether you even remember it now. That was probably a long boring ride for you I fear, one of the kind I remember taking so often, and it is hard for a kid to be excited when s/he's bored, I know. If I had that maroon photo album from 5111, I would have scanned in a couple of shots of your kids and of places in Vernal that are germane to this story. I hope you find it and can locate the





pictures that fit in this volume. What surprised me about Vernal on that visit was that it had shrunk during the intervening years. Just like the central intersection of Vernal had earlier for me. As a kid on the farm, I marveled at the gigantic buildings on the four corners of the intersection when I visited mom while she worked at JC Pennys. But all things are relative.

When I went out to Vernal with cousin Lyle in 1960, things had changed. That was the summer I lived with Uncle Carl in SLC and worked for him on the foundation of the Singer Sewing Company offices on Foothill Boulevard. I had a bedroom in the basement of Carl's house next to Lyle's bedroom. We were about the same age so were good friends although I couldn't get him interested in attending the Bergman movie festival that lasted most of the summer. He thought those black and white movies in a foreign language with English sentences along the bottom were weird at best and stupid at worst. That summer shows up in detail latter. I'm just giving you a thumbnail so you understand why I was with Lyle in Utah that summer. He and I borrowed Carl's hot '59 Plymouth, against his better judgment, and drove out to Vernal to spend the Fourth of July weekend. It had this amazing push-button transmission to the left of the steering column and no shifting lever. That was the summer before I went to BYU. When we got to Vernal, I searched for the large buildings in the center of town that were sort of the center of my compass for the town.

I was puzzled at what I saw, and was troubled that the entire set of tall buildings that were so vivid in my imagination would have all been replaced in those years. It didn't seem far fetched that one or another of them could have burned down and been replaced but all of them? Not likely. It was only after some thought that I realized that the buildings I was seeing were the same ones I had seen back then. That was one of the biggest shocks of my life. My frame of reference had shifted from that of a little kid on a little farm looking at the se two story buildings, the tallest ones in his town, to the perspective of a teenager from the metropolis of Boston with real sky scrapers. I was depressed that the town was so tiny. 2 story buildings. Vernal turned out to be a two-bit cow town after all. That was how I felt. It was many years before I owned it properly as my home.

## Depression

Those years on the Ashton place were at the tail end of the depression. Our lives were simple and unadorned, out of necessity, reflecting the harsh economic realities that only began to subside as WW II ended and the effects of the extraordinary industrial explosion began to permeate the nation. No luxuries there. We didn't have much and our parents didn't think to live any differently than they had during the depression. Most



people lived the same way. All of our relatives who also lived on farms lived the same way we did. It never occurred to me to wonder about it.

I mention the depression again to remind you of its impact on my life. It continued in the Vernal era of my life. It was there like a source of radiation, powerful, omni-present and unavoidable. All economic aspects of our lives took it into account, not consciously but, nonetheless. We saw the news paper and news reels at the beginning of movies and were aware of the poverty that persisted in the country. "Hoovervilles" shown above in Figure 19 which existed in cities epitomized this poverty and the make-shift existence that was forced on people as a result of the loss of everything they owned. Out in the country where we were, there wasn't even enough resources to build Hoovervilles. We were poor but didn't know it and were relieved that we had a place to live and a job for dad and food on the table. Or perhaps, in the country there was no need to construct them. I don't know.

As my awareness of thing matured in Central Elementary School, I perceived that city folks had it different than we did out there on that little farm. In school I heard class mates talk about what they did at home. About what they had. That was

probably intentional and it had the desired effect on poor kids like me from the outlying farms. After school when I walked past their homes on my way back to the farm, I was aware of a gulf between me and them. I looked out the corner of my eye enviously at their beautifully painted houses, and their nice cars, dads who wore suits and ties to work. And felt ashamed of my own place in the world, my unkempt farm lawn and dirt driveway with a ditch running along it, not even a sidewalk along the road.

I saw these kids run along the clean sidewalks, along the streets that were paved with curbs and gutters, marked regularly with trees on some streets. They turned into the concrete walkways across their neatly manicured lawns, bordered with beautiful flowers, into the sparkling clean doorways with the luxuries they had. Their homes were freshly painted and modern. Bathrooms. With bath tubs. Nice beds. No honey bucket, no need to sit with their bum exposed to the cold, no smell of the outhouse with pesky flies. Running water. Running hot water. Central heating. No coal shed, no coal dust, no carrying coal, no ash heap, no need to take out the ashes. Uniform heat in all rooms. Nice furniture. Garages. With concrete floors. No electrical wires stapled to the walls. Fancy light switches. Carpets and throw rugs. Man alive, that was heaven. I knew my place then.

### Outbuildings on the Ashton Place

Our primitive 5-room farm house didn't have plumbing of any kind. The only pipe in the house ran from a pump on the kitchen counter down into a well under the back porch where we got our water. We had a privy which meant that we had to use a honey bucket -during the night because no one was going to go outside of the house in the dark -there were no outdoor lights- and run all that way out to the privy and back. The house didn't have central heating. I didn't even know what that was for years. It was heated by 3 different coal-burning stoves - a "heater" in the bedrooms, a potbelly stove in the diningroom which was kept closed off during the winter to save coal, and a large cast-iron cook stove in the kitchen.

The house had been built before electricity was available, but it had been brought into the house before we moved in. The evidence of this was simple. Bare wires were stapled across and up walls to light sockets that swung from a large ring in the ceiling. Some of the lights were turned on by twisting bulky ceramic switches fastened to the walls near doorways, others were turned on by feeling in the air by the doorway for a string fastened to a nail there. The other end was tied to the chain of tiny round balls extending from a light socket hanging down in the middle of the room from the ceiling. When you pulled the string the socket was turned on and swung back and forth making moving shadows on the ceiling and walls. Sort of made

you dizzy to see it. You had to be careful to not let go quickly of the chain else it would fly up in the air and get hooked on something whereupon you got into trouble - and couldn't reach it.

The house had a covered porch on the front that extended across about half of the front. It was outfitted with three pillars and was painted in an ancient paint with its own peculiar smell and texture, weathered and aged, oxydizing in a patina of thick dust. I was fascinated by the brush streaks and sagging strips of heavy paint. The door on the north end of the porch lead into the living room, the house proper. It was fancy being outfitted with a large oval glass window with a bevel all around. When you stood at that door, on your right side was another door that entered the first bedroom. It was a plain door, and had a transom over it that was constructed with leaded glass. This small window opened into the bed room and theoretically would increase the ventilation in the room and indeed mom tried it when the summer became too hot to bear. It didn't make any difference however, because there was no breeze to take advantage of that opening. It was hot.

She did have an electric fan that she turned on in the hotter days of summer but not often because of the cost of the electricity. This rickety fan had a black woven cloth cover over the electric wires, and rotated slowly as it stirred the hot air. It was then that I heard the astonishing news about bats, the little mouse-like creatures with wings that were astonishing anyway. These creatures were reported to have such skillful hearing that they could tell how fast the fan blades turned and as a result could actually fly through the spinning blades without being minced. Today, I don't think that's true but at the time I believed it and wanted badly to see it happen, but the critturs wouldn't oblige me with such a display.

The front bedroom was assigned to Dick and me, and the back one, which was smaller than ours, was mom's and dad's. Dick and I shared a double bed for some time. Then mom and dad bought army surplus beds with springs and mattresses from an army surplus sale in Salt Lake - probably at the old Remington Arms plant where army surplus sales went on for year. For your information, these army surplus sales were actually sales of army surplus, not some crap manufactured in Taiwan and stamped "Army Surplus." This stuff was GI Issue and lasted forever. For example, I still have in a closet the GI Issue mosquito net that I used when we made our odyssey down the Yukon River in 1956, as new and solid as it was 50 years ago.

I have a vague recollection of waiting for dad to come home that day. We had been told what he was



going to try to do and looked forward to the evidence. He had promised to get us new beds, but were already experienced enough to understand the effect of dollars and cents and to understand that promised based on this stuff might just have to be broken, regardless of how we felt about it. He came back with them, late in the evening and we thought we had it made. We couldn't wait to climb into those new beds. Individual beds. No more tossing and turning and bumping into brother. Freedom to lay however we wanted to lay on the bed. The head board and foot board were impressive - gray curved steel pipes, looking sort of like hospital beds in reality but we had it made compared to what we had been sleeping in. Our bedroom didn't have a closet in it so there was an armoire, though we didn't use that fancy name for it. Mom's bedroom had the only closet in the house, a built-in closet and a small set of built-in drawers.

The attic was just a space above the house without insulation. This obviously meant that the heat we created with coal in the kitchen just went up into the attic and then out the roof about as fast as we put it in, an uneconomical way to heat a house, especially in the bitter cold winters of Vernal. Heating the outdoors. So dad bought a bale or two of some sort of insulation material.

In the evening over a week or two after he got home from work, he worked at insulating the attic by artificial light. He put a tall ladder up on the east side of the house to get through an opening in the attic wall. The insulation was itchy and irritating so we were threatened to stay away from that side of the house while dad carried it up the ladder and spread it in the attic. I don't think it was fiberglass but it was fiber of some kind and itched like crazy when it got on your sweaty dirty skin. We stayed away from the stuff. I wasn't able to tell that the insulation made any difference. I had expected that it would actually make the house warmer than it had been before. Conservation of energy wasn't something I understood, so the house was still colder than I liked. The cost of coal and the severity of the coldness were such that we didn't even heat the living and dining rooms most of the winter. Only on special occasions like Christmas were they opened up and heated. Too expensive to use generally. This meant that we lived in two small bedrooms and the kitchen for most of the winter. Consequently if mom ever heated the front rooms while we were home from school in the winter, those days always seemed like holidays, celebrations and we reveled in being allowed to go into the warm front rooms, running around and playing.

## Water pump in the Kitchen

All of our water came from a pump on the kitchen counter from a well dug under the back porch. Cooking, drinking, washing dishes, washing clothes, bathing. There were no spigots around the outside of the house for watering the lawn, no garden hoses. Those were totally unfamiliar things. The only pipe in the whole house ran from beneath the hand pump on the kitchen counter down into the well. The only way the lawn got any water was in the form of irrigation from the ditch but that was rare. Putting water on the lawn was diverting it from the garden and since we could eat the garden but not the lawn, the lawn just suffered. A bucket always sat on the kitchen counter under the lip of the pump. When the water in the bucket got low, we'd pump the handle. I liked to do that. It was sort of magic that this thing would produce water if the handle was moved up and down. Such a simple gesture to produce the richness of water, a richness appreciated in that desert climate.



I have to insert a perhaps offensive vignette here that it is reflective of both the general lack of water as well as the nature of little kids. Many times when I went out to the privy in the summer -not the winter- to do "Number 2", I sat there and deposited a set of dry round little berries. At the time I didn't know what that meant. Indeed, I didn't even wonder about it because that was how it was though it was curious to be performing like a sheep instead of a human being. Turns out the longer stool sits in the colon, particularly when the individual isn't drinking water, the more water is sucked out of the stool by the colon. That is its primary purpose and it pursues it incessantly. Just give it a chance and it'll show you how well it can work. Well, we proved that in the laboratory of our hot dry farm when we didn't take time to go into the house to get a drink of water. That was a waste of time. In those setting, our byproducts were comparable to those of sheep and deers and rabbits, and for the same reasons. Water wasn't pressed on us like it is today. Soda pop? Humph. Fruit juice? Not. Moms left us to our own devices, knowing that when we got thirsty, we'd appear in the kitchen and get a drink from the well using the dipper in the water bucket.

The pump had an idiosyncrasy. If it wasn't used for a few days, it wouldn't

produce water when the handle was pumped. There would be a sort of dry sucking sound as the handle went up and down but no water came out. In that case, mom or dad would pour some water from the bucket into the top of the pump around the narrow rod you see in this image. That was called "Priming the pump". It restored a seal that was lost somehow when the pump sat unused. Priming the pump always worked again so we didn't worry about having water when we needed it, but we learned that one NEVER emptied the water bucket because we would have to go to the neighbors to get water if the pump lost its seal. Lots of small details to learn about living out there on the farm.

A long handled dipper was used to get water from the bucket. It was held in place by the hook on the end of the long handle. The hook caught the edge of the bucket while the bowl floated on the surface of the water. The bucket wasn't ever covered so the gritty dust that blew around the house would fall into it but we paid no need. We used the dipper to get drinks or to get water for cooking. We shared germs I guess because we didn't worry about even wiping off the dipper. That courtesy wasn't extended to neighbors however so we did have a modicum of understanding of the theory of the bacterial genesis of infection. Neighbors were conspicuously handed a "tumbler", not a "glass", with water in it if they needed a drink. I wasn't quite sure of the background for this ritual. But mom made me a true believer after one or two lapses. She was persuasive.

There was a small sink at the end of the counter opposite from the water pump. When Mom had to wash dishes, she set a dishpan down into that little sink. Since there was no running water, she'd have to heat water in a teakettle on the stove. That might require her to stoke the stove a bit to get it hot. She'd take the poker, remove a stove lid and rummage around to stir the coals. After the water was hot, she'd pour it from the steaming teakettle into the dishpan. This boiling water was tempered with cold water from the bucket to get a temperature she could put her hands in. If the water became too cold while she was doing dishes, she'd go get the teakettle and pour more water into the dishpan. As she washed dishes, she'd hold them to the side of the dishpan over the sink and pour clear water from the bucket over them to rinse off the soap. Odd, today, to think that it was actually a sort of luxury for us to have the sink that had a simple drain. It meant that we didn't have to lift the dishpan, and carry it out the kitchen through the covered porch to the steps out back to throw the water out like some people did. We had the luxury of just turning it upside down in the sink at which point the water would drain outside by itself. It's all relative isn't it.

The pipe that ran from the drain of the sink simply stuck a foot and a half through the wall so the dirty water just fell onto the ground. This waste water sat

there creating a nasty smelling puddle that persisted through most of the year, though it obviously froze in the winter. Foul smelling place it was in the summer, harboring flies and bacteria though we didn't worry much about any of that stuff like people would today - except for the pesky flies. Dad would dig a small trench into the ground every so often to lead the water out of the puddle. Most of the time.

### Bread, Milk and Onions for Dinner

Dad had just ridden his bicycle home ~5miles home from his job as a machinist at LT Payton's Machine Shop on the east end of Highway 40 as it passed through Vernal on its way to Denver. In those days horses were still used but there was a stigma to using them in public that I didn't realize affected dad. In the Leamington Volume (#2) he tells that he was too embarrassed to ride into Leamington with his mom when she hitched horses to the wagon to go to town. His words are that he "just wasn't able" to do that. He didn't elaborate because he was still embarrassed about her hitching the horses up and his unwillingness to accompany her, but his meaning was clear. He was too proud to do that when other people were driving around in luxurious automobiles. So I understand in 2002 better than I did previously why we didn't have any horses at all on our Vernal property, why dad didn't use them for anything. Plus I understand now the inveterate war that he carried on with Gen, spoiling his love of horses.

In the center of the tiny kitchen hung a bare bulb at the end of a long electrical wire that was stapled up the wall and across to the center of the ceiling. It was turned on by pulling on a long string that ran from the light socket and was fastened onto the wall near to the door. We sat around a small wooden table that was filled half of the small kitchen. We didn't use place mats, indeed I never heard of the things, nor did we use tablecloths. Too much work to launder by hand, so she bought a piece of oil cloth that she kept on the table to catch spills. She just wiped it off after each meal.

Supper was a pile of thickly sliced home-made bread that mom baked for as long as we lived in Vernal. It sat on a plate in the center of the small table, the center of our meal, along side a pitcher of milk from the neighbor's dairy herd or grandpa's cow, sparsely supplemented by a salt shaker, soup bowls and spoons at each place, a dish of radishes or cut up yellow onions. Desert was and a quart of home-canned peaches or pears. They were delicious. Sometimes we had some something else to liven up the meal, some chow-chow [a type of corn relish mom and her sisters made at our home in the fall in the galvanized tubs that were used to do the washing. That gives you an idea about how much they bottled.] or pickles.

After saying grace -sometimes kneeling on the floor by our chairs with dad



telling one of us to "be mouth"- we'd break up the hard bread -hard by commercial bread standards especially if it was a couple of days old- into our bowl. I chuckle today when some yuppie says something cool about "breaking bread", as if they had a clue. Then we'd pour fresh-from-the-cow milk with clots of cream over it. We could have glasses of milk too<sup>[1]</sup>, if we wanted. It was unpasteurized but was usually from cows that had been vaccinated against bovine TB. I think that was a health department requirement that cows be vaccinated, though I'm not sure all cows actually were. In terms of the cleanliness of the milk, we weren't bothered by the fact that the milking was done out in a corral, a messy place with dirt, and manure of all kinds, twigs, bits of straw and hay, bird droppings every where. It wasn't possible to have really sterile milk from the corral. But I had no clue about "sterile". That was a fancy word that was not part of our vocabulary out there. The most we strived for was comparative cleanliness, not sterility.

The reality was that just before a milker milked a cow, he washed it's sides and udder with a bucket of soap and water in an attempt to keep the milk more or less clean by keeping stuff from falling into the bucket. There were nonetheless usually bits and pieces of straw or whatever in the milk. It was impossible to prevent that from happening with cows covered in corral stuff. After the cow had been milked, the bucket was carried back to the house. The milk was then strained by being poured out of the galvanized milk bucket through a clean dishtowel held tightly over the top. To me, that cleaned the milk and I didn't worry any more. Funny, isn't it. As long as the small chunks of dry manure and bits of straw and dirt were strained out so I couldn't see things floating in the milk, I was satisfied that the milk was "clean". Ha. After the milk had been strained, it was poured straight into large bottles and pitchers that we kept in our icebox.

After pouring milk on our broken bread, we'd first pour out a small pile of salt directly on the table by our bowls and pass the shaker to the next person. Then we'd take up a wedge of onion, dip it into the salt and bite it off to eat with the bread and milk. Which always dripped off our chins from the too large spoons we ate with -or more likely our poor manners. When we were finished, we'd have one or two halves of a pear or peach in our unwashed bowls. It didn't matter that they weren't washed.

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<sup>1</sup> Note the plural - glasses. Why, you ask, during tough times could we drink any amount of milk we wanted? Because there was a dairy down the road, because milk spoiled quickly and because when cows are producing, they produce prodigious quantities of milk and since waste was a cardinal sin, we disposed of as much food as we could. Excess milk was given to the hogs - "slopping the hogs" is what feeding them is called, with buckets of kitchen waste and milk. To this day, nothing satisfies my thirst like cold milk. With a peanut butter sandwich I can drink a quart of milk and feel unsatisfied.

They were clean and we ourselves had just poured the milk into them and eaten out of them. That was supper many times. Little talk that I remember. Eating was serious business. Many meals without any meat. Now listen to me: those dinners were as satisfying as any I have had in my life. Perhaps more so because I had a deep need that was satisfied this way. To this day I don't feel a need for variety, no boredom at the same meal every day. I could eat the same thing days on end.

### Grandpa Merrell and his popcorn

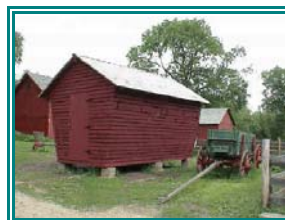
Even though we lived several miles away from Grandpa Merrell, we saw mom's family often. There was a herd of them over in Naples so we could always find someone to talk to if we went over there. I don't remember whether we made daily visits, or went over several times a week or less but whatever it was, it seemed often. Grandpa loved popcorn. He made it whenever he had a "hankering" for it which was mostly in the winter as I recall.

In those days on the farm, people grew their own popcorn and dried it in the fall for use during the winter. They didn't shuck it. Instead, the ears they were going to use for popcorn had the husks pulled backward like a pony tail and tied so that they could be hung up to dry. I remember the homegrown popcorn and I remember the startling new-fangled cleaned shelled popcorn called "Jolly Time" that started to appear just then. I remember when we bought some of this new stuff in Vernal. It came in a can, not a bag or sack. When it was opened, the kernels were clean, no wispy husks or broken kernels. It was sort of magical to be able to find the stuff this way in the store. Such extravagance. The container was made of a pressed fiberboard that was rigid like metal. The interesting part about the packaging was the lid. It was made of stamped metal but it was removed by pulling on a heavily waxed string like the one in Lifesavers. It was embedded around the top of the can between the sides and the lid and tore the paper wrapper that had been applied over the fiber can and caused the lid to come off. "Jolly Time" was available in this blue can or in a red can, the blue being yellow corn and the red being white.



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We were used to the old way. If Grandpa grew enough corn, he would



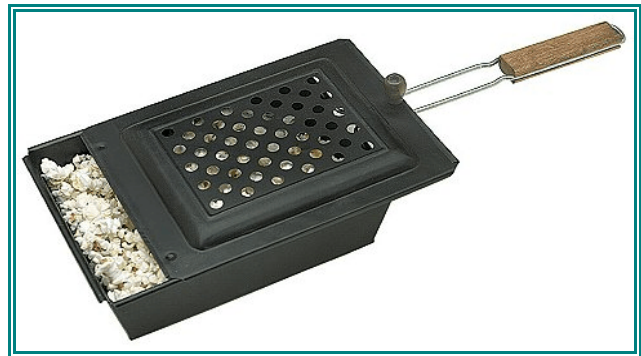
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dry it in a corn crib for feeding his hogs. There were various styles for these storage sheds and I saw both of these in Vernal. The problem with the one on the right is that rodents help themselves to the stuff. When grandpa wanted popcorn, he'd grab a couple of the special ears he had dried for the purpose, shell them in his hand, and then pop the dried kernels.

The field corn stored in these cribs did not produce uniformly large fluffy kernels like you are used to today, especially in movie theatres. That's why JollyTime Popcorn was an instant hit. When grandpa or his appointee fired up the kettle to make popcorn with the home-grown product, the results were pretty sad by the standard you are used to. Making popcorn was a substantial project. You didn't just throw some oil and popcorn in an electric pop corn popper that you plugged in. No, the first step was the shell the corn and then clean it, a tedious task. Then you fired up the stove to get it hot. This was the same process regardless of the reason you needed a hot stove. You took one of the stove lids off, stirred the coals with a poker and threw in some more chunks of coal from the coal box or coal scuttle sitting by the stove. After a flame had started from the coals, you put the stove lid back on and watched it to see that it didn't go out. If you needed to hurry the fire, you could increase the draft by adjusting the front door or the draft itself, or possibly the damper in the stove pipe above the stove. You can see this was not a trivial process like turning a knob on your electric stove. You had to really want to get a hot stove and you really had to know how to do it. Finally the stove was hot enough so you put some sort of a pan on the coal stove to do the popping.



Grandpa liked a cast iron skillet -obviously with a lid- or a black metal popper on a long handle like the one above. The advantage of the skillet was that he could cook the corn in fat or butter. He'd drop some butter into it with a handful of popcorn and then shove the skillet back and forth on top of the stove to more or less stir the kernels inside of the pan to keep them from burning on one side. That's hard work. Iron skillets weigh five or six pounds and create a lot of friction on the top of the stove, so if you're going to really agitate the kernels to keep them moving, you have to work hard to move the skillet fast enough. After a while, depending on how hot the stove was, a popping sound indicated that he was about to get his popcorn.

There was rarely the cascade of popping sounds that you are used to in your own poppers but he'd get enough kernels to satisfy his taste.

He'd pull the skillet off the stove, remove the lid, pour the results into a bowl and pour some melted butter on it and shake some salt over it. What he had was a mixture of about a fourth "old maids" the kernels that had not popped at all, along with popped kernels of various sizes. Turns out that the term "old maid" can be construed as a suggestive term that refers to females of the specie in a derogatory fashion. Many of the kernels that were popper were pretty dark, almost burned while others were just right, this variation stemming from the unequal stirring that resulted from trying to push a heavy skillet quickly across a stove top. He'd sift through the mixture with his finger pulling out those that met his standard. He'd share so we got to eat some too. The "old maids" were actually my favorite. I liked the crunchiness of the barely cooked, unexpanded kernels. I didn't understand why these unpopped kernels were called "old maids", women who had not married.

## Icebox

When we moved to the Ashton Place, we had a real "ice"box, one that was used real ice to cool foods. It was a contraption that stands out in memory for various reasons, the most memorable being the peculiar, powerful, odd odor it produced. This smell was an amalgam compounded of moldy wood, decayed food and the smells of food from the table put there to cool so that they could be used the next day. Iceboxes pre-dated true refrigerators like you are familiar with. True refrigerators use electric compressors to cool and are so cold that they create ice. Ice boxes don't make ice because they never achieve a freezing temperature, so you couldn't ever store ice cream in an ice box. We didn't get a real refrigerator, often called a "Frigidaire", for several years. Our icebox sat outside on the back porch outside the back door.

These things and were build like wooden cupboards. They were constructed with several compartments for storing food and drink and one large compartment to hold the blocks of ice. The food compartments opened through narrow slits onto the ice compartment through channels in their walls. The ice block cooled everything in the wooden compartments to a great extent but nothing like a real refrigerator. It was not able to actually freeze anything. It just cooled food cool enough that it didn't spoil overnight, but it didn't do much else. As the block of ice shrunk, water draining out of a drain constructed for the purpose, its ability to cool food also decreased. These iceboxes looked more like odd cupboards than anything we think of today as an icebox, i.e. a refrigerator.

This one is about the size of the one that we kept on the back steps. The block of ice was put behind the "cupboard" door on the top left. This door was kept closed all the time because the ice melted faster when warm air touched it. The coolness from the ice spread throughout the compartments through narrow channels that allowed the cool air to flow freely. The coolest place in the icebox was on the bottom shelves. Mom stored left overs in our ice box until the next day when she would use them for dinner. They wouldn't last long in the temperature of an ice box that was no where as cool as you are used to seeing in your electrical "fridges". The pan underneath the ice box collected the water the flowed out as the ice block melted.



One of the reasons an ice box didn't keep a low temperature is the quality of the insulation. There was no such thing as Styrofoam or fiberglass insulation so it was difficult to maintain a low temperature.

The icebox was a favorite place for our white cat to sleep. She would jump up onto the top and lie there in the sun, resting against the porch wall that radiated heat onto her. About head high for us kids. I stood there in the spring, leaning on the warm ice box, enjoying the warm sun on my neck while I petted the white cat sprawled out enjoying the sun and purring softly.

We didn't bother with the ice box in the winter, only the summer. The outside temperature in the winter was cooler than that achieved inside the ice box so we just set food outside of the house on the covered porch where it would freeze. In the summer,



ice was brought out to the house weekly by the iceman. The ice was from the Calder creamery and was harvested during the winter from their lake and stored it in icehouses under mounds of sawdust to sell during the summer. The ice man drove a big truck and wore a long black rubber apron. He'd check with mom to see what size block was wanted and then he'd lug the blocks of ice from his truck to the back porch. I don't remember he parked his truck but he obviously drove up or dirt driveway some distance so he didn't have to carry the ice farther than necessary. He always wore the black rubber apron affair to protect himself from the cold ice and water and used ice tongs like these that were so heavy that I could hardly lift them.

One of the interesting things I've discovered in this journey back into time involves the intense anxiety I feel even today when someone -anyone- opens a refrigerator door and leaves it open while s/he does something on the counter. It makes me nuts. I want to walk over and slam the door, quickly, and I understand now why that is. The amount of time that an icebox door was left open affected the length of time that a block of ice lasted. Since we could only afford to get ice once a week, I was always "encouraged" to hurry whenever I got something out of or put something into the icebox. If the block didn't last all week, food would spoil. Hurry. Always hurry! Hurry up! The tone of the encouragement was less than pleasant. So I learned an irrational lesson that is hardwired into my nervous system: you must always hurry up when you are doing anything in something that cools food. It doesn't matter whether it's an ice box or an electric refrigerator. I feel an intense, irrational anxiety when a refrigerator door is opened that is out of proportion to what's going on. My wife stands with the door open, carefully pouring water out of a pitcher, then sitting the glass on the counter before she returns the pitcher to the refrigerator and I feel great anxiety - for no reason. Do you remember hearing me grouse when you kept the fridge door open while you did something like pour a glass of milk? Now you understand part of the reason that I was irritable about it. And I understand now how unreasonable I was in my grouching. It was burned into me however. Sad that we develop this sort of irrational response to our world isn't it.

Sometimes we were allowed to chip pieces of ice off the block to put in a drink of water. To get these chips, we used an icepick like this one. The surprising thing about an ice pick is that the amount of force needed to make chips was miniscule. If you stabbed directly into the block of ice, the block just absorbed the energy and a small hole was made. But if you tapped lightly at an angle on a corner of the block, chips would



fly off. Disproportionate cause and effect it seemed to me.

## Meat

Another example of the effect of the depression, as well as the effect of WW II -which are blended together and hard to separate- involves meat for the table. Dad didn't raise any kind of cattle, chickens or hogs and I've wondered today why not. Didn't he want to deal with farm animals or chickens? I'll have to ask mom. Later: as noted above, I have figured it out myself.

To get meat for us dad occasionally hunted rabbits and every fall he went deer hunting. Not for sport but for meat. Some uncles and dad would go out and harvest tubs full of rabbits. I remember seeing them out on our front yard with a wash tub full of dead rabbits, wearing rubber gloves while they skinned and gutted them because of the risk of tularemeia. The nice thing about tularemeia is that it is killed by cooking so we could safely eat this meat after it was cooked.

We were actually luckier than city people in regards to meat because we could get wild game and our relatives had farm animals and fowl that they shared with us. Beef, pig, chicken. Dad got a deer each fall. We ate fish if we got fresh trout but that was about all the fish that found its way onto our table. Those options didn't exist for people who lived in the city without country relatives.

The whole notion of spoilage is interesting when comparing what is done in a home today to what was done back then in those circumstances. Today if a piece of meat has begun to smell funny, it probably ends up in the garbage, perhaps a rational thing to do. But I think that we are over-sensitive about health risks today. Just look at the stupidity about cyclamates and asbestos. Back in that era when you didn't have much, you made dang sure that there was no way to salvage an errant piece of meat before you trashed it. Adding a bunch of onion or garlic to "tainted" meat that wasn't too far gone killed the bad flavor and thorough cooking killed any organisms so the meat was preserved and we ate it. We did that in Brazil too. An entire oxen was salvaged this way after it was secured in a closed room overnight before it had properly cooled. No one suffered from the large dose of garlic that was applied. Indeed, people loved it.

When the ham got the green layer on it from hanging on the icy cold porch during the winter, mom would cut or scrape the green layer off. The next slice she cut off would be thoroughly cooked to be sure anything was killed. We saw the green piece that was discarded but weren't bothered by its presence. Because mom and dad weren't. That was just how meat was sometimes in the winter. A ham was suspended on a stout string from a nail out in the unheated porch and pulled down for a slice as needed. In fact, dad like meat that had aged before it was eaten to "make it taste

better." That was especially true of game birds like ducks or geese, though not apparently so true of pheasant. My palate wasn't able to discriminate the difference but mom and dad said it was so, so it was. In the same manner, the grayish white scummy mold that grew on apple sauce or apple butter did not mean the whole jar had to be discarded. Mom would just lift out and discard the affected portion plus a little extra to be sure she got it and we'd eat the rest. As long as there wasn't a bad flavor it was fine.

The spoilage that was deadly serious was in bottled vegetables. Every bottle that we brought in from the root cellar out back of the house -a root cellar like those you saw in "Wizard of Oz"-was carefully examined by mom before she opened it. The first clue was the lid. If it showed evidence of pressure inside the bottle she immediately slowed down and checked it out. The tell-tale sign she watched for was a bulging lid that should have been depressed. We needed the food but we didn't need botulism. *Clostridium botulinum* is the fancy name for the nasty anaerobic bugs that grows enthusiastically in improperly canned food and kill a person who eats it. Potent stuff. Something like a pound of it distributed in the water system of New York City could kill off the entire population. Mom didn't know that fact probably but she did know of experiences in the community that people died from eating 'tainted' home-canned foods. So a raised lid on a jar of beans was pretty much a sign that it was going to be discarded, not even given to the hogs.

We had plenty of pork, such a sophisticated sounding name for such a basic food. Thank the Norman Invasion of England centuries ago for the fine sounding Norman words used today for Anglo-Saxon words - beef for cow, pork for pig, venison for deer, veal for calf, etc. There were actually a lot of four letter words that fell out of favor -chuckle.

## Deer hunting and Venison

Some years we only had the one deer that dad shot, but some years mom got a tag and got her deer as well. The Fish and Game sold metal tags that had to be affixed to the horns of any deer that was shot. Dad hunted with a World War II army surplus Enfield 30.06 that he refurbished when he worked as a gunsmith. Mom used a little lever action 30.30 that I used in Alaska on a mountain goat hunt, where I got "deer fever" and couldn't bring myself to pull the trigger on that gorgeous crittur we had stalked for an hour and a half in loose shale. Nope, not me.

Deer hunting season starts in October when cold starts in the mountains. That forces deer down from their summer range into valleys where forage is not yet covered with much snow. A deer is always gutted on the spot. This is necessary to preserve the quality and flavor of the meat. The digestive juices in the stomach and



the lining of the esophagus will leak through their linings into the surrounding meat. The result is funny-tasting meat which is tossed out because it's "spoiled". It is probably still OK to eat in terms of human digestion but the taste is bad so custom dictated discarding it. Good custom therefore dictated gutting the animal right away. However, those who understood that leakage from the esophagus is what made neck meat taste bad will excise the esophagus. The preserves the meat for a roast.

When the gutted carcass is brought back to the house it is hung up to age a bit. With the hide still on, the animal is hoisted up with a rope that is placed through cuts below the "knee" on each hind leg. Heavy sticks are also placed into the abdominal cavity to keep it open so it would cool. The removal of the hide is called flensing and is done with a special knife blade that is medium length and highly curved, far more than you imagine. An Eskimo Ulu is a perfect flensing knife. This is because the knife blade that is nearly a perfect half-circle is pushed and turned in an arc between the hide and the body of the deer. This splits the fascia, the silvery multi-layered membrane that joins the hide to the muscles. Its function in life is to hold the hide on but to allow it to sit loosely on the muscles. Splitting this membrane frees the hide without damage to the meat. The sound of flensing and the smell are distinctive. Deer are musky smelling, not unpleasant but definitely gamey and not something the squeamish stomach will like the first time. Dad flensed the deer in the evening after he came home from work, so it was cold and dark.

After the hide is removed, the butchering really started. The carcass is cut into quarters with a saw, axe and sharp knives to make manageable pieces. Then the leg of each quarter was divided at the knee. These smaller chunks are divided into roasts, steaks or whatever dad wanted. The cuts probably didn't much resemble the sophisticated cuts of a butcher but they sufficed to get the meat into manageable pieces. Some people rented a commercial locker in town so would roll the roasts and steaks in butcher paper -that's why it's called butcher paper- and take it to the locker. I think we did that with some of the meat, but we also bottled some.

The meat for bottling was cut into small pieces. Mom had a pile of these pieces on the kitchen table and stoked the coal stove for plenty of heat. She fried the meat in a couple of iron skillets while us kids kneeled under the kitchen table to stay out of the way. This was a small kitchen that was half filled with the kitchen table and that stove. From under the table we were close enough that when she felt like it, she could easily hand us bits and pieces of fried venison.

I remember the sense of security and well-being of those times. The house was warm while cold winds, sometimes snow-laden, whipped around outside. Vernal winters can be bitter. But Mom was cooking and feeding us. In her company, we were safe. Sounds odd perhaps that we felt as secure but we did. To understand that,

imagine what it was like, a mom and two little kids on a small farm out in the country, isolated from neighbors, with few resources. Enjoying the heat of the stove. Heat was comforting, and mom was taking care of us. We were safe.

After she had finished frying the meat, she loaded it into quart jars, carefully sticking the pieces in so the jars were completely filled. A bit of salt was dropped in and each jar was filled with water up to the shoulder, leaving enough head room that they didn't explode during the cooking. She sealed the jars with canning lids, and rings that she heated in a water bath to soften the rubber seal. Mom and dad had decided that the extra cost of a large home pressure cooker was worth it because it provided more positive seals so food didn't spoil as frequently which also meant it wasn't dangerous to eat. The thing paid for itself. Her large canner, the envy of women who used the traditional water bath method which is slower and messier, held 7 quarts at a time. Since she bottled several hundred jars some years, it took a long long time over a hot stove. The jokes about slaving over a hot stove have a basis in fact and history. Women did stand for hours each day over the hot stove.

Given the limited financial resources of mom's family and our own family, deer season was a

godsend, free meat on the hoof, just waiting to be taken. So those who were old enough to buy a "deer tag" did so. Here's part of the tribe with deer, all bucks. Five of the six got their deer.



Some seasons

does could be taken but not apparently in this year. The third man from the left in the back is Grandpa Merrell, to his left is Leo and to Leo's left is Harold. The other three kids are grandsons. The second from the left looks like one of Ross's two older sons. The camping gear on the left means they spent some days out there in the dry

desert hunting.

This "deer tag" was mandatory. Game wardens were stationed along roads leading out of deer territory to check all vehicles to see if all deer had deer tags. If a tag wasn't permanently affixed to the horns, there was a serious penalty. I don't know what it was but do know it was severe enough to get everyone's attention. None of this group hunted without tags and didn't try to reuse them. Of course, I don't know whether or not they poached deer and entertain the possibility because of their impecunious state but that would have been done discreetly any time of the year. The deer tag was provided to the hunter when he bought his license to hunt. It was a long narrow flexible metal band that had some device permanently attached to one end of the strip. The other end of the strip was wrapped around the horn and inserted into the device on the other end and pulled taut. At the point the band was securely locked in place and could only be cut off. That meant the tags could not be used again, the point of the locking mechanism.

Mom's family went out in large groups to hunt. All of the men started paying attention to where they saw deer in the fall in anticipation of the opening of deer season. They needed the meat for the winter and tried to locate a population of deer where they could all get one with minimal time and effort.

### Garage and Gate

The garage was located at the east end of the driveway that came off the road from town. It was about one car wide. There was a large gate at the entry off the road. It could be closed to protect the yard from cows or whatever needed to be excluded. This gate was huge. It extended from one side of the wide drive to the other and was constructed of 2 x 12's, which probably were true 2 x 12's, not the baby things sold today. It hung on two ponderous hinges and because of its size, swung deliberately and slowly. To stabilize the gate itself and to help balance it on the hinges, an enormous board was placed diagonally across the gate. It extended several feet past the top hinge. At the top end of this diagonal a large cement block had been poured as a counter-weight. We were told to not ride the gate when we opened or closed it. I didn't understand the reason for not riding it. It was enormous and my little weight couldn't harm it, I thought. The problem, of course, is that even 50 pounds placed on the end of a gate this long would create enough pressure over time to deform it. We bootlegged rides now and then, sort of excusing our illegal behavior by lamely rationalizing that the gate "needed to be watched" while it was opened or closed, or some such excuse. Little kids can be as dishonest about their motives as adults. We rode the gate because it was just fun

When we moved into the place, Mr. Ashton had gotten an agreement from mom

and dad that he could continue to use the garage for storage. We were not told what was stored in the garage and this arrangement lasted several years for his convenience. The garage had a single door that swung in a big arc to the south side under an old cotton wood tree that had a swing hanging from a low branch. The garage was constructed of 2 x 4's and was covered with a skin of heavy corrugated sheet metal that was rusted in places.

The door was secured by a large padlock that we did not have a key for because it was Mr. Ashton's. This bugged dad. He wanted to know what was inside. Either Mr. Ashton didn't tell him -because it was really none of dad's business- or he didn't believe what Mr. Ashton said. One bright sunny day -the kind we mostly had in summers- dad got a pry bar and went to work. Being naturally discreet, and seasoned to the work, he did this investigation on the back side of the garage. It wasn't visible from the road. In his mind his objective was probably pretty modest, just take off one piece of the sheet metal so's he could see what actually was inside, not too much of a big deal. Just take a look to see what was really in there. Curiosity and cats thing.

I remember the itch to look inside the garage but all I remember is seeing him work to remove the sheet metal. After he satisfied his curiosity, he re-nailed the sheet back in place so it wasn't evident that he had done what he did. That's a nice thing about heavy metal sheets with permanent holes. In his mind, that was the end of it. He had satisfied his curiosity and did it without creating any damage. But he had forgotten that two little kids observed the whole process.

On another fine sunny day, Mr. Ashton came out to the place to get into his stuff in the garage. At some point while he and dad were talking, one of us kids decided to share the experience with Mr. Ashton. This kid -Dickie or me- volunteered the fact that not too long ago dad even took a sheet of metal off the back so we could sort of peek inside. I don't know what repercussions there were, but that particular kid didn't impress his dad that day.

## Grainery

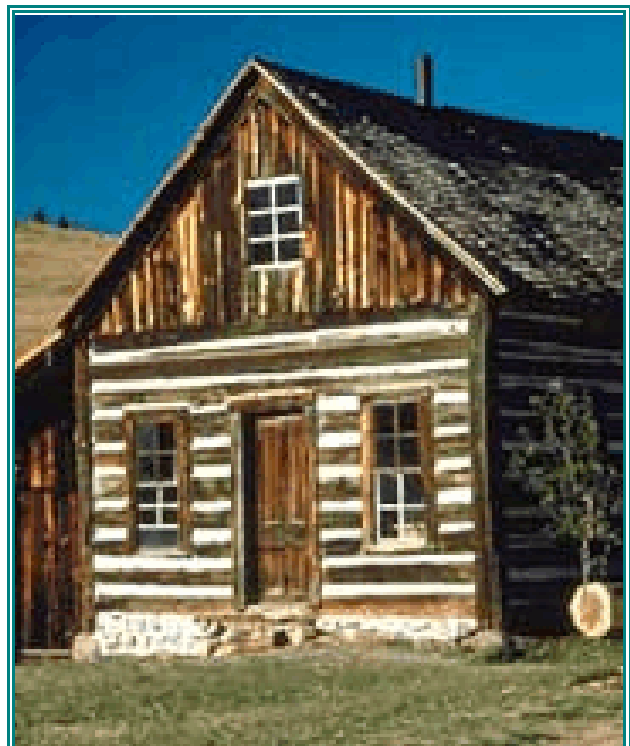
There was a row of lilacs across the back side of the house. The dirt driveway turned north in front of the garage between the house and grainery. The lilacs lined the house-side of this one-car wide dirt road. On the south side of the grainery was a coal shed, a sort of lean-to, that had been added later to store the ton or so of coal that we relied on for heat and cooking and hot water for laundry and weekly baths. The coal was hauled out to our place in a big truck with a bed that lifted to spill the coal out the back end. Dad ordered the cheaper grades of coal, lignite or bituminous. Not as good as the better burning anthracite which was also

more expensive. The bituminous or lignite was sometimes tinged brown and made lots of clinkers, but it provided heat. When you didn't have the money for anthracite, this was what you burned. "Poor folk have poor ways."

The grainery was constructed of logs that were probably 10 or 12 inches in diameter. They obviously had been hauled out of the Uintah's because there were no large evergreens in the valley. I suppose it's possible that the early settlers could have logged off the large evergreens in the valley, but I doubt that. The dry desert conditions in the flatland were not conducive to growing large pines or spruces. To prepare the logs for the grainery after they had been hauled by horses out of the mountains, they were dressed first. This meant they were skinned to remove the bark and flatten the knots where branches had been cut off, using an adze or axe or draw knife. The ends of the logs were trued and then notches were cut near each end, one on the top and one on the bottom like Lincoln Logs. This made them nest together when they were stacked up to build the walls. Even with well groomed logs, there are crack between the logs that let the wind blow through and allowed heat to escape. So the space was chinked on each side. The chinking was made out of mud and straw. The straw held the mud together. Perhaps some outfits used cement in the mix but the chinking in our log cabin was obviously made without cement. It was soft enough that I could scrape it with my thumbnail and could break strips in half that fell out of a crack. When the chinking was properly applied on the inside and the outside, the logs were airtight.

The problem with chinking is that it doesn't bond to the wood. If one is lucky, the chinking doesn't have a clay in it like betonite. Betonite is astounding stuff because it absorbs something like 10 times its volume in water, but its bad business in chinking. The problem is that when it dries out, it shrinks back to a fraction of the volume it created when filled with water so falls out of the cracks in short order. Good chinking dries in place and seals the cracks. But any chinking weathers over time and falls out, one small piece at a time.

Since no one had lived in our log



cabin for years -probably because the "new" house had been built and occupied- the chinking wasn't maintained so it was falling out all around the grainery. The big people in our house insisted that we shouldn't pull it out, but it was a temptation that was probably not resisted too strenuously by a couple of little boys in the neighborhood. When a foot-long strip of chinking has loosened from the crack and was hanging outward a few inches, held in place by a couple of straws, the temptation to see just how much pressure those straws would resist was pretty great. Dad unfortunately was training scientists who understood experimentation.

This image from a government site shows what the chinking looked like when it was in good repair. Ours log cabin didn't look quite like this because these logs were squared off so they would make a more or less flat wall. In addition, our log cabin had chunks of chinking missing in many places.

The design of our own log cabin was unusual. It was constructed such that the north half of the cabin was actually one and a half stories tall. When you stepped through the front door, you entered an atriumy sort of space that stretched up forever to this four foot tall kid. It was dramatic. There were no buildings in town even that had such a tall room. At least that I was familiar with. On that east wall straight across from the entrance there was a loft for sleeping that was accessed by a stairway sort of thing. A sort of dreamy space up there with a cliff-like downward view. Straight across from the door, there was a staircase that went up to the loft. Neither the stairs not the loft had no a railing to keep you from falling. The honor system obviously. You were trusted not to fall or jump. We obviously were not allowed to go up the stairway which didn't have railings either, but it wasn't difficult to restrain ourselves. We were afraid of falling so obeyed that injunction. The area up there was probably a bedroom space though I don't think I ever heard it discussed and don't remember ever going up to see. As you stepped into the main high room, there was a doorway in the wall on the right side. This led to a small hall that opened onto at least two more bedrooms and a small storage room or two. The southern half the grainery was a single story with several bedrooms and storage spaces. Beneath the grainery was a crawl space about 2 feet high that was open along the entire east side. We chased cats into that crawl space and ventured back there in search of riches and robbers. The porch on the front of the grainery was the place where cousin Ruthie met her demise 2 years after we moved to Alaska. I'll tell you more about it later.

The grainery was used during our reign as a storage space. We never spent the night in it, indeed, it never occurred to us to do that. I don't think it ever occurred to me to want to spend a night out there and that interests me today. Do you remember how badly you kids wanted to spend a night in the rental house we

purchased, at your mom's insistence, over on Christine Street? You kids were relentless in your determination that we spend a night there. When I was a kid I had none of those compulsions. Understand, please, that I'm not making a value judgment about either of us; I'm just making the point that when I inherited a second house, I was not moved to go out there and sleep in it. Perhaps it was the smell of mouse droppings and fertilizer? In any event, the grainery was just a dusty dirty place that reeked of mouse droppings and urine, plus a variety of other incompatible smells like fertilizer and axle grease and kerosene. The back bedrooms -I call them bedrooms today but at the time I didn't know that was what they were because I didn't understand that it had been a home at one time- were filled with bags of fertilizer. The great room held all kinds of junk and boxes. We were free to go and play there but we were cautioned to stay away from the fertilizer in the back room and whatever insecticides were there. We didn't know what those bags of funny smelling chemicals were, just that they could hurt us. They all smelled bad and were powders or granules, so were easily identified and avoided.

One of the things we played with in the grainery was an old car radio that had buttons to push to change the station, a new-fangled device actually. It was from a car and was broken, but it was fascinating. The front cover was missing so I could see the little trolley car affair fastened to a string that wound around large wheels on each side. Along the path the trolley moved there was a set of metal fingers that could be pulled out a short distance. When they were pulled out, they stopped the trolley when it moved along its path in response to a button being pushed down. I was fascinated by mechanical things and always wanted to take them apart "to see how they worked", not that I would actually understand. So I investigated this old radio, and in the process managed to mash one of my fingers, the inevitable price of investigation and exploration. But I did not complain to mom. My experience with her when I was hurt as a result of my own stupidity was sufficient to make me sit on the back porch and cry quietly, holding the damaged part until it stopped hurting. I never told her about injuries I could get over by myself that way. Easier on the nervous system.

Just inside and on the north side of the entry way there was a sturdy wooden box filled with fossil mastodon ivory that dad brought back from Alaska a few months before I was born. I learned in 2002 that one of the reasons that dad stayed behind in Seward when mom had already come out to Naples, was to be able to go up to Fairbanks to buy this particular box full of fossil ivory. Exactly how he would have done things. Mom still has the box in Provo in 2002. It's illegal today to traffic in fossil ivory without some sort of permit. The Antiquities Act sets forth the rules. There were no such rules when he bought the ivory, not that he would have

obeyed them anyway. Some of the ivory has tool marks that prove the ivory was soft enough to be shaped and cut with wood chisels before it air hardened. Over the first 14 years of my life in Vernal and Seward, I remember that Dad used a small blue electric hand drill to make jewelry for mom, flowers and arrowheads that he glued to clips. He was a true romantic, although he hid it well. One spring day as I stepped into the grainery, I heard some small unfamiliar noises that seemed to be coming from the vicinity of this box of ivory so I investigated. Inside the box, beneath a layer of cotton padding I found a litter of micelets. Little pink erasers without hair, squirming and wiggling, eyes not yet opened. Fascinating sight that I ran to the house to describe for mom's benefit. She was not impressed but she didn't tell me to do anything about them either.

Sometime back in the 1970's dad reported that he had been contacted by a man who lived in the midwest about this fossil ivory. Dad didn't know him and didn't know how the man found out about the stuff. This made him nervous, an understandable reaction after his exposure to the idiocy of bureaucracies that had forced him to return the Hawaiian skull to the Bureau of Ethnology. This was before the days of the internet so it was very strange for a person you didn't know to contact you about anything. Dad was afraid that if he responded that someone would order him to send all in of his ivory. It turned out that the man was building a cross bow and wanted a small piece of ivory so dad sold him a small chunk of ivory for a big piece of change. Money could change his morals in an instant I fear.

The grainery had a crawl space that was open on the east side. We'd crawl back into it and occasionally found toads, dry skinned, slow-moving critters that couldn't jump very high, especially when compared to the sleek muscular leopard frogs in the marsh or irrigation canal. Feral cats that roamed the back half of the property sometimes dropped a litter of kittens in the crawl space. We knew that because the mother would hang around there. These cats were truly feral so you couldn't catch them and if you got too close they would arch their backs, hiss and snarl, ready to swat, looking scary. One time we crawled back in and found a litter of kittens that were so new that their eyes weren't open. We ran to tell mom. Mom told us that if we handled the kittens the mother might move them. We couldn't restrain ourselves in spite of her instruction, and really didn't understand the truth of her advice. We handled the kittens just a tiny bit because they were so loveable. So momma cat moved them just a tiny bit. The next day they were gone and we never found them again. These feral cats usually hung out in the orchard.



## Ruthie Burned Herself up on the Grainery Step

The grainery behind the house was the original house. It was taller than the one we lived in. When we moved to Alaska, mom and dad rented the property to Mable and Ted. I don't know the particulars of the arrangements but mom and dad probably felt better about leaving the property there knowing that relatives occupied it. The odd thing today is to realize that to this day I do not know when mom and dad actually sold the Ashton Place.

At that time, Mable and Ted had two children, Tommie and Ruth. Ruth was Dickie's age. Before our family moved to Seward, the four of us played together whenever Mabel brought them out to our place, or whenever we went to theirs in Vernal. At the time this disaster occurred, we were living in Seward, around 1952. We received one of those frightening mid-night long distance calls in Seward. We did have phones in Seward - party lines where more than two homes could be on a line at a time. Mabel explained to mom what had happened, based on the evidence she had.

Note something that may surprise you. Today, long distance calls mean nothing in particular to you. You grew up with the phone as an extension of your moods. All of you call each other as often as you wish, any time of the day, without great concern for cost, or -here's the real point- for the content of the call. You call each other long distance if you just want to say "hello", to check in since you haven't spoken with each other for a day or week or two. That is totally different than in these early years of phone service, when connections were terrible with raspy grating sounds that were often louder than the voices. When a long distance call came in, often as not during the night to get the best rate, it was an occasion for anxiety and concern. No one paid the price to make long distance calls unless s/he had something important -very important, nay literally "life-and-death"- to say. Not even weddings or births merited such extravagance in those days. There were no congratulatory calls about graduations or promotions for people in my situation. No calls on Mother's day. No calls for Easter or Christmas. None. The only long distance calls made by people like us were about life and death,



injury and serious, very serious, illness.

I vividly remember one such call coming into Vernal. Mom was taking her Saturday night bath in the wash tub in the kitchen. After one of us answered the phone and heard the respy static that made the speech almost unintelligible, and got the message, "May I speak to Marie?" the kid who took the call frantically banged on the kitchen door, yelling, "Mom, its long distance! Come quick!" And she did. She got out of the tub and went to the phone in the dining room, the only phone in the house - none of these extravagances of extensions around the house. Indeed, I had never heard of more than one phone in the house until I moved to Boston when I was 14. What a stupid thing. This event with mom running scantily clad from the kitchen was indelibly marked in my mind for at least two reasons: First, by the unusualness of her appearing outside of the kitchen in a towel, something she never did, and second, by the gravity of the call, the seriousness of the content. Judging from her face and words and the conversation that followed later with dad about what she had heard, I knew the call was one of those major things that probably should be written on a tablet of stone for succeeding generations.

So when Mabel called mom in Seward during the night, we automatically knew it was about something monumental, disastrous. It was. Mabel called to report two things: First, Ruthie had accidentally started a fire that burned our grainery down. Second, Mabel reported that she was dead as a result of being burned in the fire. There was nothing that mom could do that far away, not even attend the funeral which would take place before she could even get out to Vernal, even if she had had the inclination AND the money to take the trip. That was a things about Alaska at the time: it was not a simple mid-morning flight of 3 or 4 hours away to get somewhere. To travel "stateside" was to undertake a trip that was days long, using different kinds of transportation.

What happened according to Mabel's report was that Ruthie had been playing with a gallon jug of kerosene on the front step of the grainery and had started a fire. I remembered that particular glass gallon jug because I was powerfully instructed about it when I lived there to leave that particular bottle alone. On pain of death, if not worse. I obeyed the order, but I didn't realize how prophetic the instructions were about what would happen if I messed around with that bottle.

I always harbored two different sentiments about Ruthie burning herself up. On the one hand, Ruthie was a nice cousin that I really liked, and whom I'd never get to see again, though I didn't really comprehend 'death', so I felt bad for her. But on the other hand, it was her own fault for disobeying in which case she sort of deserved what she got. Kid's opinions don't have too much gray. It was my opinion - reinforced by mom- that Mabel let her kids get away with things that were 'wrong'.

Turns out that in this instance at least, mom was right. However, inside of me, I sort of liked Mabel's generally nicer approach to kids.

Ruth was about 7 and was using the kerosene to start a small fire that she had laid on the wooden front step. No understanding of the risk of mixing flammable substances. A wooden step is obviously not a good place to set a fire in the first place, so what happened was probably going to happen one way or another. Ruthie took the lid off the gallon jug and poured some of the kerosene onto the little pile of wood and paper that was to be her fire. The problem was that while she was pouring out the kerosene, some of it ran down her hands and dress onto the porch. Then when she lighted the match with one of the kitchen matches, the fire followed the stream of kerosene. Up her leg into her kerosene-soaked dress. She turned into a fireball. Mabel said she saw that happen from the kitchen window. She heard Ruthie scream and rushed out of the house past the lilac bushes to Ruthie to try and put the fire out. By the time she got there, Ruthie was so badly burned that she died a day or so later in the tiny Vernal hospital where I had two surgeries. By the time the fire department arrived at the house, more than a mile from the fire station, all the firemen could do was watch the logs finish burning and protect the garage and house from burning as well. They must have done a good job, or else the coal shed was empty because the garage did not burn.

## Collier's Magazine and WW II

That dramatic cover was printed when I was 9 months old. It demonstrates



how the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was commemorated in the media 12 months

after the event. Pretty evil image, isn't it. Pearl Harbor is the reddish-brown streak located at the bottom of that image, diagonal air strips and ships lying at anchor in the harbor, unaware of the terrible bombing about to be inflicted on them by the Japanese. This was part of the context of the internment of American Japanese that is regarded so often today as an inexcusable error or evil of the federal government. I've wrestled with the topic and have several opinions about it. In the final analysis, I don't think it was an inexcusable error and I explain that attitude below.

At the time this cover was published, we were living in Salt Lake City, I was less than a year old, mom was pregnant with Dick, and as far as I can tell, dad had completed his 3-6 month welding/machinist training program. He was working at the Remington Arms Plant out on Redwood Road when this image was published. It reveals the national concern and preoccupation with the war that I think was understandable. This cover illuminates at the national perception of the Japanese, which included both domestic as well as foreign persons. The Remington Arms Plant was about to shut down for ever a few weeks after this cover was published.

The internment of the Japanese was appropriate, in my estimation. I am not a wise man, but I think it was a reasonable thing, perhaps not the only choice, but nonetheless as reasonable an option to exercise as not interning them. I advise you to not use the trusty ol' retrospectoscope in your current year, whatever it is, to form an opinion about the internment. You weren't there and the information you have is probably incomplete and biased. It isn't just or fair for you to criticize the men and women of the time who lived in reality in a swirling miasma of forces and influences and knowledge and news of the time that you don't know. There are those knobby headed do-gooders today that shed tears over the sparrow that falls - but overlook what was going on. Let's be real and be fair here.

Look first at what had been done to the US by Japan in its sneak attack. Look at the amount of direct damage inflicted on the US. Look at the [short-term] effect on the ability of the US to wage war to defend itself. We basically had no Pacific navy after that disastrous bombing. That is not a trivial thing and that was in fact the object of the attack. The Japanese struck an absolutely masterful stroke in destroying so many of our ships at anchor in their own harbor so far from its homeland. It is embarrassing to acknowledge that from a tactical -or strategic, I never remember which- point of view, they did an extraordinary thing in that complex act. Not minor things.

The obvious but understandable mistake on the part of the Japanese was to believe that after destroying the US Navy in Pearl Harbor, the US would simply buckle. Silly them. Perhaps most nations would have reacted to comparable

destruction as if it were a permanently crippling blow, and would have been unable to mount a defense in time to prevent the Japanese from accomplishing their objective. Americans are different. Silly Japanese. They did not know the equally extraordinary capacity of this nation of irritable argumentative mavericks to come together brilliantly and kick the collective Japanese butt all over the Pacific. Poor them.

With World War II in progress around the world, and attempts to harm the US, the state of mind of the US was anything but benevolent but Roosevelt was trying to remain neutral. But even before the Pearl Harbor Fiasco, the US was beginning to understand it would have to fight for its survival both in the east and in the west. We were in a survival mode in various respects. In 1939 Roosevelt had even commissioned, after hearing Dr. Einstein's fervent plea, research into the A-Bomb. Things were already afoot. Even in Alaska things were shifting. For example, Fort Raymond, large enough to accommodate 3,000 men, was started in June, 1941, 6 months BEFORE the Pearl Harbor Fiasco. These things were the result of forces in the nation that were fomenting the population to go to war, to not sit it out. Their influence was heightened by the destruction of US shipping by Hitler's U-Boats. We had not declared war but Hitler disliked, for obvious reasons, the fact that we were assisting the British so put us in his gun sights.

The extraordinary destruction of our Pearl Harbor fleet by the Japanese bombing inflicted such a crippling blow on the US that it appeared to the Japanese that we would not be able to counter-attack while the Japanese conquered the entire Pacific. The objective was to take us out of the equation. That was the last straw for many people. Politicians and citizens reacted with fear and anger. With those perspectives -as shallow as I know they appear today- the internment of Japanese - while the Germans were not interned- becomes reasonable in my estimation. I understand that there was some reason to intern Germans etc. but there were substantial differences in my estimation. Let me explain my view.

First, the bellicose Germans had declared their intention to do what they were doing, i.e. to sink anyone's shipping that ventured to transport stuff to Europe, so when we chose to send our ships into harm's way, we were informedly stupid. Further, while the Germans were inflicting heavy damage on civilian shipping, they had not eviscerated our entire blue-water navy in the Atlantic. Consequently, their preying on our shipping -that we knowingly sent into harm's way- did not have the dastardly quality of the unexpected sneak attack of the Japanese that demonstrated enormous planning, execution and determination to cripple us. Yes, "Us". I am an American and I feel today what the Japanese did to my nation. And yes, I would intern them in an instant today if I had to in the conditions that prevailed at the

time.

### The Rape of Nanking by Japan 1937-1938

I am compelled to educate you about a critical part of the background to the internment of domestic Japanese by the US Federal Government. It was not done on a whim and I suspect that this type of information is totally new to you, but you need to know it in order to understand why the Japanese were interned. I will sound like I am biased against Japanese. I am not. Indeed, I admire their culture and arts - above all others and view them in general as the most highly developed bunch I've encountered during my exploration of this particular world and sometimes wish I were one of them. I formed a deep friendship with my neighbor Nissei, George Taniguchi, the only friendship outside of Nancy that I maintain in Boise. I fear that your generations will not be given the facts by the liberal forces that control the media of this country, which wish to besmirch the government as much as it can for the simple pleasure of destroying anything of value that it can, in spite of any protestations to the contrary. They wish simply to besmirch and tear down and destroy it, offering nothing of redeeming value in its place. But not here. Not here, my children. I want you to have the rest of the story so you can form your own opinion and see what was going on back then. The bombing of Honolulu and the subsequent internment were not simple a tit for a tat series. No, they were part of a broad picture that you have never told about so I am going to explain the "rest of the story to you" with one example that could be multiplied many times over.

First, let me disabuse yourself of the idea that Japan is a kind nation. As Lisa's model woman says, "Get over it." I am going to present some pretty horrible information here to make my point. To give you a dramatic view of what the Japanese had done a mere ~3 years before they bombed the heck out of our navy, let's look at the "Rape of Nanking" committed by the Japanese army as it marched, uninvited as the avenging conqueror, into Manchuria, a difficult-to-reach for the Japanese country, that nonetheless didn't prevent them from embarking on their extraordinary attack. Let's not look at what they did previously to Shanghai, or what they had done over the centuries to both Korea and China. Let's look at just one episode of horrific evilness committed by the Japanese that our nation would never commit, My Lai notwithstanding. The dimensions of the evilness of My Lai stem from the evilness of the liberal media rather than from the realities of obscene war.

This information about the Rape of Nanking by the Japanese in 1938 was vividly current and real to this nation before the Pearl Harbor Fiasco. To get your own perspective on time frames, just think back in your own life about three years to

what happened, and experience the freshness, the immediacy of those events. They are not ancient prehistorical events. They are, indeed, part of your life. That's how it was for our politicians when the Japanese simply obliterated our nave in 1941. They had fresh memories of these events:

Here is a capsule of the whole thing: :

**"For six weeks, from mid December 1937 to late January 1938, the rapes continued. The murder of Chinese males [ed. By the Japanese] was conducted under the sanction of Japan's high command. Hundreds of thousands of civilians and disarmed ex-soldiers were arrayed in formation, their hands bound behind their backs, and marched outside the city wall. There, they were beheaded or buried alive, bayoneted, raked with machine-gun fire, or doused with gasoline and burned.**  
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Ultimately over 350,000 men -THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND!- women and children were massacred and mutilated and dishonored by the Japanese in Nanking between 1937 and 1938. Three hundred and fifty thousand defenseless



people in less than two years.

Use this as background when you try to decide whether the feds acted reasonably a mere 3 years after the Rape of Nanking, after the astonishing, unprecedented destruction of our entire Pacific navy to protect the US. Note, please, that this was not an enemy that observed the Rules of Queensberry. They would-and will today in 2002 and later- use every diabolical method in their power to annihilate you, to overrun you, to simply destroy you, and in the end take distinct pleasure in mutilating and debasing you. No qualms. Indeed, Japanese soldiers carried pictures in their wallets of the atrocities they committed on women. [Read that book.] George Taniguchi explained to me several times that the Japanese are the most xenophobic nation in the world, feeling superior to all others. I believe he was correct. The Japanese despise all of us -all of us- who are not Japanese, and take distinct pleasure in debasing and destroying us all. Don't believe different.

Here are several images that reveal the cold-blooded ruthlessness of the Japanese massacre of hundreds of thousands [350,000] innocent defenseless Chinese citizens. In this image, a Chinese man is tied from behind by a wire which is held by another soldier. This wire incapacitated him and made him a stationary target for sword practice. He is unable to run, unable to defend himself. Decency dictated that for this reason he should simply be treated as a prisoner and allowed to live out the remainder of his life as a prisoner. But the Japanese soldier with the sword has a different view of what is just. He has just severed the man's head which is just falling off his shoulders. While other soldiers watch with enjoyment. Sword practice is what this was called.



Figure 33 <http://www.sjwar.org/Pows-g.htm>

Is this an enemy you should have trusted? Were Americans acting irrationally when they interned the domestic Japanese after the Pearl Harbor Fiasco when they had seen this sort of information? I'll answer for you. No, they were not irrational. They in fact did understand that the Japanese would occupy our own country itself if

it could except that we were too far away and too large for them to manage the task, but do not misunderstand them: they would have done these same thing to us if they had the chance, and would take the same pleasure at our destruction and defamation.

So guess what. In spite of our public New Testament avowals to the contrary, when threatened with our own destruction -our own destruction- we revert to the Old Testament, Jewish dog-eat-dog response where the Golden Rule was re-written as "Do unto others before they do unto you." No kidding. We decided that these polite, quiet, apparently -but perhaps only "apparently"- cooperative Japanese could not be trusted and that in fact they should be locked up. This was not a baseless conclusion, in spite of the evil propaganda of the liberal media to the contrary. So we decided that for the good of the "body politic" we would lock them up as a body. Don't be confused about the reality of the US political state of mind in those days because you didn't live then, so you don't know what it was really like back then.

Kent and Lisa themselves have visited the enormous museum in Tillamook that reveals a great deal about the war footing that existed back then on the west coast, where fears of Japanese attacks were based on actual events which minor in retrospect, could not be distinguished from precursors to major assaults. There was scarcely any radar then, and there were no surveillance satellites. This is the largest wooden hanger in the world, and is the site of daily launches of helium-balloons to patrol the west coast to watch for Japanese incursions into our country during WW II. That's the reality. We did not know whether or not the Japanese had in fact planned direct attacks on continental US. But only morons would have discounted the possibility after the astonishing destruction they inflicted on Pearl Harbor that the Japanese would not attack our continental body. Look at the bombing in Dutch Harbor, in Adak in the Aleutians, the Japanese submarine approaches to our west coast, and you will begin to understand that we suspected, with a legitimate basis, that the Japanese were intent on actually attacking and occupying our country. Who would have guessed any nation could have accomplished the massive destruction they accomplished on Dec. 7, 1941. No one. No one. As a result, we became convinced that any Japanese person could become the agent of destruction of this nation. Sad, but true. That's one of the evil consequence of war. In this case, one that we did not prosecute ourselves, which was inflicted on us by this audacious act of evilness on Dec. 7, 1941.

Here's a longer description of the Rape of Nanking taken from the history that is located at <<http://www.skycitygallery.com/japan/japan.html>> :

**"Many soldiers went beyond rape to disembowel women, slice off their breasts, nail them to walls. Fathers were forced to rape their daughters, and**

sons their mothers, as other family members watched."

Japanese invented games of rape and torture, turned murder into sport.

Soldiers competed in "Bushido" -KILLING CONTEST- and sent the number of murders back to Nichi-Nichi Shimbun national newspaper in Japan to publish.

"I have never been to hell, but if there is a hell, it was in this city," reporter for the Tokyo Times told the killing in Nanjing."

"At one time, after Nanking was captured, more than 30,000 Chinese were driven to the foot of the city wall."

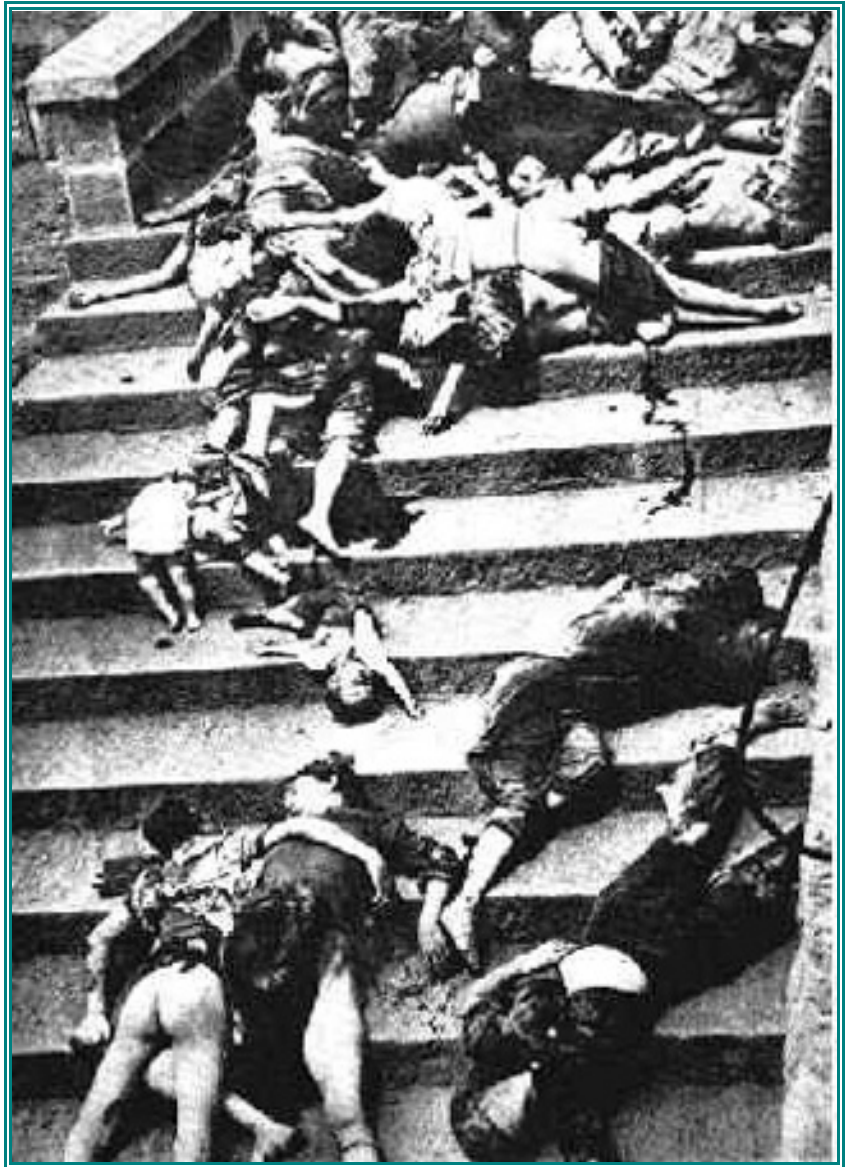
"Machine guns then swept the crowd and grenades were thrown from atop the wall. The 30,000 people were all killed, most of them were women, children, and elderly." reported Tokyo Asahi Shimbun correspondent Yoshio Moriyama on December 14, 1937.

"Those in the second row were forced to dump the severed bodies into the river before they themselves were beheaded," The Japanese military correspondent, Yukio Omata, wrote, "The killing went on non-stop from morning until night ....."

This is not an enemy we had compassion for, nor could we trust them, particularly after they had just slaughtered our sitting navy in Honolulu. Their values were antithetical to ours, and in a dog-eat-dog war, guess what we were going to do to be sure that you didn't grow up speaking Japanese.

This photo show women who were thrown on public stairs after being gang raped and their children bayoneted in front of their eyes. Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Chinese citizens were massacred.

The US federal government knew about these things that had happened a mere ~3 years previously. I think it was appropriate for the US to intern the Japanese in America after they blew the hell out of Honolulu. They were a group which did not blend well with the populace like, for example, the Irish or Italians. True, both of those groups also retained their identity in Little Italys, etc. but Japanese were aloof and inscrutable. They are the most xenophobic nation in the world, according to my friend George Taniguchi



who understands those things better than I. He told me that the Japanese are the most biased, prejudiced people in the world. As I've said variously to some of you, I personally believe that the modern "peaceful" era in Japan is an anachronism. The spirit of the Samurai is in my estimation the underlying spirit of the Japanese culture. The man who coldly slices another in half with one swipe of a sword, calling it honor, feeling pride in his action. Mark my words. Japan will rise again. MacArthur *et al*/simply forestalled it, blanketed it deeply enough under the civil rules of Europe that this spirit has not shown through since the end of WW II. But it is there and

will erupt at some point, as virulent as it was before. What we call "peace" today is simply enforced quiescence and forbearance, not peace.

Do you think that Bush wouldn't like to take equally drastic measures today with Al Queida? I expect he would but for two factors: first the liberal eastern seaboard powers -that are generally antithetical to my agrarian view of the universe, i.e. common decency and simple courage and bravery and a sense of right and wrong-counter him at each turn and bleed over the poor people he would harm, and second, there is no single ethnic entity that he can yank into camps. He's done the best he can to hamstring the terrorists. Look at how he's gone after Al Queida interests in other nations, after their banking and assets in this country and so on. Oh, he'd do it to today if he could. And guess what: a fair number of us Americans would salute him for doing it. Now that 9/11 is 8 months past and we see that terrorism continues and spreads to other nations, we would support him in locking up Al Queida. Indeed, a few months later, we have now seen the bombing in Bali, the hostage taking in the Moscow Ballet, the bombing in the Philippines, the bombing of the French ship in the gulf and so on. The evil ones are on the move.

Having said what I have in support of the internment, I now want to tell you that I do have a major problem with the internment. The internment was prudent from the point of view I have just mentioned, in spite of the inconvenience. The problem for me was the way Japanese property was handled. That was flat wrong. The government took possession of their holdings without compensating them. That was wrong.

I know how wrong the taking was because George Taniguchi told me. One late afternoon in a hot August sun around 1993, we sat on his roof. We talked while he lackadaisically re-pointed his chimney. Enjoying the summer zephyrs and the setting sun, lazy in the heat of the radiating roof. I will tell you about George in more detail in the Boise Volume. But up there on the roof that afternoon, he revealed deep feelings about the internment. George told me how he and his parents had to give up their large farm in Gilroy, California when they were interned and what he experienced as a 14 year old boy.

Years later, George drove his ancient father back to Gilroy just to take a look at the old homestead that had been confiscated by the Federal Government when the family was sent into internment camp. Mr. Taniguchi senior had built the farm from nothing in the 1920's and '30's and sent for his picture bride after he was well established. George showed me a beautiful family portrait of his parents, himself and his one brother. He was excited to take his dad back to the farm because his own memory of the place was shaped by his experiences on it before the war. As they drove up from southern California they anticipated seeing the farm, expecting it

would be in the condition it was in when it was confiscated. What happened was terrible. When they arrived at the farm, they saw the opposite of what they had anticipated. Instead of neatly manicured grounds, well painted houses and clean lands, they saw dirty, disheveled, unkempt grounds and trashed buildings.

The property had been taken over by a group of Hispanics who let it fall into disrepair. Perhaps they had no money? George seemed to believe that this experience hastened his dad's death. I obviously don't know what the truth is about the appearance of the land at the time he went there with his dad, nor do I know what the Hispanics had done, nor what they could be blamed for, but I do know that George was deeply troubled by that experience. [Now don't get the idea that I am prejudiced. I am reporting the facts that you can verify with George - though you might have to dig him up for the conversation.]

The point then: the loss of the family farm was unfair because it was a government "taking without compensation". The failure to compensate the Japanese was wrong. Each property taken should have been paid for at fair market value by the government.

When the US paid each interned Japanese person the sum of \$20,000 40 years later I was ambivalent. If I viewed the money as simply a way for bleeding heart liberals to buy their own peace of mind for having locked the poor Japanese up, then it was a cheap action and I don't support it. The Japanese themselves should have been insulted at the act in the context of uncompensated taking - but being the consummate businessmen they are, they would never look a gift horse in the mouth. Bank it and then make fun of it in the kitchen over a cup of sake. But if I see the money as compensation for the uncompensated taking of property, then I think it was appropriate - but am bothered because it is too little in that case. Even that perspective rankles because the compensation is indiscriminate, i.e. it spread the compensation over all people, including those who lost no property. It seems to me that the appropriate thing to have done would have been to set up a board to review all takings, to assess them, and then compensate them according to their actual damages.

The Collier's Magazine that published the preceding cover was a large format magazine like **Look**, **Life** and **Saturday Evening Post**. They were the source of much of the news we received about international events. News was also available in the news reels that preceded all movies in those days. When the lights went down, the first "movie" was a 5 minute summary of things happening in the nation or world, narrated by a snappy newscaster. Propaganda was freely, liberally incorporated into the media and swayed public opinion. Just as it does today. If you don't think that the new reports you read and hear today -even in 2050- are designed to sway you in

some manner, then you haven't really paid attention to them. Every story you hear has a slant built into it, they preach at you, bombard you, overwhelm you. The point I'm making is that the propaganda of the time, that is criticized today as government interference at the time, is no different than the propaganda promulgated today by the **New York Times**, the **Republic**, etc. The difference is who is writing the text and incorporating the spin. I don't like it in any event but it seems to be the nature of politics and public life and media.

Retrospect shows that the federal government knew more about Japanese actions and intentions than it revealed at the time, just as the Federal government knew more about "9/11" than we were told immediately after. But I am not particularly bothered by that -at my age- for the simple reason that I understand how slow and dim-witted government is, how cumbersome it is. I also do not believe that publication of the suspected actions of the Al Qaeda would have helped anything. There would have been a severe public reaction, howls of outrage and claims that the feds are being stupid and so on, without proof, etc..

In case you doubt that, just look at what happens today after 9-11 each time the attorney general announces another threat of terrorism. The basic reaction is criticism of him for scaring people without providing specific information, etc. But be realistic and get over it - you can't have it both ways, but the liberal media nonetheless cynically tries to have it both ways. What in the world would and could George Bush have done in 9/01 to "protect" against what was done? Nothing. Simply nothing. All the coordinated intelligence in the world would not have been useful to him because there would have been shrieks of all sorts if he had really attempted to impose bans on travel, and other restrictions. He couldn't construct safety nets over the twin towers and the pentagon. He couldn't stop air travel. He couldn't even introduce increased surveillance. That is how it would have been for Roosevelt.

## Root Cellar

But civilian life went on. We had a root cellar that was located a short distance to the north of the back porch, directly outside of the kitchen window. From a distance it just looked like a longish pile of dirt that ran east-west, perhaps 3 feet higher than ground around it. The door of the cellar was about 8 feet from the house and lay nearly horizontal. The cellar door looked like the door of the storm cellars in "The Wizard of Oz", wide flat wooden doors that were heavy. There were strict orders to stay off the "roof" because playing on it would cause it to collapse. In fact, the mound of dirt covered a structure of timbers built around a hole in the ground that was six feet deep. And you dang well knew that you would get hid if

you dared walk on that roof. It was so inviting.

This root cellar was a source of vivid memories and emotions. I remember the labels of the cans of tomato paste that mom purchases. Contadina, the same today as they were back then, a painting of long rows of tomatoes in California, aligned on a vanishing point in the distance.



The root cellar consisted of two rooms. When you descended the stairs, you entered the frontroom that was lined with

shelves. The back room was devoted to dirt bins for storing root crops like carrots. It was a hole in the ground that had a framework of timbers with a roof that was covered with several feet of dirt. Each time I stepped into the cellar I walked into a palpably moist, cool, smell. If it were presented to a blind-folded me today, I could identify it. It is a compound of the odor of plain ol' dirt mixed with the scents of fresh and moldy apples, potatoes, carrots and cabbages, with a whiff of mice droppings and urine. Not an unpleasant or pleasant smell. Just distinctive. It was sort of like the smell of areas where I found toads that peed in my hand.

When mom sent me down to get a jar of beans or venison, I knew exactly where they were located. If she asked me to get something I didn't know the location of, she'd gesture with her hands and indicate the right or left and how high. The shelves, constructed of vertical 2 x 4's and 1 x 12's, were assigned to specific foods. The assignment to go get something out of the cellar was not one I appreciated. But in the gestapo environment, I knew better than to object. Just brace myself, rush into the cellar, grab a bottle, and flee.

The act of opening the heavy cellar door that lay at an angle on the ground was difficult. I could do it, but it strained me. There was an unlighted set of steps going down, steps of dirt shored up at each level with a timber. While descending those steps, I would feel moist cobwebs across my face and arms. When I entered the palpable smell, I felt more cobwebs across the doorway. I timidly reached out to find the huge ceramic light switch in the darkness, and would twist the large black knob to turn on the bare dangling bulb. It was dirt-covered, cobweb-covered, 25 watts to save money. A layer of fine dirt that constantly fell from between the boards in the ceiling covered everything. Strings of old cobwebs hung randomly in



the small dirt room, dirt floor and dirt wall.

As I was on my way down into the cellar, I sometimes felt brave and 'in charge'. But this feeling of resolve dissolved quickly. By the time I walked through the primitive timber doorway into the first room, I was nervous about the whole thing. This was not a good idea. It was like walking into a tomb. The alternative was to go back and tell mom I was afraid to go into the cellar after all. But I understood, through experience, that that was not a really good idea. So I braved the darkness and creatures of the cellar.

The spider webs were one of the nastiest things about the cellar. I never wondered, but today I do: what was it that caused spiders to hang webs in dark spaces that never saw light, hence never saw insects? Odd, really, because the effort expended in creating webs was wasted. Sort of a death wish. But whatever the situation, I hated the feel of the wettish cobwebs that hung fresh over the doorway and over each of the shelves where I went to retrieve whatever the assigned food was for the day. It was always the same, regardless of how recently one was down there. Those wet, unexpected and unwelcome dusty cobwebs on the face that made entering the cellar a trial.

But that was a mild problem compared to leaving the cellar. At the instant I held the beans or corn in my hand, the entire cellar was instantly populated with six-headed creatures with drooling bloody fangs waiting to pounce on me the instant I turned my back. Like those under Calvin's bed. Every time. As soon as I was stocked with the assigned goods, I was filled with unspeakable fear and terror. Those are the correct terms. If you have never done this deed alone at age 6 years in a cellar, then you don't know what it's like.

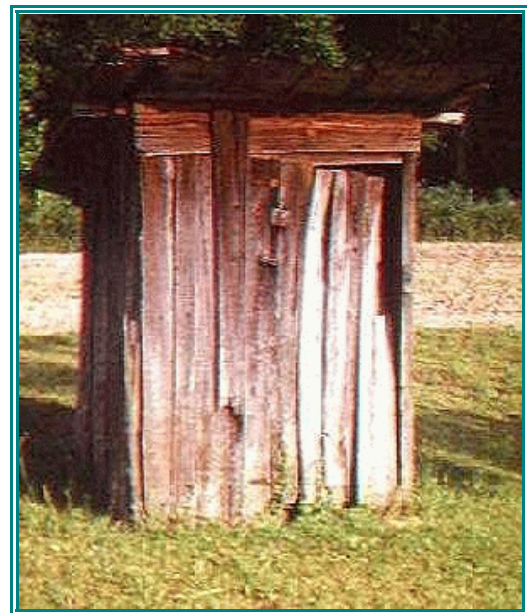
It was a fearful experience to know that misshapen horrible dwarfs and monsters waited in the back room of the cellar, for you to turn the light out and turn your back, so they could pounce on you and tear you into bleeding shreds to die on the dirt floor in the dark, where no one would hear your scream, where no one would discover you until your irritated, disgusted mom finally came to retrieve her bottle of beans, knowing that you were just being lazy. I would bolt for the doorway, hoping fervently that I could clear the door jamb before my legs and arms were ripped from my body. I knew that as long as I could get my body over the threshold of the small dirty door sill, I would be safe. Without fail, I accomplished that thing. I was never disemboweled, but I always understood that I was miraculously favored. I could almost hear the heavy breathing of the creatures that would then slink back into their room to wait for me next time. It was a gift of god that she allowed me to escape. I didn't exactly thank Her because that is pretty hard to do when you are sweating and afraid.

## Privy

A privy isn't a very elegant place but it's superior to the alternative, an open trench in the ground. Both in terms of privacy, and in terms of protection from the elements, especially in the winter. What one does there isn't too elegant either. Us boys only used the privy for "Number two". To pee, we'd stand outside of the coal shed or grainery. So did dad. I remember how grown-up I felt when I stood by him after he came home from work, peeing on the side of the grainery, blasting straight out as only a little kid's bladder can do. Amazing. I was a big boy then.

Ours was a two-seater, an odd thing really since people didn't go in together. At least adults didn't in my experience, though if Dick and I both urgently needed to, we would go in. Today, I don't understand why privies were made with more than one seat. I suppose they were helpful with large families, the norm for agrarian families? There were even three-seaters which must have been something to behold when all sites were in operation. Think about it. Sitting there in the smell, chatting about things in general, swatting blue bottle flies. Please pass the catalog.

The construction of a privy is simple. A framework of 2 x 4's is erected over the hole in the ground, and covered with boards. There was a door over the entrance for privacy though that was only visual. Chuckle. A space between the roof and the top of the walls provided some ventilation but didn't make a bit of difference in the smell. There were always cracks between the boards, or holes where knots had fallen out so 100% privacy wasn't possible. You could always hear rustling in the tall grass around the privy if a kid was trying to sneak up so you'd holler, "Jimmy! I hear you!" And he'd leave. Usually. Peeking through knot holes was an educational enterprise. About as revealing as when kids too far away to be bothered by going to a privy, pulled their pants and underwear down to their ankles and hung their bums over the top pole of a pole fence, out there in the sunlight, letting loose. What a sight. The comments were not polite.



Our privy was down beyond the grainery, just past the clotheslines on the path that ran between the large garden and the berry patch. It was far enough away that the well under the house wasn't contaminated. Privies always have a strong smell

which some families attempted to control by using lime. They would put a 50 pound sack of lime behind the door. When you finished your business, you threw a good handful of lime into the hole you just used. That did help somewhat I suppose but I couldn't tell any difference. Toilet paper was expensive so wasn't used much. Instead, a Sears or Montgomery Wards catalog was left to the side of the seat - or some old newspapers. Seems sort of ineffective? It was better than corn cobs like you used in the corral.

Flies were always a problem in the summer. While you mediated, they buzzed around. Spiders in the corners of the privy up by the opening between the top of the wall and the roof, spun webs that filled with desiccated fly carcasses, iridescent with sun rays reflecting off them. You hated the flies to land on you because you knew where they had been. This is one of the reasons that mothers disliked having flies in the house.

To control them, families used a spray gun to dispense "Flit, a widely-used insecticide. The reservoir held about a quart of insecticide and was

fastened to a 2inch thick tube that worked like bicycle pump. It was fun to hold the tube in one hand and work the plunger up and down with the other hand. This created a mist of the chemical that killed flies, or whatever insects that happened to get in the way.

There is an interesting story about "Flit". The creator of the Dr. Seuss books started his career in art in the advertising agency by designing ads to promote "Flit".

Mom and dad used DDT bombs a few times to fumigate the house, though I don't know why they did that. It was a losing battle out on a farm with a dairy herd a quarter mile away. Perhaps they were exasperated with the quantity of flies that they couldn't get rid of with Flit. These devices did look like small gray bombs. The project was a large one. All of interior doors were opened to allow the gas to circulate in all rooms, and all of the windows were tightly closed. Then us kids were chased out one door while dad set the bomb on the floor opened it. We got to see the smoke start coming out but were chased away before we could breathe it. Several hours elapsed to allow the DDT to do its job and dissipate before we were allowed back in.



In those days, DDT was viewed as a safe product and was miraculously effective against a wide range of pests. This photo illustrates that belie. Today the stuff is

banned but at the time it was introduced, the world was a different place, filled with otherwise insurmountable pests. It was a panacea that time has shown to be a nasty product to use. But it is irrational today to criticize people for using it back



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then. We had little comprehension of the risks of the time, of the marginal understanding of the basic science, of the huge economic and health losses associated with the pests that were miraculously controlled by DDT. This is what that led to its widespread use.

Privies, not unexpectedly, lent themselves to nasty pranks that tended to happen around Halloween. This prank worked because the structure was not secured into the ground with concrete. They were more or less set with stakes into the ground over the hole that received the offerings. On Halloween during trick-or-treat time, some smart aleck would sneak up on a privy, push it over on its side, and go away laughing about it. Now and then some farmer got a step ahead of the kids. He'd go out and move the privy so that it was sitting upright, but to the side of the hole, leaving the hole uncovered on the side of the most likely approach. Obviously, the kid who snuck up on this privy in the dark to push it over might find himself in a funny spot.

Sitting in a privy on a hot summer day, with sun poring through cracks, illuminating the spider webs is not a bad thing. Peaceful, quiet, drowsy sort of thing. Time stands still. You wait. You think. Buzzing of flies in the background, a few bird chirps fill the suspended time. The quiet whir of a horse-drawn sickle bar, a cat meowing. The Sear catalog warm, the wooden walls radiating comforting heat. So much nicer than in the cold winter when you freeze your bum.

### Montgomery Wards and Sears

That era was the heyday of these catalog companies. They grew by leaps and bounds across the US, offering an astonishing array of products to families out in the middle of no-where. Which is where we were, a mile outside of a tiny town that had few selections in few stores. These enormous catalogs were shipped once or twice a year and provided an large amount of pleasure. Reading and looking and longing we did regularly. Kept us out of trouble.

When mom was ready to order something from Sears, she would pore over the catalog for hours, consulting with us about what we wanted, what she could afford. Then one day she'd make up her mind and laboriously fill out the order form, verifying that she was listing the right item number, the right page, the right size and color. Then she put it in the mailbox and raised the red flag to tell the postman we had mail for him to pickup. The products returned via the US Mail. There was no such thing as FedEx or UPS. The only delivery service we had was that provided by the US Post office, which in my estimation, was an honorable agency at the time. It is a joke today that should be privatized to get rid of the graft and laziness and inefficiencies that aren't tolerated in private industry. Anyway, the post man eventually delivered the long-awaited boxes of things which were opened anxiously and tried on. Ordering out of a catalog is difficult because sizes vary by manufacturer, colors vary and so on. So some products had to be sent back, but this process was still superior to buying things in town out of the little stores with their limited inventories of products, colors and sizes.

