

Naples - 1944-46 Part IV

Chapter Contents:

The Garage	<u>2</u>
Milk, Cows and Cats	<u>5</u>
Samuel Peter and the Cedar	<u>7</u>
Three Jensen Generations	<u>9</u>
New Vernal Third Ward Building	<u>10</u>
Sunday School in a Log Cabin	<u>12</u>
Snowstorm in Naples	<u>14</u>
4 Year old Riding Horse Alone	<u>17</u>
The Five Horsemen	<u>18</u>
Fish	<u>20</u>
I love cats	<u>21</u>
US Highway 40	<u>24</u>
Sunshine Ranch	<u>26</u>
Grandma, Nasturtiums and Petunias	<u>32</u>
Slaughtering hogs	<u>34</u>
Light bulbs and Darning Needles	<u>35</u>
Federal Ration Stamps	<u>38</u>
Birthday Party for the Cousins - on the Lawn	<u>38</u>
Aunt Helen, Tatting Lace and Louisa May Alcott	<u>40</u>
Grampa Merrell and Potato Candy	<u>43</u>
Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid in Split Mountain Gorge	<u>45</u>
Marie the Dressmaker	<u>48</u>
Broken Milk bottle and Knee	<u>54</u>
"Green Eyes"	<u>55</u>
Grandpa and the Morning Glories	<u>56</u>
Mulberry Trees and silkworms	<u>58</u>



Dad decided after 5 or 6 months at the Manhattan Project in Hanford, Washington that he'd had enough. So he returned, again, to Naples. Always Naples. Where we were, the three of us, mom, Dickie and Ronnie. Thank god for Naples. I don't know what these two people would have done without the reliability and dependability of Fuller and Teen who always took them back in.

The decision to leave Hanford to go to Honolulu was made in Hanford according to mom's latest conversation. She said that he and three other guys who roomed together in Hanford all decided they would go to Pearl Harbor. This meant that his visit to Naples was just that, a visit, before he hopped off for Pearl Harbor. I have no idea how he got there but since commercial airlines were few and expensive, frequented by the wealthy, he doubtless took a ship from San Francisco or Los Angeles. He never mentioned that trip in my hearing.

The Garage

These photos were taken after Dad embarked on the Pearl Harbor episode. Judging from Dickie's size, I'd guess he was about 18 months, which meant I was 3'ish. Mom's holding the two of us which was OK with us. If Dickie was a year and a half then this was



Figure 1 Mom, Dickie and Ronnie



late 1943 or early 1944 in which case mom was a slip of a girl being 21 years old. But she'd already been around: she'd spent a summer in Tremonton working for her sister, meeting dad and deciding to get married, had returned to Naples while dad went to Seward, followed him to Seward to get married, moved back to Naples for a few months until dad came back from Seward, went to SLC where dad became a machinist and worked for the Utah Ordnance Depot, while two kids were born, after when she returned to Naples again while dad went to Hanford. Not bad for a 21 year old, particularly in those days. Mom is as extraordinary a creature as dad. That fact is lost too often in my stories. My best description of her strength is her chapter, "Tough as Nails", in JIMMARIE.

Dad is holding us on the same day, pointing to something that neither kid is sure about. Look how large his hand is across my chest and how small my own is holding his wrist. He was thinner - and younger- in those days, wearing the fedora that he wore until we moved to Boston ~13 years later. He'd dress up in this hat with an over coat and



Figure 2 Dad Dickie and Ronnie and Garage

leather gloves looking so classy. What a gorgeous pair when they were duded up for a dance like the Gold and Green Ball.

This garage was converted into apartment by grandpa Merrell and his sons by building a single wall across the garage to divide it into a front room and a back room. Then he finished off the interior walls with the same



fibrous wonder board of that era, Cellotex. The front room was the living, dining and cooking room and the back room was the bedroom and storeroom, of whatever there was to store. I don't believe that we had any plumbing so used an outhouse. There was electricity, but we cooked with a kerosene stove.