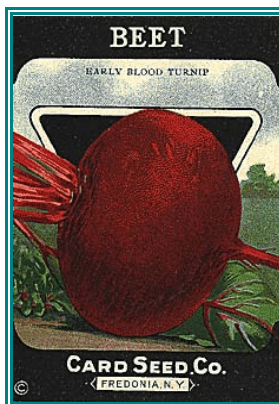
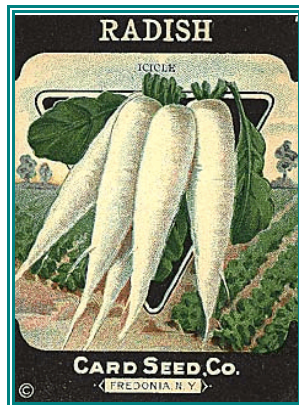
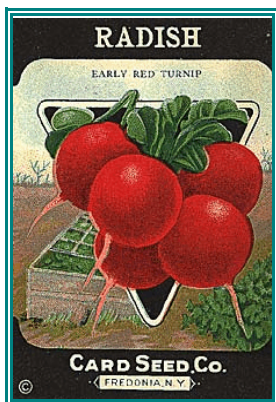
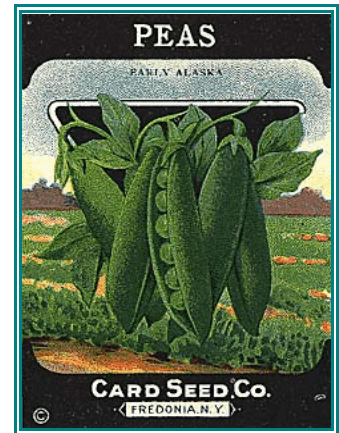
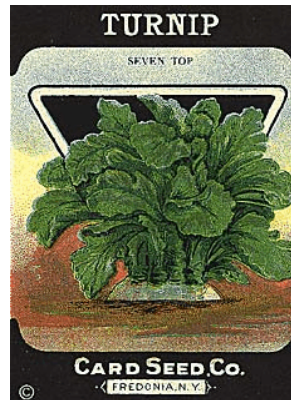
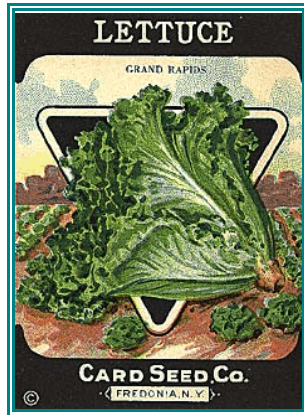
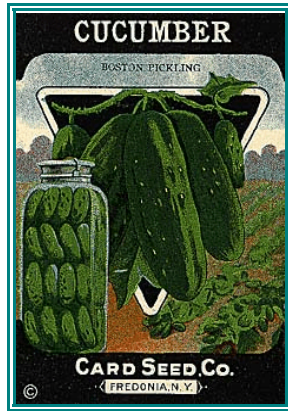
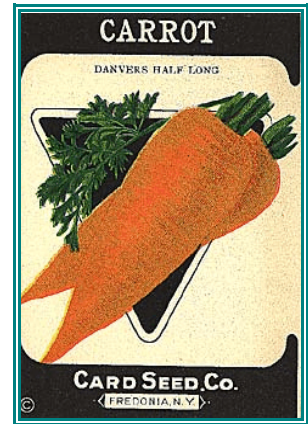
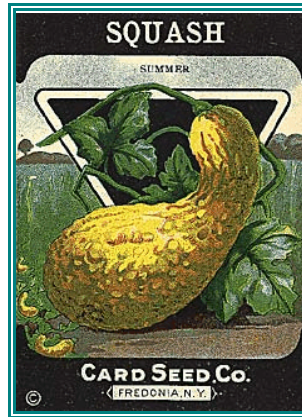
While the companies were known and respected, their names were the fun to play with. Sears and Roebucks was the full name of the company at the time. This was transposed into Rears and Sawbucks, a hilarious thing. Similarly, Montgomery Wards was modified into Monkey Wards, producing as much humor. Today the jokes seem a bit thin, but that is a reflection of the general increase in education and sophistication. At the time, these jokes were indeed funny.

### Choosing seeds for the garden

The process of picking seeds for our vegetable garden started in the spring. Another mail order enterprise although local stores like Ashton's Hardware stocked some seeds. The Burpee Catalogs came in the mail and the urge to get out and garden after a long cold winter caused the adults to start thinking about what they wanted to do this year. They wondered which seeds did best last year, which vegetables were not appreciated and so on. Dad didn't spend much time in this project but mom did. She'd look in the catalogs to find the vegetables that interested her, paying attention to the cost of each packet. She'd dog ear the pages, and on a piece of paper would tally the cost of her order, updating it each time she changed her mind. She discussed her choices of seeds with her folks and her siblings in the region, all of whom grew vegetable gardens for food.

In those days farmers allowed some vegetables mature and "go to seed" so that they could have seed for the next year, a practical, economical way to do it. Not too many years earlier, it was probably the most common way to get seed because catalog companies hadn't come into their own yet. But there was a problem with harvesting one's own seeds: over generations some vegetables deteriorated in quality and didn't thrive. What was preferred was seeds that resulted from new crosses. They possessed qualities that were lost through repeated self-pollination.

The images on the next page show seed packets from the Card Seed Company in that era. I don't remember that we used Card Seed seeds, so these probably aren't the exact ones



that we used, but the style of art is identical to that of the seed packets we used. There is an aura that goes with this style that calls to mind that era. The art style was repeated in all forms of advertising for shoes, canned vegetables labels, and so on. I remember standing as a small kid in front of the tall racks of seed packets in the Ashton's. Wondering what a celeriac plant tasted like.

## Preparing the Garden

Our garden was a source of life, so it received enormous attention to ensure, insofar as it is possible, a substantial source of calories for the next year. This may seem to be an overly detailed description of the process. I'm going to give you a detailed description of the process because it reveals much about what it was like to live on a rural farm in that era when we produced a large percentage of our own food. Your experience with the little gardens I raised in Boise suggests that gardens were small, irrelevant projects that didn't contribute much to the food on the table. A source of as much irritation as benefit. Things talked about, but which didn't require much effort and which were ignored in the end when cheap vegetables were purchased in the stores. In Vernal things were different. The garden was critical to our food supply and received appropriate attention.

The first step in preparing the garden plot was to plow the field. Then it is disced, harrowed, fertilized, smoothed, furrowed, planted, watered, grown, harvested and eaten. Gardening was a substantial undertaking that all the neighbors and relatives did in those days. Vernal was an agrarian society and even the town folk maintained kitchen gardens. Every kid knew how it was done.

When the ground was ready and the night temperature was high enough, Dad would stake out the garden plot for plowing. He arranged with a neighbor to bring a tractor and plow. The point of plowing is to break up the soil and turn it upside down so that the next steps would produce a deep bed of loose soil that would produce a good crop. A man drove a tractor down the long driveway along the irrigation ditch and between the garage and grainery out onto the garden plot. The plot was less than a quarter acre but it was nonetheless a substantial undertaking.

Tractors have ultra-low gears that allow them to crawl at a slow walk. This gives the driver excellent control. As the tractor nears the end of a row, the driver pulls a lever and the plow blades magically raise up out of the soil. The shiny satiny beautifully shaped blades glisten in the sun, as they bounce and jounce over newly-cut furrows. The driver makes a hard cut of the steering wheel to turn the tractor around, never stopping. He watches over his shoulder and when the tractor is lined up for the next furrow, he pushes the lever and the silvery plow blades descend back into the soil. At the edges of the field a strip of several feet was taken up in the



turns, wasted space but that was necessary as the tractor is turned around and lined up for the next row. Tractors are designed with a short turning radius to minimize the amount of space wasted by turning around.

Plow blades were fascinating. As they cut the soil, they left a clean vertical wall on one side about a foot deep, and rolled a strip of sod and soil in the opposite direction, twisting it upside down. Earthworms appeared, sometimes cut in half, other times whole. Attracting birds interested in the free meals. They stayed away from us but hovered near until we were far enough away to risk sitting down to forage.

I am fuzzy about when dad managed to buy a small two-wheeled motor-driven tractor that he worked the garden with after the heavy duty plowing and harrowing had been completed. This little tractor had a Briggs and Stratton motor, and large black wheels. He had a variety of implements that he bolted to the back end of the unit and walked behind it carefully tilling the garden rows. I don't think he ever used it to do the entire process. Whatever the case, he used it to cut furrows and weed.

The next step after plowing was completed was to harrow the strips of sod and dirt with a disc harrow.

This process chops the stuff into smaller clods, and breaks down the roots holding the dirt together.

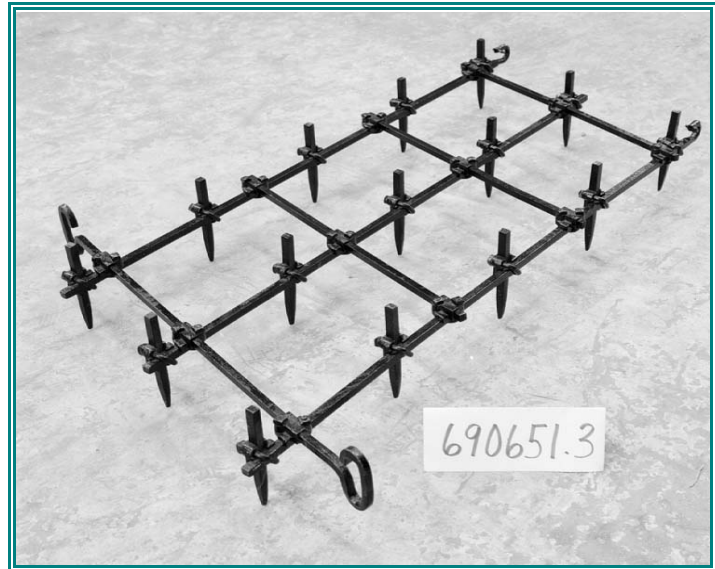
The disc in this image is designed to be hitched to a pair of horses. The farmer would sit on the small metal seat and put his feet on the bar built for that purpose.

There is a single row of discs that is divided into two halves that are angled rather than in a straight line. The angle ensure d the

discs cut and turned the sod. If the discs were in a straight row, they would cut into the sod but would not turn it. The handle by the left side of the seat was used by the farmer to raise and lower the disc. Each time he came to the edge of the garden, he'd raise the discs, turn the horse, line up on the next row, lower the discs and go again.



After discing was completed, a tooth harrow was pulled across the plot in both directions and diagonally. This was the stage where I wanted to participate. A tooth harrow looks sort of like a large sled with a hefty wooden frame on the top that was capable of holding anybody. However, when I asked to be allowed to sit on it as it was slowly pulled across the field by the tractor, I was enthusiastically informed that it was not to be allowed, that it was not safe to do that. I didn't really understand it at the time because the harrow moved so slowly. But I understood that the adults didn't want me to do it, so being a natural coward, I dropped the subject - verbally. I never understood in my heart how dangerous it was to do the innocent things I proposed. I see now that it was indeed a stupid thing to do. Getting a foot caught under the frame, even when it was moving slowly would have resulted in the leg and then the body being pulled under the teeth before the tractor could have been stopped, a pretty grisly way to die. The teeth worked the sod that had been disced, making smaller and smaller chunks, turning and tossing it. The next step was to drag a flat frame across the field to flatten the dirt into a bed.



The last stage was the only foul part of what otherwise was a sweet loamy smelling process. Spreading manure, real honest to goodness fresh from the back end of a cow manure. Dad hired a tractor that went over to the Coopers' dairy and loaded the manure spreader with the smelliferous stuff, wet green dripping and chunky.



Cows drop their plop anywhere which is a problem inside the milking shed - actually it was a barn with a cement floor. To help handle and control the stuff Mr. Cooper spread straw on the floor which meant that the stuff was chunky what with the straw being mixed through it.

The back end of the spreader has shafts with teeth that turn fairly quickly and catch the manure. It is flipped it into the air, out the back end of the machine, sort of randomly. A contraption in the bottom of the manure spreader moved the manure from the front of the bed to the back end. Then the stuff lay in the sun smelling mightily but was essential to producing a good garden. Chemical fertilizers were available but cost money, which we didn't have. Remember this was just a cut above subsistence living. Besides, why spend money for chemicals, when this stuff was a quarter mile away and free. Mr. Cooper had to get rid of the stuff so he was glad to have someone come over and do some of his work for him.

I don't remember what implement was used to mix the manure into the soil, but it was a critical process actually because the manure had to be thoroughly mixed and broken up. It would burn plants otherwise. After the manure had been worked in, and the plot had been smoothed, dad would walk through the field a last time, picking out any rocks, large roots, or pieces of wood, throwing them to the edge of the garden, along the irrigation ditch on the south.

Then mom and dad staked out the rows with the twine. After the rows were staked out and approved, dad used a hand-powered tiller that he could change implements on. The tiller with the two wheels was too large to cur the furrows. The one he used was like the one I had in Boise that was ruined by one or two boys and their friends. They obviously ran with it, enjoying how the large wheel bounced up and down. Oh, that was probably pretty fun to watch and I suspect that a scrawny thoughtless kid named Scott had more than a little to do with it. In the end, it was ruined, beyond repair so I could not use it and I couldn't afford to repair or replace it. Dad had bought it for me to tend the garden, just as he did when I was a little kid.

Anyway, after the rows were staked out, dad would cut the furrows with the proper plow blade. He carefully walked the tiller along the strings, cutting to just the right depth so that the garden could be irrigated through these furrows. The critical parts of cutting the furrows were making them of uniform depth, and making them slope down away from the irrigation ditch because gravity was the only way water would get to the end of the row. If there were defects in the uniformity and depth of the furrows, they were repaired when water was first let into them when it became obvious what needed attention. This is where the saying about "getting water to the end of the row" came from.

The stakes and strings were removed after the furrows were cut. The string was carefully rolled and stored for other uses. Families kept balls of twine in the house to store string of any kind that came into the house. That way there was always string to tie up things that needed tying up. The fact that it saved money was equally important.

After the furrows were in, mon and dad would plant seeds by hand. Different seeds required different planting techniques. They knew them all. Some seeds were soaked over night, others planted straight from the packet. Some needed to be planted deeply and others almost lay on the surface of the ground. Seeds varied greatly in size. Radish seeds were small but peas and corn were large. The east end of the garden was where potatoes were planted. Dad always did that. He'd quarter potatoes to stretch them, making sure that there was at least one "eye" in each piece because that is where the potato plants originated.

After the garden was planted it was time to let in the water for the first time, an exciting thing. Obviously, the entire process of preparing and planting the garden was planned around the date and time we would have the right to the irrigation water in the spring. When water runs down a furrow the first time, it obviously soaks into the soil, condensing it, and forms well-defined tracks for future waterings. This is the time that high spots in the furrows are repaired with a shovel if necessary.

There actually is a great deal of skill involved in irrigating. The water has to be let onto the garden long enough that it is watered but not so long that it is flooded. Flooding does two things. First, it kills some vegetables, and second, the furrows blow out at the far end and no longer contain water. These defects could be repaired but that was unnecessary work. During the irrigation process, water flow from the ditch actually has to be stopped before the sheet of water reaches the end of the rows. To fail to time the stopping of the water properly, was to invite various problems. If water is stopped too soon, the bottom of the garden isn't watered, and if stopped too late, the furrows blow out. There was always a tension in deciding when to stop the water. Irrigation water on the garden is like a sheet of slowly moving water and the irrigator has to watch the progress of this sheet and the rate of flow out of the ditch to know when to stop letting water in. That allows this sheet to finish its trip to the bottom and to stop right at the end of the rows.



This picture shows what our Vernal gardens really looked like. Note the weeds and the unkempt appearance of the thing. Not like the neatly manicured gardens out behind Boise homes tended by men who spent their days in offices with time -and energy- to be fussy. As long as the land produced the vegetables required for the winter, it wasn't important how it looked. We worried



about weeds when they interfered in the growth of vegetables. Otherwise, they provided a benefit in that they reduced the amount of evaporation of water because they protected the soil from the sun.

On our farm, the house would have been on the right side of this picture, and the irrigation ditch would have been behind these people flowing from right to the left, i.e. to the east. This mother and daughters are harvesting a crop that grows on low vines. Look at the woman's hands to see how she's lifting a branch of a plant. Can you tell what they are picking? I can't. What do you think of their attire? Two of

them wear long pants, but two of them wear dresses. To work in the garden, to harvest vegetables. I bet if you polled 100 city women working today in their gardens that you would not find a single woman who wore dresses. Levi's, shorts and halters would abound. The only time my mom wore slacks was when we were going out into the woods or boating. Otherwise, she wore dresses. Dresses, not skirts and blouses, plain old fashioned dresses with full skirts. None of these form-fitting numbers either. These were modest full skirted-versions. It is interesting isn't it. Why was there this compulsion for women who were physically active, bending over and so on, to wear a piece of clothing that complicated their work?

Note also the children. The kids are out there in the garden with mom doing work that isn't entirely fun, particularly if the ground is muddy, or if the sun is hot, or if the weeds are shedding prickly seeds, or they are harvesting cucumbers and squash that have nasty little spines. But there they are. Learning how to work. And equally important, they are getting a sense of contributing to the welfare of the household. Mom is not preaching to the girls. She's just trying to get vegetables for dinner, or for canning. But in the process of herding the girls out there and making them help her do her work, she is including them in her life and making them central to the welfare of the home. They are learning something about each crop, when to pick it, how to tell it's ripe, how to pick it. That's the kind of opportunity that I wish I had been able to provide you kids. I regretted that you did not have the chance to feel like you were contributing to the household. Most of the time you were simply consumers, not being able to contribute to the welfare of the house. City life does that and it is a great loss.



Mom planted a wide variety of vegetables: peas, beans, turnips, several kinds of lettuce, corn, tomatoes, squash, pumpkin, cucumbers, potatoes, carrots, turnips, beets, radishes, bell peppers, and dill. Vegetables were harvested during the summer as each variety "came on". The first vegetable was the radishes, a cold-weather crop that was planted early and appeared along with certain early lettuce that also likes cold, followed by peas. Mom planted the standard red radishes as well as the icicle radishes. The latter grew into long narrow pure white things several inches long. I didn't like them because they were so hot. Radishes ripened in about 60 days so would be ready in early May since we planted cold-tolerant vegetables in March before the danger of a killing frost had fully passed.

Radish seeds are roundish plump spots that we placed in shallow rows under mom's instruction. She carefully pulled a thin layer of dirt over the seeds and gently water them, advising us to be careful and not step on them. We'd check them

frequently and could scarcely believe when those tiny seeds produced shiny, bright green leaves, two at a time. Dad told us that they were "dicotyledons". We took his word for it. He said the other group of plants were the "monocotyledon", or "monocots". That was fine too. Made him happy to teach us. Small wonder that precision in names and word choices became a passion. Precise words and names were magic. So radishes were dicotyledons. The body of the radish swelled and expanded, lifting the tuft of leaves higher, exposing the red globe to the sunshine. When they were large enough, mom let us pull them. We'd clean the dirt off by rubbing them on our jeans, bite off the tap root, and eat them. Tangy bite that was more than I appreciated, but the joy of harvesting something I planted made it worth the effort.

Peas were next. They took longer and had to be staked up. When they were ripening, we watched the pods that were short flat things that lengthened and fattened. Finally they were ready to harvest. Mom said to hold the vine when we pulled the pods, lest we pull the vines out of the ground. We generally followed the rule. The pods were lovely, crunchy things that we learned to pop open by squeezing on the stem end, then splitting them lengthwise with a thumb nail to expose the row of shiny, evenly-spaced green peas. Shelling them out with a thumb into our mouth was ecstasy.

Turnips came on later and I loved to go out into the garden with mom when she pulled turnips for dinner. She would sit on the ground when dad was home from work, in the shade of the grainery on the west end of the garden, with a paring knife. While she held the turnip by the top, she'd cut off the root tip, peel back the skin that protected the flesh and then cut chunks for herself and us kids. I think I liked it as much because she was there with us as much as because I liked turnips. Today I love turnips and think they have this same association in my subconscious.

Corn was a curious thing because it would get "smut", an ugly word. None of our other vegetables developed such ugly growths that ruined the whole item. Aphids and wilt and caterpillars took their toll but they didn't infiltrate the vegetable and twist it into such nasty growths. Dad's alarm at the presence of the stuff created anxiety in me. I worried



excessively no doubt about the stuff. Later in life I learned that there are people around the world who actually cook and eat the stuff, savoring its flavor, because it is simply a form of fungus. I didn't appreciate it. When dad encountered it, he anxiously pulled the affected ears off the stalks and destroyed them, believing that if he left them, the smut would mature and infect neighboring plants.

Potatoes were the grandest vegetable to harvest. Late one evening in the fall after we'd about given u, he'd come home from work and announce that he figured it was about time to "dig the potatoes." Hallelujah. We were allowed to stay up late that evening, more for our personal pleasure than for any help we could provide. I didn't get that at the time. We were too small to lift much, plus we didn't really get what was supposed to be done. A potato is a potato and we would want to save all of them, but he didn't. He'd take his potato fork and us out to the east end of the garden where he had planted a bed of spuds. We'd watched these plants all summer, noting how dark the dirt turned under them when they were irrigated each week, watching them erupt and then grow from short sprouts into bushy two-foot high mounds, wondering when we would be able to harvest them. Their dark leaves were dense and tipped with a small violet-colored flower.



Dad was systematic. He started at the end of one of the outside rows, slowly and carefully placing the fork just right. Next to, but not in the middle of, the mound created by one plant. He'd step hard on the fork, driving it straight down into the soft soil that had been dry for most of a week. When the top of the fork was ground level, he reef back on the short stubby handle with both hands, pulling the tines squarely into the potato mound. As he did this, the bush would rise slowly straight into the air, then tilt slowly back and fall away from him. We stood as close as we dared, watching intently to see what the tines would bring to light as the fork handle was laid almost flat on the ground. A mass of different sized tubers still hanging on the potato bush appeared and we were overcome at their beauty and profusion. All summer we had watched and waited and hoped and now here they were. Clumps and piles of potatoes, glistening in the low light, thin skins translucent on the white flesh, eyes looking back.



He would lean forward holding the fork to the side, and would pull out the large potatoes. Digging his steel hand quickly down into the loosened dirt, hunting for others that had refused to surface. Satisfied he had found most of them, lying them in the furrow to be sacked by mom who followed, he moved to the next potato mound and repeated the exercise. Meantime us kids were allowed to rummage around in the exploded mound, hunting and collecting potatoes of any size. It didn't matter that they were the size of a marble. They were potatoes and needed to be collected we thought. The odd sensation that I had about the mass of tiny potatoes that hung from the potato bush that we held up in the air, was that they looked like the premature eggs that hung from the ovaries of chickens that we slaughtered. Small roundish things, joined in a mass by strands. Mom came along with gunny sacks and carefully picked up all of the potatoes that dad had laid in the furrows, watching for others that he'd left behind in the upside-down beds. These sacks were thrown into a wheelbarrow and pushed back to the house to the root cellar. He'd cart them one at a time down into the cellar and into the back room, throwing a bit of dirt over them to make them think they were still in the ground.

Mom made creamed new potatoes out of the small ones that us kids collected. If she was lucky, she'd have some fresh peas that she'd add to the mixture, creating a delectable dish that stood out for its fresh taste and beauty. Green peas and larger white potatoes in a white thick cream.



The era of steam power was ending when I became a young person. Before the development of the internal combustion motors, steam was used for about any mechanical purpose you could imagine. Mr. Watts hit a home run in England with his steam engine. Tractors were built with steam powered drive systems. I saw them at the Henry Ford museum in Dearborn, Michigan with dad one day when he was in Ann Arbor. He was enraptured, a whole day looking at machines of all sizes and varieties. A remarkable variety and style of steam powered tractors. I don't remember much about them when I was a kid but they were around.

They're still around today if you look for them. This is a modern example on the old engine that has been refurbished and is involved in a tractor pull competition. Wide metal wheels with steel chevrons for traction. The smoke from the stack is from a wood fire in the boiler. The thing is powered by fire. The heat simply converts water into steam that is directed into a cylinder where it



moves a piston that is attached to a series of gears that could do "work." The largest steam tractor I saw in Dearborn had wheels taller than dad, three feet wide to keep it from sinking. There was 10 foot ladder to climb up into the cab. The steering mechanism was constructed of a heavy, and I mean heavy, chain that twisted the front axle on a fixed point in the center of the axle. Amazing machines. Most of them were bought up during the hunt during WW II for metals to use in the war effort. Farm equipment was cut down on the spot and hauled off to smelters so most of these machines are gone. But they were the technology that bridged the gap between horses and internal combustion motors.

Two other vegetables that mom used occasionally grew around the privy, a fact that never bothered me. Horseradish and parsnips. I didn't care for the horseradish but found the long, narrow, tough leaves interesting to look at. Parsnips weren't really a favorite either, but I'd eat them if mom put them on the table. She peeled and boiled the roots. When they were soft, she mashed them with a fork and mixed in an egg, salt and pepper. Then she'd take a small mass of this stuff and roll it in a dish of cracker crumbs she made by lightly rolling a rolling pin over saltines. These soft patties were fried in a skillet until golden brown and served. It is odd that they were planted in that location and I don't understand why.



On the north side of the place behind the privy there was a small orchard and a berry patch with a few strawberries and raspberries. They didn't seem to thrive and I suspect that was because the patch was too far away from the irrigation ditch to get sufficient water.

The raspberry canes had long spines that hurt, especially the ones from last year's canes because the spines had hardened into sharp thorns. There weren't enough of either kind of berry for mom to make much jam so she got additional fruit for that purpose from relatives. What I liked about the berry patch was the clumps of small yellow flowers, a weed, that looked like buttercups. I had heard -in Raggedy Anne- that if you rub a butter cup under you chin -it had to be under your chin for some reason- it would leave a yellow streak. A lot of flowers probably would, but I didn't know that so I practiced with these small round flowers, trying to get them to make a yellow streak. They were also marshmallowy and sweet in the story but in reality they were sort of nasty. I thought that the fact that they didn't make a streak was because I didn't rub the right way. I crushed them under my chin and smelled like a plant. It never occurred to me that the story might be fiction, nor did it ever occur to me that these were not buttercups anyway. But what's a kid to do.

The orchard which was just east of the berry patch had several apple trees, an apricot tree, and a peach tree. We'd try to climb these trees but being short made it difficult because the first branches were too high off the ground. When the apples were ripening, we were limited to sampling windfalls on the ground. Dad sprayed the

apples so there were not many worms but we still checked our apples carefully for defects that revealed worms boarding inside. We'd eat the apple anyway if we liked it and were careful to spit out the worm if we happened to get it.

I did not like one of the apple at all, but it turned out to be grandma's favorite. It was called a "banana apple", and was a largish apple that was yellow in color. Those traits were fine. It was the texture that I didn't like, dry and mealy, instead of juicy and crunchy. But grandma loved them. It was like chewing moist saw dust.

The orchard was far enough away from the house, out there beyond the privy, the edge of my universe, that going into it was an adventure. It definitely was not like going out to pull a turnip or a carrot, nor was it like going across the street to see Norie. It was a foreign, exotic, shadowed, distant place where we were concealed. Populated with feral cats. That made the orchard an interesting place. Cats. I always loved cats.



Old man Johnson had a field on the south side of our place. It was in alfalfa and produced a wonderful smell when he cut it with his horse-drawn sickle bar and raked it with a horse-drawn rake. The old guy here is dressed pretty warm for the task with a vest so he must have lived somewhere that was colder than Vernal. But the steel wheels with teeth, sickle bar and dog are about right.

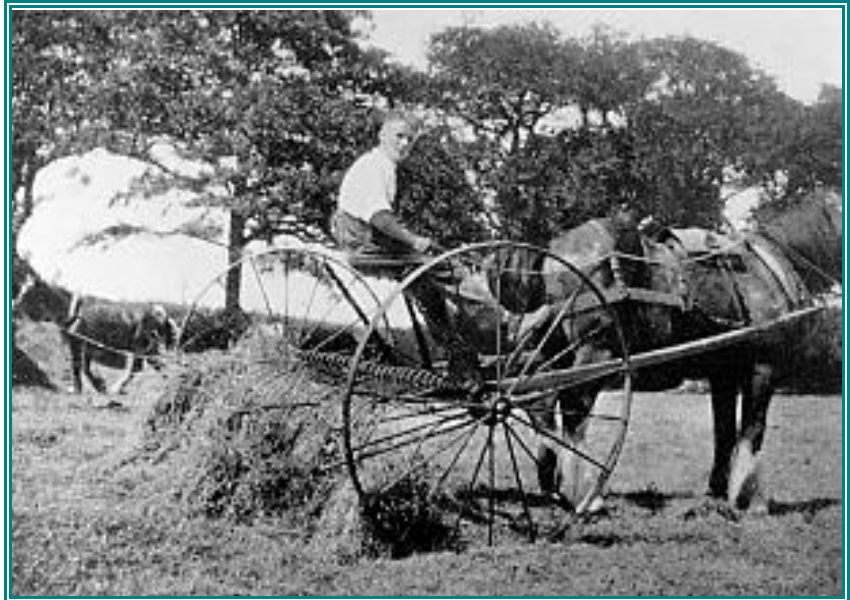
The sickle bar is the long diagonal bar that looks sort of like a comb, lying diagonally above the dog. This is the resting position. When the farmer wants to cut a swath, he moves the lever on his right which causes the bar to lift up in an arc toward the left of the picture, and finally lie down flat a few inches above and parallel with the ground. As the mower moves forward, the wheels turned and caused a series of gears attached to a small gear box in the axle to operate the sickle bar. As the hay was cut off at ground-level, it fell slowly in an arc like a wave moving across the field as the horse pulled the mower. Small animals or pheasant would bolt out of the field as the bar moved toward them.



If you look closely, you see that there is an angled blade on the left side of each of those longish teeth. That is the left half of a triangular shaped blade. When the sickle bar operates, those diamond shaped teeth move back and forth across the spaces between the long "teeth", and mow anything in their path, including birds, rabbits and snakes.

Hay doesn't just happen. It has to be made. The first step is to leave the alfalfa where it fell for a few days. If freshly-cut alfalfa is baled, it decays and molds because the

moisture content is too high and animals won't eat it. Hay can even mildew after it has been baled if it has not dried sufficiently. After a few days of drying in field, the farmer goes over the field with a hay rake. The rake turns the alfalfa upside down to expose the underside to the sun, and organizes it in rows across the field. Another period of time passes to allow it to dry more after which it will be re-raked if it needs to be turned over. Once the alfalfa is dry enough it is called "hay" and can now be hauled to a barn for storage or baled.



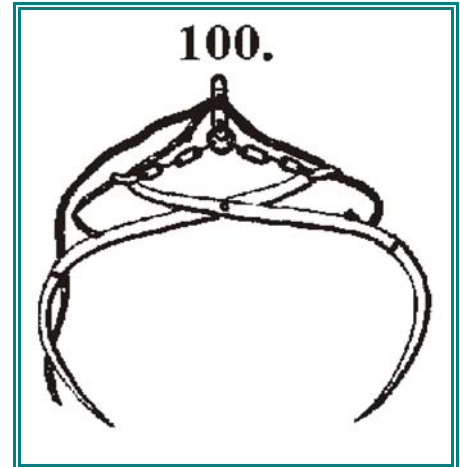
In this photo, the hay obviously wasn't baled. It is being loaded onto a hay



wagon. The wagon is pulled to a barn where it is pulled to a hay loft or stored in a haystack on the ground. The farm hand uses a pitchfork to pitch the dried hay from the field up onto the wagon. That's hot heavy heavy work. Pitching 30 pounds on the end of a long handle up over your head for 8-10 hours a day builds muscles and wears you out. Notice the size of this load.

The man on the top wasn't getting out of work. He had a critical job. He had to be sure that the hay was packed evenly across the wagon bed. He would direct the placement of the next pitchfork of hay to make sure that it was well distributed. If he stacked up too much on one side, it might slip off the wagon as it bounced over the inevitable ridges and ruts that were everywhere on the way to the barn or stackyard.

When the loaded wagon was back in the barn yard, one of several kinds of hay forks was used to put the hay into the barn for storage to protect it from the rain. One type was a frame that sat on the ground outside the barn with a long lever and pulley to lift portions of a load of hay from the wagon up into a barn into a hay loft. Another arrangement was to suspend this type of hay fork from a rafter inside the barn and lower it to the wagon to lift loads up into the loft. In Volume 2 Dad tells about hauling hay on his place.



**M**om did the washing once a week, every Saturday. It was another major project that took most of the day because most of the work wasn't mechanized. We were fortunate however in that we had an electric washing machine. It was constructed of a big round metal tub on long legs with casters that allowed it to be moved easily. Under the tub was a motor that turned the gear box that turned the agitator inside the tub. There was a lever to turn the agitator on and off. The motor in our washing machine was electrical but some of them were gasoline engines. In Alaska the Schafermeyers who lived 5 miles outside of town used a gas powered one. Either version was an advancement over the old washboard and tub of water that women previously used to do the washing, a tiring time-consuming process.

There were no clothes dryers because there was no natural gas, and electricity was just too expensive to justify using it to dry clothes when clotheslines or wooden laundry racks didn't cost anything to use. We had 5 clotheslines which were probably 30 feet long. They were spaced about 2 1/2 feet apart with one end fastened to the north side of the grainery. The other end was secured to a horizontal bar that was nailed across the tops of a pair of rough hairy-looking juniper logs that had been set into the ground and stiffened with guy wires on the ends and sides. The lines were set about 5 and a half feet off the ground which meant they were too high for us little kids to reach. Too bad. In Seward that wasn't a problem. Because the snow pack would build up under the lines, putting them at chin level, in which case we got to

go out and hang up the wet wash and take down the dry clothes.

The order in which clothes were washed wasn't random. The controlling factor was the rinse water. The idea was to do the whites and delicates first when the rinse water was fresh. The mixed colors were done next and finally darks were done last because the dirty rinse water didn't make much difference. The purpose of the rinse water was to remove soap, although blueing was used for the whites to make them appear whiter than they otherwise would be. The water in the washing machine was easily drained out a spigot into a bucket. It was carried to the kitchen sink where ran out on the ground. The tubs were harder to empty because the water had to be lifted out one dripping bucket at a time, heavy wet work. So only the washing machine water was changed frequently.

The freshly-washed clothes were taken out of the house in a basket or big dish pan which was set on the ground beneath the clothes lines. They were lifted a piece at a time out of the basket and shaken out. A small amount of fabric was folded over the line and clipped into place with a clothes pin. These pins came in two styles. One style was the long round kind with a slot cut into it, the kind that is used to make puppets, and the other kind was the newer spring-loaded pin that had two flat wooden pieces held together by a steel spring. Mom preferred the latter, probably because they could be opened wider than the round kind, and would not break like the round kind if it was forced over a piece of cloth too tight for the slot. We liked the latter because they could be taken apart and reassembled to make little guns that would shoot peas or small rocks. When hanging the wash out to dry, you worked from the end of one line systematically down it and across the lines. By the time you filled up the five lines, the clothes on the first line were dry if there was any breeze so you could start taking them down if you needed the space. Since washing was only done once a week, there were always lots of clothes to be washed. Taking in the clothes, as the process was called, was easier than hanging because the clothes were fluffy and dry. Unless you were in a hurry to go play, it was even sort of fun to do it. The two rules were: don't let them drop on the ground and don't lose the clothes pins.

Fabric softeners today come in various scents which are pleasant, but they do not compare to the smell of freshly washed clothes that have dried in the sun and breeze. It is an undescrivable smell that is comforting and refreshing. The loveliest moment of the week was to finish my Saturday night bath, put on clean underwear, a pair of freshly washed pajamas and climb into a bed just made up with freshly washed sheets.



**W**e ate a lot of oatmeal for breakfast, and lots of Cream of Wheat, but



mom also bought some prepared cereals. Kellogg's Corn Flakes were one of my favorites, especially the first few bites, with milk and lots of sugar and fresh cream. The Corn Flakes box always had alluring ads on the sides, pleading for you to spend some money on a new thing that every kid just had to have. I don't recall that I ever managed to gather the necessary quarter to mail a box top in to get the premium but I longed for them. I'd sit quietly at the table, alone in my world, reading the back of the box, again and again, imagining having the toy. While Dick did the same thing with a box of Wheaties or Cheerios.

The toy in this image are obviously related to WW II. That was not uncommon as I've explained before. WW II permeated our lives in every imaginable way.

The Kellogg company not-too subtly played on kid's fascination with military things to get them to spend a few cents on a



product. So that Kellogs can make more money. Note the hook:

**"You can actually talk through this and give commands like they do in the Army!"**

Astonishing, isn't it. But it was just fine with me at the time. The smiling kids are wearing helmets to further heighten our sense of involvement with things military.

The other commercial breakfast cereal mom purchased was Nabisco Shredded Wheat. We usually ate it by crushing the bale and pouring milk and sugar over it. But grandpa Merrell preferred to eat it with hot milk, a pat of butter and salt and pepper.

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**H**oney pot. Bet you've never used one. Know what it is? A chamber pot, the thing that was used in the house to pee or poop in - so you didn't have to go

out to the privy and freeze you heinie off at night. In the winter. In the absolute dark or snow. Some farm homes had nice enameled pots with handles that you used to carry them. We didn't. We just used a large old tin can, the large kind. Just as effective. Smell wasn't any worse. Imagine how those things smell when they sit in your bedroom. Especially if you don't take them out every day.

Well, we had the privilege to carry them out. Part of 'learning to work.' It was messy at best and when the pot was spilled, there was hell to pay. Since all of friends and family lived the same way, there was no sense of inferiority -around them. We knew we had nothing and that city people had lots of things, but we were healthy and clean and what more does a person really need.

Our privy was a two-seater out in the backyard far enough away from the well to not contaminate it. In the summer that was OK though the smell was not a pleasant one -though not an unpleasant one to a nose

used to it. Sears Roebuck or Montgomery Wards catalogs provided the toilet paper -and reading material when we closed the door. The catalogs were left on the seat to the side of the hole. While you sat, you could read to pass the time. The paper was slippery and didn't wipe too well, but to a kid who used corn husks out in a corral when an unexpected event happened, any paper was pretty good. At night when we had to relieve ourselves we used a number 10 can that sat in the corner of the bedroom. We'd empty it every day because it began to smell foul quickly.



### Sunday School without Shoes

There is an event that sheds some light on this business of town vs. country, on this painful sense of inferiority that we had out there on the farms. In the country during the summer we didn't wear shoes all the time. I don't know whether city kids did either but that wasn't important. As far as I was concerned, they did. One day I lost one of my shoes somewhere out there in the yard or across the road. We often our shoes off to wade in the purple clay marsh to investigate the pools of blackish-purple water that the dairy cows walked through, creating small tubes of black water that might hold something interesting. We'd wade and reach down into the black water, feeling for frogs or tad poles or anything. We also waded in the irrigation canal or pond, chasing frogs or water snakes. Shoes were in the way

so were set aside. And forgotten.

On this particular day, we lost our sense of time and location and when we went home, I didn't both of my shoes. That was it. Mom had had it. She reminded me that she had told us a dozen times to watch where we put our shoes and to be sure to bring them home because we didn't have money to buy new shoes just because a kid was lazy. I was told that I had to go back and look again, harder, and that if I didn't find it there would be severe punishment. I would have to go to Sunday School the next day without shoes. I went outside and I hunted earnestly everywhere. Walking again and again where I thought I'd walked, looking intently for the missing shoe. Tears came, hot and burning, so I could see well. Because I knew. I knew what was going to happen. Her punishments were sure and when the spell was cast, the deed was done as sure as the sun setting in the west each day.

I finally went home without my shoe, knowing that I would also get into trouble if I was out too long, even if I did find the shoe. You couldn't win. So I had my dinner, my Saturday night bath, and went to bed in agony, dreading getting up in the morning. In the morning I got up and had my breakfast, wishing there were some way to get really sick really fast, some way to get out of going to church in town without shoes. I was mortified. But there was no sickness or way to skip. Particularly since mom was going to teach me a lesson by humiliating me. She enjoyed it.

We went to church. I was embarrassed beyond words. Everyone else had shoes on, but I had to walk into the foyer and into the chapel with bare feet. I felt like everyone staring at me. Because I didn't have any shoes. There were a few pointed comments and observations, but it was more the unspoken sneer that bothered me. Little kids are mean to each other and this situation played on the idea of the "haves" and the "have-nots", the gap between town and farm.



You get the flavor of that life style. Simple, unadorned farm life. Under the tail end of the Great Depression. One of the technological changes that was overtaking rural America was "electrification". The process went on in some regions for decades after I left. While I was a kid in elementary school in Utah, i.e. about 1950, I vividly remember learning about something called the "TVA". I'd never encountered acronyms before so part of my response to "TVA" was fascination with the fact that an abbreviation made of letters could stand for something else, a complete name, in this case, the "Tennessee Valley Authority".

We were told -this is the really important thing- that the TVA was an example of "rural electrification" of America. I understood what "America" was and I understood "electricity" because we had it in our house, though the grainery didn't. I was surprised that anybody, i.e. "The government", cared about extending this miracle to "All" of America.

The concept of "government" was a new one. I could not really comprehend the notion of any kind of government, let alone the federal government. But I was impressed that it would actually care enough about me and my relatives to do this sort of thing. That was a powerful introduction to the concept of "government." I really didn't understand how it was able to do wonderful things for "people" but accepted what I was told. That was a far cry from the cynical view of politics I have today - justified it turns out.



I suppose it is because of this sort of introduction to the best of the federal government at an early age, that I still have faith in the system - against evidence to the contrary. I can't tell whether I'm a democrat or a republican. That's why I declare myself an independent. Groups of any kind make me nervous. Exclusionary and superior to outsiders.



**I**t was in 1951 that Mrs. Schofield gave me this particular book. I was reading everything in sight and was bored and hungry for a reading challenge. I was such a good reader that she'd assign me to take a kid out in the hallway with chairs and a book so I could coach him. It embarrassed me that he needed help, not that I felt superior. I just felt bad for him and wished he'd just pay a little attention remembering the shapes of the letters and their sounds. During reading period while the other kids were struggling to read aloud for her, I was sneaking peeks inside my desk at anything else to look at, art, anything. Because it was so tiring to hear the kids made the same silly mistakes that Mrs. Schofield patiently corrected. The woman was a saint.

Mrs. Schofield saw my boredom and as she cast about for something for me to

do, she decided to give me what I now understand to be a "desk copy" of a new book she must have been dropped off by a salesman in the hopes she would like it and buy it for the school. At the time I just knew it was the only copy she had so to be careful with it. Ms. Schofield had shown us how to open a new book so that we didn't break the spine. I did that. Laying it on the desk on the spine, holding all of the pages vertically, carefully laying the front and back covers on the desk, running a finger down the spine to loosen the joint on each cover, repeating that action with bunches of 5 or 6 pages alternating the back and the front until all pages had been creased.

Then I started to read. The concept of government involvement in farm life came through somehow. This time it came across as both beneficial as well as intrusive. It was a depressing book and I don't know exactly why. One thing that was depressing was the new concept of erosion. I'd never heard the word before. Sort of an ugly sound. It made me worry about how my relatives plowed their furrows on the hills in their fields. Erosion. A new word accompanied by drawings of the destruction of whole fields where water had eaten away the dirt, making gullies too wide for tractors to cross, a young sad boy looking at the devastation.

The book gave an accurate representation of how furrows ought to circle hills in horizontal lines to prevent water from flooding down and carrying the soil away. I looked at my relatives' fields and could see that they weren't really doing it "right". So I was troubled. I loved my family and was defensive of them. Yet the scientific presentation of facts was equally compelling. I was bothered and depressed about the prospect of my uncles' fields being ruined and their families losing their livelihood. The consolation was that most of their fields were generally flat.

That was my first contact with crusading text books wherein do-gooders proselyte the young to a new vision of the world. Not necessarily accurately or fairly. But effectively. That brain-washing bugs me. Educators in particular bug the heck out of me because they have taken to themselves the role that belongs solely to parents: the inculcation of values and they reject parental involvement. Of course, they can get away with it because most parents have abdicated the responsibility. But it still bugs me.

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**A**nother example of the influence of the depression on our view of the universe is Grandma Merrill's view of employment. She had 12 children, 11 of whom made it to adulthood, a miracle of sorts in those days. I remember her talking to one or another family member after not having spoken with them for some period of time. After the initial civilities were passed, she said with great

satisfaction "Everyone has a job." It didn't matter what the job was, cleaning out stables was as important to her view of life as being a bank president. Everyone had jobs, what a thrill, so everyone had income so no one was reliant of government or church welfare for help. Isn't that an interesting point of view? Can you feel how she felt? We all have jobs today and can change them at will. Just look in the Employment Classifieds each Sunday. Thousands of jobs begging for bodies to fill them.

I thought her excitement was sort of extreme. Of course everyone had jobs. I didn't grasp at the time that her statement was a reflection of the difficult times they went through in the late 20's and 30's. I understand today with tears in my eyes. Those were terrible years to raise a family I guess. My heart clutches today when I replay the memory her poignant, excited statement, "Everyone has a job!" Wow. What did I do to deserve the extravagance I have enjoyed.



**M**an alive, this thing was magic. The pictures were three dimensional though I didn't know the term. The images looked like "real", standing there in front of your eyes in this little plastic things. I felt like I could walk out into them. Wheels of cardboard with tiny colored pictures placed evenly around the outside. I must have been 7 when I got one for Christmas with some reels. They were simply the newest version of the devices that had been produced years before to create that 3-D image.



Figure 66 <http://theimaginaryworld.com/pre224.jpg>

Of the dozen or so reels I collected before moving to Seward, the one I remember best is the one about Alaska. That was where dad was, that was where mom and dad got married. The images were beautiful. A view from the stern of a steamer on the ocean was dramatic. Wide white wake against a stormy gray storm sky. And a thunderbird totem.. Severe and threatening it was, staring back at me, in

its bright colors and precisely carved geometry.



In our tiny universe of two acres, there was a host of cowboys watching over us. They influenced our world, how we played, what we wanted to buy, what we dreamed of doing. One of these cowboys is unfamiliar to you, Range Ryder, but he was a live and kicking out there on the Ashton Place when I was a kid. He doesn't look too tough here, tending to a pair of irresistible kittens. I don't know if his name is associated with the Red Ryder BB guns but it may have been.

Note the familiar things in this image that reflect farm life. The hay. The milk bucket. The leather gloves. The hat. The kittens. Familiar like he was out in Grandpa Merrell's place.



John and Nora lived in a white house across the road from us. They were more like grandparents than neighbors. I trusted them and liked them and felt welcomed when I visited. Our dusty driveways were straight across from each other so it was a quick trip to go visit them. The rule was "Stop, stand still, and look carefully both ways before crossing." If mom saw us just run across without stopping and looking, there would be hell to pay later. No slack was granted for excitement or kid-ness. The irrigation canal also ran straight along our properties, on the south side of the drives, crossing under the road through a culvert. The water flowed east from a large canal past the end of John's property, one with a concrete and steel headgate. We'd go visit them when we were bored. Nora would offer us a cookie sometimes but she knew that mom didn't want us "to spoil our appetites" so didn't do that without permission. John usually wasn't in the house because he was out taking care of his hay and cattle.

It was a nice country house, narrow and tall, the first place I remember the nice smell of tobacco and coffee. Wonderful comfortable smells really. In

retrospect it is interesting to note that in spite of its smallness and ruralness, the house stoutly maintained a formality and deference to social etiquette that you would not expect to find. In those days all houses had a front porch with an overhanging roof line so that guests at the door would be spared rain or snow while they waited for the door to be answered. This house was no different. But the front door was never used by us. We used the door on the south side of the house out by the kitchen in the back yard. That's where friends and relatives went when they visited. Important visitors like a pastor or politician would stand at the front door and rap sharply and wait for it to be answered by Nora, who stood there nervously drying her freshly washed hands on a dish towel while she dabbed at her hair-netted hair to be more presentable to the formal visitor - who probably didn't care about how she looked but his point of view was of no interest to her.

The reason the front door wasn't used was because it opened into the parlor, a real old-fashioned parlor - "parler" is the french word for "to talk"- where adults would sit around and be formal and chew the fat. It was not a comfortable room, a room where you'd make yourself to home. Nope, it was a place for formality. Along the wall opposite the front door sat a black horsehair couch covered with real horse hair because it was covered by a real horse hide. The hair felt strange, sort of slippery. Like you needed a saddle. Over the front door hung a stuffed buffalo head, the first one I ever saw. Its eyes were the most interesting part because they looked real. I'd never seen glass eyes before and was impressed at their verisimilitude. Sort of scary really. When I heard about men wearing glass eyes, I thought about the buffalo eyes. We could see into the parlor from the kitchen but were not allowed to go into it. Just looked through the kitchen door and wondered at what we saw. The idea of not being allowed to go in wasn't bothersome. Our own living and dining rooms were off-limits, too, though we would venture into them for specific purposes, i.e. assignments from mom. Mom's reason for keeping us out of the rooms was doubtless cleanliness. If we were in there, there would be a mess to clean up and she didn't want to have to do any more work than necessary so she kept us out of those two rooms. We spent our time in the house in two rooms, our own bedroom and the kitchen. Looking back I see that I had no sense of being denied space, of being confined, yet I was. Two small rooms isn't much space to play in so we spent a great deal of time outside in the yard.



I've got to tell you about homemade cigarettes, a specialty of Ol' John Watkins, my first encounter with sin and iniquity. Pretty fascinating after all. We were allowed to



call John and Nora by their first names, an odd bit of egalitarianism that didn't quite match mom's stern formality in other settings, but that was OK with me.

Above all else, John was a cowboy, a dyed in the wool, homegrown, bowlegged, crusty, kind, old cowboy. Always in Levi shirt and pants, bowlegged like he could just slide over a horse. With cowboy boots, sometimes covered with you know what from the corral. A cowboy hat on his head, and a smile on his face. A nice man. Smelling pungently of horses, hay and tobacco.

His left shirt pocket bulged. Hanging out from under the buttoned flap was a short yellow string with a white medallion on the end the size of a quarter. Always. That was as much a part of John as his levis, boots and hat. The bulge was caused by one of the packages you see here, a Bull Durham cloth sack filled with chopped tobacco, marketed in precisely this configuration. The red paper strap around each sack was a tax seal and the orange package that was slipped under the tax seal held white cigarette papers.

When John figured it was time to light up, he'd find himself a place to sit or a fence to lean up against. This was a major production, requiring undivided attention, lest a wind or shake undo his handiwork. He'd unbutton his left shirt pocket with his left hand and pull out the pouch. From the orange pad he'd separate one cigarette paper and return the orange pad to its place under the red seal. Then he'd work the mouth of the pouch open a bit, not all the way open. While he held the paper carefully between his middle finger and thumb, wrapped around his index finger to make an open trough, he'd carefully sprinkle tobacco from the pouch with his right hand from one end to the other. Once he was satisfied with the quantity of tobacco in the paper, he'd hold the pouch up to his mouth. He'd take one of the yellow strings in his yellow teeth and pull the pouch away from his mouth to tighten it, and repeat the process with the other string. After the mouth of the pouch was tightly sealed, he'd reach over his chest and put the pouch back in his shirt pocket.

All this time he was carefully holding the cupped paper in his left hand, not spilling a fleck of tobacco. Now he'd take the paper on both ends and arrange the tobacco smoothly from end to end by tapping it with his right index finger to evenly distribute it. When he was satisfied, he'd run his tongue along the full length of one



side of the paper and fold it over the tobacco and press the other dry side down on the wet edge. They glued together. Then he'd sort of tap one end of the thing against his thumb to compact the tobacco flakes so they didn't fall out. Now was the time to light it. He'd fumble in his pocket shirt for a safety match, lift his right leg and with a vigorous flourish quickly rub the match head on his levis from his hip to his knee at which point it would ignite. I marveled at that technique wondering if he'd ever burn himself but he never did. Then he's put it to the cigarette, light it, start breathing smoke and be contented. Breathing smoke from a leaf fire seemed uninviting but I was intrigued by the ritual. To this day, I have still not tried to smoke a cigarette. Mom was effective.

There may have been other brands of tobacco marketed for the do-it-yourselfers but the only one I was aware of was Bull Durham. These ad were all over the place, the ends of barns, sign posts and so on.



**N**ora had a flock of chickens that she tended for fun and profit, the profit coming mostly from the eggs, though she'd also sell a fryer if asked. She had a large enough flock that there were several dozen surplus eggs a week. Ladies from town would come out to her place to get them. Some women insisted on the brown ones. There were people -as there apparently are today- who believed that there was a tangible difference between white eggs and brown eggs. I never understood what this difference was, but being a mere kid who didn't understand many things anyway, I assumed that the problem in not understanding was simply a defect in my own understanding. Nor did I know which kind of chicken lays which color of egg but she had both kinds, i.e. Rhode Island Reds, or whatever was out there. Norie even had guinea fowl, the darndest things. They mixed well with real

chickens but they were so funny looking, with their dark mottled plumage that I never quite got used to them.

Before Nora would put together her dozens of eggs, she would carefully "candle" them. This is simply a process of shining a light through the eggs in a dark room to illuminate the shape of things inside the egg. The shape of the yolk was diagnostic and if there was something wrong with the egg, i.e. it was spoiled, she could tell it and would discard the egg rather than sell it and lose a customer.

There was always more demand for her brown eggs than there were brown eggs. It wouldn't do to have the city lady appear for a dozen brown eggs and find only 10. These ladies would not accept white eggs in lieu because their cake recipes called for BROWN eggs. So Nora, being a practical shrewd operator would give nature a hand. She had figured out through taste tests that a white egg tasted just like a brown egg. They mixed in recipes just like brown eggs, and so on. So when she was short a few brown eggs, she would do a sort of Easter Egg Dye job on enough whites to fill up her dozens. She'd sit them in a pot of coffee for 4 or 5 minutes until they had a nice tannish color. Then humming to herself, she'd rinse them in clear water to remove the smell of coffee, dry them carefully and finish out her dozens. I don't know that she ever got complaints from the city ladies about being given counterfeit browns.



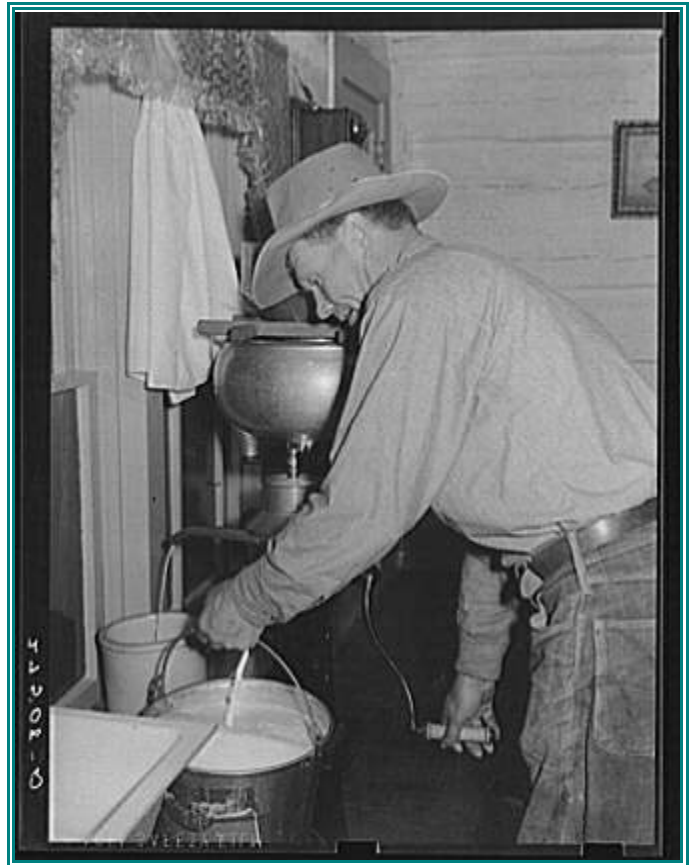


The funnest time to visit the Watkins was in the morning or evening just after John had milked his cows. By hand. After he had finished milking, he's carry the milk pails back to the kitchen which was on the back of the house. He'd strain the milk through cheese cloth if he wanted to help Norie that morning. This process did nothing except strain out the large pieces of dirt and straw that had fallen into the bucket in spite of the milker's careful handling of the milk and the cow.

In this photo the lady looks like Nora. The milk in the bucket has already been strained through a cloth and now is being poured through a metal funnel to get it into the bottle. After the straining was done, the milk was not processed further. It was ready to drink as it was. Period. Even refrigeration was not common and pasteurization was not practiced on farms. We liked drinking the milk straight from the cow. We'd hand the milker a clean cup and he'd fill it with milk and hand it back.



John and Nora had enough milk to make it worthwhile to buy a cream separator. It was not electrically powered so if we arrived at the right time, Nora would let us turn the crank that processed the milk. The process always fascinated me. A bucket of milk was poured into the wide reservoir on top. As the crank was turned, the milk flowed down into the works where the cream was separated from the plain milk, apparently in a centrifuge. To my mind milk and cream were both pretty much the same thing so the fact that this machine could separate them was sort of a miracle. I was a simple kid, always being impressed at the bits of magic around me.



Turning the crank required minimal strength if you didn't push too hard, and produced a wonderful whirring grinding sound. As the milk was separated, the cream flowed in a tiny trickle out one tube and the milk flowed out another. In this photo the large bucket in the front of the machine collected the separated milk. The white crock on the left catches the cream.



One of the funnest things that has disappeared from the side of the road is the Burma Shave signs. We watched for them during the long boring trips we took. Mom would point out the first sign when she saw it from the front seat, after which we'd read them out loud as we reached each one.

The company came up with the idea of creating jingles about their products and then placing them along side the roads of the country. The verses were 6 lines long so six different signs were created, with a single line on each. These signs were stuck into the ground like political signs about a quarter mile apart. So when you drove along the road, you'd see the first sign and know you were in for five more

signs. We loved to read them. Here are a few of the verses from <http://www.fiftiesweb.com/burma1.htm>. Imagine you have been riding for an hour in the car and are reading them one line at a time as you drive down the road:

<p>The ladies Take one whiff And purr-- It's no wonder Men prefer Burma-Shave Lotion</p>	<p>Use Burma-Shave In tube Or jar Then follow up With our new star Burma-Shave Lotion</p>	<p>He tried To cross As fast train neared Death didn't draft him He volunteered Burma-Shave</p>
<p>The whale Put Jonah Down the hatch But coughed him up Because he scratched Burma-Shave</p>	<p>To kiss A mug That's like a cactus Takes more nerve Than it does practice Burma-Shave</p>	<p>If your peach Keeps out Of reach Better practice What we preach Burma-Shave</p>

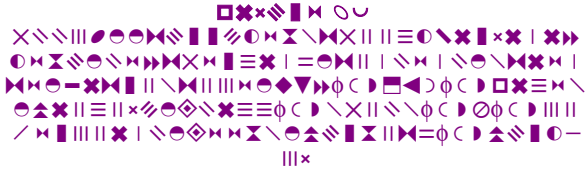


Cockleburs grew freely in the untended part of pastures and yards, along fence lines and along ditches. Mid-summer the 3 foot tall plants were green and soft, with two kinds of flowers on each, male and female. The hot dry days of July and August and September cured these plants. They died and their fruits became nasty inch-long, porcupine seeds that fell to the ground. Barefootedness became hazardous because the spines were like short nails. The worst spines were the two that stuck out of the narrow flower-end. Spikes that would dig into anything soft.



This kind of burr clung to anything that had hair, like dogs, cats or cattle. Chickens and snakes were immune. An occasional burr wasn't a problem to a creature unless it became lodged in the shoulder area between the front leg and chest. Those had to be cut out with scissors because they caused ulcers in the poor animals.

Burdock burrs were as pesky because they grew equally well in the hot dry climate. The difference between them was profound however because the burdock never developed the iron-hard, spiny seed pod. The short hairs fringing these burrs remained like soft hair, each having a hook that grasped hair or fabric. They pulled easily off the plant and buried themselves in a cat's fur, making a ball that was impossible to remove except with scissors.



Burdock burrs were a ready-made erector set. They could be hung together like velcro fasteners to form long strings or balls. Their size was too large to make fine details but they were fun to play with, sitting in the hot sun, listless, whiling away the time, wondering why these plants produced burrs.



Fence lines were like experimental gardens, sources for a wide variety of plants that didn't survive out in the pastures, gardens and alfalfa fields, including the Scotch Thistle. The name intrigued me. Why was it called "Scotch"? My mom was part Scotch. Was that the same "Scotch"? I never heard an answer to my question. But I loved the plant. Mom and dad didn't because it was noxious weed to them, a source of work and irritation. It was a hazard to livestock as well because it had hasty thorns.



To me, it was a lovely flower. The swollen buds were lined with geometrically perfect rows of short spikes. The bud erupted and produced a dense purplish tuft of fine hairlike strands that crowned the bulb. Its loveliness wasn't matched by its nature. Touch the thing and you'd discover that the entire plant was armed with hard sharp spines, waiting to stab.

The oddest thing about these deceptive plants was that horses loved to eat the flowers. How they could manage that without injuring their mouths was a mystery. I couldn't even pick the flower without hurting my fingers.



## Making butter

Grandma had a churn that made butter out of cream. Making butter was another of those magic tricks. My childhood was filled with magic. Such an extraordinary world to awake in. How could whitish thick liquid turn into hard yellow butter?

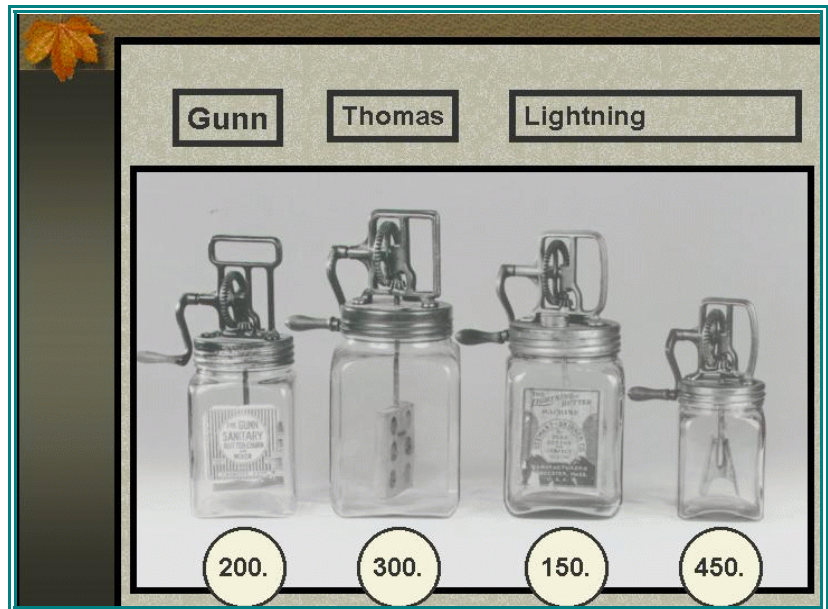
Her churn was a square glass bottle like these and held about a gallon of cream. The metal lid was about 6 inches across and was constructed with a superstructure that looked like the handle with the gears of an egg-beater. Basically the same design. There was a grip to secure the thing on the table with one hand, while the other hand turned the handle.

This rotated a pair of shafts like in an egg beater. With the difference that in the

churn, there was a flat paddle on the end of each shaft instead of a whisk. These small wooden paddles were canted slightly. When the shafts rotated counter to each other, the paddles set up powerful current stirring the cream. Beating it.

So why does this magic work? There is a prosaic explanation. That I didn't know. Cream is sort of an emulsion, i.e. a mixture of a fat and a thinner liquid, where the two are mixed together such that they never really separate out into distinct layers. That's not exactly accurate so don't be too critical here. The cream particles, i.e. little globs of fat, remain separate from each other even though they aggregate in a uniform layer on top of the milk because the microscopic-sized fat globules are lighter than milk. They rise like pieces of wood in water. Overnight a layer of cream forms. But while they aggregate, these tiny particles never join hands. They remain separate from each other.

However -and here's the key to making butter from cream- if the fat globules are spanked and smacked into each other, they start clumping into larger and larger masses. Two globules become one and pick up another globule and so on. This process



requires physical spanking of the globules. Shaking will not really do the job. With enough spanking -which can be a long time I can testify- eventually all of the fat molecules are squashed together into a mass of butter sitting in a puddle of true butter milk, a watery, thin, whitish, not-very-good-tasting liquid. The stuff you know in the supermarket as "butter milk" is a counterfeit. It doesn't even resemble real buttermilk, this thin, watery, tasteless stuff. Actually, what you call buttermilk is markedly superior. It is the metabolic byproduct of a jillion bacteria that have had a grand time in a tub of milk. This thickish sticky residue of their housekeeping endeavors is packaged and sold in the supermarket as "butter milk". Ha. But it is wonderful stuff.

The process of spanking the fat globules is hard work, so churning was a contribution kids could make to the household. It saved the grand/mother time so they could do other things. The funny thing is each of us kids always wanted to be the one to turn the crank on grandma's churn. Like we had forgotten what happened last time. We'd argue about who got to turn the crank while she was getting ready, pouring the cream she had collected over several days into the churn. It didn't take too much churning before we got tired and wanted to go play so we gave up to the next kid. Grandma would coax us to stay and suggested we take turns so our arms didn't get so tired. Eventually, one of us would sort of sneak out the backdoor when she wasn't watching -we thought. It was fun to start but was tiring.

After the butter was made, the butter milk -whey- was poured out and the butter was scraped out. Grandma usually poured the buttermilk into the slop bucket outside the backdoor for the hogs who loved the stuff. We could drink it if we wanted but most of us didn't. The butter was sprinkled with salt and paddled into the shape of a ball with wooden paddles made for the purpose. Then it was put in the ice box or the refrigerator, or just set outside in the winter. That was how butter came into being, a prized substance that farmers insisted is the only stuff to put on bread and cook with.

Which put them on a collision course with whoever was the driving force behind newfangled margarine. Oleomargarine. Napoleon Bonaparte encouraged the development of a butter substitute for his army. Farmers knew that this counterfeit not only didn't taste right, but that it was hazardous to our health. Butter built stronger bodies. 32 states enacted laws banning the stuff, and Wisconsin didn't lift that ban until 1967. Grandpa sold it in his store though he probably took some heat from the farmers who frequented the place. Naples was nothing but farms so he doubtless has some resistance from his neighbors, but he made a few cents so sold it.

The packages were designed to reinforce you the buyer's mind the fact that the stuff was artificial, hence not to be relied on. The package consisted of a pound-size plastic bag that was filled with a white substance that looked like lard or shortening, which is probably about what it was. An inch long capsule of dark orange colored dye was inside the package. The capsule, probably hard plastic, had to be broken open at which point the dye leaked out into the margarine. The fun was kneading and squeezing the package to spread and mix the dye into the white stuff. Once the dye was mixed, the plastic package was cut open and the margarine was squeezed out on a plate.



Figure 77

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/state/wis150/stories/0226sesq.stm>

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These things were all over in the country. Chickens. Most chickens were confined to chicken coops but others just roamed. You weren't surprised to see them in any road or yard. Roosters were vividly present, strutting around like soldiers, shimmering in the sunlight, trumpeting their incessant chatter. Stupidly looking you in the eye. With their twitching head. Morning always opened with roosters crowing. They do wake everything up because they are so loud and persistent so early. We were told to never chase hens because that would make their eggs have bloody streaks in them.

The sole objective of chickens was to eat. That's it. They looked for food incessantly, insects, grain and seeds or other bits of stuff that they would ingest. Their heads bobbing in time to the walking looked sort of stupid -because they were stupid. Never nice, always indifferent. Grandpa bought crushed oyster shells to provide calcium for the eggshells. The crushed shell came in 25 or 50 pound burlap bags that grandpa would carefully open. Then he would broadcast the shimmering

fragments by hand around the yard or the corral.

In the spring grandma would order chicks for the next crop of chickens. They came through the US Mail in wide flat boxes, peeping and scratching. I obviously didn't pay much attention to how long they were in transit or how they were fed and watered and kept warm during transit, but these peeping boxes arrived with dozens of chicks. They were transferred into specially designed incubators, smallish enclosures that were covered with a metal umbrella, food and water. It was warmed by electrical light bulbs. The feed was mash, a coarse powder made of crushed corn and grains and was served in long metal troughs that the dumb birds would walk in and soil. Water was dispensed in a water bottle inverted into a shallow tin pan that they could drink from.

Chicken yards -for bigger chickens- looked like this:



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Note again that the woman is in a dress. To feed the chickens, to garden, to do most things. Slacks and levis weren't generally worn by the genteel country woman or housewife. Only on hunting or fishing trips were they "permitted" to wear slacks, but even then they didn't always.

There were two reasons to have chickens and both of them involved the

kitchen table. One was so that we would have meat now and then, and the other was so that there would be eggs. Otherwise they are messy dirty animals that you wouldn't want to put up with. Except they make it worth your while to deal with them because they fed you.

Hens lived in a hen house with nest boxes. These were rows of "cubbies" outfitted with a mass of straw to make the chickens think they were in a nest so they would start to lay eggs. This image shows one row. In a hen house, this row was repeated in 5 or 6 layers so 2 dozen hens could be sitting and laying at the same time. That was the strategy and it worked well for most hens. When you were sent out to get the eggs, you went to this hen house and had to check each one of those boxes for eggs. If you left them a few days, they would spoil so all boxes had to be checked every day. In some cases, a hen would be pretty nasty so we'd scare her away. If she was really mean, we'd tell grandma who would go out and shoo the hen away to check for old eggs.



When there was a problem getting a hen to lay, grandma had several 'nest eggs' that she would use. These are the source of the term "nest egg" you hear used in reference to saving a bit of money as a starter for an account for something. Most of these nest eggs were made out of wood, shaped like chicken eggs. These were put into the brood box for the particular chicken in need of encouragement. The pressure of the eggs would stimulate the chicken to start laying eggs. That made sense to me because I could see the nest eggs, the chicken could see the nest eggs, and they looked like chicken eggs, ergo the chicken would try to make more - though I didn't have a clue why that would be so.



The problem for me was when grandma put clear glass nest eggs into the brood box. To me, the fact that they weren't visible and they didn't look like chicken eggs, i.e. they were not white rather were clear, seemed to me reasons that the chicken should ignore them. But they didn't. They weren't that smart. The clear glass eggs worked as well as the white wooden ones. Chickens are really stupid I decided. It

was obviously the pressure and shape of the device that affected them.



The irrigation ditch ran across the road from Watkins' place to ours, through a culvert buried under the road. It sits at the bottom right of the diagram of the lot. On our side of the road there was a small pond where the water came out of the culvert. The pond was round, about 10 feet across. In the center it was 2 to 3 feet deep which is fearfully deep to a 6 year old kid.

The culvert was a simple tube of corrugated galvanized steel about 18 inches in diameter. It was a source of delight and fear. The fear stemmed from the odd notion that I might get stuck in it, and that as a result I would drown. Why I would have that fear is a mystery. The only way I would ever have gotten into the culvert, particularly since the flow was out and toward me -we were forbidden to cross the road- would have been if I intentionally climbed into it. That was not likely. But I still had shivers of that fear when I leaned down on purpose on the road on my belly, my head near the cool water, and looked back into and through the culvert. I could see the small distant half-circle of light at Watkins' end where the water flowed in. The inside was dark compared to the outside, yet there was plenty of light to see what was there. Mossy accumulations waving in the current at the margin of the water, odd pieces of grass dried onto the upper culvert surface.

The water flowed rapidly inside the culvert because it was so narrow. This fact, plus the corrugation of the culvert, rippled the surface of the water as it flowed. In the late afternoon the sun shown almost directly into the culvert because it was lined up east-west. At that point, when the sunlight entered directly, the culvert became a shimmering tube. Dappled shadows and highlights reflected onto the top of the inside of the culvert when the light reflected off the ripples. Lighting up my own face with flecks of light.

In those days there were only true sounds, sounds made by real objects in real time. No synthesizers, no vocoders, no artificial, processed sounds. Les Paul wouldn't appear for 5 or 6 years. But this tube was magical. As the shape of the tube and the ripples on the surface of the moving water interacted, the small shout of the little kid into this tube over the flowing water was mysteriously transformed. The sound inside of the culvert wavered and echoed and multiplied into a large fuzzy warbling voice out the other end. "Hello!" "Hi there!" "Hey you!" Again and again for the pure joy of hearing the magic of the tube. "Hey there!"

Through the center of this pond the water flowed rapidly, creating small eddies and back-currents in the shallower water on either side of the pond. Water plants and short rushes grew at the edges of the pond, providing habitats for an assortment of insects, some that lived on the surface and others in the water. Water snakes and frogs hung out in the pond, feeding on the insects. The snakes weren't large but something about their slithery movement and their staring countenance made me nervous about them. I would pick them up gingerly, but I was nervous about them. We were told that if they bit, we could get sick but that was the extent of the injury they could do. I never experienced it.

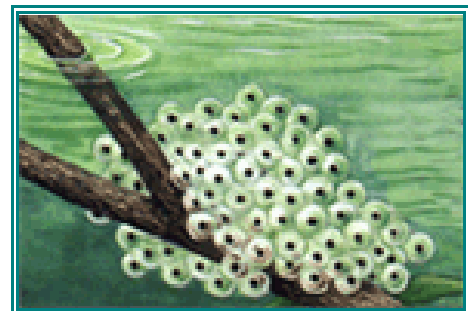


Spiders abounded and hung their curtains of lace on the rushes, collecting flies and other critturs not paying attention. The maple-leafy, funny smelling box elder tree hanging above the pond provided the spiders a steady if boring supply of fodder. We'd see the dried carcasses of dramatic black and orange box elder bugs suspended mid-air, swathed in spider webbing.



The aquatic insects slipped smoothly through the water in short bursts. Some of the small ones rose quickly from the bottom to the surface, immersed in bubbles of glistening, refracting air that was exchanged at the surface. Then the bug swam frantically back to the bottom to avoid predators in the form of fish or frogs.

In the spring, with the seriousness and dedication of earnest scientists, we'd hunt for frog eggs that were abundant in the area. This cluster is on a branch but most of the ones we found were on rushes or reeds or underwater parts of plants, always in shallow water near the shore so that the fast current wouldn't wash them away. They reminded me of the large tapioca that dad would



cook on rare occasions with the difference that these gelatinous masses each had a black spot. This black spot evolved over a few weeks into tiny curls and finally into tadpoles with transparent engine rooms.

Tadpoles are as astonishing as caterpillars: they both undergo the most astonishing transformation I could imagine, turning into adults that look completely different than the juvenile form. But in contrast to the caterpillar, we would actually watch the changes a day at a time. Tail dissolving, turning into a stump and finally disappearing. Most wonderful was the development of legs on these little tissue balloons, the forelegs appearing first. We discovered through experimentation that the hidden hind legs of a polliwog can sometimes be forcibly popped out by squeezing the abdomen.



The frogs that inhabited this small irrigation pond were the snazzy sleek competition models, the leopard frogs [*Rana pipiens*]. Long and skinny and shiny and as fast as anything in the pond. They folded up tightly and unleashed startling jumps with their black eyes shining straight at you when they went. In the water they'd shield those eyes with clear water hoods to protect them from dirt and injury. Their speckles were a marvel to behold, sort of an oriental pattern they adopted to show off I suppose. When you crept along the edge of a pond hoping not to disturb the frogs, you concentrated. So much so that when one of them unleashed a noisy jump into the water like they always did, you were startled. You swore you wouldn't be, but you usually were. They were difficult to catch.



A large football-shaped brown beetle called a "water boatman" scoured the bottom for small creatures to eat. They were an inch or more long, and swam quickly to the surface to





take a breath and then paddled down again. They swam leisurely, unless disturbed, with rhythmic rowing of large paddle-shaped hind legs. They had long beaks that inflicted a painful bite so we left them alone but we longed to capture on. To show dad.

We always hunted for bull frogs in the pond, because children really don't comprehend the uniqueness of habitats outfitted for each creature. Bull frogs were not even found in the purple-black odoriferous marsh on the other side of the Chevron tanks. These magnificent gigantic creatures were only available for review up at the "crik" several hundred yards north of us and that was absolutely off-limits for our explorations. Faster moving, large stream. So when we saw one of these large creatures anywhere, we



nearly wet our pants. Such amazing creatures compared to the *rana pipiens* that were so common in our yard. These huge guys had long toes and a sort of warty hide in contrast to the smooth leopard frogs and their eyes were enormous. Different than the leopard frog's eyes. Their voices were like drums in the night.

Small brown snails foraged for slime algae on the stems of reeds and water plants. Their shells were nearly translucent so their inner parts were partially visible. Small empty shells were scattered on the dry bank of the pond, a testament to their inability to live out of the water. They could live outside of the water so could be found on rocks as well as under water on weeds.



Whirligigs shined in the sunshine like bits of tinfoil. Darting quickly around the pond, up and down. They seemed to never tire. And never seemed to have any direction. Just movement. Frantic and sparkling. The

front end looked like the back end except that the head end did have a flatness. The relentless energy was dizzying. They never stopped.

The loveliest insect was the water skipper. They avoided the currents, skating lazily around the margins of the pond on its surface in squadrons of 2 or 3. Four long legs extended like outriggers, final flat joint resting on tiny mounds of surface tension. Like hydrofoils. They never swam very far though they could accelerate rapidly to avoid danger. And could jump straight up into the air. We herded them like cattle by the wave of our hand. And occasionally trapped them in quart jars. Picking them up was an education. The legs unexpectedly folded up along the body so they looked like short gray sticks. The hardness was surprising, like wood. The miracle of a bug that size floating on the surface still amazes me. I didn't understand about surface tension.



Living out in the country like we did was like living in an enormous laboratory. We spent much time alone so watched everything around us that was interesting. We became familiar with all bugs and amphibians in the area and collected many of them. Our two acre farm with the irrigation ditch and small pond was an excellent place to become a naturalist, although we have never heard the term. We were just "playing".

## Gene Autry

Gene Autry was in the background of my life and my play. With Dickie, with Tommy. We played cowboys and Indians and this man is one of the famous movie star cowboys that inspired us. He was one of the good guys and wore a white hat. The sign of the good guys.

The mountains here look like the Uintahs. I think that the background and the fact of horses made cowboys familiar and friendly and appealing. These guys could be my uncles out there taking care of things. We had cap guns and pretended to be tough, catching cattle rustlers and bad guys.

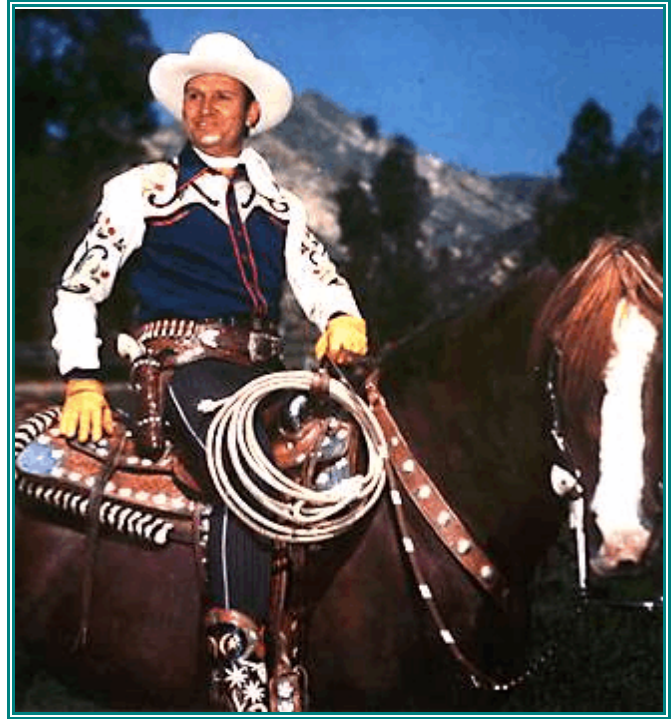


Figure 91 Gene Autry  
<http://www.fiftiesweb.com/western.htm>

## The Ditchrider

Our two acres were bounded on the south side from end to end by a small irrigation ditch that flowed toward the east, though there were only pastures -not crops- as far as I could see in that direction. Water in the desert is a very big deal and if you haven't lived that way, it's difficult to imagine the tension that goes with the management of water.

Irrigation systems cost money to build so water associations were formed to generate the necessary capital. Farmers would buy "shares" of water based on their needs, paying whatever the standard rate was for a share of water. Someone in the association would laboriously set up a calendar that displayed all the farmers with their shares of water. On paper, a share of water was probably a certain volume of water expressed in acre-feet or some arcane measure. But that figure had to be converted into reality. It was converted into the number of hours it would take for a share of water to flow into a farmer's property. The association didn't care what he did with it once he had the flow of water. Just so he didn't keep the flow beyond the allotted time. The calendar showed the day of the week and the time of day -

morning, day, or night- and how many hours that each farmer got the water. Water flowed during the night, too, so shifts were assigned around the clock, midnight for 4 hours, it might be 2 p.m. for 8 hours, depending on the number of shares you owned. In the spring the farmers got the schedule and memorized when they'd get the water. When the hour of the day of the week that was assigned to them to get water, they were at the ditch with a shovel to be sure to let it in immediately.

Livelihoods and lives depended on this water, so when it's your turn "to get the water" at midnight on Wednesday, you darn sure are going to see that you do. If the guy upstream is tardy in pulling

his dam or opening his gate, there will be words and if this happens often, then there was an appeal. To the Water Master who I knew as "Ditchrider". This man seemed to have the power of life and death. His rulings about who got the water actually could affect the success of someone's crops which could have profound implications for their well-being and that of their family. He needed courage, the wisdom of Solomon and the calmness of Solon



Figure 92 <http://www.srpnet.com/community/heritage/facts.asp>

during some of his discussions with highly exercised people who claimed that they were massively wronged. He might as well have worn a black mask with a pirate's hat and patch over his eye as far as I was concerned. He was "Authority Incarnate", a powerful awesome creature whose pronouncements sort of echoed with thunder and mild lightening in the background while us mere mortals quivered and said "Yes sir."

When he was referred to by my family, it seemed to be with a hushed respectful voice. It probably wasn't, and there were probably more than a few derogatory things said about him. I see that as an adult, but as a kid, the things I grasped from the conversations I eves-dropped on made him out to be a supernatural creature who would hear disputes and mete out justice impartially on all, the ultimate source of authority and wisdom. Man alive, he scared me on those rare occasions when I actually saw him ride along the ditch bank on his horse, in his large hat, black

boots, carrying his shovel, looking for breaks or imperfections -and I suppose miscreants- that needed attention that he would magically call down from heaven. Satan himself with cloven hooves, forked tail and flames from his mouth could scarcely have cowed and impressed me more. "The Ditchrider" was spoken of in awe and respect, regardless of the personal feelings of resentment one might harbor in his breast. You did not want to make him mad at you.

### Piper Cub Candy Drop and Plane Crash

Next to Grant, Leo was my favorite uncle. He was less direct in his affection for us nephews but he always had something going on, something that occasionally was fun for us kids. Ultimately, he committed suicide with his wooden leg, attempting to make it look like an accident to collect the limit on a \$200,000 life insurance policy that was 6 weeks old. The claim was denied and the circumstances were bogus. Laree was given a nuisance settlement of \$30,000, was told that she was lucky, and advised that she would be smart to let the matter rest there.

What he did was not wise. He took out a large policy and a few months later died. He didn't realize how skeptical insurance companies are about deaths that follow the purchase of large policies within a year. In peculiar circumstances. He apparently thought he had figured out how he would commit suicide but make it look like an accident, thereby resulting in an enormous windfall to his beloved wife and their kids. The fly in the ointment was the skepticism of the insurance investigator. He concluded after examining the facts that Leo had simply ginned up a suicide in hopes that it would be interpreted as an accident.

The "accident" happened out on Grant's ranch on the Greenriver. What was found was Leo dead, lying on the ground behind his own pickup. With his wooden leg trapped beneath one of the rear wheels. In an obvious -he hoped- but failed attempt to remove the wooden leg. His face near the exhaust pipe, the ignition key turned on, the gas tank empty.

Those are the facts. When they are analyzed one sees that this was a phony accident. Leo would not have been trapped because he couldn't remove the wooden leg. Especially not Leo. Nimble, clever and slippery. Everywhere he moved, the telephone was put in Laree's name, not his own. He died of carbon monoxide poisoning which was highly unlikely out there in the open air. All he had to do if he really couldn't get out of the wooden leg harness was to simply turn his head away from the exhaust pipe.

What he must have done was leave the truck in neutral without the brake set,

lie down behind the truck, pull it over the end of his wooden leg, then half-remove it to make it appear that he had been trapped and was unsuccessful in his attempt to get out of the situation. Then he put his face to the exhaust pipe and breathed the fumes until he passed out. At that time his hemoglobin would have had more than 14% CO on board, a lethal dose unless he could have been placed immediately in a hyperbaric chamber at several atmospheres of 100% oxygen.

But I liked him and even worked for him. See the section below about working on his beaver farm in 1964 after I came home from Finland. I worked for Leo then, another scam, but I didn't know it at the time. Great job while it lasted.

Around the time I was six or seven, Leo took it in his head to learn to fly airplanes. An appropriate thing for a daredevil like him to do. He went to the tiny Vernal airport, paid his money, took his lessons and got his license to fly. He never had enough money to buy a plane so rented them by the hour. Dad tells a story below of a crash into a mountain while he and Leo were scouting for deer.

On this occasion, he told mom that he was going to rent a piper cub at 10:00 am next

Saturday. He told her that he was going to fly around the valley and that he would come and buzz our place so we could see him. He would rock the wings to wave to us and then drop a couple of handkerchiefs of candy over our place. When mom told us, it was about like having Christmas in the summer. Candy dropped to us from an airplane, an airplane driven by our very own Uncle Leo, on Saturday. Man alive, it doesn't get any better than this. We hardly slept Friday night.

When Saturday came around, we were probably out of bed at 5:00 a.m. anxiously scanning the sky watching for daredevil Leo. It was many hours before he would make it to our farm but little kids don't have a conception of time. They only know that something momentous is going to happen that morning in which case they were primed and ready to roll about 4 hours too soon. That's OK. Little kids' lives are filled with experiments because they don't have a clue about how things really work so they make up theories and test them constantly. Fortunately, little kids' enthusiasm isn't permanently dampened by failures of their theories. They chalk



them up to experience, learn something sometimes, and make a different theory next time. Just keep experimenting and learning and trying to figure out what this life is about. I'm still trying to do that.

The time finally came and we stood out on the front lawn. The drone of a small airplane -they were all small in those days- appeared from the east. As the drone came nearer, we ran around the yard trying to see him. He was going to come right over our house and drop the bandanas of candy in the middle of the yard in front of the house. We could hardly stand the excitement. We had never seen an airplane up close in the air. We finally spotted it between the garage and the grainery. But something seemed wrong with the direction he was flying. No worry. Leo liked us and was going to drop the candy for us. We knew that. So we watched. As he drew near, the sound getting louder, we could see the propellor spinning as the plane banked and started to come down low.

As he approached, we waved madly so that he could see us, so that he would know we were there waiting for the surprise. True to his word, he released the two blue bandanas at what he thought was the right time. Unfortunately for us, he needed a Norden bomb sight to do the job right. His angle of flight, speed and wind vector messed up his drop. He really didn't know how to do it after all. The bandanas came down, we could see them as they fell, landing somewhere west of the Watkin's home.

We were sick. First, we were sick with excitement about the prospect of Leo flying an airplane right over our house, Second, we were sick the he missed our yard. We went over to Norie's place with mom to see if we could find the bandanas of candy. Norie said that she hadn't seen them fall but it was fine to hunt for them. We hunted and wandered and wondered, but could never find them. The bandanas were simply lost. Whether they fell into the large irrigation canal or simply were lost, we never figured out. We only knew that the excitement was stillborn, that we did not get the stuff he tried to give us. We understood that he really did try to do the job because we saw the two packages fall, but we would not be consoled in our hearts in spite of his effort because in the end, we did not get the glorious packets from the sky.

### Hammocks and leg casts

The Cooper's dairy herd would periodically break out of its pasture down the road and roam the area, following the road in either direction. The cows would go into any yard and eat grass, flowers and vegetables. Dad and mom were exasperated with this predation so dad built a cattle guard across the dirt driveway.

A cattle guard is basically a 2-foot deep pit that extended from one side to the other of the road to be protected. A wooden structure is build in this squared-up hole to hold 2 inch pipes. The piped stretched from one side of the driveway to the other and were spaced about 3 inches apart. Cows are stupid and will not walk on this contraption -the point of the device- because they fear that their hooves will slip between the pipes. They know there is danger when they see the pit so they won't cross it. They can even be stopped by painting stripes on pavement. Stupid critturs. Guess I was too.

We were allowed to cross the cattle guard without any limitations. It was our only access to the pond and Watkins, so we used it often. One day while I hurried, my right foot slipped and I fell into the pit. My fall was stopped when my knee jammed into the pipes, all of my weight on it. It hurt but didn't incapacitate me. I probably cried a while and then went on chasing frogs or Dick.

Here's a wonderful image of a cattleguard, about my vintage. It's wonderful not so much because it shows you the grid of pipes lying across a pit which spooks cows, rather because this photo could almost be taken from our property. If you took the Watkins place away from across the road, and looked to the west beyond their property to the mountains on the west side of the valley, you would see this image during one of the rare summer thunderstorms. Virtually identical. This is what it looked like to a little kid in the desert with sage brush surrounding the settled areas. The storms were



<http://photography.cicada.com/gallery/prescott/graphics/cattleguard.jpg>

spectacular. That's where I learned to love heavy weather. So dramatic isn't it.

About this time I was doing the usual trick little boys did in hammocks in the giddy hot sunshine out there in the country with nothing else to do but fight with brothers and find ways to get into trouble. Dad stretched a hammock between the two cottonwoods in the front yard for us to swing in. We used it more like a swing than a hammock. Sitting up on the edge, pumping to swing higher and higher. At the top of the front-ward swing, we would bail out onto the lawn, yelling "geronimo" like



we knew real pilots did. That second in a free fall made my stomach woozy and exciting so we did this often. One day I landed wrong on my right knee again.

The result was some sort of disruption of the knee joint such that a granulation developed. When I sat on a chair swinging my leg, the knee joint produced a quiet noise you could hear across the room. It sounded like someone walking on granulated sugar on the floor. It didn't really hurt but mom was concerned enough that we went to visit Dr. Spendlove again. He used his hammer to check reflexes and asked the usual questions about history of injuries. He decided that the knee should be immobilized for a while to let the knee heal itself. There was no such thing in those days as corrective orthopedic surgery or lasers for arthroscopic exams. He applied a plaster cast that extended from mid thigh down to mid-calf and left it on for a month. Whatever it did, it worked. When he removed the cast the granulation was gone, as were my hammock-jumping days.

### Mom and the .38 Pistol

**D**on't mess with mom. The impact of the depression showed up in odd ways. Mom tells of being a kid on a hard scrabble farm in eastern Utah that didn't produce too well. Grandpa worked in the gilsonite mines and then in Naples but needed to supplement their diet. He'd grab one of the kids and hand them two .22 cartridges and a single-shot gun. And say "Don't come home without something for each cartridge." Grandpa meant it and a tongue lashing was not unlikely for whoever failed. Cartridges were expensive and the family needed the meat. Not a small amount of pressure. Her dad is the meanest family member I ever knew. I sort of don't like him even today because he was so mean to me and my brother, physically mean, pinching our legs in 'horse bites' until we cried. He only stopped when we started pinching him back that hard.

The net result was that my mother is a superior marksman. It was perhaps 25 years ago that dad became concerned about my mom's security during the long summers when he was out in the desert on a dig. So he bought her a .38 caliber pistol, not a small one if you know anything about side arms, to defend herself with if someone entered the



Figure 95

<http://www.estate-services.com/images/TAG/July/pistol.jpg>

house. A .45 had a larger slug but the difference was trivial from 10 away inside a house. Both made a lot of noise and big holes. She stored the gun in the top drawer of her bedside stand and believe me, she would have defended herself. **D o n o t** deceive yourself about that. Whoever entered her house would pay for the deed with something more serious than a scolding. Like going out of the house in a box, a hole plugged squarely between his eyes from 6 feet by a woman with the coolest detachment.

Dad foolishly thought he'd "teach" her how to shoot this new pistol because she hadn't shot a side arm before. He had so was an expert compared to her. This was one more instance where his ego got in the way of his intelligence. She was a more accomplished marksman than he ever would be with any kind of fire arm. Dead Eye Dick. That's Marie Merrell. You'd risk all if you gambled against her.

Digression: This actually is diagnostic of their entire relationship so far as I understand it. Probably don't, but I have opinions and conjectures. Mom admitted to me in the last year that she prevented herself from engaging in things she enjoyed because she knew she could them better than dad, and she did not want to discourage him by surpassing him. Witness the only painting she ever did, the chalk and charcoal painting of an Eskimo in a parka. It hangs on dad's side of the studio. Superb, simple and true. It was the first thing she ever did. She hung it in the Business Women of Seward's art show in the Odd Fellow's Hall and garnered enormous praise. He also had paintings hanging in the same show. Right then she knew. She would have outclassed him in 6 months if she had practiced. Such clarity and purity and accuracy. Poor James A. Mom knew. If she competed with him she would have surpassed him in short order which would have devastated him. The public outpouring of appreciation would have discouraged him. I have no doubt about that. Somehow Marie was superior to James A in various ways. I marvel at the truth. She knew she had talents but she sublimated her need for self-expression in her dedication to him.

Back to the .38: He went up someplace like Hobblecreek canyon around Provo and found cottontail rabbits off the side of the road. These rabbits are excellent for target practice, excuse the harshness, because they are too stupid to move when something disturbs them. Dad explained to mom how to hold the pistol and how to aim it. He demonstrated, taking shot after shot, rabbits sitting still, carefully explaining how to squeeze the trigger and how to sight to make sure the target is in the gun sights. After firing all but one of the cartridges, he decided to give mom a chance to try it. She took the pistol, she reached out the window, aimed. And blew the rabbit's off. Dad rolled up the window disgustedly and went home.

So mom was a marksman of the highest caliber -because of the Great

Depression. Here we get the nub of the issue: she and dad were significantly affected by it in a wide variety of ways. This colored how they viewed the universe - and here's the point for me personally in this story- and of my particular place in it.

First and foremost, their view was that I was not here in this world to have fun, I was not to enjoy myself, I was supposed to simply learn to work and to take care of myself and that's how they started training me from the first. And guess what. That's how I would have raised you. I tried, didn't I. I didn't succeed too well, though, did I. I was incapable at the time of understanding that I needed to completely overhaul my strategies in dealing with your mom and that isn't as much a criticism of her as it is an admission of my own inadequacy. My world view crashed into hers and when I thought you kids should be required to work 15 hours a week at a grocery store or McDonald's, etc. I lost. She thought you should not have to work, that you should be allowed to "have fun". Perhaps that's better for you all? I don't know. Silly question, isn't it. If it isn't, only you know the answer.

I have resented all of my life my parent's view of what I should have done. I would have given my eye teeth to have been taken on any of the Harvard expeditions Dad went on every summer. But would he take us? Not on your life. To be with him, to share with him, to escape. But, no, we had to learn how to work, staying home working on miserable truck gardens -- while he went to Florida, to Pennsylvania, to Nova Scotia, to Texas, to Montana. He came back with these wonderful stories and my heart ached to be there with him. It was very difficult to understand why it was so important for us "to learn to work" when he himself escaped each summer for months. He did not know what he did to us either by his rejection of our plaintive requests which finally ceased - or by his absence from our home, leaving a fully capable, but feminine, captain to wield the sword and give directions and judgment. Little love there was expressed at least. Mayhap there was much, but the evidence was scant - nonexistent in my estimation

## Gravity-Fed Glass Cylinder Gas Pumps

In those days the electric gas pump had just started to replace the older gravity-fed pumps in town at the bigger "service stations". Most service stations outside of town still used the older manually operated gas pumps that relied on the operator for fairness. These pumps were constructed with a pump to move gas from the underground tank up into a tall glass cylinder that had a long flexible hose fastened to the bottom, with a valve on the end of the hose to control the flow of gas. That simple.

The pump handle is the long lever on the left bottom side of the pump. The owner pumped that handle to fill the glass cylinder above. The cylinder was marked along the side with lines that indicated fractions of and whole gallons. When a customer needed gas, he'd pull in, ask for 5 gallons and wait while the owner took off the gas cap and inserted the nozzle into the gas tank spout.

But since these were manual pumps, without any mechanism of any kind, the owner controlled the distribution of gas. It is not an easy matter to see from the ground precisely how much gasoline has been delivered or how much remains in the cylinder. Indeed, the whole process begins on a soft number, i.e. the number of gallons pumped up into the cylinder. This meant that the operator and customer stood there staring with squinted eyes at the glass to watch the level of the gas as it slowly ran out of the glass cylinder into the car. Dad told how one place he stopped to get gas in the country, the wife of the owner stood out with the owner while this process was taking place. The shrewish wife stood behind her man, all the time saying things to him while he was trying to fill dad's tank, "Ok Ok, that's about enough. Slow down! You're going to let too much out. Slow down! I can't keep good track of where it is!" and so on.



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[http://www.ukans.edu/carrie/kancoll/graphics/boltz/hp\\_gas.jpg](http://www.ukans.edu/carrie/kancoll/graphics/boltz/hp_gas.jpg)

There is a law of physics involved here that either side would try to take advantage of. Any liquid in a cylinder will develop a surface that depends entirely on the nature of the liquid. Some liquids tend to actually crawl up on the surface of the glass where the liquid and glass meet, in which case the top edge of this curved surface is higher than the center of the surface. Other liquids will act just the opposite: they will curve the edge of the surface down in which case the edge of the surface that is bent down this way will be lower than the center of the surface. So if the good wife is looking at the center of the surface, she will see it getting to the target amount sooner than her husband will who's watching the edge of the surface coming down the glass. You can see why states' Department of Weights and Measure found a major problem when they started to look at how accurately gasoline was delivered. Today you pull up to a gas pump, order your gas, pay for it and leave. You don't even think about whether the delivery system is accurate. You rely on the Bureau of Weights and Measures to take care of that for you, and if you are interested, you can even tell whether or not any pump you get gas from has been inspected recently. There is a paper sticker somewhere on the pump with a date of the last inspection or the date of the next inspection with someone's signature attesting to that fact.

### Dustbowl and Okies and Arkies

**A**s noted in Volume 1, there was a constant flow of down-on-their-luck people through

Vernal. It was a lovely farming setting that promised to yield to those who were able to buy the land and irrigate it. That was the problem. But people from the midwest, Arkansas, Kansas and Oklahoma, had to leave their places after they were destroyed by drought and nasty weather. So they went west, the less settled half of the country in search of a place to set up.

I don't know whether you have a comprehension of the disaster that befell these people. They are spoken of critically every where it seems and not without reason because they did steal anything they could and became a nuisance for the communities they passed through. Yet they were good people at bottom who simply lost everything they had. This loss occurred over several years on their farms as rain stopped, and reservoirs and lakes dried up, they mortgaged their farms for seed, planted the seed, it failed, they got another mortgage the next year, planted new seed, it failed and finally they were destitute. No one would lend them a nickel. So they became bitter and they moved. Who can blame them.

It was weather that caused this massive failure of farms. Extraordinarily



terrible weather. Look at this image to get a sense of the dust storms that were spawned after years of drought. This is terrible in itself. Dust got into every thing. But look at it as an indicator of the terrible quality of the land. It was so dry that wind just blew it away in tons of dust like this. Under those conditions no one could survive. That photo was taken in 1935, showing the specific conditions that ultimately drove Arkies and Oakies through our town.

### Training to Work

**S**o when did we get training to work? You guessed it. Early, early. I don't remember

much of this sort of stringent training before I left Vernal at the age of 9 because we were so young, but I can tell you many stories about it in Seward during the next 5 years. And during the rest of the years I lived at home. Though even in Vernal it started. Mom and dad bought me and Dick small but real rakes for the small but real task of raking the dang front lawn when it was covered with leaves and cottonwood

debris. Got any idea how messy those trees are? Terrible. Bits and fragments of brittle branches fell all the time especially when there was a stiff wind. Their sole beauty was in the cross section of small branches. When you broke one more or less cleanly across, you saw a lovely pentagonal brown star with a dot of lightness squarely in the center. Mysterious really, like discovering hidden treasure to kneel there on the lawn when we should have been raking, breaking the branch to see the star concealed inside. Like a Cracker Jack prize. We really didn't have to rake the entire lawn I see, but that was how it felt and it was a burden. So the play rakes were serious tools given as just that, to teach us to work. I left Vernal when I was 9. Were you forced to rake your lawn at age 9? Such different upbringings, huh. Neither better than the other, I suppose, just different. But they affected my view the universe and your places in it.

Walking home from elementary school seemed natural and actually was a cousin of the idea of 'work'. It never occurred to a little kid to ask why there was a bus to take him to the school, but not one to take him home from school. If it was good on one end, why not on the other. I had a sort of sense that the purpose of the bus to school was for teachers' convenience, so that they were sure to get their victims on time every day. The school was a mile from our house. So the idea of walking home might be overpowering to kids today. But it wasn't to us. There were kids who lived even further from school. The walk home was as natural a part of life as the seasons of the year. Which did affect us in various ways.

The sunny days in fall and spring were nice. The walk was even a peaceful sort thing, the smell of alfalfa and cows and horses and the asphalt made it pleasant. There were always things to investigate and to think about, like why do they cut the tips of the cow's horns off. Insects and leaves and asparagus. In the spring we would pick asparagus on our way home. It grew along ditches and along fence lines. But there was a strict rule about it.

Mom was emphatic. She said, "You can't pick it if it is inside of the fence line." even though there was no one around for a mile. Well, we became mosaic scholars in our ability to look at a stem and ponder the application of the rule to it. Was it completely inside the fence, or was it sort of half and half, was it OK to pick if any part of it was outside, even if only the tip was leaning outside, or if its base was half outside while the top half of the stalk was inside, etc. More than once we sort of looked up and down the deserted country road to see if anyone was coming -even looking at the other who was studiously looking the other way to facilitate what was about to happen- before we guiltily picked the stem and hurried along the fence. We didn't talk together about these things but we each knew the other was wrestling

with his conscience and the cosmic question of stems being inside or outside fences. We wouldn't eat the stuff ourselves. It was gross. But mom love it, so she loved us when we gave it to her. Afer we gave it to her after we wiped our sticky wet smelly hands on our levis and tore out the door to play in the yard. In those years there was no home work for elementary school kids.

Some of the year wasn't so pleasant. Vernal winters can be rough. So that walk home wasn't much fun. Mom tells stories of how hard it was for us. Oddly enough, it didn't occur to her to do anything about it because it was as natural to her as it was to us. She grew up in worse conditions. There was a gulch about a quarter of a mile from our house and on more than one occasion we apparently stopped at a lady's house on the other side of the gulch. For a bit of warmth and some hot chocolate to help get us home. She would use that miracle device, the telephone, to call mom and assure that us kids were OK and would be home soon. I remember the cold and the tingly cheeks and frozen hands and stiffness. But it was just how things were. And I saw no difference in the obligation to walk home and the obligation to do other chores where were a short step from "work".

### Thorne's Studio

Leo Thorne was a little man to me, wizened and wrinkled. He was probably about 35 but to me he was an antique. He treated me well so I liked him. He took pictures for whoever wandered into his shop there on mainstreet in Vernal a door down to the west from JC Pennys, on the same block. Apparently he had an earlier shop that was located on another street as shown in this photo. I don't know where that was, just the one by Pennys. Mr. Thorne is the one who took the photo of Dick and me that is on the



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Dedication page of Volume 3.

The neatest thing about Mr. Thorne's studio wasn't Mr. Thorne, although he was a colorful character. When he was working behind a view camera, he'd hide under a black cloth while he composed the photo, waving his hand and giving instructions. Garters held his sleeves up and he wore a green visor like a bookkeeper. The thing I liked about his studio was his collection of Indian artifacts and curios. I don't know what "curios" are.

The most fascinating thing in his collection was the mummified Indian. I know it's bad taste these days to own someone's dead grandfather and I honor that concern. In these days, however, that sensitivity was not present, so remains were handled without regard for the feelings of the descendants. So Mr. Thorne had a mummy with dried tight skin, eye sockets drawn tightly together, hair looking like hair that just needed to be brushed. The mummy was clothed in appropriate clothes and was lying on a sandy surface to reproduce the burial site. In addition to the mummy, Mr. Thorne had all sorts of pottery, bead and leather work, papoose boards, and bows and arrows.

## Blacksmithing and Muzzle Brakes

On the end of the enormous barrel of a military tank is an odd structure, a fenestrated [Port. "Fenestra" = 'window'] collar the outer circumference of which is wider than that of the main barrel. It imparts a sense of design to what otherwise would be an unadorned tube. But it also serves a function. The fenestrations allow enormous amounts of energy created by the explosives in the shell to bleed off behind the projectile just before it exits the barrel. It is hard to believe that this short distance is enough to make a difference but it does. This lateral release of energy from the interior of the barrel decreases the kick or recoil felt at the firing chamber and posterior of the barrel. The fenestrated collar is termed a "choke" or "muzzle brake".



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A machinist easily switches to being a gunsmith, sort of a sub-specialty of the trade. Dad did that. In Vernal. The shop was on one of the main streets near the

center of town, on the south side of the street.

The most difficult part of the process was drilling a uniform hole through the barrel from one end to the other and then "rifling" it. "Rifles" -which hand guns don't have because the barrels are too short- are spiral grooves inside the full length of the barrel that impart a spin to the slug, thereby extending its range of accuracy.

After a barrel was finished, it was "Blued". Blueing required that the surface of the barrel be highly polished not a trivial exercise, particularly when the barrel had a hip or a flat surfaces that blended into the rounded barrel. After polishing is finished, the barrel was pickled.

The acids used to pickle metal are harsh, some of the most caustic used in industry. A peculiar pungent metallic odor rises from the pickling vats. These chemicals are in the same group as electroplating chemicals which are difficult to dispose of today. Back then, they were flushed down the drain. Today they classified with the most toxic industrial products in the US - almost as bad as nuclear waste.

Pickling accomplished two things. First, it removed grease and mineral deposits to ensure that only pure metal was exposed. Second, pickling prepared the surface in some manner so that it would blue uniformly.

The actual blueing process is a purely esthetic process that has no effect on the firing of ammunition, though it does prevent rust to some degree. The process requires heat and some type of solution that imparts the dark bluish color to the surface of the gun barrel.

Back to the muzzle brakes: Any weapon that fires projectiles with explosive charges through a barrel produces this recoil that only varies by degree. Side arms and rifles produce kicks but a hand gun's kick doesn't bruise the shooter. Rifles do as they kick back against the shoulder. One way to minimize the bruising caused by the kick is to wear a shooting jacket that has substantial padding over the shoulder where the rifle is held. Another is to affix a muzzle brake on the end of the barrel.

They come in various styles, some of them even being adjustable, but my dad's were the best. His were not just functional fenestrated collars although they served their purpose. They were works of art. He experimented and made various styles of



muzzle brakes, trying some out on the rifles of relatives. He modified the design to increase the amount of energy that was bled off. But effectiveness wasn't his only end point. His work had to have beauty.

The beauty of his designs arose from the details. To accomplish its purpose the fat collar stuck on the end of a barrel simply needed holes to be let into it. The function of bleeding off energy behind the projectile before it exited would be accomplished. But dad was not content with simple round holes. The fenestrations that he let into a collar were elongated, like rectangles. Then he rounded the corners of each of the three equidistant rectangles he cut into the collar. The elongation increased the amount of energy that would be bled off, and also added a sense of refinement and beauty. The rectangles looked like a cartouches waiting for the insertion of hieroglyphics.

That wasn't enough beauty. The triangles between the rounded corners begged for treatment. So in that space he let in smaller holes that further increased the amount of bleed off, and simultaneously imparted another level of complexity and beauty to the design. Again, a simple functional round hole wasn't satisfactory. He modified these small holes, converting them from simple circles into sinuous triangles that filled the space between the rounded corners. The corners of the triangles were cut to points so fine that one marveled that metal could be worked that way. Finally, he rounded off the outer surface of the fenestrations so that there was no flatness. The final product was a gorgeous, blued muzzle brake that looked like it was carved out of porcelain, not metal, and I was touched by their beauty. They looked like images from a Tlinket totempole.

## Stoking the stove

**C**oal stoves are something you have to experience to appreciate. The funnest thing

about them was the isinglass window on the door on the front of the firebox. Isinglass is actually a mica sheet which allows you to see into the brightly burning coal without being burned and without getting smoke in the room. As it aged, the isinglass started to get smoky between the layers of mica and you could see less and less but it was a fun thing to. The stoves were sources of comfort as well as heat. To sit between the back of the stove and wall was to be in a sort of warm neverneverland with the cats, out of the way, comforted by the large looming warm thing, sort of like being in a narrow cave. Or womb I suppose. When you felt sick, it was a safe comforting place to sit.

Bringing in coal was a regular chore in the winter, i.e. 'work'. And a tough one.

Remember, I was 9 when we moved from Vernal to Alaska. A coal hod with its characteristic shape was used for small pieces of coal, i.e. egg sized. We filled it part-full with coal in the coal shed in the back yard. Most of the coal dumped by the coal truck was in the form of large chunks a foot or two long. So we had to break up the big chunks by using the blunt 'heel' of a single-bit axe like a sledge hammer. After busting up coal this way, there would be small chunks that we would carry in the hod. The larger pieces we would carry one at a time in our arms across the yard to the house, up the steps, through two doors, and shove them into the kitchen stove or the big pot bellied stove, banging and clanging as they hit the swinging metal plate that hung down halfway over the door to keep smoke inside while the stove door was open. Feeling mighty proud of ourselves.

The thing that would get us in trouble with these stoves was crayons. Plain ol' Crayola coloring crayons. How, you ask? One of us would get a wild hare in the winter and would go to the back of a hot stove, usually the pot bellied stove in the dining room if it was lit up. We would hide behind it with a couple of crayons. Squatting between the pot belly stove and the wall so we couldn't be seen, we'd draw on the hot metal. The crayon would melt, leaving a neat track of watery-looking wax -which was the point of this exercise- that sort of lost its color against the black metal.



We knew we shouldn't do that -it was wasteful of crayons- but it was such a temptation. The crayon magically grew shorter leaving its glistening track like a slug slime trail. We'd get too nervous about it so would stop before we were caught - most of the time. But we'd still get in trouble some how. Today I look back and I guess that the evidence of our experiments lay on the floor under the stove, and that it was the mess on the floor - not the wax on the stove- that was the real issue. But we never saw the wax drip on the floor. That wasn't what was interesting.

The other end of the coal business was taking it back out. Transformed into ashes and clinkers. Know what clinkers are? I don't either. But they grew in the bottom of the stove from the coal and were brown-tan colored misshapen glass-like

masses that had to be taken out with the ashes. The coal shovel used to scoop crushed coal into the stove was now used to scoop and scrape out the ashes. The "heater" in the bedrooms even had a square shaft out the right side of the stove that was part of the grate. You put a crank that shaft and could jiggle the two halves of the grate back and forth to make the ashes and clinkers fall to the bottom of the stove for easier cleaning access. You made sure the stove was not hot when you did this little number. We put the ashes in the coal hod and lugged it outside to dump on a dust heap behind to coal shed where ashes were usually put. However, when there was snow and ice on the ground the ashes were sprinkled on the walkways to make them less slippery.

### Lightening, Pot Belly Stove, and Prayer

One evening mom and dad decided the y needed a night out and they left us alone. Whether this was because they couldn't find a baby sitter, couldn't afford a baby sitter, or thought we were old enough to be left alone, I don't know. But it was while dad was still in Vernal so Dick and I were somewhere between 6 and 8 years old. That's pretty young to be left alone and I was nervous about it. Mom told me I was in charge and to take care of Dick.

The night was dark so it was not summer time. A thunderstorm developed after a while, sending bolts of lightening and loud peals of thunder into the house, heavy rain pelting the windows. There were no adults around to turn to for comfort and we knew better than to leave the house. If they found out we did that, we would get in trouble for disobeying, regardless of the reason for seeking comfort from Norie and John.

So we were there alone, not knowing when mom and dad would return, getting more frightened as time passed as the darkness and storm filled our imaginations with fearful thoughts. The telephone wasn't a consideration. It wasn't used to just talk to people. It was only used when there was a specific task to accomplish and asking for comfort wasn't a task that needed to be accomplished.

The pot belly stove was lighted which indicates that it was cold outside, which added to our sense of discomfort. I went into the dining room and huddled by the old stove, seeking comfort from its warmth. As I squatted there by it, my fears filled me. I remembered a Sunday School lesson. The teacher said that if you are ever afraid that all you needed to do to get Jesus' help was to pray to him. That fit the situation so I folded my arms, bowed my head and said a prayer out loud, asking to be comforted in my time of need, being alone, needing to get myself and my brother into bed asleep before mom and dad came home. The simply uncomplicated faith of a

child.

It worked. I felt a lightness develop when I opened my eyes. My anxiety slipped away and a confidence appeared. I took Dickie and myself to the bedroom, we got into our beds and were asleep by the time mom and dad got home.

### Bleu Cheese behind Pot Belly Stove

My introduction into the fine art of savoring bleu cheese happened on the floor. Of the dining room. In the winter. Behind the pot belly stove. I don't know what the occasion was that resulted in this stove being fired up because we normally didn't heat that part of the house in the winter that was outside, so something important was going on. The fact that something usual was happening probably contributed to the circumstances, even made this evening into a festive celebration. I don't remember. Nor do I care. It was what it was, a signal event in my life, one of the rare unexpected gifts of the gods who allowed me to lie on the hot floor between the stove and the wall by my own huge gnarly rough sweet-smelling dad, in a dark room, lit only with the light shining through the door from the kitchen, fire roaring, dad lying there, contentedly, munching on saltine crackers, cutting off fragments of foul smelling cheese from a small block in his hand with a paring knife, putting them into his mouth -and mine- exclaiming about the excellence of the flavor.

The flavor didn't exactly excite me, but in the manner of an insecure teenager with a group of friends he is trying to impress, I pretended to love the stuff. It actually smelled like the stuff we rubbed from between our toes in the evening. Gross. Only Limburger smells worse, it really does. But we had bleu cheese and in my naive mind, the bleu was "blue" and I assumed that name came from the fact that there were bluish streaks in the cheese. Dad explained something about the fact that this color came from bacteria but that was a foreign word. I didn't understand, but I did understand that this cheese didn't sort of "just happen" like the orange longhorn cheese did. This cheese was special. And it was Danish. That was important.

Dad told mom a wonderful story about how he got it. He said that he went to the Ashley Valley Market which was located at the north end of our road where it connected with Vernal. Our neighborhood went there to shop. There were no supermarkets, although a huge Safeway store opened while we still lived there and I swear it was at least 10 acres in size. The Ashley Valley Market was tiny, the model of a neighborhood 'corner store' where you could find most of the sundries that you needed. Well, dad was in there to buy something, he said, and the shop owner whom he knew well, commented that he had this block of stuff called "bleu cheese", but he

had tasted it and it was pretty strange. He didn't really like it, but he ventured to offer it to dad for an unusually good price. Dad's impression was that the store owner thought that the cheese had spoiled and he was trying to unload it on a country bumpkin to recover part of his cost. Well, dad played his part equally well. He allowed after tasting the cheese -and loving it from experience- that it probably wasn't too far gone to be passable so he supposed he'd take a pound or two of the stuff. So a deal was consummated, the owner hacked off a chunk of the stuff, weighed and wrapped it and separated dad from the requisite amount of currency. Dad went his way pretty smug.

The reality probably was the both dad and the store owner did OK, but both of them were too narrow-minded, too cupiditous, to see what the other was thinking. But that worked out well. In the end they each got what they wanted, and I got a chance to taste this funny cheese. The beginning of a lifetime of affection for bleu cheese.

Note how cheeses were sold in those days. They were sold in wheels, 2 foot wide wheels, perhaps 10 inches thick that lay on the counter under a circular glass or plastic cover like a cake cover. When a customer wondered about how good the cheese was or what it tasted like, the clerk would lift the cover, cut off a sliver with a long cheese knife, impale the fragment on the end of the pointed knife and then extend the knife to the customer, offering the fragment for tasting.

Also note that dad had learned how to "taste" things. He didn't learn this on the farm. He knew how to take a small bite or sip and allow it to roll over his tongue while making small rapid tasting sound with his tongue, actually sucking in a small amount of air that flowed over the stuff in his mouth and then flowing upward past his soft palate into his nose. He knew how wine was tasted, obviously. Hmmm....

### Dad at Calder's Creamery

One of the jobs that I remember dad having was out at the Calder's Creamery. It was north of Vernal a ways and he worked there in the winter. He told me a story I could scarcely believe - except he said it was true in his truth-telling voice, the voice of a scientist. One of the things he did at the creamery/dairy was harvest ice in the winter for sale in the summer. The ice blocks were cut from a frozen lake



Figure 102 Lost URL

with a saw like this, and stored in an ice house with saw dust piled over it to keep it from melting. That is where the ice came from for our ice box. Dad said that when a man left a steel crowbar or ice saw on the ice in the afternoon when quitting for the day, it would sink into the ice and that it would finally sink all the way through and fall to the bottom of the lake. I knew better than that. Ice is like rock and things can't sink through rock, so how were they going to sink through ice.

I didn't understand, but I could tell he was telling truth so I remembered it. What happens is that the pressure of the crowbar on the ice is sufficient to melt a few molecules of ice and turn it into a layer of water. This is a discrete measurable distance. The crowbar always sinks down through the water staying in touch with the ice which keeps melting a tiny bit. As this process continues, the metal bar will eventually sink right into the ice and will migrate all the way through until it comes out the others side, in which case it will fall through the water to the bottom of the lake. Just like dad said it would.

One of the things he did for Calder's was drive truck to deliver dairy products to local stores. The truck he drove looked just like this one, taken from the Thorne Photo library on the University of Utah Library website. The overhead wires, the dirt road, the age of the truck all remind me of Vernal when I was a kid. [This photo is from the Thorne collection.]

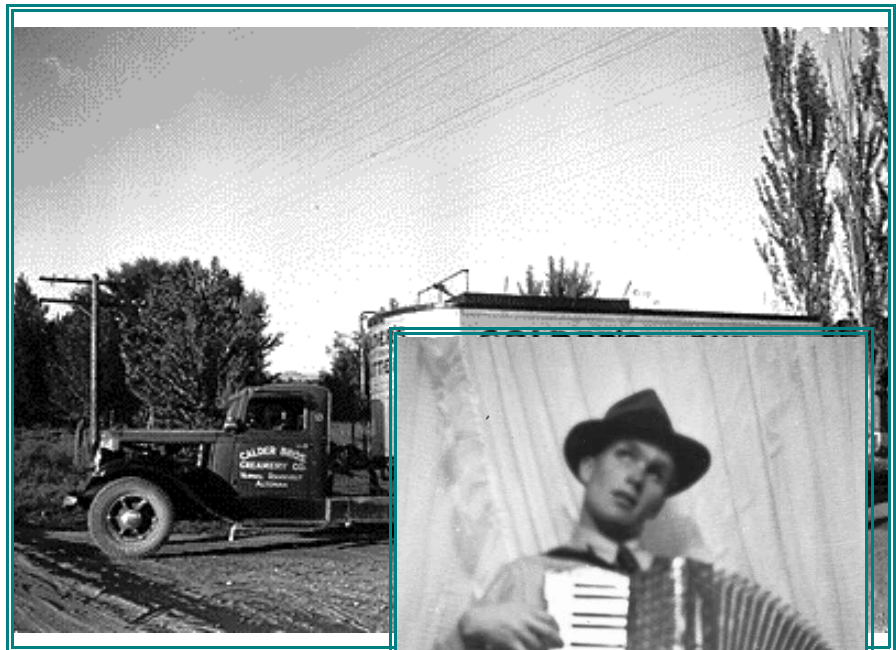


Figure 103 Calder  
<http://www.lib.utah>

## Little Country Bands

Dad played accordion and sang and Art Schafermeyer played guitar, a sort of





back-up rhythm guitar. They played together with a group of guys who'd get together at one house in the evening to practice. And would perform at church dances, or just for the sheer joy of it. Their music was "Down in the Valley" and "Red River Valley" style music and lyrics, played with the simplicity and earnestness of simple folk who loved their music and let it show. I loved to go to the practices on the rare occasions I was allowed to do that or to watch them perform at a dance. That was MY dad up there singing and playing. My dad could play anything. He played fiddle as a young man, played Eddie Peabody-style four-string banjo and guitar.

He played guitar most of his life. When I worked with him in Dry Mesa that summer, I took the old blonde Kay Guitar -that you could drive nails with- he had given me in 1960 after having carted it around the country for 30 years. He had his own guitar there and we played and sang together some evenings, something no one would ever expect. He loved the old songs I had learned while I was in Finland to keep from going crazy. "Roll on Columbia" singing his heart out, harmonizing with the plain harmonies of real country music.

### Fall into a pit of fire

**A**round 1948, my grandparents built a tiny store in Naples that also dispensed gas. They lived in the back of the store in a small attached home. When they had the grand opening, the gasoline storage tanks had not yet been installed in the deep hole excavated in front of the store. Construction debris was thrown into the hole for a bonfire in celebration of the opening.

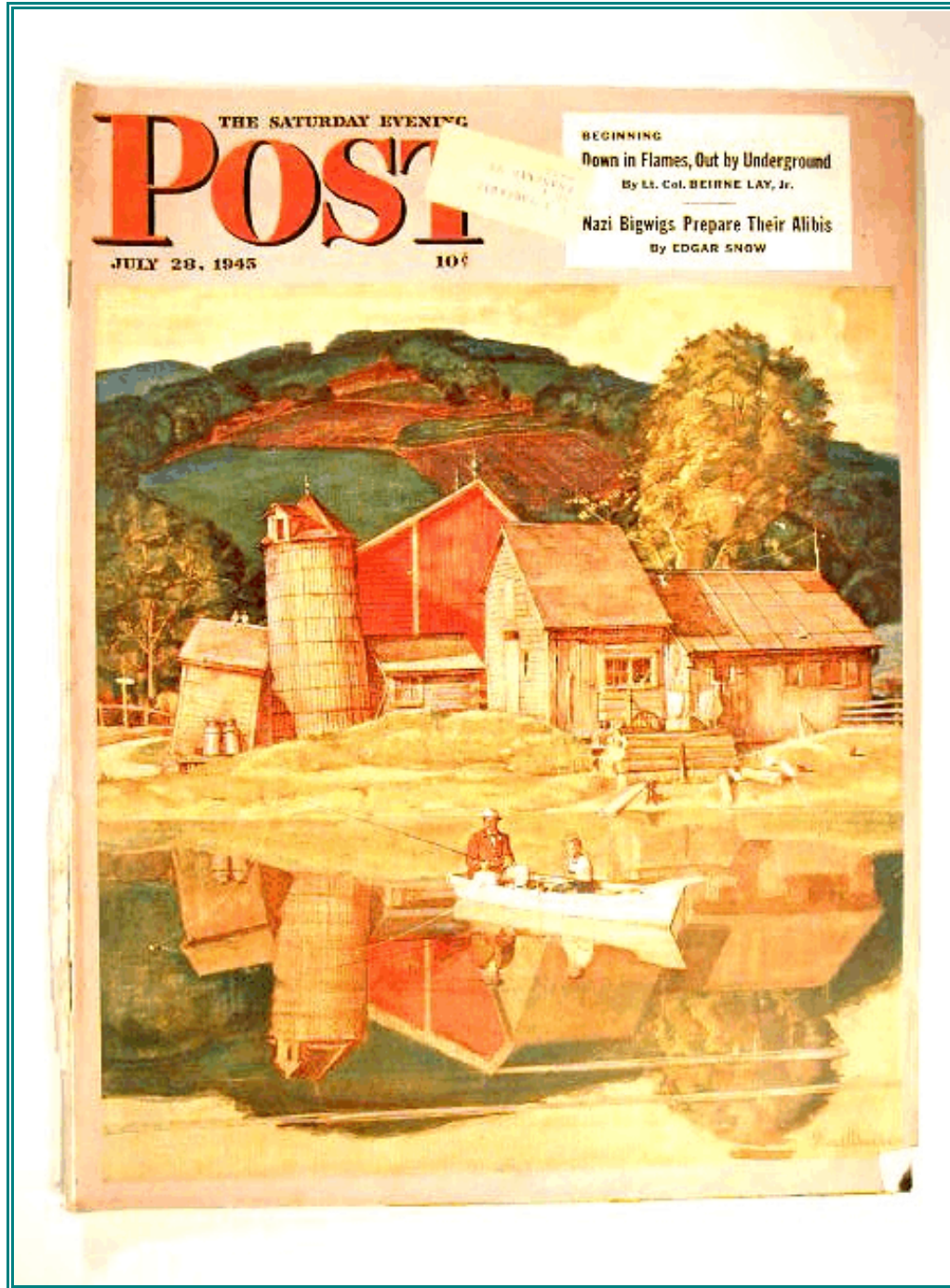
I was sitting on the high mound of dirt with another kid, boy or girl I can't remember. The dirt was a loose mound, waiting to be pushed back in to re-fill the hole after the gas tanks had been installed later. After the bonfire was started, this kid and I shielding our faces from the heat with one hand held balloons out as far as we dared in the air because the heat coming up caused them to float. Pretty neat thing for a country kid. Somehow things turned bad fast. I felt myself slipping downward and screamed as I fell into the pit filled with burning timbers. The sensation of slipping into fire is recoverable today if I want to feel panic. Falling, terrified, in slow motion, knowing I had been stupid, that I was going to be severely chastised for being so foolish, fearing the pain of the fall, not having a clue about what burns are really like. As I screamed, the people standing around in front of the store saw what happened. A man whose name I bless didn't hesitate. He quickly laid on the ground at the edge of the pit against the tremendous heat and flames and reached down for my hands. I could hardly touch them. Another man laid across his legs to hold him from falling as he stretched down to get hold of me. He jerked me

out of the fire like I was a bit of dandelion fluff. I was burned badly. I hurt worse than I've ever hurt in my entire life which is saying something. My left leg was the worst injured and today there are patches of disrupted blood vessels where I landed on a burning board.

Mom came running out to pick me up and hurried me inside the store to get ready to go to the doctor. Naples is 4 miles east of Vernal so it was a long drive in an old car. There was no ambulance. Farm injuries were taken into town by the family or neighbors. But before we could leave mom or the driver had to go into one of the bedrooms to get cleaned up to go. Why?! I don't know. It makes me angry even today. I stood in the hallway outside the bedroom, waiting for them to complete their toilet, screaming and hurting so badly. Twisting myself up in the cloth curtain that hung across the doorway to Grant's bedroom in place of a door. Finally we got ready after mom had primped her hair and put on a clean dress. We got into the car and were on our way. Sitting there crying, hurting so badly, no one able to do anything about it. We drove straight to Dr. Spendlove who cared for me all of my years in Vernal. I vividly remember being carried straight through the office lobby past the receptionist who usually was the stern gatekeeper. The man who carried me didn't hesitate. He knew where to go and what to do. Straight back to an examination room where he laid me on an exam table. Dr. Spendlove just looked at me. While he talked to mom he opened his medicine chest. The last thing I remember was a needle in my arm. Morphine. Blessed drug. You have no idea how badly a burn like this hurts. Morpheus, the Greek god of sleep. I don't remember much about it after the needle. No one does after major trauma I've discovered and that is merciful.

Ultimately, as a result of the burns I developed a "fibroid tumor" on the top of my right ear, a euphemism for scar tissue. It required surgery and resulted in a defect that I am aware of but which has not caused any problem for me generally, though hair cutters might comment about the fact that there is actually hair like the hair on my head growing on the top of my ear, not surprising since a skin graft was taken from my scalp just above the defect to cover the hole left by the excision of the large tumor. The reason it has to be excised was the embarrassment I felt when kids commented on and made fun of this tumor on my ear. Kids are mean.

## The Saturday Evening Post



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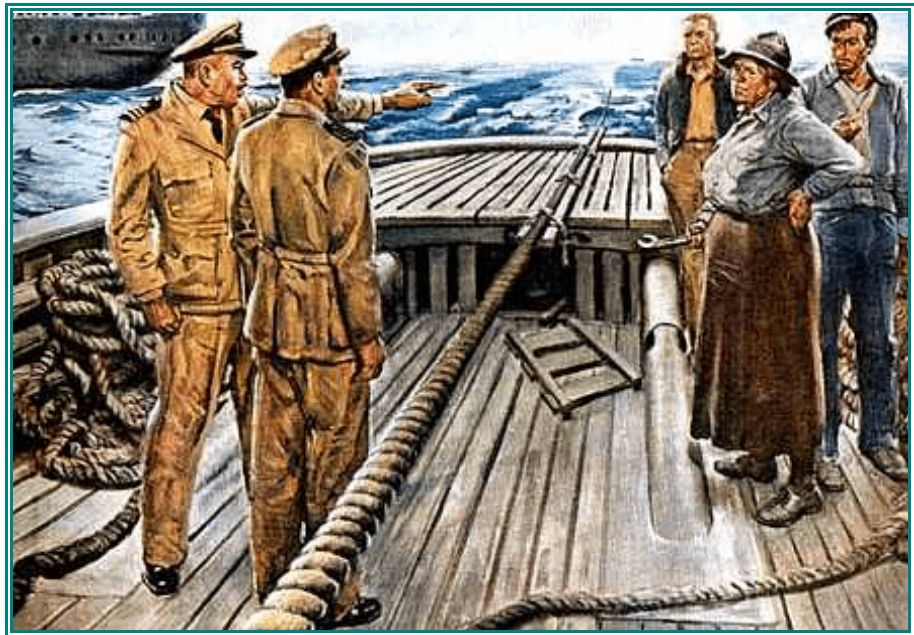
[www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/ARTleyen2.jpg](http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/ARTleyen2.jpg)

The Saturday Evening Post was the only magazine, other than the National Geographic, that was a regular part of our household. It was there in Vernal, vaguely,

but most prominently in Seward. No TV to rely on for stories, entertainment and news, so we relied on the Post. The Post was almost a cultured magazine in that little cowtown, though lovers of the New Yorker magazine would laugh to hear that. We didn't take the daily newspaper, either. The raspy tinny radio was the only daily source of news which in that little cow town wasn't much, though I obviously wouldn't have understood it if I had listened to it. I just say this for your adult minds to make sure you understand the scarcity of news for my folks. The Post was our connection with the outer world, the world outside of Uintah Valley. I loved to sit and look through it. I didn't read it from cover to cover because much of it was in language too difficult to understand, but the pictures and the advertisements captivated me. Nothing else to get interested in, so these new images fascinated me.

The Post was many things actually. It was a source of news both national and international and

contained a wide variety of non-news items. Chiefly, entertainment of several types. For example, there were always short stories in each issue. Some of them being long enough to be divided across two or three issues. Some of the stories were written by the same author and appeared a few times a year. "Tug



Boat Annie" was an example of the latter that I remember well from Seward days when I lived on the ocean. She was a powerful crochety tug boat captain who was the heroine of an infrequent series of lengthy articles published in the Post. There was mystery and some violence and atmosphere in these stories.

Cartoons were the most accessible type of entertainment for me in the Post. Some of the cartoonists appeared regularly, others rarely. Ted Keys was one of the regulars. His "Hazel" series showed up in the same place for years, at the bottom of the last page in every issue.



## Mural for the Tabernacle

Someone asked dad to paint a large, real large, mural to hang in the local LDS tabernacle. So he did it, probably more because of the challenge rather than a sense of obligation or devotion. It was a challenge. The canvas he painted must have been 6-7 feet high and stretched 15 or 18 feet. I not really sure of the dimensions but make that estimate based on its size in relationship to the size of the walls it was hung against while he painted it and how it looked on the front wall of this building to the right. While painting it, he'd tack up the section he was going to work on and then attack it with drafting pencils first and then with brushes and oil paints. He worked in the evening so had to use artificial light, bare-bulbed lamps sitting on the floor shining on his work space. The thing was eventually completed and hung in the Tabernacle. I remember sitting in the audience in the Tabernacle during conferences by grandma and grandpa Merrill, looking at that thing my dad did. My dad. I was pleased but didn't really grasp the fact that it was a dramatic accomplishment for anyone out there in that dry dusty uneducated place. Dad was an artist from my earliest memories.



At the boring quarterly conferences that we'd attend in the Tabernacle, I sometimes sat with grandma and grandpa Merrell. If the sun shined in through one of the upper windows, I'd try to coax her to loan me the pocket mirror out of her purse. She thought of it as a quiet toy to occupy a bored kid. That's what it apparently was for most kids. However, on at least one occasion, I reflected a brilliant ray of sunlight along the ceiling of the tabernacle, which attracted some attention, then up onto the mural, tracing the rail road and outlining the clouds. That got a lot of attention. Until some one figured out who was distracting the audience. The mirror was retrieved and put away - but I wasn't too repentant.



The mural was like a Thomas Benton or Diego Riviera mural. An allegory. In the style of public murals of the 1940's, WPA era. A sweeping view of the development of the country, starting in the industrialized east flowing across the central states into the Wild West. It showed the advent of steam railroad engines that traveled along side cowboys and Indians and settlers in Conestogas. Storms in one part of the mural, the growth of cities in the desert in another part. The thing is currently in mom's basement. The Daughter's of the Utah Pioneers made a serious mistake in their pursuit of the thing. Do-gooders believe good intentions justify bad manners. Marie may be old but she's tough as nails. She knows her rights and won't be intimidated. The DUP [don't you love the acronym?] apparently threatened mom in some manner after she hesitated to hand the thing over to them. They told her that she had "return" it to them. Ha. What was never theirs can never be returned. If it belonged to anyone other than dad, it was the LDS church, not some bunch of pompous nuts. They indignantly found their way out the front door after it was pointed out to them. Never returned.

On the back of the black and white photo shown above is a stamp showing it was the "Product of the Thorne Studios". This little guy was all over the place. Nice man. In dad's handwriting was the notation "Stake Conference circa ?1950". Followed by: "Painting 9' x 18'. By J.A. Jensen {Painted in 1947} for Vernal Highschool's Centennial "1847" program then donated to they Uintah Stake, Archie Johnson Stake President. Late pulled down by Irvin Haws, Stake President, after building was no longer used for stake conference." So now we know the truth behind the thing.

One of you kids needs to go over and spread the thing out and take its photo for UBW - your chapters of UBW. At least that's what I would have suggested in early 2002. But when I talked to mom about it later, she told me that someone had borrowed it in Provo., and still later she told me it was taken back to Vernal. So when I took mom out to Vernal in July, and we stopped to visit Mary Schaefermeyer, the one who went to Seward with us in 1951, I asked her about it. I told her that mom said it was back in the tabernacle. She snorted and looked at mom and said, "Marie, you know it's down there in your basement. It's not out here." Marie is always clear in what she means so there was no doubt. My guess now is that mom did in fact loan it to someone in Provo for some sort of celebration which means the darn thing is probably lost because she doesn't have a clue where it is now. I don't suppose it much matters. I don't want the thing in my house and none of you want it either. So just enjoy this picture and the memory. That's all you'll be able to take when you go anyway.



On the next page is a fuzzy enlargement of the mural itself. Apparently the top edge was sagging on the left side but it looks fine. Out there in Vernal. I'd sit there and look at that man and woman with the handcart passing the prickly pear, wondering what it must have been like. The idealized goal on the right was too beautiful to believe my dad made it, but I knew he did and was proud of it. No one knew who I was, that it was my dad who did that thing, but that was ok with me because I knew who I was and that he did it.



## Central Elementary School

This school was two stories tall and spread over what seemed to be an enormous amount of land though when I visited it years later, it was not large. The combination of two unfamiliar-to-me features made the building impressive: first, the room dedicated to kindergarten was a large circular one, and second was the fact that I was trapped in an army of other kids and supervised by teachers of varying degrees of humanness. Disagreeable experience. I was claustrophobic and wanted to be back on the farm with 2 of my own acres to explore, without interference of other kids or intimidating big people who had the power to order me to do what I didn't understand or want to do.

I did 4 years there, starting with Miss Anderson in Kindergarten who should have been banned from teaching tender kids, followed by Miss Isabel in First Grade, Mrs. Williams in Second Grade, and Miss Schofield in Third Grade.

## Kindergarten

Kindergarten was a distressing experience. None of the kids in my class were familiar to me. I was taken away from my familiar home environment where there were few kids, the Roberts kids and two families of Cooper kids. Coopers owned the dairy and herd, and the Roberts kids lived further down the road past Coopers on my side of the road. The regimentation of kindergarten was hardest to cope with. True, mom was a strict disciplinarian but there was nonetheless freedom at home to walk around, to go to the privy, to get a drink whenever I wanted, and so on without needing to formally ask for permission. The arbitrariness of Kindergarten seemed as unreasonable as anything could be. Why did we need to sit with our hands folded when we weren't causing any trouble. But rules were rules and so it was.

The fun thing -the only one- about kindergarten was the snack that we received each day. It was some sort of cookie or cracker with a cup of fruit juice, sometimes orange juice. We didn't have fruit juices at home and certainly not orange juice, so it was exotic. Cooks hauled it from the cafeteria in a large metal cooking pot that looked to be aluminum. The teacher would ladle out juice and call us in order to go get our drink and whatever else was served with it. I suspect that the juice was made available by the federal government through one of its millions of welfare plans. I doubt that the farmers on the school board would approve spending money to buy orange juice for their kids when local tomato and apple juices were available, probably from one of them.

After completing our tour of duty in kindergarten we moved on to first grade.

We understood that this was 'real' school, not the sissy stuff for babies. Actually didn't feel much different. The school rooms that I attended in Vernal and Seward looked like this with the difference that all of the desks were occupied:



☒ ✕ ✎ 📖 📄 📅 📆 📇 📈 📉 📊 📋 📌 📍 📎 📏 📐 📑 📒 📓 📔 📕 📖 📗 📘 📙 📚 📛 📜 📝 📞 📟 📠 📡 📢 📣 📤 📥 📦 📧 📨 📩 📪 📫 📬 📭 📮 📯 📰 📱 📲 📳 📴 📵 📶 📷 📸 📹 📺 📻 📼 📽 📾 📿 📠 📡 📢 📣 📤 📥 📦 📧 📨 📩 📪 📫 📬 📭 📮 📯 📰 📱 📲 📳 📴 📵 📶 📷 📸 📹 📺 📻 📼 📿 Classrooms and desks  
<http://www.usda.gov/oc/photo/00di0878.htm>

These desks were not uncomfortable to kids. Indeed, the question about whether they were comfortable" was laughable. They only had to be serviceable. Remember: in that era, "kids were to be seen and not heard." Anywhere. We were assigned to specific desks and kept our supplies inside the desk on a shelf under the writing surface. The desks had ink wells in one of the top corners where we would put a bottle of writing ink when we had to practice writing using quills and nibs. Our heavy-duty cast iron desks were bolted directly to the floor. Other desks were bolted in sets of 4 to 2 x 4 rails so they were stable and remained in place but could be moved around by the janitors.

### Miss Anderson

**F**or me, going to kindergarten was the equivalent of being a wild stallion that unexpectedly had a saddle thrown on its back and a bridle with bit fitted

painfully and permanently into its mouth. I bucked and I kicked and never adjusted. Never. I had been wild too long by then. The discipline and rules didn't make sense. I did nothing unkind to anyone. It wasn't -and isn't- my nature. I treated kids and adults with courtesy and kindness and respect. But I often found myself the object of criticism from the teacher. I didn't comprehend what I had done wrong, I observed the "Golden Rule", but I had failed somehow, I had erred, because I had transgressed something called "rules" that I didn't know. But that didn't matter. Horse sense was not the guiding principle, being kind was not the guiding rule here.

"Following the rules" was the rule. I was mystified, pained. Ignorance was no excuse. Failures to conform were equated with stupidity and castigated as such. I agonized over my failures which were abundant and frequent. I did not comprehend what was required of me. My mom and dad and Sunday school teachers had explained carefully what I was supposed to do. I thought that was all I was responsible for. I did those things as a necessity, because of fear, and because it was my nature to be kind and considerate of others. But to no avail. I knew I was a "bad" student.

Mom magically preserved most of my "report cards". Following is the one from Kindergarten signed by the Executioner "Lorene Anderson" and principal "John Stagg" who in that time was hopefully not the butt-kissing sycophants that are endemic in public schools today, NEA parasites on the local economy. Today, however, they strut around with Ed.D. as if they were gods. I'm off the soap box now....but not through.

*Ronnie Jensen*

Public School Kindergarten  
JUNTAH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Harold M. Lundell, Superintendent

ACTIVITIES	Semesters		Days Belonging	Days Absent
	1st	2nd		
<u>Language and Literature</u>				
1. Likes to tell own stories.	S	S	90	0
2. Speaks clearly.	S	S		
3. Likes to listen to stories and poems.	S	S	86	17
4. Is learning new words.	S	S		
5. Likes to play stories.	S	S	Total 176	17
<u>Number Concepts</u>				
1. Likes to count.	S	S		
2. Understands terms of comparison, more-less, big-little, half-whole, etc.	S	S		
3. Understands clock, measures time.		S		
4. Associates numbers with objects.	S	S		
<u>Discovers The World About</u>				
1. Likes birds, flowers, animals.	S	S		
2. Is discovering how to obtain information from books.	S	S		
3. Becoming more observant.	S	S		
4. Asks good questions.	S	S		
<u>Reading Readiness</u>				
1. Knows his name in print.	S	S		
2. Likes to look at books.	S	S		
3. Repeats rhymes and retells stories.	S	S		
4. Can tell about things he has seen.	S	S		
5. Knows sounds of many consonants	S	S		
<u>Rhythm and Music</u>				
1. Likes to sing.	S	S		
2. Can march, gallop, skip, hop, run to music.	S	S		
3. Is learning left, right.	S	S		
4. Likes to listen to music.	S	S		
<u>Arts and Handcrafts</u>				
1. Likes to use crayons.	S	S		
2. Likes to paint.	S	S		
3. Likes to use clay.	S	S		
4. Can use scissors and paste.	S	S		
5. Knows colors.	S	S		
6. Likes to build and play with blocks.	S	S		

Figure 112 Kindergarten Report Card - Side B

Notice that the only "bad grade" I received in Kindergarten was in the first

HABITS AND ATTITUDES	Semesters		Days	
	1st	2nd	Belonging	Absent
<u>Responsibilities</u> He is learning to:				
1. Do his share of class work.	S	S		
2. Take care of himself in room and lavatory.	S	S		
3. Sit by others and not bother them.	S	S		
4. Take care of his own things.	S	S		
5. Knows what to do with things he finds.	S	S		
<u>Initiative</u> He is learning to:				
1. Have ideas about how to do things.	S	S		
2. Work without too much help.	S	S		
<u>Cooperation</u> He is learning to:				
1. Take turns in talking.	S	S		
2. Take turns in playing.	S	S		
3. Work with other children.	S	S		
4. Take turns in using equipment.	S	S		
<u>Work Habits</u> He is learning to:				
1. Use materials and tools carefully.	S	S		
2. Follow directions.	S	S		
3. Concentrate on his own work.	S	S		
4. Get things done on time.	S	S		
5. Put away materials and clean up room.	S	S		
<u>Personal Habits</u> He is learning to:				
1. Speak softly.	S	S		
2. Come to school neat and clean.	S	S		
3. Rest quietly.	X	S		
4. Be careful on playground.	S	S		
5. Say, "excuse me, thank you, good morning," etc.	S	S		
6. Be kind to others.	S	S		

Parents' Signature  
(Please sign and return )

*Mrs. James A. Jensen* \_\_\_\_\_  
1st Period \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd Period \_\_\_\_\_

Marking Code:  
 S - Indicates progress is satisfactory  
 V - Indicates improvement is desirable  
 X - Indicates progress has been made

*Lorene Anderson*  
Teacher

*John Stagg*  
Principal



half of the year where I was marked down because I hadn't learned to "rest quietly." Fact is, I still haven't. That goes against the grain of me to have to sit still, especially when I have to follow someone else's silly "rules". I have no problem with rules that arise from reality, from horse sense, but I will never freely accommodate myself to arbitrary rule that were dreamed up by some tight-souled mean person with what s/he perceives to be a modicum of authority. [Say 'thank you' now, because lots of really bad words were omitted here.]

Also note the absence of even a bad grade for the "Number Concepts", "Understands clocks, measures, time." I didn't get the clock. This business of big hands and little hands going in circles, pointing randomly at a series of numbers that "told" time just mystified the hell out of me. What nonsense was that. The more I was badgered about it, the more tentative I became until I learned what to answer. Not really grasping the ideas for some time. I did so poorly that the poor teacher didn't even know what to put in the box.

Note the interesting and bizarre measurements. What funny ways to measure a kid's progress" in kindergarten. I suppose I don't have others to substitute for them but they strike me as remarkably inane. Could I "March, gallop, skip, run to music"? It's embarrassing to even ask the question. If I had difficulty doing those things it was because they were such stupid things to be forced to do in the presence of a teacher who was evaluating you. I also like the one, "Asks good question." I suppose that means that some questions are 'bad' questions? Upsetting to me since my life was nothing if not a series of questions about every darn thing that came into view. Or "Takes turns using equipment." What a stupid thing to say. You need to know that we had a pair of D-6 Caterpillars, three front-end loaders and one Yellow Road Grader on the playground that we took turns with. Making trenches - to bury the teachers. Or "Knows what to do with things he finds." My ears burn. Or "Becoming more observant." How in \_\_\_\_\_ could one of these types even tell that? I was more observant of Mrs. Anderson then than she ever was of me. Ha. It's a miracle we could eat our lunch alone and navigate stairs and walk through doors without hitting the jambs. These morons 'teaching' us were brilliant.

Two interesting items on the second page: note that I was absent zero days the first semester, but was absent 17 days in the second . That resulted from the childhood diseases that infested us. Funny thing about the report card - it has no date. So I can't use mom's list of diseases with confidence. Let's do some math, a shaky enterprise anytime with me. If I started kindergarten when I was 5, that would have been in the fall of 1947 and would have finished in the spring on 1948. If that's the case, the list of illnesses and inoculations that mom prepared shows that I



did not have diseases after all that spring. I had two surgeries. Age 6. My tonsils were taken out, and the tumor on my ear was removed. Those surgeries accounted for 17 days of missed school. Miracle that I ever passed kindergarten wouldn't you say? Sharing Cats and running to music. I must have been a prodigy. Cuz' I could even button my own pants.

Mom's signature. She signed herself "Mrs. James Alvin Jensen" which reveals the prevailing perception of mothers of their place in the community in the era, extensions of their men. They signed themselves as their men's possession. Odd in today's perspective. And the style of the signature. It is so carefully written that it looks like she wrote it with the expectation that her penmanship would be graded by the teacher. The odd thing about the signature today is that I can't distinguish it from dad's. In the end their writing was so similar that I couldn't discriminate one from the other in isolation. The only reason I am sure this was mom's signature and not dad's is because of the "Mrs.".

### First Grade and Miss Isabelle

Miss Isabelle was a dream of a First Grade Teacher. I fell in love with her. My first true love, in truth. I had no idea what 'love' was -sad admission- but I experienced it in her class room. And was devastated. Even seeing this photo of her causes twinges in my poor old heart. She was absolutely gorgeous, stunning. Surprise you when you look at this photo of an old woman? I could understand why. But please remember: this woman represented the height of fashion and social power in the small agricultural town of Vernal in that era. She was one of the emerging liberated women though the term was too new for that era. [She's staring straight into my poor ol' eyes. Sigh. Amazing. Hope you have that experience 55 years later.]

She was actually Isabelle Johnson, but due to the fact that there was another Miss or Mrs. Johnson teaching at Central



Figure 114 Miss Isabelle

Elementary, Isabelle elected to go by her first name with "Miss" stuck on the front of it. That was a wise thing for her to do. It made her imminently approachable by us impressionable let-me-give-you-my-heart first graders who had done Kindergarten at this school with unapproachable Mrs. Anderson. Miss Isabelle explained to us kids the first week of school that we were to call her by her first name. I was undone. First name with a teacher. Well. When I had a chance in recess, I shyly went up to her and told her, "You can call me Ronnie."



flies out of the house was the major hygienic accomplishment and not coming into the house from the privy with smelly hands. Indeed, it didn't really "take" because the concepts were so foreign out on a farm, but out of fear of embarrassment if nothing else, I complied with the instructions. Plus I was in love. The first new concept was the idea of kids having to apply hand lotion after washing their hands. What a silly idea. Actually, as you can tell, the whole concept of washing my hands all the time was a bit foreign, but far be it from me to admit that putting this slippery greasy stuff on my hands was abnormal. Mom did that on occasion but she was a girl. That was different. That was "girl stuff".

As I got into the spirit of the enterprise, I pleaded with mom to have my own little bottle of "Jergens Hand Lotion" with my name on it, to sit on the counter by the sink in the classroom with similar bottles - owned by kids who were probably as allergic to the stuff as I was. The hand washing was a mini-course in what today would be termed "Infection Control", a good thing to be teaching to a bunch of kids from farms who played in who-knows-what up to the point they went in to eat dinner. It isn't that farm moms didn't know or didn't care. They just had to contend with the challenge of no running water and dirty little kids who were anxious to get the meal over so they could go back outside again until dark. Splashed water on the dusty dirty skin with a swipe of a towel was it.

The second idea out of the good hygiene business was these neat little cellophane packages tightly filled with Kleenex, the stuff you saw but didn't dare use otherwise in your life. What a novel idea. After we got over the foreignness of the concept, I think us kids sort of dreamed up excuses to apply those delicate puffs of softness to our noses, really wasting them in the process.

My report card for the year follows on the next two pages. Note that I had problems in the first quarter with observing "Safety Rules". I still do. I imagine, once again, that the "safety rules" were really just "rules". If I didn't see a safety issue from the vantage point of a little boy running his body out there on the play ground, then I would proceed. Turns out that mom thinks that a big reason for the fact that my poor body has suffered so many traumas over the years is that I am first, impatient and second, anxious to do. I asked her why I got hurt so much and that was her explanation. I want to get out there and do the thing. None of this waiting, thank you. Let's get on with it.

Note also that I had difficulty, according to Miss Isabelle, with reading at grade level and with "phonics". BS. I was just fine, thank you. The problem was that my interior discussion about philosophy of reading and learning didn't match that of the exterior world so I was viewed as troubled and at-risk. Because I followed my

own path. Chuckle.

The second semester Isabelle noted that I was having trouble learning "self control." Still a problem with me. I have difficulty conforming to what I perceive as arbitrary rules, rules that appear to be the product of arbitrary people who don't have a clue about how life is lived.

# THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OF

## Utah School District

1948..... - 1949....

**GRADES: FIRST, SECOND, THIRD**

Report of Rondo Jensen

Grade 1 School Central

Teacher Isabelle Johnson

Principal John Stagg

**TO PARENTS:**

A child's education goes on twenty-four hours of the day. The activities of the school, the home and community all contribute to this process of development.

This report gives our estimates of the results being achieved by this child in the classroom work and school activities.

Parents are requested to study this report and when the progress of the pupil does not appear to be satisfactory it is urged that they confer with the teacher and principal. The report should be signed by the parent or guardian and returned to the teacher.

**H. GRANT VEST,**  
Superintendent of Schools.

Figure 117 Figure 117 First Grade Report Card Side 1

### STUDY YOUR CHILD'S GROWTH

**PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Vigorous play, large muscle activities, proper rest and nutrition are important aspects of a child's physical development. Parent and teacher should be conscious of the development of eye structure, and permanent teeth and the coordination of muscle and nerve. Practice in climbing, to develop chest muscles and back muscles should be encouraged. Experience in balancing the body in rhythmic response to music should be provided. Proper habits in drinking, eating, and elimination should be established. Parents and teachers should watch for colds and communicable diseases.

**MENTAL DEVELOPMENT**

With equal opportunity, development comes more slowly for some children than others. This is natural and is to be expected by parents and teachers. At this age it is important to develop wide interests and proper attitudes. Children will start to read, learn to do some writing, and a limited amount of number work. They will learn to express their thoughts by using appropriate words, stating clear sentences, and by taking pride in correct pronunciation. They should start showing interest in good literature. Pupils begin to take pleasure in writing ideas in the second grade.

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Children grow increasingly social in nature through experiences in group living and sharing. During these years they will become increasingly aware of the interdependence among people in the home, the school and the community. Friendships and loyalties develop rapidly and may change fleetingly, as they are based on transitory interests. Leaders will appear among children and need proper supervision in both the home and the school.

**EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

A sense of humor is an outstanding characteristic of pupils in primary grades. Children's emotional experiences should not be dramatized by adults as being more important than they really are. Children of this age make ready response to beauty which needs encouragement. They will make response to rhythm, which should be encouraged. A sense of security should be provided by both home and school.

Figure 118 First Grade Report Card Side 2

Signature of Parent

I have carefully read the report herein contained.

1st Report *Mrs. James A. Jensen*  
 2nd Report *Mrs. James A. Jensen*  
 3rd Report *Mrs. James A. Jensen*  
 4th Report *Mrs. James A. Jensen*

TRANSFER

THIS CERTIFIES THAT

has done work in \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School  
 as shown on this report and has asked for this transfer  
 to: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Future Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, Teacher  
 \_\_\_\_\_, Principal

CERTIFICATE OF PROMOTION

This certifies that as a result of the record shown in  
 this report *Ronan Jensen*  
 is hereby promoted to the \_\_\_\_\_ Grade on this  
 \_\_\_\_\_ day of *July* 19*49*  
*James Jensen*, Teacher  
*James Jensen*, Principal

VERNAL EXPRESS PRINT

Figure 119 First Grade Report Card Side 4

Progress Report

Days of School	45	40	45	42
Days Absent	2	0	3	0
Times Tardy	0	0	0	0

HEALTH and SAFETY Reports: 1 2 3 4

Keeps Clean and Neat	S	S	S	S
Has Good Posture	S	S	S	S
Observes Safety Rules	X	S	S	S

READING, WRITING, ARITHMETIC  
MUSIC

Is Reading at pre-primer level	S	S	S	S
Is Reading at the primer level		X		
Is Reading at first reader level				
Is Reading at second reader level				
Is Reading at third reader level	S	S	S	S
Is satisfactorily developing skill in oral expression	S	S	S	S
Is satisfactorily developing skill in muscular control in art, writing, and construction	S	S	S	S
Is satisfactorily developing skill and appreciation in music	S	S	S	S
Is satisfactorily developing skill in number work	S	S	S	X

WORK HABITS

Works well with others	S	S	S	S
Works well alone	X	S	S	S
Makes good use of time	S	S	S	S
Finishes work	S	S	S	S
Is developing self control	S	X	S	S

MARKING CODE:  
 S—Indicates progress is satisfactory  
 ✓—Indicates improvement is desirable  
 X—Indicates that progress has been made

Figure 120 First Grade Report Card - Side 3

In those days I was still "Ronnie". But I found something interesting when I scanned in the above report card. Mom had folded and preserved a double-sided piece of paper that had a drawing on each side. I assume I drew in that school year - why else would she have preserved the photo in an envelope that contained only the first grade report card? The two sides of the page follow. The first page is a primitive representation of human beings. The second page is an extraordinary creation. Remember, please, that I was a first grader when I did this. I had no training from my dad other than watching him work intently. I only used crayons.

The first page with the three stick figures is probably generally on track for any first grader. Primitive representations with sticks and circles. Mom obviously wrote in the "interpretation" that I must have provided to her later when she asked me what I had drawn. I am not entirely positive today that what I said is what I really intended but that is ancient history. Such bold, impersonal entries.

The second page surprises me. Staying within the lines, but more importantly the freshness and creative matching of lines and colors within the free-style shapes. I've seen comparable images, done by an idiot savant who was published to immense international acclaim. He also used crayons to capture his realistic reality. Mine was abstract, but it was comparably sophisticated and compelling in its imagery.

I need to comment further on the three stick figures. They are primitive because I was young. That isn't a problem. Motor skills develop at their own pace so are part of the problem for a young person. Rendering an image of a real thing is affected by the degree of physical control the kid has over the crayon. But in addition to the motor skills, there are the psychological and perceptual dimensions. Did you know that if you took that picture to a child psychologist today and asked him/her to tell you what s/he thinks about the home environment of the child who drew them, s/he would tell you that it was a negative, frightening, oppressive, unpleasant environment. Look at those open mouths. Terror. Fear. Lack of love, lack of warmth, no smiles, no interest. Just fear.

I tell you this because it is important that you understand the meaning of this artistic expression -anxiety- I lived with. Oppressive isn't it. Last week the Jewish attorney who works with Deanna brought in a drawing done by her 4 year old girl. It was stunning in its loveliness and wisdom and humor and ability to draw things with perspective and perception. I was amazed and I looked again at this picture drawn when I was 2 years older, i.e. 50% older than she was, and felt like weeping. What a terrible picture of my environment I presented to the world. But it was accurate. I know that. It's no surprise. I just thought it was more hidden than that. The border along the top is the interesting artistic element - with three circular blank spots.





Figure 121 Drawing of "Boy, Mother and Dad"



Figure 122 First Grade Drawing - Side 2

Actually, these pictures reveal substantial control over the crayon as in the fringe. Careful and controlled alternation of brown and red along the upper border of the picture. Similarly, the accurate placement of the pupils inside of the eyes of the stick figures shows control. Staying inside the lines in the abstract designs, particularly where two colors are blended inside of one shape shows that motor control was present. So the fact of the staring shocked anxious humans must have derived from the psyche, not from the muscles. It makes sense to me. I recall the time in Vernal as one of stress and anxiety. Constantly. Those three figures tell the tale.

### Second Grade and Mrs. Williams

Second grade with Mrs. Williams is pretty much a blank. Except that I knew that she didn't think highly of me as a person. Or of my penmanship. I have a vague image of her. She was a largish, severe, matronly woman with gray hair who never smiled and never joked with us. The most positive experience we could hope for was for her to mention our names as having earned a good grade on a test. I did not hear my name. My penmanship earned constant criticism from her. It was poor but she made it worse by confirming in my mind that I would never learn to write right. Interestingly enough, I have photos of Miss Isabel and Mrs. Schofield, but not Mrs. Williams. I didn't like her any more than she liked me.

### Third Grade and Mrs. Schofield

Third grade was different. I liked school and looked forward to going. I was still socially uncomfortable with those other kids, most of them city kids, in cliques that excluded me, a loner from the country, from a farm. When the bus picked us up in the morning, we were some of the first kids picked up. The driver continued south, picking up the two groups of Cooper kids, then the Roberts kids, and turned east along a road to collect other bebies of kids before it headed north again to drop us off at the school. Getting off the bus and going to Ms. Schofield was totally different than going to Mrs. Williams. Wonderful things made school an exciting time, a fun time, a place to learn and gave a sense of being competent.

First, we could tell that she just liked us. Simply because she liked us. That made for a good beginning. Every morning she -like the other teachers- would enter the class room and greet us as we waited at our desks, "Hello children!" and we replied in unison, "Good morning, teacher." Sound like too much regimentation? It wasn't. It was actually comforting. In a few minutes we would stand together, face the American flag that hung in the front of the class room and put our hand over our

hearts. There were a few loudly whispered arguments about just where this thing called "heart" was located and where we should be holding our hands, but we generally knew that a hand over the center of our chest would satisfy most critics.

We said the Pledge of Allegiance out loud, slowly and carefully, as a group of dedicated citizens. I don't want to overstate that because there were some characters who were always half a beat off whatever we did, but the general tenor of the situation was understanding that it was a significant thing to stand as a class and honor our flag with our hands, hearts and mouths. The flag was a big deal in those days. A sacred emblem that unfortunately lost its meaning during the Viet Nam war, one of the sad casualties of those painful years. Flag etiquette was drilled into us and we accepted it. We knew that if there was bad weather that the janitor would not even expose the flag to the weather because the flag was sacred. If rain came after he had hung the flag, he'd run

-R U N- out and pull it down to keep it sacred. My my. Such a different time. We have lost something important, haven't we. Emblems are critical to the well-being of a society and we lost the most universal one.

We would also -perish the thought, all you ACLU lovers- sit quietly, bow our heads and repeat the Lord's Prayer out loud. Tsk tsk. The only thing that troubled us was the conflict over the words about "forgive us our debts" which was translated as "forgive us our trespasses" by another faith. But the concept of saying the prayer as a group to open our day was uniformly accepted. That obviously reflected the mores of the insular culture, yet it was a nearly universal exercise in schools across the country. When we later heard of the nasty souls who took schools to court because they felt their children were being forced to be religious against their will when "forced" to say the Lord's Prayer -poppycock because no one was "forced"- we were shocked. Truly shocked. What was this thing, to say that the Lord's Prayer was a bad thing, that kids were being harmed by saying it? I'm not sure it was really a religious thing for us, but there was respect for the concept, a tolerance that boded well for the body politic. This skirmish over "religion in school" in the 1950's was a signal event, foreshadowing the massive shattering forces that culminated in the anti-Viet Nam movement. I personally think that the tolerance of the community for saying the lords prayer was healthier for the community than the nasty selfishness of the do-gooders who were, after all was said and done, the bigots and intolerant souls. Poop on them.

This was during the winding down of WW II but military things were prominent in school and the news. Looking back I am surprised at how long the winding-down took. Officially WW II ended in 1945, yet 5 years later it was as vivid in my mind as

when it was going on, perhaps more because my mind was unformed back then. Uncle Grant had come home from Guadalcanal with a broken back and for years had to wear a back brace, which probably refreshed my sense of the reality and nearness of WW II. In class, Ms. Schofield talked with great pride about her son who was a pilot in the air force. I don't recall any particular exploits of his but it was a big deal, her son being a pilot. I was impressed.

She explained, using her son as an example, what it meant to "be on the beam". She explained that her son relied on radio signals to guide him in combat. My, my. She was filled with palpable pride telling stories about him. He had to "be on the beam". We heard and were awed at her conviction and the lesson taught. We didn't have a clue about the technology but we learned something about the importance of being good people and good citizens. In those days it was safe to be patriotic, to speak of America with love, to be openly critical of our enemies. Such a change, isn't it, and not a good one when all is said and done.

Values were clearly explained and endorsed. There was no squeamishness about believing in our country and god and the flag, none about being patriotic, about trying to be good people. My life has been richer for the experience.

Most of us were persuaded by Mrs. Schofield. to scrounge money from our parents to buy Postal Savings Stamps. My personal book is shown in Volume 1. She would write a list of who gave her how much money and would go to the post-office to buy these stamps. It was a bit like saving Greenstamps later because we were given



**Multiply this... by 9,000,000**

**... to keep fighting radios on the beam!**

Under pressure of war's demands for immense quantities of radio equipment for use on land, at sea and in the air, crystal grinding techniques have been revolutionized. More than 9,000,000 crystals have been produced for war by Western Electric to date. One of our shops now makes as many crystals in a day as the whole industry used to turn out in a year! And four such Western Electric shops are now working. In other phases of Western Electric's war work, much the same thing has been happening. Radio receivers and transmitters of many types have been produced by the tens of thousands—mikes of all types totaling more than 600,000—over half a million headsets—vacuum tubes by the millions. As a natural result of Western Electric's years of leadership in telephone and radio work, this Company is today the nation's largest producer of electronic and communications equipment for war.

To speed Victory, buy War Bonds regularly—all you can!

75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
**Western Electric**  
ARSENAL OF COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT

Figure 123 "On the beam..."

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu:80/adaccess/R/R03/R0359-72dpi.jpeg>

small paper books with squares for stamps. Then we would lick and paste our next stamps into the book. The amount I was able to save was minuscule I am sure but the concept of doing something patriotic was drilled into us that year. Saving money through the post office was important. We understood that the government would have money to help soldiers, an important lesson.

It was during this year that learned about atom bombs, how they might land in this country, how powerful they were. We learned how to protect ourselves during an attack in the class room, learning how to crowd ourselves under our desks so that if the ceiling fell we would have some protection. We believed in the possibility although it was so foreign that we weren't really troubled by it. At this point I have to tell you something important: while I did grow up more or less during the time of what I consider to be hysteria about the atom bomb, I was not troubled by it, no more than I was about the concept of war itself. That interests me because I hear people a few years younger than me speak of the terror of the atom bomb and so on. I think that's silly. Perhaps because I preceded the baby boomers I am not hysterical like they are about the atom bomb. In fact, I have liked the idea that we had it and as a result were able to hold the communist philosophy in check.

Once more, I harbor a deep misgiving about the actual source for the anxiety: I believe it stemmed more from the manner in which the media chose to portray the atom bomb than from actual comprehension by the public of the risks of nuclear fission reactions. I don't think people really cared that much, and would not have gotten worked up about it if the media had been more balanced in its presentation of the facts. Similarly, I believe that there are snide groups of people who make it their objective to be destructive of everything, to tear down, to make fun on, the overstate or understand, etc. in order to make themselves feel important. They feel important when they get people to be upset and angry. That is sick, but it is the kind of sickness that has to be tolerated by the democracy that is being negatively affected by it.

Mrs. Schofield helped us memorize a variety of military songs. We would march around the outside of the room in single file singing them under her direction. "The Caissons go Rolling Along", "From the Halls of Montezuma", as well as the usual "America the Beautiful" and the "Star Spangled Banner." I loved marching around the room singing my heart out participating in something larger than myself, something more real and tangible than singing songs in Sunday school.

Ms. Schofield believed in field trips and wasn't afraid to take her bunch of third graders out into the town, alone. Glorious opportunities to get out of the class room, under the guidance of someone who loved us who was going to treat us to

something fun and something educational at the same time. I had never been of field trips before so these were like getting liberty from a ship for a weekend. I knew from my own dad how much fun learning can be and her style of teaching on field trips was comparable. One of the field trips was to her own house to show us her flowers. Four o'clocks stick in my memory from this trip. I even located seeds later in Boise and planted them in front of 5111 because I loved the name as much as anything. I've grown them since and they are imbued with a special quality derived from her instruction about where the name came from.

She took us to the Vernal Field House of Natural History. I thought I owned the place because dad did work there, and took us in many times. I personally knew Ernest and Billie Untermeyer, the directors, and they wisely reinforced my sense of familiarity during the introduction of us to them by saying something special that revealed to the other kids that they knew me and liked me.

True to form for a teacher who cared, she gave each of us kids a class picture with her standing in the background. There were 31 of us kids, divided about equally between boys and girls.

I'm sitting on the front row on the right side of the kid with eyeglasses and his hand in his mouth. That's Clayton. Funny kid. I liked him. Vivian is the fourth from the left. I loved and feared her. A pretty, powerful girl who scared the crap out of me by her directness and prettiness.

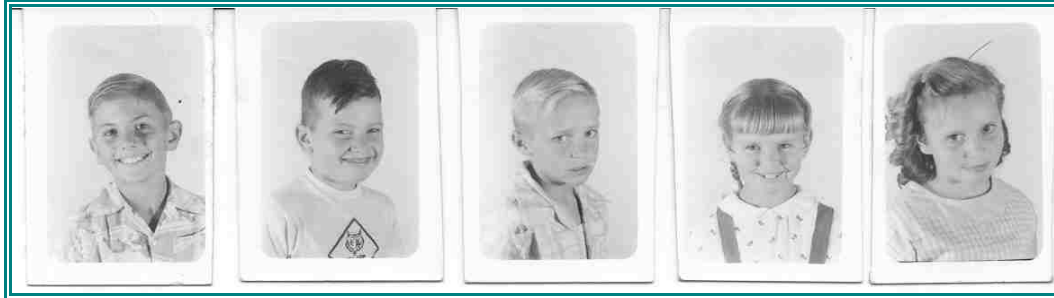


Figure 124 Miss Schofield and Third Grade Class

It seems odd to look closely at these kids today and to be able to remember most of them because I can't remember most of my high school senior class. What particularly surprises me is the fact that as I look at these little kids, I see them as being my own age - right now. My age today. But I am 60 and they are only 8. Odd that they should age as much as I, even though the images here are of little kids. How can that be?

Here's a set of "thumbnails" that I traded with five kids. Surprised I had the

courage to do it.



Perhaps they initiated the trades? Clark on the left, Gary, Dale, Vivian and Carol Lee. I can describe the personalities of each kid. I liked Vivian but she was tougher than us boys. Her last name was something like Merkley. Gary was the class clown, Clark was the nice quiet likeable guy and Carol Lee was trying hard to be friends with every one, a little on the large size.

Mrs. Schofield maintained discipline by herself. No need for "team teachers" or "assistants" or "parent volunteers". That's impressive but of course, that was a different era. When a kid came home with a bad report, s/he got a heavy-duty lecture. Maybe a laying on of hands, you know, as in the "School Board". No kidding. Bad behavior in school for most families wasn't acceptable so Ms. Schofield and company could rely on that backstop. That simplified discipline in the classroom. What interests me about this business is that while discipline in the classroom was greater then, parental involvement in the classroom was less than when I was PTO President. There were a few things like Halloween Parties where mothers brought cup cakes and cookies but entertainment was the limit. None of the grading of papers, preparing of weekly take home packets, tutoring that happens today. I believe that the key to classroom discipline was parental involvement at home.

I have to admit though that in the final years I worked with Valley View Elementary in Boise it was shocking how difficult it was becoming to find parents willing to volunteer to do about anything. When I moved there in 1977 there were more willing parents than jobs but when I was leaving they didn't want to help. Just ask them for money, and they'd produce it, but just don't ask for any of their time. Their lack of interest in school and behavior in school was reflected in their kids who didn't have great interest in or respect for education. Shortly after Julie left Valley View, discipline problems became so severe that Boise Police Department permanently stations a Resource Officer in the school. Of course, what I refer to was a microcosm of society. These changes weren't confined to our elementary school.



Society itself was undergoing profound shifts that were undermining the social structure that schools used to be able to rely on for support.

Note in the class picture the same thing I've been harping on - all of the girls are wearing dresses. No levis, not jeans or slacks of any kind. Girls always wore dresses to school, and nice ones at that. If a girl wore levis or slacks it was because she had no dress to wear, was too poor or something equally unfortunate. This negative sense associated with slacks or jeans for girls was so prevalent that I think those girls would have begged borrowed or stolen a dress if necessary, just so they wouldn't have to appear in slacks. I'm not saying that girls ought to wear dresses today. I'm just pointing another of those subtle cultural clues that reveal something about the standards of the community and era. Acceptance of social norms was inculcated early. Notice their hair styles. And the hair of the boys. Neat and tidy all of them. Once more that reflects something about family life as well, the presence of mothers in most of the homes at the time kids went to school. Today single parent families have a different set of obligations and demands that allow some kids to appear at school disheveled. Teachers are as much social workers today as they are teachers, hence part of the justification for the support staff.

A puppet show near the end of the year was most memorable class project. The theme was dinosaurs which naturally was my forte. Mrs. Schofield -in those days the designation "Mrs." was not sneered at, and it referred to an adult woman who was married as opposed to "Miss" who regardless of age was not married and we made sure we knew which to use and did- encouraged me either directly or through her manner, so I took off with an assignment. We were each to prepare a picture on a stick of whatever dinosaur we wanted, and had to prepare a short explanation or history about it. When everyone was ready on the assigned day, there would be a puppet theater for us to present our animal when we would each step up the to puppet theater and go behind the curtain to hold our creation up in front of the curtain. I did so well that Mrs. Schofield had me help other kids who were struggling.

I chose to make a puppet of dinicthys, a monstrosity of the prehistoric oceans, a huge fish creature that had armor plates on its head and chest. Why did it appeal to me? I don't know, but it did, so I made one. Mom got me some light cardboard and tongue depressors. I carefully drew the this creature and filled in the key elements. Then I cut it out and pasted it on the tongue depressors that we used as a handle to bring the creature up into the stage of the puppet theater without our hands showing. I colored the creature with colored pencils out of a box of 8. A treasure, my own set of 8 short colored pencils that put color on the page like crayons did but

without the bulkiness and flakes. I think that's why I love the idea of the large sets of colored pencils sold in art stores. Throwback to being a child.

About the time we were getting ready to put on our puppet show, Mrs. Schofield took us on another field trip as part of the curriculum. She didn't use fancy words like that, but she knew her stuff. She walked our class down the street to Main Street and eastward to the Field House of Natural History. All by herself, and there was no monkey business. Kids lined up in pairs following behind her as she marched determinedly on her way. The fieldhouse looks like this today and it looked like this back then with the difference that there was nothing planted in this sidewalk. It was just a cement slab. I don't remember whether or not there was a flag.



Figure 126

<http://utahreach.usu.edu/uintah/visitor/tour/ufh.htm>

The museum was a glorious place to spend hours. Three large rooms filled with exhibits. The main room had a counter where Billie or Ernest Unterman answered questions and gave directions. Nice people who treated kids well. They acted like they actually cared for kids even though they had none of their own. Surrounding this counter/information center was a collection of rock fragments, dinosaur bone fragments, gastroliths, minerals, books and so on. The point of these items didn't seem to me to be to take my money. It seemed to be aimed at giving information on topics I wanted to know more about. Indeed, over the years, Billie and Ernest gave Dick and me birthday presents of small books on dinosaurs that were in the museum collection. Some of them even survive today at 2821 North. If you asked Billie a question, she'd hunt for the little booklets that had the answer and show us. She didn't pressure us to buy them, rather pointed out what was there and the information it contained.

While we were visiting the museum, Mrs. Schofield told Billie Unterman about this dinosaur puppet project which was one of the reasons for the visit. Billie was interested to know more, like she always was so she asked some of us kids, ones she knew I think, about our individual choices.

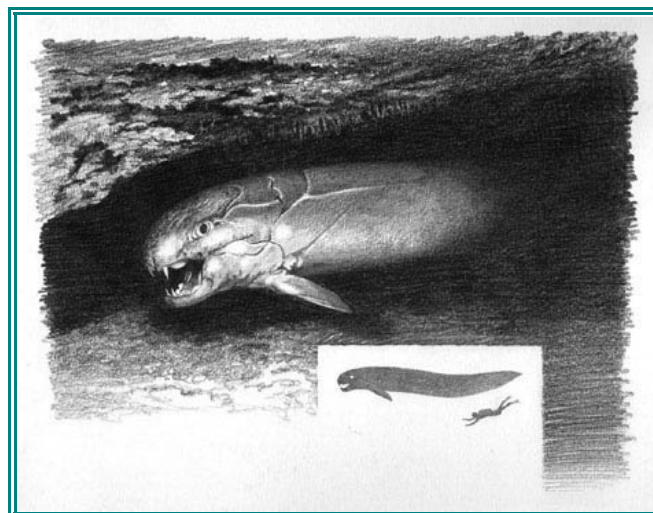


Figure 127 <http://www.chez.com/glandin/Dinichthys.jpg>

When she turned to me, the courage I had speaking privately with her dissolved. I told her that my project was dinicthys. She asked details about each of our creatures and I told her that mine was a big sea monster and that had armor on his head and thorax. At that point she did something unexpected.

She contradicted me. I suspect she was gentle about it because it was her nature to be careful with little minds, but she was also a stickler for accuracy. The latter is what prompted her to correct me in the presence of Mrs. Schofield and the class, all of whom were clustered around the information counter. I was mortified. I could scarcely tolerate the embarrassment of being singled out in the first place to be asked questions in public even about things I loved and understood, but it was much worse when she said I mis-spelled the name of this creature. She did know which one I was talking about no doubt. But she told me that I was mis-pronouncing and mis-spelling the name. Instead of "dinicthys" the correct name was "dinictys", she said. I was mortified.

But I knew I was right.

But what's a kid to do, even one that isn't falling apart?

Well, I went back to school and after school wandered home disconsolate. I had been embarrassed at having to speak in public, I had been mortified at being corrected in front of everyone, and I knew that I was right. I don't think I said anything to mom. She actually wasn't particularly interested in what happened at school, unless we were in trouble. Report card time we had her attention but only if there were bad grades, and that only for a day or two. Otherwise she was too occupied with her own issues, too busy to worry about me. So I don't think I told her what had happened. That is probably part of my problem. I had no outlet for my anxieties and fears so I kept them bottled up inside of me, carrying them around like lead sinkers that pulled my poor little soul down.

After dinner the phone rang, a rare thing. As noted above, people didn't hang on the phone all day. If they had a specific reason to use the phone they did, but it was not used as a form of recreation and gossip like it is today. The caller, a woman, asked for mom, so mom listened carefully to an explanation. After signing off, mom said that the caller was Billie Unterman. Billie called to apologize for what she had done that day, and said that she was the one who was wrong, that I did, in fact, spell the name right. What happened was that SHE had mixed up the names of this armored sea monster and a large saber-toothed tiger who was named "dinictys". I was vindicated. But of course, the kids at school didn't get to hear that. No justice for little kids.

### "I see London, I see France..."

On the playground behind the school we had two sets of swings, two slides, one of them so tall I was afraid of it, a merry-go-round, teeter-totters, monkey bars and a jungle gym. The swings were constructed of wide thick rubber-fabric strips that hung on chains from a steel pipe frame set in concrete, six or eight in two sets. The ground beneath them was covered with sawdust. A teacher prowled the yard refereeing the inevitable disputes that arose when two kids wanted the same thing, or one pushed the other and so on. Boys were also admonished to be nice to girls, to treat them more kindly than they did each other. That training took hold with the result today that I feel like being courteous to females, which doesn't always go over well with those who wear the chip of equality on their shoulder. I feel like I'm unkind when I offer my seat to a woman of that ilk and risk being rebuffed when I hold a door for her.

Girls jumped rope when the weather was good, and played jacks. This was an interesting game, requiring good hand-eye coordination. Smooth surfaces were hard to find so the girls always played over on the concrete walks. With a wise guy walking through to mess up the jacks - if he could get away with it. The downside was the anger of the teacher who would lecture the kid for doing that. The idea was to bounce the ball with one hand and to use the same hand to grab different numbers of jacks before the ball hit the ground. I didn't quite understand the rules.

Some kids brought a paddle ball with an elastic string that pulled the ball back to the paddle after it had been hit. Tough game. I couldn't master it. Fear of failure made it impossible to actually try it in front of other kids and since I didn't have my own, I never became competent at it.

Competition for the playground equipment was intense since there were so many kids. All six grades - minus kindergartners who were too small to risk the rowdiness- were on recess together so competed for the devices. Naturally, the larger kids tended to get their way. The monkey bars and jungle gym provided some unplanned excitement, kids being kids. As you noted above in the photograph of Mrs. Schofield's class, girls wore dresses so when they played on the jungle gym there was



the possibility of someone looking up someone else's dress. The climbers tried to avoid that more or less successfully -though more than one actually desired it, even at that age. Same for the monkey bars. Hanging upside down by one's knees while waving the arms was the height of bravery. Particularly for the girls in their dresses. Naturally, as soon as any kid saw a girl attempting this, he focused on the project and when it was accomplished, he yelled loudly the ditty,

"I see London, I see France,  
I see Mary's underpants."

Tremendous interest and titters and shouts of derision resulted while the hapless Mary recovered herself, got down and with an embarrassed face told the kids to leave her alone.

There were a whole set of ditties that kids recited or shouted at appropriate times for various reasons. Herbie Snyder was a member of my class and I don't remember what so special about him as to earn his own ditty but he did:

"Herbie Snyder, Billie Goat Rider,  
Lift up his tail, and out comes a  
spider."

The teachers shushed kids who said those things, but the net effect of the sanction was to push the behavior underground so it erupted on the periphery of the playground. In those days, there were no TVs, no electronic toys or games. No entertainment except that we created ourselves, so these things carried over for generations.

### Hopalong Cassidy

There were actually five famous cowboys that I looked up to and admired.



Figure 130 Hopalong Cassidy  
<http://www.fiftiesweb.com/western.htm>

Hopalong was one of them, a good guy, but notice that he's not wearing the traditional white hat of the good guy. He's wearing black. It makes a nice contrast with that white cloud behind him. The mountains look like the Uintahs so that would have increased our familiarity with him, our understanding of what he was about. Two six shooters. He was impressive.

Note that he had high cowboy boots with a white border. I always longed for a pair of cowboy boots but never had any. They were too expensive. Mom made us think that the reason she didn't get them was that they "weren't good for our feet". Humph. I understood the money part so wasn't entirely convinced she was entirely honest there. I was used to that duplicity in my parents, as you probably were with your parents.

## Christmas and Santa Claus

Christmas turned out to be a real mixed bag. On the one hand, I was titillated and thrilled at the notion of getting a lot of freebies but on the other, there was rigid discipline and control, more than usual, which is saying a heck of a lot, which made Christmas a perilous enterprise. I suspected that they punished us for getting so much stuff from them. There are some wonderful memories about Christmas, and there are some bitter ones.

Some of the Christmas songs you kids sang came into being when I was a kid. That's probably surprising to hear because they may seem eternal to you like "Silent Night." But some sprang into existence on radio waves at a specific point in time that I remember.

"Here comes Santa Claus" was one. Sung by Gene Autry. Most of these Christmas songs were sung by one of the famous cowboys. I'm not sure what that means - but it does mean

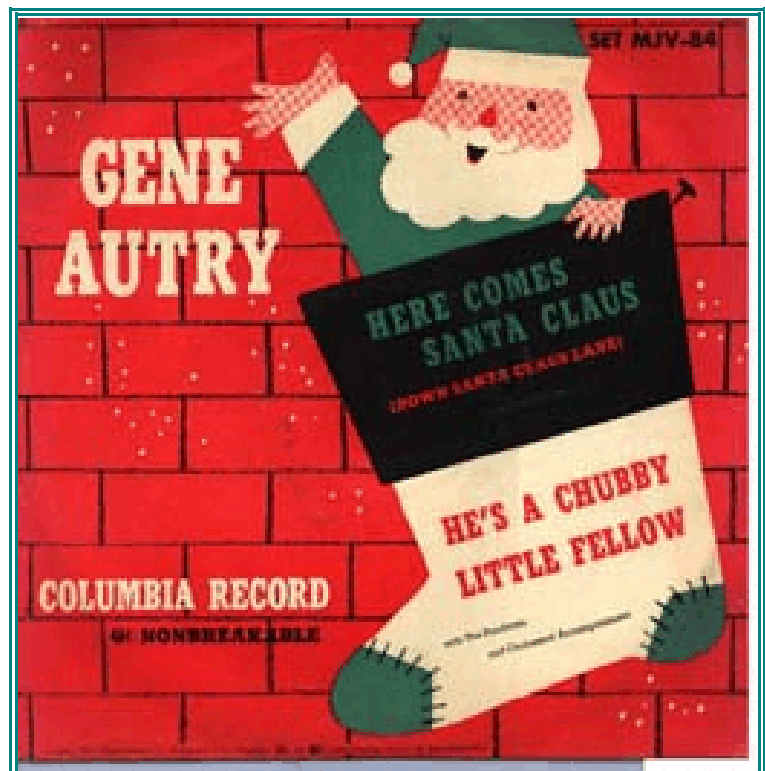


Figure 131 <http://www.the-forum.com/toys/images/004rc002.jpg>

something. Cowboys the chosen ones to sing to the young. This image is of the printed, paper sleeve for a 78 RPM.