The humbleness of the place shows vividly in these photos. The yard isn't in grass, just dirt covered with whatever debris was on it. No major cleanup on the farm. That isn't to say that no one cared because they did, but most energy went into tending crops and animals, growing and canning vegetables and cooking. Making sure that there was enough grub for the next winter.

We were fourteen months apart but there seems to have been a substantial difference in our size. Dickie was a little guy that I took care of and I guess I sort of pushed him around. His toy truck was wood with eight wheels.

Just recently in an antique store I saw the characteristic reservoir for kerosene a stove. Few people probably know what the odd shaped glass bottle is for. It is a gallon-size jar made of clear glass with vertical sides, a flat bottom, a flattish top, and a rather narrow mouth. Over the narrow mouth there is a "lid" that has a one-inch long metal shaft sticking out. After the bottle is filled with kerosene the bottle is inverted and is set into a metal cup designed to hold the bottle. As the bottle is lowered, upside down, the metal

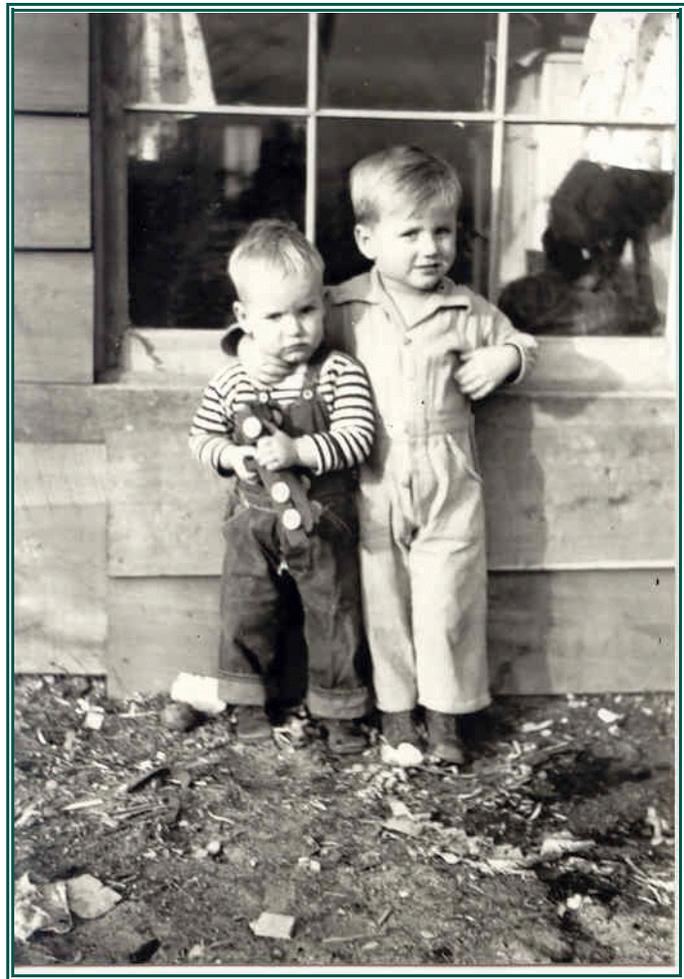


Figure 3 Dickie and Ronnie and Garage



shaft impinges on the bottom of the metal cup which pushed open a valve in the lid which allows kerosene to flow out of the bottle into that cup that is attached to a tube that runs across to the two burners. The bottle sits there as a reservoir, with air bubbles occasionally rising inside it as kerosene is consumed by the burners. The burners sat on the narrow feeder tube from the reservoir bottle. They were about 4-5 inches across and had circular wicks made of asbestos fiber to burn the kerosene. These wicks soaked up the kerosene from the feeder tube and you lit them with a large kitchen match. Then you adjusted the size of the flame by turning a knob to raise or lower the wick, thereby making a bigger or smaller flame. This little two-burner stove even came with an oven. A rectangular, asbestos-insulated metal box with a door on one end. To cook in the oven, it was set across the two burners which were both lighted and allowed to heat the oven. There was a gauge in the door that sort of indicated the approximate temperature inside. When it was deemed hot enough, the cake or bread was put inside, the door closed, and you prayed. But the omnipresent smell of kerosene is a vivid memory.

Milk, Cows and Cats

Grandpa had some milk cows which was a good deal for us in our poor state. We could have all the milk we wanted and make our own butter, plus the left over milk was put in the slop bucket for the hogs that had to be fattened up and they loved milk. A single cow can produce a prodigious amount of milk every day so must be milked in the morning and in the evening. They were almost in pain by the time milking was to be done. The milker took out some "hobbles", a single-legged stool to sit on, a clean milk pail with a dish towel to cover it, and a pail of soapy water.

The next image shows what the milking operation looked like out in the corral. Pretty humble. This woman -you can tell because of the bare legs and apron plus the style of the hat- is using a bucket to sit on instead of the one-legged stool. Note how unsanitary the location is. Nothing like the nearly sterile environment of modern dairies. Out there in the dirt with cow pies, flies and straw everywhere. The milker usually had a rag in the bucket of



warm soapy water that s/he used to wash off the bag and teats before starting. This washing only took off the gross dirt and straw. It obviously isn't possible to really disinfect a cow standing in those conditions.



Figure 4 Milking in a corral

<http://www.usda.gov/oc/photo/01di1437.jpg>

You can't see the hobbles but they are

there. Cows get rambunctious and kick and try to run sometimes, so a milker protected him/herself and the pail of milk by using hobbles to immobilize the cow for the duration of the milking. Hobbles are U-shaped metal strips with small chains across the open side. The U-shaped metal piece is wide enough to fit around one of the cow's hind legs, and is held in place by a small chain that hooked across the front side to hold of the U-shape. One hobble was put on each hind leg and the two were joined together by a chain that was so short that the cow could move one leg alone. This meant it could not walk or kick or buck. It couldn't walk which is why the things were called 'hobbles'. The cow might be offered some hay to appease her during the milking and sometimes its calf would nurse while the cow was immobilized.

Cats would hang out sometimes in the corral at milking time, hoping for some. If the milker was inclined, s/he might offer the cat some warm milk in a tin can or cup. Grant would just squirt the cat which didn't offer much sustenance to the cat but provided some humor because cats hate to get wet. Even with milk.

The pail of milk was sometimes covered with a dish towel and carried



back to the kitchen where it was always strained through a cloth to remove wisps of hay and dirt that might have gotten into the pail. Then the milk was ready to use. Period. No pasteurization, no homogenization, just raw milk. Whatever milk wasn't used was let sit in a large jar or bucket until later. During the time it was sitting, the cream would rise to the top and could be spooned off in thick spoonfuls.

Samuel Peter and the Cedar

During the month or so that dad was back in Naples, grandpa Jensen "found a ride to Naples," and he spent a week or so with us all in Naples. While he was there, the adults took a trip into the Uintah mountains so dad could show them o grandpa. Dickie and Ronnie were too small and would have "been in the way" so they were left behind with grandma. Grandpa Jensen always carried his rock hammer which you see stuck into the trunk of the dead cedar behind him.

Dad described how as a kid he and his dad would pack into a canyon on horseback and spend most of a weekend. Together, looking around, seeing what there was to see. I have Grandpa Jensen's geology book in my library that he used as a guide to geology from which he taught dad about geology and stratigraphy.



Figure 5 Samuel Peter above Leamington



This trip with was probably payback for the memories.

Grandpa only wore dark colors, bright ones being unseemly. Quietness, peacefulness, thoughtfulness were his hallmarks. Collar always buttoned. Grandpa Jensen was the most gentle man I ever knew.

Mom went on this outing, leaving us kids home with grandma Merrell. She was dressed for the occasion in slacks, appropriately. Note how tidy she is. She isn't wearing levis or blue jeans. She has on some kind of nice slacks and a blouse on comparable quality, even for climbing trees and hiking around in the desert. That was her style. Always.