"Up on the Housetop Reindeer Paws" was another carol I loved. It created the vision in me of Santa's sled and reindeers on my own roof, and I laid awake at night straining to hear the crunch and rustle of little paws - in the snow that usually was there. That was a delicious part of Christmas, the secret fantasies surrounding the Santa Claus, his elves and the reindeer.

"Frosty the Snowman" started back then. The thing that was new when you were small was the annual TV special of this name. It was based on the song, but was merely the adaptation to a new medium of the old lyrics. Look who sings it. "When Santa Claus gets your letter" was also popular so this 78 sold well. Frosty was a fascinating character. We made snow men so knew what happened in the sun and we wondered about Frosty while we watched our snowmen melt. The magic of a hat conferring life was wonderful. We put hats on our snowmen, secretly hoping, but nothing happened.

Rosemary Clooney managed to horn into the Christmas Scene somehow. Amazing. Her entry was "Winter Wonderland", a lovely song that conjured up images of a winter wonderland. I was young and impressionable and believed what she said and tried to create in my mind the images that her words

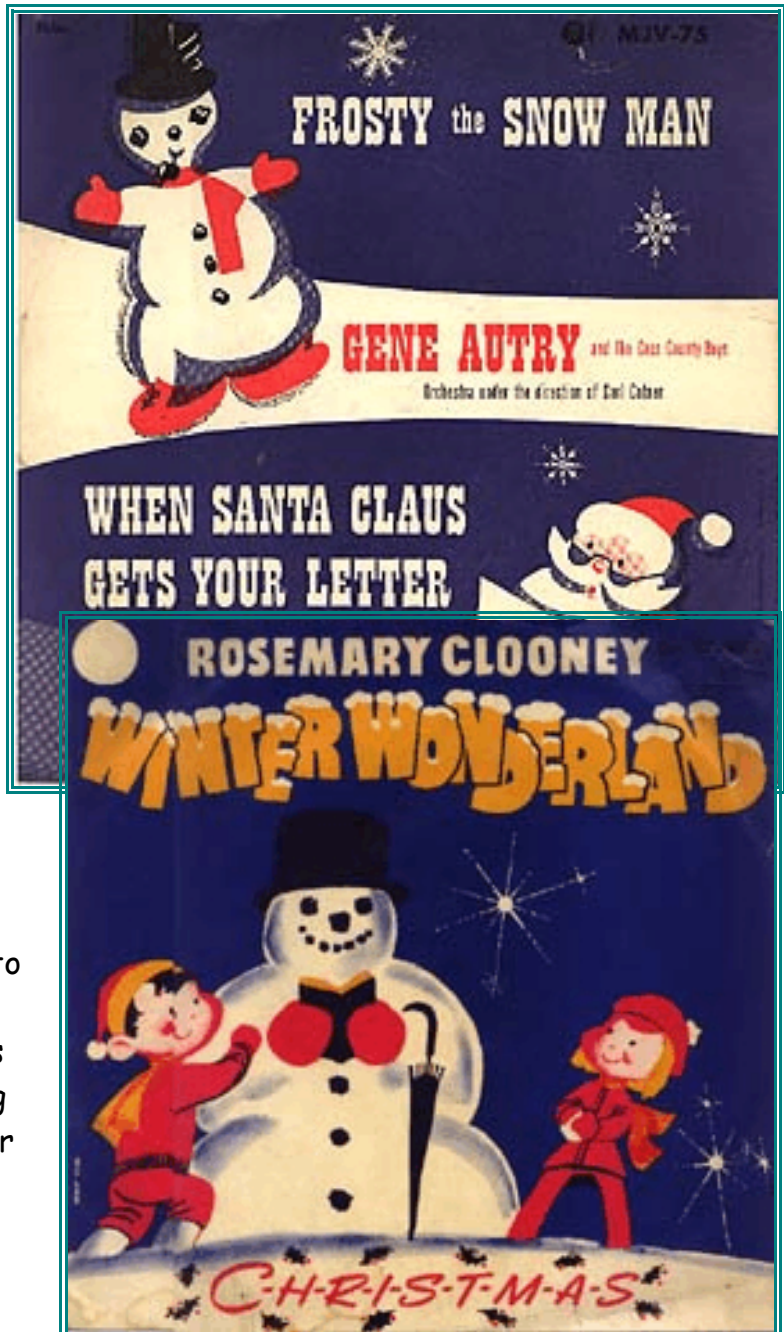


Figure 133 <http://www.the-forum.com/toys/images/004rc005.jpg>

were calling for.

We didn't own any of these records. Just heard them on the radio but that was enough to make them stick in our minds. There were no video games, no TV, nothing like that to distract us so when we heard something new, we listened and learned quickly.

Arthur Godfrey contributed his version of "T'was the Night before Christmas". He was another prominent man like Art Linkletter who stood tall in the world of radio. He pushed Chesterfield Cigarettes and was enormously popular.

When you listened to this song at Christmas time, did it create exciting images and expectations of something wonderful? Did you, too, lie in bed trying not to sleep, to listen for the sound of hooves on your roof when Santa's sleigh landed with the reindeer? You of course fell asleep before you heard the noise but in the morning you got up to see the evidence and you continued in your secret belief and hope for another year, didn't you.

"I'm dreaming of a White Christmas" appeared a year or two before I left Vernal. Bing Crosby came out with this song before we moved. Bing was called the "Crooner" for good reason, a lovely Irish tenor voice, smooth and mellow. He was always classy. This movie was one of the rare times when the four of us as a group indulged in sin. We knew better than to go to



Figure

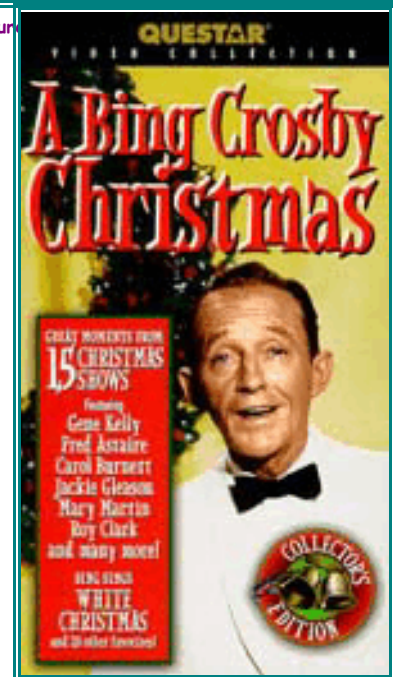


Figure 135

[http://www.ifilm.com/image/stills/films/a/159153\\_m\\_1\\_a.jpg](http://www.ifilm.com/image/stills/films/a/159153_m_1_a.jpg)



movies on Sunday. Right? Evil thing to do. I heard preachings about that many times when we asked to go to a movie. Well, one bright sunny Sunday dad decided that he was going to see "White Christmas" that afternoon. He bamboozled mom into going with him and taking us kids. I sat in the theater not really enjoying the movie, partly because it was over my head, but also because I was actually knowingly intentionally purposely committing sin, sinking low in the eyes of the supreme being. I did enough bad stuff on my own and I didn't need to be shanghaied into doing something that I wouldn't be brave enough to do on my own. Tsk tsk.

Have you noticed now often my point of reference is the year we moved to Seward? That move was a defining time for me, a milestone, the first of two continental divides, the other being the move 5 years later to Boston, a psychologically shattering event.

The story of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer was written in 1939 I discovered recently, but I remember that the song, as distinguished from the story, appeared in 1949. I was 7 years old and I remember hearing the song and loving the magic of it. I remember it. Clearly. A reindeer that talked, one that had a red nose that glowed. I tried to imagine it in the dark cold snowy Vernal night, hoping he would guide the sleigh safely to my house. So that all were safe and so I got the goodies. I was split evenly between altruism and greediness.

One of the singing cowboys sang it, Gene Autry and Roy Rogers. Can't remember which one, but the song enchanted me. This is the original cover. We had this book and I devoured it many time in Vernal and in Seward. Red shiny nose. This was in the days before miraculous electronic inventions and in the days before all of the phony fake graphics you are familiar with. So this flashing nose on a reindeer was in the world of marvelous, impossible, wonderful

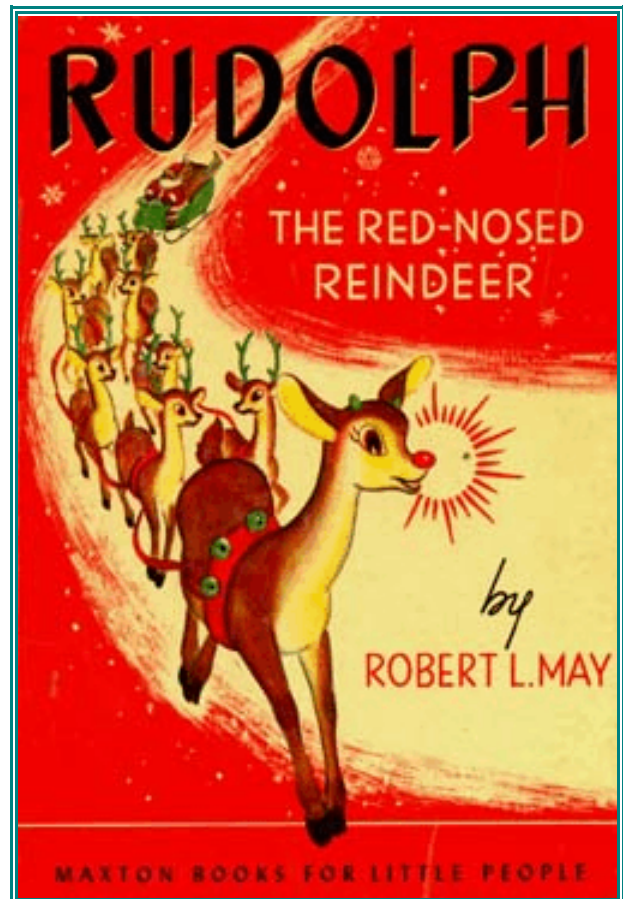


Figure 136

<http://www.heritagebks.com/christmas/c19400.j>

stuff.

"Santa Claus is comin' to town" was another one of these new Christmas Carols. I wonder why there were so many new Christmas songs in that era that have stuck in the national consciousness? When others have not followed? Perhaps it had to do with the national psyche that was recovering from WW II in ways I don't really understand, but results don't lie. You never had a "new" Christmas song appear in your youth. Just look at the number of Christmas songs you grew up that came out in those few post-war years. But not one in the next 40 years. I think, without a shred of evidence that this tells you something about the state of the county after we had defeated the Axis, prosperity had returned, the Depression was over, people were buying their own homes and cars and so on.

Anyway. This is the album cover for the 78 rpm of "Santa Claus is Comin' to Town." Did you ever hear a 78 playing? New experience you should have. Once.

About the time this song appeared, Santa Claus actually did come to town, to Vernal, if you can believe that. He even managed to hit town on Saturday when we were not in school, not at all troubling to a little kid who doesn't know that Christmas isn't due for a couple of weeks. Santa Claus made his appearance right down town in the center of everything, in the intersection in front of JC Penny's and the Bank of Vernal.

There was a platform for him to stand on outfitted with one of those tinny PA systems that the MC -didn't know that was what this guy was called at the time- yelled to, "Watch out, here he comes! Look! Can you see him? Can you hear him? There's Santa Claus! Let's cheer for him!"

He finally did make his appearance. To hundreds of kids and parents hollering, jammed together, like in a mad house. I wasn't used to such stuff and didn't enjoy it.



Figure 137

<http://www.the-forum.com/toys/images/004rc003.jpg>

The worst part, however, involved a box of flat pink wintergreen mints. They were stacked two-high in a long narrow box, probably 3 rows of these two-high, quarter sized mints -a total of six of these delectable unusual candies. It seems like Uncle Grant was involved.

Whatever the case, Santa Claus with his bag of stuff was throwing out handfuls of these and other kinds of candies to the kids crushed around the stand in the dirty packed snow. I badly wanted one but as you can guess, I was self-conscious and nervous. There was no way I was going to lunge after one of the things even if it came my way. In the end after Santa Claus had emptied his bag of goodies, I didn't get one and I was in tears. I wanted one so badly and I was miserable about not being brave enough to go after the things. That really was one of the feelings I had - pain at not being able to dare to try. So sad. I was conflicted here because most of the time mom reined us in and threatened us "within an inch of our lives" as the saying goes if we got rough with other kids but this time she was exhorting us like a coach to, "Get in there and get one!! Dang it! Do it! Do it!" With an underlying message, "What's wrong with you that you can't do it?!" Was I confused?!

One of the adults on our team understood what could be done at this point so he went to the store and bought one of the same boxes and gave it to me. But oddly enough, I didn't want it. I felt patronized, I felt angry, I was unable to deal with the whole experience. The crush of people, the rude kids, the fear of trying, the sadness at not getting one, the contradictory messages, and so on. I would rather not have even gone to town and had that experience. Santa Claus was a disappointment after all.

While it would be inaccurate to suggest that those feelings represented all of my feelings at all of my Christmases, you need to know that that kind of feeling was nonetheless present at some level most Christmases. Christmas just was not an entirely joyful time in that little family. Knowing that I am a mystic who has badly wanted to "believe", I have wondered how much of the sadness I've experienced with Christmases came from the harsh commercialism that conflicted so badly with the gentle loving notion of the birth of a special creature who loved me I was told, who should be loved and for whom we had a big birthday party. I gave my heart freely and wholly.

We had little money, as was the case with our neighbors and relatives, so I didn't really feel like I was worse off than most other kids -until I went to school after the Christmas break and saw what town kids got for Christmas. Mom and dad did what they could to give us gifts and goodies and in their way probably went beyond their personal boundaries. But at the same time, there was that quality of

something negative that I mentioned above, control, anger, irritation, resentment, or whatever. I don't really know what it was, but I did know and did see that there was something going on inside their heads, particularly mom's, such that I had to be careful to not upset her around Christmas time. Not just because she would withhold the gifts, rather because she would flare up quickly and be irritated beyond her usual response about whatever I did and express her anger and disappointment.

Here's a classic example. Look above at the diagram of the house above to get your bearings.. See the doorway between our bedroom and the living room? The Christmas Tree was set up in the living room on the other side of our bedroom door.

All we had to do was open the door to see the tree. We helped decorate it and watched it for weeks. We went to bed Christmas eve in the one Christmas present we were allowed to open that night, always pajamas, giddy with excitement, intoxicated at the thrill and anticipation. We knew better than to get up before mom and dad did. There would be hell to pay so we waited and waited, whispering, until they finally got up, knowing the whole time how excited we were.

The instructions they gave to us each Christmas morning were simple:

- (1) Get completely dressed before you come out of the kitchen,
- (2) Do not sneak a peak into the front room where the Christmas tree is, and
- (3) Eat all your breakfast before you go see the tree and presents.

We were threatened that if we failed to do those things we would be punished, which typically meant that the other son would be allowed to make first choices or some such thing. Sure enough, on this day, the pressure was just too great. One -likely both- of us stealthily, so we thought, got out of bed while mom and dad were still "sleeping", sneaked over to the door and slowly, carefully, excruciatingly slowly turned the knob and pulled the door open. Goodness, sakes alive! The tree was afire in colored lights and presents were strewn over the floor, a toy airplane, a..... Whammo! One of them stormed into our room and yelled at us to shut the door, to finish getting dressed, to eat our breakfast, we knew better, etc. We were disciplined for our failure to obey their instructions. The squeaky hinges probably gave us away.

Understand please, that this breakfast wasn't an instant breakfast or a poptart. It was a full breakfast of cooked oatmeal with sugar and cream, a glass of milk or Postum and toast. We were sick with excitement and had no appetite. But it had to be eaten in its entirety before we could go see the tree. Neither of us could

go until the other had finished. Such a diabolically clever form of torture. Make one of us the source of the delay for the other. They actually savored the pain we felt I think. You may think I belabor that point but I don't think I do.

We eventually got to go in to see the tree and presents. It seemed like noon. The nice part about that was that the living room was finally warm when we went in. We were practically lined up in uniform, put at attention and marched into the room. Then allowed one at a time and in order and slowly to see what was there. There were some nice gifts that we were happy to have, but our mood was tempered out of fear that we would commit another sin and be disciplined, not even knowing what we might do wrong. Minefields in Afghanistan sort of thing. It seemed like a Charles Dickens kind of Christmas with Scrooge doing the grudging honors.

Would you enjoy that kind of Christmas morning?

### Jack Frost and New Year's Eve

We had another tradition that was actually a lot of fun and un-pressured. First, remember what our windows were like in the winter. The temperature was below freezing all winter and our house and our windows were uninsulated. The temperature inside the house dropped so low during the night that the water in the water bucket in the kitchen, the warmest room in the house, developed a skin of ice. The thin panes of window glass were all that kept the cold from flowing through the windows. Consequently, developed a thick skin, quarter to half-inch layer, of frost, whitish patterned rime. That was the work of Jack Frost. He painted the windows with this beautiful stuff - that made it impossible to see out, but which made stained glass windows of white stuff.

We kept our Christmas Tree up until after New Year's day every year only undecorating it and throwing it out after celebrating that day. On New Year's Eve Jack Frost would take advantage of our tree. He would come into the house when we were not paying attention and leave three things under our tree. First, a coconut, a real hairy brown coconut that we never bought at any other time of the year. The eyes and mouth on the thing fascinated me. Second, he left a commercial box of white vanilla sandwich cookies, the only time we had such things in our years. And third, Jack Frost left a bag of tangerines, things that -you guessed it- we didn't have at other times. I find out from Deanna that in some parts of the British Isles, citrus fruits were mandatory for Christmas so perhaps this custom stemmed from that heritage.

So Jack Frost thrilled us on New Year's Eve. We saw his handiwork on the windows during the rest of winter, and saw his gifts so he was in a sense more

authentic and real than Santa Claus was - who was supposed to come down the chimney, a thing we didn't have and so on. Jack did his work where we could see it every night of the winter. We liked him and loved his New Year's Gifts. What a treasure of a memory.

## Cats and Jelly Bean

We always had cats, and some dogs. But particularly cats. I don't know why that is, whether it is mom's preference that rubbed off on us or whether it was simply a natural preference of us. But cats it was, everywhere. I do suspect that the over-riding influence was mom. She tolerated dogs but never unreservedly liked them. She hated them because they jumped on people, sniffed you, crapped in the yard, knocked things over, dug up the flowers, etc. Just not good citizens. Since I was trained by her, I agree. I don't mind dogs that mind their own business but I dislike them in general. Too demanding, too dependent, too obtrusive.. So I have cats. They are quiet, they don't sniff visitor's crotches, they don't jump on visitors, they don't leave smelly large crap in the yard, I can leave them alone 3 or 4 days at a time in the house alone, untended, they purr when they are inclined to be petted but don't demand a great deal of me, if they jump on me they are light and soft and gentle, their presence is evident but not intrusive, they don't require me to spend lots of money being trained about to handle them, don't require vigilance on how they are treated by anyone, don't get upset if I pet their head, if I play with them, etc. etc. There's no accounting for taste, is there. Dogs are just fine. I just don't want any. Unless it were a tiny miniature.

So we had cats primarily. The ones we had in Vernal were from the relatives or feral cats that we re-domesticated. Ferals showed up in the orchard and we managed to get one or two of them to adjust to being handled.

The one dog I had in Vernal was named "Jelly Bean". It is a silly name, but what's a kid going to name a small smooth entirely black dog? Jellybean was just fine, so Jelly bean it was. Its coat wasn't much for the winter so it was very cold, not being allowed in the house. It was allowed to spend time on the unheated porch but never allowed into the house.

The highlight of the Jellybean story was the white mother cat who had just had a litter about the time we got this newly weaned pup. For reasons that only she knows, she decided that this new puppy needed her attention more than her own kittens so she abandoned them letting them die and began to nurse this pup. Consequently, the pup never understood that it was a dog and not a cat, and that it was supposed to chase this cat. In turn, the cat was grateful at not being chased so

she let the pup haul her around by the head in play. The pup had no manners and became larger and stronger than the cat so would pull her around by her head. She seemed to think this was the natural state of affairs and let him do it which was not a problem in the summer. But in the winter, it was another story. The first winter the momma cat's ears got wet with saliva, froze, and broke off. So this poor cat went around with broken ears, but didn't begrudge the pup the injury.

Momma cat was so protective of the puppy that when a visitor to the house started to talk to the tiny puppy on the front porch, momma cat rushed around the corner of the house, jumped on the porch, fluffed up and hissed angrily at the woman. She understood that she was not welcome to pet the pup but didn't understand why.

The pup came to an untimely death one day while we were at school. He ran in the road and managed to get under a car, being killed in the process. Thankfully we were not around to witness the event. After I walked home from school, mom broke the news to me. I was sad because I loved the little dog.

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This was the name of a flower I never saw, and a girl's name. "Rose of Sharon", but that isn't how it was pronounced. A name I heard used but I couldn't relate it to anything because they didn't grow in the valley. Such a strange name for a girl, a three-word name that described a flower. "Iris" was also a flower but it didn't seem funny like this one did. It was a biblical name apparently but wasn't much used locally. Turns out that this is a sort of hibiscus, which probably explains why it didn't grow in the Uintah valley. Winters were cold, even sub-zero some times so tropical plants couldn't survive.



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## Breakfast Cereals

**B**reakfast cereal was usually a cooked cereal, cream of wheat being my favorite. Oatmeal, especially if there were any raisins, was probably about a tie. On rare occasions mom would also cook whole wheat for us, real wheat grains that she soaked overnight and then boiled slowly until they swelled and burst. That was something I liked. It had its own flavor and was chewy. We had eggs for breakfast sometimes but usually it was "mush". Commercially prepared cereals had been around a long time but they were more expensive than these cooked cereals. I don't remember how often mom bought commercial breakfast cereals in Vernal, although after Vernal we usually had prepared cereals - Wheaties, Kix, CornFlakes and if we were lucky, one of the new sugar cereals. Early on, cereal manufacturers discovered that their cereal boxes were natural advertising devices.

Putting Superman into any ad focused it on kids, created a compelling interest in the product. Not accidental at all.

Kellogg's PEP cereal was a whole wheat product that fell by the wayside. Anything made out of whole wheat probably suffered that same fate until the health food nuts rose up in the '70's with granola and the hokey "organic" monkey business. Whole wheat fell out of favor because it was associated with a country-type food I guess. Perhaps it was the flavor. We ate it sometimes but I don't remember what it tasted like.

The propaganda in these ads was complicated. The kids are smiling, healthy kids probably because they are the stuff. The little girl is smiling at Superman, a coy smile, in her pig tails. Superman is a ruddy cheeked young man who just flew in, cape trailing in the air. He looks kindly at the little boy with a gentle smile, listening to his words, holding his shoulder as a friend. The third boy with the happy smile has his fingers in his lips, whistling up his friends to come and see Superman - and to eat this cereal, with bananas on it. In a bowl, sitting



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on a plate.

The grand-daddy of cereals is Kellogg's Corn Flakes. Oh, there were many competitors, but somehow Kellogg's Corn Flakes managed to become the archetype of prepared breakfast foods. Everyone knows the name, everyone has eaten the stuff. You don't know a single person who has not eaten the stuff - unless they are a recent immigrant. That's what I mean by being the archetype. Probably no other breakfast cereal is as widely known and remembered as Kellogg's Corn Flakes.

Kids were sucked into the Madison Ave Culture early by these gimmicks. An amount of silver plus one or two box tops would buy heaven, excitement, thrills, uniqueness. That was a special draw I think. Being special in the groups of kids you associated with because you had these toys that you had obtained through the US mail instead of at the local Five and Dime. Just look at these little grinning kids. You wanted to be one of them.

Eating this stuff was fun. The result was a table littered with splashes of milk and a dusting of granulated sugar. Mom's judgment about how much sugar to put on the cereal was flawed. About half what it should be. So when she wasn't looking someone might help himself to another teaspoon of the stuff - if she forgot and left the sugar bowl on the table. That's where the spills of sugar originated. The splashes of milk came from the flat flakes that redirected the pouring milk out of the bowl. The best part of the cereal was the bottom part of the bowl. Where the sugar had fallen to the bottom and produced a sludge that was pure pleasure.



I think my next favorite cereal after Kellogg's Corn Flakes was Kix. Little

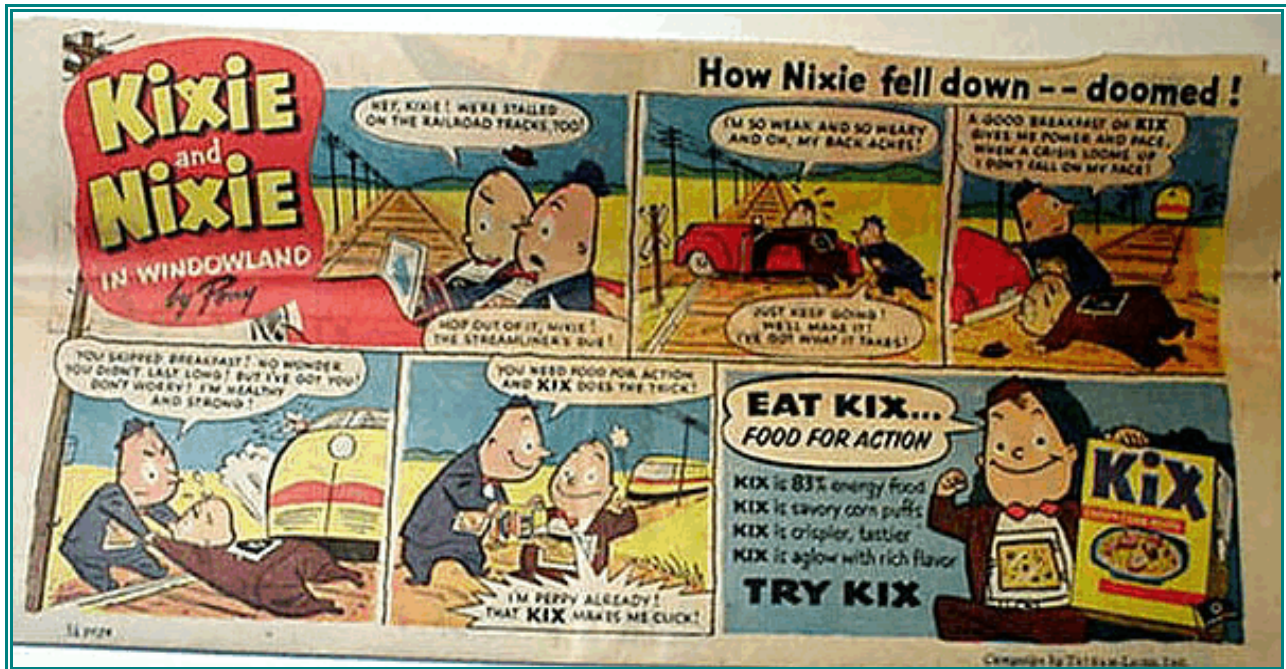


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round puffs of oat flour that had a wonderful taste with milk and sugar. Kixie and Nixie were the characters created to pitch the product to kids in cartoon. Filled with excitement. Like when one of them stalled their car on the tracks -while the train approached- but the one that had his breakfast of Kix had the energy needed to push the car off the tracks and pull the other guy off the tracks just the locomotive would have cut him in half. Then a celebration. With a breakfast of Kix. Note that the ad even pitches the nutritional value, though how it concludes that "Kid is 85% energy food", one can only guess. That's what the company did.

### Mercury and Silver Inlays in Gunstocks

It must have been about the time that dad was working as a gunsmith, i.e. gun maker, that he picked up another skill: inlaying gun stocks with silver. He was a natural for learning anything that you did with your hands, that involved creating something of beauty.

He probably learned this technique from some else but I don't know who. It's such an obvious thing to do that it seems like any number of other people would have already done it. Or he may have seen it in a gun magazine or heard about it from a friend or seen it at a gun show. Whatever the facts were, the basic process was

straightforward.

Dad would remove the gun barrel and trigger works from the gunstock. Then he'd layout on one or both sides of the stock a design that he -or the owner- liked. It might be a Moorish-style filigree pattern or it might be an elk head.

After he had the outline of the thing drawn in pencil on the stock, he'd take a small electric drill that he used for many purposes and load it with some sort of dental drill bits. Whatever they were, they had to be able to cut wood easily and be easily controlled as he followed his lines with the tool. The stock was stabilized on the table on a towel or something to keep it from tipping back and forth so that he could concentrate on cutting the right depth while he followed the outline. After the outline was cut, he would drill out the wood between the lines to create a space in which to place the metal. This sounds simple but it required considerable skill when he did this process over a curved surface because it was difficult to keep the same depth to his cut. He would smooth the bottom of the cut out and then make a final critical cut. He undercut the margin of the opened area in order to have a lip that would retain the inlay that otherwise would fall out. It was obviously critical that the open areas not be too large because a gun stock receives hard use so it was inevitable that the inlay was going to be abused during its life. This is probably why the filigree was optimal for this technique. The areas of silver were narrow so stayed in place.

The silver material was prepared precisely as a dentist prepares amalgam, the metal putty that you have in your teeth after cavities are drilled out. It is a mixture compounded of powdered silver and mercury, the heavy flowing metal that you saw in the small bottle I kept around at 5111. Fooled Kent one day with that tiny 3 inch long bottle -which weighed a full pound- when I handed it to him as if it were an ounce or two. He nearly dropped it, but wasn't too surprised in the end - because I was always doing something that sort of took advantage of his good nature and trusting nature. Shame on me. Like the time I tricked him into taking a big bite of a jalapeno pepper. He and I had been pulling sweet pickled peppers from a jar and while he wasn't watching, I stuck a pickled



jalapeno that looked the same . Poor guy. He deserves gold stars for what he put up with good-naturedly.

The proportions of mercury and powdered silver had to be precise so dad used a measure to meter out the proper quantities of the two elements. After measuring them out, he poured them into a ceramic mortar and pestle like this one. Then he would laboriously and carefully grind them together until they were a uniform paste - used to be called "Bell's Paste". That is the way dentists made amalgam at the same time.

You never saw this process because in your days dentists used pre-measured packets of stuff that they would pop open, insert in an electrical-mechanical mixer, turn on for 60 seconds or so, and then remove the capsule and spoon the liquid amalgam into your prepared cavity. Back then, the dentist and dad had to measure out the elements into the mortar and with a pestle grind the two together for several minutes. The process of hardening was a chemical one and if the metals were not evenly mixed they would not set up uniformly hard. In your mouth it was critical that there wasn't be too much mercury in the amalgam because if there was, it would separate out of the mixture and you would swallow it, possibly to your detriment.

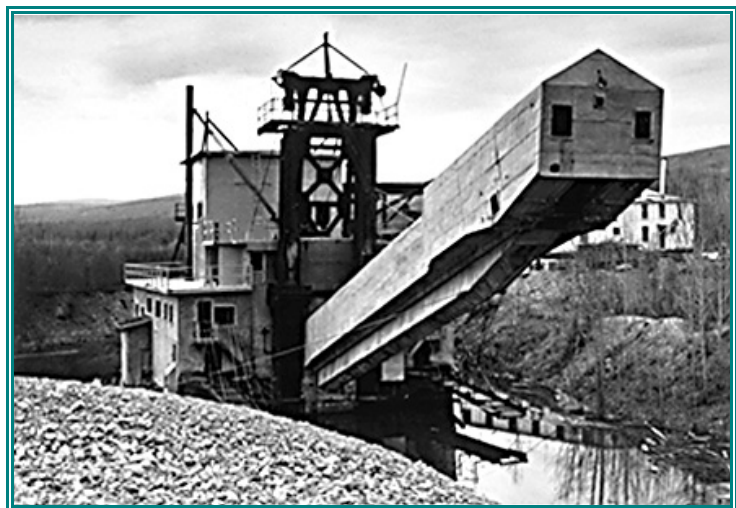
That was something I learned. The hysteria in the world today about mercury is just that, hysteria. Oh, I agree that it is a bad idea to inhale mercury that has been converted into a gas, a vapor. The reason is simple: if you inhale a molecule of mercury -yes, that is very possible to do if someone is stupid enough to make molecules of mercury appear in the air we breathe- then the mercury molecule will go down into your lungs as easily as a molecules of oxygen. It turns out that molecules of anything behave the same way in this respect -they are all "gas". When the molecule of mercury is down there in the lung, it will do what oxygen molecules do, i.e. it will cross over into a capillary filled with blood. Then when this blood in the capillary moves up into your brain, that molecule of mercury will move out of the capillary flowing through the brain into the brain itself, and that is a problem because the metallic molecule creates an electrical short and prevents electricity from flowing along that wire, i.e. prevents brain waves from flowing down along the brain cell that is now holding onto the molecule. There is no way to get it out, so if a dentist is careless enough to put amalgam into his high temperature autoclave and silly enough to hang around to breathe the steam that comes out of it, he will end up with a blank stare and a fine tremor in a wheelchair in a nursing home, staring blankly into nothing.

So, yes, mercury can be horribly dangerous. But the problem for me is that the naive stupid regulators of the last 20 years act as if all mercury, both elemental

and molecular, is evil, high risk stuff that will kill you on contact etc ad nauseam. Nonsense. I played with the dang stuff as a kid and never was injured by it. Was I?! My dad worked with the stuff as did all dentists. It isn't elemental, i.e. liquid, mercury that is the real risk so playing with it is not really a bad risk. Obviously, it does pose a threat if it converts into vapor and you inhale enough of it, but that requires an enormous amount of exposure.

More lecture: while I was risk manager as St. Al's one of my crusades was employee safety. The first study I had the Hartford Insurance company perform was to go through every room in the hospital, which was hundreds, with a highly sensitive analyzer to detect the presence of mercury. It was a device that used a thin sheet of gold foil as a detector. An electrical current was set up across the foil and when even one molecule of mercury landed on it, the current was altered. There was little mercury anywhere which made us all happy. Except for one room in Central Supply. In that room employees were required to cut the fingers off of rubber gloves and then fill the cut-off fingers with elemental mercury and tie them off a certain way so that a selfish little general surgeon could use them to dilate esopahguses. Even after we offered him the pre-manufactured replacements, he refused, so I just went around him and got an administrative decision made that he couldn't get around that forbid my employees from being forced to do that job. He was forced to use pre-manufactured devices.

I did that because the concentration of molecular mercury in the room was 250 parts per million when there should be zero. The problem was that employees occasionally spilled mercury out of the finger tips during this primitive process, so mercury ended up the floor was covered with a carpet. No way to ever collect it all so the mercury in the carpet exhaled molecules and raised the level to this dangerous level where certain employees worked for years. And guess what: none of them were harmed. That doesn't mean it was OK to expose them to molecular mercury. I'm just making the point that they DID experience an enormous exposure but were not harmed by it. [I had the



carpet also removed as hazardous waste and manifested and shipped to a hazardous material dump out by mountain home. We got a commendation from some government agency for the exemplary way we handled and documented our actions.]

The nastiest example I ever heard of uncontrolled employee exposure to mercury was exemplified by Baumhoff's dredge up on the South Fork of the Yankee. It looks just like this one from Alaska, sitting in a pool it created from a narrow stream of water.

One of the times I toured the thing an old timer who volunteered to teach visitors about the dredge -who insisted on referring to Oscar Baumhoff as "Bumhoff" which tickled me every time he said it- explained how the gold was extracted from the gravel and collected inside of the dredge, the purpose of the entire machine. Mercury was then poured in that space because gold dissolves in mercury. Then the mercury was re-collected into containers and were removed from the dredge. On the shore along side the dredge a small still was set up to distill the mercury-gold compound. As the still was heated, the mercury quickly converted into molecular mercury and was driven out into the air, leaving gold behind. That was fine, except that during the time the still was hot and the mercury was being driven off, any employee who stood downwind for a length of time was going to breathe the stuff in, and that was bad. Really bad. I don't know how many men were harmed by that process but it was highly dangerous and is one I would have forbidden on sight.

Ever heard the term "Mad as a Hatter"? Remember the "Mad Hatter" in ALICE IN WONDERLAND? They did get mad, i.e. crazy, over time as they practiced their trade. Because the way they made sheets of felt in those days which was then converted into hats was to take chopped hair and spread it out on a flat surface and compact it together in a technique I don't know, using liquid mercury. The stuff I played with. But these guys were exposed 8-10 hours a day to the stuff, rubbing their hands in it so eventually went mad because they did acquire molecular mercury in their brains from that massive exposure. This madness was known to an occupational hazard of hat making, though years were required for the effect to happen.



Anyway, I get carried away at the mass hysteria of government and do-gooders who don't have a clue what they are doing, filled with the idiocy of inexperienced, unrealistic, impractical snot-nosed college graduates who live their lives in a hermetically sealed play rooms and haven't a clue what life really is like, what the real risks are. They are a greater danger than the mercury.

So dad did compound his amalgam and then used dentist tools to place and compact -dentists say 'condense'- the amalgam. It was an art to create the proper thickness of the layer. Too thick and he was wasting silver and too thin and he had to drill it out and replace it. After it was hardened he polished the surface to a high finish that reflected like a mirror. Silver of course does that. He polished the inlay so that its margin was absolutely flush with the level of the surface of the gun stock and did it so well that you couldn't even feel the margin if you passed your finger over it without looking at it. He did this for several other men.

The old Enfield 30.06 dad had was an exemplar of one of the finest rifles produced. It was manufactured by the British but was such an accurate durable rifle that the US used them in WWI, WWII and the Korean Conflict. Dad got his as army surplus in the late 1940's and it looked like this, with the stock that extended to the end of the barrel. He didn't like that style so he cut the stock down to the front anchor for the shoulder strap. He didn't like the wood stock over the top of the barrel either so he removed that as well.



After he had re-machined the barrel and outfitted it with a muzzle brake he inlaid the stock. I haven't seen it for years but believe it is still at 2828 N.



Last night while talking to Mom about the 'new' house in Naples she told me a story that still bothers her. She was about 10 years of age. She explained that her

mom had been president of the Relief Society for most of the time she had lived in Naples. I had heard that before and found it eminently reasonable, such a peaceful quiet woman. She is the only person I have met who embodies what I believe "Christian Charity" is. No anger, no threats, no boastfulness, no hypocrisy. Just a gentle peaceful person. She was suited to lead a group by nature and example.

Mom's life was obviously affected by her mother's responsibilities. She said that about this age, she and several girl friends had made plans to go into 'town', i.e. Vernal, for a Saturday afternoon. She went home to tell her mom and get ready to leave, but her mom told her that she couldn't go, that she needed Marie in the house that afternoon to help, so mom had to cancel her participation in the outing. What had happened was that Teen asked several women to make several quilts that she was going to give to a family that needed them. Unfortunately, the quality of the work that the adult women had done was unsatisfactory to grandma, a highly skilled quilter. [The quilt she gave me as a wedding present is now in Lisa's home if you'd like to see it. She made that quilt entirely by hand when she was 79 years old. It does not have the quality of her work when she was in her prime, but it was a gift of love created in her twilight years as she sat alone in a tiny apartment in SLC. She lived 4 years after grandpa died.] Grandma kept mom home that afternoon to help her unpick all of the poor work. Then they had to rematch the blocks and corners and edges and re-tie and finish off the quilts.

The most distasteful responsibility grandma had was to lay out the dead and prepare them for burial. There were undertakers in town but these people couldn't afford that extravagance, even for the dead, so the congregation took care of the process for the bereaved family. This meant undressing and washing the bodies. Then clean clothing was put on, the hair combed and the body arranged in a coffin. Grandma did that for years. She was known to be a compassionate kind person who treated the deceased with respect and courtesy so people liked her to do it.

In addition to laying out the bodies, grandma also finished the coffins. Mom said that the coffins were made by any carpenter in the congregation who had time but that her dad never made one. He wasn't skilled at wood-working. After the coffin was made, it was taken to grandma who would line it and cover it. She tacked a thin cotton batt inside the coffin, and covered it with a satiny cloth of a solid color. Mom said it was difficult to get the cloth because of the depression so they used pretty much what was at hand. She'd then cover the entire outside of the coffin with another fabric that was preferably one that had a textured pattern to it, a sort of brocade. This attention to appearances was appreciated by the family and congregation.







Dad never talked about what he liked, or why he liked things, so I don't know what the attraction was to this song. My guess is that it was a song that called to mind his own boyhood out in a desolate desert where he rode horses and was familiar with cattle drives. His own voice was comparable to Vaughn Monroe, a deep tenor voice so perhaps

that was part of the draw. Dad was sentimental and would tear up when he was touched with something and this song seemed to call up deep emotions.

The story was equally compelling to me. I imagined what the "Devil's herd" looked like, or what the ghost riders looked like. An

image, gaunt, strained and pained.



Grandpa Merrell wore galuses. So did Grandpa Jensen. I thought of them as "suspenders" but these old men referred to them as "galuses" with a certainty and conviction that persuaded me that I was mistaken. The right word was, after all, galuses. Such a strange word. Sounded like something that went wrong with your feet. Users of galuses claimed that they relieved a man of the pressure of a band around his waist while he was laboring on horses or shovels, an important benefit. Belts did the same job but constricted the abdomen, leading to speculation that they might also impair digestion. Who knows. Perhaps they did. And do. Us uptight modern men may just be suffering from too-tight belts and would benefit from reverting to old-fashioned galuses.

Similarly, these old men wore "galoshes", things I thought of as "rubber boots". Again, I was apparently mistaken. The right name was "galoshes" but when kids at school laughed meanly at my use of the term, I prudently decided that I'd limit use of that particular word to a particular domain of my life, i.e. the household of my grandparents. I didn't mind using the word with them because it was what they preferred, but I was danged if I was going to say that word and get laughed at in school. Looking back, I suspect that the kids who laughed knew the word out of the mouths of their own grandparents who also lived in the valley, but they were city kids, aloof and superior, above using old-fangled words when there were new words. So "galuses" and "galoshes" found their way into a verbal dustbin, used sparingly and in particular safe environments where the smart-alec city kids weren't around. Actually, I came to agree on a strictly objective basis that these old-fashioned boots were irritating. The new boots slipped on, and didn't require the buckling of these metal clasps that would freeze over with ice, making it impossible to maneuver them. Grandpa found his word and preference in "rubber boots" relegated to the dust heap of old-fashionedness.



The last archaic personal item I encountered was the garter, two kinds, the kind that held socks up and the kind work around the upper arm to hold a sleeve up. Mr. Thorne of the photo studio fame wore the latter, along with his greet eye shield. Mom made us wear garters to hold up heavy wool socks that had no elastic in them which meant they slipped down quickly. These garters were a band that was fastened around the calf just below the knee so that the fatness of the calf would hold it up. This band had one or two clips that could be opened over the top of the sock to hold it in place. I was embarrassed to wear them but there was no choice about it. We wore long underwear that sagged, too. I suspect that the sagginess of clothing was related in large part to the fact that we wore articles of clothing for so many days. If something wasn't visibly dirty, mom didn't wash it. The work of washing clothes was much greater than today so she'd hold a pair of levis up and look for stains or grime. If there was none, we got to wear them for another day or two. The smell of clothing wasn't a consideration for kids, though perhaps it was for adults. I don't know that. But I do know that us little kids that only bathed once a week were oderiferous after about Wednesday, which meant that we had no sense of smell for others I'd guess.



We grew up eating rabbits, because cotton tails were abundant in the desert- and free. They taste sort of like chicken when cooked and even resemble nondescript pieces of chicken. I had a real good understanding about rabbits, what they were, how they looked. And what they tasted like. That's the practical reality. Sitting in a car while dad shot cottontails that he picked up and put in the trunk to be cleaned and skinned later at home. That's what rabbits were. Dinner. And pests because they would get into alfalfa fields and eat substantial amounts.



We even caught some rabbits barehanded out on the Green River Ranch. There is a parasitic plant - related to morning glories- called "dodder"- that can attack alfalfa fields. This yellowish filamentous plant has no leaves, just narrow stems, which grow densely and spread from plant to plant, thereby creating a tight net over the entire field if it is not controlled. When we were out on the Greenriver



Figure 151



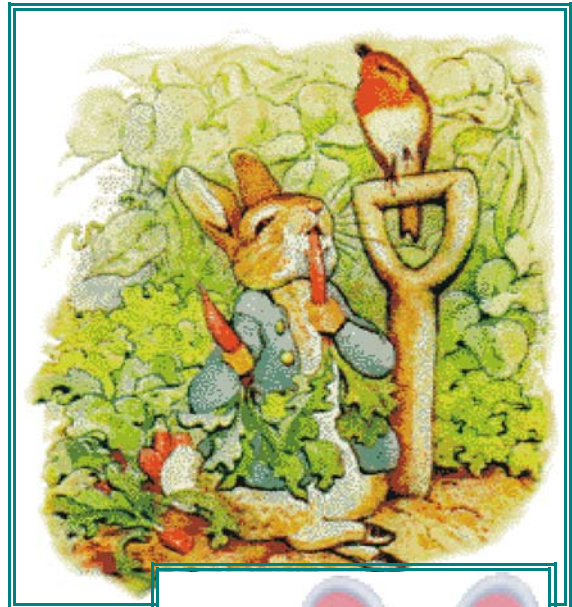
Ranch, we would go out in the evening before we had to return to grandpa Merrell's house. And walk along dirt roads through the alfalfa fields, looking for spots where

there was dodder, looking to see if there was anything moving underneath the nets. When we saw something move, we'd run crazily out to the spot because the dodder net slowed us down. We looked like drunken sailors staggering instead of running. When we got near the rabbits that were foraging in the early evening, they would obviously spook and try to get away and usually did. But the netting of dodder also slowed them down, making them vulnerable to almost being caught by little kids.

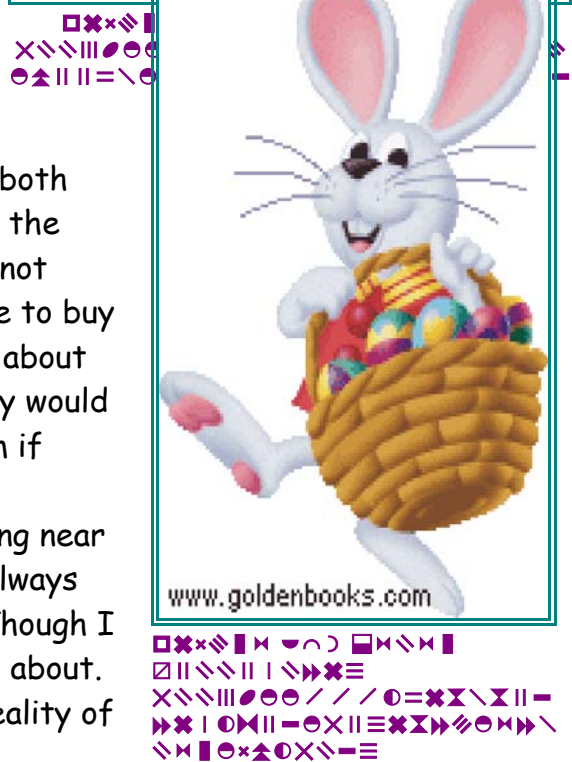
I also encountered rabbits raised in hutches for dinner. Farms don't teach you any sympathy for animals or birds. They certainly don't teach violence either, but you don't grow up with soft spots in your hearts for the prize pig or chicken you raised in 4-H or Future Farmers of America. Nope, you grew it and sold it for cash.

But there was a magical world of rabbits separate from this practical one, one peopled -rabbited- by Peter Rabbit in the Beatrice Potter books, and Peter Cottontail, the official Easter Bunny. This was the world of the Easter Bunny that I fervently believed in - being a naturally practical kid who understood that this rabbit produced some pretty nice goodies on his day, plus there were lots of fun things to do.

The Easter Bunny and Santa Claus were both believable to me. The proof was in the fact of the celebrations that involved each. If they were not 'real', then why would adults go to such expense to buy toys and candy? Why would the adults tell me about them, persuading me that they were real? Why would stores and churches and school celebrate them if they weren't real? The evidence for their authenticity was unarguable, compelling and dang near as believable as the statement that "The sun always comes up in the east." Period. No argument. Though I wasn't quite sure what this "east" business was about. In addition to these objective proofs of the reality of



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Klaus and Peter, I simply wanted to believe in the fantasy. My world had room for fantasy. I understood that the loud startling noise made by lightening in the sky was the noise created by the celestial unloading of logs by some gigantic creature, the man in the moon or some such enormous distant being -so said Uncle Grant. These two fantasy characters were as believable.

In this fervent clasping of these fantasies to myself I was no different than most little kids. Didn't you, too, cling to the wispy fuzzy stories associated with actual celebrations simply because you wanted to believe in them, believe in fantasy? Separate from the goodies. You may not have known that they were what is termed 'fantasy' but at some level in your soul and mind you intuited that they were stories of supernatural things that otherwise didn't exist in your everyday world. You knew they were different. And you wanted that difference. I did too.

So Peter Cottontail was a special thing for me just as was Jack Frost. The fact that there were so many rabbits around somehow added to the believability of the story. Had I never seen a rabbit, I may not have found it as easy to believe. The same with Jack Frost. While I never saw evidence of his person, I nonetheless saw evidence of his reality in his nightly work on our windows, quarter inch thick layers of gorgeous crystalized ice.

About the time I was becoming sentient, we heard a new song on the radio and I still remember these words, as if I had heard them last night:

*Here comes Peter Cottontail,  
Hopping down the bunny trail,  
Hippity-hoppity Easter's on its way.  
Try to do the things you should  
Maybe if you're extra good  
He'll roll lots of Easter eggs your way.*

*You'll wake up on Easter Morning  
And you'll know that he was there  
When you see those Easter goodies  
That he's scattered everywhere.  
Here comes Peter Cotton tail  
Hopping down the bunny trail,  
Hippity hoppity Easter's on its way.*



Those memorized words that still hum in my memory were sung by Gene Autry. I can

hear his sweet voice singing those words while he strums his cowboy guitar. There was a Little Golden Book about Peter that these images are from.

Dick and I decorated eggs every Easter using the Paas Easter egg dye kits. I imagine they are the same today. There were half a dozen tablets of color, a copper wire device for lifting eggs into and out of the dye solutions and wonder of wonders, the tattoo-like transfers you wet and held on the egg to imprint them with wondrous images of Easter. Mom helped us do this mess, on the kitchen table. She prepared the hot water and mixed the tablets in individual cups with the right amount of vinegar and then turned us loose. I think that most of our eggs were pretty muddy brown out of our enthusiasm to experiment with as many dyes as possible. Almost always muddy brown, with smeared, illegible tattoos, but we had such a good time that it really didn't matter.

One of the other things that made me a firm believer in Peter Cottontail turned out to be entirely accidental. It's hard to believe it happened like it did.

On this particular Easter Sunday we had been duded up in whatever new clothes we were given -Easter always involved some new clothes- and went to Sunday School in the morning. As was typical for our household, there was no sampling of the Easter basket or goodies before we had done our duty. We weren't even allowed to SEE our Easter Baskets. Indeed, we had no way of even knowing if there were such, but we trusted our folks, and knew their style. When they said, "No, You don't get to do that until you do such and such", then you dang well knew they spoke truth, i.e. there were in fact such. You could wear yourself out on them like waves against the Rock of Gibraltar but you were some puny balsa wood boat. There was to be no viewing even. Just eat your breakfast, please, comb your hair, go to Sunday School and then and only then after you get home from church do you get to see your Easter Baskets.

Since on the day before we had personally dyed 2 dozen eggs -probably from Norie's place- we knew that there were at least a few dyed eggs around the place, many of them having been destroyed the day before in our annual Easter egg roll, but some remained. So if worse came to worse, we could find solace in eating those. It was always fun anyway to see the filigree patterns dyed into the surface of the boiled egg through the cracks in the shells.

When we came home from church we were as excited as we could be, probably not having heard a word that was said to us at church. We jumped out of the car and started running flat-out for the house. Suddenly mom yelled a loud yell for us to stop. Being obedient -those yells always caught me off-guard and I learned the hard way that they were usually followed by a lecture and punishment and even though I



sometimes but not always didn't have a clue what misdemeanor I had committed this time which was how things usually were- I stopped stock still and waited to hear what there was to hear. Surprise of surprises, there was no lecture. Deep sigh of relief because that yell put even the excitement of seeing my Easter Basket out of my mind, and now I could think about it again. Then she did something that she had never done before and which she didn't do again.

She called us to go with her to look for rabbit tracks around the house. That was a new one, but I was involved in fantasy. If mom said we'd look for Easter Bunny prints, then we would and the chances were good that we'd find some sort of clue about this secretive creature that somehow got into our houses with goodies. How he carried them was never a concern, where he'd get all the candy never bothered me, what chickens he conned never bothered me. Nothing did. He was real and I reaped the results. So we checked in front of the house to see if we could tell whether he had been there, but all that grass didn't wouldn't show any prints. The north side of the house was never used by anyone for anything -even Peter Cottontail. Somehow mom steered us from looking around the back porch. We then checked on the south side of the house. Most of it was grass as well, but just below the window of mom's and dad's bedroom there was a patch of loose dirt. We said 'ah ha!" and ran to look. Lo and behold, there actually were rabbit tracks. All over the place. We were excited because we knew he had been to the house and had left us something wonderful.

By now mom allowed as how we could probably go into the house to check and see what there might be. We went to the back door, up the 4 stairs, through the enclosed porch, through the kitchen, and into the dining room. There on the dining room table were two baskets filled with candy, plastic grass, dyed eggs, jelly beans and large colored candy eggs. We knew Peter Cottontail had done this deed personally. Because we saw his footprints out there on the ground. It was a satisfying Easter to have the fantasy prove out in reality, in a way that Santa Claus never did.

Years later mom told me the rest of the story after I had kids of my own. She asked me if I remembered an Easter in Vernal where we had hunted for Easter bunny prints around the house after church and oddly enough, I did remember it. It was such a vivid experience to actually see rabbit prints outside the house on the very day the Easter Bunny was to be there that it was indelibly marked in my memory. She went on to explain as one parent to another what the truth of the situation was.

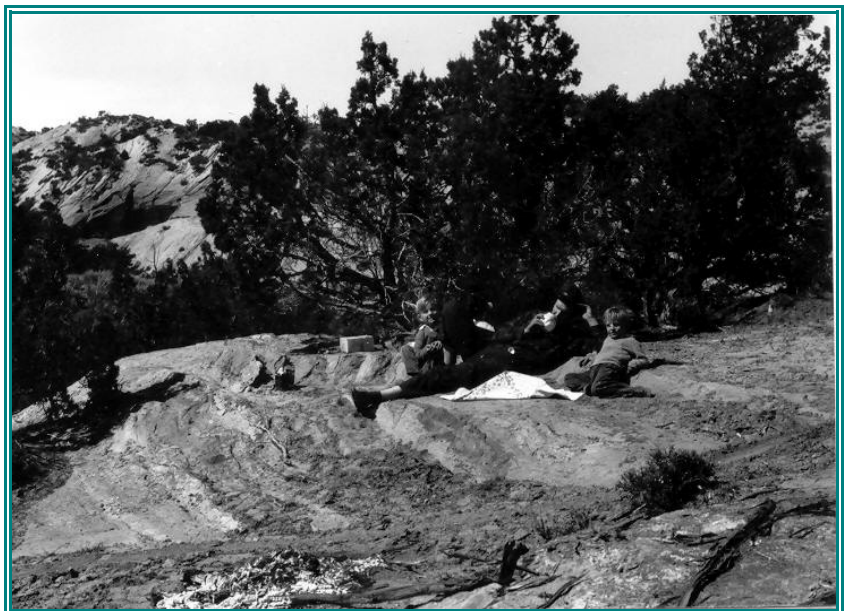
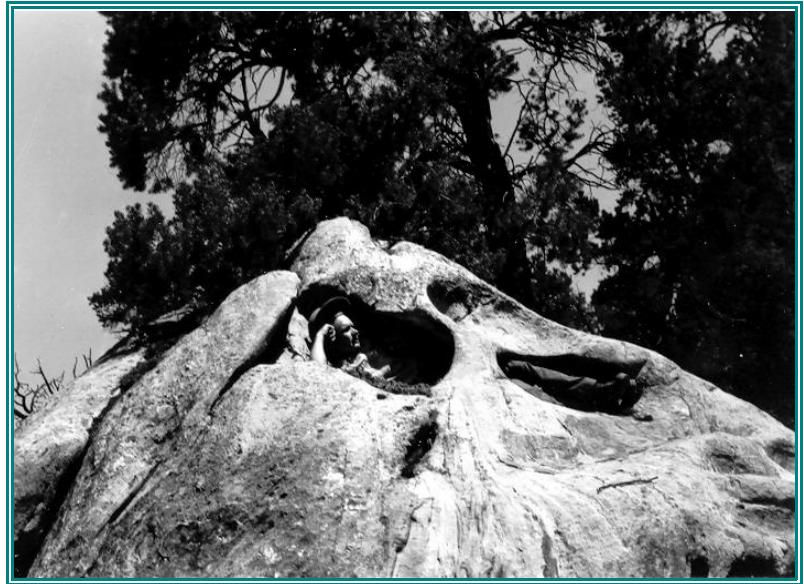
What had happened was that in the rush and hubbub of getting ready to go to church, she and dad completely forgot to assemble the Easter baskets and put them



Dick and I are kicked back lying in the dirt enjoying ourselves. In the tallish junipers and cedars. Notice, too, that we are duded up. To go out into the desert to play in the sand. Interesting isn't it to be so formally attired for a romp in the sand. Sand and dirt blended. Dead wood lying all over because there were no tourists to burn it up. Easy to collect enough wood to make all the fire we needed. Can't tell whether the Easter egg roll already occurred but it didn't obviously matter. If it was over, we were content, and if it was still to come, we were still content. Look at our comfort.

Dad sometimes did funny things, things that startled and pleased us. Usually he didn't say a great deal to us, and usually he was so absorbed in what he was doing that we couldn't tell whether he was even aware we were around. But every so often he would do something funny and warm, like climb into a hole in a large sand stone, wearing his fedora, and lie there like he was having a good time.

This picture shows the three of us, Dickie on the right by dad's head, at this Easter Egg Roll. The desert was a familiar comforting place to dad. He was a "man of the desert" and fit in with it intimately, having been born and raised in desert. Note the whitish spot in the left half of the bottom edge of



the photo. That's the campfire that you see mom roasting wienies in just above and just below.

I like how we were happy together here. Look at our smiles and body language. We were happy. Please note that. I carry on here at great length about the pain and difficulty of being my father's son, which was real, yet there were lots of good times. Interestingly, as I think about them, a good share of the good times were on outings, not in the house. He liked to travel and be out and about. As a result, his treatment of us was affected positively when we were out and about. He became approachable and friendly. He'd be silly and fun - which he never did in any house we ever lived in. Odd, really, to realize that now, but it is true. Ask Dick if that's his memory as well.

Mom is roasting a wienie on a stick -that we just took from the desert after we got out there- in the fire that is right there in front of her. If you haven't built fires in the desert, you

probably can't see the fire in this picture and don't understand how there can be a fire right there. It looks like there is nothing there. But there is. The reason she has her hand over her face is to protect it from the intense heat of what looks here like a pile of white dust. What happens is that the dried juniper and cedar, started with rabbit brush, burn hot and burn completely so there is little smoke, and all that remains of a



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fire is ash. No charcoal, nothing. Just powdery ash that blows away in the slightest breeze. She had a fire there and since the two of us are lying back with smiles on our face over there behind her, my bet is that she was roasting wienies. We would have been right there participating in the roasting of marshmallows. More likely that as the mother bear she was getting our main course ready. We knew it and we relaxed. Roasting wienies was actually not a really fun thing. We usually burned them. It took a while and required patience and a technique which we didn't have. The marshmallow edition was a different story. Even if we caught them on fire and charred them, there was still the lovely sweet soft heart to savor and munch on.

Those sand dunes there in the back ground, to the right of and behind mom is where we rolled Easter eggs. Mom would boil the eggs on the Saturday before Easter while we nervously hovered around, not wanting them to crack because that marred them for dying. They obviously tasted just great but the point here was not taste. It was perfection.. After we harvested however many came out of the boil intact, we would dye them with Paas dyes in cup-sized containers filled with a dissolved dye and vinegar. We used the copper wire instrument that came in the Paas packages to move the eggs through enough dye baths to render them totally brown. When we were satisfied with our masterpieces, we stood them in the holder that was formed by punching out pre-stamped circles in back of the box that was folded to be a tray. When the eggs had dried by being held in that holder, we would them, fairly unsuccessfully, try to apply paper 'tattoos' to the eggs, tattoos that came with the dye set. That we failed year after year was irrelevant. It was the intention and the action of trying to do it that counted. We knew we were succeeding.

Then after going to Sunday School, we went home, got our Easter baskets, changed our clothes and hopped into the family chariot for an outing. It was a breath-holding time, we're going out to roll Easter eggs and roast wienies and roast marshmallows and mom is there and dad is there and we are going to be alone out there, just the four of us, going where ever we want to and have a dozen eggs to recklessly waste however we wish. [I just phoned mom to ask her about which day we did this Easter Egg roll because part of my brain can scarcely believe she'd allow us to do it on Sunday. Saturday seems more likely. When I asked her point-blank did we roll eggs on Sunday, she allowed as how "my family didn't see anything wrong with doing things like that on Sunday." i.e. she didn't answer my question. What she did was provide a rationalization for having done what she "knew was wrong". My anxiety about it was based on my memories of her vehement refusal to do anything on Sunday. So we sinned. And had a grand time, as the faces in these photos show. Yay, dad.

The roll itself was a simple process. We hunted around until we found a high sand dune that had a long -at least long to us- clear pathway. We'd take an egg or a stick and trace a straight, more or less, path from the top of the dune to the bottom, hoping that it was smooth and straight enough to guide a hard-boiled, tattooed, dyed egg from the top of the run to the bottom. It never worked that way, but that didn't detract from our intensity in laying down the track. After we, with dad, had designed the course, we'd go with our eggs, carefully divided exactly evenly, to the top of the run. There we took turns. Always, exactly, one after the other, never two in a row. And always in turns. That was how things were done with those parents,

excruciatingly equally divided portions.

The egg would start out slowly and we'd be tempted to sort of push it along its way to get it going. But the law of gravity was fairly dependable in that quadrant of Uintah Valley so most of the time we could rely on it. By the time the egg had gone about half way down the run, it was jumping just a bit into the air and spinning wildly, the tattoos whirling like dervishes. By the time the egg had done 3/4 of the way down the track, it had picked up so much speed that it was jumping a foot or so into the air and jumping 3 feet in a bound. This is where things usually started coming apart. The shell would be crack and start disintegrating. The last time the egg landed after its wild career down the narrow track, the shell disintegrated, just blew off the white. The egg spun violently, wildly, so the shell peeled off with a thin layer of boiled egg attached, leaving the bare yolk exposed to the abrasive sand. In the end, even the yolk disintegrated and exploded, leaving only sand-coated fragments that weren't even trying to clean off to eat. It was exciting to send our eggs, one after the other in turn, down that Olympic-sized track, seeing each one disintegrate into spinning, shattered fragment.



Vernal winters are bitter cold. The altitude and latitude give the Uintah valley cold temperatures that are frequently in the teens. Standing outside on the road in the morning waiting for the bus in that kind of temperature is cold business. Walking home a mile after school is worse.

The most humiliating thing mom ever did about clothes -and she did more than one- involved this bitter cold. We were living on the Ashton Place, and mom and dad must have had a tough time paying the mortgage and making ends meet. I don't know how or whether his frequent job changes contributed to their financial straits. Winter clothing was expensive and since our resources were so limited -we were just plain poor- they didn't have money to buy good winter gear, or buy any gear this particular winter. So mom found ways to get by -with good intentions.

First, we wore long-handled under wear. That was a good start although they became mildly uncomfortable because they got baggy after a day or so. Remember that we only bathed once a week on Saturday and wore the same clothing all week unless it got dirty. The next layer of clothing was long sleeved shirts and levis. We also wore those mid-calf wool socks that wouldn't stay up without the garters. They held the socks up but were embarrassing. To finish off just before we went outdoors, we put on some non-descript, hand-me-down winter coats and mittens that did a fair job of keeping our fingers warm. I always wanted to have gloves like the

city kids but mittens were warmer because you can close your hand inside the mitten and keep them warmer than in glove where each finger is surrounded by cold.

We didn't have winter hats with ear flaps so our ears were painfully cold when we walked home from school. I don't remember whether we even had a car at this time but it wouldn't have been used for something as trivial as picking kids up from school. We had feet and could walk. So in the first grade we walked home in the snow. A mile and a half.

Parenthetically, the fact that little kids could walk that far alone revealed something important. Our country has lost that innocence that allowed little kids to walk without any fear more than a mile through town and then practically deserted farm land. Mom did not worry that something bad would happen. I never felt any fears about a person harming us. It wasn't even a consideration. In fact, I felt like I could go to any adult if I needed help. They took care of little kids. Now, I realize that wasn't entirely true even then but it was much more true than today and the fact that we were not cautioned to watch out for adults shows it. We knew several ways home and were only in any kind of danger when a vehicle passed us on the road and that was only a risk if we were out in the roadway. But cars were rare so even that risk was minimal. Today a parent would be derelict to allow their small children to walk a mile alone everyday. Even in Vernal. Times have changed, evil doers abound and live everywhere and unprotected little kids are just that.

Back to the frozen ears. Mom noticed how cold our ears were and she knew the temperature. We doubtless complained and cried because they were so cold. Pink and cold. It was bitter cold without ear covering to provide some protection so she did the only thing she could think to do with the resources that she had. She took the fur collar from an old coat and cut it into 2 inch wide squares. Then she cut two slits in each square and threaded a length of webbing through the slits to make ear muffs. These fur blocks could then be positioned over our ears and the belt could be tied under our chin. An entirely satisfactory device to protect them from the cold.

I was mortified. There was no way I would be seen in public with those things on. Even in second grade I would have died from embarrassment if I had appeared at school in those things. The ridicule one would experience would be enormous. I obviously had to wear them in the morning when I went out of the house and while I stood by the side of the road where mom could see me waiting for the bus to come. But as soon as I got on the bus with those horrible things on, a cat call or two erupted. I pulled those hateful things off as fast as I could and stuck them in my coat pocket. I would have thrown them away if I had dared but I had to put them on

when I got near home. To get home without them would have resulted in severe punishment.

I don't recall how I developed this acute sensitivity to the disgracefulness of poorness but it was there and I am embarrassed even at this moment by it. Those earmuffs were terrible humiliation even though mom meant well when she made them.

### ▼⋈ | ✕ \ || | Roasts

Mom had a way to cook venison roasts that masked the musky flavor that bothered some people. Which really was a problem I discovered later when I ate a roast cooked by someone who didn't know how or didn't care to mask the gaminess. In fact, I had no idea until I was a teenager that venison is disliked by some people because of its gaminess. Her roasts and steaks were delectable.

I don't know what spices she used but there were several The one I remember was laurel leaves. Called "bayleaf". Her method started with a hot cast iron skillet on top of the stove that looked like this. The door behind her would be the door into my bedroom. She'd dredge the roast in mixture of flour with lots of salt and pepper it. After it was coated white on both sides and all ends, she would drop it into the hot skillet to sear it. This required the stove to be stoked hot to heat the skillet that much.



Figure 159

Searing created a nearly-burnt crust of over-cooked meat that would hold the juice inside the roast. There was

a loud sizzle when the roast was lowered into the pan with lots of popping and splattering that produced the most delicious smoke. After she was satisfied that the down-side was sealed she'd take a large cooking fork, stab it deeply into the roast, pry it off the pan and flip it onto another side. She repeated this process until all sides were seared, i.e. showed a shiny hard brown surface. T

She'd then add her other spices and top off the roast with a couple of bayleaves. Actually, they may have made no difference in the flavor but it was part of the ritual and we'd remind her if she forgot. They were from Schilling and came in a narrow Schilling-red box. After the roast was properly seared and decorated



with spices, she would pour some water into the skillet and cover it with a lid, put the thing in the hot oven and roast it until it was nearly done. I don't know how she knew when this point was reached. Then she'd fill the skillet with fresh vegetables. These consisted of quartered potatoes, carrots, occasionally celery, and onions that she tucked around the roast until the lid scarcely seated. When she opened the skillet later, the meal was excellent.

When the skillet was opened, the steam flowed into the kitchen, filling it with a savory smell that made my mouth water. She'd cut the roast into pieces and serve it up on plates with generous helpings of vegetables. We'd sit down, say grace, and indulge. More than I could eat most of the time, but the flavor was wonderful. Gravy was made out of the drippings and the left over amount was saved to be served on bread for another meal as a way to stretch the meat.



Infection Control was a name that was decades away from Vernal or small communities like it. So stores that sold candy in bulk had large candy jars sitting in rows on shelves, low enough that kids could see them and reach into them. Most of the candies were one or two for a penny, and were un-wrapped. You took your pennies or nickel in, took as much time as you needed to look carefully at all of the sweet colorful offerings and finally made you decision. A momentous one. Then you took the metal lid off the jar and reached in to take what you had chosen. These items were carried in your hot sweaty palm over to the counter where the shopkeeper or clerk had been carefully watching you for the whole time. You laid the items of the counter while the person pushed them out flat on the counter, the better to count them. After adding things up, using a scrap of paper and a pencil if the number got too big, the clerk would tell you how much you owed. You would laboriously count out a penny at a time on the counter so the clerk could see that you were being honest. She re-counted it anyway and scooped it up, sorting it into the right slots in the cash register drawer.

The stores also had wrapped candies and gums. There were fancier and more expensive.

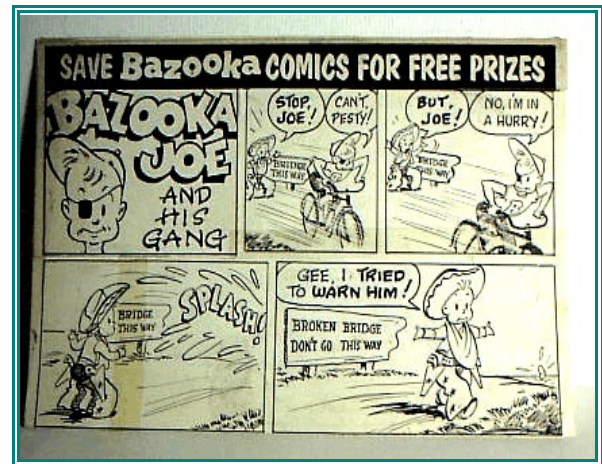
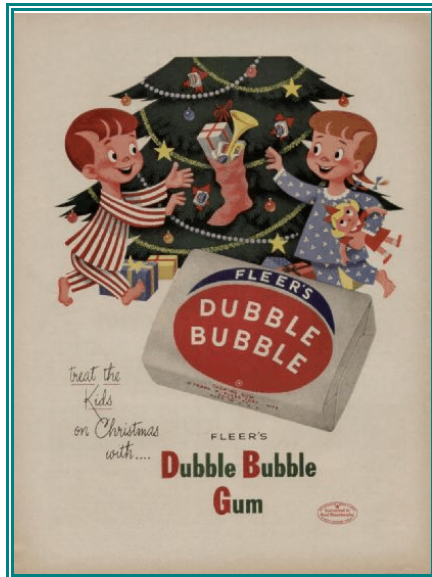
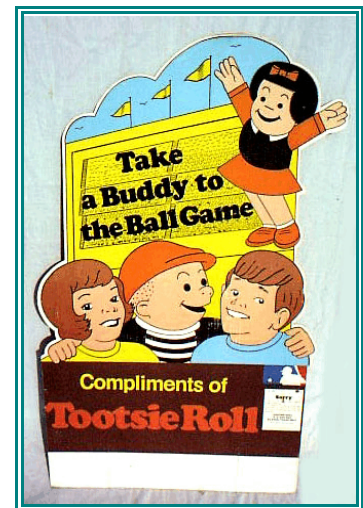


Figure 160  
<http://theimaginaryworld.com/burg75.jpg>

Fleers Bubble Gum was a penny apiece and Bazooka which was larger was two pennies. We only bought a 2 cent apiece gum or candy when we had a dime. Five pennies weren't many. We stretched them by buying the two for a penny variety of hard unwrapped candies.

Tootsie rolls of the large size were available in Grandma's store. Five cents for this monstrous roll of chocolate candy that was scored into bites that were too big to chew. I didn't see the smaller pieces until we lived in Seward. Nancy and Sluggo advertised this candy, appealing effectively to little kids who read those comic books, dreaming of the joy of having a tootsie roll.



**P**ickles are cucumbers that have been abused. With chemicals that harden the walls of cells and replace the natural juices with a spicy mixture of diluted vinegar. Alum is the principal chemical for transforming the cells, and affects cucumbers like formaldehyde affects mammalian tissues. Making of pickles takes time and a great deal of work. And seems to involve a small amount of magic or luck.

Mom raised cucumber plants in Vernal sufficient quantities to harvest enough small cucumbers to make a batch of pickles. She did not use the large cucumbers



that were cut up and made into chips for the table. Those were prepared with grandma's recipe. These large cucumbers were peeled, scored on all sides with a fork, cut into wheels and set into a bowl of water, vinegar, sugar and black pepper for a few hours, sometimes with slices of pickles. For pickles mom preferred baby cucumbers about 3 to 5 inches in length. It took several days to collect enough.

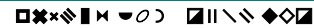
I don't know her recipe and don't remember all of the details of the process, but I remember that it took much longer than bottling fruits and vegetables, the only measure of time I had for food preparation. In contrast to her uniform success with canning, she was challenged by pickle-making, the only thing she didn't seem to master in the kitchen. She was an excellent cook. When the pickling process didn't work, the cucumbers would simply spoil and grow a foamy mold on the surface of the brine, or the pickles would taste funny or they would be mushy. She achieved all of those results along with good pickles.

The first surprise about pickle making was that the pickles weren't cooked. It was a cardinal rule about food preparation otherwise was that it had to be cooked thoroughly. So it was a violation of that rule to simply wash the little cucumbers and start the process. Turns out that there was no risk, but the violation of this otherwise rigid rule was conspicuous. We learned and lived rigidly by rules. After the small cucumbers were washed and the stem end cut off, they were put into a pickle crock which was covered with a mixture of water, alum and I don't know what else. There was a formula for letting the filled crock sit for a number of days after which mom drained the liquid off, holding the cucumbers inside the crock. The dinner plate she set as a lid over the collection was used to hold them in place while she tipped the crock on its side to drain the liquid off. The liquid she re-filled the crock with was a different mixture than the previous one. This draining and refilling was done several times.

She used her mom's recipe for the pickle spices. Dill that we grew in our own garden was the chief flavor since these were "dill pickles" but there were celery seeds and seeds of other kinds, including some the size of peppercorns that weren't. After she had mixed the spices in a bowl, she put them in a small cloth bag that she boiled them for a while on the stove. That liquid was the last that was poured over the cucumbers to flavor them. The seeds and the liquid were poured into the crock. The dill weed from the garden was hung upside down in the grainery to dry and kept there until it was needed, adding its aroma to the mixture of metallic fertilizers, musty mouse smells and oils and kerosene. In the end, we had pickles even if mom had to get them from her mom.



**P**arsnips are funny looking roots, knobbly, long and white, that look a bit like horseradish except that a parsnip is as bland as the horseradish is wild. We grew them out behind the privy, which probably sounds awful but I don't think there was contamination of the roots. Later: I guess I am rationalizing there, aren't I. Why would anyone plant a vegetable for the table along the side of the pit of a privy that was filled with you know what? We worried about the



distance of the privy pit from the well under the house but the vegetables in the soil didn't seem to be a problem. Another thought: remember how in the orient human waste -euphemistically termed "night soil"- is spread on gardens as a fertilizer? The vegetables and people do fine so perhaps there is no problem after all. All I know is that they were just planted there out of the way, behind the privy by the horseradish plants on one side and the strawberry patch a ways to the north. Mom used them regularly as part of our diet but the only way I remember them being prepared was as patties. She probably used them in stews but they weren't memorable there. Actually, they aren't memorable at all. Ask Dick - he hates them.

To prepare the patties she would peel and section the roots and then boil them until they were soft. Being a bit fibrous they didn't fall apart in the water like potatoes did. After they were softened, mom would drain the water off, holding the pot over the sink, lid tipped just a bit to allow water to flow out while she carefully avoided the swirling steam. She'd pour the parsnips into a large bowl where she mashed them into a pulp with a fork. A couple of eggs, salt and pepper were mixed into the mass after which it was divided into quarter-cup portions on a sheet of waxed paper. They were flattened and dipped into saltines she had crushed gently in the wax paper. Then she fried the patties in a hot skillet to brown the outside and firm them up after which they found their way to our plates. I didn't mind them, though they weren't exactly favorites but Dick didn't like them at all. A couple of years ago I bought a parsnip and left it on his doorstep. He never said anything about it.

The salmon loaf was basically a meat loaf prepared with canned salmon instead of hamburger. Mom bought a medium sized can of salmon which she mixed that same way she mixed a meat loaf. The salmon always interested me because the bones were

present, but had been chemically reduced during canning to a chalky substance that could be eaten. The bones in catfish and trout, the fish we caught and ate, were hard and sharp and not eaten so these mysterious bones seemed sort of dishonest or magic or both. The term 'loaf' probably came from the fact that the stuff was cooked in a bread pan so the result was shaped like a loaf of bread.



Soaps figure prominently in any household, modern or not. Hand soap for the sink, soap for the dishes, soap for the laundry. Dad had a special need in this regard because mechanics use oils and greases that stain the hands. The color didn't really bother him except when he went to church. He'd like to have more or less respectable hands so he'd scrub them harshly, using a nail brush to try to remove dirt. I see him sitting in church intently using a small pocket knife to work on his nails, gouging more of the black grease.

He used a substance called "Goop" to remove the heavy grease. It was a wonderful stuff because in the can it shook like jelly, and had a powerful, sweetish hydrocarbon odor that filled your space when you used it. Then he used soap to remove the goop that had dissolved the bulk of the grease. He preferred to use "Lava" soap, a soap that was compounded with finely ground pumice. The bar was gray, rough like fine sandpaper, and did the job. Insofar as it could be done.

The preferred soap for bathing was LifeBuoy, a sweeter smelling soap than Lava



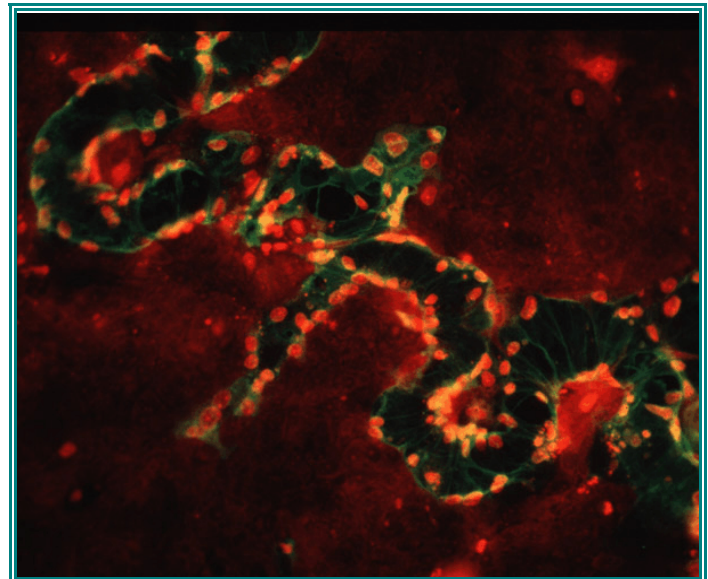


buried, she would not pull them out because that might break the head off which would always result in at least a minor local infection. Instead, she put oil over the insect to cause it to withdraw its head to go hunt for air. I still have a couple of scars from tick heads. Some people heated a knife blade to drive the tick out but the heat affected the person as well.

The concern for tularemia was particularly vivid one spring. For reasons that I don't remember, dad and some of mom's brothers brought home a tub half full of cotton tail rabbits they had shot that day. I don't know whether the rabbits were known to be diseased but they were handled as if they were. We obviously needed the meat. There must have been a higher than usual concern for tularemia because I specifically remember that whoever cleaned and skinned and butchered the animals wore rubber gloves, something I didn't remember seeing done before. We were ordered sternly to stay away while this job was done so that we didn't touch the skin and guts. I don't know where the offal was put but imagine it was buried out in the back acre somewhere. After the rabbits were divided, they were thoroughly cooked. At that point, they were safe to eat and we did eat them. All. But that need for stringent care to avoid disease reminds me of how careful we had to be in Brazil to avoid infestations. I obviously was lax - getting worms 3 times, and amoeba two times.

Back in those days, the FDA hadn't gotten itself as involved in livestock production and regulation nor in the monitoring and grading of meats as it is today. Actually, that is sort of an irrelevant statement. Because the FDA has no authority to regulate what families do for themselves so what we did with those rabbits or grandpa's pigs was none of the FDA's business in the final analysis. But that doesn't mean we didn't know and didn't care about the diseases the FDA has worked to eradicate or at least control.

Another of the nasties is trichinosis, a disease carried by pigs. When a person eats meat with these critturs in it, they migrate through



the stomach lining and set up permanent house-keeping somewhere in the body, one of the favored places being the heart muscle. So guess what happens 15-20 years later - the person develops heart abnormalities and keels over from a heart attack. That is precisely the risk posed by the Chagas Disease of Brazil. Funny parallel. Had to sleep in a mosquito net to avoid attacks by the "kissing" bugs that were the vector.

The way to reduce the risk to the eater of pork is to cook the heck out of the meat. There is no risk of contamination through the skin so cutting up and preparing the meat for storage or cooking did not require rubber gloves. But before eating pork, it had to be thoroughly cooked. No rareness at all. Heat was the way to ensure that these organisms did not set up housekeeping in a person. After careful cooking the meat could be eaten without any anxiety about becoming infested.



**I**t is a miracle that I did not lose my right eye. The details of what we were doing at the time

of this accident are lost in memory but the basic facts are not. I was running outside the house with a sharp, foot-long stick in my right hand, playing some game with Dick. The stick was probably a sword or spear. Something went wrong. I tripped and fell but didn't let go of the stick. The end of the stick jammed into my right eye. Miraculously it slipped off the globe and gouged the bottom of the eye socket. It hurt badly and bled a lot but no permanent injury was done. I probably didn't even get a visit to Dr. Spendlove in spite of the severity of the injury. People just took care of everything they could at home. Today I would have had a speedy ride to a doc-in-a-box. I can't tell which situation is better for the kid.

About this same time I had to have a "sty" removed from one of my eyes. By Dr. Spendlove who spent a lot of time with me. This sty was a growth on the top edge of the bottom eye lid. As it grew it prevented the lids from fully closing, was a thing I felt all the time, and it was an irritating visual distraction. The procedure was done in his office while I lay on an examination table. Dr. Spendlove put yellowish drops in the eye to deaden it and after a short time took something that looked sort of like a narrow nail clipper with a threaded screw through the middle. He opened the jaws of this thing wide enough to fit over the sty, held it down over the thing while lay on my back, watching. Then he turned the thumb-wheel. He tightened it until it clipped the sty completely off. Perhaps my memory of the device used is inaccurate. I know I was scared and I feared I would be blinded by the procedure.

Mom did something unusual for her in this situation. I had resisted having the sty "cut" off my eyelid even though it hurt and made me look funny, particularly since



Dr. Spendlove prescribed some greasy yellowish ointment that mom applied twice a day. That earned me a few more comments at school. She thought it should come off and for a reason that I don't know today, instead of just strong-arming me -which would have worked again- she chose to conciliate and finally bribe me. She told me that after I had the sty removed I could go to the store and pick out an album of 78 rpm records. My very own.

After the procedure was successfully completed, I looked for a long time at the albums of records and finally picked out a set that had three or four 78's. Woody Woodpecker. The thing that clinched the deal for me was the fact that there was a cartoon book in full color in the album with the text of what was being spoken on the records. You could read along, which makes me suspect that my "choice" was perhaps more guided than free. Whatever, I loved that album. Mom still has it at 2821 N. The way you knew to turn the page was to hear Woody laugh a funny laugh.



There was pain later that mom treated with what was a common remedy in those days, over-the-counter paregoric. This was a sort of joy juice that moms used to quiet kids, ease pain, stop diarrhea, prevent car sickness, and generally have control of any situation involving kids. It's anhydrous morphine. You could buy 4 ounce bottles over the counter. It has an odd sweetish-flavor. Mom would put a teaspoon in a quarter-cup measuring cup and fill it with water before giving it to us to drink. [This is the same stuff I used in the Amazon to control diarrhea.]

It's odd isn't it that a narcotic, even a mild one, was dispensed so freely but this was the tail-end of the wide-spread use of laudanum and cocaine - which is why Coke is named Coke though the formula today obviously doesn't include it.. This practice persisted into the 1970s because we got some in Bloomington for Liz Hart who had a major intestinal problem. At that time, one could only get 2 ounces and had to sign a narcotic log and present ID but it was available. The problem for the DEA was that it was a simple matter to cook the anhydrous morphine to drive off a molecule of water which converted it into the more powerful morphine. Today, paregoric is only dispensed on the basis of a doctor's DEA-issued prescription.



By my memory, I had measles three times. There were German Measles and Red Measles and you should only be able to catch each one once, but I skillfully did one of them two times. The drawback of the measles was being locked in the bedroom, blinds pulled so the sunlight didn't bother our eyes, itching like crazy, and wanting like crazy to get out. The good part was that we didn't have to go to school. Because of the risk of transmission to other kids. Which is actually a funny thing when I look back at it. Because in those days before vaccines moms were practical about the reality that most kids were going to come down with most childhood diseases. So they, with great wisdom I think, would send their own children -after school of course- to homes where they knew there were kids with measles or mumps or chicken pox. Just to get the darn diseases taken care of in a time of their own choosing. In those days there was far less anxiety about kids getting these "childhood diseases" and if the timing was somehow right to get measles over with, then send the kid over to get him or her exposed so it can be over with. Today I fear there is a sprt of hysteria about getting childhood illnesses that were so common back the.

It interests me to read last week -2002- that some brilliant bunch has determined scientifically, and with a heck of a lot of money I suspect- that kids who were raised in the yeasty environment of corrals and farms ended up having more reactive and helpful immune systems than kids raised in sterile town houses. Duh.

Dick and I somehow avoided the mumps in Vernal. We had measles and chicken pox, the latter being strange with little red spots of watery blisters, but never came down with mumps. As little kids we had no insight into the risk to males of mumps but mom was concerned that we get the disease over with before we entered puberty. I didn't realize it at the time. So in Seward she engineered our exposure to mumps. The infected kid was my friend Jay Clapp, the son of the Episcopal priest who stood on his front porch of the rectory adjacent to the church on Sunday after bidding goodbye to the last of his flock, with a beer can in one hand and a cigarette in the other. That always struck me, given my fundamentalist background, as something a 'good' priest shouldn't do. I liked him, however, and ate at his table many times. Where I was introduced to 'succotash', the combination vegetable dish that I thought was just a silly word that Sylvester the Cat probably made up.

The oddest thing about eating at the table was the way food was served. In my own home, dishes of food were set on the table and passed around for each to help himself to. In this home, the family originating in Connecticut I believe, the father, not necessarily Father, had a pile of plates stacked in front of him. He

grandly served the meat and vegetables one plate at a time after which it was "handed around" -not passed- to whoever was getting it next, starting, of course, with mother who sat directly opposite father. This process took several minutes while the father queried each kid as to which foods and how much of each was required. Fairly pompous way to eat, particularly in Seward, of all places to stand on such silly formality.

Later I found the history of my diseases, if I can call it that, that mom kept which contains an accurate -I assume though I'm not entirely sure- listing of diseases and years. It is attached here, and re-appears again in a discussion about vaccinations. The first thing to note about this list is mom's ambivalence about calling me James. You can see that she obviously wrote my middle and last name first, and then, as an after thought squeezed my first name into the inadequate space before Rondo.

Isn't that weird? She doesn't know whether she likes the name she gave me or no. That was a constant source of pain for her. I think she regretted giving me the same first name as dad because of reasons I have to admit I don't understand. Why should it be a problem if the son and dad have the same first name? Lost of people do that but she regretted it. To this day,

Palis shots July 17 - Aug. 7  
 James Rondo Jensen

chicken pox	1950
S. measles	49
measles	49
scarlet fever	45
whooping cough	46
mumps	1954
Tonsils	1947
small pox vaccination scar	1951
diphtheria Tonsil	1952
T B test	1952 neg. 1954
Typhoid	1952
Tetanus (Dicks)	1950 Both 1956
fibroid tumor removed from ear	1947 ?
Tonsils out	<del>1936</del> 1946 ?
led. Rate - Rondo	1952
accident Feb. 14/1955	Keloid
Keloid	thymus

60 years later, she refuses to acknowledge my first name. She will die without having ever called me by the first name that SHE gave me. Something is wrong there, not majorly, but diseased nonetheless in my estimation. She has never, not one \_\_\_\_\_ time called me by my first name. Understand, please, that it is not an accident, that it is intentional. Then try to figure out why is is such a big deal.

Remember that in those days her faith -according to mom many years ago- preached about the naming of babies, instructing people that they should give the babies precisely the names that they, the parents, chose to call the babies by the remainder of their life. That's why Dick has the unusual appellation "Dick A Jensen". They didn't want to call him Richard so they named in "Dick", and they needed a middle initial but apparently couldn't agree on a name, or couldn't find one at all, so picked the first letter of the alphabet to stand in its place. Since the "A" was not an abbreviation for anything, they did not use a period after it. So you see my point: if they were that meticulous in the choice and design and spelling of his name, I assume they did the same thing with my name, so why in the world can mom not use the first name that she so carefully chose years ago during that era of brainwashing? Folklore has it that in the early of years of me Mabel did call me "Jimmy" but mom brought that to a screeching halt, though I never discovered why - nor did I actually wonder about it back in those years when Mabel was still around to share the facts. [The fact of the matter is that there are profound psychological explanations for this phenomenon and I don't want to even begin to think about them.]

Back to the childhood diseases in Vernal: I had a full spectrum of them as you see here: measles two times in 1949 when I was in first grade in the spring and second grade in the fall, scarlet fever when I was three, i.e. still in Naples while dad was off playing war, whooping cough when I was four so dad may have been home by then, and chicken pox when I was 8. I fortunately avoided diphtheria it did appear occasionally in towy, scaring the crap out of me. Similarly, I avoided getting tetanus and typhoid fever, two more nasty diseases. Tetanus was known as "lock jaw" and was noted to be a horrible disease that resulted in death by asphyxiation due to the whole body paralysis that resulted from the toxin. I was aware of one or two kids from Central Elementary school who dies from this nasty disease.