Figure 6 Rita Hayworth



Three Jensen Generations

This is actually an important photo, more important than most of the ones you see in UBW. Because it is one of the few photos there are of the three generations of this line of US Jensens.

Dick and I have no male age-mates who are named

Jensen, just a smattering of female cousins and a few other-named males, i.e. Joey Zezulka. So this is an important photo to genealogists trying to construct a pictorial history of the generations.

Of course, I have a cat in my arms. And a hat. Always a hat. I love hats. See the chapter in JIMMARIE on "Hats" for details of this lifelong fetish. And cats have always been my preferred pet compared to dogs. That particular cat was one of my favorites as you can tell from all of the photos in this chapter that show me playing with it. Gentle animal that seemed to love me as much as I loved it.

In terms of the generations, Jens Jensen who came to this country in the late 1800's was an only son, as was his son Samuel Peter and his grandson James Alvin. This means that there are no Jensen relatives in the US who are directly related to us. None. Dick and I and our sons are the only related Jensens in the US. I had 2 sons and Dick had 4 so the line has now branched substantially.



Figure 7 Three Jensen Generations 1944



New Vernal Third Ward Building

The Ashton Place was situated in the Vernal Third Ward. West and south end of town. The congregation moved into a brand spanking new building about the time I got a memory. Prior to the time that it was constructed and dedicated, we attended religious services in an older church building on the north side of town, one that was constructed out of dark brown bricks. The three memorable aspects of that congregation are a fireplace in the dark foyer, the yellowish-tinted, leaded glass windows and having to sing for the whole congregation.

The latter was preceded by weeks of feverish practice in Sunday School and by painful laborious memorization at home. The occasion is not recalled, but the episode is. In those days, adults and kids all met together in the chapel for the start of Sunday school before breaking our for indoctrination. The kids sat in orderly rows in the front of the chapel, arranged by age group, the youngest -3 years- in the front. When the time for our "performance" arrived, our little class of little kids - couldn't have been more than six years of age- stood in place at rigid attention with *Walter Morrow* and *The Eyes of The World* upon us. Plus the bishop and his counselors who sat stony faced staring at us. I was a nervous wreck, dry mouth, swallowing often and hard. The song was one of the awfulest in the Mormon hymn book, [the one about Joseph Smith vision in the sacred grove]. We had to sing the entire song, 5 long verses, with a sort of hip-hoppy melody that skipped from down low to the third C below middle C and up to the second C above middle-C, sort of like the chorus of the *Star Spangled Banner*. The accompaniment was provided by a tinny piano about three hundred feet away so we sang at a different time than the pianist played.

Once our little band was launched, there was no stopping us. We had been in agony for weeks and could not wait to get this fearful task completed. Jesus Christ Himself would have had to appear to interrupt us because we knew our teacher's honor, the reputation of The Sunday School, the respect of the entire congregation, the approbation of the Mayor of Vernal, the admiration fo the Governor, the welfare of the State Road Department and the general well-being of our own families were at stake in this ordeal We



were determined in our nervousness to acquit ourselves well - but more out of fear of the consequences of failure than out of love of the song or a desire to serve the congregation, which, after all, is precisely what we were exhorted and threatened to do. That dichotomy persisted throughout my tenure with that well-intentioned bunch - sweet exhortations followed by sometimes implicit and sometimes explicit brassy threats.

Once that opprobrious task was completed, we were able to make the move to the new building for the 3rd Ward. That was exciting. It was one of the largest buildings in Vernal and entering it each time was an occasion. It smelled new and had

shiny door hardware that was unfamiliar and impressive. The tallest buildings otherwise in town were in the center intersection, each two-stories high and they really seemed tall to this little kid: The Bank of Vernal and across the street JC Penny's. We did go to SLC on rare occasions and the multi-story buildings there were not something I could comprehend. They did not compute so were not a frame of reference for determining whether or not the town buildings were big or not. My measure of tallness was the two story JC Pennys building or the Bank of Vernal.



Figure 8. The building that became J.C. Pennys later.

<http://gowest.coalliance.org/cgi-bin/imager?00072173+MCC-2173>

It was never a congenial thing to attend church in either of these places



for some reason. My shyness, my sense of being out of place, dominated my perception of the experience. We had to be quiet, things were hushed like a funeral, people were grave and solemn, lectures filled with threats of punishment poured over the pulpit, infractions against decorum were sharply chastised and so on. Even the pert smiling Sunday school teachers communicated a deeper sense of discomfort of some kind that impressed me more than their stories about the man named Jesus who wore odd looking clothes. Joy and happiness were mentioned but somehow the words rang hollow. You can't fool kids. Even if the kid pretends otherwise, it intuitively, with shocking accuracy, grasps the tenor of any situation. Like a pet dog, a kid has emotional radar that picks up signals in the environment and deciphers where they originate and what they seem to mean - with unerring accuracy. The only peculiar thing about the kid's perception is that it often has no frame of reference on which to fit the interpretation which means they don't quite understand what they are perceiving. But perceive it they do. I did. An apt summary of the years of "Doing Sunday school", which was sort of like 'doing time', is the judge with a big black book filled with black marks against our names for all of our infractions. There were no gold stars.

Sunday School in a Log Cabin

About the same time the "Vernal Third Ward" was being outfitted with its new building, the "Naples Ward" was receiving similar attention. A year or so before we moved to Seward the new building was operational. I can't remember specifically what the old Naples church building was like but I remember that there was a large log cabin by it that was used for Sunday school. It stood on the east side of Highway 40 about a quarter mile from grandma and grandpa Merrell new country store - which was perhaps 3/4 of a mile from the little house they lived in when we visited them in 1953.

This old log cabin stands out in memory because of its resemblance to a painting that was reduced to a poster for use by Sunday school teachers when they taught about "The First Sunday School". The predominate features of the picture were the humble nature of the building because it, too, was a log cabin, and a man named "Roger I-think-it-was Ballantyne" the perpetrator of



Sunday school. Of course, if he hadn't done it another zealot would have devised a method to teach and exhort and encourage and nourish the youngest generation. At least those were his commendable goals. It just didn't feel like something positive to me.

It interests me that even though our home in Vernal had a log cabin on it and the fact that there were other log cabins still lived in by old timers, a log cabin had a sense of rusticness, of being leftover from a bygone era. A meeting in it for any reason created a sense of being in the wild untamed west that greeted the first settlers. The log cabin had a large stove in one end to generate heat during the winter. The spaces between the logs were well chinked so there were no breezes inside. But the sense of gravity that Sunday school was apparently supposed to create was missing. A log house had become an anomaly or anachronism even in that era. Not a particularly impressive setting even for a kid. The well-intentioned teachers exhorted us with fervor to good works and vigilance against Satan but all they accomplished was to depress and scare me. I wasn't encouraged. I was discouraged.

But I couldn't complain because a complaint about SS -not the Waffen SS, mind you, though they share some traits- would have produced something less than the sympathetic understanding I desired from my parents. So hating all the mean loud jostling kids, I went like a sheep to sit and follow. Hoping earnestly that no ruddy faced excited adult leader or teacher would call on me to do something or to answer a question. Even if I knew the answer, I couldn't get it out properly so would sit in misery waiting until the inquisition moved to the next victim. My tongue wouldn't work, I couldn't look at the teacher when addressed by her -always female- nor could I look around the room. I stared at the floor, head hung low to reduce the size of my profile, hoping I guess to make myself less conspicuous, less likely to be called on, less interesting to the other kids who wondered what was wrong with me.

Today, it's evident that this description of what others in the environment were doing isn't entirely accurate. Likely no one really gave a rip and looked my way out of curiosity to see if there was any entertainment value, but seeing none, they went on. But this description captures the essential mood of the memories of the time. It was painful.