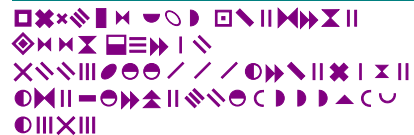
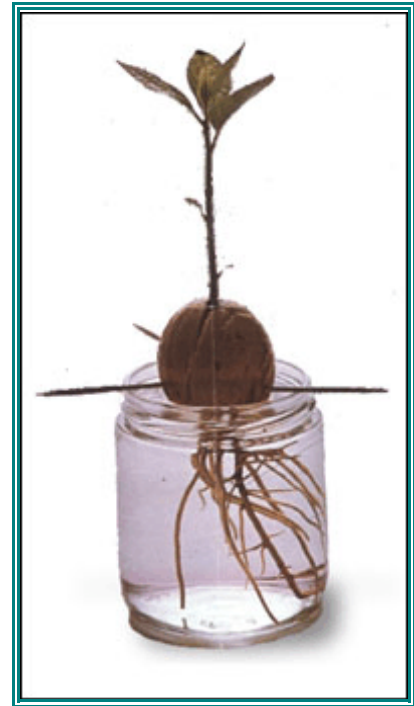


**M**arie, a kid off the desert, loved avocados. She never saw an avocado tree in her life but she loved the fruit. I have speculated -fruitlessly-ha-- about where she could have acquired such a taste. Later she and I had a little chat about where she first learned to like avocados and where we lived she did this trick with the seeds the first time for us. She is quite sure she never ate one until we lived in Seward, and I am quite sure that we did this trick in Vernal. Believe who you will. We could both pass a lie detector test.

There is no doubt that avocados weren't a staple of her diet in Rainbow and I'm not sure where she would have first encountered them and developed a taste for them. These were the old-fashioned, true -as opposed to the new hybrids that look right but taste wrong- Haas avocados with the rough black skin that broke like wood. She'd treat herself to one on occasion. She'd take it home and cut the pointed end off with a paring knife. Then she'd take a small spoon and dip small bites out of the flesh, carefully scraping the hard skin, until it was empty. I think she'd eat the whole thing right then. They weren't used in salads and I don't know whether dad even liked them, but she did. I don't know whether or not I liked them at the time. I love them today..

The fascinating thing about an avocado to me was its seed, and enormous monstrous seed. As a farm kid, I was used to seeing seeds of many kinds but they were the small dry dark things that were buried carefully in the dirt and watered with irrigation water. This seed just shouted to be examined and played with and cut open to see the germ and tasted. That was a principal part of our experimental armamentarium, sort of like being a dog or cat who have no other investigative method. I played with these seeds more than once, doubtless puncturing my hand with the knife when it slipped during the attempt to use it to split open the two halves. The hard flesh somehow looked attractive but the taste was bitter.

There was a wonderful experiment that mom did for -or with- us several times. She'd take three toothpicks -not two- and an empty pimento cheese glass - those are what she used as juice glasses, though it was pretty fancy talk to refer to them as



"juice" glasses. They were just small glasses. In any event, she'd get one of them, three toothpicks, the avocado seed and a large needle or nail. She would use the needle or nail to put three holes about equidistant around the avocado at about the same level. Then she'd insert toothpicks into those holes and would be careful to not break them off. When they were in place, she'd fill the glass with water, sit the avocado into the water so that it rested with its toothpicks on the lip of the glass, and put it in the window to grow. She did not peel the crusty brown skin off the seed.

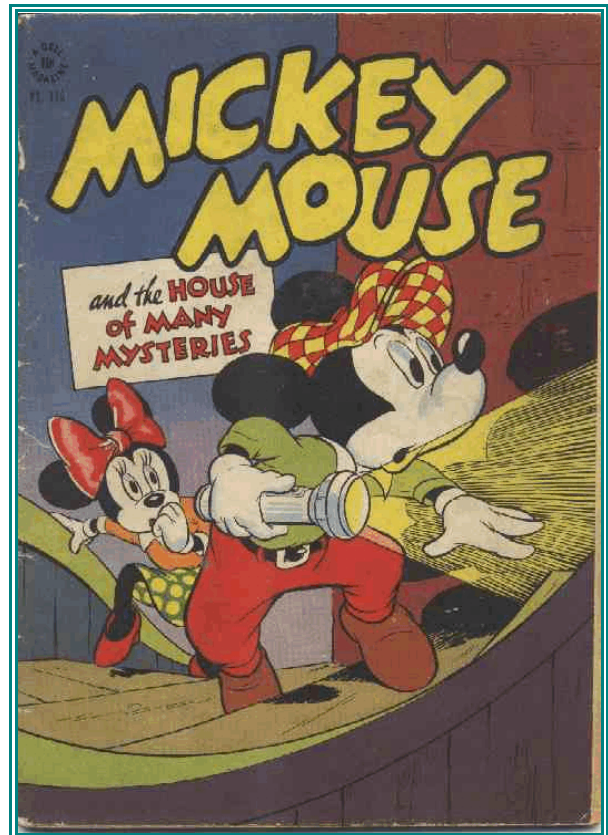
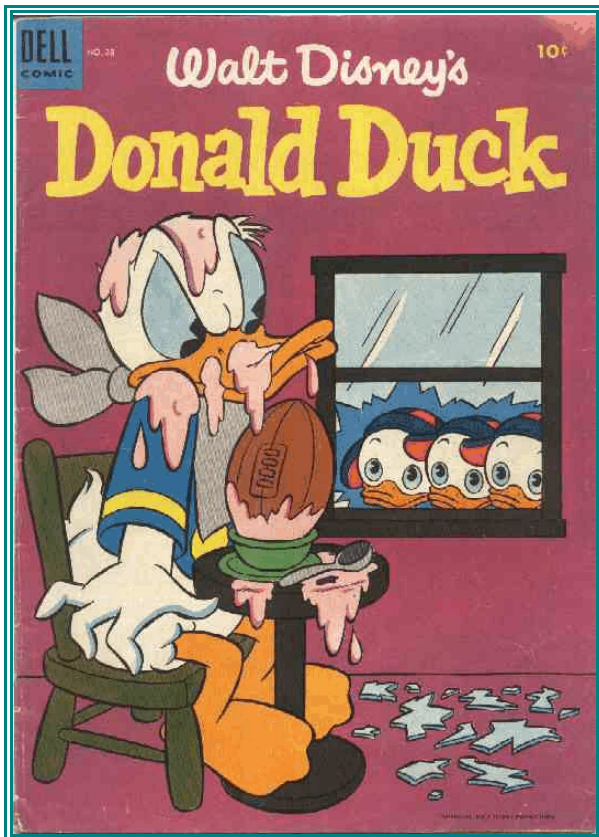
Growing anything for a kid is agony. The excitement created by the parent about what it's going to turn into fills the kid with anxiety and he just can't wait to see the plant that is reported to come from the seed. But it grows so slowly that the kid can scarcely stand it. These seeds were no different. We'd watch it every day for a while until we forgot about it. But one day mom would call us and point out that the husk over the giant seed was starting to split. That meant that the germ was growing and so we'd watch it every day for a while, until we forgot about it again.

Then at some point mom would call to tell us that there was a tiny green sprout erupting from the top of the seed -ah yes, the wide end of the seed must always be up, not down in the water- so we'd run to see and sure enough, there it was. We knew sprouts. These plants, said dad, were dicotyledons, which meant that the first sprout out of the seed had two leaves instead of one - a monocotyledon. There were indeed two small leaves. Over time, the tiny sprout would grow into a lanky skinny plant that was set into a pot of soil. It would get a foot tall and then something would happen to it and it would be thrown out. The trees would not have survived any winter I lived in so the point of the exercise was simply to see the germination and growing that happened each time.

In a similar vein mom did some plant magic with fat carrots. I mean 'fat' carrots, ones that were an inch and a half in diameter. She'd take one of these, cut off the top three inches and then scoop out the center of the cut end of the carrot, leaving the stem-end intact. Excavating a small cup without cracking the outside of the carrot. After she had made the hole large enough, she would use toothpicks again. This time she didn't need a needle or nail because the carrot was soft enough that she could just push the toothpicks into it. After placing three toothpicks equidistant around the carrot, she would make a sort of harness out of string that hooked onto the three toothpicks. This harness was suspended from a nail in the wall, or tied somehow over a window. But it was upside down, and the cavity created on the cut end was filled with water and kept filled. The growing that took place in this situation was out of the bottom of the carrot. It would produce the fluffy



book that mom and dad would subscribe to for us. An exquisite gift for many reasons. It was agony to pick out the one we really wanted to receive. A wealth of candidates and no reliable metric to tell us which one would make us happiest each month when it arrived.



Finally we each picked one of the Disney characters - probably because those were mom's preference. It is remarkable how little free agency we had in spite of her attempts to make us think that we were the ones in charge of our decisions. The arrival of the comic books in the US Mail was a momentous occasion. The mailman delivered our next issue, folding it carefully in the mailbox out by the road so we didn't see it until one of us was sent out to check the mail.. Everything stopped for that afternoon while we solemnly and earnestly read our new comic books. Several time running. Time stopped, barking dogs weren't heard, Mr. Johnson mowing his alfalfa field disappeared. The sun stopped shining while we laboriously went through these miracles. Our own comic book. Brought to us by the mailman. Paid for by mom



and dad. The ultimate mystery.

After we finished reading our own, we would negotiate with each other to arrange a trade so that we could prolong the solemn thrill of reading new comic books. Today that transaction seems simple enough. It should have been a pretty simple thing to say, "Here, I'm finished, can I read yours now?" But it was not easy. There were a kind of rules of engagement that governed how we entered into parlays about loaning our prized new comic book to the other. We didn't argue about whether we would sit at round or rectangular tables, but only because we weren't familiar with the subtleties of diplomacy. It didn't matter that we had nowhere to go and nothing else to do and each wanted badly to read the other's new comic book. The bargaining probably had as much to do with the fact that there wasn't anything else as interesting to do out in the country as quietly debate the merits of who should give in first, who should cross the bedroom to the other kid's side and lose face in the process, especially if the Cooper kids couldn't come over to play. So we savored the negotiations and filled time with them. Finally our avaricious need to read the other's comic book overcame our principles. Prudent, again. Morals undergo rubber twists during times of need I've noted, starting at age 5 or 6. When we tired with the endless, fruitless parlays, we just handed the comic books straight across so we could savor the joy of deciphering new images and words, eating up another portion of what otherwise was a dull hot afternoon. We got to read new books and to practice our negotiation skills. Double benefit of these subscriptions. Neither helped ultimately.

These comic books were preserved in a pile on our respective shelves and we re-read when weather was bad or we were otherwise bored. Sometimes when mom was in the mood, really more a matter of money I suspect today, she would let us pick out a new comic book at the store when she was shopping. That way we added to our hoard of worn dog-eared magazines. There were more rules, however, about which comic books we could read.

Censorship has a long history in my life and I accepted it as normal. Turns out I was pretty pragmatic about my morals. To not accept the choices offered to me was to not get a comic book. That simple. Ain't that the way with life now? So I liked mom's choice of comics - a lot. Actually, I did. Anything by Disney or Walter Lanz was acceptable. The off-limit comics were ones that portrayed violence which even included the Three Stooges. That was one I didn't get, particularly since the Roadrunner did more violent things to Wily Coyote than Curly ever did to Moe. How could she say it was bad for Curly to slap Moe, but that it was OK for Wily Coyote to be blown up with dynamite or fall a thousand feet again and again? But I wasn't too severe in my morals, and I kept my reservations to myself lest I lose the chance

entirely of getting another new comic book. Even Superman was off limits.



One of the early settlers of the Unitah Valley was named Merkley and his name was preserved in a park that was located somewhere north of Vernal. Being as young as I was, I really didn't have a clear sense of where things were. I just got in the car when told to, and went wherever mom and dad were going.

Merkley Park was a pretty big deal in Vernal. It wasn't so far away that it was too far away to go out there for a picnic. I remember going there for picnics with our family as well as for outings with the school or church. I don't really know what the larger group was but I know we did go out there with a lot of people that I didn't know. Actually, there wasn't much of a difference between a church group and a school group.

The park was typical high mountain desert and had trees and lots of flat space for throwing blankets down to sit on. There were firepits to roast wienies and then marshmallows. The fun time was in the evening when the fire shone brightly in the darkness, making the area around the camp fire safe and special. This image is from dad's miscellaneous collection of stuff. It is unlabeled so there is no way to know who these people are. The fact that he retained the photo suggests there are friends or family here. Somehow it looks like a scout outing, or some formal group.

The sandstone cliffs that surrounded the park were fairly high and I heard a story at school that fascinated me. It made me want to be 10 years older because I heard stories from dad and grandma Merrell about Indians. The story got about town that some one was exploring in the mountains up above Merkley Park in the small caves that pocked the



red sandstone cliffs. In one of these caves this lucky person found an Indian burial with some Indian artifacts. What I remember specifically was that the guy found some pots. For some reason I was envious and wished I were old enough to be able to go up there and hunt for more of them. I knew there were more out there just waiting to be found.





skipping school for any reason, except their -either- own death. You went to school, come hell or high water. No phony excuses were taken from the kid, and fewer were forthcoming from the parents. No self-respecting parent in those days would have phoned the school to say, "Oh, attendance counselor [there actually was no such thing then because teachers were capable of doing their own jobs], so and so just doesn't feel good today! Would you please be so *kind* as to excuse him/her?" Nope. When parents were advised of the upcoming episodes in weeping and wailing and rubbing alcohol, there was no way around it. Running away to join the circus was an option, but seemed a mite excessive even for a 'shot'. On the fateful day, we didn't sleep too well and were cheerfully and forcibly pushed out the door by moms who made sure their offsprings were spruced up and in school. With clean undershirts.

We went to class and sat quietly. "Good Morning., Teacher" was pretty somber. The Pledge of Allegiance was pale, but the Lord's Prayer rang out, with a few miscellaneous additions in a few hearts. Dread permeated the classroom, all of us were nervous and distracted. We didn't pay much attention to the teacher so she'd admonish us to "Pay attention," but she knew she was spitting into the wind. When our class was summoned to the cafeteria, we silently and unhappily lined up as ordered and followed single file behind the teacher. As we neared the arena, we could smell the alcohol and heard the quiet hubbub of many voices. We had to stop outside the cafeteria where the ordeal was in process and nervously waited for the command to enter.

Kids who had been "shot" walked past us back to their rooms displaying a full spectrum of reactions, some in a catatonic state walking stiffly like they had developed a severe ataxia, fear that jarring the injected arm would make it hurt worse, some rubbing their arms, pained, some lifting their sleeves to see where the injury had been inflicted, a tiny drop of blood here and there that looked to be a gallon, some teary eyes. But there were smart alecks and show-offs who pretended it didn't hurt, laughing about it. We secretly thought they were lying. Perhaps they weren't but I thought they were, thought there were trying to be brave because they weren't.

We were summoned into the cafeteria and then saw the white nurse uniforms setting up old-fashioned glass syringes, evil looking affairs with glass plungers, and shiny heavy-duty needles. They filled them with stuff out of bottles with peculiar rubber plugs in place of proper lids. They inverted the bottles, sticking in the needle, squeezing air into the vial, drawing out a measured amount, looking carefully at the numbers on the barrel as they ejected the excess into the air, laying the syringe on the table, repeating the process endlessly. As we advanced we were told to loosen

our sleeves on the side we wanted the shot. You got to be kidding! We DIDN'T want it, what an unfair way to put it. As we neared we saw kids look away, swallow hard and grimace, while the nurse murmured platitudes and rubbed the skin with a wet alcohol cotton ball. Then she picked up the armed and loaded syringe and squeezed a bunch of skin on the arm muscle, quickly stabbed the syringe in to the hilt. At that point she'd pull back on the plunger to see if there was a return of blood in which case the needle was withdrawn and you got a second injection. When satisfied that things were right, the nurse would finally ram the medicine in. After withdrawing the needle, she'd swipe at the wound and say "Next" at which point each kid tried to walk away without fainting. Some actually did faint and were carried by attendants to cots on the side of the cafeteria, covered with warm blankets and nurses who watched over them till they recovered.

The whole experience was terrible, but I think it was terrible because we all made it terrible. A mob mentality, a mass hysteria phenomenon in reality. There was discomfort and fear if injections were given in a doctor's office but things weren't hysterical there. Partially because your mom had hold of your ear I suppose. In the schools, we exuded anxiety and fed on each other's tensions, listening to a whine, a cry, watching for tears and fears, horrified that we would cry. In any event, we got vaccinations and survived them but experienced a sort of rite of passage.



I don't remember whether we got the Sunday Paper delivered to the place  
Every Sunday

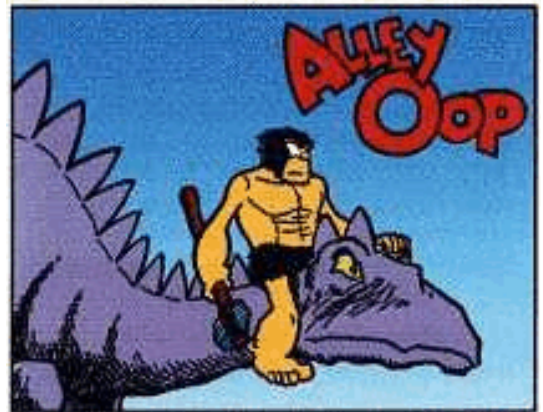
but we got it often enough that it was part of the landscape. I loved the "funnies" and looked for certain strips that I understood, or which were drawn in a style that appealed to me. Dad and Mom read the real paper but they enjoyed the funnies too. Here's a list of most of them, that I found at <http://www.toonopedia.com/>. I'd like to put more information in here about each of them or give you bigger images of my favorites but space doesn't permit that, so I'll make a comment or two and let it go at that.

In order to grasp the experience of the Sunday Funnies, please remember that there was no TV. None. Not even in town. Even when TV came into being in the late 1940's in cities Vernal was over the mountains nestled in the bowl of the Uintah Valley so could not even receive the primitive signal. Translator stations did not exist. Either you were in range of the city signal or you were not. There were TV signals that were available in SLC. I remember seeing TV for the first time, probably in ZCMI. I was not sure what to make of it because I had never seen something like it. A screen that was perhaps 6 or 8 inches in diameter, not rectangular. It was

green and pale green, not black and white. Basically a dressed up oscilloscope. It is important, if you are trying to grasp the atmosphere of this life on a small farm outside of town in that deep valley in those years, to remember this fact that there was no TV. We just had the scratchy AM radio broadcasts that almost disappeared at night. Newspapers, magazines and radio were our sole entertainment at home.

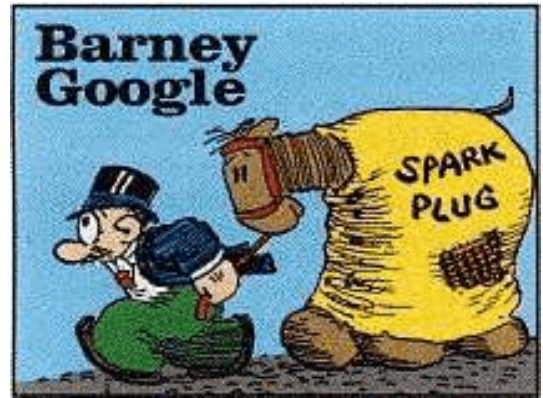
Vernal was a tiny town of several thousands without much activity. Little hustle bustle of commerce out there in this desiccated dry corner of the state where the sidewalks were rolled up at 5pm. That made anything unusual or special out on our farm an event, a 'happening.' Sunday Funnies were that sort of thing. The experience of the Sunday paper was heightened by the fact that dad was home. All day. In the house, with us, reading the paper too. So the Sunday Funnies were a central experience each week. The ones listed here appeared during that era and constituted the framework on which my funny paper memories and experience are hung. Dad and mom with the paper with Dickie and I, relaxing. It was always on sunny days in my memory. Grin.

Alley Oop was a favorite for the simple reason that it had dinosaurs. And my dad liked dinosaurs. A natural combination. Actually, I found the dialogue above my head, too adult for me to really follow or be interested in. But I looked at it anyway, always wondering at the oddly-shaped arms and legs of the man. And at the fact that he managed to tame gigantic creatures that I was afraid to think about.





Barney Google was an odd strip that I didn't really get it. Just look at this image. The humor was over my head. A derelict horse named "Spark Plug". In some drawings the horse was built into a chariot with wheels instead of back legs - which were powered by a large battery sitting on his rump.



Blondie is still around. Dagwood still doing the stupid things he did back then like this image of him running smack into the postman in his haste to get out of the house.



Brenda Starr was always there. And I always didn't read it. I didn't like it. And didn't understand it. Her starry eyes and overdone smiles were phony.



This one I liked. Mother was a strong willed woman with a heavy rolling pin that flew after Father when he came home drunk or forgot to do some task he said he'd so. And the beautiful daughter was beautiful. I was afraid of her. No way in hell I would have talked to HER.



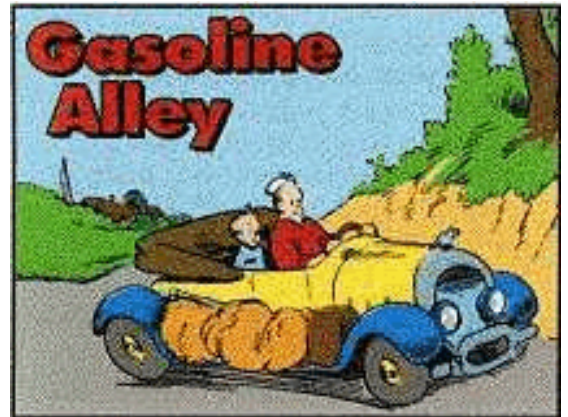
Of course, this was a given. I loved the technology of the strip, not really believing the day would come during my lifetime when there would be such things as wrist watch radios. I have one in my stuff somewhere that I bought in Boise in the late 1970's. It had an ear piece and picked up all the local AM radio stations with the use of a tuning knob. Most amazing. Fighting crime was a commendable duty, parallel to being cowboys.



Flash Gordon has come up in UBW several times. The most frightening series of strips had to do with aliens who came to earth and sucked away all the oxygen, killing everyone who was unprotected. Somehow that rang as possible, as maybe something I needed to worry about. So I did.



This showed up regularly, I read it regularly, and didn't understand it regularly. It seemed familiar, however.



These kids and adults talked in a funny impossible to understand blend of English and I think German or Dutch. I didn't -and don't- know which. But the pictures told most of the tale. These two kids always were in trouble with the adults. Grampa was good to protect them, momma always was whipping them and the goat ate anything in sight. The humor was too subtle - I wouldn't get the kids' humor in this scene.



Al Capp wrote this for decades. I had to good(?) fortune to meet one of his kids who was my age. They lived on Brattle Street not far from Harvard and Rich Hawkes picked the kid up to go see "Around the World in 80 Days". On the way the private-school snobby kid carefully told the story about how the "colonial Americans fired the first herd shot round the world." [Remember your American History?] He was OK. Notice, again, the sexuality of Daisy Mae. She was did not look like Olive Oyl.



This was weird. The drawings were distorted and weird always. Dreams were more like nightmares. Another one I didn't understand well but the drawings were lavish and fascinating. Another trend setter - though I didn't know it at the time.



This apparently is one of the innovative comic strips of the time that set the stage for much of what was to follow. I didn't know that. The humor I appreciated was the slap stick variety. The simple line drawings were easy to understand, however. I'll show you a full Sunday strip on the next page. Reminds you of "Archy and Mehitabel"?





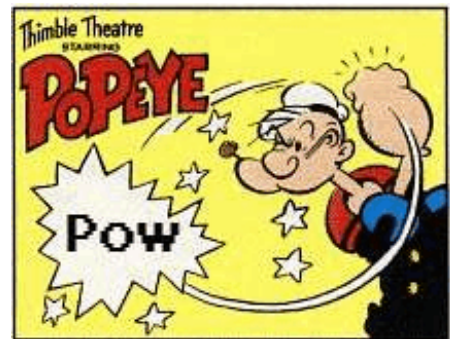
She was always there. Missing her eyes. So did "Rusty" or "Sandy", whatever the dog's name was. Daddy Warbucks was sinister and was not a sympathetic character but he seemed to treat Little Annie well so that was OK. The dog talked, "Arf", a new concept. A dog talking in comic strips.



This was a strip I understood and related to. Two little kids my age doing things I did. Note, however, how they were always dressed well. Not sloppy, even in comics.



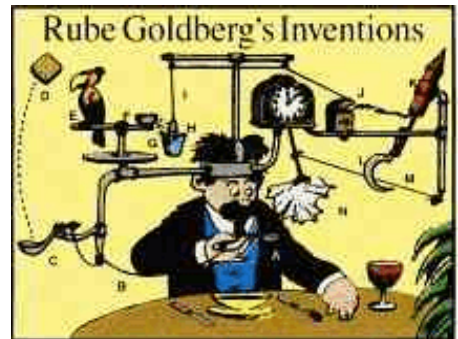
This guy had another set of arms I didn't understand, and the business of gulping cans of spinach to get instantly strong was a bit much. His fights to protect Olive Oyl from the big bad guy were punctuated with these "pows". Wimpie and his hamburgers I didn't get but since he appeared in the strip, I read about him, too. Just didn't get it.



Nice drawings, probably sort of accurate history, but boring as boring can be. I rarely spent any time looking at this adult strip. But I appreciated the fact that it was well drawn with handsome people and an ethic of good and bad.



Rube Goldberg has disappeared from the landscape but he showed up then. The mad inventor who created the weirdest inventions to do simple things. Like in this drawing. Disney used these sorts of inventions in "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang."



This one must have been about WW II but I didn't understand it or wasn't interested in it. I didn't read it. But note the inventive colors and outlines. Another trend setter. I discovered later.



This was in the category of Gasoline Alley. I related to it because it seemed to capture some of the reality of life as I knew it. But I liked it. Of course, we didn't have a trolley out our way and I'm not sure when I first saw one. No doubt in SLC.



These guys were the rudest meanest people in the strips. I read them, thought they were funny some of the time but didn't approve of their nasty pranks.



## Dad Driving for Wycoff

Wycoff Company was based in SLC, a trucking-distribution business with a large number of contracts. It employed a large number of employees in various kinds of trucks and vehicles around the state. As best I can tell from dad's table of contents, he must have worked for Wycoff around 1948 or 1949 because I was so young, and because he worked so many different jobs in the ~4 years we lived in Vernal. Whatever the date, he started to drive a Wycoff truck, a panel truck, from Vernal to SLC and back, five days a week. That might not sound like much of a trip today because people make that 180 mile trip today on the much improved US 40 in something like 3 hours. But back then the road was a narrow, winding up-and-down road that was slow to travel, plus the cars and trucks were slower than today's vehicles. And the speed limit was probably 50, about the limit for most vehicles at the time on that tortuous narrow road. In addition, his trip was lengthened considerably by the side trips he had to make along the way, to Ioka, to Gusher, out to Ouray and so on, places I don't even know today. His job was to deliver newspapers, movies, and small parcels along the way. I don't know what the relationship was with the US Post Office but it seemed to me that he even delivered some postal items.

Whatever the particulars were, this simple-appearing round-trip was calculated to drive a man nuts. A day at a time, with the pressure to meet deadlines, to have to wait for some jerk to get a package ready, for a clerk to come over and sign for the package, for a manager to delay while examining the delivery to really make sure it is all there, plus the boredom of the same road day in and day out, back and forth, winter and summer, may I go crazy before I go to sleep tonight please. God, what an awful job. I don't imagine that the pay was anything commensurate with the responsibility or boredom. But dad needed a change of jobs when he took this one and hoped it would pan out. It didn't, but he had some wonderful adventures to tell. Remember: Adventures are hell while they are happening.

The truck he drove had the usual two front doors and a split door in the rear. No side doors or windows. He'd open the rear doors, throw in whatever he'd picked up, or grab out whatever was to be delivered, get rid of it, and be on his way as soon as possible. No time for small talk. Timing wasn't critical in the morning but in the afternoon around quitting time it was. If he went to Ioka too late in the day, he couldn't make his delivery even though he was outside the store, so he had to make a second trip out there the next day, frustration of frustration, mutter and growl. The truck was grey and had the Wycoff logo on the sides. To me it was an extravagant thing that he drove truck for Wycoff, driving all the way to SLC every



day and returning to us. I was proud of him and his job.

He would leave before we got on the bus for school, in the panel truck that he drove home every day so he obviously left early. It was sort of romantic to a kid to see his dad bustling in the early morning, muttering and complaining and hurrying, while mom made his lunch, getting him ready in his pressured style to leave on his next adventure. Too awed by the event to say anything, I simply watched, admiring his courage and strength to take that trip, clear out to SLC again today, man alive, how could he do that. I was also afraid of him, so I felt a mixture of powerful forces. He was so self-absorbed that we didn't have a great deal of interactions. The trip was long. I knew that from personal experience. It was a long harrowing ride on a narrow road through Fort Duschene, and Roosevelt up through Strawberry and down the other side past little towns and mountains and snow and cold and wind and deer and creatures and accidents and highway patrol.



Just to come back to me. To my little home where I waited for him each night, hoping and praying -probably literally- for his safe return. My world would have crashed if he had not come home. So funny to realize that today, as an adult who faults him badly for his bad treatment of me. But I loved him. Beyond words, and if he had gone, I would have died, too. He was my anchor, the anchor of my mother, and the sun rose and sat in him. A giant, a god, thank you god for him, what an extraordinary gift I had in him, my very own dad. I love you dad. Thank you for being you, you rascal. So complex and fearful.

His return in the evening was a time of celebration. Thankfulness, really. I felt in my heart that I was lucky that he came back. In one piece. Dickie and I did the most amazing thing for him that might offend you, but please don't be offended. It was a gracious thing that spoke of my love and affection of him. He would sit himself in a chair, and wipe his forehead with his right hand and exclaim what a terrible hard day it was. While mom would stand and listen to him, waiting for him to come down, to calm down, to be here with us, brushing his hair, examining his neck for pimples that she popped while he talked. Some days when he was in this first phase of coming home, the "arsenic hour" I've told all of you about, he'd complain about his

boots, real work boots, not some silly sissie Adidas or Nike how-stupid-can-we-make-people-look shoes. Men's shoes, by damn, that laced up 6 eyes with 6 hooks above them, rising up over his ankle. Loggers. Men's shoes, fancier than cowboy boots, or irrigation boots.

Some evenings when the sun was setting and the house was warm and cooled by summer zephyrs and we worshiped him, Dickie and I would ask him if we could take his boots off. He would allow as how that would be just fine. So we would. We would each hoist one of his pant legs above his boot top, untie the lace and then carefully un-hook it from all of the eyes, then loosen the crossed lace in the eyes, pull and wiggle the tongue to loosen his boot until we could finally work it off. While he sat there luxuriously, head thrown back on the chair, eyes closed, enjoying the attention -the worship. We loved the smell of his hearty boots and his thick woolen socks that we would remove for him. Secretly waiting for the day that we, too, smelled like that, could wear boots like that, could drive truck like that. Smelling his feet at which mom would scold us which puzzled us each time. We loved dad and everything about him.

In the summer -not the winter- when he returned we always hurried out to the driveway where he parked. To see him, but after that perfunctory exchange had been taken care of, we would both, Dickie and I, go to the front of the truck. And peer intently through the grill onto the radiator. To see what treasures he had collected this day. The smell was of hot metal and cooked insects, a smell that is undescrivable, sort of not nice, sort of interesting smell, while the radiator and engine block crackled as they cooled. We looked and stretched and poked. Butterflies. Large bees. Beetles, etc. anything Insecta we wanted to see. Because they were new and because sometimes they were perfectly preserved. A bug that was caught just right in the vanes of the radiator died immediately and was then dried intact by the heat of the radiator and the wind blowing through it. So we always looked to see what was in there this time, always hoping for a new treasure, a new bug we hadn't seen, one that we would excitedly holler, "Daddy! What's this? What's this bug? Is it a dragon fly?" A time to commune with him, to capture his attention, hence his affection, while we partook with -and of- him the mystery of life in this world, things that mesmerized him, pinned him, impaled him, until he could see them and classify them, both for us and for himself. He'd then wander off, but we always got him for an instant.

The largest wild life he brought for us to see was magical. Magical because he made it so. Today I see there was a trick in what he did, such that one could say he was dishonest. But if he was, I thank him for being dishonest because he gave me

such a lovely thing to see and experience. To remember today so I can share it with you. A creature that could turn its head around and around and around in one direction. With the risk that if it turned around one more time, its head would unscrew and fall off. Onto the ground. Quick, dad, turn it back the other way so its head doesn't come off!

On this trip, he encountered a small gray and white owl. He managed somehow to secure it safely in the back of the truck so he could bring it home - for us to see. It had a broken wing so couldn't fly but he wanted to show it to us and managed to get it safely there. He knew about owls. Like he knew about most creatures of the mountains and desert. This small owl, a gorgeous fierce, defiant creature. Dad perched it on his hand, allowing it to grasp a leather glove to protect his hand from the talons. We stood up close, marveling, leaned up to see it, this wondrous creature, with gorgeous startling enormous eyes, with enormous jet black pupils, that stared out from large fuzzy feather circles, over a down-turned beak that peeked out of its feathers. Grasping tightly onto dad's gloved hand. What eyes. Staring intently, with an occasional slow blink of enormous lids that briefly covered those glowing yellow irises and black pupils with a rugose lid that stretched and recoiled.



The shock, and it was a shock, was when he turned the owl completely around. 360 degrees, a complete circle. The head did NOT turn. Not a bit. It stayed right where it was. Looking squarely at me, so I knew it hadn't turned. Dad turned it again and the head stayed right there, right where it was when he started the turn. When he said the head would unscrew if he turned it in that direction too many times, we knew he spoke truth. He carefully turned it in the other direction to screw the head back on, to preserve the poor owl's head, to keep it from coming off. We were relieved that he did that because it would be a sad thing for an owl's head to fall off. We had no idea how to put it back or what would happen, but it was serious so we wanted it to keep its head on.

Is that a gift? It was. What a marvelous bit of fantasy. With a living creature. Unscrew the head. Right there in my front yard. We understood screws because we lived with a mechanic and had learned about screws and nuts and bolts and screw drivers and wrenches, so when the body turned, but the head didn't, we found it entirely plausible -especially since dad said it was so- to believe that the head could unscrew. We did not want to see a loose owl head on the ground.

The secret that he didn't tell us was that there was a mismatch in the capacity of the human eye to detect movement and the speed with which the owl could make that movement. The fact was that the owl could turn its head so quickly that our poor eyes wouldn't even see that movement -more than 18 frames a second and we wouldn't see it- hence it appeared that it never turned its head. In fact, it turned its head exceedingly quickly just so that it could literally keep its eyes on us. It was wondrous.

One of the principal commodities that dad carried on certain days was movies, the latest releases for Vernal and all of the small theaters between Vernal and SLC. Theater managers anxiously awaited his arrival on the days the feature was to change because their attendance was dropping off, and they knew that a new feature would automatically put them back in the black. These films were about 2 inch wide, whatever the industry standard was. They came in heavy metal cans that were strapped shut by leather strips with buckles. He laid the films in the back of his truck in the order he needed them when he returned from SLC along US 40. He exchanged the old movies for the new ones, and store them carefully. On his return to SLC the next day, he returned them to the movie distributor. Each theater got credit only after their prior films were returned. Not a small responsibility as was evident if he messed up somehow.

As a result of his trafficking in movies, we ended up with perhaps a hundred small plastic spools. They were about 2 inches wide and were about the same diameter. Most of them were a bright yellow. A few were a light gray. They apparently were the spools that were used to hold the cartoons. How he ended up with spare spools I never figured out. It would seem that each theater would re-wind its cartoons onto the spools that they came on and return them to the distributor in SLC, but somehow dad ended up with a large number of empty spools. That he brought home for us. We had a grand time inventing games that utilized them. Sharing them with friends like Billie Schafermeyer who played with us often. We even took some of them to Alaska.

Dad drove for Wycoff until he had an accident that put the fear in him that he was going to kill someone if he kept driving and falling asleep. This dad's version of his Wycoff days, that I didn't see until I picked it up Aug. 6, 002 when I went to

2821 to rummage around in his stuff for these stories that I knew he had written but which never found their way into a book.

### East Wycoff Smash-Up

**James A. Jensen**

***East Wycoff Emeritus***

**In Remembrance of all the Dead Theatres Killed by TV and  
Dedicated to all East Wycoff drivers, before & after Me**

After our little yellow brethren were blown to bits by our Devastating Atomic Might I found my way back from Pearl Harbor to my family in Vernal, Utah.

Grazing around in the job market a bit, I finally took a job driving an express run. It was a grueling, daily, 400 mile round trip from Vernal to Salt Lake and back in a Ford panel truck. It was in the middle forties before US 40 was widened from a narrow two lanes to the straighter, wider highway of today. The Ford hauled film for seven theaters from Vernal to Park City, Utah, and newspapers for people living along the route. On the morning trip to Salt Lake all used film was picked up and distributed to owners on Salt Lake's Film Row, at the same time the next 'scheduled feature,' cartoon, news, and trailers advertising coming attractions were picked up for each theatre.

The film business completed, there was time for lunch, minor repairs, or to have a tire, or headlight replaced, etc, before the Deseret News came off the press at 2:00 PM. When these were loaded it was then out of Salt Lake valley as fast as possible. The truck had to complete distribution of film, papers, and be in Vernal at 4:30 p.m.. In addition to dropping large bundles of newspapers in various towns, single papers were thrown off along the route. Midway, and Charleston, west of Heber, were serviced by a detour from the highway.

Speed limits were a problem. It was necessary to break them to stay on schedule outbound from Salt Lake. The Wycoff Company paid all fines outbound to Vernal; the driver paid fines inbound to Salt Lake, there being enough time to make the trip within speed limits. Highway patrolmen were alert every afternoon to catch East Wycoff speeding. Local teenagers agitated the problem by constantly goading the patrolmen; "Yeah, yeah, you can't catch Wycoff".

It was necessary to watch for patrol vehicles by keeping one eye on the rear

view mirror. When any vehicle, far behind, roared out of a side street onto the highway, wheels spinning, gravel flying, and followed at a fast clip, it was safe to assume it was the Law. Speed was cut immediately to 40 MPH before the law was near enough to clock the truck. Radar didn't exist in those days, but one day E.W. was trapped by a conspiracy. A plan was dreamed up to arrest me when I was doing 70 mph across the Strawberry Plateau. As it turned out, I was arrested' while lying on my back UNDER MY TRUCK in Daniels Canyon.

The Heber Highway Patrolmen, County Sheriff and City Judge, three pillars of Law and Order, representing the very foundation of Civilization, Liberty, and All We Have Fought For, contrived a fool-proof (which meant even they couldn't mess it up) plan, to nab me, and once and for all time, nail my hide to the courthouse wall. However, my hide didn't stay there long enough to shrink and dry. The said Pillars had neglected to calculate the diabolical cleverness of the Wycoff Legal System which sprung me from the Heber Slammer even before the bailiff found the keys to lock me in. The entire operation was a farce.

After servicing Heber valley one day I looked back just before disappearing from sight into Daniels Canyon. In that last half-second I saw a vehicle rip out of the Charleston road, slew around onto the highway and head after me in a cloud of rubber smoke. Instinct told me it was the Law. A plan flashed into my mind. Some work was done on the muffler that day so I would fake checking it. I roared five miles up the canyon, then pulled off the pavement and stopped. There was a mechanical "tattle-tale" in the truck, a clockwork device accurately recording all moving and stopping times, but not MPH, on a time-scale disk. This disk was replaced every day.

Grabbing a crescent wrench I dove under the truck. The muffler looked okay and in a couple of minutes the Patrol vehicle pulled up behind me. Two frustrated officers got out and came towards me. (finding me stopped was a rotten turn of events.)

They were supposed to be on a high-speed chase after me, up Daniels Canyon, across the Strawberry Plateau. Making the traditional heroic dash, scarf flying in the wind, lights flashing, siren wailing, to overcome and collar me, possibly beating me into submission with plastic black-jacks~ demonstrating the glorious truth that Good Overcomes Evil~ instead their bold scheme was falling apart. Things weren't going according go plan- they found me laying on the ground. How can an officer dramatically arrest a victim when said victim is lying down?

As they approached I banged on the muffler with my wrench, and continued this "fake work" until I could see two pairs of feet beside my truck. Tap, tap, clunk, clink, bang, "Damn" (I skinned a knuckle), and then: "Ahem, koff, koff", the feet signaled me, as if I didn't know they were there. After a bit I crawled out to greet

them.

"Nice day, uh?", I said with a smile, "I had some work done on my muffler and was just checking it. Seems okay. I just skinned a knuckle, do you have a band-aid?" This really threw them for a 90 yard loss. How could they put their stainless steel, true blue efficiency to work when the evil victim asks for a band-aid? How disgusting. How pathetic~ it was degrading mockery. "Look here, dammit, we're offi--," the sheriff began, but was cut off by the calmer patrolman.

"Ah, Yuss, uh", yuh see, we're arresting you for speeding", he stammered, "and uh,--, we're taking you back to court in Heber".

Well, you can see how this hit me in the face like a cold bucket of slop. It changed everything. They were ignoring a fellow humans appeal for help. What depraved levels of brutality were they ready to stoop to if I resisted? I considered diving back under the truck where I could kick them in the face if they tried to collar me. But, decided to try a wiser tack first.

"There is a very strict schedule which I must keep," I whined on the verge of tears, "I must get papers to the many young carriers waiting along my route". This ploy confused, and put them on the defensive.

Highway patrolmen had no radio in those days so all decisions were left to each officer at the scene of a crime. They looked at each other. This was an unexpected development. They were caught off guard. Making any concession to me wasn't in their script. They had to come up with something quick, so as not to lose face. The patrolman decided to appear Noble and Just.

He set my trial for the following afternoon and said I could go. My soul being choked up with a burden of guilt and remorse, thanked him profusely and drove on up Daniels Canyon feeling like a rotten hypocrite, but a well pleased "rotten hypocrite".

The next afternoon the Wycoff lawyer followed me to Heber's little red courthouse. I had given him the tattle-tale dis-proving my time into the canyon and up to my stop, and the length of time it took for them to arrest, then let me go.

I was concerned that the lawyer didn't ask questions to give me a chance to explain anything. He was young but, proved to be an expert in confounding rural law. A premeditated plan to get me, hatched by the entire network of Heber Valley jurisprudence, quickly came to the surface.

Embarrassingly, for them, the patrolman and sheriff had failed to coordinate their stories. This came out as my lawyer questioned them. The two officers testified they were in the same vehicle, one following me at 400 yards, and the other at a mile and a half--both in the same vehicle. I bit my lip wisely suppressing a guffaw. My lawyer caught this discrepancy and rubbed their noses in it. I could then see why he didn't need my part of the story. He had had experience with such

country folk and knew that if he pressed them hard enough they would trip themselves up. My lawyer now introduced the tattle tale disk, explaining how it worked and its significance to my case. The judge wouldn't even look at it, ruling it irrelevant and innrnaterial. This threw my lawyer back on his wits, with which he was richly endowed. He went on to further confound the two officers on various points, exposing wide contradictions in their testimonies. But this had no effect on the judge's predetermined verdict. It was clear he had conspired with the Patrolman and Sheriff to convict me regardless of any evidence proving my innocence.

I was guilty, of course; I was guilty five days a week, but this case was a hilarious charade. I didn't mind being caught, if I was apprehended speeding. But to be arrested for speeding when I was laying on the ground under my truck was ridiculous; clearly an affront to all red-blooded American violaters. The officers knew this too, but stubbornly stuck to their guns, not knowing that to have a successful conspiracy one must be flexible. Devious, to be sure, but not stupid..

We appeared before the judge the next day in Heber. The big-city company lawyer from Salt Lake City arrived late but managed to nail their hides to the wall. He asked the patrolman:

Q- Where was the accused when apprehended.

A- "In Daniels Canyon".

Q- "Exactly where in Daniels Canyon?"

A- "About a third of the way up".

Q- "How fast was the accused traveling when you apprehended him?"

A- "He,--ah--, wasn't traveling"

Q- "What was he doing".

A- "It sounded like he was working on his truck.."

Q- "Exactly where was he fixing his truck? Could you see him?"

A- "Ah---, no. He was under his vehicle"

Q- "What position was he in, under his truck, when YO1 approached him?"

A- "Gulp, koff, he was layin' on the ground",

Q- "And you arrested him for speeding?"

A- "Ah, er, ah, yes, but The lawyer cut him off.

Q- "You have testified that the defendant was NOT in his -vehicle~ that the truck was NOT moving when you apprehended him for speeding, and your first knowledge of the defendant's presence was while the defendant was lying on the ground under his vehicle. Is that correct?"

A- "Er, ah, yes".

Q- "How is it possible for a person to be arrested for speeding when he is lying



on his back under his vehicle?" Is it illegal for a person to be under his vehicle?— "Your honor, I move the defendant be acquitted, not having been in violation of any law when apprehended".

Judge: "Overruled! I find the defendant guilty as charged.

And thus the gargantuan juggernaut of corrupt justice in Heber valley ground to an un-glorious end. But while the judge was instructing the bailiff (I suppose) to buy timber to erect a gallows out behind the courthouse, my lawyer jumped up and yelled:

"Your Honor, I appeal the conviction". (hooray for us. I ended up being free.)

I never heard any more about the foul deed I allegedly perpetrated on society that day--Iying on my back beside the road in Daniels Canyon. However, for years I was haunted by the specter of having my door smashed down in the middle of the night, by rifle butts, and being dragged off to the Heber slammer as the agonized screams of my loved ones faded away in the distance. The Heber Kangaroo Court was my only official business with the long tentacles of the law in Heber valley. However, a few weeks later, up on the Strawberry Plateau, a possible grab beginning a new case, was averted by quick decisive action.

I saw a vehicle coming up on me at high speed. I just happened to be in the right place where I could disappear around a certain corner. Turning off the pavement where I knew there was some loose gravel, I spun the wheel as I stomped the gas feed into the floor. The old Ford responded beautifully. Spinning around like it was on ball bearings, casting a wide fan of gravel out into the grass. It swung and slid back onto the highway. With my foot still in the carburetor I took off. When I met the patrolman coming into the curve we passed going in opposite directions. He threw me one quick, puzzled stare, making my day.

After he was out of sight around the curve I turned around and headed after him. In about five miles we passed, again going in opposite directions. He nodded weakly to my friendly wave.

As time went on, I saw a variety of accidents, some of which I could see were not the fault of the driver. This weighed on my sub-conscious mind. I knew that some day my number would come up, and when it did, I might take out an entire family or at least a load of hogs. One terrible, inexcusable, ghastly CLOSE-encounter did occur -though noone was killed.

Inbound one morning I nearly bought the farm near Park City with my wife. As I swung around a wide curve two miles from town something black up on the ski slopes

caught my attention. As I stared fascinated at the mountain high above town, I was aware out of the corner of my right eye that my wife's mouth was moving. My eyes dropped instantly to the pavement I realized she was silently screaming.

I was terrified by what I saw--traveling over 65 miles an hour I was on the wrong side of the highway, about 100 feet from a car load of people approaching in the other where I was supposed to be. In a moment that car would pass us on the wrong side of the highway. I was petrified.

The other driver saw I was in his lane soon enough to pull over into mine; the left lane. Had I kept my gaze up on the mountain we would have passed' each other safely, both vehicles traveling in wrong lanes.

In one awful, instant-reflex action that will ring throughout all eternity (St. Peter looked up from his writing and paused--would it be death or escape?) my arms started to jerk the steering wheel back to my side of the road--which would have resulted in a horrible, bloody smash-up, killing everyone. But in a split micro-fraction of a second something resisted and jerked the wheel back, keeping my truck on the inside lane, passing the car on the wrong side. My wife witnessed this miracle.

A group of terrified, open mouths flashed by at about 130 miles an hour. Forty five years later, I am still unredeemed from that terrible blunder which, but for a providential intervention, would have instantly wiped seven or eight lives from mortality.

My memory always reminds me, "what if,---? what if,---?" I still wonder how people in that car felt when they saw me almost cut over in front of them. We could all have died as quickly as slamming a heavy cellar door down on a grasshopper.

My guardian angel certainly stayed my hand in that moment, allowing the other car to pass safely on the wrong side. There is only one explanation but that has never removed my guilt.

In the billions of years of my future existence, stretching off into eternity, I will never forget the horror of that moment; neither will the passengers of that almost ill-fated car. For a long time after that, I would wake up in a sweat gasping at the realization of the many lives I nearly snuffed out by careless negligence. How can one undo such self-recrimination? One can't. But the scar it made sank deep into my sub-conscious mind, adding to a darkening, fatalistic apprehension germinating there. Other things happened to haunt me.

After more than a year and a half of frantic driving my conscious mind began to flow into an hypnotic, altered state. I gradually began to drive in an unconscious, automatic state. I would be driving along, looking at an empty highway ahead, then glancing in the rearview mirror I would see a vehicle going the other way. It had just passed me, without me having seen it approach.

Or, I would suddenly snap into consciousness, almost jerking the steering wheel from its socket, realizing I was halfway up Daniel's Canyon without knowing how I got there.

In panic I would look down quickly and see that all the big newspaper bundles to be dumped on various corners in Heber and Midway were missing, while the last place I could consciously recall was about five miles before I reached Heber. I would break out in a sweat. How had I made it through all the stops, and traffic, to awaken halfway up Daniels Canyon? Sub-conscious tension built as more hypnotic experiences followed.

Winter, of course, was the most hazardous time. I saw various car and big diesel rig wrecks hit drivers when least expected. Also, very odd expressions of human nature carne into view. One winter morning, after deep snow had been plowed into high sloping banks on each side of the highway in upper Daniel's Canyon, I had curious experience.

I was headed downhill. Coming around one corner I saw five people below, milling around a stalled passenger car. It was crossways, blocking over half of the space between the snowbanks on both sides. I expected that the people in an act of self preservation would rapidly climb the snow banks on either side to safety when they saw me coming, So what did they do? Everyone quickly scrambled into the car, slamming the doors behind.

As soon as I saw them I had begun pumping my brakes as gently as I could, trying to keep from going into a slide. Though I did so deliberately and carefully, I couldn't keep the truck from slowly swinging from side to side on a zig-zag course. The surface was like glass. I had almost no control. Would I hit them? Miraculously, the truck just happened to swing in the right direction, missing their front end as I passed. I had no split- second of time to get a glimpse of their faces, which were probably buried under coats or some other "safe" thing. This experience taught me that when under the stress of great danger, people may react in a ridiculous manner.

There were other incidents, though small, adding to my growing apprehension. I tried diversions to keep my mind occupied and awake. Some worked, some didn't. One was music. When running on long stretches, steering with pressure from my knees on the bottom of the steering wheel, I learned to play the chromatic harmonica fairly well. But it wasn't enough. Occasionally I still woke up in the night in a cold sweat.

Downhill to Vernal in the winter, nearly to Current Creek Lodge one day, the roads were glare ice but all curves had been sanded. I drove accordingly, foolishly. When I reached the last tilting curve before Current Creek it was unsanded. I couldn't steer the truck went into an uncontrolled slide. Orville Merrell was with me and as I lost control he said, "You're in trouble". I needed him to say that??

The truck spun slowly around as it slid down the highway. The road tilted in toward a high bank and on every other spin the front of the truck hit the bank, bouncing far enough back on to the road so that when the rear end swung around it didn't hit. When the front came around again it was near enough to slam into between the second and third front end imprints in the clay bank, a large sharp boulder protruded a foot out of the bank. This boulder would have smashed the trucks front end in, had it been in the wrong place.

The front end finally stopped in the barpit. I walked a quarter of a mile and got a tractor to pull me out. I don't remember what he charged, but I clearly remember the prints of my headlights and grill in the wet clay bank, made each time the front end banged into it. There were other minor mishaps and many blown tires. Road construction was very hard on them, rear tires averaged only 9,000 miles, instead of 30 or 40 thousand.

Once I stopped at a scattered string-out of abandoned cargo, after the truck had been removed from the wreck. I picked up enough blemished sections of asphalt roofing to cover my coalhouse roof. Another time and place, where in wet weather a flour truck had slid off the road on a curve, I picked up several wet sacks of flour. I had learned in Alaska that when a sack of flour is dumped into water, the flour only wets a couple of inches deep. As the flour soaks up water it also swells up tightly, sealing out any more water. If you let a wet sack of flour dry out, and cut through the shell, the inside 3/4 of the sack will still be dry and usable. Such small events Occasionally broke the daily monotony. One involved a bald eagle.

I was within a mile of the Daniel's Canyon summit one day when a bald eagle suddenly plummeted out of the sky onto the road just before I passed over it. As I did so small birds boiled up from under both sides of the truck. Small birds often harass hawks and eagles, driving them out of their territory. The collision was over so fast I couldn't identify the small birds.

I stopped and ran back to examine the eagle lying in the middle of the highway. It was stunned. I picked it up carefully and examined it. No bones were broken so I thought it would recover in a short time but it needed a safe place to do so.

I put it in the truck and stopped at Bether's service station at the summit. Carrying it inside I found Mrs. Bether and her late teen age daughter. Explaining how I got the eagle, I asked if they would look after it until it recovered enough to fly away. I cautioned them very strongly, "Do not put your hands near it. When it regains its senses it will still be wild and will aggressively act for self protection." I explained that an eagle does not use its vicious looking hooked beak- instead it uses its needle sharp talons. "Do beware of its feet." Thanking them for being willing to watch over it I left.

When I stopped in the next morning I found what I was afraid to see. The girl had a wide bandage on her forearm. They hadn't listened to my warning. Before the eagle was fully recovered the girl carelessly moved her arm near it and "quick as a flash", (her words) the eagle's feet came up and clamped down on her arm. It had her with both feet. Several talons penetrated her skin. Her mother couldn't pry them loose. I had neglected to warn them about one danger: "If the eagle grabs you with its feet, DO NOT KEEP THE LEGS STRETCHED OUT when you try to free yourself."

An eagle's feet are specially adapted to clamp on prey and hold it when it flies away without using muscular force. When its legs extend special ligaments pull its toes into a clamp position. When it picks up a fish or other prey and flies away with it, the extension of the legs clamps its feet firmly into the prey. No muscular force is needed to keep the toes in a clamp position. I learned this in Alaska, once winning a bet on it.

Someone shot an eagle out of a tree near the docks where I was working. The eagle landed in a bush. A longshoreman approached it with a stick. When the stick was near enough the eagle, lying upside down, it grabbed the stick with both feet. When the longshoreman lifted the eagle, it hung from the stick upside down with legs extended. The eagle's weight kept its legs extended, which held its feet firmly clamped around the stick. The longshoremen were amazed by the strength of the eagle's feet and how it kept them firmly clamped around the stick. They couldn't shake it off.

I told them it was impossible for the eagle to let go of the stick as long as its legs were extended, describing how "clamp" tendons in the leg keep the foot clamped when the leg is extended, but open when the leg is flexed. Guffaws, ridicule, and rough language met this ridiculous claim. A bet was made, I then instructed the holder to lay the eagle on the dock, on its back, and push its feet up against its body. He did so and the feet immediately opened releasing the stick, to the amazement of the experts. I won the bet.

In trying to separate the eagle's feet from the girl's arm, her mother kept its legs straight by pulling away from the eagle's body, clamping its feet even more securely. Fortunately the girl's sheep herder boyfriend came in and wrestled the eagle down and freed her arm. They said he carried it out behind the station and eventually it flew away.

Eagles, schmeagles: such interesting diversions were so far apart I couldn't depend on them to dispel my hypnotic boredom. Daily I sunk deeper into it. Driving in an altered state of mind progressed until I was driving that way much of the time. When my right front wheel drifted over into gravel at the edge of the pavement, vibrations telegraphed up the steering column signaled my mind to make a correction.

I automatically pulled to the left just enough to get the wheel back on the pavement.

This worked fine until late in my second year the state road commission fouled the system up: it irresponsibly widened the pavement without widening the bridges. The railings were narrower than the pavement. Disaster was now impossible to avoid; it was imminent, but when?

I was rolling along one day at my regular 70 mph, five miles from Heber, outbound with a full cargo- when my number finally came up. I suddenly opened my eyes -became conscious- or whatever, in time to see a heavy wooden bridge railing about to hit my radiator a foot inside my right front headlight. I gripped the wheel stoutly.

As the truck smashed into the bridge railing a wild exciting sense of euphoria exploded over me. I couldn't believe it, I WAS ECSTATIC! No fear of death and dismemberment, or of pain and suffering, I was relieved and joyfully happy.

It had finally happened. Oh boy, oh boy, It had finally happened. I was going out but wasn't taking a family, or even some hogs, with me. It sounds crazy, but I was thrilled and stupidly happy. My long wait for disaster to strike, was over. I wouldn't have to sweat it any longer. If I lived, I could drive a couple of weeks and then quit the job. It seems strange to me now that I didn't quit before the wreck, but I couldn't. I was like hypnotized by a cobra, unable to move.

I knew the right front corner of the truck was demolished, including the wheel and tire, so I gripped the steering wheel with all my strength. I didn't know if it would make any difference I did it instinctively. Later the patrolman said I must have been going over 70. The truck's right wheel, fender, and part of the radiator, were pulverized yet I traveled 350 yards, he said, straight down the highway before the truck swung to the left and rolled off the highway into a deep barpit.

All the heavy metal film cans made a terrible racket inside the van as we rolled over and over. The noise was music to my ears. They were part of the grand happening, music to celebrate my release from a prison, no less, of my mind. We landed among a small band of sheep which happened to be grazing there. When I suddenly crashed down among them, they boiled up over the highway in, I mean, wild confusion. We're talking deep mutton-shock here, orbiting woolies and chops.

A kid setting on the back of a flat bed truck traveling ahead of me, must have been half asleep. The noise of the bridge railing smashing off woke him up in time to see the sheep stampeding up out of the barpit and across the road. He told the patrolman that the sheep ran up out of the barpit in front of me, causing me to wreck. This didn't explain the smashed bridge, which happened before the mutton stampede.

The "kangaroo" patrolman was smart enough to see the sheep were not the

cause of the truck hitting the bridge, but he didn't cite me. I believe his guilt over the kangaroo court caper made him extra lenient. Maybe the Wycoff lawyer put the fear into him.

I drove another week then quit. But I have never escaped the awful vision of the many people, including me and my wife, almost being smashed up by my negligence that warm spring day as I approached Park City. It is burnt deep into my eternal memory.

They still plow the snow high in Daniel's Canyon; tourists still beat their way through snow on the high Strawberry Plateau in winter, but my career as a truck driver ended suddenly, the day the sheep boiled up out of that barpit, 350 yards down the road from a bridge with one railing.



Our lives were touched by the residue of WW II at every turn. In school it was spoken of, the news reel in the movies always included it, the newspaper had stories and photos of it, magazines and the newspapers carried ads about it. Bell Telephone was a prominent producer of war materiel and advertised constantly. This is an ad from TIME magazine and extolled the wonders of the new "electric brain" they had developed to assist gunners track and shoot down enemy airplanes. Note the propaganda here in the form of smiles on the clean comfortable men sitting there in a shack made of sand bags. I don't think that there was any comfort for anyone who was in battle, sitting inside a sand bag or any other kind of emplacement. These kinds of ads persisted for years after hostilities ceased.

Time - Aug 5 '45 - 45

**Electrical Weapons by the Maker of Bell Telephones**  
No. 4 of a series: for the Army Ordnance Department

**The Electrical Brain in its sandbag pit**

In a trailer, protected by sandbags, an amazing device solves involved mathematical problems with lightning speed. It is an *electronic* gun director which enables anti-aircraft gunners to knock down enemy planes with hitherto unheard of accuracy.

Scientists of Bell Telephone Laboratories, drawing on their years of experience in the development of telephone apparatus and working closely with Army Ordnance experts, evolved this electronic super-brain which adds, subtracts, divides, multiplies, differentiates, integrates,

and "consults" ballistic tables—all the while instantly and continuously aiming the guns at the spot calculated to destroy a speeding target!

More than 500 individuals worked on the design—over 5,000 drawings and 1,100 specifications were prepared for its 16,000 parts, which include a great many electrical principles and devices well known in the telephone industry.

Quantity production of this complex device held many problems. But Western Electric's long experience in building complex Bell Telephone apparatus to highest standards of precision, made it possible.

Against both planes and robot bombs, these *electronic* directors have helped AA gunners to hang up new high records of accuracy.

*Buy more War Bonds—and keep them!*

**Western Electric**  
IN PEACE...SOURCE OF SUPPLY FOR THE BELL SYSTEM.  
IN WAR...ARSENAL OF COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT.



### Whisky bottle and Bee Stings

There were plenty of bees around the place what with all the clover and alfalfa next door grown for hay. They were a natural plentiful part of the background and we learned to deal with them as safely as we could. But there were times when things didn't work out quite right. We'd end up with a bee stinger in our epidermis, not a happy situation. We'd go to mom to complain about the hurt and she'd check out the site of the sting which by that time was already showing some redness and swelling.

She'd look closely to see if the stinger and sac of poison were still embedded in the skin. If it was, she'd flick it off with a finger nail. Later someone told me that



the proper way to remove the thing was to use a knife, laying the blade flat against the skin and then moving it slowly across the stinger. The theory was that by moving the blade this way, it would catch the stinger itself and push it out. The objective was to keep from apply pressure on the poison sac because squeezing it would press more venom through the hollow stinger down into the skin. Did it work? I don't know. I'm not sure that mom used that technique and I don't imagine I was sophisticated enough to appreciate the difference. Just get it out of me, please, was my major concern.

After she had removed the stinger, or at least determined that there was none, she would take us out to the enclosed back porch. There were windows on the east and the south sides, with shoulder high cupboards on the west side. She'd go to one of these cupboards, pull the door open, and look for a particular bottle. It was a half-full whisky bottle that had a corn cob stuck in the mouth as a stopper. What happened to the original cork I never knew, nor did I wonder. I do now. This whisky stuff was described as "bad" or "not good for you", or some such thing. Words to put us off, to keep us from experimenting. They worked. I never opened that bottle to see what was inside. The penalty, if caught, was too severe. Of course, I didn't know specifically what the penalty was, but I knew my mom.



After getting the bottle of whisky, she'd turn it upside down to wet the corn cob stopper. Then she'd pull the corn cob out of the bottle, sit the bottle safely down, and then locate the stung anatomy. She would apply the corn cob like a dauber on the sting, on the theory that the whisky would remove the swelling and reduce the pain. Did it work? I don't know. Adults probably would apply their mouth to that of the bottle with better results. I do know that I was fascinated and repelled by the smell of the whisky. Because mom made sure that I disliked its smell. She learned this remedy from her mom so it was probably a common one in the area. I was also fascinated and repelled by the fact that this evil stuff that she graphically portrayed as evil or bad or nasty was actually applied to my skin. I probably expected it shrivel or turn black since the stuff was so nasty. It never happened but to this day the smell of whisky creates a peculiar negative reaction.

## Eucalyptus 44 Shampoo, Lemon Rinse, Vinegar Rinse

I was introduced into the world of personal hygiene, not by Miss Isabelle, although she made a memorable attempt to teach us first graders about the risk of not washing your hands, and of the benefits of blowing your nose in tissue that you discard instead of on your sleeve and of putting white grease -Jergens Lotion- on your hands after you wash them, the most outlandish of them all because it promptly collected dirt, but by mom. Did you get lost?

Mom was always -as I've said a hundred time so far- conscious of her appearance, and the first evidence I remember of this fact is the way she took care of her hair. To me, hair was hair and while Dickie and I tended to get a bit smelly a few days after the Saturday night bath, it wasn't unbearable. It was the natural order. I wasn't impressed with the notion of somehow striving to look clean, let alone smell clean. Whatever I was, was good enough for me. I was just me, but that was offensive, apparently, to some, hence the need for those Saturday night baths which were sort of a waste of time - though there was always the payoff of clean P.J.'s and clean bed sheets that smelled so wonderful from the clothes lines that afternoon. That was a good mom.

Mom took pains to keep her hair in good repair, to brush and care for it, to have permanents -Toni "Which twin has the Toni?" was the brand- and so on. She would shampoo this hair between Saturday baths, the first clue that there was something special about doing shampoos. Even today shampoo connotes at an emotional level something sort of extravagant, probably because while mom purchased this gorgeous smelling Eucalyptus 44 shampoo, we were not allowed to use it on our hair. We had to use a bar of soap - which incidentally is probably part of the reason that our hair became so odoriferous so fast out there in the sunshine, sweat and dirt don't you think? Not rinsed off thoroughly, the residue would attract dirt. Shampoo was a treat reserved for her.

She would set the dish pan on the kitchen counter, put water from the water bucket under the pump into the teakettle and fire up the coal stove. When the water was boiling, she'd pour it into the dishpan with ladles of cold water from the bucket to get the right temperature. Then she'd put a towel around her shoulders, clothespin it together in front, and lean over the basin and wash her hair. She used a glass cup to lift water from the pan to wet her hair. Then she'd uncap the Eucalyptus shampoo, pour some in her hand and spread it on her head. Then magic happened. I saw so much magic in my childhood that I thought it was natural. She'd rub the stuff and voila, a thick white foam developed all over her head. Bar soap didn't do that.

She'd rub the stuff thoroughly in her hair like she was going to rub it off.

After scrubbing it sufficiently, she'd lean over the dishpan and scoop water up and pour it over her hair again and again to rinse out the shampoo. She'd empty the wash version of water, refill the basin with fresh water and complete rinsing. After being satisfied that she was basically free of shampoo, she'd skillfully swirl the towel around her hair and head like a turban to hold the hair in place. Looking like an exotic Arab princess. She'd pour the water into the sink again where it drained out the stub onto the ground by the root cellar, disturbing the brooding flies. The final act was to put some water in the pyrex glass cup, pour a bit of vinegar into it, uncover her hair and then pour this "vinegar rinse" through her hair. She said it "cut" the soap, like cutting grease I supposed. This mixture was left in for a few minutes and then she rinsed the rinse out by pouring fresh warm water over her hair until she was satisfied it was clean. Then she'd dry and style it.

When she was in an extravagant mood, she would allow us during our weekly baths to use a bit of the eucalyptus shampoo on our own hair, a real treat. When she was really in an extravagant mood, she would follow the shampoo with a vinegar rinse. Those were rare and memorable experiences. The sweet camphorish smell of the shampoo followed by the tangy smell of apple vinegar overloaded my olfactory lobe every time. What delicious odors.

Occasionally for reasons that I don't know, she would substitute a "lemon rinse" for the vinegar rinse in her mid-week shampoo. This was done by squeezing lemon juice instead of vinegar into the warm water that was poured over her hair to cut the shampoo. We never got this courtesy, probably because lemons were expensive while vinegar was not. The smell of crushed lemon skin remains one of my favorites. Any citrus skin produces in me near euphoria. I would sit and smell a citrus skin for a long time.



**Brusha, Brusha, Brusha,  
New Ipana [eye-pan-ah] Toothpaste,  
Brusha, brusha, brusha,  
Does wonders for your teeth!"**

This jingle came out of the radio, pitching a new toothpaste. We clamored to try some, but found that we didn't like it after all. Mom preferred the standard, i.e. Colgate, which



means we did too, though we didn't know that until we tried this stuff.

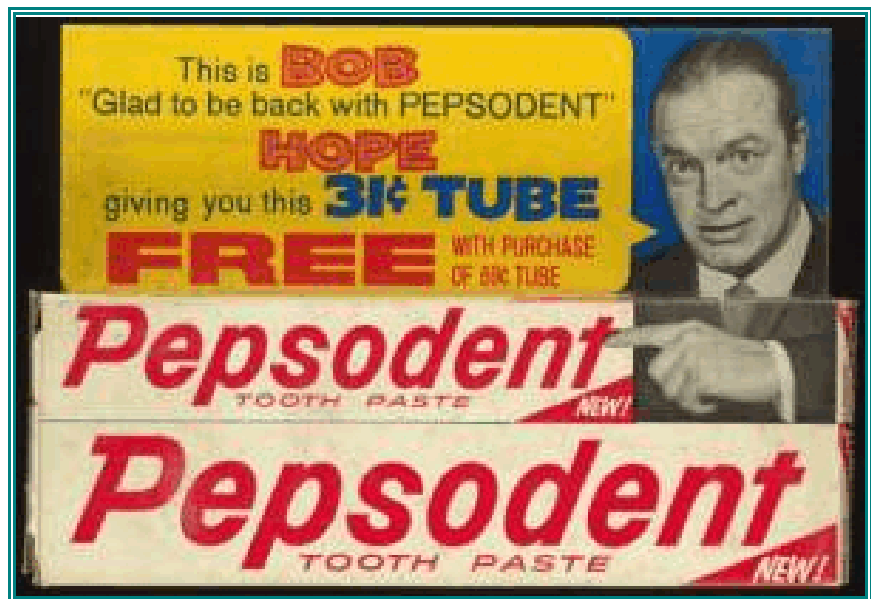
Another brand of toothpaste that we persuaded mom to buy was Pepsodent. The jingle -remember, no TV- that persuaded us that we needed to try it ran:

**"You'll wonder where the yellow went, When you brush your teeth with Pepsodent!"**

That's a pretty gross jingle for a pretty gross toothpaste. Anything that didn't have the minty bite of Colgate just wasn't any good. Notice who's pitching this stuff. Notice the same sales gimmick you see today - some product free.

Toothpowder was the only tooth care product without mint that I'd use regularly - at least as regularly as I ever used tooth care products. It came in skinny cans with a lid like a salt shaker. You'd shake some of the powder into your palm, and pick it up with a wet toothbrush. I didn't know why mom would buy tooth paste of tooth powder. Gritty powders that didn't seem to me likely to do the job.

When we brushed we were sent outdoors for the project. We stand on the top back step of the four, scrubbing our teeth for enough time to satisfy mom who'd yell at us to brush some more if she thought we were stopping too soon. We held a glass of water in our left hands during this process that we used to swish our mouths out, after we swirled the brush in the water to rinse it. Spitting the water out was a constant attempt to do it like a man, often with streaks down our shirt. Not an easy thing to do.





I visited a dentist a few times but don't remember much about what was done to my mouth, just how the process unfolded. Mom would make us wash our hands and arms and faces and put on clean clothes on the fateful day. She dressed up, too. Any visit to a health care professional, or even a bank for that matter, required nice Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes. Then she took us into town to the Dentist's Office, a place with the aura of a haunted house. Scary. I had to sit outside of the operatory in a drab office with old magazines. The whole place had a smell of alcohol which was unnerving because



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that was the smell was associated with the dreaded "shots" at school. The people were always dressed in white and efficiently friendly, i.e. not friendly at all, just play-nice. Sitting down in the chair felt like giving up. Open up please, and then he'd poke around with a probe, using a little round mirror to see what was behind my teeth, reflecting light from the overhead light that he swung this way and that to get a better view. I'd wait with some trepidation for his diagnosis, i.e. how many cavities.

When there were cavities, he'd set up to drill and fill. He'd do a stick with Novocain, an unpleasant painful thing. Then he'd drill out the cavities with a drill exactly like the one in this picture. They were driven by bands of cord, rather than air pressure used exclusively today. A bit in the latter turn 200,000 RPM,s while the mechanical ones like this one turned about a tenth of that speed. The advantage of the higher speed is a decrease in the amount of pain and a shortened drilling period.

The sound of these large bits cutting into your teeth could be heard inside your head like a grating, grinding that vibrated your jaw. The holes were created by bacteria that ate sugar. I never understood how microorganisms eating sugar would make holes in my teeth but these big people were pretty confident that was what happened.

### Green Eggs, Green Ham and Coke

Actually, "Green eggs" has nothing to do with this story. I just put that in because I liked how it sounds. Reminder of your tour of duty with Dr. Seuss' book, "Green Eggs and Ham."

This is probably the dirtiest moral trick mom played on me. I suspect she knew what she was doing but don't know that for sure so probably should be lenient with her. What happened can be viewed in different ways. From one perspective, she was just doing what a mother should do who is concerned about the moral welfare of her offspring, but from another, she was using the neutral results of a scientific experiment in an inaccurate manner to prove a moral point which was un-related.

The background for this story is the health code of that group, a health code that had never been really adhered to. I believe that Mom's generation was one of the first to finally live it. But something bizarre happened. They went beyond the basic concept and converted it from a reasonable, take-good-care-of-your-health thing, into a decree that equated 'violations' with moral turpitude equivalent to adultery, murder or perhaps just bank-robbery. It has become an extraordinarily important factor in evaluating new members of the congregation, and is the first measurement taken: does s/he smell of tobacco? etc. If the answer is yes, the evidence is conclusive, the person is evil and must be avoided at all costs lest one's own salvation is threatened. If a visitor smells of tobacco, members do one of two things, both of which are wrong. Either they shun the person, feeling superior, or they patronize and condescend to him, pretending to "not care". If they point out that they "Don't care", then the truth is that they in fact do.

The problematic substance I'm talking about here is caffeine. Caffeine use is the other measurement -beside tobacco or alcohol smell- taken to determine the moral fitness of a person. If the answer is yes s/he uses caffeine, then beware, there is moral turpitude in the vicinity. The faith made an understandable but gross error: It formed a shaky syllogism something like this:

- 1) Coffee was proscribed

- 2) Coffee contains caffeine.
- 3) Therefore, caffeine is proscribed.

But the logic is fallacious. The order was that coffee by itself was off limits. No reference to this caffeine. The bizarre thing is that this health code allows believers to use caffeine as long as it's in medicine, i.e. excedrin. Then you can overdose but escape censure. [So what's the difference between 2 Excedrin or a coke and 2 aspirin.?] Some other religious groups have done the same thing. Lawrence of Arabia noted:

"The Wahabis, followers of a fanatical Moslem heresy, had imposed their strict rules on easy and civilized Kasim. In Kasim there was but little coffee-hospitality, much prayer and fasting, no tobacco, no artistic dalliance with women, no silk clothes, no gold and silver head-ropes or ornaments. Everything was forcibly pious and forcibly puritanical."

-SEVEN PILLARS OF WISDOM (Lawrence 1963:150)

Caffeine was a hazard there as well.

Coca cola became an evil substance, something that would harm your essential soul. This is where mom did her dastardly trick. She somehow discovered that if you put a piece of ham into a dish of coke it -the ham- turns green. So she hauled me and Dickie one day into grandma's kitchen behind the store in an ominous state of mind sort of like that of the assigned member of the sanhedrin who makes his annual entry into the holy of holies. Where she opened a bottle of coke, and then carefully -as if it were picric acid- poured it into a dish and proceeded with her demonstration. And lecture. She said she was helping us understand why we were not allowed to drink coke -that we otherwise thought was just fine since our uncles drank it without evidence of injury. She wanted us to know that we would actually be harming our stomachs if we drank it. Perish the thought. That got my attention. My own stomach? I hadn't much worried about that but now that she had pointed it out, Well, I better listen up. I also listened because I could tell that failure to at least appear like I was attentive would result in a painful something or other on some part of my anatomy. Life filled with that sort of evidence makes one acutely sensitive to the settings wherein pain happens. Tended to make a true believer out of you in anything set before you even if you didn't understand or care.

She took a small thin slice of ham that we recognized as coming from a ham off from what used to be a pig, and told us to watch. She laid it slowly into the coke and told us to wait a bit. This was interesting. An experiment always arrested me. She

had already done or seen this experiment because she knew what was going to happen and how long we had to wait while she explained again her concern for our welfare. But the underlying thread of this lecture had nothing to do with the state of our gastric pouch -itself filled with quantities of hydrochloric acid anyway, but don't confuse me with facts, please. The underlying thread had to do with morality, with principles of rightness and wrongness, with the concept of doing something evil. It was pretty difficult for us little kids to see how pouring a brown liquid in our mouths was evil, but if mom said it was so, then...that was what she believed.

See the skip? The three little dots? Diaeresis, hysteresis, whatever the '-esis it is. The pause, the change in emphasis? That's unfortunate. But it's how little kids operate. You know it from your own experience and can probably list instances where you, too, did the same thing. Little kids have BS Meters operating, as finely tuned as any meter possessed by adults. More authentic and honest. When the little kid hears some of the stuff, the needle is pegged at the top, the setting is recorded, the message is memorized, but the little kid knows better from painful experience than to say anything. S/He simply makes note of all things that happened then. The unfortunate consequence of these kinds of situations is that the kid ultimately learns to display behaviors that APPEAR to be obedience when s/he actually couldn't care less about the "principle". The kid is simply doing what he has to do to preserve his or her hide or mind. But s/he doesn't believe it. The really unfortunate consequence is Cynicism. A whole generation, indeed generations, have learned that cynicism, which goes hand in hand with hypocrisy.

After the proper length of time, she said, "Watch!" and dramatically poked a fork, not her finger -demonstrating thereby the risk of the liquid- into the stuff and pulled the poor piece of pig up for inspection. Sure enough, it was green all over. Triumphant, mom grinned and pointed it out to us, explaining that if we drink this stuff, our own stomachs will turn green. That got my attention, green stomachs apparently were bad things I promised never to touch it and so on. She won that round, but lost the match. A cheap trick on a little kid will backfire in the end. It did. But not till I was 27 years old.

I actually was more interested in the fact that there were small round thick-walled bubbles adhering to the surface of the pig. The green was nice, sort of corroded copper color, but I wondered, "How could it be that bubbles would stick on the surface of the pig?" And "Where did those bubbles come from anyway?" I vividly remember the situation and these little bubbles. But do you think I asked her about the bubbles? Not on your life. We were being instructed and edified and far be it from me to point to some interesting scientific phenomenon that rudely intruded on the lofty doctrine that were being wafted my way. I still wonder about



them.

The irony of the caffeine business has to do with another member of the class of drugs -termed methyl xanthines or methylated xanthines- that is named "theobromine". It acts directly on the heart. It turns out that this drug is the drug of choice of the LDS church. It is the active ingredient in chocolate. Tell me, then, "What is the rationale that allows this class of drugs to be split into useable and unusable divisions, allowed and not-allowed groups?" To my way of thinking, it is more reasonable or logical to use all of them or to not use any of them. Fastidiously turning one's nose up at caffeine while gorging on chocolate, smacks of a severe case of phariseeitis. [If you're interested in a deeper discussion of this matter, see chapter 25 of TMG.] So you are allowed to take an excedrin for your head ache and elicit a sympathetic word or two. But if you accomplish the same medicinal effect by taking an aspirin with a glass of coke, you earn criticism and judgment. But they are medically equivalent so you better soft pedal the "logical" explanations.

## You can have a piece of bread

When we got home from school, we were always hungry. The walk was long and it had been hours since lunch, so we always wanted something to eat. One or the other of us would find mom and coax her for some food. It really didn't matter what it was, just something to eat. In contrast to your home, there was no freedom to go into the kitchen and take whatever you wanted, whenever you wanted. None. We didn't dare take anything without explicit permission. If we even took two pieces of something when we had been told we could have "one" or "some", and tried to rationalize our action later after we were "caught" -and we always were caught- that excuse earned only ridicule and anger. Mom did not tolerate fools or foolishness. If she said "one" she dang well meant "one", and if you were so stupid as to take two, then you were going to pay a price for your cheekiness. No slack was cut for any excuse. She was the Lord High Executioner and if you were going to step over the line and take "two", then you hoped that it was "really good" to make up for the misery you knew you were calling down on yourself.

So when we came home starving we would approach her for something to eat. If she had made cookies, she might tell us we could have "one", or if she was feeling extravagant, she would let us have "two", my goodness, I can hardly stand it, please, thank you, grab them and run outside where you can't hear her out behind the grainery before she changes her mind and don't you dare make her mad you stinker, no it's your fault, you dummy. She would usually tell us we could have "a piece of bread." She cut her bread before she put it in a breadbox so we didn't have to. She didn't want any of these big fat slices....

A breadbox was an important part of an old farm kitchen. There was no refrigerator to store bread in, there were ants of various sorts, and a variety of flies. Plus the climate was bone dry so bread hardened rapidly if it wasn't covered. Our breadbox was constructed of metal with a hinged lid that sealed tightly enough to keep bugs out and moisture in. In the process, however, it acquired a peculiar odor, compounded of the smell of stale bread and the smell of the mold that filled the cracks of the box even when it was washed regularly with soap. After a loaf of bread had cooled enough to no longer sweat, it was sliced with the bread knife which had a serrated blade. This sliced loaf was placed in the breadbox.

When mom said, "You can have a piece of bread," we went to this breadbox, lifted the lid and examined the slices. Being manually cut, there were different thicknesses, though the difference was not great because she was so skilled. Nevertheless, we would engage in an examination of these slices, practically using a micrometer to find the thickest one. If we took too long she'd yell, "Just take one!"

She feared we were eating a third slice during the examination. We'd take one and sneak out the back door fearful that in her irritation she just might revert to style from prior incidents and tell us that she had changed her mind and that we couldn't have any bread because we had misbehaved, so wait until dinner. I do remember occasions when I was so hungry that my stomach ached but that wasn't something you admitted because she'd somehow use that to her advantage to lecture me about something. You just couldn't win with her.

## Tonsillectomy

In those days it was common for kids' tonsils to be removed. The problem was that all kids got tonsillitis and since there was no ampicillin or other antibiotics with which to treat the infection, the kids were sick a long time, missing school, feeling bad, generally miserable. So moms and doctors finally decided sometime during the kid's early tenure on this ol' mudball, that the time had come to yank them out, sometimes with the adenoids which are adjacent to the tonsils. True to form, the time came for me to have this done. It sort of felt like it was my 'turn' to go through the process. All of our cousins and friends seemed to be having it done. A rite of passage.

Go back a moment. Look again at what I said was missing: antibiotics. Such a different world back then.

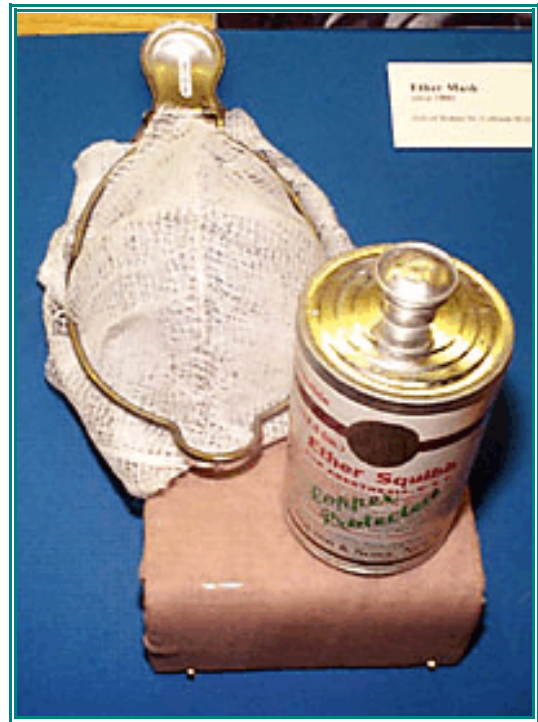
Good ol' Dr. Spendlove presided again. In those days, the hospital where surgery was performed in Vernal was a church building, denomination unknown to me, taken over for the purpose. The building had stained glass windows, a dead giveaway. When I went to the hospital for this procedure, I was as impressed with the fact that I was invading a foreign religious building as I was with the reality that someone was going to do bodily harm to me.

The experience was anything but religious. I was just a little kid and was taken like a lamb to the slaughter. Mom tried to prepare me for the experience but that's impossible. How does anyone get comfortable with the idea that he is going to be put to sleep with medicine at which time a piece of him is going to be cut out? I dreaded having to go but knew I couldn't outrun my mom and dad, and didn't have anywhere else to go anyway. After a restless night, I got up, got washed and dressed and obediently got into the car for the ride to the hospital. I wasn't allowed to eat or drink anything that morning but I wasn't hungry anyway.

In the hospital, I was taken to a funny bedroom where I had to undress and put on a strange thing called a "gown", sort of a night shirt. Then I was laid on my back on a cold table with wheels. This table thing was pushed down a hall and into a

white room where a few people stood around wearing white clothes. Staring at me between white cloth head covers, and white masks. Then I was tied down on a table and was given anesthetic.

You will never have to experience this type of anesthesia which is barbaric. After I was immobilized on the table with a bunch of strangers standing around in funny looking costumes, one of them leaned over me and stuck a thing over my face. It was a wire cage that was covered with gauze like the one. It was set over my face and held in place by a hand. I turned my head to avoid it but couldn't because I was tied down. Then the person started dripping ether onto the gauze, which produced a horrible, sweet smelling inside the mask. I tried not to breathe in because it frightened me, made me terrified, while my mom had abandoned me and left me in this cold setting tied down, helpless and alone with strangers. I couldn't hold my breath forever so had to breathe the foul smelling stuff in. That was all those people had to do, just wait. Because anyone is eventually going to have to breathe in, and as soon as they did, they would breathe in the ether would do it's job. The worst part of the going-to-sleep part is how long it takes. My ears started to ring loudly, I couldn't see straight, so I squinted my eyes terrified of the horrible experience. The nasty sweet smell was everywhere. The nurse told me to count after her "One", "One", "Two" "Two", "Three", "Three", "Four", "Four",..... . I remember counting to 23 before I passed out. That is a loooooonnnnnnnngggggggggg tttttiiiiimmmmmeeeeeee to be in the terrifying state, as frightening as any experience I have had. I passed out like all people do, while all those people in white with masks stared at me in my agony and terror.



Ether Mask  
1910-1915  
U.S. National Museum

After the surgery was over, I was put in a hospital room. When I started to wake up, I experienced the after-effects of ether which are as bad as the going under. If you haven't experienced them, then you ain't lived, brother. When you finally become semi-conscious, you are aware you are hurting mightily in the place you were cut on, your eyes are closed, so you crack them open, all the time breathing this

execrable, sweet, sickening smell, and wonder where it comes from, where does that overwhelming foul smell come from, why is the room filled with the stuff. When you get your eyes open, another unpleasant truth is revealed: the room is spinning. Another unpleasant truth: you can't focus your eyes anyway. So you close them and lie there, feeling like you'll fall off the bed, smelling this bad stuff, hurting, dizzy, afraid that you are injured for life that you will now be like the mentally retarded people you've seen. A nurse comes by and murmurs something to you and suctions your mouth out.

You become nauseated and start to gag and retch. You try to sit up but can't. The nurse comes over and pushes you none too gently back onto the bed and tells you to relax. Can you believe that?! Relax? You, nurse, are as out of your mind as I am. Of course, the retching and gagging is precisely the wrong thing to do just after the doctor cut your throat open when he snared off your tonsils. So your throat starts bleeding. So you swallow the blood and that adds to the iron burden in your stomach that makes it even more upset that it was from the ether. So you gag some more, and you bleed some more and you swallow some more and so on. A thoroughly sunny experience. Later in the day, I could see through the hospital windows that the sun was setting when I went to sleep, a sort of authentic sleep-like-I-do in my own bed. I was taken home, though I don't know if it was that evening or the next day.

After I went home, I was put to bed on my army surplus cot and mattress. I felt privileged to have such a nice bed to sleep, so much nicer than having to sleep in one bed with Dickie. Mom kept the window blind closed I suppose so that I could sleep. The first days are fuzzy because mom used the old faithful remedy, paregoric, which I learned later was "anhydrous morphine". Can you believe it? This stuff could be bought off the drugstore shelf like cough syrup! Drug addicts in the '60's discovered that you could convert this stuff into the mainline version by heating it in a spoon over a candle flame which drove off a molecule of H<sub>2</sub>O. For this reason it is now impossible to buy it in any state without a properly filled-out Federal Drug Enforcement prescription form that shows the doctor's name and DEA number, etc. This bottle is from 1906 but it was the same stuff when I was a kid being doctored up to keep me quiet.



Mom would actually administer the stuff to us before we went to SLC in the car, ostensibly to "keep us from getting car sick" but more likely than not given to keep us from fighting in the back of the car. She took a quarter cup measuring cup - one made of plastic, a new substance in my short life which is why I remember it was plastic- and measured out a teaspoon of paregoric from the four ounce bottle. Then she filled the measuring cup to the top with warm but not hot water and stirred it to mix it. Then I'd have to drink the stuff which wasn't too bad. It was sort of sweet with a weird flavor that was neither attractive nor offensive. I discovered later that the odd flavor comes from camphor, though I don't know why camphor is mixed with the morphine. If I didn't want to drink it, she'd use whatever threats she had to use to get compliance. Each time I'd go to sleep.

I was not allowed to eat food for some period of time because of the risk of causing some bleeding but that wasn't a problem. I couldn't have eaten even if I had been threatened with a whipping. Instead, I was given what seemed to be delicacies that were rarely provided otherwise. My favorite thing was jello. Mom would make jello but instead of allowing it to set up, she would offer it to me in the thick, liquid form. That was easy to drink and the sweetness and orange flavor made it something I'd drink freely. She also gave me popsicles, and later some pudding. Soft sweet cool foods that were easy and pleasurable to eat.



I wanted one of these. Badly. I saw them in stores and in town and imagined myself pedaling bravely around, steering it while roaring around corners, nearly tipping over. So much more elegant than our wooden wheel barrow and carbide barrels. There were also airplanes that you could pedal like this. Sigh. We didn't even have tricycles to ride. An American



Flyer Wagon was the only rolling stock on the place, other than small toy trucks. We'd see toys like this on the lawns in town.

### First Aid

When we cut ourselves badly enough mom would apply something medicinal to the injury and then put a bandage over it, though she tried to save those because they cost money. Her preferred antiseptic was Mercurochrome and merthiolate. I found out later when I oversaw the Infection Control program at St. Alphonsus Hospital that both of them were about as effective as dishwater. That's an exaggeration because the alcohol portion of the stuff did something, but the "active" ingredients weren't too active.

Unguentine was another first aid product that was advertised that sounded interesting. I wanted to try it but which never used. It seemed to be sort of a first aid and sun burn product. We lived our whole summer in the sun so didn't understand the notion of sun burns. That seemed to be something that city people experienced.

Band-Aids existed but weren't much used. They were too expensive. Plus they didn't stick too well anyway so came off in the dirt and grime we lived in.



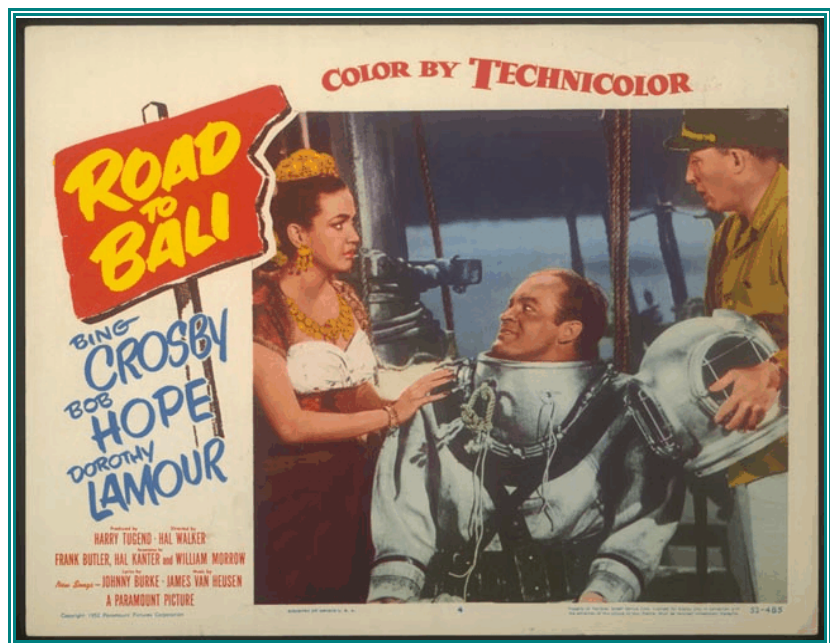
**T**hese odd little dolls showed up in carnivals as prizes when you played games of chance. They were obviously human forms but had few features to indicate whether they were boy dolls or girl dolls. The eye lashes gave it away through. Girls.