The Satan character was an odd one. SS teachers didn't teach it but the image in my "community" was that of a man with red horns, the hind legs and cloven hooves of a horse, and a long ropey tail with a sort of arrowhead on the tip. His teeth were long pointed fangs and his eyes were compelling and evil. In one of his hands was a pointed three tined pitchfork used to torment his victims. Even when we were told that there was no such creature -today, I'm not sure- this portrayal of The Evil One was much more interesting and unsettling than the SS teachers' description of a Satan who looked like a man.

So we met in that log cabin for Sunday school opening exercises and the divided into classes. The log cabin was painted white inside and was kept clean and orderly. The windows has some sort of gauzy curtains hanging on the sides. Posters of scenes from the Bible were thumb tacked to the walls to set the right tone. An upright piano sat in the front in a corner to accompany us kids when singing. The most memorable songs were "Little Purple Pansies Touched with yellow-gold", "Give said the little stream", and "In my Garden". When we were in the right mood and had the chorister that we liked, we'd sing our hearts out, loving the experience though I'm not sure that it was a "religious" one.

Snowstorm in Naples

Vernal doesn't really have much snow in the winter, although my memories contain some big drifts of snow here and there. The scene in the next image is grandpa's yard in Naples. In the left in the back you can just see the front edge of the garage that we eventually lived in, but I don't think we were living it at this time. I am too small, so this was probably the winter of 1943-44 just after we moved from SLC after the Remington Arms plant shut down. The yard covered in snow in which case it looks clean and tidy. You will see below in this chapter a photo of a birthday party of us kids on this yard that looks considerably different.



Mom's hat which is hard to see against the snowy tree is another of those fancy things she did for herself and Jim. I'm obviously objecting to something, big mouth open - again. Haven't stopped yet. Snowball in hand, ready to pop someone. Probably poor Dickie who stands patiently and quietly there. Snowsuits and winter coats and mittens. I remember those feelings well. They were the same every cold winter there. This view shows the stuccoed side of the house and the size and location of the garage. Grandpa and his sons built both of them from the ground up.



Figure 9 1944 Snowstorm



For me Tommy and Ruthie was as close as brother and sister, although she has about leaned out of this picture. We spent lots of time together from an early age playing together. Tommy was a fearless, good-natured kid who was always fun to have around. Oh, we argued now and then about things such as whether it was proper to call the motors on airplanes "engines" or "motors". But we were friends. And his mom let him buy and make "kool aid"!!

I relied on Tommy for fun and companionship. I went fishing with him various times later in our lives. He stayed in Vernal in a house not far from the small air strip until he graduated from high school so was always there when I returned. In later years when I stayed over night at his house, he and I'd get up early in the morning and go to a 'crik' to fish.

Neither of us seemed to catch something but he was always sure he'd catch an "Eastern Brown", a trout I had never seen, and one that I'm not really sure was that prevalent. But he'd say that was what he was after and who was I to argue with him. I



Figure 10 Ronnie, Dickie, Tommy and Ruthie



didn't know what was there so we'd quietly at 5:30am sneak out the house with our poles and worms and hike a mile or so to fish.

4 Year old Riding Horse Alone

While we lived in the garage, farm life went on. Grandpa was still active then so was out and about on the farm, and his sons did their assigned duties. All of the farmland had to be irrigated if one wanted to have any sort of crop, whether it was vegetables or alfalfa. So my uncles who were at home -probably Ray, Grant and Delroy because Harold, Ross, Carl and Leo were married by then- had several duties related to irrigation. One of them was just maintaining the ditches, the other was letting the water out on the field and stopping it at the end of the water turn.

Ditch maintenance was critical. They had to be kept clear so that water would flow through them, and the banks had to be stable so that water didn't break out where it wasn't supposed to go. Grass that grew luxuriously in the good soil with all the water it wanted was the stabilizer of the banks, but it also obstructed the ditch as it grew luxuriantly in the rich soil with all the water it wanted. So someone had to ride or walk the ditches every month or so in the summer checking every foot of both sides of the ditches to make sure they were in good repair.

The uncle with the duty would put a 10 inch mill bastard file in his back pocket, put on knee high black boots and a hat, grab a shovel and me, and get on the horse he had saddled up to go out to the end of the property so he could walk the ditch back to the house. At the property line the uncle would dismount with his tools, tie the reins to the pommel of the saddle so they wouldn't drag on the ground, then make sure I was well-seated in the saddle and then turn the horse toward home. At that point the horse would start ambling slowly back to the barn. Of course the horse that did this was a gentle one that always went to the barn whenever it was given that chance, so it was safe for me. No foolishness here about the welfare of a kid who was being loved and cared for by an uncle who patiently agreed to take the little kid out with him on his job so the kid could get another ride on a horse, always aa big deal even on a farm where horses abound. Interesting, isn't it,



that horseback rides are always special occasions.

Let me ask you a question here, in jest and earnest. How does it strike you - who was raised in Boise to be careful, even fearful, about his/her safety- to know that a 4 year old child was left on a horse alone, unable to reach the stirrups, unable to handle the reins, practically unable to hold onto the pommel, relying entirely on the good nature of the horse to protect and care for him when he was out of sight of the uncle and the barn? The grandparents and mom knew this happening but showed no concern even though they all knew that the horse could bolt if spooked by a snake, that the kid could fall off, etc. etc. How would you feel at this very moment if someone told you that your own 4 year old child was going to be taken half a mile away and then left alone on a horse that was going to bring the child back to you? Be real, now. Your guts should wrench cuz you didn't never live on a farm, and don't know that there are gentle reliable dependable horses that are as safe as an easy chair. Drop the reins to the ground, or tie them to the pommel, and slap its rump and say, "Go home". And it would with a certitude and reliability you can't always find even in dogs. Horses are wonderful creatures.



The Five Horsemen

One bright summer morning, five little kids begged their moms to take their rolling stock out into the yard. So that they could ride together, in a puddle, and chase bad men away and round up steers. Escaping marauding coyotes and cougars. Tough work. But safe in the yard where a call for a mom would rouse one of them immediately. Couldn't take our guns outside today but a mom would come running if needed so we were safe. In a puddle.

Ruth Handy on the left, who burned herself up when she set fire accidentally to our grainery while playing with a gallon of kerosene and matches. I'm the next one, with Tom Handy on my left, followed by Jim Cook, and then Dickie. Actually, there is are two pieces of unidentifiable rolling stock and one wagon, plus the rocking horses.

Nash. Built like a tank. The first car I remember we owned. You could drive it though a brick wall and only the bricks would be damaged. Pre-WW II cars were still built with heavy sheet metal. The war sucked up any



Figure 11 Five Horsemen ages 3-4



metal that could be economized so thinning out the metal used in cars provided some of this needed metal.

Vernal winters got below freezing most of December through February and into March so starting an old timer like this one was a chore in the cold. A head bolt heater was used. I don't know exactly where it was plugged in but on the coldest nights when the temperature got into the teens or colder that heater was connected to an extension cord to keep the oil in the pan warm enough that the starter could crank and start the motor in the morning. Mom stands out as the one who had to go out and tend the old car in the cold weather. I remember her out there in bitter weather cranking the car and worrying about whether it would start. Sometimes it did and sometimes it didn't.

Fish

One of the things that we ate with surprising frequency given the fact that we lived in a desert was fish. Fish. With fins. That had white flesh and was moist and sweet. We got to do this because mom's family were fishermen. Not dad's. Looking back today I actually can't remember single instance where dad caught and landed a fish. He may have but it was not something that was memorable, like seeing mom hook, fight and land a fish. It seems like he may have held a rod when we trolled in the bay in Seward for salmon, when we



Figure 12 Mom, Dickie and Ronnie out fishing somewhere.



all seemed to take turns, but he did not participate in the catching and landing of these slimy critters. Mom did.

We started fishing at a young age and I believe this is a photo of us standing in front of some bushes that were out in the county where we went out to fish with some of her relatives. As usual, she was clean and tidy in a skirt and sweater, with a ribbon in her hair, her kids being equally clean. Even if we wanted to get dirty, that wasn't an option for us. I don't know what I'm waving, but I have someone's shoes on for the occasion.