They were made out of thin plastic so were probably

made in molds, not very sturdy but cheap. The plastic had a peculiar odor. They were hollow and crushed easily.



This man was a giant. He was a dominant character who entertained the troops over seas and acted in movies that we watched. I understood most of his humor which was clean compared to the stuff you hear today. He did a series of movies with Bing Crosby that had "on the road" in the title. I saw this one in Vernal or Seward and liked it. Dorothy Lamour was one of the famous actresses of the time.





You've heard the stories and descriptions of how telephones used to be, what it was like to live in a house where they were the only connection a family had with the outside world. Your lives today are filled with cell phones which to my child would have been impossible dreams. The stuff of the Dick Tracy wristwatch radio. Impossible. Yet they are here as you and I reap the benefit of technology. I call Julie in New York at 10am, Lisa in Phoenix at 11 and Nancy in Boise at 12.

On my cell phone. A slim little thing stuck there in my shirt pocket, weighing only a few ounces, waiting for me to push one number button and then push "CALL". At which time a miracle is worked. The thing hands me your voices. As clearly as if you were in the next room. I'm glad I'm sitting each time I hear your reply. No distortions, no degradation in quality. I hear you laugh, I hear your uncertainty and reservations, your questions and thoughts with a perfection that was impossible when I was a kid.



On my cell phone. A slim little thing

stuck there in my shirt pocket, weighing only a few ounces, waiting for me to push one number button and then push "CALL". At which time a miracle is worked. The thing hands me your voices. As clearly as if you were in the next room. I'm glad I'm sitting each time I hear your reply. No distortions, no degradation in quality. I hear you laugh, I hear your uncertainty and reservations, your questions and thoughts with a perfection that was impossible when I was a kid.

The image of Charleston Central above reveals a great deal about how Bell operated. Look at the operators seated in a straight row on the right side of the room. Behind them, evenly spaced, are supervisors who are experts, monitoring, poised and prepared to help any one of her "girls" who need help with an unexpected question. On the front left sits the big shot, the supervisor of supervisors, who watches carefully the operations, keeping track of individuals, of how things work,

preparing her evaluations of people, her assessments for her supervisors. Bell ran a tight ship and was concerned with providing high quality service.

Back in this era, there was not even a dream of cell phones because the technology did not exist. Telephones of the time were controlled from this type of room, usually named "Central". Where women, always women, sat on high chairs, put a headpiece on to hear and speak and faced their own panel of several hundred little metal holes arrayed in neat grids, with a set of shiny flexible rubber hoses tipped with metallic jacks that they had to connect in the correct patterns in those little metallic holes.

Young women neatly dressed listened to customers who wanted to talk to someone else in town. To you kids, that is no big deal to use the phone, but it was back then. It was. The idea of just picking up this black plastic thing and holding it to you ear to wait for a human voice to come through it was novel, was startling, even a kind of witchcraft. The nice voice would say, "Central. May I help you." Or "Central, who do you wish to speak to" or some variation on the theme. Then you bravely, for an old farmer it required bravery, said the name of the person -the "party"- you wanted to speak to and waited.

The operator said, "One moment please" while she riffled through a paper -not digital- directory of telephone subscribers, which was only a small percentage of the homes in town, for the number of the 'party'. Then she'd pull up the right combination of black and red cables and connect them in the right holes in the panel in front of her. And magic.



These operators' telephone service is one of its greatest assets in time of emergency. It reaches millions of people—helps thousands of business to get things done quickly—and is a vital part of our national defense.

In the last five years the Bell System has installed more than 100 million miles of telephone cables.

TELEPH

XXXXIII


**She Still Has "The Voice With A Smile"**

War traffic keeps her busier than ever but she manages to keep calm and pleasant.

She still has "The Voice With A Smile" even when the lights are thick on the Long Distance switchboard and the circuits are crowded. Even when she has to ask you to—

"Please limit your call to 5 minutes. Others are waiting."

That's to help everybody get better service and you couldn't ask for a better reason than that.

BELL TELEPHONE SYSTEM 



The phone of the other party would ring and the party would pick it up and start talking. Impossible. No need to go out in the weather and walk a few blocks or drive a ways. Just pick up the phone and call. These operators had to keep their cool and handle the load when things got busy because so much individual initiative was required. It was totally manual. The miraculous phone switches did not exist. These women were the switches.

"Party lines" were an inconvenience but an economic necessity. Imagine that the small phone company wants to add phone service to four families who live 5 miles out side of town. Wires are needed to do this. No wireless things then. So the phone company had to pay to buy the wires and poles and supplies and pay men to run the lines out there to those families and had to later maintain and repair them. That was expensive and today it looks to me like the phone company could actually be accused of being altruistic because it was unlikely that it would recoup its investment in the life time of those few new subscribers. Today no self-respecting corporation would be guilty of such extravagance. "Tsk tsk, sorry can't do it folks. Our accountants say it doesn't make sense."

But while the phone company did provide phone service to those four families out there, it did not spend more than it needed to. It would run one phone line out and would hook the four families up onto that one line. Technically, that was a simple thing to do, and economically it made sense. The problem was, that when Central dialed one of the phones on that "party line", all parties on the line would hear the ring. The way the phone company distinguished between the four parties on that line was to assign each one a distinctive combination of rings. One family would be assigned two short rings, another would be assigned one long and one short ring and so on. That way, each of the four families would know whether or not the phone was ringing for them or not.

But the parties would all know who was being called. Worse, any party who wanted to could pick up the phone at the same time and eavesdrop on the entire conversation. So boys and girls did not have smoochy sweet phone conversations, did they. It was irritating to know that someone else was overhearing the conversation. Because it was none of their business. In addition to the invasion of privacy, there was a technical problem when multiple listeners we on the line. The loudness decreased because there was a fixed amount of electricity in the line which was divided by more users than it was designed to handle.

When I was in Silver City in the 1980's with some of you kids, I asked a woman in the library/museum for some assistance. Silver City still had one of these primitive phone systems that had battery packs hanging from each telephone, which required the user to manually turn a crank to make the bell on another phone ring. I

asked her about making an appointment to take a bunch of you kids up to the little church that was usually shut. She said she'd call so-and-so down in a small town nearby who was the caretaker of that old church.

While I waited, she lifted the handpiece off the phone base and turned the crank to dial So-and-So. While she waited, someone who obviously heard the ring picked up their phone, needing some entertainment. Silver City was a pretty dead town so it was understandable I guess. The lady who was helping me recognized who that someone was that had picked up the line. She said, "Mabel! Hang up the phone! This call isn't for you!" Apparently Mabel hung up. But that how these phones worked. Every set of parties had at least one of those nose pokes, who would eavesdrop just to eavesdrop, and it drove the others nuts.

The phone we used was a black, sturdy, table top model. This model is perhaps the exact model we had. The white paper on the front had the phone number which was a short 4-5 digit number. The cable was a straight woven fabric-covered wire. None of the fancy coiled plastic coated wires of today. Sturdy, simple, no-nonsense design.



The image of a man made out of lightening bolts captured my interest. Whoever it was that provided electricity to Uintah Valley in those days used this character in its ads. He showed up in ads, urging something or other on the reader. The lightbulb head fit with the concept of electricity and light. His friendly smile and antennae attracted kids to him. It was a surprise to learn years later that this man was not created in Utah. He came from the east originally but was adopted by electric companies for obvious reasons. He showed up on billboards and in newspapers so was part of the background of the valley.



### Coal Burning Stove



This is what our cook stove looked like. Ours was a different brand with some white enamel surfaces not present on this model but the design was the same with the fire box on the left. The large door in the front of the stove is the oven door, with a large handle. When the door was opened and allowed to fall onto its hinged, it jarred heavily, the floor resounding from the thump like a bass drum. The round dial on the front was the thermostat that registered oven temperature with some degree of accuracy though you didn't really believe it.



The way the oven was heated was ingenious.

Obviously, the firebox would heat the left side of the oven but that would allow a big temperature difference between the two sides of the oven, meaning half cooked cakes. In those days you had to turn your cake while it cooked, not a real problem, except that cakes made from scratch could easily "fall" if bumped at the wrong time, resulting in a dense sponge that was only hogs would eat. There was a critical period of time when the leavening had created fluffy bubbles in the cake that wasn't yet firm. If the mass was jarred at that point, the bubbles would collapse. To minimize the variation in the temperature in different parts of an oven, stove manufacturers designed the firebox in such a manner that the heat and smoke were directed up over the oven, instead of straight out the back of the firebox. After the heat flowed across the top of the oven it went to the back and up the chimney. Look at where the stove pipe is - right in the middle of the stove, not behind the firebox on the left.

The lady has the door to the firebox pulled open so that she can feed a small split log. Just below that door there are three round protuberances. Those are the draft controls. You turned the knobs on the end to change the size of the spaces through which air entered the firebox which altered the amount of fire, hence, heat, produced by the fire. Below these draft controls is another door. That is the space that collected the ashes as then fell from the firebox. The fire rested on a grate

rather than on a flat surface. This grate allowed the air to flow upward along the entire bottom of the fire.

Hauling ashes was a chore for big people usually, though toward the end of our stay in Vernal I remember having to do some of this work. The first principle in dealing with ashes is to be sure the fire is completely out and that the stove is cold.

Otherwise, you could have some exciting times when a hot coal fell out onto the floor or you. The coal scuttle was used. The first step in removing ashes when you burned coal especially was to shake the grate. There was a handle that you used like a crank. It had a square hole that you fit over a square peg end of the grate. Then you quickly rotated the handle back and forth to wiggle the halves of the grate. This loosened the clinkers and chunks of ash that were hung up in the grate. The coal bucket was set beneath the door and a shovel designed to fit in the firebox was used to pull the ashes out and into the bucket.



This was done slowly because any enthusiasm produced clouds of fine ash dust that mom didn't like much. After the bucket was full, it was taken outside and the ashes were spread on the snow and ice-covered paths to make them less slippery.

Sitting in the center of the stove top between the teakettle and pan, you see a flat iron, the kind that mom used to iron our clothes before dad bought her a fancy Sunbeam electric iron -that went from zero to 260 degrees in about a minute. You could scorch your shirt in a second when the thing was warmed up, popping and crackling in enthusiasm to work. Mom had two of the flat irons and one handle. The handle was affixed by pushing it down into notches in the flatiron made for the purpose, while twisting it to the right. That engaged parts of the handle and the flat iron. To remove the handle you just reversed the process, after you had set the cool flat iron back on the hot stove. The two irons were alternated, one always heating and one always ironing.



To the left of the flat iron you can see

lines in the top of the firebox. Those are the outlines of the three lids that set over the firebox which could be removed. Two of them were circular and rested on a third piece that set between them shaped sort of like a diaper. When a wash boiler was to be heated, all of these lids were removed and the boiler was set directly over the fire. The special tool that was used to lift the lids off the top of the firebox is hanging up on the left side of the stove, out of the way but easily accessible.

Above the stove proper are a pair of doors that enclosed spaces that obviously stayed warm when the stove was burning. These warming ovens were perfect places to set bowls and pans of food to keep warm for dinner, while other things were being prepared, or while mom was waiting for someone to come in for dinner. On top of the warming ovens mom usually kept a salt shaker or salt box and a pepper shaker, all industrial size. A box of large kitchen matches for starting the fire was hung on the wall to the left.

In the winter in particular, welcoming heat then emanated from the door and the oven and stove and when I didn't feel well, sitting by it was comforting inducing a delicious listlessness. When we wanted something to eat, mom would sometimes butter homemade bread and sit it on a rack in the oven to brown. A cup of hot cocoa completed the meal. Especially when mom dropped a marshmallow in to float and melt, sweetening the drink with vanilla. When we were sick, mom would fix us toast this way. We didn't get an electric toaster, a new-fangled Sunbeam contraption, until about the time we went to Seward.

A coal stove is a wonderful thing, sort of the center of the family universe. When it is stoked and hot, its heat fills the entire room, glowing and comforting. It was a lovely thing to sit between the back wall and stove when it was not really hot. There is something reassuring about warmth, particularly in the gastronomic center of the house. We took our Saturday night bath in front of this stove.

Unfortunately the stove was not capable of being banked sufficiently to last through the night, so in the morning the house was icy cold. Literally. That was particularly true in an uninsulated house in cold Vernal winters. Sometimes the water bucket on the kitchen counter had a skin of ice that formed after the fire went out and the house cooled off. In the morning you broke the ice by pulling the dipper out. Dad would start the fire again, and we'd grab out clothes and run to stand in front of the stove to change from our pajamas.

We kept some painted turtles in the kitchen in a flat Pyrex dish, and one night they froze. Solid. We thought they were dead but dad put the dish on the stove shelf and forgot about it. Later someone noticed that the turtles had thawed out and were moving energetically now in the hot water.

## Mustard Plasters

These things have to be experienced to be appreciated. They were applied to your chest to "cure" a cold or flu and they worked. Because you would do about anything to avoid being treated again. They came from grandma Merrill, the only mean thing she ever did to me.

These painful things start in the kitchen. A thick yellow pasty curdled soup is prepared on the stove with large amounts of powdered mustard and wheat flour. Then a piece of outing flannel was laid on the table and liberally smeared with this warm paste. Then I was sort of tied down in bed on my back while the thing was laid on my chest with the paste directly on my skin. It was then covered with something to keep the sheets from being soiled, blankets were piled on top of the plaster and I was left there to stew. I did. The mustard started to burn badly. It was painful to lay there for however long it was the thing was left on. I'd guess something like half an hour because mom and grandma knew that it took more than a few minutes for the plaster "to draw out" whatever it was supposed to draw out. Even after the miserable thing was removed my skin hurt although warm soft flannel was put over my chest.

Home remedies were all most people had to rely on unless there was a life-threatening problem that did need to expensive attention of doctors. There was no such thing as health insurance and few doctors. Families did everything they could to care for and heal each other. Some of the ideas were silly. One of dad's sisters, who I won't mention by name in case extended family members read this and get the idea I'm ridiculing her, had a sure fire cure for smelly feet and it wasn't washing them or your socks. It was an enema.

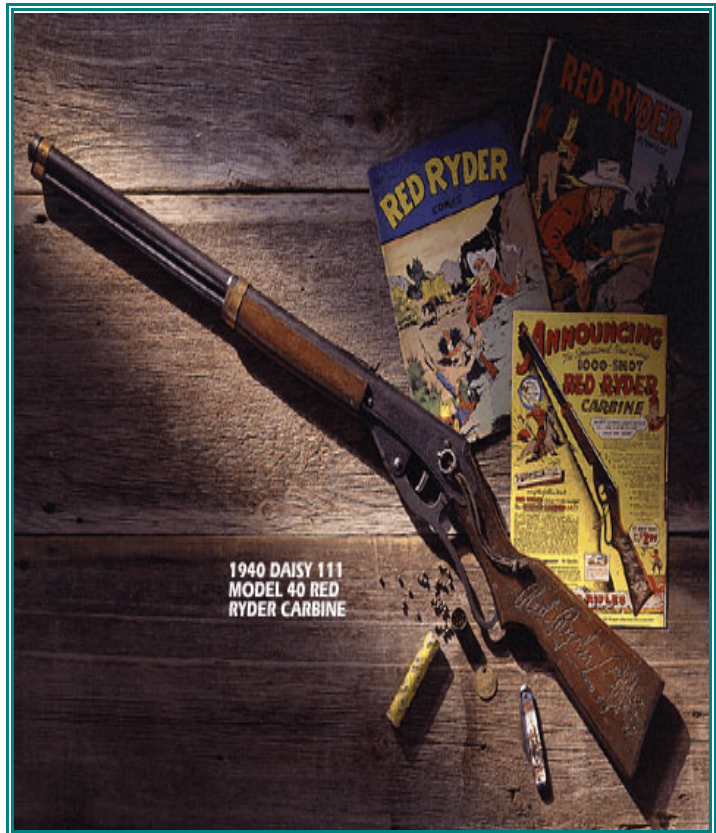
## BB guns in the dairy herd

As noted elsewhere, the Cooper dairy herd was a constant source of irritation to our 2 acre farm. Before dad installed the cattle guard that effectively stopped their entry. When they were inside, the cows would graze on anything green in our yard. This is where us kids made a heroic entry. We were granted an extraordinary dispensation by mom and dad.



They had given us Red Ryder B-B Guns, and poor you if you fail to comprehend the magnitude of this boon. Boys waited to get a BB Gun, their first step into manhood, their first firearm. Then I saved pennies so I could buy more BBs because I shot a lot of them. You pulled the handle down to pump a compress air into a cylinder. Then you returned the handle to this position before you pulled the trigger.

One time I forgot to do that. I intently sighted on a sparrow that was bouncing around in the lilacs, and when I pulled trigger the lever whacked back up on my hand so hard I thought I had broken my fingers. I don't know how I managed to get my hand out of the lever but I did. Fear is a more powerful stimulus than pain. I struggled out there on the back porch, frantically trying to find a way to hold the stock stationary so my good hand could pull the lever to



free my hand. While my hand hurt, I knew that if I reported to senior management to get help to pull the bb gun off my hand, that I would be soundly abused for my stupidity. That is what it was in my excitement to get the dang birds. Getting hurt was getting hurt twice around our house if you reported the injury. Because you always got a painful lecture about how stupid you were to have hurt yourself that way. So you never wanted to admit that you were hurt. Far better to just conceal the hurt and deal with only that hurt. Tongues inflict pain worse than bb gun levers.

After getting fed up with these damn dairy cows grazing on the peas and beans, and leaving cow pies all over the place, mom and dad decreed that ANYTIME the herd showed up in the yard, we were free to blast away at them as often and as painfully as we could. We even understood that in so doing we were actually assisting the welfare of the family. Perish the thought that mere kids should get a glimpse of the fact that their efforts contributed to the welfare of the family. [See discussion

of Boston episodes below for elaboration on this issue.”] Man alive, that was heaven. Running and hollering after the herd out in the front yard, stopping to cock the lever, not even sighting before squeezing off the next shot. The cows kicked into the air when they were hit and bellowed but weren't hurt. The yelling and screaming probably upset them more than the BB's but it was a great sport to be allowed to shoot the stupid critturs that were damaging mom's flowers.

### National Geographic

As far back as my memory goes, we had the National Geographic in the house. Dad was in love with it so it found its way into the house each month. That provided an enormous amount of fascinating fodder to occupy us when it rained the winter when it was too cold to go outside. I don't think I ever heard him explain his fascination with the magazine but it obviously had to do with his love of nature and art and places and cultures, all of which showed up regularly.

I picked up his love and to this day delight in seeing a new National Geographic magazine. My only regret today is that it's become too politically correct, that it changed its old stilted journalistic style that I like, that it tries to cater to the boob tube generation by trying to emulate the boob toob. But I still like it anyway. At 5111 you all saw the collection I acquired over some 20 years. Those were in leather bound slip cases, and came with detailed indexes so you could actually use the set like a small library. It's too late for you now, but that was what I was trying to produce for you. I hope whoever got them appreciated them.

Anthropology probably became the love of my life through the medium of dad and his magazine. Exotic monkeys, dark dangerous jungles, naked African women, treacherous rivers with boiling rapids, high mountains, gorillas, big game hunts, Indians, and so on peopled my imagination. But perhaps the most vivid images I remember clearly today are those accompanying an article about Cappodocia in Turkey. Such bizarre landscape. It looked like moonscape in those black and white photos and you can see the similarity. This volcanic region was used by early Christians who



moved here to escape persecution. They excavated their homes in the volcanic rock, making the bizarre landscape even more bizarre by having people living in these structures.



This man is the ultimate cowboy, the one we admired the most. I don't know why. He stood head and shoulders above them all for some reason, probably Madison Avenue and it worked for us. His horse Trigger was also the best, the one we wanted to ride. Roy and Trigger were tops.

Madison Ave blended in the toy store. Roy Rogers cap guns, shirts and hats were marketed to use impressionable kids, though we could never afford to have any of this stuff.



Dick and I went to visit the Coopers one hot summer afternoon because we were bored at our place. We walked the half mile on the soft, hot native asphalt road. When we arrived at the Cooper places, two families of them, no one was home. Not at either home. That wasn't unusual but this day we did something unusual. We opened the front door, which was always unlocked, just like at our own home, and entered the house. What possessed us to do that I'll never know, but we went in. We had been trained rigorously to never go into some one's house without permission and to never take anything that isn't ours. But we experienced a sort of moral break that afternoon. We went in and then we did something very wrong.

We wandered around the house looking in rooms that we already knew well. We played there all the time, for cryin' in the rain barrel. But we were compelled to do this thing, perhaps because of the novelty of the action, or perhaps the thrill of risking "being caught". Who knows. When we got to the kitchen, we poked around in the cupboards, completely without moral compass by now. And we did the unthinkable. We opened a package of powdered sugar and made a sort of glaze with water like mom would make. Then found the box of graham crackers and put the glaze on some of them, like mom did, and put another on as a lid. Then we ate them.

Until we were full.

About now our moral compass, our moral gyroscope, kicked in. We broke out in a cold sweat and knew we were in trouble, even though no one had come to the house. We were beset with ghosts by now about punishments that would be about as exciting as bamboo splinters under the finger nails. We tried to put things away as best we could and slunk out of the house, shutting the door quietly, just in case. And wandered nonchalantly home. But it didn't work.

There is something about a child who has done something wrong, that is, a child who has been provided a moral compass, that produces a neon sign over his head for mom to see that says, "I did something wrong." That happened to us. We hadn't been home too long before mom figured out something bad had happened. I suspect today that the telltale signs were powdered sugar on our shirts and glaze on our faces. The Coopers weren't home yet so she hadn't received a phone call saying that the kids had done such and such. Indeed, the Coopers really wouldn't know for sure who did the deed in the kitchen. But mom knew something was up, so she began to grill us in a mild exploratory way at first that quickly became a full-scale inquisition. "You what?!" I am grateful today to see that I was unable to lie to her once she got the drift that we had done something wrong. I am glad about that.

She drug the facts of our misdemeanor out of us and then rehearsed one more time the magnitude of our sin. We had gone into someone's home when they weren't home, without their permission. Sin number one. Worse, we had gone into the kitchen and stolen their food that they needed for their own children, 6 of them. Sin Number Two. There were probably more than that, but these were the biggies.

Now the humiliating punishment. She was teaching a lesson that hurt because she believed it should and because she believed it was deserved -and probably prayed it would make a difference. She handed us the unopened box of powdered sugar out of our own cupboard and ordered us directly to walk back to the Coopers and to tell the parents what we had done and to give them back the powdered sugar we had stolen. Period. Nothing fancy about it. Just do it and do it now before I give you a hiding so you can't sit for a week.

What choice did we have? None. If we had failed to do it ourselves, the worst thing could have happened. She would have personally dragged us along and towered over us in the Cooper household while she ordered us to do such and such and so and so. We did go to the Coopers and we did confess our sin and we were mortified because some of the kids were there to witness this shocking scene and we did hand the parents the box of powdered sugar. Then we turned around and walked home, wishing the earth would open up and swallow us up.

After we went home, the lecture was repeated. There was never a shortage

of words when mistakes were made and teaching was indicated. Worse, we had to literally give up our own desserts to atone for our sin. That box of powdered sugar was the one mom would have used to make the same desserts for us. Powerful object lesson here. You have to remember the penury we lived in to appreciate the magnitude of our mistake and the magnitude of the punishment.

### ST 37 and Camphophenique

The over-the-counter remedies marketed when I was a kid have mostly disappeared, perhaps for the better. But I remember various of them and was impressed with the promises given by the manufacturers. Mom and dad used these two regularly, as indicated.

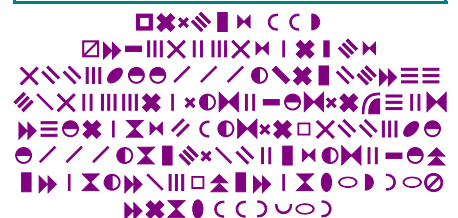
ST 37 came in pint-size, cobalt blue bottles and was a precursor to Listerine, indeed later coexisted with Listerine and promised to keep your breath smelling clean. The ads for ST37 even had drawings of bacteria that were killed by the stuff. Microscope slides were drawn to illustrate the organisms that caused bad breath - "halitosis" was the disgusting name for the disgusting stuff. The ads promised magic and long life and success in love, etc. if you would use it.

Dad used it for another reason. He "gargled" with it when he got a sore throat. He must have gotten strep throats because he really got painful infections that he'd treat with this stuff. He'd pour some of it into a glass of water, stand at the sink, fill his mouth part full, tilt his head back, and proceed to blow air up through the stuff that rested in the back of his throat. This was supposed, I guess, to circulate the "medicine" in the oropharynx to kill the nasty bacteria. I don't know whether it worked or not because I didn't get to use the stuff.

If I was supposed to gargle, I was given a small glass of warmish salt water and told to do the same thing. I did and it felt fine, but I can't say that it made any difference. Maybe it did, but not so I could notice it.

Camphophenique was a more potent product. It came in small bottles, was oily and had a powerful smell. Because it is made of camphor among other things. This package is the modern version but closely resembles the version we used. The bottle was green glass with a screw-cap.

Its major use in our household was to treat cold



sores, things that I seemed to get frequently. I don't understand why I rarely get them today when I got them so often during the winter in Vernal and Seward. Whatever the reason, I am glad. They were really painful. I've heard that small pox vaccinations would reduce the frequency of cold sores, herpes, for some people.

The treatment consisted of pouring a few drops of the oily liquid onto a small cotton ball. The cotton ball was daubed directly onto the cold sore and did not usually cause any pain. The treatment continued until the cold sore was healed.

### Re-loading Ammunition

**G**et the brass! Collect the brass!", he said. So we scurried around like obedient little

rabbits hunting eagerly in the sand for the empty cartridges ejected from his 30.06 or mom's 30.30. The exotic acrid smell of cordite and spent gunpowder filled the air around us. The reason for collecting the brass wasn't concern for the environment. That's proven by the fact that the spent rim-fire cartridges from .22's weren't collected. They were left where they fell - because they couldn't be reloaded. The big cartridges were collected to save money and to give dad the pleasure of re-loading his own ammunition.

The only time I collected .22 shells was in Alaska. Dick, Billy Schafermeyer and I would round up some shells and shoot them off using a technique learned at scout camp. But in this method, the empty cartridge itself became the projectile. To do this you first had to take leave of your senses and second, you had to think that you were invincible. We could have lost an eye in a second if the technique had mis-fired. I'm not sure I'd allow my own kids to do this -which is not to say we had dad's approval either.

It's disarmingly simple. Take a couple of large matches out of your waterproof match-holder. Break the heads off so that there is no stick left on the heads. Drop the match heads into the empty cartridge. Then find a board, a log or stump with a vertical surface. Now hold the open end of the cartridge up against the flat vertical surface. And hammer the cartridge tightly into place using any rock that was handy.

Up to this point the process is benign. There is no risk from anything done so far. The risk arises in the next simple step. Take another match and yell to the other kids that you were about to shoot off your cartridge. If they are smart, they will turn their backs to you. Do they? No. They avidly turn to watch. Now, you light your match, sit to the side of the embedded cartridge, and hold the match flame up against the brass. It takes only a few seconds of direct heat to ignite the

two match heads inside the cartridge. At that instant -and it is only an instant- you hear and see a small explosion and the cartridge shoots off so fast that you can't even tell where it went.

Just like a bullet. Which is pretty dang exciting. As long as you don't really understand the risks. If the cartridge had been lodged in the board in such a way that one side was more tightly embedded than the other, it would explode off the board in an arc toward the tighter side. If your face was too close, the effect would be not much different than the slug fired out of a rifle. We thought this technique was pretty exciting, and were amazed at the amount of energy in those match heads that left a small blacked spot on the board around the circular cut left by the cartridge. We heard of kids having their eye put out while doing this, but knew it couldn't happen to us.

Re-loading ammunition was fascinating. A complete industrial process right there on the kitchen table. Dad couldn't afford to buy the re-loader so borrowed it from the gunsmith he worked for. None of my gun-shooting uncles could afford one either. The expendable supplies were all he bought: projectiles or "slugs", smokeless gun powder and primers. It was years later that I saw regular black powder fired. It makes a large cloud of black smoke that practically obscures the shooter's vision if the wind blows the right way.

The reloader consists of a stout vertical metal shaft affixed securely to a base or clamped to a table top. On this shaft is a device that works like an Arbor Press. A variety of tools and dies are fitted into the press to perform various functions on each cartridge as it is being prepared.

The reloading process is straight forward, based entirely on the structure and function of a cartridge. A loaded cartridge is simply a brass tube that has the projectile clamped in one end, a new primer in the other end, and gunpowder in between. The cartridge is slipped into a similarly shaped firing chamber of a rifle and locked in place. When the gun trigger is pulled, a firing pin is released and strikes the center of the primer. The cordite in the primer explodes, igniting the gunpowder that is touching it, firing the projectile out of the brass cartridge and rifle barrel. That's the basic process. So re-loading is simply the process of refurbishing and reloading the cartridge so that it can be fired again.





After the brass has been cleaned, the spent primer is ejected by being pushed out with a metal rod long enough to reach it through the center of the cartridge. When a cartridge is fired, the brass tube will actually expand if the firing chamber is larger than the cartridge which it usually is, so it needs to be resized. The shoulder needs to be reformed and the neck needs to be reshaped and so on.

### Deer hunt in rain

When I was around 5 or 6 the whole family went deer hunting, the only time I have clear recall of doing that together. The reason we didn't go usually was probably because kids get bored, are noisy and slow things down. If you have to wait for kids to catch up or to finish playing in the trees, breaking camp and getting out on the trail is a slow process that the men didn't tolerate. Plus the men wanted to be in their blinds early before the deer were moving about. There was also the risk of being shot, which did occasionally happen though not as often as later when the Californians came on the scene. They'd shoot a cow and swear it looked like a mule deer.



Deer season starts in October so the weather is turning bad. It rained while we were up on the mountain so we spent considerable time in an old canvas tent. These tents were heavy and difficult to pitch, not like the small miracle-fabric tents today that are set up with internally-placed fiberglass rods. They had to be laid out and laboriously staked every few feet and suspended by guy lines to trees so that an unexpected wind would not blow them down. At night it was like being in a peculiarly shaped cave that smelled peculiar from the preservative applied to the canvas to prevent mildew and rot that would otherwise grow from any retained moisture.

I learned an important lesson about these heavy tents, as usual, the hard way. Dad said not to touch the inside of canvas tent when it was wet. He probably explained what would happen if we did but it didn't convince me. In fact, his

prohibition was an invitation. I needed to find out for myself what the result was. So one evening when it was raining, and the inner surface of the canvas was glistening wet and sagging from the weight of the water, I reached up to that shiny surface and drew my finger along it. Sure enough, the glistening disappeared. That was a discovery and seemed to be what he was talking about but that wasn't all I learned. The next thing that happened was that the rain water began to drip through the mark I had drawn on the tent, as if a dam had been removed. Whatever was below the drip obviously got wet and dad wasn't too happy about that one. So I got the usual lecture about, "Why don't you listen? Why don't you do what I tell you to do?" I didn't know the answer to either question then and still don't today. I'd do the same thing again I suspect. The interesting thing about the tent was how magical it seemed that it could hold out water until you touched it. Miraculous.

We spent a weekend up there I'd guess, wandering around, exploring and checking out things that were new to us. The mountain flora and fauna is markedly different from that on the farm in the dry valley. The most remarkable plant we encountered was a toadstool. We had toadstools around home, but this one was 10 inches tall and that big across. Simply stupendous. We knew that is what it was because it was shaped like one but it seemed impossible that one could be so huge. A piece of the umbrella had been chewed out by a deer, someone said.

I had mixed feelings about killing deer, anything really. I was never taught to be a bleeding heart and grew up where animals were grown and slaughtered to feed us. That was how things were. But inside of me there was also a respect for life that seems to have come with this model. I didn't like killing very much. Indeed, in Alaska, a story that will be told in the next volume, I was finally ready to shoot a mountain goat after a long stalk, and I froze. I couldn't do it. So dad blew its head off with his rifle which didn't particularly upset me, but when I sighted on the animal I just looked. I couldn't pull the trigger. Dad didn't say anything about it even though he had saved it for me. So I don't really know what his reaction was that his kid couldn't shoot a goat. I don't really like even killing insects or snakes if it isn't necessary. I don't make a crusade out of it, but I don't. On one of the rafting trips on the Payette, Robbie and the Thompson boys wanted to kill a small cold snake we found on the early morning bank and I wouldn't let them. They were confused but that was how it was when I was the leader. There was no danger and nothing to be gained so let it alone.

## Tumor removal

**W**hen I fell into the bonfire I burned the right side of my head and over

the next year it developed a large tumor. Right on the top of my ear. Dr. Spendlove -who got to know me really well and who had this gorgeous daughter "Penny" who made my voice disappear- pronounced it a "fibroid tumor" and recommended that it be surgically removed. I don't remember whether I had any role in the discussion, whether I wanted it off for cosmetic reasons or not, or whether it was just somehow medically right that it should be removed. Whatever the strategy was, the thing was removed.

The tumor was exactly on the top of my ear and was an inch long and half an inch high, a pretty conspicuous mass that attracted kids' interest at the least. In this 3<sup>rd</sup> grade photo it shows as a small lump on my right ear. It grew much larger. The rudeness of kids was the major reason to have it removed because it wasn't painful. Perhaps there was a problem. I was wearing glasses back then because I was far-sighted, in which case the temple would have rubbed on and irritated the tumor, particularly after it grew larger. Note the tinting of this photo. Manually done. Also note the home-made shirt. That dark stripe should have been over the shoulders, not the front - perhaps it was and I just put it on backwards but I wouldn't have escaped the house that way.

I obviously had to be put to sleep for the surgery. Back to the same religious hospital, the same drill. I hated it. I had ether three times as kid, once for my tonsils, once for this tumor and once in Seward for surgery on my leg. Mom hauled me to the hospital on the fateful day, and parked me again with people I didn't know. And we repeated the procedure that I'd just gone through to have my tonsils cut out. They assured again I would be fine the same to me. I knew better. I had to take my clothes off, embarrassing, and told to put on what seemed to be a folded piece of cloth that I wore like a shirt. No pants. I was put on a cold stretcher and pushed down a



hall into the operating room. And away we went. The same horrible induction and same horrible recovery. The being tied down while I was intentionally suffocated with a weird gas is one of the worst things I've experienced.

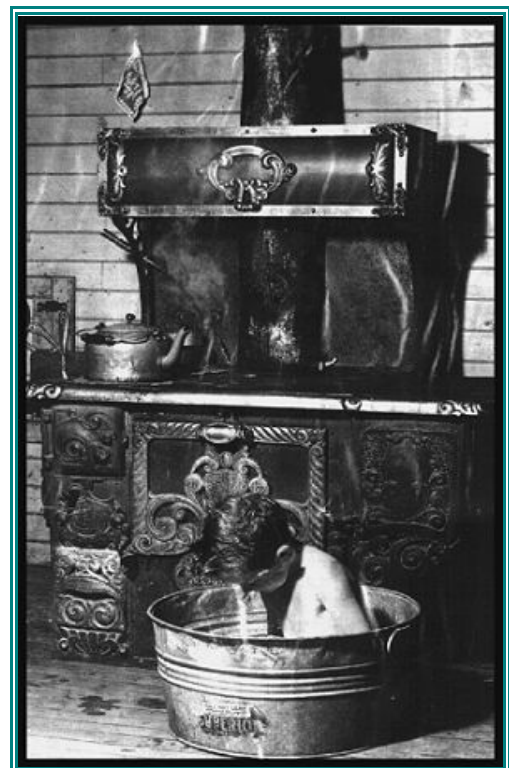
Dr. Spendlove had to remove a substantial piece of tissue to get the whole tumor. That left a large area without skin so he cut a small piece of skin from my hair above my ear and moved it down into the bare area where it healed in place and hastened the growth of new skin. Only problem is that there was hair in that skin so I have an odd patch of hair in a defect on the top of my ear today that puzzles barbers when they see it.

### Saturday Night Bath

After the washing was done it was our turn to get clean. Saturday night was the time to get ready for Sunday, the time to wash and be refreshed. During the week mom would give us clean clothes as needed, meaning when we got the others too dirty to wear by her measure. We'd wear anything as long as she'd let us. Hand, face and neck washing was a fairly regular weekday event though it wasn't a religious ceremony. I tried to avoid it as much as I could. Took too much time when I could be outside investigating a sparrow nest or chasing a cat.

One of the two large round galvanized tubs that had been used to rinse clothes a few hours earlier was set on the kitchen floor in front of the stove, obviously a welcome location in the winter. The following photo captures the setting well, stove tub and floor. This represents accurately what it was like when Dickie and I had to take out baths every Saturday night - and only on Saturday night.

Water was heated on the stove that was literally sitting that close to the tub set between the kitchen table and the stove. The water was heated in a large teakettle there on the stove. In preparation for the bath, the tub would first be filled perhaps half full of cold water using the bucket under the water pump on the kitchen counter. Then mom poured boiling hot water from the teakettle into the water, stirring it with her other hand, until the water was just



right. Well, about just right. If it was too hot, Mom then cooled the hot water by pouring water again from the water bucket under the pump. She tried to find the right balance between making the water cool enough that it was tolerable but not cooling it so much that it got cold too fast because then she'd have to heat more water on the stove. During the bath if we did feel cold, we'd ask her to put more hot water into the tub and sometimes she'd oblige. I can see her holding the teakettle over the side of the tub, slowly pouring hot water in, telling us to stir it around so we didn't get scalded.

Mom and dad would bathe first and then we bathed. Some of the water might be pulled out with a bucket and replaced but not all of it. Pretty shocking, isn't it. Can you imagine yourself actually getting into a tub of water that someone else had bathed in? I bet you recoil at the idea. But that is what we all did. Dad usually bathed first followed by mom. In the same water. The only difference between each tub full of bodies was the addition of more hot water to warm the water up. Otherwise, each person just added his or her residue to the mix and the next down on the totem pole got the results. It didn't bother us in the least. We had no idea what we were doing. If you don't know that you are doing something that others dislike, you have no way of knowing that.

The concept of showers that constantly flushed soap off you with fresh water was foreign. I had never heard of such a thing until we visited some people in town who had one. When I first tried a shower, it was not as satisfying as a tub where I was covered with hot comforting water. So hot sometimes that it burned my feet in which case I would squat in the water, not sitting down, and cover my feet as best I could with my hands which were also burned. But it was satisfying to sit in water that you can splash on your legs or belly to warm yourself.

We weren't allowed in the kitchen when mom and dad bathed. That was a private matter so we played in our bedroom until it was our turn. When we went into the kitchen, mom had our clean clothes lying on the kitchen table or a chair. By the time they had bathed, the well water which had a high mineral content, was white with soap and was covered with a floating scum. We undressed in front of the stove and took our turn in the tub and didn't think twice about the business of the soap scum. We knew that soap bubbles, i.e. foam, were fun and viewed the floating scum as a sort of foam which we would push around like little boats on the surface of the water. Mom would pour more water from the teakettle if the water was cold and finally we'd get out, teeth chattering and shivering, to be dried in front of the stove.

Finally, the best part of the bath on Saturday night. After getting toweled off by mom while we stood in front of the hot stove, simultaneously feeling hot on the back side and cold on the front side, we put on clean underwear. And then



madly drove grinning wildly, loving the experience, showing the real reason he bought the dang thing. It had wonderful pipes sort of like the blooie pipes of a motorcycle, which he obviously loved, and it had acceleration that the heavy Nash didn't have.

It didn't matter to dad that the car was mechanically shot. It really didn't, and perhaps that's part of the reason that mom didn't belabor the point. Dad was a machinist-mechanic par excellence and there was no mechanical thing that he couldn't repair himself. Indeed, he liked doing that sort of work so this two-door chevy was a do-it-yourself dream. I loved it because I liked the mad acceleration and the noise, and because he loved it.

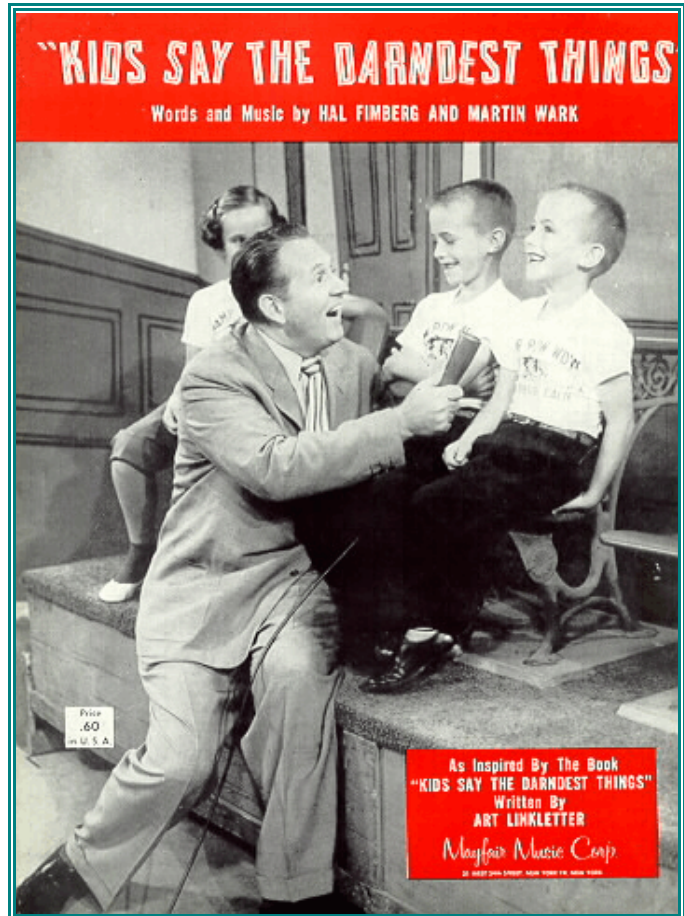
The dialect of Vernal called a car manufactured by Chevrolet a "Chivy". I remember saying it that way and remember the shock later in Alaska when I realized that the spelling and pronunciation were two different things.. I was learning to spell and was an excellent speller. I sometimes won the spelling bees that regularly held. We didn't have any of the modern day crap that NEA teachers foist on poor kids, crap that only makes the poor kid feel stupid after while because they really can't learn to read. What is chiefly needed is a good paddle on the bum with the order to "LEARN those words." That works and the kid is better off than with some pap foisted off as superior education. So as I was memorizing the sounds because that would help me sound out and pronounce new words -what a novel idea- I learned that the letter "e" often had the value of "i" in the word "pet". As I talked about "chivys" with Billy Schafermeyer and thought about how the word was spelled, it unexpectedly dawned on me that in the Vernal dialect -not quite in those terms- the "e" of "chivy" was being pronounced like the "I" in "pit". That wasn't right. I realized that the "right" way to say the word was with the "e" of "pet".

If you would really like to understand what was going on in Vernal, the explanation is probably simple. That dialect apparently simplified its vowel quadrilateral and merged some of its mid-high and front vowels, sort of generalized them into the "I" of "pit" so that "chevy" was "chivy" and "creek" was "crik". It would be interesting to see whether or not that was the residue of dialects of the British Isles because there was a grundle of those immigrants in the region.

**I**t was in Vernal or Seward where I became aware of a radio show that this man MC'ed. Art Linkletter His radio show was "Kids say the darndest things!" and he made a song out of it, sold books with that title, and generally made us all laugh.

I don't know how he got into these situations with little kids but each week he'd interview some of them on the air. During their conversations, the kids always ended up saying the "darndest things" that made me laugh. They were so silly and so funny and innocent.

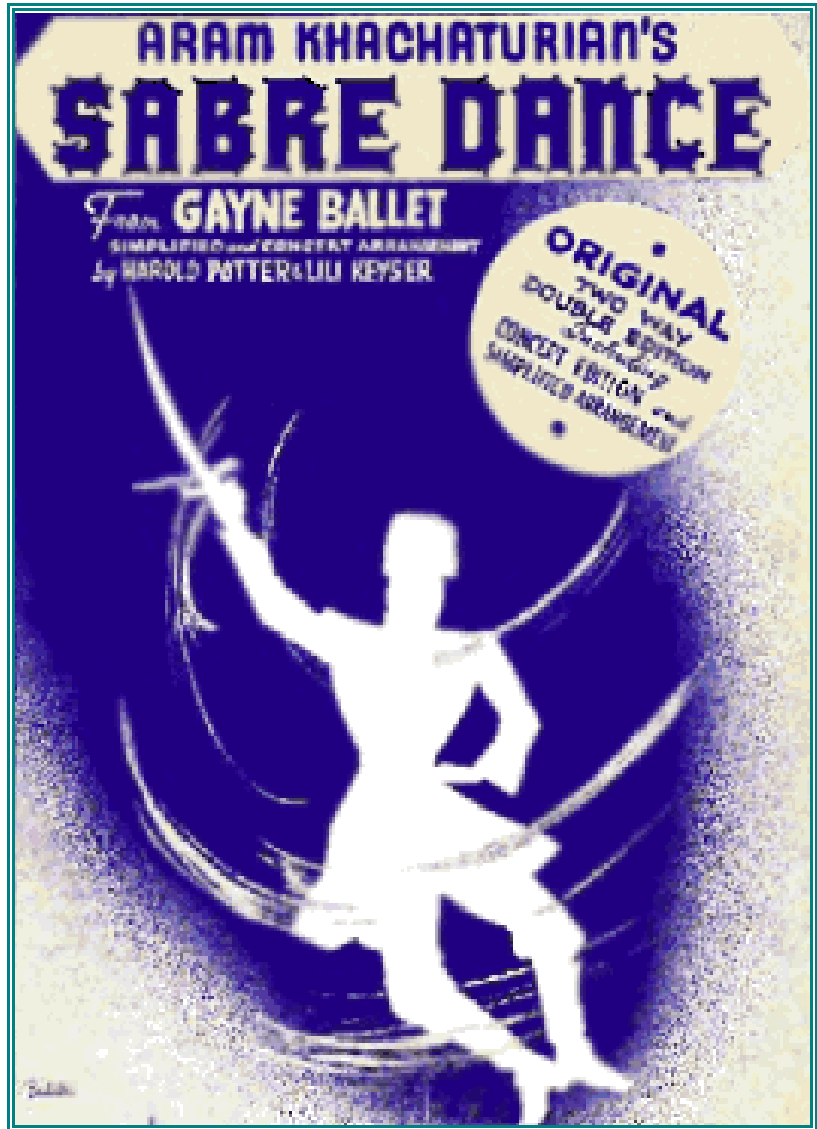
I think that the thing I liked the best about him is evident in this photo: Art actually liked little kids. He loved talking to them and while he was the clever smart adult, he was able to enter into our world and speak to us in words and with ideas we understood and related to. That there should be humor there was irrelevant. It was simply where we were and he had this wonderful capacity to bring out the humor without making us feel bad. Indeed, he made the kids feel important when they said the funny things they said. Those two little boys remind me of Dick and me at the same age in the same era.





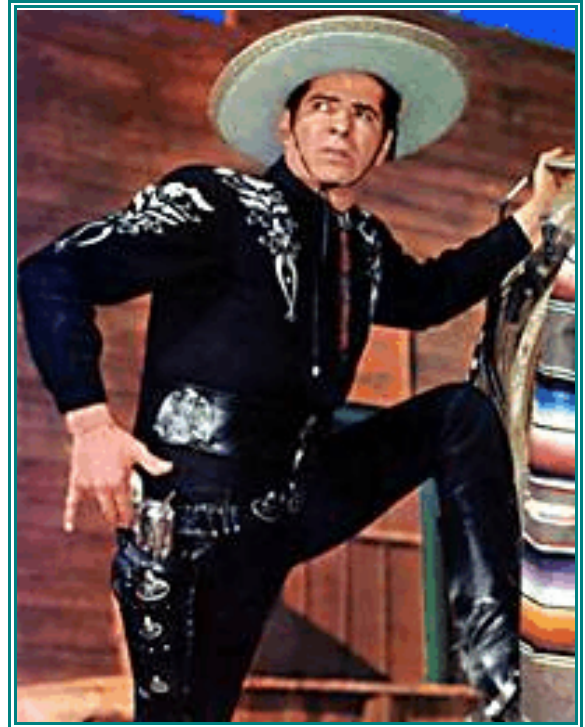
**K**atchaturian's "Sabre Dance" loomed on the horizon there in Vernal. What a name.

I'd never heard such an odd name in my short life. However, it was an interesting name that sounded exotic and I never forgot it. The music was a piece that dad introduced into the household. I don't recall that he ever talked to us about it. He rarely actually looked at us so that we could see both of his ears when he spoke to us. But we heard him talk about things, in this case this music. Since he liked it, we liked it. I look back again and marvel that I should have become familiar with and fell in love with this kind of classical music out there on that little farm. Our neighbors didn't show much interest in such things, indeed they might have considered it pretentious had they known.



## The Cisco Kid

The Cisco Kid was another famous cowboy we were familiar with. But for some reason, he was never one that I wanted to be. Perhaps it was his Spanish name? There were few Mexican people in the valley so I didn't have first-hand knowledge of them. I don't think that my parents were prejudiced. Indeed, dad told funny stories of working with Hispanics in the Leamington area. He was not prejudiced. I think that the reason he wasn't one of our favorite cowboys is because he was from a region of the country that was different than our region. On that basis alone we would have gravitated to the Roy Rogers type of cowboy in the mountains, rather than the south-west desert type. In any event, he was there in our cowboy constellation, adding to the sense that there are important men out there who ride horses and shoot guns and chase bad men and rescue beautiful women.



I was afraid. Dad removed the thick dark linoleum and pulled up most of the flooring of the enclosed back porch. This exposed horizontal boards called 'floor joists' beneath which was a space too short for adults to stand up in that was dark and cobwebby, like a cave. The point of this destruction was to expose the water well because it needed some maintenance. That was our only source of water, a well that had been dug at the time the house was built and then concealed under the porch. Up to that time I had no idea what was under the porch or where our water came from. I'm not sure I ever thought about what might be under a house, and probably assumed the floor was on the ground. The missing floor boards meant that I would fall if I walked out the kitchen door or if I walked into the porch through the back door. We were given explicit orders: Don't you dare go through either of those doors as long as the flooring is torn up and dad is working there.

After dad had enough of the flooring pulled up, he rigged a rope and pulley affair and hung it from joists over the center of the well. He secured a contraption to the tackle so he could sit and lower himself down into the well to do what needed

to be done. This exercise was done in the evenings after he got home from work. It must have been summer because the weather was good. He used a light bulb to be able to see what he was doing down there.

He allowed us to get a look down the well one time. It was pretty sobering. A circular hole that was probably about six feet in diameter, straight down into the ground. With dark water down there, just waiting for someone to fall in and drown. I'd never seen inside a well under a house and the experience made me nervous ever after when I walked over that porch floor. What if the flooring let loose? I'd fall straight down that hole into the water. And drown. I had a mortal fear of water. I don't know what he had to do but it was a necessity because he stopped working on some art project, the focus of his life, to tend to the well.

### Impetigo and Ring Worm

Farm aren't the cleanest places to live especially when compared to city dwellings. That's not to say that country people didn't care about being clean or that they were dirty, because they did care and they were not dirty. But in those days out in the country, roads and driveways were not paved, there were no sidewalks, and yards were not covered with neat tidy grass, rather were dusty crabgrass places. Plus cows, horses, chickens and hogs were present doing their thing, which resulted in a multitude of organisms that city folk didn't have to deal with. These creations always made deposits wherever they went. When people walked anywhere on a farm and then went into the house, they tracked in whatever they picked up on their boots out in the corral, yard or driveway. The wind blew "dust" from the roads and fields and corrals through the open doors and windows. Kids who played with anything that came to hand were exposed to a wide range of bacteria and fungi and whatever was in the soil.

Two different times I had impetigo, a painful, embarrassing skin disease. It is caused by a staphylococcus organism and actually isn't limited to farms, but I lived on a farm when I got it there so the association with farm life is inevitable. It was embarrassing for two reasons. First, it was on my chin and grew into large brown scabs that told the world I was diseased. Second, the treatment was equally conspicuous - gentian violet.

This stuff came in a small bottle with a dauber. It is dark purplish-blue in color and was



daubed liberally over the crusts and surrounding skin to ensure complete coverage. The treatment was even more conspicuous than the lesion.

These infections were painful like any bacterial infection. The original blistering spot crusted over and formed hard thick scabs. When they were bumped, they broke in half, tearing the skin a bit and bleeding a lot. Mom gave me orders to leave the scabs alone because that lengthened the amount of time needed for them to heal, but that was impossible. There is some fatal attraction to pick scabs from any source, impetigo or mosquito bites. The traitorous evidence spoke for itself when I got home from school, bright red weeping blemishes. I listened silently and impatiently while she gave another lecture and painted the things with gentian violet again.

Antibiotics would have solved the problem. They are probably the most commonly administered drugs today. Gentian violet was the most available chemical to treat the bacterial infection. The first anti-bacterial medicine that came into existence in the 1940's was the miracle drug sulfa. When that became available it was widely prescribed and we took it many times but for other reasons. Penicillin came along in the 1950's. The sulfa we took was in the form of what seemed like enormous large, blocky pills that we had a hard time swallowing. They had an odd sweetish taste that was offensive and they hurt when going down because they had square sides.

Little kids are not famous for being nice to each other. When you appear with large scabs on your chin you are ridiculed, and when they are covered with purple dye, you really stand out as a topic of conversation. You felt like a leper so when the Sunday school teacher talked about how lepers were shunned, you had a real good idea of how it felt. That may have been a good thing.

Ring worm was another common malady of the scalp. It is caused by a fungus rather than a bacteria and usually showed up on the scalp. It was spread by sharing combs or skin to skin contact. It was another embarrassing thing to have because it appeared as circles of yellowish skin that lost the hair. Little kids would comment about it and since they were taught to avoid the infected person, were at liberty to demonstrate their aversion. I had this once or twice and don't recall that it



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hurt. There was just a funny looking spot in the hair, but no pain. The pain comes from the treatment that other kids give you. I don't remember what the treatment was.

## Lifesavers

These were the neatest candy in the world. Little round wheels with holes in the center.

Wrapped seductively in tubes of waxed paper like the kind mom used in the kitchen. The wrapper was printed with colored bands suggesting the contents. A heavy waxed string on one end provided access to the package when you pulled it hard to tear open the wax paper inner tube. The string was heavily waxed so flakes of wax broke off as you pulled it. After the end was open, you tore the paper in spirals as you ate further down into the tube. Such delicious colors and tastes. The colors were as enticing as the flavors for some reason. Colors have always been fascinating.

This image appeared for years and always fascinated me. Flavors, colors and circles dripping out of fruit. That ended up in these neat tightly wrapped tubes.

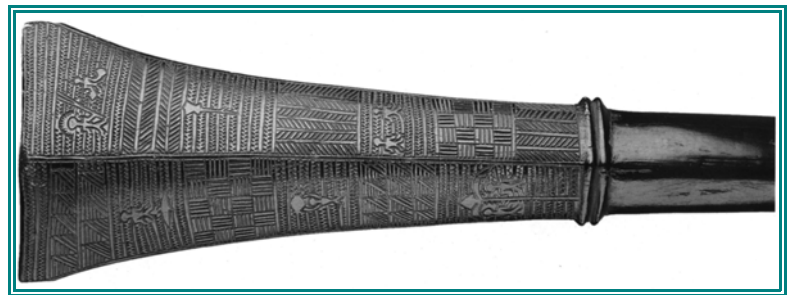


Joe O'Leary came to visit dad around 1950. I don't know where he was living at the time but regardless, he spent about a week with us. I can tell from Mom's words that he was not a welcome visitor. I will tell you more about this in the

Afterword. This was the first time I met him and I was uncomfortable with him, as I was with any new adults. But he was a sort of quiet man who watched what was going on around him and didn't take pleasure in giving kids a hard time. He probably wasn't interested in kids at all, but at least he wasn't unkind. Note how that is one of the first things I comment on about adults - how they treated kids, i.e. how they treated me. Was it that way for you when you were a kid, i.e. did you note first and foremost whether a new adult was nice or mean?

Dad was working while Joe was in town so Joe was on his own during the days and kept himself busy. For various reasons that I learned later from mom, she did not like Joe. For good reason it seems, and not simply because he wished to have coffee in the house, a thing that she eschewed. Whatever that means. I don't know what he did when alone during the day while dad was at work, but in the evening he and dad spent a lot of time reminiscing and looking at stuff dad had brought home from Hawaii, the fish casts, the bottles filled with creatures, the Tahitian war club, spear gun and so on. Remember that dad only left Hawaii about 3 years earlier, so they still had a lot in common and recent experiences to rehash.

This is a Tongan, rather than Tahitian, war club but it gives you an idea of the ornate character of the club. The pattern is dense, carved skillfully by artists who had the tools and the experience to set the pattern into hard dense wood. Dad's club is more cylindrical and is still at 2821 N. His was carved out of a black wood like ebony that is highly polished. It was used to crack skulls.



The item they talked about that impressed me the most must have been something Joe brought with him because I don't remember that dad had one. It was a mammoth tooth. These things are about 10-12 inches long, 4-5 inches wide and must weigh 8 or 10 pounds. Its size is what impressed me the most, just having gotten to the age when teeth come out. My own were minuscule compared to this giant, which made it easy to understand that the creature that wore the tooth was also enormous.

Note the "bars" across the tooth. Those are stripes of dentin which is harder than the other portion of the tooth so don't wear down as fast when the animal is grinding its forage. This is the only kind of tooth the creature had. These bars were familiar because they are essentially the same as those that I saw on the teeth of horses and cows that I dug out of the pile of bones on the other side of our east fence. The other peculiar thing about these teeth is that unlike our own teeth, they grow throughout the life of the animal. That was essential because the animals ground a lot of dirt and debris with the plant materials which ground the teeth down. The manner of replacement was to grow from the back end forward the front.



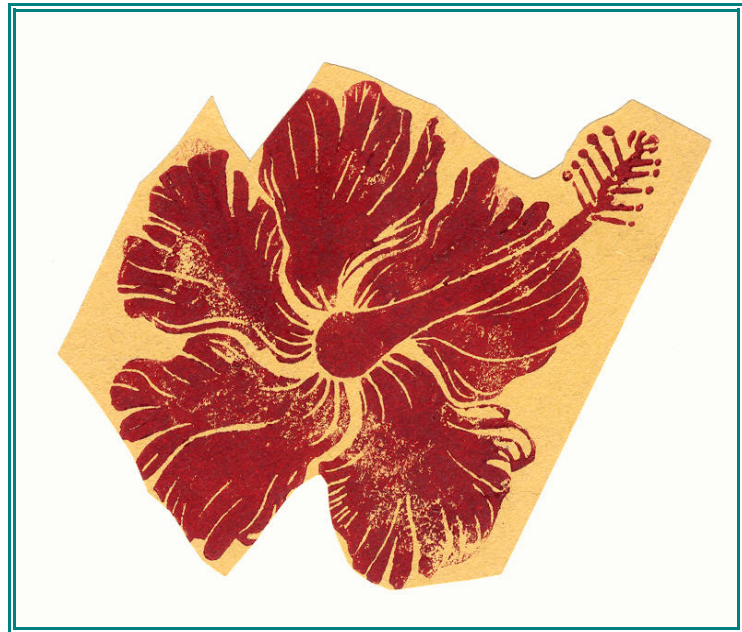
Figure 233

This allowed the thinner portion -the left end in the photo- to drop out one day. Ingenious way to deal with the gritty food and the need to refresh teeth.

Joe always had a great interest in Indian things, any kind of anthropological thing. So he and dad probably went out to the Ouray Reservation which is was the closest reservation to Vernal. That may have been when I went to the reservation. I have a vivid memory -that I verified with mom last week- of going out there one afternoon. At the time she and I talked, I didn't remember why we went but it must have been to take Joe because there was no other reason to go out there. The homes were not like mine. They were wooden structures that were rounded on the top. The doors were surprising because they were rawhide skins nailed on the lintel. You lifted the hide or pushed it to the side to go in.

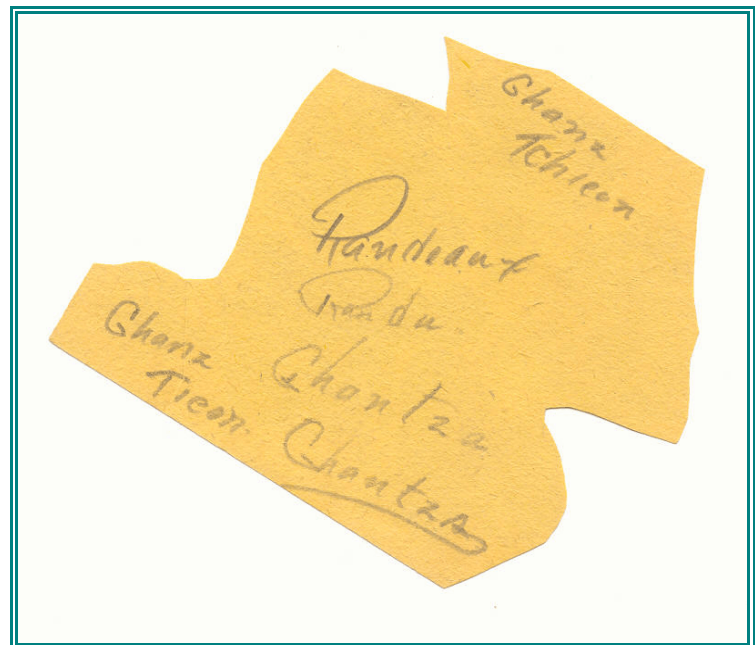
Joe was an artist like dad so they talked about painting and drawing. Dad had been doing some work with linoleum block prints and so they looked at the blocks and the prints. His favorite topic was flowers. For most of his life. The last painting he did is a tiger lily, hanging in my kitchen. It took some talking to convince him to let me have it.

While I was scouring through the stuff I have around here a few months ago, I found an envelope that was filled with "designs" that I had clipped for dad. I cut those things out of scraps of paper while he was in Seward waiting for us to come up. Amongst that bunch of stuff was this proof he made of one of his blocks. I apparently found this in the trash so took the freedom of cutting the thing out, though I can't imagine why I chose to make this shape. To cut a "V" between the two top and the two bottom petals but not between the two left petals strikes me as odd, sort of inconsistent. But kids do what kids do.



Here's the back side of the proof. The name "Ghana" stands out at the top, suggesting that dad had been reading a National Geographic recently. The name in the middle, "Randeaux", appears to be a test to see how my name looked in French spelling. The other names I don't know what they are. He was a dreamer.

Joe was a constant in dad's life. He was one of the few friends that dad had. Joe, Bud Hegessy and Art Schafermeyer are the only men I know who meant something to dad. He didn't have much contact with any of them, but there were part of his universe, part of the frame of reference within which he lived his feverish life. He





knew that anytime he wanted to get in touch with one of them, all he had to do was phone or write and they would be right there. They always were. Dad and Joe exchanged letters occasionally, i.e. every year or so, which surprised me because dad didn't keep in touch with even Bud. Joe's letters -and packages- usually had some specific anthropological or artistic thing to share. For example, Joe built a Plain's Indian peace pipe from scratch, using soap stone for the bowl, and just sent it as a gift to dad. I want it. Dad even went to the Florida Keys to visit Joe one summer at his home where he retired, a measure of their friendship. Dad got Joe got a job as a preparator at MCZ so we knew him in Boston. He invited us to his place for Sunday dinner. He had some interesting new items from Africa and when I asked him about the crusted grimy surface of one item, he shook his head and muttered that I didn't want to know about it because it had to do with human sacrifice. Of course, I was instantly fascinated by it but he would not talk about it. Stinker.



**A** farm on Vernal doesn't seem a likely place to learn much about science other than agriculture, nor much about art. But it was rich in both. Thanks to dad whose interests were supported by mom. I make this point, not simply to provide the facts, but to make a major point:

**All of my avocations stem from these fertile rich years where dad was doing what he did naturally, exploring and experimenting, being generally busy all the time without trying. The stuff rubbing off on me like pollen.**

There is nothing I have tried to do that he didn't presage. I see his footprints in every new room I enter.

Mom provided the manners. Manners were mandatory. If you forgot to say "please" or "thank you", there was a sharp reprimand with a frown. Then the dang thing you wanted was withheld, held up in the air until you said the magic words. And if you were surly about saying the 'please', guess what. You didn't get the thing at all. Every time. Every time, so whether or not you felt like saying either word, you knew you better make the effort, and 'nicely', because the consequence would cost you more. That was so frustrating. To be under such total control. It felt like humiliation was the point of the drill.

Manners extended to how you eat and what you eat with. I don't know how widespread on farms, if at all, mom's concern about manners extended. But manners

were a big deal in that little house. By the time I was eight years old, I could set the table with a salad fork, a meat fork, a cocktail fork, a knife, a soup spoon, a desert spoon and a butter knife. With a butter plate, a main plate, a dessert plate and a cocktail goblet. On a farm. Mom and dad even bought some silver plate specifically to have the equipment necessary for this sort of dinner. And a set of cheap cut glass goblets, cocktail glasses and so on. I don't know today how much of it was just a need to "put on the dog" and how much was a genuine love of these things. But that love persisted in mom through the years. You've seen her closet filled with these sorts of things? Some of them stem -haha- from these years.

The only memory I have of mom and dad actually entertaining formally in Vernal centers on the large round dining room table. Covered with a starched ironed white table cloth. Us kids had to go to bed early to be out of the way so we did not even see mom set the table with the things she did. Nor did we get to see the guests who obviously had a great time. We were locked into our bedroom and heard the loud laughing friends come because they walked right past our door to the front entrance, creaking on the porch flooring. We could tell that they had a great time the next morning.

We went into the dining room while mom and dad were still in bed and saw the table. Such a decadent rich-looking scene for our little farm house. The dinner party must have gone late because the table had not been cleared, unusual for mom. The dessert course was still on the table with left overs of cake and ice cream in the bowls, goblets and dishes. It was obvious that adults had even played with their food because things were mixed together that otherwise would not have been. Cloth napkins lay on the table or chairs or even in the dishes. Crumbs were everywhere and I was amazed that my folks would entertain this lavishly and that they would allow the bad behaviors that were manifested in the party debris. And I was jealous that I missed it.

Science was part of my life from as far back as I remember. The largest area of science was obviously paleontology and he had specimens around the house or stored in boxes in the grainery. We went out east of Vernal and collected gastroliths, small rocks ingested by certain dinosaurs to aid in digestion, much as chicken ingest pebbles that are used in the gullet to grind up food. Trips out into the desert to hunt rabbits or picnic were fairly regular and everywhere we went dad talked about the stratigraphy and rocks we found. It was sort of a competition to find the most interesting rock to show him because it focused his attention on us for a period of time. His love of plants and his year in Hawaii was abundantly present. In the form of information he had collected, such as a knowledge of plant taxonomy. In the form of pastels he painted of tropical flowers like hibiscus. Or linoleum

blocks he made of orchids that he used to print dresses that mom sewed and sold.

One of the most intriguing things in his collections were dark amber colored bottles of specimens he had collected in Hawaii, crabs and insects. He didn't look at them often which probably heightened their fascination. He also had plaster casts he had made in the islands for a dozen or so fish. Which he had painted with the natural colors, extraordinary creatures for farm kids who only knew catfish, suckers and trout.

Art showed up in the ways just noted. Painting, sculpting, drawing,



The religious culture of the community didn't include coffee on its list of things that were acceptable to drink. But it was abundantly present. And interesting. I loved the smell of Nora's coffee pot, as it sat perking on her stove, water boiling up in spurts through a tube into a glass stopper in the lid, falling through a basket filled with the dark grounds. The acceptable substitute for coffee was Postum. Mom and dad drank it sometimes, though I don't remember it being a daily routine. Struck me as a bit odd to substitute something for another that was denied. If it isn't acceptable to drink the one, then why try to produce an imitation of the thing.

We obviously got to drink the stuff and it was generally too strong for us. One time I refused to finish a cup of Postum at breakfast. So guess what. I

Figure 236

<http://www.old-time.com/commercials/postum.htm>

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got to just sit at the table until I did finish drinking it. About gagged on it but that would have evoked an even worse punishment.

This ad impressed me. I wasn't quite sure what "coffee nerves" were but this creep sort of looked like a guy who could make problems for mom. We certainly weren't the cause of her 'nerves.' Drinking Postum didn't seem to solve the problem. These two kids look like Dick and me and the mom is doing what mom did. Even down to the striped shirts and short hair. There we were. And there she was. Yep. That about says it all.



As I've worked with this volume and tried to relive this history from the point of view of my inner child, as opposed to my adult mind, it has become evident to me that the time that dad worked in LT Payton's machine shop is the time when I formed my definitive image of "my dad", when I decided for my inner person what my dad was and who he was. Forever after. I can tell that I hit pay dirt in this section, that the man I loved the most is here. It turns out that he was a machinist and a welder. First and foremost. He was a machinist and welder and that is how I view him today, as odd as that may seem to you who only knew him as "Dinosaur Jim." True, he was an accomplished artist, and inventor and sculptor and so on, but to my inner child those are simply the things that he did, not what he was. It is as if a man who was truly a carpenter took up plumbing or teaching, while he remained at bottom, a carpenter. So it is for me and my dad. He was a machinist and welder. Above all else.

LT Payton's shop captures the whole man, so I am going to spend more time in this sub-chapter than most others in UBW. Because I want you to be able to experience some of the same feelings and thoughts and understandings I experienced. As a 6 year old. Remember that. I was 6 and I was 7 and I was 8, so my world view of James Alvin was as narrow as that of any other kid that age. But more importantly, the world view of James Alvin that formed while I was that age is the definitive experience for me of him. Period. Others will view him differently and they will be right -for them- but not for me. You know what it's like to be a six year old. Go back there.

The fact that James A was a stevedore does count for something. The fact that he became one of the most widely internationally known paleontologists of the century counts for something. The fact that he was an artist, sculpture, inventor, musician, singer, etc. all count for something.

But not much.

He was MY dad, first and foremost. And my dad was a machinist and welder,

thank you very much. Now we'll go on. Leave it alone now. You have my view.

So we're going to go to Payton's machine shop now and wander around, seeing and experiencing and smelling what I saw, experienced and smelled. Please regress yourself to your own 6<sup>th</sup> year and go with me. Be 4 feet tall, looking up at large machines, hearing odd sounds, wondering and being frightened and impressed. This is my dad's world, the one where he was most at home, most creative, burning with an intensity and focus that I thought was natural for any dad/man. Turns out it isn't.

Machine shops are unique amongst industrial establishments. At least in my experience. They are filled with a multitude of machines that are used to produce 'things' out of hard shiny metal, according to blueprints handed to the machinists, highly skilled men and women who invest a great deal of themselves in becoming qualified to deal with substances that are so hard and difficult to manipulate, all of whom exhibit a degree of intensity and creativity that few trades encompass.

LT Payton's shop sat on the east end of Vernal's main street and was probably typical of machine shops. It was a huge cavernous place without a ceiling, just a high curved roof, uninsulated, with large doors on either end. It looked like an airplane hanger. The front doors were large enough for trucks to get inside and the back doors were large enough to allow large stock in to be set up in lathes or the other devices for manipulating and shaping metal. In the process, smells are produced that can only be produced by the techniques employed in such shops. The floor was of cement and had a coating of paint, smooth but not decorated with linoleum or tiles. The whole shop seemed to have a patina or dirty grease and oil which is not surprising under the circumstances. Nothing was shiny though the place was sufficiently clean to properly do its work. Except for the threads of a newly-machined tool or the sheen of a highly polished shaft. Those things were immaculate, but the setting in which they were produced was not. Indeed, one wonders how such brilliantly shining things were created in such a disheveled, dirty appearing setting.

"Waste", "sweeping compound" and "push brooms" were introduced to me in Payton's shop. "Waste" is difficult to describe. It is compounded of what looked like a mass of heavy threads and small balls of cotton and other colored clumps of fiber. It came in gunny sacks and was used to wipe up spills, to clean off finished products, and clean up the equipment like the lathes, drill presses, grinders, and arbor presses. You would just reach into the sack, grab a hank of the stuff and pull and tear it out of the mass. After it had been used to clean up whatever you were cleaning up, you threw it into the trash where it was eventually burned or taken to the city dump.

"Sweeping compound" was a novel idea: when you have a dirty floor dirty, throw

some more stuff on it. Stuff that is absorbable. Then sweep the whole mess up. That's about all I really understood but I didn't speak my confusion too much, just held it inside. What I was missing was the fact that this fine sawdust that came in cardboard containers was lightly impregnated with oil. That meant that when the sawdust was sprinkled onto a dusty floor, the dust would stick to the oily sawdust so that when the sawdust was swept up, so was the dust. I didn't get that part, just that the dirty floor was made more dirty on purpose. I wouldn't dare try that at home. Seemed to me that it was just making more work for the sweeper who in this setting was using a large heavy broom. Push brooms with wide heads and long stiff bristles were also pretty new to me though I had doubtless seen them in service stations and the local market. But I hadn't been able to play with the thing to see how it moved. If you pushed it, it moved smoothly across the floor, but if you pulled it back toward you, it skipped and jumped, another of those surprises that filled my life. Why would it go smoothly but balk at coming? The idea that the bristles were bent in one direction didn't occur to me which is too bad because that explains this phenomenon.

Payton's shop had various kinds of massive tools that were used to create out of metal whatever the customer ordered. Giant lathes set in the back, small bench grinders along the sides of the space, a large manifold for acetylene and oxygen was arrayed around the shop, surface grinders, drill presses and so on were bolted to the floor for the machinists like dad to use for whatever they needed to use them for.

Of all of the possession owned by my father during his life, I think that his dirty grease-stained oak tool box is my most prized. It captures the essence of this brilliant creative man. I own it, as noted elsewhere, and I am going to take you on a tour of some of the tools from that tool box -most of which I don't even know what they are for- and of some of the stationary tools he used in LT Payton's machine shop. Read this section about LT Payton's Machine Shop carefully, please, because you will get one of the best insights you will ever have into James A. Keep these images in your mind as you remember him and think of what he accomplished. This section explains a great deal about him.

In addition to the large stationary tools stationed in a machine shop, each machinist had to have his own tool box of small hand tools that were necessary to perform his job. You have never seen such an array of bizarre, arcane tools as are found in a machinist's tool box - unless you go into a chemist's lab.

I don't have room to show you all of the different kinds of tools in that tool box. There must be 400 so I am just giving you a sample of some of the kinds to



They are called "micrometers" and they are designed to measure things down a thousandth of an inch. That's less than a third the thickness of a hair. Ultra fine measuring is done with these devices. I mention elsewhere how devilishly difficult it is to actually do the measuring because what feels "right" to an untrained hand is "wrong" according to how things fit. Did you realize that for some things to "fit" together properly they have to be forced together with an arbor press?

This is a small arbor press which gives you an idea of how much force is used to "fit" some things together, e.g. the inner and outer races of a set ball bearings. Lots of force and this is only a tiny arbor press.

To use a micrometer, you place the thing to be measured inside of the "C" shape. Then you turn the wide barrel, i.e. handle, to move the stem up against the item so that it is captured between the stem and the anvil on the opposite side. As the thing is being snugged into place with the wide barrel pressure builds up as it gets tighter. Inside of the wide barrel is a carefully machined set of gears that are designed to pop loose at a preset pressure. That's how 'torque wrenches' work. At that point the large barrel just spins freely without tightening the thing. As that point, the measurement can be read off the barrel - if you know how to read the arcane numbers. In the larger micrometer, however, you still have another step to take. You take hold of the tiny knurled shaft that is sticking out the bottom end of the barrel and turn it until it clicks loose like the wide barrel did. At that point you read off the measurement from the barrel. Sounds easy, but it ain't.



The next device in the plate has a magnifying lense. I don't know what he placed it on to keep it in place while he inspected threads or whatever he inspected, but this lense gave his eyes the ability to ascertain whether there were defects that had to be seen in order that the finished product would meet the specifications on a blueprint.

I don't even know what the top right device is. It has a barrel like a micrometer so I suspect it is a specie of micrometer but one that is placed inside of a pipe to measure its width. Got a better idea? The odd comb-like tool is a gauge that was used to measure the outside diameter of things that needed to be measured. Notice the range of diameters. Even the teeth on the left have ultra-small diameters for measuring small wire-like things.

In the next plate there are three tools. I don't even have a clue what they

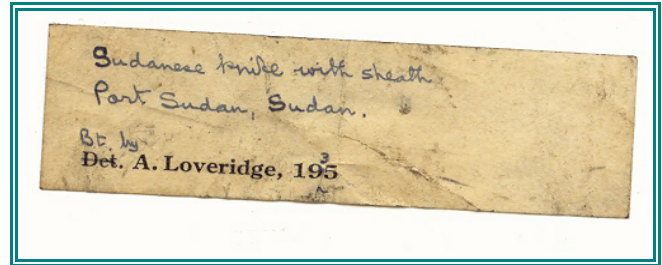






had to grind it on a fine-grained grinding wheel to match the specifications of the blue print. The metal that these dies are made out of is extraordinarily hard, being formed of Carborundum, a mixture of metals and carbide, so that they were hard enough to cut other metals. After the bit was completed, it was clamped into a special device on the lathe after which the lathe was set up to turn at the rate specified and to advance as necessary to create threads or remove metal.

This curious piece of oil paper from his tool chest has a notation "Sudanese knife with Sheath. Port Sudan, Sudan" with the name "A. Loveridge 195" corrected to "1935". I have no idea where the knife is or even if he bought it, but the fact that the label is in the tool box suggests he did.



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The sort of thing he'd spend his money on. He was interested in knives as the collection of knives he personally machined proves.

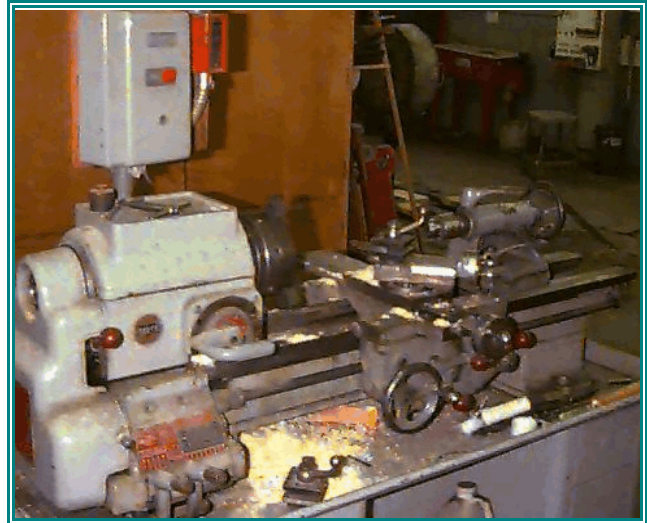


In this set of tools there is an identification plate that he made and left in his tool box for some reason. There is a straight razor but I don't know whether he used it in some metal-shaping process or whether it was just his personal barbering tool. The long white flat stick is soapstone. It is used like a pencil or chalk to mark metal because it is not affected as quickly by heat as chalk or crayons.



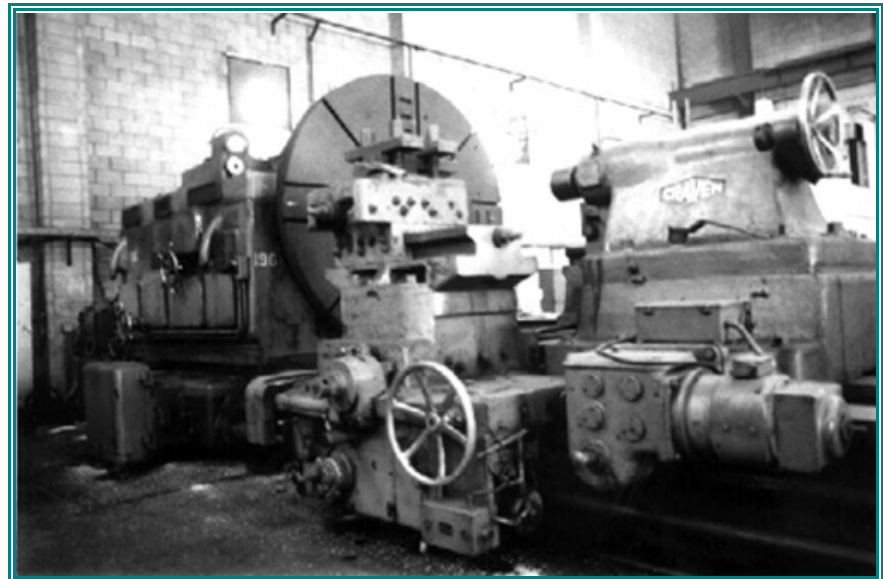


Here's a photo that I put in with some reservation because it fails to give you a sense of the size of the lathe that dad used. It's pretty substantial compared to a lathe used to turn wood, but it's a baby compared to the real deal. You may think that my memory is flawed -and that would be right- but I can tell by size of the chuck, the dark round wheel on the right end of the light gray housing that this is a baby compared to what dad used. This probably wouldn't handle more than a 3-4 inch piece of stock while dad's lathe stood 6 feet high and handled much larger material.



This does give you an idea of what the parts of a lathe look like. And what a machine shop is like. Messy and unpainted. What's missing is the smell. A rich mixture of things.

Ah ha, here's a photo that give you a better idea of what the lathe was like that dad worked on in Payton's shop. This is even the same vintage as the ones he used, being a 1942 Craven. With all sorts of gizmos, handles and things. The large "wheel" on the left is the one that has the chuck, i.e. the circular clamp, that secured the stock so that it could be machined. It determined what diameter stock could be machined, and since



weight went up with size, the entire lathe had to be larger to handle the load. There is something in this photo in front of the center of the chuck so you can't see the actual chuck but you get the idea of how large it is, particularly when you compare it to the small gray chuck in the preceding image. This is where the big boys worked while the preceding one is for small work around an auto shop or a machine shop that did small jobs. This guy was ready to take on anything. The major difference in the layout of dad's shop and the one in this photo is that in this one there is a solid wall behind the lathe. That shows that most of the jobs were worked between the chuck and spindle on the right, jobs that required long lengths of metal to be turned. In dad's case, the oil drilling pipes were 20 feet long and he only worked on the ends, so there was a doorway behind the lathe that allowed him to pull the long pipes through the back end of the lathe up through the chuck where he'd set up and work on it.

The largest stock I remember dad working on came from the oil fields in Rangeley Colorado. I don't know which oil company was exploring the region but the closest machine shop to Rangeley was Payton's machine shop, so he had a steady stream of work in the years the oil exploration went on.. A drilling rig consists of a derrick, a tall framework that sits over the hole. This derrick is the structure within which the drilling machinery operates. It's sort of the exoskeleton of the beast.

Lengths of heavy steel pipe are fitted together with a special grinding bit on the bottom end to drill down into the earth for oil. As the bit digs deeper, the length of steel pipe has to be extended in order to push the bit even further. This length of pipe with a bit is called the "drill string" and it is the central part of the drilling rig.

Here's a shot of the drill bit on the end of the drill string that has been pulled up out of the hole and suspended in the derrick. Problems with the drill string meant that the oil company's investment was sitting still, i.e. being wasted. So maintenance of the drill string was the number one priority at the oil field. Drill bits always wear out which means they have to be replaced which is a major project. The drill string has to be pulled completely up out of the ground so that the bit can be removed and replaced. Imagine the sequence. Imagine that the drill string is a mile long and consists of pipes that are 20



feet long. To get the string out of the ground so that you can get at the business end to change the worn bit, the whole string has to be pulled up out of the ground. The only way to do it is to elevate the string 20 feet, after which the top section of pipe is unscrewed and set aside, then the string is pulled up another 20 feet, that pipe removed and so on until the bit is exposed at which time it is removed, replaced and the string is let back down in the hole 20 feet at a time while pipes are reattached.

The men who do this work are termed "rough necks" and it is tough work. There is a great deal of pressure on them when they are removing the drill string to replace the bit. Bosses are irritable and anxious that this be done as quickly as possible because the hole is not being extended during the entire time it takes the pull up and reset the drill string. In addition to the pressure to get the job done quickly, there is a great deal of mud and debris that make the handling of the pipes difficult so some of the pipe threads are dinged up badly enough that they cannot be used. In that case those sections of pipe were sent to Payton's shop. Where my dad re-machined the threads so they could be sent back out to the field.

The pipes were hauled out to the south side of the machine shop where there were openings into the shop. The pipes were driven up close to the shop where an overhead crane was moved out and over them so that dad could hook on to one of them at a time. This

overhead crane was a chain hoist like the one being used by women machinists in WW II. See the chain hanging down from overhead, and the large hook between the women? The hook was how a thing was secured to the overhead hoist. Then the chain was pulled to raise or lower whatever it was hooked to.

After getting the pipe elevated from the ground or truck, he would then pull the hoist laterally along the overhead way





which obviously moved the pipe in that same direction. He moved the pipe closer and closer to his lathe and carefully inserted its end into the back end of his lathe. As he moved the pipe far enough with the overhead crane, it moved far enough into the lathe that he could then secure the pipe in the chuck and proceed to do the repair designated for that length of pipe.

He'd tighten the pipe in place by individually tightening three clamps that were spaced equidistant around the circumference of the chuck and do the same thing at the end stock to hold the piece securely when the lathe rotated it. He'd check the specifications he was to work to and pick the die, like those shown in the plates above, to cut new threads-or re-thread old threads. He examined the die to see if it was sharp enough and of the right shape and if not, then he'd take it over to a large grinding wheel bolted to a wooden bench.

He'd throw a protective hood over his head, fire up the wheel which had a starting coil to get the thing turning, imparting a low growl until it disengaged and the motor sang at its high speed. When it was at speed, he carefully ground down and reshape the tool. This produced gorgeous rooster tails of hot sparks that flew a yard in the air, that burned if you stuck your hand into the spray. The grinding produced so much heat in the piece being ground that had to be dissipated lest the piece be deformed. This was done by dipping the tool frequently into a can of dust-covered water that was sitting by the grinding wheel for that purpose. There was a hissing boiling sound each time he did that. After he had the shape and size he wanted, he'd take a smooth stone like a whet stone to remove any burr that would affect the cutting ability of the tool.



When the die was correct, he'd set it into the lathe, and tighten it into place with a wrench. Then he'd turn a little handle that moved the bit up against the metal, and another handle to move it to the right or left. Then he'd adjust the rotation speed of the chuck and the depth of the cut, the rate of speed at which the tool advanced along the ways, and turn it on, concentrating hard. At this point us kids could get away with more exploring and foolishness than otherwise because his mind would be riveted to the joint where the bit was cutting the steel.

One of the things that fascinated me about turning metal stock was the drip

of emulsion oil that he used. The emulsion was milky creamy colored and was slightly viscous. It smelled like oil but had the consistency of water which puzzled me. There was a narrow goose neck attached to the lather that he would pull down over the bit when he was ready to start. It was connected to a reservoir of emulsion that served two purposes. First, it reduced the heat that was produced when a Carborundum bit cuts into metal stock. Second, it acted like a cutting oil the make the bit cut better, and since it, too was protected from the heat, its edge lasted longer. To get these benefits, dad would turn a small valve to adjust the trickle of emulsion directly onto the bit and pipe. This oil flowed over the work piece and was collected in the bottom of the work area of the lathe and drained off into a bucket. If the work was really hot, it would produce some steam and a smell that is found only in a machine shop.

At the same time, the die is removing a narrow strip of metal that comes off in a spiral, sort of like a spring, except that this spring is composed of a brittle metal that crystalized in the process. It is extremely hot right when it comes off so can't be handled for a while. We played with the coils that were lying on the floor under the lathe after they were cold. We usually cut our hands when we played with these springs that were different thicknesses and diameters, depending on the size of the stock in the lathe, the die being used and the speed of rotation.



**I**n addition to being a machinist, dad was a skilled welder. It was a natural thing for him to

express his artistic creative side through metal. The world of welding is actually more complicated than understood by most people. The man in the street thinks, "Welding. Oh yes, that's just sort of joining two pieces of metal together with heat." While that definition isn't wrong, it is inadequate because welding processes can be divided into two large groups, one of which is left out of the definition. The groupings might be named "joining processes" and "dividing processes." Welding can be also sub-divided into the type of technology used, electrical or gasses. Then gasses are divided into oxy-acetylene, heliox, etc., the names of the gas combinations used to weld. The different mixtures are used in different situations, depending on the metals being welded. For example, aluminum metal can only be successfully joined with heliox mixture -or spot welded with electricity- because oxy-acetylene torches burn too hot and simply melt the device into a pool of molten metal.

Dad did two kinds of welding. He was an arc welder and he used oxy-acetylene torches. Arc welding is used to join pieces with electricity while oxy-acetylene torches with intense flames can be used to either join pieces through the

process of 'brazing" or to cut metal apart.

Arc welding is the welding you observe when a steel framework for an office building is being erected. You've seen an intense bluish-white flame created by a man leaning closely to the metal girders, wearing an odd hood over his head. Saying that brings tears to my eyes. That is what my dad did and I admired him doing it, Vulcan himself couldn't have impressed me more. I was jointly frightened and impressed at the danger and power of arc welding. My dad did it. He wore his hood and bent over the diabolical stuff without fear rendered a new rigid metal thing.

The basic process of arc welding is simple. First, you get the two pieces of metal that you want to join, and you carefully line them up where you want them to be in relationship to each other. Then you clamp them together with C-clamps or whatever kind of clamp is needed to hold the pieces steady so they don't pull apart before they can be welded. Then you hang a steel hook on the end of a heavy cable to one of the pieces of metal. This cable comes out of the welder and is called the "ground". Then you take the other cable that is also connected to the welder and hold it to the pieces to be welded to be sure you have enough cable.

When the welder is turned on, an electrical current flows through the handpiece and jumps across the tiny space into the metal that has the ground attached to it. As the current flows across this short space, it creates that brilliant flame that can literally destroy your retinas in an instant if you look at it without any protection over your eyes. The cardinal rule for anyone around arc welders is "Never look into the arc without protection"

That tiny flame created by the flow of current across a narrow space is called an "arc", hence the name "arc welding". But something else is needed for the open joint between the metal pieces to be filled in. The way this is done is simple. A long skinny rod of metal -called an electrode- that is 12-14 inches long is clamped into the handpiece so it is an extension of the handpiece. When the tip of this rod is held down to the grounded metal pieces, the arc created by electricity flowing across the space melts the of the rod. The rod melts and the molten metal flows into the open joint between the metals and is immediately cooled off and hardens in place. The welder simply moves the rod of metal slowly





worked like one of those clothe spins that you squeeze to open. He'd check the settings on the welder to be sure that he had the right heat for the work he was doing. Then he'd get the right electrodes, half a dozen of them, fitting one into the handpiece and lay it down by the piece that was to be welded. This was a slow methodical process, done a step at a time to ensure the success of his work, an excellent model of how one should do things. He didn't preach or lecture or teach. He simply did what he did, and by itself constituted the most effective form of teaching there is - by example, without preaching.

About this time, he'd put on leather gloves that extended part-way up his arms or he'd put on a full body coverall. Finally he crowned himself by putting on a welding shield. I was in awe. He was covered entirely in black, except for his face at that moment. The shield made of a light metal had a glass window that he looked through to see his work. Its shape and size was designed to protect the skin of his head and neck from the intense radiation that would burn him otherwise. More than once he came home with what looked like sunburns over the front of his neck when he welded a small joint without protection. But he always wore this shield. It was constructed on an adjustable head band that had joints on each side that allowed the welder to raise and lower it by twitching his head forward or backward.





a sharp nod which made the shield fall down. Over his face. There he was, Vulcan. He'd experimentally touch the electrode to the joint to get a jolt of light to be sure he was in the right place because the view window is so dark that you can not really see anything unless there is an arc operating. Then he'd settle in to weld.

Head bent forward in the shield, hanging over the welding field, sparks roaring flashing and splashing, intently deliberately slowly moving the electrode across the joint to close it. It was so exciting and terrifying to stand there hearing the roar of the arc that could kill in an instant, or blind in less. The whole shop lighting up with the brilliant blue flickering lightening from this arc that he was controlling. All eyes averted from this tremendous act of creation. I feared the light would enter through the back of my head as I stood with my back turned to the fearsome arc.

As the tip of the electrode melted, it formed a puddle of liquid metal that filled the space that needed to be filled, the point of the process. As this melting occurred, the electrode became shorter so dad had to keep moving the hand holding the electrode down closer to the work at the same time he was moving it forward, being careful to not allow the electrode to actually touch the work. As he welded the electrode was consumed, he'd shake out the inch long butt, quickly lift his hood to see what he was doing, grab and insert a new electrode into the handpiece, position it over the work piece, flip his hood back down and proceed. On the floor a small collection of these stub ends would collect, something else to play with. After they had cooled.

If it touched the electrode to the piece, he had a little emergency. He had to get it free. To leave it in place with the handpiece and ground basically connected to each other was to risk a meltdown of the arc welder. That's why it was a little emergency. The instant that happened, all bets were off about the smooth bead. Just get the dang circuit broken. He'd suddenly jerk the handpiece back and forth to get it free, all the time the welder was making a loud ominous hum it normally didn't make. If he couldn't get it free -which was unusual- he'd just open the clamp on the handpiece leaving the electrode welded in place on the work piece. That would immediately break the circuit. Then which he'd hammer or chisel the electrode off the work piece and start again.

After the bead was finished, dad would lay down the handpiece, lift his shield and examine it. The bead that is. At this point, he could determine how well the joint had been formed, whether there were irregularities, how much further treatment it needed. During the welding process, the intense heat interacts with the three melting metal pieces -the two being welded together and the electrode. This interaction which is both physical and chemical produces stuff called "slag". Slag is waste material that is composed of some oxidized metal and impurities of the

metal - though the electrode should not have impurities in it. The flux that surrounds the electrode -though it can be applied as a paste with a brush- works its magic in that instant and causes the slag to float to the surface out of the weld. This maintains the integrity of the weld and simplifies the process of removing the slag that usually accumulates during the welding process.



The first step in removing slag was to use a chip hammer designed for the welder, the most distinctive feature being the wire-wrapped handle. You can figure that one out. One end was chisel shaped and the other was a flat hammer head. He kept this hammer by him while welding because he always used it after finishing his weld. He'd use it to chip off the bubbles of slag or excess drops of metal. That allowed him to inspect the bead thoroughly to see if it was sound.

After he'd cleaned off the slag, he would grab a grinder. I loved to watch grinding metal because the abrasive wheel produced a rooster tail of lovely orangish sparks of hot metal the scattered everywhere, turning into black gritty dust on the floor. If you put your hand into the rooster tail you could actually feel the mass of the material hit you. And how hot some of them were. This grinding was usually sufficient to smooth the bead though there were methods of actually polishing it if that was called for by the application or specifications. In this photo the guy is wearing eye covers and gloves.



The most offensive smell - actually, the only offensive smell- in the machine shop came from the acetylene generator. A machine shop generally smells like hydrocarbons - greases, oils, solvents and the like. They have a jillion uses when machining and shaping metal so they are used in abundance and provide the basic smell of a shop.

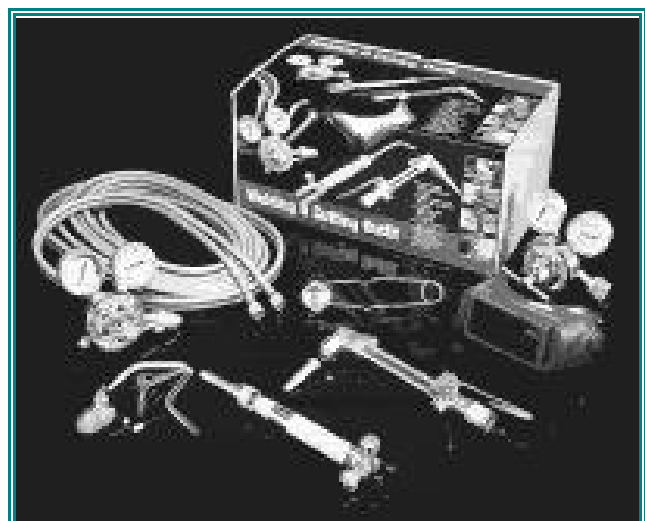
Acetylene, the gas that is mixed with oxygen in a welding hand piece to cut metal or to braze it together, has an unpleasant odor, sort of like decayed garlic.



The welder used a handpiece that was connected to two hoses, one from a cylinder of oxygen -usually a green tank- and one from a cylinder of acetylene -usually black but not always. This image shows a standard moveable acetylene torch setup. On the top of each tank is a regulator to control the pressure of gas being sent through the lines to the handpiece. I'll tell you more about this type of welding now since it is the other type that dad did throughout his life. His extraordinary ability to mount dinosaurs in ways that no other paleontologist ever dreamed of doing stemmed to a large extent from his ability to do both types of welding. His technique which has become the world standard today was the ultimate for mounting skeletons: no visible supports. The ultimate mount was the camptosaurus he put up in the Eyring Science Center lobby. It was standing on one foot, leaping into the air, without any visible metal anywhere on it. No one will refine the technique beyond that.



Oxy-acetylene welding is done with an ultra-hot flame that is created by burning a blend of oxygen and acetylene. The mixing is done in a specially designed hand-piece that is connected by hoses to sources of each gas. This image shows the elements of the setup used by a welder. The two long pieces in the bottom front of the photo are two different types of hand pieces with different nozzles. Dad used both kinds of handpieces. The one on the top is for cutting metal apart. The one on the bottom is for brazing metal together as you can tell from the two knobs on the very right end of the handpiece. Each knob controls the amount of one gas that enters into the handpiece from one of the tank.

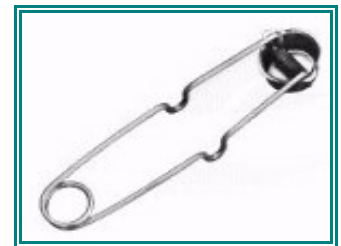


The hoses are the upper-left items in the photo, and look like a coil of rope but which is in fact a coil of tubing that consists of two different hoses manufactured together. In front of that coil of hose is an item

that has 2 round gauges with needle indicators which sit on top of a non-descript looking round part that has a tube sticking out the left of it. That non-descript part is the part that is inserted into the top of a tank of gas and secured in place with a large nut. There are actually two of these things, the other one being on the top-right of the picture. They are "pressure regulators" and the two dials tell you two things - obviously. The dial that is closer to the tank indicates how much pressure is left in the tank, which infers how much gas you have left. The other dial shows how much pressure is being fed out of the regulator into the hose that goes to the handpiece, two very different numbers sometimes.

See the odd Tee-shape handle on the left side of the regulator? That handle is used to adjust the amount of pressure coming out of the regulator for which reason this kind of two-stage regulator is properly termed a "variable pressure, pressure reducing regulator". It is necessary to step the tank pressure down to a working pressure that the handpiece can handle. A full oxygen tank has 2,200 PSI of pressure which would just explode the handpiece and hose the gas were applied directly to the hose. After a regulator is fitted onto a tank, the wheel valve on the top is opened fully and pressure is adjusted by the regulator, not by this valve.

One end of each hose is connected to a regulator and the other end is hooked to the handpiece. When the welder is ready to fire up his torch, he makes sure both tank valves are wide open and adjusts the pressure coming out of each regulator to his handpiece. Then he uses the small valves on the handpiece to carefully allow some of each gas to enter into the handpiece. At that point you hear a quiet hiss as the gasses flow out of the nozzle. The welder then uses his "welder's match" or lighter to ignite the gas mixture. It usually ignites with a sort of roar and the flame is always improper, smoky and yellow.



After the torch is lighted, the welder then fine-tunes the flow of gasses into the handpiece to adjust the flame. He does this with the small knobs on the handpiece while he looks at the flame and listens to it. The sound of a flame coming out of a torch is almost as diagnostic and the shape and color of the flame. There are two basic types of flames, oxydizing and carburizing and each has specific applications in welding. The two types of flames are distinctive and easy to identify. The welder knows which type of flame he wants so adjusts the controls to get that kind of flame in the handpiece.

If you have looked carefully at a candle flame you have observed the same segments that a welder watches while adjusting his flame. Next to the wick -nozzle-

is a long dark oval, almost colorless. That is the coolest part of the flame and consists of unburned gasses. On top of the cool oval is the portion of the flame where the gasses are burning. In a candle the color of this part is orange-yellow because it is such a cold flame but in an acetylene flame this portion is a blue color. The center of this segment is the hottest part of the flame and is the one that the welder hold on the metal he is working with. The welder can increase the temperature of this portion by increasing the amount of oxygen introduced to burn with the acetylene and he can see the flame change shape and color as he adjusts the amount of oxygen flowing out the nozzle.

If the welder is going to be cutting metal, he will use the cutting torch that has a long handle on the top. As he adjusts the flame, he will press this handle down to see if enough additional oxygen flows through the nozzle. After he heats the metal to melting point, it will turn orange and soften. When he can tell the metal is ready, the welder presses that handle and holds it down at which point the high pressure flow of oxygen causes the molten metal to spray off in a rooster tail of ultra-hot globules of metal that will scorch your shoe leather in an instant if it lands on it. Worse, it will give you third degree burns in less than a second of contact, so in contrast the rooster tail produced on a grinder, you stay away from this rooster tail.

A machine shop like this one saved money by generating its own acetylene for use in the shop. The moveable set up shown above was also used on jobs off-site but it was considerably cheaper -after the initial capital outlay for the generator- to generate acetylene on the property. An acetylene gas system is a low pressure system operating at something like 8 PSI; for reasons I don't know, an H-tank for acetylene, in contrast to an H-tank of oxygen, is filled with a porous filler of some type that apparently does something to stabilize the gas.

The only chemicals required for the production of acetylene are calcium carbide and water. Nothing else, in about the simplest chemical process you can imagine: drop carbide chips into water and collect the acetylene gas. That is the basic process.

Obviously, there needed to be a sophisticated system to do this in safely and economically but the concept was that simple. The acetylene generator consists of a hopper for the carbide chips that is constructed over a sizeable, sealed vessel of water. The chips are dropped a few at a time into the water. As soon as the chips contact water they are chemically transformed and the major byproduct is acetylene



gas.

The generator looked something like this, though Payton's wasn't this large. The two devices above the tank are the carbide hoppers. The sealed tank is outfitted with a piping system that collects and directs the gas into the shop. This piping system had regulators at various points around the shop that can be used by anyone who needs to do some acetylene welding. During the chemical process of producing acetylene from the carbide chips, they are converted into a gray sludge that accumulates on the bottom of the tank. Periodically, the sludge must be removed out of the round cover on the bottom right of this tank. The water is also changed at the time and a new supply of fresh chips provided. Obviously, it is critical that the hopper of carbide chips be sealed so that water vapor cannot rise into them.

When welding pieces together, an oxy-acetylene uses an electrode similar to that used in arc welding, with the difference that they usually do not have the coating of flux and no electrical current flows through it. In this type of welding, the flux is usually painted onto the metal with a brush.

The heat for this welding obviously comes from the torch rather than an electrical arc. The hot metal and flame produce UV rays and infrared rays that give welder's head aches and can ruin their eyes so they wear goggles with tinted lenses. But in contrast to the arc welding flame, this one represents far less risk of injury to the retina. Goggles are still worn however.

The process of welding metal pieces together is also called 'brazing" and is comparable to arc welding. To begin, the welder must prepare and set his pieces up as in arc welding with the differences that no ground is affixed to them, and he will apply flux out of a can or tube directly onto the work piece.

Then he collects his tools, welding rods -not electrodes since no current flows through them- and



his torch setup. He gets his flame going, puts his goggles on and applies heat to the workpiece. When the metal changes to the proper color, he then sticks the end of the welding rod into the hottest part of the flame next to the work. As the rod melts, he directs the bead of molten metal onto the open joint to fill it, as in arc welding. After he has completed welding the pieces together, he checks the bead as in arc welding with a chip hammer and will grind it with a surface grinder as needed.

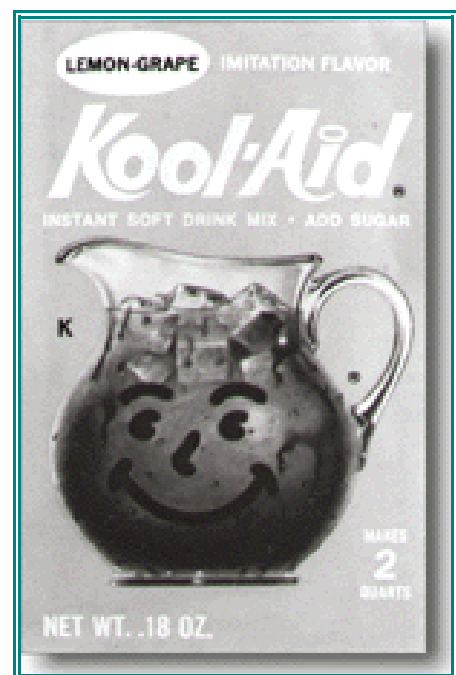
That, then, is a quick introduction into welding. Dad did that my entire life. He did it in Vernal, in Alaska, Boston and Provo. I think that he was stimulated by the notion that he could personally take the hard stuff of metal and bend and fold and shape it to his design. He seems to have experienced a heightened sense of creativity from welding and I do suspect it stemmed from the hardness of the substance. He also felt creative when he painted but I wonder if there wasn't a different feeling to him. He had a arc welder in his basement in Provo when he died.

I think you might benefit from understanding more about what a machine shop is like because it should give you some more understanding into your grandfather J. Machining metal is totally different than carpentering or concrete working. The demands created by stubborn metal require the wide range of tools shown above in samples. The hardness insists on absolute perfection in technique when a shape is being made, a hole is being created, a joint is being filled and so on. My dad loved the challenge and rose to it. As I just noted, he achieved the ultimate artistry in mounting dinosaurs when he mounted the camptosorus standing on one foot on the edge of a ledge - without a single visible support for the skeleton internally or externally. No metal showed.



I don't know when Kool Aid was created but I remember early memories of the stuff so it has

been around a while. The Kraft Food website offers this image and says it was designed in 1954 by the artists son who drew his name on the pitcher of icy kool aid. We did not buy it because it was too expensive. But cousin Tommy's mom would buy it, probably because both parents were working and making more money than my folks were. Only a



nickel for a package, that made 2 quarts but a nickel was a nickel and when you didn't have extra, then you didn't. Period. My folks were unswayed by Madison Avenue.

Tommy loved to show off when he invited us to his house to have some kool aid. He'd get permission from Mabel to make it himself, something that she probably didn't exactly approve of because there would usually be some spilled kool aid, or scattered sugar, or too much sugar used. But it was great fun to drink the commercial preparation.

We had our own special drink, however. Made with water, crepe paper, citric acid and sugar. The citric acid was a powder in a small cardboard box. We'd taste a little bit of the stuff on our finger but it was so tart that it was too strong to enjoy. We'd put some in a quart jar filled with water and coax some sugar from mom in the kitchen. We'd mix the three together well, and to get some color we'd take a piece of any color of crepe paper and stick it in the water. That leached the water-soluble dye out of the paper and into the water so we then had a colored drink. It obviously didn't have a particular flavor, but it was fun to make, and was something farm kids could do at the time.



The rain was terrible. We huddled in a small cave created by an ledge of sandstone that hung over a small cave. In the cave. Avoiding the heavy rain. Waiting for the rain fall to tend. Out there on the massive desert between us an Vernal. A long way. What if we couldn't make it back in time for dinner? Would we die?

Grandpa sat in the dryness and talked quietly about the desert. He explained to me what he had explained to the preceding generation, i.e. my dad, that Sego Lilies had saved the lives of the pioneers who entered Utah territory in 1848. They had learned from the Indians that the bulbs, the tubers, of Sego Lilies were edible and nutritious. So the starved pioneers waiting for their first crop of wheat the nurture harvested Sego Lilies for their survival. The page that was the source of this image says, "Sego lilies saved many early Mormon pioneers from starvation. The most critical period was 1840-1851 when Utah was visited with a plague of crickets which devoured crops, forcing food rationing."



So when the rain stopped, Grandpa Jensen took me out onto the flats. He pointed to the myriad mariposa sitting out there and showed me how to pull the plant so that the bulbs, some of them walnut sized, could be harvested. He showed how to rub off the dirt, and remove the outer scaly layer. Then he ate the bulb and relished it. I tried it, and they were crunchy with a nutty flavor, no bitterness, just a mild sweetness and crunchiness. The pioneers' lives were preserved by eating this miraculous plant that is as beautiful as it looks. The flower is subtle and gorgeous. The throat is a deeper color than the rest of the three petals, an arresting combination.

Out there on the desert dad took my grandfather into a cave, a place that he had relished for years and had looked forward to sharing with his father, triumphantly, revealing to the one who taught him something of priceless hidden beauty, a hidden thing that he had discovered himself. He took us with carbide lamps on our oversize helmets into a cave where there was something he savored and desired to reveal to his dad in a burst of glory. We walked and walked down steeply into this cave, deeper and deeper, going close to the core of the earth, so that dad could reveal this unspeakable glory to his dad. Finally we were there. The mystery was a column, a pillar, of ice, several feet in diameter that stretched from the floor of the cave to the ceiling. And it was cold, ice cold and I shook.

A carbide lamp produces acetylene gas, the gas used by welders, by dripping water stored in a reservoir in the top of the lamp into a hopper of dry chips of acetylene stored in the bottom of the lamp. Adjusting the rate of flow of drops of water adjusted the brightness of the lamp by varying the quantity of acetylene gas. The outflow of gas was ignited by a lighter like a welder's match.

The light from the lamps not really bright but in a dark space it was sufficient. It shimmered as the wind currents whisked the flame from side to side. Smell from the carbide like rotten eggs, hydrogen sulfide smell. I feared that the light would be extinguished by the winds blowing through the deep caves we descended into. I did not want to go. But turning around alone in the dark to find my way was a greater fear. So I held onto my companions and followed them with such fear that I look back and think



I was a hero. I must have been a hundred feet tall to follow them, given the enormous fears I felt inside of me. I remember them. I was nearly paralyzed by the cold, the everlasting darkness, the rumbling rushing noise of the deep river and the fear that the earth would collapse on us and the fear that the feeble lamps would blow out. How did I do it? How do kids do it ever?

It stretched from the floor of the cave to the ceiling, adjacent to an enormous hole in the floor of the cave. Through that hole came to roar of a subterranean river in the next chamber of the earth that rushed noisily onward to the aquifer that it fed. Such noise it made. It was terrifying. The sight of the gigantic icicle was impressive, but the terror created by the noise and the cold suggested that the river might tear the floor of this cave away and destroy us all. It was more than I could tolerate. I shivered from the cold, because it was cold and I wasn't properly coated, but the shivering was more from fear of the river swelling upward and drowning us than it was from the deep cold that made steam of our breaths. I even feared falling through that hole into the earthly-sunk river, but I felt like a coward when I felt that way, felt guilty and ashamed, because my giant dad stood on the edge of the hole, ready to fall in but showing no fear, while he shouted to his dad about what he could see down there in the hole gesticulating with obvious relish and sense of safety. I could only think about getting out of that cave before I lost my mind. It was absolutely terrifying to be there in the location experiencing what I was experiencing.

It is interesting to be an adult today writing this, recounting my childhood as I remember it. Admittedly it is biased and incorrect. But the interesting thing to me is the fact that these accounts are permeated by threads of fear and anxiety, about uncertainty, about insecurity, confusion, all of which filled my life, occupied these times I spent with my dad. What a time to live. Childhood. I have no way of knowing if that is the experience of all children, but I know it is mine. Childhood was a tough time, like I was just biding my time until I would be able to get out there on my own, doing what I wanted to do, not depending on my parents or adults for safety and direction and control, becoming able to do what it was that I wanted to do. I obviously had no idea about what that was, but I had an inkling, a sense, a longing, to be there to do "it". So that I didn't have to rely on, or obey, these adults who put me in positions that were so painful and confusing. Dad dragging me down into this terribly frightening cave near Oak Creek was on one hand, a generous thing. Yet on another, I cannot but harbor the suspicion that he knew it would scare me to death. And -here's the point- that he wanted to do that to me. I don't understand it. What did I do to deserve that sort of treatment? I was in no position to threaten or harm him, indeed, I was completely dependent on him, helpless and hopeless, yet he



persisted over the years in doing things like this to humiliate me, to satisfy whatever the base desires of his were to do this sort of thing to helpless human being. He might as well have tortured helpless puppies. After all is said and done, he was a mix of things.



Dickie and I fought so much that mom and dad decided they would develop a formal method to resolve differences between us. Today as a parent I sympathize with their effort. It is difficult to find a method to keep siblings from fighting all the time, and as difficult to mediate their arguments so any method offers promise to control the insurrections is attractive. To the parent. But it wasn't to me, nor do I think it was to Dickie. It didn't work.

Mom and dad bought a set of boxing gloves, shiny red gloves, the most ridiculous things I ever see. Huge puffy red things that you put on your hands and were to wreak havoc on the other guy. I didn't know that Rocky Marciano wore those kinds of things when grandpa Merrell listened to the radio, screaming for him to "Knock him out!" Wouldn't bare hands be more effective? Dad was going to teach us how to box. That way, so the theory went, when we had a difference of opinion we could ask for a boxing match. We could decide who was right that way. I guess. I'm not really clear about how the whole thing was structured, but it strikes me as a dangerous thing to say that the one who beats the crap out of the other is somehow "right". Besides when things heat up between brothers, there isn't a whole lot of cool logic that would allow as how the time has come to retreat to our own corners, don the clumsy gloves and then as gentlemen engage in a spot of fisticuffs. Nope, beat the crap out of him and no. None of that silly business.

In any event, I remember several evenings when dad was home and these things were strapped onto our hands. They were big and silly, huge puffs of something sort of soft covered in a slick leather. Laces across our palms and up our wrists. We were supposed to "box". It wasn't too nice however to stand there facing Dickie with mom and dad watching while dad instructed us in the technique of boxing.

We had to hold our hands up in a certain way to protect us from the other guy and had to stand a certain way to protect my anatomy from injury. That sounded just fine and was exactly what I wanted. I didn't want some mug taking a whack at my puss. The problem was that when I did hold my gloves up to protect my face, I couldn't even see the other guy. I had two glove palms turned toward my face up in front of my face. That is protection, except that he was then free to attack me around the side of the gloves. And vice versa. That really didn't seem fair but that

was called "boxing" and dad and mom thought it was a great thing for us to learn to box and to be able to "settle our differences". So who was I to say it wasn't nice to take advantage of my defense and hurt me. That's exactly what I was trying to prevent by holding the gloves up. Dad would yell at Dickie or me, "Hold your gloves up, punch him with your right, protect your face, don't telegraph your punch by pulling your hand way back to hit because the other guy will see it and punch you, keep moving, move to your right, lean forward, etc." None of it made any sense. Except holding my gloves in front of my face.

I don't think that we actually boxed too many times. I don't understand how it happened even today but somehow we would get railroaded into lacing the gloves on and "boxing". It wasn't too bad for a while, but then one of us would actually get a good punch in, and the other kid's nose or lip would start bleeding. At that point, dad would scream to the wounded kid to do this or that. But he might as well have been hollering at a mule. At the instant blood was drawn, that kid's eyes filled with tears and he turned into a windmill, a flying flurry of telegraphed punches so fast and hard that the other kid was always knocked to the ground. Also injured and in tears and hysteria. The gloves were disgustedly pulled off by the parents who had nasty things to say to both of us. Which, in the end, only made the exercise as painful as it was stupid.

In the end, all I learned was how to street fight and today if I were able to turn myself loose in a fight, I can tell you that I would simply immediately powerfully unreservedly as hard as I could kick the guy squarely in his unprotected youknowwhats, and then while he was on the ground, gouge his eyes out and then bite chunks of his face off. I know because I almost got into a fight several years ago here in Portland and at the instant I almost let loose that is exactly what I was ready to do.

I experienced a shocking, powerful, primitive response like I had retreated to a cave and was going to preserve my very life. No polite rules, no cautions, no reservation, just, "Man alive, you push me a hair further and I'll just come apart in rage and kick you so hard in your privates you'll have to go to hospital....." I'm not kidding. I saw it like on a screen inside of my head and I was ready to go. If he had touched me again, he would have been gone. The poor guy would have been admitted to the hospital and I would have been put in jail. I will not be polite if I am going to fight. Either don't fight, or fight to the death is how I feel after going through the "training" I received. This crap about rules of engagement makes me sick. If you're going to engage in obscenity, which fighting and wars are, then for hell sake, do it as evilly and nastily and powerfully as you can to (1) prevail and (2) get the dispute over as quickly as possible.

The signals we received from mom and dad, in particular from mom, were



can think of today, a fine gesture for a shaky kid who did understand about the value of money. My leather coin purse with the brass hinge and clasp bulged so tightly by the time I crammed in Grant's gift and what I had already saved I could hardly get the clasp to lock. It bulged in my pocket, nearly pulling my pants down.

The day came to go to this other school. Busses of kids were transported down Highway 40 to the west where they were unloaded for the day, sort of a Tom Sawyer holiday from school. With stalls of all sorts and banners and screaming, laughing, feeding kids all over, none of whom I recognized, balloons, and banners and games, adults everywhere. I walked around for a long time, clutching that bulging purse tightly in my pocket lest I lose it. Looking at and wishing for food and drink. But the self-consciousness I felt at my own school was malignant in this one. I could not conceive of myself ever getting into a line to buy something to eat or getting in a line to buy a toy or trinket or play a game. People would be watching me, listening to me, wondering what's wrong with me. That's what I thought. I know today that wasn't what went on but that's what my worried, nervous soul experienced in those settings. The only place I was comfortable was being on the farm with the Cooper kids or with cousins on farms in Naples.

After wandering aimlessly this way, just waiting for the time to board the bus and go home, I needed to go the bathroom. That, too, was an ordeal. I was so shy that I didn't dare ask anyone for directions. I had learned that there was something unsavory about toilet functions, and would have preferred to fall into a hole before I asked for the bathroom. Not being particularly insightful about just watching other kids or reading signs of doors and in hallways, it was a long time until I got to the bathroom, aching so badly that I felt I could hardly walk. I unbuttoned myself, and did the job, actually hurting from the release, re-buttoned, feeling nervous the whole time, anxious to get out of the bathroom and back in the open. After a few minutes I discovered with a stomach-churning sensation that my coin purse was not in my pocket. Stricken and panicked, I ran back to the bathroom because that was the only place it could have been lost. It was not there, but in this I was confident. I had lost it there. I was perfectly clear about it. I had not removed the purse from my pocket at any other time. And having been raised in a house of rigid morality, I took the next logical step to collect my personal property.

I went to the Office where the Lost and Found would be kept. I knew that my purse would be there, because it wasn't in the bathroom where I knew, accurately, I had lost it. Hence, someone had found it and dutifully turned it in to the lost and found to await its owner. The effort required to open that door was enormous. I did it. I walked into a strange place where an old woman -probably 25 years old- impatiently looked at me. In halting words, probably looking at the floor or anyplace

but her face, I explained what had happened and politely asked her if a brown leather coin purse filled with coins had been turned in. She said, "No, no such thing was turned in, but here. Here's a brown coin purse. Is this what you are looking for?" She held out a coin purse. Mine. Empty.

It was empty. This was really, and please don't laugh, my first personal contact with the evil of the world. It was inconceivable that I would personally experience robbery like this. I was devastated and held back the tears of anger and frustration and disbelief. Just stunned that someone would take all of my money and then have the audacity to turn the empty purse in to the lost and found. I had done nothing to deserve that treatment, I knew my mom would be angry at me for losing all that money, I had denied myself everything to save the money, and now it was gone. There are no words to describe the feeling- except devastation. I sit here, 59 years old, with tears when I relive that devastating experience. A simple innocent farm kid stripped of his largest treasure because of his own carelessness and irrational fears in public.



This is a true story. Ask Dick. Grant lived the grandpa Merrell's store in one of the bedrooms in the back and had several bloodhounds. We liked them, with their long ears, saggy eyes and a skin that was about 3 sizes too large. For reasons that only Dick knows, he decided that he would eat with these dogs. It wasn't because he was hungry, it wasn't because he had been ordered away from the dinner table. It was simply because he knew he needed to do that . Perhaps he was comforting the dogs. Or preferred their company.

Grant filled two large flat Pyrex bowls with the food and when it was ready, set them on the ground behind the house. He called the dogs and after they were eating, went back in the house. It was then that Dickie knelt down on the ground, pushing his way between the bigger dogs to eat with them. The food that Grant cooked a pot was a mixture of dried bread and milk. Perhaps Dickie just liked warm bread and milk, but he could have had it on the kitchen table.



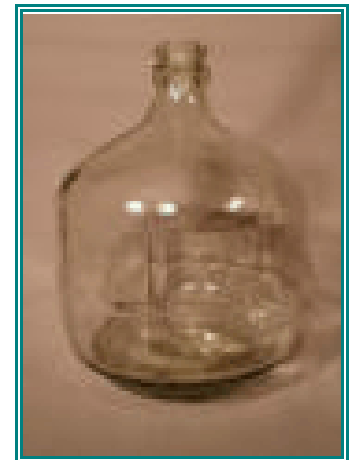
When grandma and grandpa lived at the small country store in Naples, the one where I fell into the storage tank pit at the grand opening, there was a machine shop almost directly across the street. It was owned by a man named Lloyd Pope. He was another large man who was also a genius who did all sorts of things anything he wanted to. And successfully. His shop was a large domed structure that looked to me to be impossibly large for a private residence, as it in

fact was. He and dad were great friends and remained so until he was found dead on his kitchen floor a mile from dad's house in Provo. He did a lot of electrical work and his preferred method for testing light sockets to see if they were hot was to stick his finger into the socket. He had no difficulty determining whether or not there was juice and he wasn't bothered by it.

He had two sons, one of them my age. His name was "Wylie" and he was a nice guy. When Dickie and I visited grandma and grandpa, I often went across Highway 40, after looking carefully both ways, to play with Wylie. One day he convinced me to learn to play a game called "chess". I'd never heard of it before. So he taught -or tried to teach- me how to play chess. What a weird game. Chess.

I was used to playing "Fish" and "Parcheesi", but "Chess" was completely outside the realm of "possible games" for me. I had no ability to comprehend a game wherein there was such a complicated set of characters or was such a complicated set of rules. I played Chinese Checkers or plain checkers. Each piece had about two possible roles, in the most extreme version of the game. But a game where one character could move in straight line, and another could move diagonally, and another could move one square, and another could move 2 and 1 or 2 and 2? And you had to be able to "see" a thing called "check" and "checkmate", neither of which made a bit of sense? What a weird game. I obviously never got interested in Wylie's game. Checkers was complicated enough for me. Wylie would proselytize me every now and then, thinking, apparently, that I was a better bet than most of his neighbors. But I wasn't. Or maybe he was just desperate because he had exhausted the supply of kids in his neighborhood. What a boring game. I remember sitting at a kitchen table with him while he set up the board and pieces, explaining again, how each weird-shaped piece was to move. I couldn't even remember how each one, let alone what I was supposed to do. I played just to make him shut up for a while. I was unable to even understand the rudiments of a game. I simply did not understand what he was about. So we would both get tired of the game and wander off in search of something more interesting to both of us.

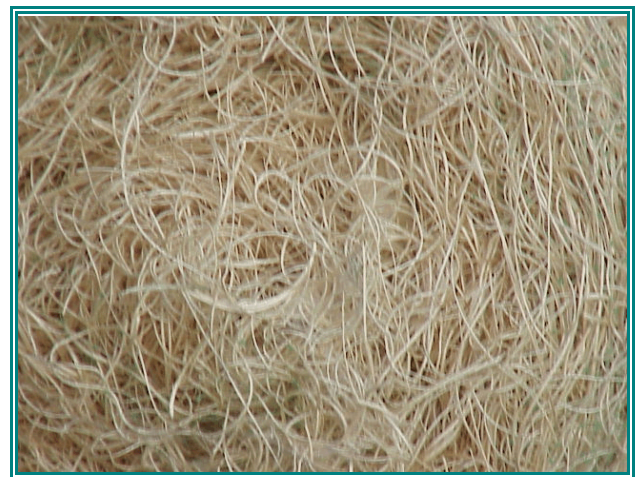
One thing in his dad's machine shop that always interested me were the carboys. These were large greenish glass bottles, the biggest bottles I had ever seen, even bigger than a milk bucket. They must have held 20 gallons. Lloyd was a welder and jack of all trades and in the shop he had on his property, he repaired everything brought his way, from a carburetor to refrigerator. Some of the jobs



required acid, probably as a flux or a cleaner. Whatever it was that Lloyd, consumed large quantities of acid so he bought it in bulk. In carboys. It obviously wasn't fluoric acid because that has to be stored in wax bottles. You've seen highly diluted fluoric acid used to etch glass. This acid was probably sulphuric, hydrochloric or muriatic acid. I don't know what he did that required so much acid, but he large quantities of the stuff in enormous green glass bottles.

I wanted one of them, which was a silly wish because it would never happen, but oh, how I wanted one for my own. These bottles came in large crates built of wood lath, and were protected by layers of excelsior, stuff that protected the bottle from shocks during transit. They were seductive in their size and color and shape, but all I could do was admire them and wish I had one, though what I would have done with one was basically 'nothing'. That's the way of kids, to wish for a thing they can't have - which they cannot even use if they have it.

Excelsior is probably foreign to you because it had pretty much disappeared from the scene by the time you woke up. But in my childhood, excelsior was a prime packing material because it was effective, it was cheap, and it could be easily shaped to protect anything that needed protected. It was simply long shreds of wood that were mixed together like the wires in a steel wool pad, only much larger. These "threads" of wood were half the diameter of a pencil lead and were made from a kind of wood that didn't break when converted into these "threads" that were then wadded up and bent. It was perfect to pack a carboy in a crate for travel to keep it from breaking en route to its destination.



The amount of acetylene gas used by Payton's shop must have been substantial. Dad brought home several empty barrels for us to play with. They were distinctive for two reasons: in addition to being made out of metal, their sides were corrugated circumferentially for some reason, and the lids were absolutely tight, like the lids on metal cans of baking powder. The reason for the tight seal, obviously, was that the carbide chips must be protected from water, even

humidity, for two reasons: first, to prevent the production of acetylene in an uncontrolled environment where a spark could ignite and it and second, to simply preserve the product so that it was viable when the time came to use it.

The volume of these barrels were a grayish black color and probably held about 5 or 6 liquid gallons though the carbide chips were probably sold by weight. This made a nice sized barrel for little kids to play with. The barrels initially had a peculiar but not offensive smell from the carbide. We had few real toys so used our imaginations to create fun out of all sorts of odd things around the place. The barrels were exciting, actually, because they were different than anything else we had around. They were a highlight of summer.

We had a wooden wheelbarrow around the place that we played with when the urge or imagination struck us even before these acetylene barrels showed up. Once the barrels were there this wheelbarrow became all sorts of things. If we laid the barrel flat in the wheelbarrow, it didn't take much of an imagination to make it into a Prairie Schooner. Such a grand name. Not just a "covered wagon" but a Prairie Schooner. They were pretty much the same thing but I remember how grand the name sounded, Prairie Schooner. So we had Prairie Schooners when we wanted them.



You can see the shape in this image, particularly if we draped a sheet over the top of the barrel. Even had a little dog hanging around. Jelly bean, a black dog with short hair.

We'd be out there puffing and panting, nearly dying of thirst in our covered wagon. For real. Little kids don't like to interrupt their play for trivial things like eating or drinking. Cougars prowling, hanging overhead in trees waiting to drop down on us or waiting for us to stop so they could sneak up and grab us.

After assembling the prairie schooner, one of us laboriously struggled to hoist the heavy wheel barrow up off the ground and simultaneously push it forward, not a small task for a 6 year old. The other of us preceded the thing around the yard, calling out whatever came to





mind, or pointing out to the driver a hazard like a rock or cat. Or just argued about things. On these trips in the prairie schooner we struggled across the desert to the next settlement, not quite sure we would make it before we died of exposure, or of thirst, or from Indian attacks. We had to fend off attacks or robbers with our cap guns, yelling and shooting, feeling what the danger was and thrilling at knocking the bad guys out of their saddles.

Remember that the days were long and hot and dry so any play that involved dying of thirst or heat stroke had a certain verisimilitude in those conditions. It is important for you to keep the context in mind as you go back to my childhood, not because it is wrong to not keep it in mind, rather because that is the best way for you to reconstruct in your own mind today what was going on in my mind at the time. This was a dry hot summer climate and cold winter. Prairie Schooners were historical artifacts at the time but they were still vividly present. The pioneers had come across the plains in such and their stories were present.

Other days the wheelbarrow with the horizontal carbide barrel took on an entirely different character. It became a steam engine roaring and smoking its way up impossibly steep mountains, snow slides hanging over us, more Indians and robbers ready to steal the mail. One of us being the choo-choo sound while the other yelled to put more coal in the fire box, "Where's the coal?! Hurry, hurry, we're losing steam We're going to roll backwards!"



We were familiar with steam engines because they were the most prevalent type we saw in movies. There was no railroad into Vernal so our exposure to trains was in the media. Diesel locomotives were in use on the main lines, and were romantic modern devices but were not as common yet as the old coal-fired steam-engined locomotives. Steam engines have a long boiler as in this image so we had a locomotive to drive around the driveway when we wanted. Until we got bored or tired.

The wonderful thing about this train was that we were not constrained by train tracks. We could cut across the yard or the driveway, going anywhere we pleased, even out into the weedy fields to the north of the house or east of the garden. The only place we couldn't take it was over the cattleguard but we had so much territory to play in that we didn't need to get out on the road. Mom doubtless discouraged us from going on the road so that's the real reason we stopped at the cattleguard, not

just the fact that we had 2 acres to play in. To give you a frame of reference for the size of our property, 2 acres is five times larger than the 5111 plot. Remember when you were a little kid how big our yard was. Add that to Baumhoff's un-divided pasture - that's 2 acres.

One day in August we set the barrel upright in the wheelbarrow and pushed it out along the driveway, and along the east side of the row of lilacs. All along drive and on the east side the lilacs were the milkweeds that grew profusely in the area. The lovely clusters of pinkish flowers like these had a sweetish scent. I always smelled flowers to see what their flavor was, how they would strike my nose. These were sweet. The leaves are flat here, not at all fuzzy but the ones we had around the place were apparently a different specie and had rougher leaves that had some sort of fuzz on them.

I can't help it. You're going to get a lesson in natural history about now.

During the time us little kids were blithely hurrying about the yard, the flowers were maturing. Then we were visited by another mystical visitor, the large monarch butterfly. Dad was so excited to see them that I became excited. Just because he was at first, but I grew to love these large slowly flapping orangish black-webbed winged butterflies, larger than any other except for the yellow and black striped tiger swallowtail that was of comparable size. I didn't understand why the monarch picked the milkweed as the proper source of food for its offspring, especially since the adults prefer thistle for food. Whatever, the monarchs visited our area in large numbers and slowly paddled about the milkweeds, about the same time the pods were forming. The same time we were forming. Wonderful coincidence.

This image captures the beauty of the creature. The flower is not our milkweed but that's not the point. Just look at the gorgeous creature.



After the monarch laid its eggs on the underside of the milkweed leaves, a short period of time passed before the eggs turned into caterpillars. They are among the most beautiful caterpillars I have known. Aren't they gorgeous? We watched them grow, hunting on the milkweed leaves for these striped beauties. Beautiful pattern of yellow, white and black stripes.



The black stripes are always between white stripes. See the babies starting. In their early life they look like a moving pile of birdlime.

The largest caterpillar in the preceding image is about ready to do his magic. He's fat and ready to form his chrysalis. And to undergo the process of metamorphosis, one of the most astonishing things in nature. Here it is, you saw it at Valley View elementary when teachers brought the creatures into class for you to see the During the process his body shape is completely reshaped and he sprouts wings and legs, antennae and a head. Mystifying isn't it.

That's the end of the lecture. But know, please, that our world really was filled with instruction like that, both in the flesh and by instruction. We experienced our world first hand and saw its creatures and learned about them and their habits and life patterns. Thank you dad and mom.

While the monarchs are appearing, the flowers had been pollinated and the sun had done its duty in conjunction with some water, so the lovely flowers on the yard high leafy stalks withered. Leaving behind an odd little button that didn't look like much but over the next few weeks that little button turned into a fabulous thing, a milkweed seedpod. Even the name is fun.

These velvety full pods about 3-4 inches long just begged to be picked and used for something. It didn't matter what. Anything. They just waited for a little kid



Photo by Ken Highfill



to come along and pull them off. Which we did.

So back to the carbide barrel wheelbarrow truck where we started before someone threw in that lecture about monarch and milkweeds. We parked the wheelbarrow by the milkweeds loaded with these plush pods and pulled them off. Two fistfuls at a time, as many as we could hold on to, just to get as many as we could as quickly as we could so that we could put them into the carbide barrel, fill it to the very top, 8 gallons worth. Dripping white sticky milk from every stem, drops falling on our hands and arms and bare feet and the ground and the barrel and the wheelbarrow, dripping from the wounds in the stalks flowing down to the ground, flowing rapidly. Smelling like milkweed sap, tasting like milkweed sap, bitter. If it collected and dried in the warm sun, a sticky residue resulted, but still didn't taste good.

Turns out that the bitter taste is oxalic acid and something else nasty. When caterpillars eat the milkweed sap they do a neat trick. They retain the oxalates in their tissue instead of excreting them. When birds eat one of these brightly colored caterpillars, they get sick for that reason. Amazingly, the oxalates survive in the tissues during metamorphosis. A bird who eats an adult monarch butterfly, also throws up. And never eats another one in its life. Clever worms.

So why did we fill the carbide barrel with milkweed pods? We don't know. Just because. Just because those pods begged to be harvested. Remember, we lived on a farm, a place where the later summer and fall was the time of harvest. Somehow this was harvesting, this was helping, this was contributing. So what did we do with the milkweed? The obvious thing one does with carbide barrels filled with ripe plump milkweed pods.

We powered our rocket ship to the moon with them. We kept the barrel upright in the wheel barrow, moved it from under the lilacs lest we snag our ship on the dead branches - and prepared to launch. Flash Gordon was hanging around, you know, in the funny papers. We sat on the wheel barrow and its handles and looked up at the sky and imagined that our barrel of fuel was a rocket, thrusting and burning and screamingly firing up to the heavens, to the moon, modern men, blazing a trail through the unknown. In our milkweed filled carbide barrel rocket ship.





Mom stayed at home with us kids as long as she could but eventually the financial needs of the family required her to take a job. This was in the era when women were moving out of the home and into the workforce, as WW II ended, a profound transformation was taking place that reverberates in our society today, a shift away from the farm-based agrarian model to an urban model with the different needs and mores.

The only job I remember her having in Vernal was working as a clerk at JC Penny's store in town. I liked to go into the store because it had the exotic smells of new clothes, women's cosmetics, and leather goods. I believe that she first worked as a cashier at one of the tills near the entrance to the store. Pushing the buttons in the large cash registers was impressive since white enamel flags with numbers popped up into a little window with each push of a button, but what impressed me most was the system of overhead wires and tubes that connected each cashier in the store with a centralized cashier sort of person on the mezzanine.



After mom would ring up the purchase and get the total, the customer would give her money.-Credit cards didn't exist and checks were rarely used - it was a cash basis for most families. She would put the cash register receipt and the paper money and change into a small plastic tube and screw the lid on. Then she hung this tube on a small cable-car affair that rested on a stout cable at head level. After the tube was secure on this little tramway, she'd yank a handle and the tube would shoot overhead along the wire to the central cashier who would remove the tube, make the correct change and reverse the process. The customer and the cashier just waited for the tube to return, everyone knowing that this is how business was done. The tube sped home and engaged with a satisfying snick, ready to be sent back up. The tube was removed, opened and the customer took the receipt, the change and the goods and left.

On the days when Mom was at work when we got home from school, she made arrangements for her niece Marion, Pearl's oldest daughter, to be at the house to baby sit us. I liked Marion. She was a high school student so was unbelievably old and wise and sophisticated and she treated us well. That is perhaps the most delightful thing about her because I had limited experience with these things called "high school students" and they were uniformly unpleasant. Marion was always nice. She would make us a snack as instructed and then the highlight of the week took place. We would sit down at the kitchen table to listen to a small radio. If we didn't

dawdle on the way home from school, a choice we actually were allowed to make as long as we didn't get into trouble, steal anything or get into fights, we could listen to the Lone Ranger.

I don't imagine that video games are any more exciting to kids today than these radio programs were to me. We would sit transfixed as Marion turned on the radio which took perhaps 15 seconds to warm up, it being the standard tube type affair. She would tune it for us, scrolling across the numbers with corresponding pops and hisses and groans as the radio encountered whatever it is that a radio encounters when being tuned. Then she had to fine tune the reception by going back and forth across it. The announcement of the show was accompanied with the William Tell Overture, a hair-raising piece of music. In my mind's eye I could see The Lone Ranger and Tonto riding up over a hill hard in pursuit of some bad guys, guns blazing in the air. We became addicted to listening to shows, just like kids become addicted to watching TV.

The kind of radio that we really liked to listen to, one that we had in Vernal, was a large console radio, the size of a stove:

But radio probably was more intellectually stimulating because there were only sounds to portray the whole situation. Sound effects were as revealing as the words and virtually any sound could be mimicked in a







nervously looking at the clock, people smoking and chewing gum, sitting waiting for their bus to be announced overhead on the scratchy hollow-sounding PA system.

I would solemnly climb up on a stool at the counter and wait for the waitress to take my order. The person was polite and asked me what she could do for me and I sort of felt like saying "Nothing", but knew I had to get this thing done because mom would be angry with me if I didn't. So I would always ask for an egg salad sandwich and a root beer. The sandwich was on commercial white bread so was a treat and it was served on a large plate with a pickle, and a pile of crunchy salty potato chips. We never ate potato chips at home. The rootbeer was Hires, the best rootbeer ever made. It was served in a large heavy mug, either a nickel size or the giant dime size. I got the nickel size with my quarter since the sandwich plate was 20 cents. The neatest thing about the mug was that it was stored in a freezer. When it was filled with rootbeer and set on the counter, the mug grew a thin layer of frost on the outside and was icy cold to the lips. This technique avoided the use of ice and had the advantage of not diluting the drink. By the time I finished the sandwich, pickle, nickle rootbeer and potato chips, I was filled. Then I'd wander back down the street to Pennys to see mom before I returned to school.



There was grass in the front yard in Vernal but few flowers. The climate is arid and hot in the summer so the grass was wiry and sparse. It was not fertilized. Weeds, of course, grew better than the grass. Irrigation water was turned onto the lawn occasionally to deep soak the roots. When the grass got long enough, which was only a few times during the summer, Dad pushed the manual mower around the yard. After he sharpened the blades with a file. The reel of curved blades whirred quietly as the blades spun across the rigid bar. The sound would rise and fall as he speeded up or slowed down. He didn't have a catch basket so the clippings were thrown up onto his feet. In an arcing green cascade.

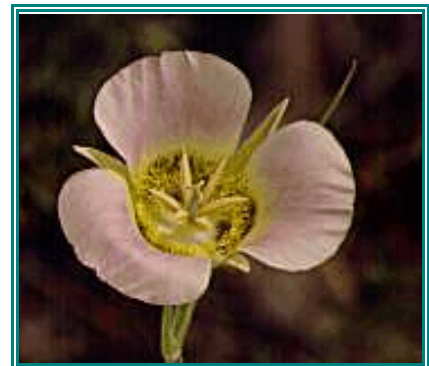


### Grandpa Jensen Visited Vernal

Grandpa came to Vernal again when we lived in the Ashton place. Dad and grandpa planned some outings in the area. I was allowed to go, but Dick was sick again. He had the measles, so didn't get to go. The trip I remember took us into a large cave. For light we wore carbide lamps. They smelled bad. Rotten eggs smell better than wet carbide. The light wasn't great compared to modern battery powered lights, but it was good enough. The cave scared me though. Enormously. I was a little tiny kid, and it was dark and damp in this cave, way back there inside where we had trekked for several hours at least - by my reckoning. More like 5 or 10 minutes in reality.

In one room there was an extraordinary sight I'd never imagined existed anywhere in the world. There was a huge fat icicle that hung from the ceiling of the cave down to the floor. White, hard and cold, and enormous. It stood in a room where the wind blew loudly and coldly, the reason for the icicle being formed, and in the floor of the cave there was a large hole. I feared one of us would fall into that black hole and be lost forever. Through this hole, we heard the roar of a subterranean river that flowed angrily and noisily through its space going to wherever it went. Frightening. A monstrous icicle out in the middle of the desert in the middle of summer, standing in a cave that roared and echoed to the point that I felt near-panic, wanting to get out of there. My lamp was flickering and fluttering and I was afraid to tell dad I was afraid. What a sad situation.

When we got out of the cave, it rained a brief desert rain. So we climbed into a small sandstone cave and waited for it to stop. After the rain stopped, grandpa pulled some sego lilies - "mariposa", a beautiful name- and showed me how to eat them. He said that the pioneers had used these as part of their emergency diet while waiting for crops to mature. Today it would be illegal to eat sego lilies because they are the state flower, but I suppose we'd try them again. I'm always thrilled to see sego lilies. They remind me of grandpa.



## Foods

Commercially prepared foods were rare in our house. Too expensive. So we made fun of them, secretly wishing we had them. Mom made spaghetti sometimes but it was an unusual dinner. Later mom did buy Franco American spaghetti in the can and we loved it. It actually wasn't as good in taste as home-prepared spaghetti but the convenience and comparable price carried the day, plus it was a novelty to eat something out of a can. This was probably one of those food that helped persuade American's to go to convenient prepared foods. I loved it.



Figure 281

<http://theimaginaryworld.com/newsad63.jpg>

The only other pasta that mom made was noodles, as in chicken noodle soup. She sometimes made her own noodles which is a big project. The fancy pastas like angel hair, fettuccine, and so on were unknown. City folks maybe used them, in fact probably did, but these unusual pastas didn't enter my diet until after I left Boston in 1960.

Commercial puddings were rare items in our diet, and home-made puddings not at all. Jello brand puddings were mom's choice, hence our choice, but Royal puddings were trying to crowd into the pudding world. The twins, Roy and Al, were the key item in Royal's attempt to horn in, counting on the persuasive power of kids on mothers to carry the day. The kiddie market has been around for a long time.



Figure 282

<http://theimaginaryworld.com/newsad15.jpg>

In the late 1940's Betty Crocker managed to create cake mixes in a box that had a reasonable shelf life, and cooked reasonably well. They were a sensation. Just open a box, pour the powder into a bowl, add some water and an egg, mix and put in a pan and bake. What a switch from the laborious process of measuring out every ingredient and getting the batter just right.

Kids were also treated better when moms baked cakes from Betty Crocker. Because they didn't fall as easily when cooking. This was a particular problem with coal stove ovens. The heat was uneven, so cakes baked unevenly and had to be oh so carefully turned half way through the baking time so the other end could cook. Any jarring of the cake, even with the oven door shut, could cause it to fall. The cake mixes didn't seem as likely to fall this way.



Figure 283

[http://www.old-time.com/commercials/stunning\\_upset.html](http://www.old-time.com/commercials/stunning_upset.html)

### Ceramics

In the late 1940's, mom and dad, perhaps mostly dad, got involved in ceramics. They went to Salt Lake City to take classes, as I recall, and purchased what must have been a good size kiln for a private party in those days, along with all of the things required to actually make a business out of ceramics. They had some success but not enough to live on.

Separate from the business success was the impact on me of being in a home where ceramics were as normal as drinking water. The stuff was just sitting around the house and I was allowed to take clay and make things. So I did. And bless mom's wrinkled heart, I have a shoebox in the garage today, 2002, with half a dozen of the primitive things I made. Considering that I was only 7 or 8 years old and that I worked without the benefit of any direct tutelage, the things are not half bad. Several cobbled up, lumpy dinosaurs and a couple of nature scenes are in that box that mom preserved for all these years for "me". Actually, for her grandkids I suspect.

I was particularly interested in the dinosaurs that swam, the plesiosaurus, the dinicthys, and elasmosaurus. This is pretty crude I suppose but I was only 8 years old.

I built him on a pedestal so that he can stand up, and painted the glaze on myself. He actually does capture the essence of a plesiosaur. The joint in the neck shows that it was tough to join the neck and body.

Another specimen that survived is a triceratops. With a flat head. At least I got three horns on his shield. I obviously belonged to the school the believed dinosaurs should be the color of whatever glaze you had the most of. He looks a bit better from the front where you can see he's trying to smile.



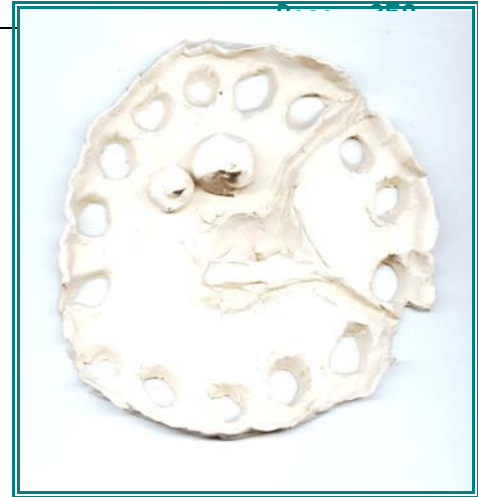
I branched out in other areas after watching the ladies being taught "how to do ceramics." They learned a technique that I really liked, slab construction is what it's called. Sounds easy but it is as complicated as any technique. You roll clay out in slabs, cut out squares, and assemble them into boxes. Then you make a lid out of another flat slab that fits evenly over the top of the box. I decorated the top with various things and added flanges the right distance from the edge to hold the lid in place. Pretty sophisticated construction I'd say, though the execution left a bit to be desired. The point was that I was in there trying and having fun, learning more than I realized at the time.



The corner joints were open at the top but I managed to get the sides and ends and top and bottom to be nearly identical, which is not an easy thing for a kid left to his own devices. The glaze either didn't match the body or the thing was cooled too quickly as you can tell from the crazing. I like that effect. The lid was a garden, including a rose blossom, rose bush, a yellow chicken and two black things that I don't know what they are.



The third dinosaur that survived is a brown brontosaurus. This guy obviously gave me a hard time shown, again, by the "joint" in the neck where it joins the body. There should be no joint but I didn't know how to form the neck out of the body in such a way that it would allow me to work with it. The idea of letting a piece lay to dry a bit never occurred to me.



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The last item to show you is the piece de resistance though it skillfully escaped glaze: It is difficult to see in this image made on a scanner so use your imagination please. This little piece has a teepee, the tallest spike in front of which sits a camp fire, almost the same height so that I could model a teardrop shaped flame. A lake is excavated with two

rivers gouged in, one filling and the other emptying the lake.

I understood that the Great Salt Lake was salty



□××◆■▶ ◊○○ ▣▶▶—|| / | ▣▶▶—||\◆▶▶◆▶

because there was no outlet so I made sure this little lake did not get salty. There is a sort of fence or border around the base but the meaning of the set of holes around the border is not known to me, the artist. Artistic license I suppose, by a kid who got carried away with an idea to decorate the edge I suppose.

The ceramic business was undertaken with usual absolute, whole-hearted, single-minded, full-scale commitment of a James Alvin Jensen project. Nothing necessary to advance the cause was omitted. Consequently, he ended up using a spray gun to apply glazes to the pieces he made, a vastly superior way to apply glaze. I know because I've experimented with ceramics in my home over the last year and it is

very easy for glazes to dry while being applied by a brush in which case they turn to a sort of lumpy paste. By a novice. Dad understood that the way to avoid this problem was to avoid brushes completely. He got a compressor -may actually have had the thing around the house already but I don't remember it- with a spray gun and applied glazes by spraying them on a wheel. That I now know is named a "banding wheel" since it is used to apply ribbons or bands of glaze uniformly by hand by placing the piece on the free-turning table, holding a brush in one place on the piece, and spinning the wheel.

I am amused today, once more, to see the incredible intensity and "environmental" anxiety associated with the use of lead glazes. I admit that lead is a problem and should be dealt with judiciously. But the risk is minor if rudimentary precautions are followed. Dad advised us to not breathe the mist, but as long as we were in a room where there was some ventilation, he didn't worry too much - nor did he even wear any sort of mask while he was spraying the stuff. He just didn't breathe the mist coming out of the spray gun. But today you would believe that even one inhalation of the mist would make you a raving idiot! Thanks to the -I get really irritated with single issue, uneducated, unrealistic, immature, inexperienced people, particularly those who pretend to have God's Truth<sup>2</sup>]- low grade morons whose IQ is smaller than their shoe size- in the media and congress -really the same undifferentiated mass although they are hired by different businesses. Today we all sit around thinking that lead based glazes are the cause of (1) bad teeth, (2) stupidity [perhaps these salivating morons are proof, who knows] (3) the general poor health of society at large, and (4) the conflict with China. That is crap. But that's another diatribe that I will forego for the nonce for you and for me.

After getting oriented to the medium and acquiring sufficient supplies to undertake the enterprise, dad and mom offered ceramics lessons to locals who envisioned their works in museums, or on dining room table. Whatever the case, mom and dad had classes on weekends as I remember it, with several long tables set up in the living room or outside on the lawn where women, usually women, sat with rapt attention, listening to the explanations while staring at the mass of unshaped clay in front of them. The whole armamentarium of tools was present, sponges, rolling pins,

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<sup>2</sup>These are the same idiots who destroyed the manufacturers who used asbestos in all its forms. What idiocy. To develop mesothelioma, one must smoke 2 packs of unfiltered Camels a day for 25 years in an enclosed space, i.e. a submarine. Exposure to friable asbestos from the bandages on hot water pipes in school will emphatically NOT induce the disease. But don't confuse the politicking, evangelizing people who are more intent on getting personal exposure in the media with the facts. Their minds are made up.



wooden sculpting tools and so on. Women attacked the clay with determination and the results of their work were fired in the large kiln. They obviously had to come back for another go, applying glazes to the bisque, effortlessly separated them from a spare rupee or two. As many lessons as were required to complete the project were offered.

Glazes were a puzzle. I understood crayons. You mix two colors to get another color, but not so with glazes. They really looked like paste made out of odd colored starch or flour, and when fired they turn into totally different colors. Gold glaze, however, glaze made from real gold, was the most startling of them all. The glaze in the small -perhaps two tablespoons- bottle was black, dense dark heavy black. Dad painted it carefully with brushes on the borders of dishes, producing black lines. But when the pieces were fired, that black was transformed into true gold. Wonderful trick. It was the darling of those women.

The kiln sat in the enclosed back porch, above the well though no one knew that. It was made of the fluffy brick material that resisted and contained the intense heat of a cone 6 firing. It was constructed in sections that were laid on top of each other to accommodate larger loads, or taller pieces. There were two types of sections, one was simply a 4 inch thick ring that added height to the load, and the other had the heating elements. The additional elements were ganged into the main controller so that it could control the temperature of the entire kiln. The notion of increasing the size of the kiln through such a simple mechanism startled me. It seemed to me that something that was capable of such intense heat as to melt dirt should be complicated

Dad and mom were always scheming how to raise a buck and they hit upon the idea of dad taking some finished pieces on a trip down through the state to market them, primarily as tourist gifts it seems to me. He'd apply the name of the town where they were purchased and mail them back down. When the day came to make this trip, it turned out that Dickie was sick again. So he couldn't go with us. This is the same thing that happened earlier when Grandpa Jensen visited us in Vernal and we went out in the desert to explore.

### Ceramics Selling Trip to Southern Utah

Dad and mom decided that dad would make a sales trip down through the state to sell their ceramics. He took me with him as company. Dick was sick, again, so couldn't go. Dad loaded up the sample cases to show potential customers his work. The pieces had been carefully prepared, fired and glazed. I think it was Leo's two door car that dad borrowed to make this trip for some reason. If it wasn't Leo's it was someone else's who lived in SLC. The first day on the trip the generator went

out and we had to delay somewhere while it was repaired, another painful expense. I was bothered that he had to spend the money but understood that there was no choice.

On the way down, we stopped at Grandpa's place for a weekend. The night that we arrived, he wasn't home. He was next door at the church where there was some sort of social that we could hear. We didn't have clothes to participate in festivities -thank god- so we waited until he returned. He did not know when we were coming to visit so he stayed at the party until the last dog was hung.

He lived in a basement that didn't have a house on it. This basement was in town. I don't think we went out to the homestead. Since Dad's shed was out behind the basement, it obviously had been moved, probably to keep his things intact. He took me out to look around at his stuff. Actually, I imagine he went to look at his stuff and I got to watch him "watch". He did one neat scientific demonstration for me. In one of his buckets of specimens there were several chunks of special rock. They were full of holes, and he said they would float. That was hard to believe. I had never seen such a thing, so he filled a bucket with water and told me to drop the rock in. I did, and it floated. It was some sort of porous lava.

We went to church the next morning, and I was nervous going to my Sunday school class with kids I didn't know. They weren't mean. But they weren't nice either. I was glad to go back to grandpa's home. The old church still stands, abandoned when I looked at it in July 2002 when I took mom down to take photographs. I spent an hour and a half driving around the area, taking photos and talking about things with mom. It wasn't until the next day in Naples that I became suspicious. Sure enough, I didn't have any film in the camera.

Another town we stopped is was named something like Midvale . Dad had friends there that we stayed with. I don't know whether we were headed south or returning when we stopped there. Wherever it was, the family insisted that we go with them that evening to a local park where there was some sort of a ceremony or program for the edification of the community. The program lasted long enough that it was dark when we finished. It was chilly by the time the program got well underway under over head lights. I sat there on a hard cold wooden folding chair, shivering and wishing I was asleep in a warm bed instead of sitting out there, but there was no choice. As I sat there, I watched the dark sky and the stars and wondered again about them. I saw a shooting star, a rarity because I was usually confined to a bedroom -not necessarily asleep- but the time they appeared otherwise. So the cold chilly evening was a success after all.

Big Rock Candy Mountain

Located down south in Sevier County was the Big Rock Candy Mountain. Burl Ives had been singing about this place for a year or so. It was burned in my memory as a wonderful place, lemonade springs and cigarette trees. What a mysterious place. As we drove south, dad said that we were going to go past the Big Rock Candy Mountain, did I want to stop and see it. mentioned that there was a place of this name. Of course. We stopped.

The mountain is an unusual sandy one, oddly shaped by wind and weather. It shows in this image as the whitish mountain on the other side of the lake. At the foot of the mountain someone had carefully laid out a trail around a variety of natural objects that were named for the things in the famous song. Dad had to cough up some change for me to get in there. The trails were of



lemon-colored sand which persuaded me of the authenticity of the place. There were little streams, ponds, odd plants, things labeled with names that Burl sang about. I was entranced. Perhaps it was nothing at all, but to this little impressionable farm kid it was wonderful.

### Bryce Canyon

Dad had already visited Bryce Canyon and either wanted to see it again or show it to me, or both. Whatever the agreement in his mind was, we made the trip off the highway to Bryce Canyon. Even to a little kid it was impressive.



I like this picture. A lot. It is the only one I know of where he's holding me. Like he cared for me. Neat, huh. He probably did but I sure had a hard time telling. We were on our way somewhere else - I don't know the order of the canyons and St. George so don't worry too much about if I'm wrong.

This picture was taken somewhere in the middle of Zion's, the nation's first national park formed in 1919, a year after dad was born. The road -dad called it "Carmel Highway" and indeed it is- was carved through a mountain and every so often in the long tunnels windows had been cut into the walls with widened areas to park. That allowed people to see the opposing cliffs. These windows probably had the advantage of serving as means for the highway construction crews to get the product of the drilling out of the tunnel. We pulled over into a rest area made for the purpose so we could take in the view which was breathtaking. Those cliffs soar upward hundreds of feet and we were hundreds of feet above the floor.

This exposure was a guess by dad. He didn't have a light meter for many years so relied on his sense of the amount of light and the characteristics of the Plus-X film he shot. He had incompatible light values. The background was brilliantly lighted by the sun, but our faces were in darkness, being lighted by whatever light reflected on them from inside of the tunnel. This print is a compromise where the background was burned out and the faces were not completely lighted but I like it. I have a pair of photos where the background is properly lighted but the faces are totally black and



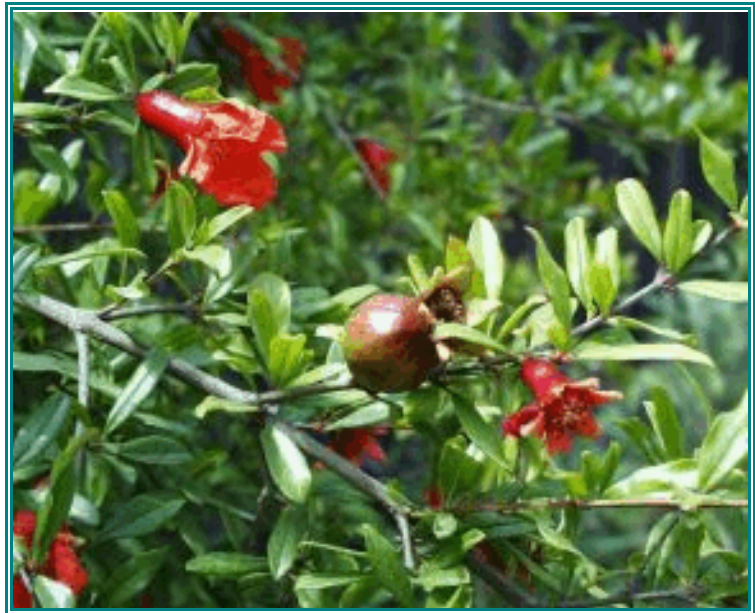
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the other is properly exposed to show the faces but there is no background at all. This print has a nice suggestive quality outlining us. My dad with his arm around me. Ha. He liked me after all.

### St. George and the Pomegranates

This title is obviously a play on the well-known phrase, "St. George and the Dragon". There was no dragon in St. George. But there were pomegranates. St. George was a sleepy little community tucked away in the south, surrounded by mountains and having little intercourse with the world at large, close to Arizona. It wasn't much different than Vernal where I lived, just that its weather was always warm and nice where Vernal's got bitter and nasty in the long winters.

This was my first exposure to pomegranates. What odd fruits. To start with, the leathery skin was totally foreign. Not smooth and shiny like apples and pears, not fuzzy like apricots and peaches, not fibrous like corn, not stringy like bananas, not oily and soft like citrus, nor hard like walnuts. Then when you opened it, there were hundreds of little shiny kernels that squirted in your eye when you tried to take them out, filled with hard seeds. To compound the wonder of the fruit, these little kernels were organized in tidy rows, and then groups which were separated from other groups by embossed bitter-tasting membranes, the kernels of one chamber being attached to one rough spot in the membrane. Never had seen anything like that. The taste was sweet any foreign. The seeds you could eat or spit out.



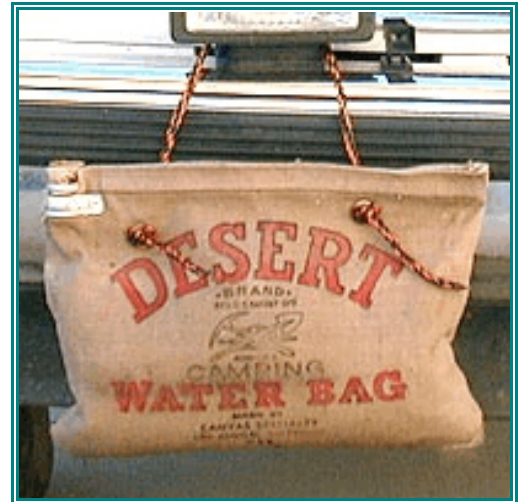
The other abnormal feature of the fruit was how it matured. It was not like apples and pears and peaches that where all of the fruit on a tree came into flower and matured at the same time. No, pomegranate was like citrus fruit, a fact I had just learned in school, so was particularly fascinated to see it in real life. There were unopened buds, young flowers, small maturing fruit and completely ripe fruit on the

tree at the same time. Unheard of. Disorderly really, but somehow they did just fine so who was I to complain.

That is all I remember about St. George. The Pomegranates.

We carried a water bag on the car so we could have cool water to drink. With the increase in the average income of this country and the comparative cheapness of soda pop, these things have been consigned to museums and memories -except for a few hard core off-roaders who apparently have resurrected them.

These bags were made of a thick fabric like gunny sacking but were tightly woven so water won't leak through. However, water moistens the fibers. When this bag is hung on the car over the front bumper, the movement of air across the bag evaporates the water in the fabric. That cools the water inside of the bag considerably so we had cool water.



We turned our selves around and moseyed up the road toward SLC and then Vernal. There were several remarkable events on the trip home was the result of my own curiosity. In spite of dad's warning not to do it, I liked to kneel in the seat and stick my head out the window while the car was moving. It would take my breath away so I couldn't breathe. I'd just gasp so I'd pull back in to catch my breath and do it again. Plus the days were hot so the blast of air cooled me off. While doing this, a bug entered my eye. It hurt badly so dad stopped the car to get it out. I manipulated the lid and used the corner of a handkerchief to finally get it out.

This trip was the only time I remember where he played word games with me. He told me three riddles that I still remember.

- (1) "As a man was walking down the street with me, he pointed to another man across the street and said, "Bothers and sisters have I none, but that man's father is my father's son." What is his relationship to me?

[Answer: his own son]

- (2) "As I was going to St. Ives, I met a man with seven wives,  
Each wife had seven sacks,

Each sack had seven cast,  
Each cat had seven kits,  
Kits, Cats, Sacks and Wives,  
How many were going to St. Ives?"  
[Answer: One - "I".]

- (3) Railroad crossing without any cars,  
How do you spell it without any "r"s?  
[Answer: I-T]

I loved that part of the trip, the mind games, the engagement with me in intellectual exercises he had never done before - and didn't do again.

As we drove, we kept seeing wet spots on the road way up in front of us. Yet as we drove we never passed over any water. It puzzled me. I asked about these odd things and dad explained that they were "mirages", a new concept to me., and a word I love He said they were caused by the heat from the sun as it reflected back off the blacktop. I didn't really understand that but I did understand that this was an artifact of nature that had a good explanation that I would probably understand someday.

We arrived back to Vernal with the car intact and a few orders I suppose. I don't remember whether or not the trip was a success from a business point of view. It was from a personal point of view however.





**James A. Jensen Provo, Utah written 2/12/91**

The phone rings. "Meet me at the airport. We're goin' up to scout deer along the edge of Diamond Mountain. Harold, Ross, 'n Grant are already up there waitin' for us." and with that my brother-in-law Leo hooked me on another wild aerial adventure.

It was the last day of a poor deer season. Not everyone in the Merrell family had killed a deer. Flying along the edge of the Diamond Mountain plateau looking for deer sounded like a fun thing to do. No blood and guts up to our elbows; no hard sweaty drag uphill; no stumbling over loose rocks; no skinned knuckles dragging what seemed like a one ton deer through thick brush. We would stay up in the air and let others do all the hard work. We would have all the fun.

Leo was now legally qualified to take passengers up so we lifted off from the Vernal airport without having to outwit the authorities. It was a dull takeoff. I should have made it more interesting for Leo by secretly hiring someone to run out at the last minute and fake trying to flag us down.

The highway over the mountain to Flaming Gorge reservoir crossed Big Brush Creek north of Vernal, then switched back and forth over the face of the mountain before finally swinging west to the edge of Kabel Hollow. This "Hollow" was a box canyon the rest of the way up the mountain. Vertical sandstone walls enclosed it up to a half mile from the summit. There it doglegged in a sharp turn to the left. The steep highway followed, creeping up along its east side to cut away from the dogleg half a mile from the summit.

We were flying in the same two place Lycoming monoplane that ran out of gas just as Leo Landed at the airport after my first illegal flight with him. It didn't have a very powerful motor but finally lifted us high enough to skim in over the top of the Diamond Mountain Plateau.



Leo, again flying from the rear cockpit, began a pattern of half-mile diameter, overlapping circles, with the center of these circles moving along the edge of the plateau. This pattern put us in over the plateau then back out over the gorge, then back in over the plateau, etc.

At first it was a thrilling sensation to have the ground rise up so rapidly, as we flew back over the plateau, that it looked like the planes wheels would be torn off by the tree tops, then as the plane swung around and back out over the gorge, the mountain instantly dropped straight away from us. This created the illusion that we were moving up and down, confusing my stupid stomach.

The advantage of this circular pattern was that one wingtip was always pointed at the ground, allowing us to see everything below by simply looking through a window. In level flight you can not see what is directly below the plane. Swinging around on one wingtip we could scan every quaky pocket for deer and also for our hunters. We weren't sure where they would be so we were literally hunting for man and beast.

I began to salivate, a sure sign my equilibrium was spinning in wild confusion with my stomach soon to follow. We were on a crazy merry-go-round, every time we swung left my stomach wanted to go right; every time we swung right my stomach tried to go left. After a half hour my insides were in full rebellion, frantically demanding access to the exit. I sat grimly with my mouth clamped shut vainly trying to exert brain power over the inevitable.

I was so involved in straining to prevent my gullet from overpowering me that I failed to notice a sudden drastic change in our altitude. We had flown into a sharp down-draft which instantly sucked us down a hundred feet below our circular flight pattern, putting us below the top of the plateau. Goodby deer; goodby Harold, Ross, and Grant.

Instinctively grabbing both sides of my seat I realized we were now in a Class A Hazard situation, one in which the pilot is no longer in charge of where, when, or how, we might land. A situation which would soon turn the organized arrangement of fabric, engine, wheels, and wings--enclosing our tender bodies--into a useless pile of junk with us in the middle of the pile. And that is exactly what happened.

I was concerned because such an unscheduled ending could easily take all the fun out of our scouting project. We were supposed to stay up in the air, easy money, no sweat, have fun-- all of which were now cancelled forever. Even praying would be of no help.

As we flew along sweating out the thought of an untimely demise, my stupid stomach was actually very happy with the thought of getting down out of the air as soon as possible, though I didn't like the prospect of leaving an empty stall in the hangar at the airport. Nonetheless that possibility was easy to comprehend when looking up a hundred or more feet to the edge of the plateau--which we are supposed to be above but

which we are flying below in the wrong direction. We were in fact, ON A TERMINAL TRIP INTO A BOX CANYON.

There are few situations more disturbing than being in an airplane flying the wrong direction into a box canyon. It's very depressing. To make matters worse I realized the motor was laboring mightily just to keep the plane climbing enough to stay above the rocks below as the bottom of the box canyon was also climbing. It was the temporary nature of the trip that was so distressing, with fate alone deciding how, when, and where we would run out of air between us and the canyon floor.

We were less than a mile from the Dogleg where, one way or another, our flight would surely end. It would it be a slow, messy affair, or would it be quick and painless, leaving something big enough to be boxed up and carried in solemn procession up a hill and into the sunset. Never before having gone through the preliminaries of facing death I was unsure of how much detail one should expect to review before the final door slammed.

As the plane labored on Leo said nothing but I knew enough to read the gages in front of me. I could see the motor RPM's were almost down to "stall" and at the same time our airspeed was also almost down to "stall". In fact both gages were almost down to KILL and the bottom of the hollow continued to rise up to meet us.

Flying past ponderosa pines, with half of their height above and very near to us, was a most unnerving experience. Leo would dip gracefully to the left, then to the right, to miss the trees as I looked out into the middle of each one as we passed. In one I saw a startled squirrel choke on a nut, not being accustomed, suppose, to seeing airplanes fly by on his eye level. I knew if Leo let our airspeed drop below "stall" we would certainly smash up against one of the walls, leaving an oil smudge dribbling down the sandstone--which would irritate the U.S. Forest Service no end. My estate would be cited for littering and the USFS would no doubt insist that my survivors go up with soap, rags, and clean up the untidy mess.

Also, if Leo let the engine RPMs drop below "stall" we would just as surely end up plastered against the sandstone, etc, etc and again the USFS would be irked, etc. I experienced a peculiar kind of thrill, you might say a "once in a lifetime thrill" as we flew along KNOWING WE WERE GOING TO CRASH, and maybe be blown to Kingdom Come by a giant fireball. I remembered pictures of the burning Hindenburg and burning people staggering out of it, which didn't comfort me a bit.

One odd thing about this experience, for me, was sittin' there saying to myself, "I'm Jim Jensen, sitting here in this lame pigeon, flyin' along up this box canyon with not enough power to fly up over one wall or the other, and with not enough room between the walls to turn around so there's going to be a plane crash", or; "I'm Jim Jensen and I've always tried to be as good sort of guy but I'm sittin' here in this flying egg-crate and

it's going to smash into the mountain which we're flying toward", or; "I'm Jim Jensen and I'll soon be in a plane crash, and as the hero always says in the movies, 'I'm too young to die.' Maybe it's all a dream. Yeah, that's it, a dream".

I reach out hopefully and brush my hand over the instruments which are telling me we are about to lose flying speed--which is generally followed by a crashing sound. The instruments are real so it's not a dream. It's real, too real. My auxiliary sweat system kicks in. I've heard that when you are about to die you think about all the bad things you have done in your life. I considered this momentarily, but the distance to the dog leg was too near to give me enough time to even try an abbreviated version of my sins so I sat there with my toes clinched in my shoes. There wasn't anything I could do to alter my fate. Then I thought of something comforting, there might be a reward of sorts for our achievement.

Noone has ever flown up the bottom of Kabell Hollow in a plane before. We were engaged in doing an historic "first," so we might go down in history when we go down on the rocks ahead. Some day there could be a bronze plaque bolted to the impact boulder reading: "One day long ago two dummies flew into this rock" (how noble). Leo was an excellent pilot. He kept his cool, skimming, along, wingtips slicing needles off the big ponderosa. I thought could hear the wheels knocking birds off the tall quakies below us. Had Leo have been a clumsy pilot, or prone to panic, would have stalled us out to plummet down, discoloring a few boulders in the canyon below. He didn't panic, but with professional skill kept our "climb" just barely over "stall" so we could get as far as possible up the holler before becoming intimately involved with the brush and rocks somewhere up there. The fact that I'm here to relate this tale is proof that our landing, though not a three point touchdown, at least was not fatal to me.

In spite of Leo getting the utmost "climb" out of the engine, when we reached the dogleg where the canyon turned sharply to the left, the plane lacked enough airspeed to maintain steerageway, so instead of turning left to go on up the canyon Leo had to let the Lycoming fly straight into the mountain at 5 MPH. I was still thinking, 'it can't happen to me' when a lot noise occurred and the neat arrangement around me changed.

If we had of been a hundred feet higher we would have ski up a smooth slope, ending up on top of the plateau, where we could have calmly deplaned and ordered a hamburger and fries. But it didn't end that way. For although there were no huge clumps of bushes; no quakies or cedars ahead of us, no boulders or strong piece of cliff for us to smash into--or even a thick cow to soak up some of the impact, we did suffer an uncommonly quick, jarring stop--betrayed by primitive human technology.

We crashed smack dab into the middle of a big pole corral built around a spring to keep cattle from wallering it out. Just before we crashed Leo wisely cut the ignition. No panic, just cut the switch, knowing the peril of fire. I'm still grateful to him for that act.

He no doubt saved our lives because I was in no condition, or position, to scramble out of a pile of burning wreckage soaked in aviation gasoline. He had to pry me out of my seat; tear a hole in the wreckage and drag me free of a possible fire (remember, this is going to be a 55 MPH quick stop).

As we crashed I ducked my head. My left elbow hit the compass ramming my folded arm into the instrument panel all the way up to my armpit, tearing the sleeve of my new wool shirt. My shins hit something hard and I got a goose-egg on my forehead but I was conscious. The wind was knocked out of me but my stomach was so happy to be down out of the air it was as calm as a summer morning. Leo's seat belt ripped loose throwing him up on top of me, and before all the splintered wood reached the ground he kept repeating, "Jim, are you hurt?", "Jim are you alright?" I sounded real bad because all I could do is groan and gasp. The fuel tank had ruptured and aviation gas was anxiously trickling over everything. It ran down onto my arm stuck in the instrument panel, then down my side, my leg, and into my shoe. Thanks Leo wherever you are, I salute your cool head for the simple act of turning off a switch before we crashed (he went to his reward ten years ago, God rest his soul). The structure of the cabin was too smashed up for us to recognize the door, let alone open it and get out. Leo said with determined conviction: "we gotta get out'a here, man, we gotta get out'a here".

He wasn't a large person but he was strong and tough. He tried to move me but my body was cramped in a bent-over position with my right arm stuck in the instrument panel. This cinched my seat belt too tight around my middle. He couldn't pull my arm out of the instrument panel, and couldn't get a hand under me to unsnap my belt release, so without any ceremony, or tools, he proceeded to take the plane apart from the inside.

Straddling my seat, with both hands on the back of my seat, putting a great strain against the smashed dash with both legs, he caved the dash in and away from my arm, Getting my arm free allowed him to heave my upper body back far enough to unfasten my seat belt. Then making two great heaves with both legs pushing one way, and his shoulders heaving up, he shoved some twisted tubing and part of the smashed doorframe aside and after stomping some snagged metal down, grabbed my head and one arm and dragged me out through the hole. I weighed 200 pounds, all dead weight and with the wind knocked out of me I couldn't help him.

Leo liked to brag about his exploits but he never said anything about how he got me out of the plane that time. It was a genuine emergency and he was very earnest about it. Then getting me in a better position with his arms around my chest, from behind, he dug his heels deep into the ground and dragged me a safe distance from the wreckage. There we both flopped. Boy, oh boy, did that hard, steady ground feel wonderful. My stomach loved it. Good old terra firma, oh marvelous, steady rocks and bushes. After awhile I began to get my wind back so I could look around and see what had happened.

The plane and corral were a pitiful mess. The plane looked like a chunk of blue biscuit dough that had been flung into a big beaver lodge, then blown up with a stick of dynamite.

We sat there looking at the smashup for a long time until our nerves settled down. The plane was really totaled out. It baked in the sun there for several years before the Forest Service made its owner clean it up. He didn't make Leo pay for it because the plane's maintenance records would have revealed a serious violation; it was five months overdue for a major overhaul. The CAA would have nailed the owner's hide to the hangar wall. But back to our intrepid flyers:

Finally there was nothing for us to do but go home, so we began working our way down to the road below. At that time the spring was about 100 yards above the road through a lot of rocks and brush.

It being the last day of deer season we knew someone would soon come along and we could catch a ride down the mountain. We headed downhill. A car of hunter approached us. We stood there looking dumb. The car stopped and we climbed in. I think they picked us up out of curiosity. We had no red coats, no guns, no hats and not even hunting knives dangling from our belts. We offered no explanations but just sat there with silly grins on our faces. When we got down to Windy Point curiosity got the best of one hunter;

"I don't like to be noseey, but just what th' hell have you guys been doin'?" This overpowering curiosity tickled Leo.

"Flyin'"

"Oh, where?"

Leo jerked a thumb skyward.

"Then where's your plane?"

Leo grinned even wider.

"Up on the side of the mountain" he answered. Then again,

"Oh, I didn't know you could land up there", the hunter said in amazement.

Leo grinned even wider: "We did".

## Gasoline Signs

Gas stations were scarce but there was a variety of gas companies marketing their product in Vernal. Some of the companies are defunct today. I recall include these, because there were large signs that impressed me with their vivid colors and designs and images. The age of some of these images may be off, but not by much.

Sinclair Oil was one that stood out because it had a large green brontosaurus in the center of its ads. In Vernal this was an attractive emblem because we had the Dinosaur National Monument -we said the whole name when we referred to it.

The interesting thing about this symbol is that dad tried to squeeze some research money out of Sinclair in the 70's by trying to persuade them that it would be to their benefit for him to dig up the proper head for brontosaurus or some such thing. Needless to say, the company politely thanked him for his interest and the matter was dropped. He fumed about that for several years because he thought he really had them in the bag with his idea.



Gulf Oil was another one of the gas companies that featured signs that were simpler in design that they are today. This particular sign is primitive compared to others of the era. Somehow the orange band on white was washed out compared to others. Perhaps it was simply the shade of orange that made it less interesting than Mobilgas.



Mobilgas had the sign that fascinated me the most. Because of the image. A horse, a red horse, a red horse with large wings. Such a remarkable image to a farm kid who knew horses well





syllables of the company name interested me. This is the company that owned the tiny tank farm across the road by the swamp where we hunted for frogs and polliwogs in the holes made in the purple mud by the dairy herd when it broke through the fence.

Texaco was also a name created from the first syllables of other words, a trick that interested me. The star was the interesting part of the design, another red one. With a giant "T" standing squarely in the middle. When I looked at these designs with layers of pieces, I didn't see the overall design. I looked at the individual parts without reference to the whole design.



## Vernal Rodeo

**M**an alive, I can still remember the excitement of going to the Vernal Rodeo. It has turned into one of the top rodeos of the whole US apparently. But to me as a kid I had no perspective on that sort of thing. "In the US"? What would that have even meant to me. We would go sit in the bleachers to watch cowboys ride horses and bulls and rope steers. The funnest part was the clowns. Their job was to distract the bulls after they'd thrown their riders because they turned on them. The clowns would run out in front of them, roll barrels, wave



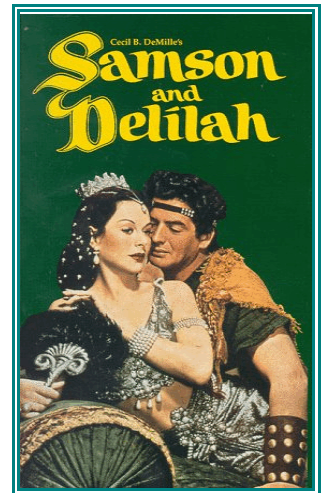
Figure 303

<http://www.vernalrodeo.com/>

things to distract the bull long enough for the rider to get up and out of the arena.

### Samson and Delilah

Cecil B. DeMille. A god among movie directors. I didn't really know what a director was but dad thought he was an amazing man and mom liked his bible-story-movies. So guess what. I liked him to. At least I could say his name with a certain amount of conviction as I parroted my parents. But I became a believer in his movies the year before we left Vernal. It was summer time I recall, and we went to a matinee of a new movie named "Samson and Delilah". Mom approved because it was directed by Cecil B. DeMille. It was a bible story that we knew well. Too bad. I fell badly in love again. Such a pushover.



The story line was familiar as we watched Samson fight the Philistines and, using the jaw bone of an ass -naughty word of course- kill a lot of men by himself before he escaped. Finally he ended up in the clutches of this woman Delilah. I knew her name well and there was even a woman in the town who carried the name. Just another funny name.

Except that this Delilah was not like any Delilah I had ever imagined.

She was Heddy LaMar playing opposite Victor Mature - and was a knock out. The setting was vintage Cecil B. DeMille -always said his full name- with large casts, fantastic sets and costumes and drama spilling out of the screen on the audience. This was another of that type. Except for this woman, Delilah, aka Heddy Lamar. And a knockout. She was easy on the eyes and even though she was deceitful, I was stunned at her beauty. I had never been impressed by women's beauty up to that point, even Miss Isabelle was not really appealing because of her beauty. But this woman just stunned me.



After she finished her deceitful trickery of Samson, cutting his hair off and



out the window. Mom discouraged it but it happened now and then. But with the appearance of this guy, more particularly, the appearance of a fine, out-of-the-window became taboo and we didn't do it.

Anyway, dad went out in the desert to sight in his gun, his beloved Enfield 30.06 with the silver-engraved stock. He'd return in the evening worn out from the day, sort of out of sorts. You know how parents get. Well, this particular year he came into the house with his ammunition and rifle in hand and got started in a conversation with mom. I think we weren't actually in the room when it happened. I think it was the tenor of the conversation that caused us to put our bodies in our bedroom. Remember how small this house was, so even stepping through the doorway from the small kitchen into a small bedroom kept us in the proximity of the little argument. She was probably fed up with being left alone with the darn kids while he was out there having a good time with his friends.

Mom came from a line of kids who were taught from the age of about five how to handle guns. Grandpa Merrell, so mom told me recently, believed firmly that there would be no accidental shooting deaths if all kids were taught gun safety before they were six years of age. I actually tend to agree. Anyway, she apparently was acting from that frame of reference in this instant when she changed subjects in that irritated conversation and turned to gun safety. He probably felt he dang well knew what he was doing, he had been handling the darn thing all day hadn't he, and so on. Besides, they were both ruffled and irritated. So he did what to me is the most frightening things he did during my entire life.

In response to her question, 'is there a cartridge in the firing chamber?', he held the big heavy rifle up to her -probably with the sneer I know- so she could see it, in his right hand. She had asked him an entirely reasonable question, especially because there were little kids in the house who tested limits, and there was no "gun safe" to secure the gun in. The rifle normally just stood in a corner. But it was too much for him to be asked that question that did, from his point of view, imply that he might not have been careful about safety, that he might have overlooked something. So he aimed the rifle -at the kitchen window- and pulled the trigger.



**He blew the window out.**

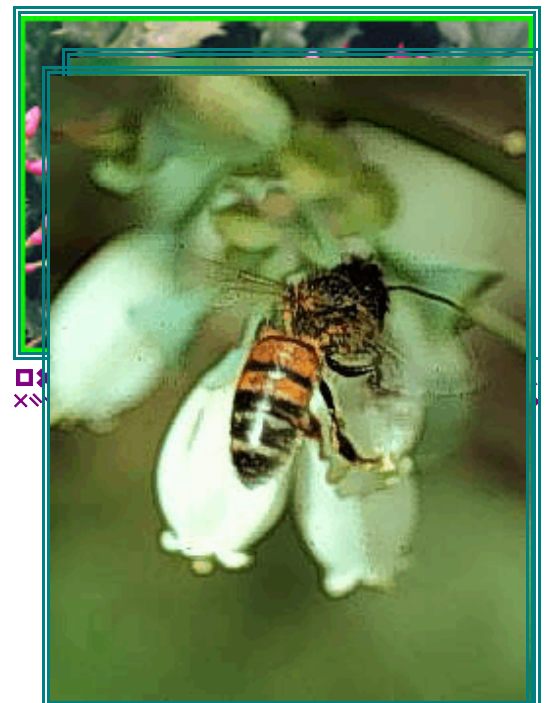


This pansy bed is where we would find the fruit jars that had been emptied by a troll during the night of the tadpoles or frogs that we had managed to capture the previous day. No sermons about the sanctity of life but the message was received - better than with a lecture. The troll was Danish. So were we except that we didn't look like him, at least not on Saturday Night. It was a sort of vague puzzle in my mind why the troll would want to harm Billy Goat Gruff but would be tender enough to save my tadpoles. The contradiction didn't bother me too much. The mystery of getting up in the morning to discover that the bottle was empty, and be told by mom or dad that a troll had released the tadpoles was wonderful enough to make me overlook the contradiction. The troll was, in fact, Danish.



House plants consisted basically of asparagus ferns and geraniums. My mom grew both. The geraniums developed yellow leaves probably due to under-fertilization. But the ferns seemed to do OK. Aunt Nelma kept an exotic enormous Christmas cactus climbing out of its pot on a narrow stand in her living room. It produced gorgeous pink elongated flowers in cold dark December, a puzzlement because crops and plants outside were dead or dormant and wouldn't bloom until the days were longer and the weather was warmer. In addition to the surprise at seeing flowers in December, the hue and colors startled me. Fluorescent colors had not yet made their debut so these flowers were unique and wonderful to look at. Plus the shape of the leaves that were called cactus surprised me. Cactus in my experience out in the desert was dry and round and prickly with nasty spines. How could this be a cactus?

The other source of color in our yard each



summer was hollyhocks. These flowers volunteered profusely every year. They were never watered so survived in this dry climate on the natural rainfall which was sparse, on the order of 14 inches a year. Yet they always grew into three to five foot tall plants, often taller than we were. The leaves were large and flat with a complicated pleasing shape. The flowers were the largest I had ever seen, made out of stuff that looked sort of like thick shiny tissue paper, wrinkled and iridescent if looked at from an angle. The stamen was tall and fuzzy, making them look a bit like the hibiscus flowers that dad painted from Hawaii. The buds opened slowly and looked sort of like a fat cigar that developed petals as you can see in the bottom right of the image. They had their distinctive scent like most flowers did.

Hollyhocks provided three forms of entertainment in an environment that would strike modern kids as boring. First, hollyhocks provided an irresistible opportunity to scare girls. If you didn't get stung in the process. The large blossoms attracted bees that crawled down inside to harvest nectar and pollen. While a bee was rummaging around down inside, you grabbed the ruffled outer edges of the blossom and squeezed them together to trap the bee. The guy in this image is in a different kind of flower, so imagine him standing in the center of the large hollyhock blossoms like you see in the preceding image. Wide open and you are unprotected when you make your move.

You have to be brave. Really. Not a trivial thing for a 6 year old who has been stung various times already. The angry buzzing that erupts the instant you grab the petals and pull them up over the bee makes you think twice about what you were about to do next. The buzzing actually made the entire blossom vibrate, an odd sensation I hadn't felt before, but given the source of vibration, it wasn't exactly pleasing.

By gently compressing the entire bloom the bee was trapped without being harmed. Then you gingerly started opening the blossom from the open end a bit at a time. When the bee was exposed but still secured by the petals you were holding around him, you rolled the bloom over until you could see his wings. Then the tricky part. You grabbed the wings, making sure that you grabbed BOTH of them at the same time. If you got only one, you quickly let go and tried again until you had both. Then you released the blossom and held the bee there in the air, angrily kicking his legs and extending and retracting his wicked shiny black stinger that you could easily see. The next step was to hold him safely away from your anatomy while you squirmed around to get a piece of your shirt sleeve into your mouth or you would sit on the ground and bend your knees up. You wet the fabric heavily with spit because it worked better that way. Then you held the business end of the bee down against the cloth, watching the stinger working in and out. When the stinger went into the wet fabric, and stuck -you could tell by lifting him up to see- you pulled the bee away and his stinger and poison sac was pulled out. Stuck in your shirt to be flicked carefully away. That didn't kill the bee right away. Now you could let it crawl

over your hand with impunity. Or tried to stick it down a girl's neck.

The second feature of hollyhocks that provided entertainment in our house was the leaves. We made candy dishes with them. Mom would get some clay, a rolling pin, a pointed knife and some waxed paper while we pulled several perfect leaves off a stalk in the backyard. Then we'd all meet at the kitchen table. She'd hand us a small ball of clay that we'd roll into a thin flat layer on the wax paper. The fun part was next, centering the leaf over the sheet of clay, veins down. We'd use the rolling pin to press the leaf down into the clay, the veins forming a negative mirror image. Now the hard part. Using the pointed knife, we'd painstakingly try to cut around the leaf, sort of like cutting the excess pie crust off a pie plate. It was tough to decide how thick to cut the stem. Little hands had a hard time, particularly when the time came to lift up the excess clay that had been trimmed off because it stuck to the waxpaper. After the leaf shape itself was freed of the wax paper, the edges of the clay leaf were bent upward to make the candy dish itself. The thick stem was made into a handle by curving it over the dish and wetting it to stick onto the clay.

The third source of hollyhock entertainment was the seed pods. They were the most unusual we had ever seen. Instead of being shaped like a seed, a sort of spherical device, they looked like miniature car tires. The actual seeds were thin flat circles the size of a paper dot made with a paper punch. They grew tightly together side-by-side in a wheel attached to a flat center piece the size and shape of a dime. These assemblies were encased in a hairy husk, and resembled car tires mounted on wheel rims. It was obvious how god intended little boys to use them.

These seed pods were pulled off the stalk and stripped of their papery husk. Two of them stuck on the end of a small skinny stick produced axles for a car. That was the plan anyway. I doubt that we ever successfully manufactured any kind of vehicle but in the way of kids who relied on imagination for entertainment, the contemplation of the project was almost as satisfying as having the finished product in hand.

Being our father's sons, we tried to figure out a mechanical way to secure a small box to the axles. A matchbox was a perfect body. It had a sliding cover to hold cargo while going over mountains. But we never managed to finish the job. The basic engineering problem was bearings: How does one secure wooden axles to the bottom of the box so that they stay in place but don't fall off? The axles must turn freely while staying in place. We'd end up rolling the two wheeled axles on the ground or rolling the individual wheels on the porch until we got bored.



### Bees, Skunks, Cheese balls and Cyanide

In our neighborhood we'd get a whiff of skunk every so often. It was a strange smell, not offensive in low doses. But adults made a big deal out of the smell, as if it were nasty or something. It wasn't to me. However, I played along with them and would exclaim, "Phew! Smells like a skunk!" when the scent came across the property. I don't think I ever actually saw a skunk on the property but the smell was there sometimes in the evening. We saw skunks dead on the road. The thing I liked about skunks was their sporty look. The white stripe running down a black back and an enormous fluffy tail made a sporty model. However, as I came to understand the fact that skunk scent really was nasty stuff when applied full strength, then I got a bit more careful in my approval of the animal.



Bees were all over the place. The alfalfa in the next field attracted them, as did the lilacs when they were in bloom and the wild flowers that grew along the creek north of us. They were not as common as the house flies but they were pretty close. Vernal was famous at the time for its honey, something that I later learned to appreciate though while I was a kid I wasn't too fond of the stuff. I'd eat it if it was forced on me but I didn't really get excited about it - unless it was on a peanut butter sandwich. Then it was good. Part of the reason I think I didn't like the honey was because we used home made bread which was pretty hard after a day or so and when the honey was put on it, the combination became very hard and unpleasant.

Vernal honey was famous because it was light colored and mild flavored. Some honeys are dark amber and strong-tasting but the Vernal honey apparently came mostly from clover and alfalfa so it was mild to the taste. The image shows a beekeeper tending his hives, like the Goodrich family did.

Uncle Grant had bee hives on his ranch down on the Greenriver. I don't know for sure whether they were ones that he personally tended to, or whether he simply provided the space for another beekeeper to put hives, a reasonable thing for anyone to do with the alfalfa fields he irrigated from the river. I imagine that he was doing it himself because I don't expect he would have become as upset as he did about the skunks.



I found the story of what happened fascinating - even though it upset Grant. In the evening late after the bees had settled into their hives for the night, a group of skunks would come pay a visit. The smell of bees wax is strong and carries far so it wasn't rocket science to these skunks to find the hives which they, like humans, regarded as a treat. But their method of harvesting was different than ours. In fact, the object of their harvest was different than ours: they wanted the bees, not just the honey.

The opening to the hives was too small for a skunk to reach into the hive, and the hives were too heavy for a skunk to push over if they tried. So they used a technique that was effective, which took advantage of the stupidity of bees - though granting them the title of stupid probably also grants them more talent than they really have. The skunk would go to the small opening of the hive, and stand there expectantly. That didn't make anything happen until the skunk started to scratch on the hive with its claws. This noise stimulated the bees inside. They were sleepy and resting but there was always a few bees that were aroused by this noise, probably guards whose duty it was to investigate and drive the intruder away. So a bee or two would sleepily and grumpily walk out the doorway and stand there buzzing a bit, not wanting to fly because the sun was down and they couldn't orient themselves. While they stood there, the skunk would scoop them up into its mouth, keep scratching and eating until it had his fill.

This skillful performance didn't win accolades from the adults, especially the ones who had pecuniary interests in the little critturs -which are classified as "livestock" for tax purposes in Idaho. In fact, the adults were downright rude about these skunks. It was their considered opinion that the skunks had no constitutional right to bee lunch so

they undertook steps to remedy the problem. In the form of traps of several sorts. But it turned out that the skunks were either smarter, or more careless, than the adults. The traps didn't trap anything. The skunks were either too stupid to recognize that they were being enticed by some kind of bait, or simply overlooked it in their joy at getting another batch of sweet bees for dinner.

This did not sit well with the adults. They thought it highly unreasonable, and unfair, of the stupid skunks to refuse to be trapped. They thought it mean of the skunks to keep taking the bees after they had been put on notice by the introduction of traps into the neighborhood, that the bees were off limits, that the bees belonged to someone else, that this someone else took a dim view of these after-dinner snacks. So the adults did what adults are wont to do.

They started to get angry and started to think of other ways to really solve the problem. They realized that half a dynamite stick cleverly rigged to go off when a skunk tripped over it wasn't really a good idea. That would annihilate the hive as well, the object in interest of all parties participating in this late night dance. So they considered fire, considered just sitting around with guns to shoot them -the skunks- and so on. I believe they actually did try the rifles but couldn't see well enough to do the job, what with the clever night-time disguise the pesky rodents wore. Black is difficult to see in the dark, even with a white racing stripe.

The ultimate solution they chose was simple and effective. Grant bought some cyanide powder which was loosely controlled in those days. Then he mixed it with some cheddar cheese. Formed small cheese balls and set them outside of the hives that were being decimated by these skunks. That evening when the skunks came visiting, they noted on their way in that there was a new scent, a decidedly interesting scent, indeed, a tasty scent. Sure enough, when they got there small orange balls beckoned. Cheese is apparently even more attractive to skunks than bees, so the skunks ate the cheese balls. And wandered away happily, for a while. They didn't return again.

## Linoleum Blocks and Hibiscus

When I was about 6 years old, dad began gluing plain old floor linoleum to wooden blocks, probably cherry wood, and drew pictures on the linoleum. The linoleum was a darkish green color and was backed with a loosely woven thick fibrous monk's cloth sort of stuff, that allowed the linoleum to bond readily to whatever mastic was applied to the floor.

Then he used tools to incise the pattern into the linoleum. That was the basic process of making blocks that could be used to "print" the pattern again and again. No different really than the techniques of using potatoes or bars of soap for the same purpose. The process of creating a block involved great intensity on dad's part. Complete

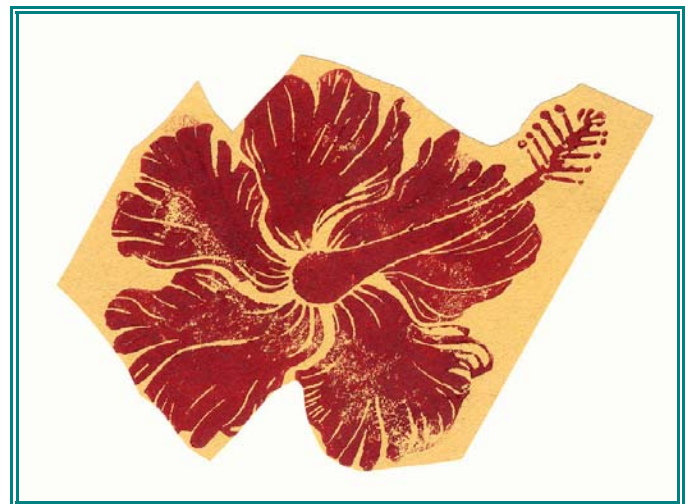
focus on the medium and method was his hallmark. In everything he did. The visible result was a pile of skinny slivers of fascinating-smelling linoleum that fell to the floor as he progressed. My attention was focused on these things, not on the actual image that he was creating. I couldn't see the image on the block, just a bunch of tool marks. I only saw the image after he rolled colored ink on the block with a squilgee and pressed it onto a piece of paper or fabric. Squilgees, particularly the spelling of the word, fascinated me. I ran into them again years later at 3 Auburn Terrace where I learned how to set manually print type and printed a brochure on a platen press than had a automated squilgee.

The common motif in my memory was Hawaiian flowers. Hibiscus and bird of paradise were familiar. Mom was an accomplished seamstress and capable of fitting the dress to the body so the result was pleasing. There are a few of these woodblocks surviving in the basement of 2821 N. 700 East.

Dad and mom joined forces in this project. The basic idea was that mom, as an accomplished seamstress, would create dresses for women and dad would paint or block-print images on these dresses.

Women could choose the dress pattern and the image. The most common flower pattern he did was a flowing sinus shape from one shoulder down across the front of the dress to the opposing hip. This sinuous shape created from large blocks of colorful flowers created a startling image for the unsuspecting cowboy sitting on the porch chewing a piece of straw. I don't know today how many of these dresses were manufactured and sold, but there are some photos of several of them, like the one on the next page. He was 33 so she was 28. They had 2 kids, one 8 and the other 7.

I don't know how seriously they pushed the hand-painted tailored apparel business but dad's 4 page table of contents of his life specifically lists it as one of their enterprises in Vernal. Did he actually stop working for hire and concentrate on the business at home? Over the years, I've imagined that he continued to work full time, but now that I've seen that entry in his TOC, I wonder if he might not have taken time off work. I don't know. Anything's possible where he's concerned.





## Magic Ant Lions

These odd critturs showed up in my world when I was about six years old. When we were in Split Mountain shouting echoes at each other and roasting wienies and charring marshmallows. I think they call the narrow canyon Echo Canyon now but there are disgusting federal rules against making echoes. Can't disturb the peace.

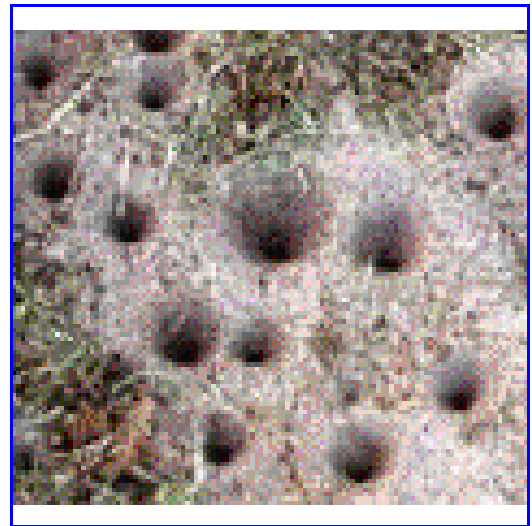
The banks of the river were goeey and muddy, but above the mud there is sand that extended up to the tan-colored sandstone cliffs that formed the narrow canyon. Into the base of this cliff the river had etched a cave that had a sandy floor. We were always attracted to the cave when we picnicked there because it was a cave. It is an atavistic urge to conceal oneself in any cave that happens along, a snug, secure place to be protected from monsters and predators.

On our exploration of the cave we noticed peculiar depressions in the smooth sand. They were perfectly shaped cones and were distributed irregularly across the sandy floor. Why should these lovely inverted cones like little funnels be there? I doubt that we figured this one out by ourselves. Probably we asked someone about those shapes. Dad was with us, we asked him, and then he worked magic.

Without giving us any explanation, he looked around on the ground, hunting for something. He carefully picked up a small ant, reached over one of the cones and dropped the ant. It dutifully started to climb up the steep wall. After it was half way up, the bottom of the cone erupted. Sand started spraying in tiny handfuls up onto the ant. The ant became frantic and scrambled harder to get out, but the sand lobbed up on it finally pulled it to the bottom of the cone. It disappeared at the same time the sand shower stopped.

We marveled at what had happened and wanted to know the secret. Dad said, "Here, it's magic. Scoop up one of the cones this way." He carefully scraped up a handful of sand that included one of the cones and held it. We did the same and asked "What do we do now?" He said, "Wait." but didn't explain what was about to happen. What a funny scene, a dad and two kids squatting still in a cave in the desert holding out one hand filled with sand.

It got boring pretty fast for a little kid. But we knew. If dad, in his clear scientific way, pointed something out, then there was something. We just had to wait, so



<http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Loge/9474/antlions.html>



hear that it was difficult but obviously she felt it. In consultation with Dr. Spendlove the decision was made to send her to SLC so that a specialist could operate on her nose and repair the septum, a measure of the inconvenience of the problem. This trip was made around 1948 or 1949. She and dad scraped the money together to pay for the surgery and the trip and the day was picked.

I don't remember how we got out to SLC, whether we took Greyhound or whether dad drove us in the Wycoff truck, but I do remember our trip back to Vernal from SLC. We traveled by bus then, so I suspect dad wasn't working for Wycoff, otherwise he would have taken us to SLC and returned us from SLC.

Dick and I were small kids and did what we were told and went where we were taken, but not necessarily happy about it. This was a case where I recall not being happy about it. We were left with Uncle Carl for the time that mom was in the hospital, and for the few days she had to stay in SLC after surgery. Carl was always a considerate uncle, concerned about us and kind. He sort of kidded with us but was careful about how we felt lest we be upset - a contrast with a couple of other uncles. His son Lyle is a year younger than I was, so he and Dickie and I played together just fine.

This was the first time I remember being exposed to the concept of divorce. I think that Carl was still living with his wife but there was an undercurrent of uneasiness in the house, in his relationship to her. Things were said in my hearing that I didn't understand but which indicated that something very serious had happened to Carl and his wife. Later, Carl did divorce and that was my first contact with divorce. The kindest uncle I had failed in his marriage. He was not judged for the failure because she - Laverne I think her name was- was apparently the one "responsible" for the failure. [Today I am less inclined to accept stories that only one person was the "cause" of the divorce, that the other person "had no idea", etc., although Carl was probably as close to being innocent as I could imagine. The road to divorce is a rocky one that is well-advertised to both parties well before the rupture occurs.. So I imagine it was that way for Carl and he apparently was not able to remedy or repair whatever needed to be repaired.]

When mom got out of the hospital, she had an enormous bandage over her face over her nose. Both of her eyes were black from the surgery. The explanation for the severe periorbital bruising was that the doctor had to use a hammer and chisel to remove some bone from mom's nose to enable her to breathe better. Whatever happened, she looked terrible. The combination of the huge bandage over her nose and those black eyes made her scary to see and made me scared that she had been hurt so bad. We stayed in Carl's place for a few days and finally it was time to go back to Vernal.

She was not really ready to travel in that condition but for whatever reason, we had to be gone, so we were. Someone purchased her ticket and loaded our suitcases up



again. Then Carl probably took us to the Greyhound station in SLC where we would catch the bus. The station was huge to a kid from Vernal. So many people and odd noises and uniforms and overhead public address system. I was intimidated by it all, not knowing what we were to do. Carl would have checked the luggage for us so all we had to do was wait until our bus was called. Then we boarded and headed out to Vernal.

The door hissed closed behind the last passenger after the driver had punched everyone's tickets. That was a long trip because the bus stopped at every little town to drop off or pick up passengers or parcels. The bus in those days served as a multi-function platform for everything from dogs to parcel post. That made the trip very long. After we got underway, the driver announced overhead whatever he announced. Just so much noise to me. The seats were large and soft, like easy chairs with cloth head rests to prevent hair oil from staining the upholstery. Mom had a pillow to lean her head on, although she couldn't sleep well. We took sandwiches so didn't have to spend money along the way at any of the café's the bus stopped at. The arrival in Vernal was unremarkable.

Over time, the bruises around mom's eyes cleared and she started to look more like my mom. The bandage came off and her nose shrank in size. Happily, the surgery was successful and her breathing was easier.

## Hair cuts

Getting hair cuts was as much of an irritation to me then as it was to my own children later. I think the problem stems from being confined for a while when you want to be outside playing. Plus an irritation that some guy is entering your own 'space' that you have designed entirely on your own. Plus the irritating scratchiness of pieces of hair down the back of your sweaty shirt. Some of the first haircuts I remember getting were done by Uncle Leo who did a good job - at least as far as I cared or knew. No kidding. At least he was fun.

But later, probably after Leo left the area, sort of on the lam I suspect, we went to a professional barber to get our hair cut. This shop was the north-south main street that ran from by the Bank of Vernal down to Central Elementary School, several blocks south.

One of the interesting things about this little barbershop was the fact that across the street was a house where lived a woman who kept a large green parrot in a cage on the front porch where people could see him and talk to him. His size and colors were wonderful to a kid used to



chickens and sparrows, who only knew parrots from comics. It was the talking which was the most fun. It seemed impossible that a creature that could speak my words couldn't understand them. Some of the things he said just killed me, coming out of a green bird in a cage. But eventually the lady who owned him finally had to keep him locked inside the house. He had learned too many dirty words from people who were trying to teach him dirty words, which he would blurt out at the bishop's or mayor's wife.

This barbershop was within a block of the center of Vernal, right next to a drive through service station on the corner of the block across from JC Penny's and 2 banks. I don't remember much about the barber himself. He did his job and we did ours and then he got a quarter and we got to go. On the wall outside his door was a yard-high barberpole tilted at an angle inside of a glass tube. It rotated creating the fascinating hypnotizing effect of an endless spiral that drew your eye upward regardless of how hard you tried not to let it happen..

There is an association in my mind between hair cuts and buying tubes of copper BB's for our BB guns. It must have been because we were sort of bribed to get our hair cut. After the hair cut in the barbershop by the corner gas station in the center of town, we would go to a store nearby and buy bb's in what looked like a shotgun shell. It was a red paper tube that even closed on the end like a shotgun shell and cost 5 cents. We'd buy this precious tube of ammunition that lasted for weeks as we husbanded our shots, trying to annihilate the English sparrows that populated our lilac bushes. Of course, they were safe. Our shots invariably were deflected by the myriad branches between us and them, but it didn't stop us from blasting enthusiastically away in the belief -hope- that one time we would score a bull's eye and knock one of them out of the tree. Happily for both of us, we never succeeded. It would have been horrifying to actually kill one of these little guys who good-naturedly stood still for target practice..

## Cigarettes and Tobacco

This stuff was just part of the environment, like background radiation. Ads showed up everywhere. In movies, newspapers, posters, and magazines. Arthur Godfrey was familiar, always pitching chesterfields cigarettes. A nice looking, pleasant man. Who wouldn't try to sell anything that would hurt you. He had a radio show that was sponsored at least in part by Chesterfield. He stands out as the buy who sang the song, "I'm a lonely little petunia in a onion patch..."

Magazines had full-page ads on the back for tobacco products. Luck Strike and Camels showed pictures of movie actors and doctors who endorsed their cigarettes. The Camels ads were the most interesting because they featured camels against a background of the pyramids of Egypt.

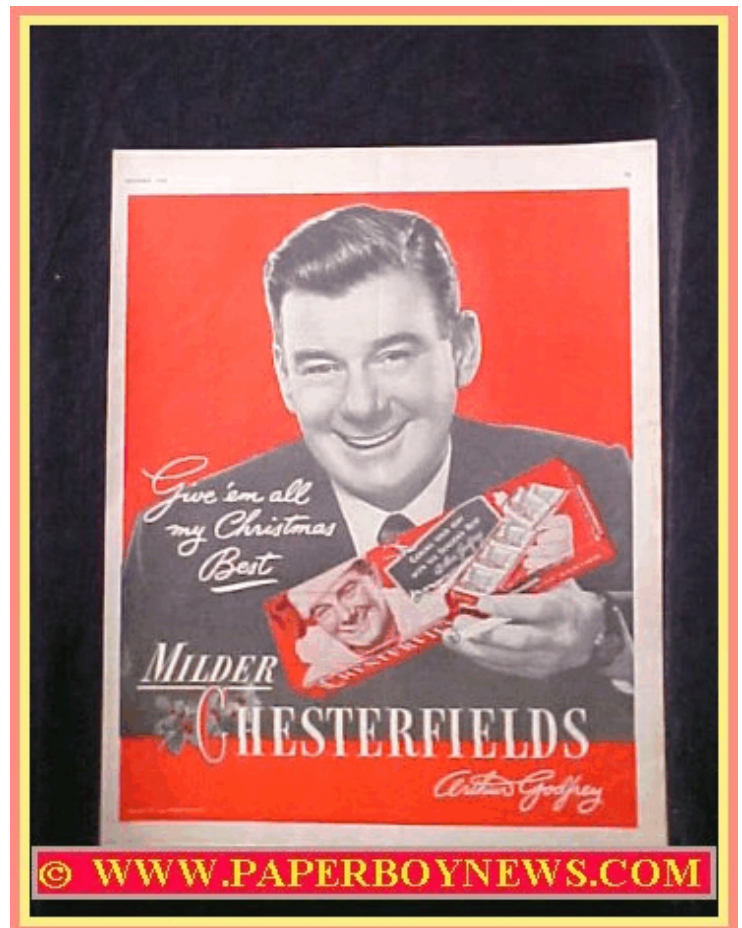


Figure 321

<http://paperboynews.com/inventorydetail.asp?number=la4510>

### Ichneumon Flies and the Fieldhouse

One warm summer day we saw the strangest insect I think we had ever seen out on the cottonwood on the north side of the cattle drive. This bug was large which was impressive but it wasn't size that surprised me so much. It was how it was built and what it was doing. I couldn't tell what it was doing.

These bugs stood on the tree trunk like the one in this photo and was doing what this one is doing. Can you tell what it's doing? It looks like a giant wasp, but it's drilling a hole in the bark with its ovipositor. The thing is hoisted up over the top of the body sort of like a curved filament and is aimed into the bark. I don't understand how it drilled a tiny hole that was used to deposit eggs in. Like miniature oil drillers. How does a long flimsy thing like this have the strength to actually drill into wood? I don't know. It's magic. My whole childhood was filled with the stuff.



We dragged dad out to look at the spectacle, both so that we could triumphantly show him something, but also so that he could tell us what was going on. He told us. Better, he was so interested in the critturs that he said he wanted to collect one or two. Now that was proof that we had struck pay dirt. Even if we didn't know precisely why this was more interesting to him than a bumble bee. He took a bottle with some rubbing alcohol in it, picked up two of the things and dropped them into it.

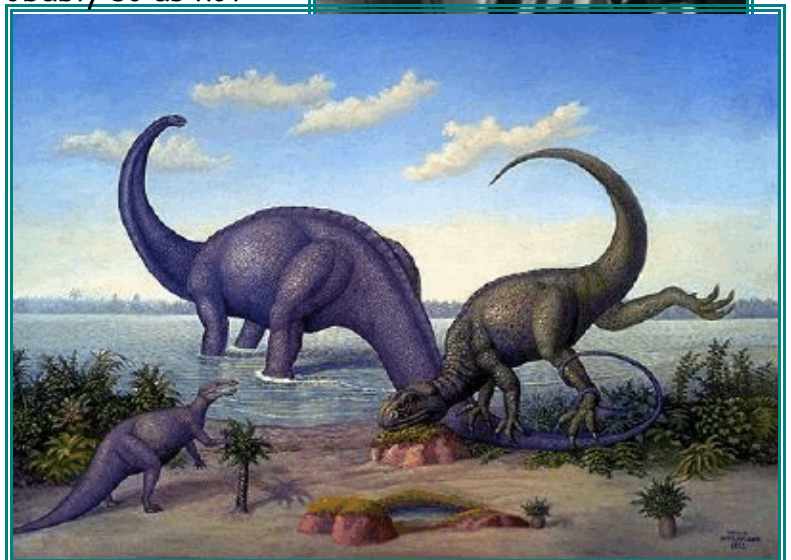
After they were dead, he pulled them out and use dressmaking pins to secure them to the end of large corks so they could dry. The ovipositor was positioned in about the manner in the image. After they dried, he took them to Ernest Unterman at the little Fieldhouse to see if he was interested in adding them to his insect collection. He was, so the specimens were put inside the glass cases with a small note that had the details that entomologists want to see for all specimens. I was proud that we had contributed to the collection in the fieldhouse.

## The Untermans

When I was a kid, Billie and Ernest Unterman ran the Fieldhouse and are probably responsible in part for it even being built. It was constructed when I was there and I remember its size and smell and the awe I felt walking through the front door, entering into a foreign fascinating world of dinosaurs. They had a vision of a museum that took advantage of the dinosaur world that surrounded Vernal. They did the right thing. When I took you kids to see it in 1984 had capitalized on that. The public swimming pool was north of the museum so we could take in both items on a single trip to town if we wanted. There was no admission fee to enter the museum.

Ernest's father was still alive when I was a kid and visited their home. He had liver spots on his hands and looked as ancient as rock, solemn and serious. There were stories about his having been shipwrecked and of the terrible hardships he had lived. I was in awe of him and this really is how he looked. He never spoke to use kids, and rarely to mom and dad. He wasn't rude nor was he friendly. He'd leave the room when visitors came probably so as not to interfere but I suspected he didn't want to be bothered by visitors. A solitary quiet man. Whom my dad admired. So I admired him. How else is a kid going to develop a measurement standard?

Mr. Unterman was an artist and his paintings of dinosaurs were hung in the field house. He



even did large murals in place on various walls, adding to the quality that pervaded the small museum. He was serious about portraying dinosaurs as accurately as he could so he sculpted models before painting them. This painting was done when I was 10 and in Seward but I probably saw it in the museum in 1953. Because of my exposure to his work at an early age, the aura of this image is the one I associate with dinosaurs. I know it's irrational but it is so. His attention to all details, the plants, the muscles, the skins, the water, rocks, everything was done with consideration.

### Fireflies in a Jar

**T**alk about magic. Insects that glow in the dark. The large pastures behind Grandpa's place sloped slowly and longly down to marshes at the bottom. In the mild summer evenings a few fireflies would appear in the crepuscular light which darkened by the time we got out to where they were. We were each armed with a pint jar and lid that we snuck from grandma's store room as we advanced upon the flies. In our concentration on these mysterious flecks of light we forget where we were. So we stepped in cow pies and sticky mud. But when we got a couple of fireflies it was worth the irritation. Light in a jar, cool pale light that flickered on and off, mysteriously from the abdomen of innocuous, unremarkable insects. If you squeezed one between you fingers the luminescence was transferred to your fingers for a while as the enzymatic process consumed the chemicals formed in the insect's abdomen.



  
<http://members.aol.com/llewela/images/fireflies.gif>

### Braiding the Maypole

**O**ne of my oldest memories of a public event is of winding a maypole. I know that is what happened because I have since read about this ancient tradition from England, a tradition that was part of an old druidic religion, which was probably originally part of a fertility rite. This particular instance took place either at a public school or at a church. Same bunch in Vernal for the most part. The vivid memory I have is of teen age boys and girls, much bigger than I, who stood in a circle around a tall pole stuck into the ground. Each person held the end of what was probably a crepe paper streamer. The streamers were of several colors.

At some point after they were placed in the proper positions, which seems to have

been one circle of boys and another of girls, they braided the maypole and I was mesmerized. The circle of boys went one direction and the girl's circle went the other, each person holding securely the end of his or her streamer. As they met the next person they would step to the right or the left of that person, depending on which direction that had stepped with the last person. That is where the braiding occurs.

The greatest miracle was that as the people did this slow dance, two circles moving in opposite directions, weaving in and out, the streamers they held began to braid on the pole.

Starting at the top, the braiding progressed down the pole, further and further, the longer the dance went on. Amazing to my young mind that this magic could happen, just because boys and girls walked in circles weaving in and out. Now the magic is no longer magic because I see how it happened, but at the time I would not have been surprised to see a magician or elf appear out of the pole. It was a miracle that this beautiful



woven pattern appeared on the pole and covered most of it before the dance stopped.

Nosegays and cones of candy were also part of the Mayday celebration. Nosegays were simply small bouquets of flowers that people gave to each other, boys to girls being something special I could tell though I didn't understand why that would be any different that girl to girl or boy to boy or teenager to adult. The candy cones were made of colored construction paper that was stapled or taped into a tight cone which was then filled with candy. A paper handle was secured across the open end of the cone so it could be easily carried without spilling the candy.









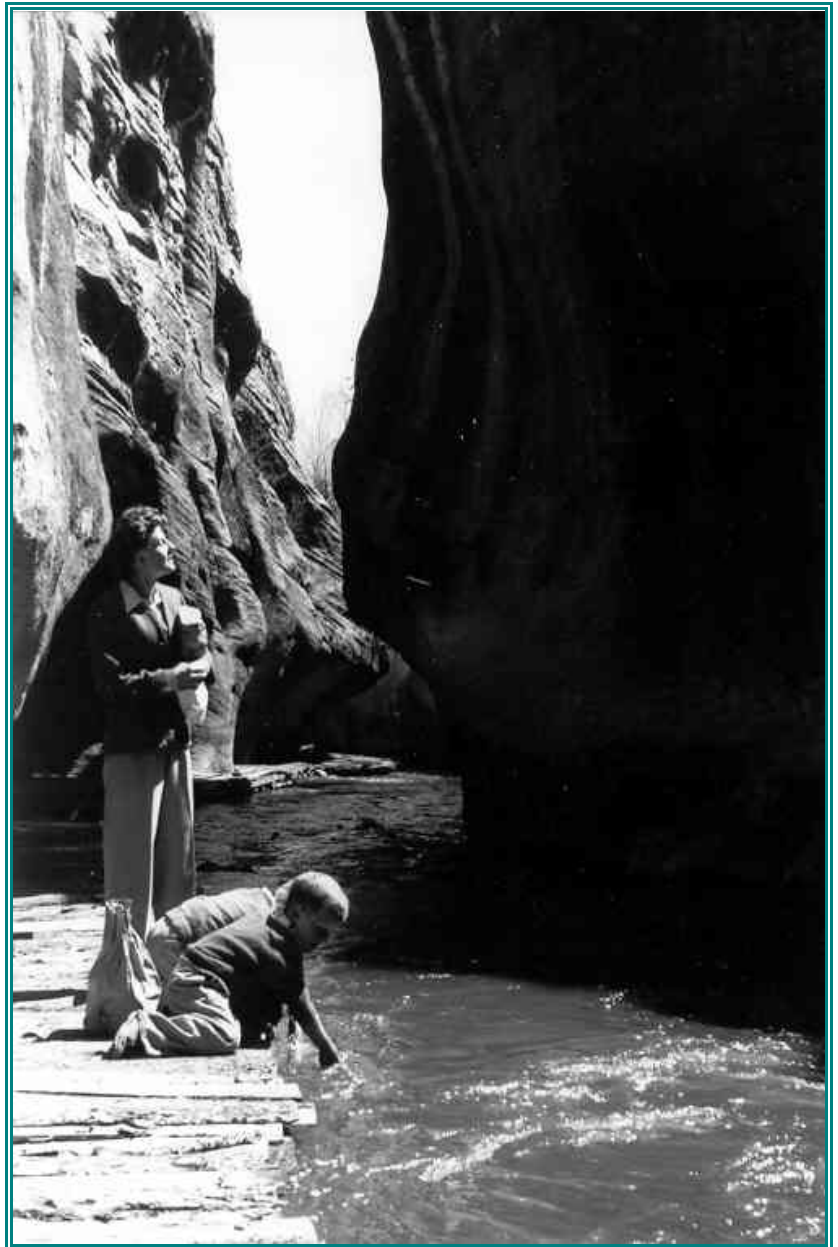


primary care giver to be sympathetic and attuned to our state of mind.

Talk about dramatic settings. Have you ever seen a setting more dramatic than this? Brush Creek flowed through these sandstone walls. Narrow, steep and tall, striped with moisture and iron pigment from seeps over millennia. So gorgeous.

You also have to admire Dad's eye. He was an excellent photographer. This is as dramatic as any he took. He saw how to take advantage of the light, the vertical nature of the picture, the stripes on the wall, the face upturned into the sun outlined against a back streak on the wall, the sun reflecting off the white hair, the ripples in the little river. Such lovely photography.

I like to see that I was there, I kneel on the temporary board walk that was washed away by the next floods that could result from a thunderstorm that summer or wait until the spring thaw the next spring when water would sluice through this declivity



□×※■▶▷◁◂◃◄◅◆◇◈◉◊○◌◍◎●◐◑◒◓◔◕◖◗◘◙◚◛◜◝◞◟◠◡◢◣◤◥◦◧◨◩◪◫◬◭◮◯◰◱◲◳◴◵◶◷◸◹◺◻◼◽◾◿◠◡◢◣◤◥◦◧◨◩◪◫◬◭◮◯◰◱◲◳◴◵◶◷◸◹◺◻◼◽◾◿

like powdered pumice blown through a crack in a wall. Actually, I remember this excursion with crystal clarity. I was petrified of a flash flood. I worried the whole time we were in this narrow channel. Worried that there might be a flash flood that would wash us all away and frownus. So while it was fun, it was a threatening time.

### Dinosaur Quarry

The Dinosaur National Monument was known in those simple days as the "Dinosaur Quarry", before the advent of true federalism, in all of its damnable, stifling forms that homogenizes everything it touches, reducing it to the lowest common denominator. We swarmed all over the dang place, climbing those hills when we wanted, collecting half-gallon paper milk cartons full of half-inch sandstone concretions if we wanted to. What a time. Unregulated life in the wild. Today you'd be arrested for doing most of the things we did back then.

We were taken up there in our twin costumes, always twin consumes it seemed, because mom had this fetish - and it really was a fetish that I don't understand to this day- of being sure that both of us knew that we were being treated equally, being given the same amount of something that the other brother was being given. It didn't make a bit of difference to us, but we acquiesced. What were we to do? We didn't have a clue really that things could be different. We just knew somehow that it was critical and eternal and important to her that she tell us that she always treated us 'equally'.

Here we are in the quarry, in our sailor suits, standing agreeably by the sign so that dad could document for you what we did back then in 1947. A long long time ago. We loved the quarry.

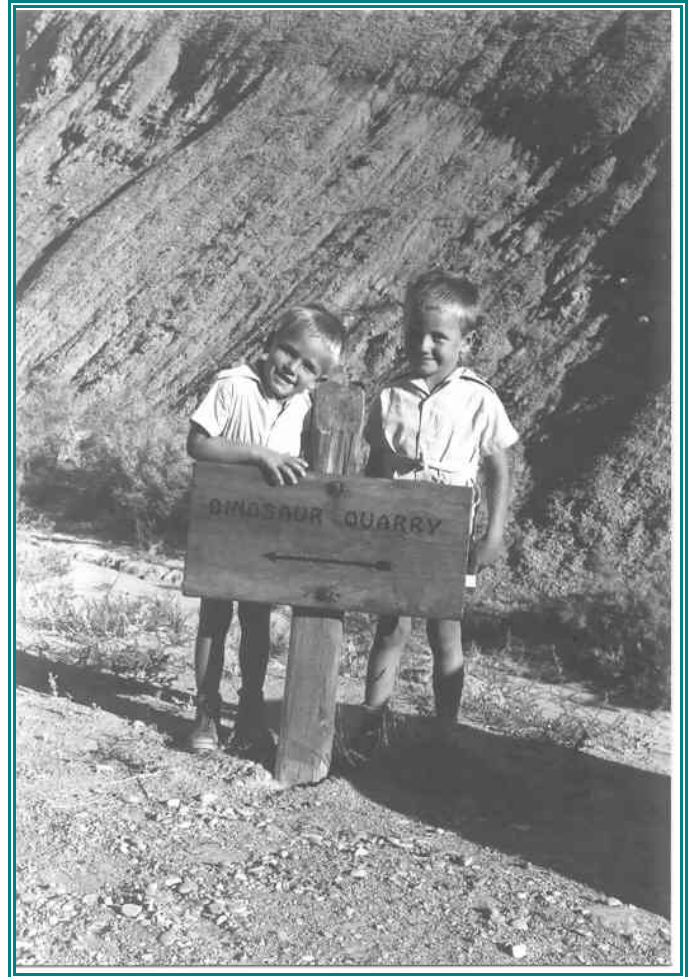


Figure 332 Dickie and Ronnie at the Dinosaur Quarry  
summer of 1947

## Midget Race Car Races

**I**n the last summer that dad was in Vernal, we went to see midget race cars. They were something new. Small cars with funny shapes that raced against each other around a dirt track, roaring and sliding as they turned the corners in the evening under bright lights on tall poles. The roll bars looked odd because I'd never seen something like that but they made sense of a sort. The idea that a car would be driven on purpose in a way that might make it flip over was foreign. That's why the roll bars weren't difficult to understand. Why in the world would these men drive so badly?

The track was on the west end of Vernal. We went in the evening and the crowd was, once more, intimidating. I never liked to go out into bunches of people, but dad's choice to go see the cars and take us with him left no option. I did want to see the races, and tolerated the insecurity associated with crowds of yelling unfamiliar people. No one was hurt and there was lots of noise and cheering. An announcer reported the event for us ringside which actually didn't help me at all but it was thoughtful of him I suppose. It was sort of a rodeo atmosphere with funny cars instead of horses.

## New Winter Coat and Aviator Helmet

**I**t was in the winter of the year that mom worked at JC Penny I think that this happened. Mom pored over the Sears catalog for weeks as fall was ending and winter was starting, a time of short days and increasing coldness. We had gotten by previous winters with hand-me-down winter coats from cousins. We were used to that and expected nothing different this year, although we hoped mightily for a change. The chronic shortness of money in the house engendered a penury that chilled any requests for something new. You learned to just not ask because the response would be a short terse comment about how we didn't really need the thing, or the reason we needed it was because we hadn't taken care of the other one, or something equally painful to hear. So we didn't ask.

But mom knew. She understood. And she cared, even though she did all she could to not let us see it. She cared. As she hunted through the catalog she was hunting for new winter coats for us. Astonishing thing. We looked in the catalog with her and wanted to know all we could find out about each choice. Of course, we only got to look at the choices she had selected first. That was always her way but we understood that was one of the ground rules and accepted it without even realizing that we did what we did. When you don't know any different, you don't know any different.

Well, one of the choices she offered us was this snazzy coat that came with the fantastic Aviator's Helmet. That had goggles. Man alive, we were out of our minds with excitement. We picked that one out and told her fervently that we wished to have it and so on. She understood and told us that she would order for it then, and did. We were in agony every day thereafter, hurrying home from school in the darkening autumn to see if the postman had come yet, aching to hear that a large package had come from Sears. Anxiety and stress haunted our days and dreams, encouraged by the increasingly cold weather especially when we walked home that mile each day.

Now you have to understand this. The choice of the aviator helmet was driven as much by World War II as anything in the community. The war hadn't really even ended. Military clothing was prized because our parents admired soldiers and expressed appreciation for their efforts. So we were caught up in a patriotism that leaked out in this manner.



When the box was brought to the house by the mailman, we could hardly wait to get it open. However, we knew that if we rushed things that somehow there would be an exaggerated slowing down of the process. Far better to hold still and wait for her to move at her own pace. Control. She was into control so we let her have it but were nervous wrecks until we were handed our own coat and aviator hat with goggles.

We put them on immediately and went outside in the coldness to experiment, to see how warm they really were. Of course, we probably thought they were the warmest thing we had ever worn simply because they were new. We ran around the yard under the barren cotton woods, imagining that we were pilots, braving the weather, hunting for the bad guys.

The odd thing about this outfit was that was unable to wear the goggles to school. I was too uncomfortable wearing something like that outside of the yard. Why would that be? I don't know today and don't understand it. Was it because I somehow thought inside of myself that I was not entitled to wear nice things, things that were unusual? I don't know why but I do know that I did not wear the goggles to school. The coat and helmet were wonderful and I was thrilled.



This brand diminished in importance to the point that most of you probably have little recall of it. Perhaps the only recollection you have is the bars of Yardley handsoap that dad gave me back in the 1980's, lavender scented that I love.

Yardley is an English company and was perceived as a sophisticated, upper-crust brand. Look at the beautiful woman here. Hair done up in a stylish turban of the time, against a background of swirling satin and subtle colors patterned like clouds. The layout is tasteful, suggesting that the products themselves would be tasteful additions to one's collection. Today the jewelry would be overdone but at the time when women wore it, the ad would have been pleasing, suggesting that "You, too, can look like this."

The other lovely thing about this ad is its shape. A long narrow image sitting to the side of a page is more artistic than one that fills the center of the page or a squarish block of it. This has a sense of design that bespeaks the quality -is intended to suggest- of the products themselves. The round box obviously is a bath powder, a body powder, that women dusted on themselves after the bath.



BY APPOINTMENT TO  
H.M. QUEEN MARY  
YARDLEY, LONDON

**cool as coral**

Why not—when her complexion affects  
that delicate, coral-like glow  
... when her mouth is one smooth,  
coral-bright curve. . . . She  
looks, feels, is completely  
beautiful—and why not,  
indeed, when clearly  
she's learned to  
"Color-light"!

"Color-light" your skin with Yardley  
"English Complexion" Powder, \$1 —  
your lips with Yardley Lipstick, \$1.  
Yardley also brings an array of ex-  
quisite beauty aids including Dry Skin  
Cleansing Cream and Night Cream.  
Both \$1 and \$2. Prices plus tax.

"color-light" with  
**YARDLEY**  
aids to beauty

Yardley products for America  
are created in England and  
finished in the U. S. A.  
from the original English  
formulas, combining  
imported and domestic  
ingredients. Yardley  
of London, Inc.,  
420 Fifth Ave.,  
Rockefeller Center,  
New York, N. Y.

ADK. BY W.M. BISH

Ladies Home Journal





Another sophisticated ad campaign was run by Charles of the Ritz. This Christmas ad in 1947, when I was 5 years old, is as beautiful today as it was at the time.

The simplicity of the colors and the design reflects the intention of the company to portray itself as one whose products would be trusted to represent a person well, demonstrating the excellence in taste.

Another aspect of this ad that may be lost on you kids is the hand writing. We learned to write, more or less, using the Palmer Method. In those days people did all their letters by hand and hand-writing methods emphasized beauty. The Palmer Method even required you to make patters of loops just to learn to move your arm and hand rhythmically. This ad tapped into the sense of discipline and style. Of course, I never did learn to write.



The *New Yorker* magazine was a trend-setter in a variety of ways which encouraged top-drawer businesses to choose sophisticated ad agencies to craft campaigns suitable for the magazine. Helena Rubenstein has pretty much dropped from view now but back then it was one of the premiere cosmetics firms. The ad is understated, relying on an appeal to simple values and a familiar product to draw the viewer in and encourage her that she, too, would look like this if she only used these products. The balloons are particularly appealing to me, outlining the person in her simple under-stated linen suit and lovely smile hidden under a straw hat and feather over a long pageboy, THE hairstyle of the era.



### Hastings Rings



One of the images of that era that captured my attention was the ad for rings used in internal combustion engines. The fascination stemmed from the bizarre shape of the man's face as well as from the fact that it dealt with things made out of metal, i.e. my dad's world. The man showed up with red stripes on his shirt sometimes, but he always had the square jaw. It was probably intended to represent the shape of a piston, a fact that escaped this kid. The fact that dad was a machinist, a man who worked on motors and engines -I don't know what the difference is and used to fight with Tommy about it, though neither of us really had a clue- probably added to my interest in this ad.



On the north side of the east end of our property, there was a primitive corral structure. I call it a bowery but am not sure what the right name is, and I can't find anything like it on the internet although it was a common structure in the area. It was simply a "roof", without walls, made of straw for the purpose of protecting livestock from the rain and sun.

The construction was simple. Four large cedar posts were driven into the ground in a square. Long logs were laid across the tops of these posts to form a rectangle. Smaller logs were laid across the rectangle and finally branches and straw were braided across these smaller logs to form a thatch that was 8 or 10 inches thick. After the straw was compacted and sat out in the weather, it was tight enough to keep water from flowing through when it rained so protected livestock standing under it.

The height of this roof was perhaps six feet, far too high for me to reach. But when cousins like Dale and Norman came over, they were tall enough to reach into the thatch and in the spring they did something that interested and troubled me. This was early enough that baby birds had hatched. The straw thatch was used by sparrows as a place to make nests, because it was dry and secure. Straw for nesting material was already present. The sparrows made burrows through the straw that were several feet long in some cases.

So Dale or Norman would reach into the narrow tunnels that the birds had created, hunting for baby birds that were still in the nest. They'd pull them out and they were ugly creatures, eyes hardly open, no feathers, floppy, and whitish. They would throw them like rocks which is the part that bothered me. I didn't mind the pulling them down to look at them but the killing was not necessary. I don't know where I came by





outside of mine but didn't mind. It was food.

In the background you can see Split Mountain Gorge just to the left of center, right where the long peak on the left falls. The jagged mountains to the right -east- of Split Mountain that I talked about above where Butch Cassidy and his gang holed up when he went to the region to visit.

When I took you kids 40 years later to Vernal, I took you to the river and hunted for this spot. Unfortunately, the banks had moved so much in the intervening years that it was impossible to get back to this specific location. But we got close enough that I took this photo of the five of you standing under a tree in the general region. Julie was mad and didn't want to stay in the photo but I insisted. Good thing, huh, Jules.



This is about the same location that I found a veritable forest of psilocybin (sp?) mushrooms that I photographed, much to the astonishment of one of you when you saw the photo many experiences later.

It was on the day I took this photo that you spent the night on the east rim of this Green River, perhaps 20 miles upstream of the place we're standing on right here. It was a hot windy summer night and we went there with grandpa and grandma Jensen in their motor home. He had a quarry at the spot we stayed on, the point of going there at all. From that location we could see the three box canyons very well.



**T**hen, as now, soda pop was a big deal. I think it was a bigger deal then, than now because it was a rarity, something unusual that wasn't a daily habit. I loved it. I nagged mom and dad to have another bottle and was generally ignored, but now and then they would relent and I'd get a bottle. The problem then was that I couldn't drink it. A full bottle was just too much for me, so I got in trouble for not drinking the stuff I had been pestering them about. It was real hard to beat them.

Pop was only available in bottles. No cans where we lived, though cans were appearing to some degree in metropolitan areas. To give you a sense of the variety of companies competing in the pop business and the variety of flavors offered, I've collected photos of pop bottle caps and put them on the next two pages. There was an enormous variety of sodas. These pages are only a small percentage of the images I found. After those pages, I've put some images of particular sodas that I encountered.

### Mission Orange

Mission brand was familiar because Grandma and grandpa sold it in their little country store. Us little consumers were bombarded even back then with ads enticing us to get our parents to buy the products, by promising us some sort of "premium" or "prize" if we could finagle a purchase of the product.

This ad calls me by name, "Kid", I understood that. Look at him, standing there with his beanie, short pants and striped shirt, funning with his bottle of Mission Orange in his hand while he yells to me that I can get free balloons. "With every carton of Mission Orange." So what. We had to buy a whole carton to get the balloons. That didn't faze us. We couldn't get a bottle let alone a carton so we could be fascinated and tantalized all we wanted.

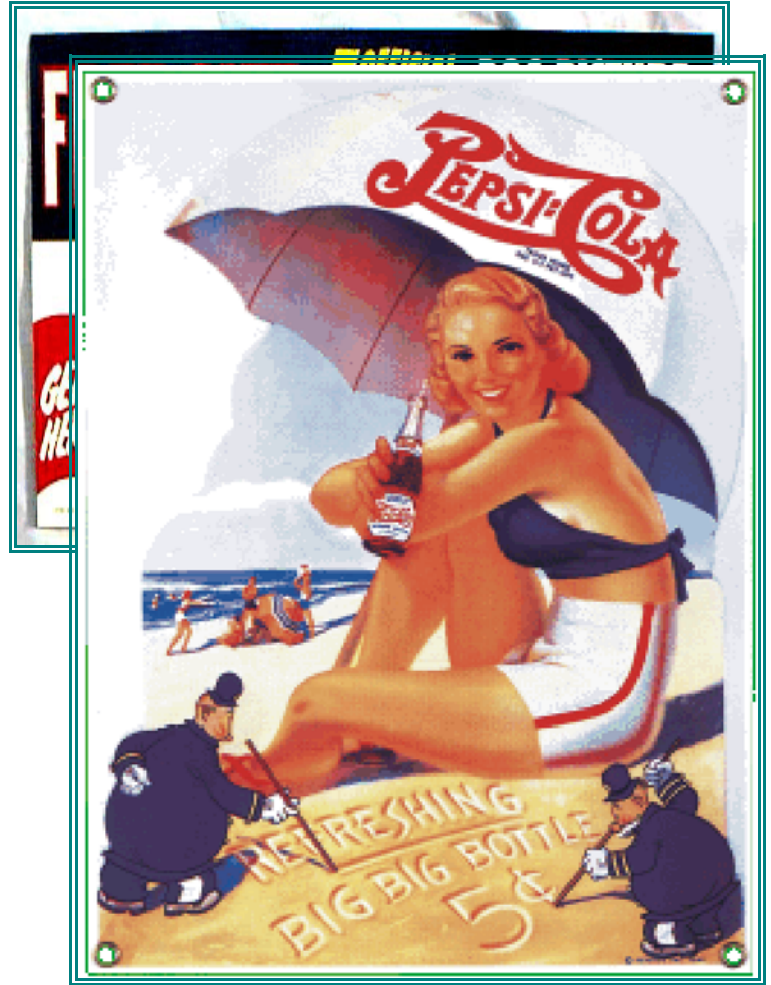
These line drawings with simple blocks of color appealed to me. I understood that kind of cartoon presentation of ideas.



### Orange Crush

The company that made Orange Crush was competing for my purchase with the other companies that made orange flavored drinks, like Mission. In this ad, the premium has changed from baby toys like balloons to more mature items that speak to my maturity. Cards, printed colored cards. Of something I liked, namely dogs. We had a little black dog and that qualified us to be connoisseurs of these cards and to know about them.

One of the hooks for us in this ad was the phrase "Trading cards". What a sophisticated idea. Cards that we could trade with other kids. Made me feel like I was and adult to have cards to trade, sort of like exchange them like money.



### Pepsi-Cola

This ad was aired for families across the country. I wonder what moms and dads did to protect their young from such risqué exposures? I never saw any of that when I was a kid and am surprised today at the graphic representation in an era that seemed at the time so innocent. Obviously, I was the only one who was innocent.

This bottle is a mere nickel. And had a refund/deposit of 2 cents. I'm not sure

what the point was of having clowns or cops drawing the information in the sand. At least that's what they looked like to me. Clowns or cops and I wasn't entirely sure they weren't the same thing. My dad didn't approve of the latter.



## Coca Cola

These are probably 8 ounce bottles, but what do you think about that price? Two bits for 6 bottles?

And notice the handle on this pack. A wire handle to support the stress of the weight. Obviously a returnable metal carrier. This little bright eyed kid was in the ads for years.

This stuff was originally made with cocaine, hence its name. It was apparently concocted by a pharmacist. The story goes that he

was trying to create a cough medicine. This country has a long history of using "illicit" substances publicly and unregulatedly for a long time. Just look at the story I tell about paregoric elsewhere. Coke was part of that culture, and they dropped cocaine from the formula only because federal regulations began to crimp their style and threaten them. Otherwise, Coke would still contain "coke".



## Royal Crown Cola



in the world. If you want to know what REAL root beer tastes like, then drink this stuff. It is without doubt the best of them all.

### Nesbitt Orange

Another of the orange sodas was Nesbitts.

Orange was probably the most popular flavor.



Figure 349 <http://www.imsdesign.com/Nesbitt1.jpg>

## 7-Up

This drink was as popular as Coke and Pepsi in that era. It's being pitched as a "family drink", which is perhaps advertising taking advantage of the risqué ads shown above that were doubtless provocative.

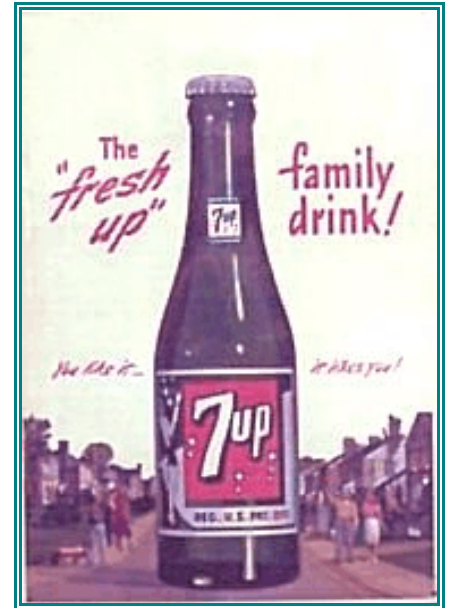


Figure 350

[http://www.nostalgiavilleusa.com/tins/t\\_sodas.htm](http://www.nostalgiavilleusa.com/tins/t_sodas.htm)

## Nehi

This bunch wasn't above using a little sex to sell their drink. It is remarkable in retrospect how seductive ads were back then. I have believed that the use of human form and flesh was something that crept into advertising in the last half of the century. Obviously, not. The difference is the amount of exposure, not the fact of exposure and innuendo.



Figure 351

[http://www.nostalgiavilleusa.com/tins/t\\_sodas.htm](http://www.nostalgiavilleusa.com/tins/t_sodas.htm)



The intermountain region was a prime location for oil exploration because of its geology. One of the major jobs dad did at Payton's machine shop was re-

thread drilling pipe for the Rangeley Colorado oil field. One of the first obvious steps we'd see indicating that more oil exploration was being done was the appearance of a small group of men with a specially designed truck. It had a small derrick that was used to drill narrow holes in the ground that were then tamped with a stick of dynamite. Some sort of receivers were carefully laid hundreds of yards around this test to receive and record information after the blast. The sound waves from the explosion would go in all directions and when they struck strata of differing hardness, they would reflect back upward at different rates. When the returning sound waves were collected and analyzed, an image was created of the strata. The geologists -stratigraphers actually- could look for tell tale signs that suggested there might be oil.

The next step if the site looked hopeful was to bring in a larger drilling rig. A stationary derrick was erected over the possible spot and tended by the requisite men and equipment. This was done northeast of our property at some point in time. I don't remember specifically seeing the rig in operation but the evidence of their efforts was half a dozen worn out drill bits that looked like this one. The ones we found were not this large because they were drilling test holes, but they were of this design. They were still too heavy to even move.

The way the bit drills is simple: the drill string with this bit on the end is allowed to rest on the bit and rotated. As the pipe rotates, the three toothed-wheels also rotate and grind up whatever they are resting on. This debris is flushed out with drilling mud that is forced down the pipe at which point it reverses direction and flows upward, washing out the debris.

When oil was discovered, the company then has to cap it and set up a piping system to collect the oil and transport it to a refinery. A few of these pumps were set up around Vernal and they all looked like this. The yoke on the left end of the bird-head-shape that runs down into the ground is a rod that pushes down and pulls up and the rocking beam goes up and down. A valving system keeps oil from flowing back into the hole and on to the refinery.





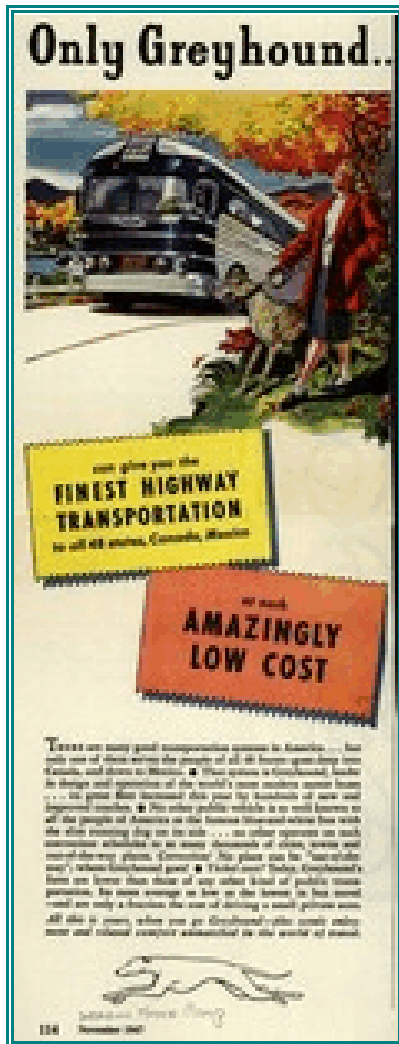
It was odd by modern measures, with the expansion coil sitting on the top of the machine, not buried in the bottom or along the back. It actually makes more sense than making a flat sheet of it and hanging it between the refrigerator and the wall.



In this era when the personal car was just taking over, commercial bus lines were relied on to travel between towns and states. The two dominant trans-continental firms were Greyhound and Trailways. These ads are from the late 1940's. The bulk of the copy is not photographic. Drawings and paintings were used for the most part. The Trailways ad would not work today. Who would be impressed with an ad suggesting that you should explore the four quadrants of this country by bus? Airplanes today are the

only way that most Americans will travel distances. The ones who use bus were those too old to drive, those who could not afford cars. So trans-continental busses today are relegated to a sector of the population that are not well-to-do, who have little money.

This is probably true today but the difference was that that personal cars still had not become dominant and air travel was prohibitively expensive so busses could successfully compete with each other for passengers. These buses were luxurious. They were well suspended and quiet. The seats were soft and comfortable to sit in for long rides, and there was a small restroom in the back, a novelty that allowed the bus to drive long stretches without worrying about passenger "comfort".





Uphill Both Ways -  
Volume 7 Vernal, Utah 1946-51



The UP Railroad was aware of the number of passengers who took bus to see the sights in addition to the utilitarian motive of just getting from here to there. Cost was perhaps a factor that entered into people's decisions, but the fact that busses could take any road probably entered into UP's decision to offer their version of busses. They called them "Motor Busses", and they were basically large limousines.

This ad shows one of those "buses" covered with luggage, traveling through Zion's Park, Bryce Canyon and the Grand Canyon. The railroad aspect of UP is in the background, though present. Instead, the emphasis is on using the roads to see the sights.

15 June 22, 4

TRAVEL IN COMFORT... BY UNION PACIFIC  
To **ZION**  
NATIONAL PARK

Even the name "Zion" conveys the feeling of awe inspiring majesty created by this National Park.

Zion, together with beautiful Bryce Canyon and spectacular Grand Canyon, are connected by smooth highways. All three may be seen on an unforgettable motor-bus tour.

Union Pacific will take you direct to Cedar City, Utah, the National Parks gateway. If desired, you can visit the Parks as a "stop over" en route to or from Los Angeles.

ABOVE—Typical formation in Bryce Canyon Nat'l Park, Utah.

BELOW—Visitors gaze in wonder at Arizona's Grand Canyon.

**UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD**

Write Union Pacific Railroad, Room 323, Omaha, Neb., for free copy of "Utah-Arizona National Parks" booklet. Also ask about escorted low-Cost Vacation Tours.







distinctive. The challenge was to get the berries without being stabbed too many times by the thorns. It was inevitable that you would have a few pokes. In the process of holding your small pail or bucket up to catch the small berries, bits and pieces of dead leaves fell into the container. This, too, was inevitable. There were insects in the leaves buzzing around and it seems like a certain kind of tent caterpillar took up residence as well, all in all it was an education to pick buffalo berries.

After the pail was full -or you gave up- you'd go home with the catch, generally a few pints because the berries were so small and the job so messy. At the house grandma would take the pail and go through the berries, throwing away the detritus and any bad berries that she found. The simplest technique was to dump the berries into a pot of cold water. The leaves and insects would float to the surface of the water as she stirred the water, making them rise so she could pull them out. After she had cleaned the berries she mixed them with some granulated sugar and set them aside.

Then she prepared the dough for dumplings. I don't know the recipe for it but know that it was different than the dough she prepared for chicken or turkey and dumplings. The latter is more like bread while these dumplings were somehow lighter in texture and color, and sweet.

While she was making the dough she'd have a pot of water on the stove to boil. After the dough was ready, she would form small balls of it, press her finger into the side of it to make a depression. Then she'd spoon a heaping teaspoon of the berry-sugar mixture into the hole, and then pull the dough over it. After being satisfied that the pocket was sealed, she'd drop the dumpling into the pot of water where it would bounce around in the boiling bubbles. She continued make dumplings until she had used up all the berries.

By the time she was through shaping the dumplings the first ones were cooked. I don't really know how she could tell a dumpling was ready but it obviously was a matter of experience. What I saw at the table were smoothish round balls about 2 inches across, the outer surface of which was glistening and transparent.

The eating of them was heavenly. Several were presented in a deep soup bowl. You could obviously eat them however you wanted to but the standard drill as to take a spoon and cut the dumplings open. Then you poured cream, real honest-to-goodness right-out-of-the-cow cream, on the dumplings, not so that they floated but generously enough that you could savor it. Then you sprinkled granulated sugar over the collection using the spoon in the sugar bowl, or if you were an adult, by taking the sugar bowl and carefully pouring sugar out onto the dumplings. Then you took your spoon, cut off a large bite of the dumpling, being sure to capture a few berries and ate it. The texture, the flavor, tartness and sweetness were delicious.

Years later, probably the summer of 1960 when I visited Naples with Lyle, I talked

to grandma about these dumplings. She said she would make some for me if I would gather them, so I went out with a small bucket and collected enough for a meal. They were as small as I remembered and the trees were as spiny as before but the result was worth it. Grandma made them and I ate them.



A year or two before we moved to Seward my elementary school class put on a play at Thanksgiving time, the re-enactment of the story of the first thanksgiving celebrated by the Plymouth Bay colonists. This was still standard repertory when my kids were in elementary school in the 1970's and 1980's. When the teacher assigned parts to students I was given the role of "Squanto" - whether I liked it or not. I did not like it. Nor did I want to even be in the play. I imagine I was given the assignment so that I would "feel important", or feel included, or learn something that the omniscient teacher knew I needed. Of course, if she had really been omniscient, she would have understood that making me perform in a play was about the most painful torture she could have chosen to inflict. She certainly did not intend to do that.

I was horrified at the thought of performing publicly. The idea of being expected to say some words out loud in front of everyone who would be sitting there watching and waiting to hear me was disturbing. That's the first and primary reason for my discomfort with the role. But there was a second: the name was ugly. What a stupid sounding name. "Squanto." The fact that it was a foreign name, an Indian name, didn't cut any ice with me. I disliked how it sounded because I disliked how it sounded. I didn't like it. Any name starting "Squa-" sounded stupid then and still does. What a stupid syllable. This is the kid whose first big word about age 2 was "reflection", repeated endlessly so he could feel the beauty of the liquids flowing over his tongue. "Squanto?" Nope. "Squanto" was just plain ugly.

Well, grandma and grandpa Merrell heard of this insurrection and didn't think too highly of it. Grandma, of course, was mild and kidded with me in the manner of the tolerant, affectionate adult she was who wanted to change a kid's mind but who wasn't angry about it nor was she really determined. Her style was a grin and a question or two, "Now Ronnie you don't really feel that way do you?!" or "Ronnie, don't you really want to do it?" The answer in each case was the same: "No." She didn't push hard on the matter because that wasn't her style - or problem. She also understood that it didn't really matter.

Grandpa, however, was a bit more direct about it. But also creative this time. His usual style was to attack a problem frontally. Horses, people, problems. Just take them on. None of this beating about the bush. Naturally, it had no more effect on me than did Grandma's attempts. I did not want to be in the play. Even when he tried to be nice,

there seemed to me to be an edge to him because he had what felt like natural, all-pervasive, all-purpose brusqueness. Perhaps that's not actually the case but I always anticipated something a bit harsh out of him. His approach would not be a question. Instead he tried shame. "Well, I don't see why a young feller like you wouldn't be glad to get to be in the Thanksgiving play!" or "Why, I remember when I was a little feller like you I'd a been proud to do it!". No soap. Didn't work.

Now his creativity surfaced, an usual thing to experience in him. He decided to become one with me, sort of a fellow traveler this time. He had spent a lot of time on the Ouray Indian reservation out by Fort Duchesne west of Roosevelt. One of the few stories I remember about his time with them as a teenager involved hats. He was an ornery kid his whole life by the evidence. He'd "find sport" -his words- in knocking the Indians' hats off, just for the fun of it. One weekend he was doing this and the Indians had reached their limit. But rather than remove his scalp which is what they probably should have done, they opted for some torture. Several of them chased ol' Fuller down and then tied him up. Not tightly enough to really injure him, but securely enough that he couldn't escape from the ropes. That was bad enough but to really get his attention they decided to sit him across the edges of a wagon box, tied in such a way that he couldn't escape. Then they left him there, sitting with all of his weight across two boards cutting into the back of his thighs until someone happened by to release him. I don't imagine he repented, though he probably didn't knock those Indians' hats off for a while.

His approach to me was to tell me a story about his life as an adult on the reservation. He had to have been an adult because had whiskers in this story. Perhaps the time he was talking to me about as he was trying to persuade me to be in the play was when he lived on the reservation with grandma just prior to their move out to Rainbow where mom was born.

His strategy to persuade me to feel OK in the role of Squanto was to get me to understand that he lived with Indians and was comfortable with them. In retrospect, it strikes me now that he didn't understand my resistance. As already noted, the resistance was to performing publicly and dislike of the name itself. I did not resist the notion of Indians but that must have been his assumption. He explained that when he lived with them, he was given the name "Ma-Kuh-chits" because of how his face looked. He apparently had a rough beard. As he stroked his chin he explained that the name mean "horned toad." This story had no effect on my resistance to the role.

The role was painful for other reasons as well. I had to memorize a series of what struck me as nonsense syllables that I was to say at a certain point in the play. To this day I don't know whether they were real Ute or other Indian words or just babble made up by the teacher. I had difficulty memorizing the "words" and dreaded the time I would have to say them in public. Even in practice in class I was embarrassed.

The other reason the role was painful was because I had to take my shirt off. Then my chest and face were painted with stripes and I wore headband with turkey feathers in it. The problem, again, wasn't dislike of Indians, it was simply embarrassment at dressing in a conspicuous way and being on public display. During the play, I had to sit on the floor for a while and then stand up at the right time and mutter those nonsensical syllables. I was nervous about being able to tell the exact point in the play when I was to stand up and speak my nonsense. The performance came and went and I don't remember it, but I have remembered grandpa's Indian nickname even though we never talked about it after that season.



*"Singing of bell bottom trousers  
And coats of navy blue,  
Let 'im climb the rigging'  
Like his daddy used to do..."*

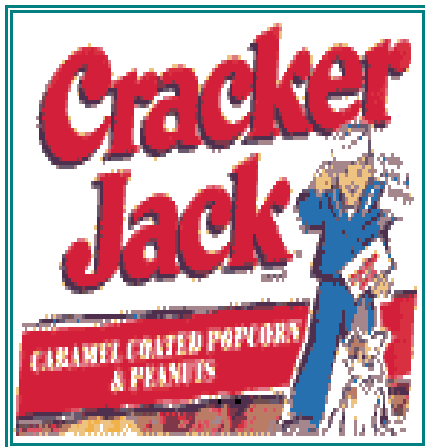
The honorable warrior. This one was a sailor, but it didn't matter. When that song was popular at the end of WWII in the late 1940's, and I was 7 or 8 years old, I loved it. My vision of the young sailor described in this song, the 'gob' in a rakish white sailor hat, was the boy on the Cracker Jack box. I could see him in my mind's eye, swinging in the rigging with the men, brave and strong, wind blowing a gale - and accepted. That was important.

When I listened to the song I didn't get a sense from the adults around me that there was anything wrong with the song. But when I listened to the words, I had a sense that there just might be something not quite right. For example, when the sweet sounding young woman sang that the man who wanted to rent a room asked her to lead him to his room with a candle, I thought that was odd. Obviously, I didn't really understand what was going on, but I knew at a primitive level that this was not entirely appropriate. But because I did not in fact comprehend what was being said, I simply enjoyed the melody. At that age, if I had understood it was a dirty song, I would have insisted that I not enjoy it. When I heard the old sailor lyrics



recently, the original version of the song, I was amazed. It is indeed a dirty bawdy song. The version that was released is shady but the original is clear and specific. The new version is on the CD I have sent to all of you kids.

Cracker Jack was such an exciting thing to get at the store, first because the popcorn and peanuts were sweet, unlike any popcorn we popped at home, and second because there was always a small prize. To heighten the suspense, the manufacturer also wrapped the prize in a small envelope that informed the buyer that there was a prize, and teased him with the challenge to "Guess what's inside?" We never could but that was part of the fun. Anyway, the song made me think of myself dressed up like the Cracker Jack Kid.



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The honorable warrior was accepted in my family as a worthy enterprise, one that was a necessity which called families to give up their men and men their lives to

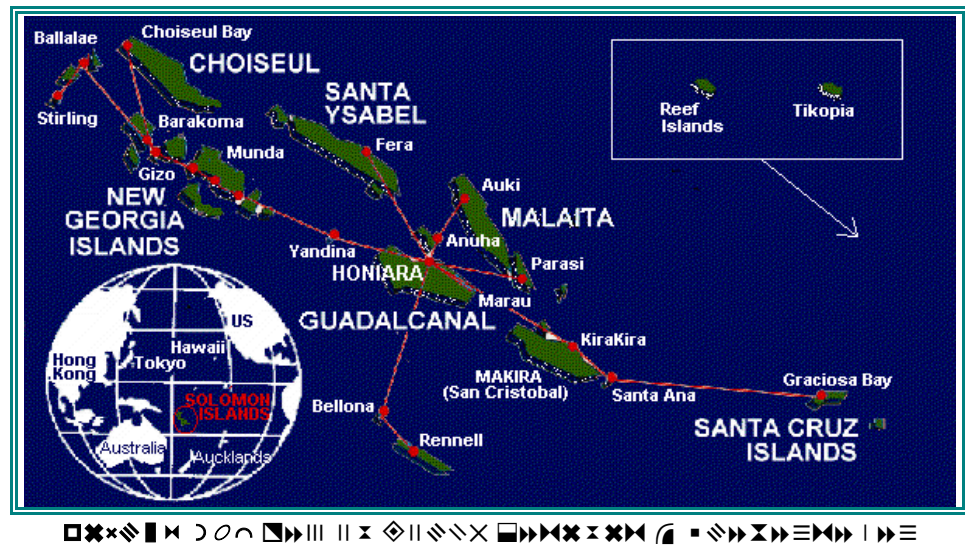
defend this nation, to preserve its freedoms. I understood that as a child, obviously not with the specificity I just stated it, yet that is what I was taught to believe, did believe, and still believe. The price of freedom was blood. Literally.

I understood that wars were evil but that freedom was precious. And if it came to



war to defend freedom and our country, then that was the right thing to do. Remembering my uncle Grant again. His back was broken on a LST landing during the famous battle of Guadalcanal. There was no shame on his return from war, only concern for him. He was present in our lives in various ways. When we went to movies, the news reel that was always shown, along with a cartoon, before the main feature, showed important incidents in the war which covered the globe. There was no part of the world that was not either directly involved in it or affected by it.

Grant's injury was the only incident I remember that affected our family directly. We did not lose anyone like some families did. The battles against the Japanese on Guadalcanal were critical.



Guadalcanal is located in the Solomon Islands in the south Pacific north east of Australia. I don't know which island the battle he was hurt on.

I was able to find another image of the Guadalcanal landing that gives you an idea of the setting. In this image the landing is not complicated by weapons' fire from the beach so it is not chaotic and bloody. I don't know whether these are LST's or Johnson Boats, nor do I



really know whether there's a difference. Whatever these are, they are comparable to the one from which Grant was unloading ammunition cans. The front "side" of these crafts is dropped down into the water when landing. That provides a ramp for men and gear to exit the boat. It was in this process that the man behind Grant fell and landed on Grant's back with a can of ammunition which is basically a block of steel at that point.



**M**y small consciousness of world events became aware around the time we moved to Seward that something bad was in a place called Korea. This was really evident when I lived in Alaska, but started before we moved. The people who were portrayed in the news reels and magazines looked like Japanese or Chinese. They all looked the same. I didn't understand what the problem was but did know that there was some kind of war going on over there again. To me it was a continuation of the WW II that had been going on for as long as I had consciousness. An important general was involved, named MacArthur. He was a hero and looked like a tough man.



This little war that erupted in 1950 while I was in Vernal as a small kid was the war that drove the economy of Seward when we moved there the next year. A substantial percent of the shipping that came through Seward was related in some manner to the Korean war so dad made his living as a longshoreman from the war. About 1953 or 1954, the amount of munitions that was being shipped through Seward to the military installations in Alaska became so great that the risk of a devastating explosion on the docks that would destroy the central part of the small town was so great that the government even constructed a special dock clear across the bay specifically to handle munitions. That meant the men had to drive a long ways around the head of the bay to get over there but there was an added premium for working in that dangerous setting

that offset the inconvenience.



**I**n the spring of 1951 a few months before we moved to Alaska the sewer line from town was pushed out our way. A steam shovel -a real steam shovel that used steam from a coal-fired boiler- was used to dig up the road so the line could be set in place and buried. The process was slow and I do not believe it had passed our place by the time we made the move. This was the third utility to reach out to the farms, the first and second being electricity and the telephone service. Vernal was growing and the fact that there was a demand for a sewer in unincorporated land was evidence that there was also an increase in the wealth of the community. The valley was still basically ranches and farm land like this, but the sewer was being pushed out.



I was fascinated by the process because I had never seen holes made in the ground that way. Uniform width and depth in straight lines. Impressive. Ditches I understood, footings for house walls I had seen, but nothing like this. That trench went straight for a mile from town down the center of the road, aimed past our house, same width and depth, as straight as an arrow. I couldn't even draw a line that straight. The men labored hard moving the pipe around, setting it down in the trench, joining it, moving dirt back into the trench with shovels. The joint of pipes is what interested me. I understood the idea that the pipe should not leak stuff and that the joint was the place where this was controlled. But I did not understand how a thick black rubber ring was going to prevent the outflow of liquid. All I knew was that I badly wanted one of those wonderful black rubber rings for my own.



The Santa Fe was a famous railroad back then. I vaguely knew the name as a kid in Vernal probably from ads in the news paper or magazines, and the name conjured up something to do with the southwest. Obviously, with a name like that. I wasn't quite sure where Santa Fe was, but trusted that it was a place in fact and that one day I would learn where it was. Meantime, the ads proved to me that it went through my kind of country, country wide open and dry and deserty. Country populated sparsely with Indians who rode painted ponies.

I'm including a good quality, full page image to give you a sense of what the full-page ads were like in Collier's or Look or Life or the Saturday Evening Post. This ad illustrates another feature of advertising in those days. Some of them were actually creations worthy of being framed and hung. The quality is not that of one of the old masters, yet it demands your attention when you look at it. You take a minute to see the rest of the tribe standing in the shadow behind the Chief, sitting high and proud on his Appaloosa, in full regalia, waving his ceremonial spear, trailing streamers of feathers in the light breeze, with orange palm prints on the chest of the house. You can barely make out the returned wave of the engineer, leaning from his window greeting the tribe that he saw every time he passed through the region.

The perspective on the train creates the sense of an enormously long machine, with the powerful red head that would take it safely through whatever needed to be gone through. Behind the train is a wonderful dramatic display of huge thunderheads, fluffy white clouds that really did materialize in the desert summer. Behind the last half of the train is a sandstone promontory just like the ones I saw all over Utah. It was a familiar ad for all of these reasons.

This is a work of art worthy of being collected.



One of the highlights of the social calendar in Vernal was the "Gold and Green Ball," the annual formal dance sponsored by the dominant faith of the community to which we subscribed. The color terms are the designated colors of the organizations for the young men and young women, gold and green. This event provoked enormous amounts work in the production of suitable, striking beautiful "formals". It was less of a deal for the young men, but the women were like a flock of peacocks, strutting and competing and looking at each other. The event happened in the spring, and was as predictable as the rising of the sun, always looked forward to.

The highlight of the evening was the crowning of the queen. Her selection probably was the result of a lengthy arduous competition in the local congregations. The fact that she was only queen in a small town was of no significance. She might as well have been queen of New York. The investiture ceremony was elaborate. She was escorted to the dais on the arm of a young man suitable attired and prepared for the occasion. In her train followed two little kids, a boy and a girl. The little girl carried flowers and the boy carried a cushion in which rested a ring that would be placed on the young woman's hand at the appropriate point.

Guess who the little boy was. Right.

The preparation for my first public performance, particularly one of this magnitude, was as elaborate as that for the queen. Mom was told to make me a costume suitable for the event, a long sleeved shirt, pants and slippers. Out of white satin. She was capable of the task and fitted and refitted me so that my appearance would honor both her and the coronation. I had to stand on a chair several times while she redid the hems on the legs of my trousers. I had to stand still while she measured and checked my waist band, the length of my sleeve, the lay of the collar and so on. I had no idea how arduous it was to being handsome. But we were ready in time for the frosty evening.

The event was held in a large dance hall owned by a civic group. Cars filled with gorgeous young men and women disgorged them at the entrance. Coats and wraps were taken by a hat check girl who handed a coupon to each patron before then entered the festivities.

The little girl and I had to be on-duty the whole evening, actually a demanding thing to do to little kids who were usually in bed long before the crowning took place. Our job was to carry baskets of candy around the hall, offering it to all of the people. Do you know how nervous I was to do that? I did my best however, because there was a certain woman watching me who made darn sure I thought I was having a great time.

As the time neared to go do my ring bearer job, I just had to go pee. I had waited all evening but couldn't wait any longer. The design of the trousers was not the normal design so it was difficult to undo them and do my job and get back into them neatly. But being a big boy, I had to do it alone. No going with mommy to the bathroom. I went in,

struggled to get the pants loosened and anxiously did my duty. Enormous relief. Ah. I struggled once more to refasten my pants. As I finished the task, I looked in the floor length mirror and was stunned. I had peed my pants. And my spotlighted walk down the hall, with the world watching me was yet to come.

I was mortified. I wanted to go home, I wanted to cry. But I could do none of those things. I hardly dared tell mom what had happened but I knew that I better tell her before anyone else did. She was angry at me. All of her careful work was soiled and I had committed a serious sin. I knew it. I would have done anything to undo it but there was no option.

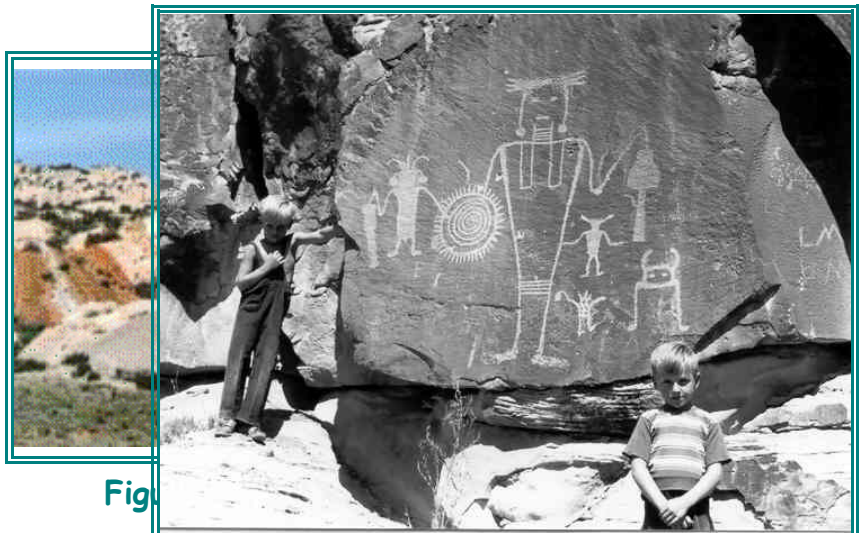
So I lined up with my little pillow with the ring resting loosely on it, terrified I would drop it. At the same time, scarlet-cheeked from embarrassment that people would all look at my pants and know that I had wet them.

Somehow it ended and I went home but it was an unpleasant experience that goes with me into the next world. Have you noticed how you are able to identify half a dozen mistakes you have made that embarrass you above all others, that you relive and wish you could undo? This is one of mine. It doesn't matter that I am sixty. That event is one of the most embarrassing times of my whole life.



There were sign posts and trails back then but it was OK to ignore them and veer off into the desert whenever. It was OK to hunt for the small sandy concretions and put them in your pocket.

When I visited the Dinosaur National Monument with you kids in the mid-1980's I was shocked. The simplicity and freedom of the site was destroyed by bureaucracy and bureaucrats. I suppose it was inevitable, and perhaps even necessary, but it was offensive to be put into herds like cattle and lead around in the order and manner prescribed. There were sign posts and trails back then but it was OK to leave them. It was OK to hunt for the small sandy concretions and put them in your pocket. I remember filling a bottle with them, and taking the bottle



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generated sufficient money to pay the passage for 3 people, from Vernal, Utah to Seattle, Washington, to Anchorage, Alaska and then to Seward, Alaska. That is not an insubstantial accomplishment. The passage included a one-way bus trip for 2 kids and an adult on Greyhound from Vernal to Seattle. We spent several days in Seattle waiting for the next D-C 3 flight to Anchorage. That involved hotel charges and food. I remember well going to what today I recognize as a low-cost hotel, but a clean respectable one, for several days. The elevator operators were nice black women who quickly learned our floor

We also went to Pike's Place which I was thrilled many years later to introduce to my son Nate and subsequently to the other kids. We even found the old store of miscellanea. My heart was filled with the recognition of the store where I saw a mummy,



a mermaid, a deep sea diver and a kraken. They were all there in 1990 when I took Nate on a sort of treasure hunt to see what was left of the waterfront mom took us to in 1950. Of course, by the time Nate and I visited it, it had shrunk to 10% of its original size. He and I went again in 2002 and took this photo. The owner said that this is actually not the original structure. That one burned down years ago on a different wharf, but the store was resurrected in this location. I was not surprised because I remembered that the original had a loft around the store that you could walk around in.

It was there in Seattle during those few days when we laid over waiting for our flight on the DC-3 that mom offered to buy us "a book". Of course, there was a hook to this offer, but I did not recognize the hook, the qualification. In my mind, the offer to buy "a book" included ANY book I liked. So I started grazing in whatever bookstores she took us to visit.

Sure enough, I saw a book I liked. A biography of Arturo Toscanini. I don't remember today why I liked him, but he had become a compelling figure. He was a dramatic, ferocious serious little man, waving his baton like a sword at the bassoon player. Since he was a classical music conductor, I obviously discovered him through classical music, and that means that it was through dad. Perhaps my fascination with Toscanini was actually a sense of a bond with my dad who had been absent from my life -again- for 4 or 5 months.

Anyway, I had to have this book. It was all I could think of. But, no, Mom wasn't ready to do what I wanted to do in response to what I thought -i.e. wanted to believe- was an open offer that she had tendered. It turned out that she had HER heart set on spending some of her hard-earned cash on educational books, so my plaintive, heart-felt request for his biography was eventually beat down. What I discovered was that I really wanted to buy a workbook of arithmetic problems. Gag. Such was life with Marie who loved us passionately but had no tolerance for our own ideas or preferences. It was a thick green book that I did dutifully, but mostly unsuccessfully, work in for a while. It was boring, and the knowledge that the book I really wanted was left behind sort of made any exercise an exercise in futility.



The fare included the one-way trip for the three of us on a DC-3 from Seattle late at night to Anchorage, a trip that lasted a good part of the night. At the time this was top of the line in commercial aircraft. It came to be a workhorse the world around because of its reliability. I flew in them in Brazil between Goiania and Porangatu, an old friend actually. Note how steep the angle is when the plane sits on the tarmac. When you boarded through the push-up stairs, you had to hold onto the seats as you climbed up to your own. It was the first time I had flown at all so I was nervous about it. Dad had flown but I hadn't and it was fearful to think that I was going to be up there in the air where I could fall out, or the plane could crash. I was afraid but there was no way around it.



There were two stewardesses on the over-night flight. I didn't understand why we flew during the night. Isn't it harder to see where you're going in the dark? They wore form-fitting uniforms and jaunty soldier-like hats while they passed out blankets and pillows and life savers to chew to prevent inner ear problems while ascending. They also passed out box lunches -literally cardboard boxes- at one point. Inside was a sandwich, apple, cookie and carton of milk, like a school lunch. Here's a school of them and it was mandatory that they wear these uniforms, that they keep the seams of their nylons straight -no panty hose then- that they smile, etc. etc.



The last part of the fare included the trip from Anchorage to Seward on the AAA Railroad. That is one of the monumental journeys of my life. I was so afraid that I would have gotten off the train at any point if I had been offered the opportunity. The

greatest fear I felt was when the train traversed a long elevated section of track and then entered into a tunnel half way up a mountain. The elevated section was built on a series of logs driven into the ground by a pile driver and looked to be insufficient to carry the weight of a steam engine and the cars it towed. This elevated section built out of piles actually completed a complete loop! I was terrified up there. I'll tell you about in the next volume.

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L T Payton was probably an average boss. OK, but nothing to write home about. He made one error, however, where dad was concerned. When he would get drunk and go to this machine shop when dad was working, he would tell dad, "Any time you want to be paid off, you just let me know and I'll do it right then!" Well, one day in late 1950, dad had his fill of drunk Payton. So when he made his usual stupid threat of paying dad off, dad said, "Fine, give me my check, I'm gone." And he was. In a few days he and his best friend Art Schafermeyer went to Seward, Alaska. I have no idea what LT Payton felt but it was not an issue.

I missed him tremendously those few months when he was in Seward and we stayed behind to finish school.

In 1951 we moved from Vernal to Seward where we lived 5 years after which we moved to Boston. In Seward dad worked as a dockside longshoreman. In Boston, he worked in one of the Harvard museums.