I love cats

My entire life I have loved cats, any cats, any shape and color. Cats. Scratchy, mangy, mean, soft, squeaky, squirmy cats. I have always loved them.

I'm not sure where this was taken but it was someplace in Naples. This kitty looks like a tortoise shell of some sort and she's tolerating being held. S/he shows up in the next few photos as well. Obviously my favorite cat and obviously an unusually tolerant one. Doubtless she would rather have been out there running and was doubtless contemplating how to get out there, but she patiently tolerated the affection and handling of a small kid that loved her.

I had a lantern jaw when I was a kid, prognathism. A dentist in Canada told me to use a popsicle stick to force against my upper teeth and back against my lower teeth to correct the problem. Seems to have worked.



Figure 13. Ronnie and kittie, around age 3.



I'm about 2-3 years which means I was living in Naples but somehow that doesn't look like the yard of grandpa's house. His yard had more structures that would have been evident in this photo - at least in my memory, but I admit that is flawed. In any event, you see that the yard was not fertilized, watered, mowed, grass. This was whatever came up, including a variety of weeds.

To me, dogs are pretty awful when compared to cats. Cats don't jump on



you, they don't drool on the furniture, they don't nuzzle your crotch when you're meeting someone, they don't whimper and whine, they don't bark,



they don't crap on your drive way, they tend to their own body wastes, they clean themselves, i.e. they are generally more respectable than any dog ever dreamed of being, they are soft, they groom their fur, they are muscular and athletic, and quiet and soft. And have a sense of propriety and are not co-dependent.

Today I can lock the doors of our Beaverton house and leave our two giant 20 pound cats for 3-4 days without any human intervention. They will eat their boring dull dried food to satiety as often as needed as long as I leave two containers of nuggets for them to indulge in. They will drink their fill of water through out those days if I leave a quart of water in a bowl - plus access to clean toilet water, and the water in the catch bowl under the



large bamboo in the dining room. And they will walk through their cramped pet door between the laundry room and the garage as often as they need to do their duty, to relieve themselves of whatever pee and crap they are infested with. Try this with dogs. By the end of the first 12 hours you will have a crappy house, starved puppies that are beside themselves with grief over the



lack of human interaction. True, our kitties are very glad to see us, but they are quite capable of differentiating between their daily need for 6pm affection and the obviously new conditions that prevail when their owners are not in the house at 6pm. And they adjust. They go on, they are not happy, but they will survive. Not like dogs. Admittedly, I ask Dick to stop in every afternoon that we are gone to feed them a can of tuna fish. Most spoiled cats. Who don't even appreciate it, which dogs probably would. But these sturdy creatures thrive in our absence.

This kitty -the one talked about above- is tolerant of the rough handling of this kid. Probably because it can tell that he loves it. Unqualifiedly. Cats. I love cats and this one knew it. Here I am snuggling this cat from the back in my nice hat and clothes. Because that was safer than from the front. The cat was looking at the same thing I was apparently. Smart cat.

This kitty is the same as in the preceding photos. Fat-headed little kid, wasn't I. Still am for that matter. Dee says I'm five, so I'm just 2 years older than in this photo.

Notice the shoes. Depression mentality again. Can you tell why? Size. Look at how big they are. About twice as long as my real feet. Either they are hand-me-downs from older cousins or Mom bought shoes several sizes too large - so she didn't have to buy them as often as she would have had to if she bought them exactly the right size for my feet at the moment. Not unusual for families in those days. I was well-fed. And clean. Always well cared for.

US Highway 40

US Highway 40 was the lifeline for all of the communities in the region. Those that didn't sit squarely on the route had good roads -not necessarily paved- leading to it. In those days the extraordinary network of 4-lane divided freeways -that doesn't seem remarkable to you since you grew up with them- that now criss-cross the country from north to south and east to west did not exist. That network was envisioned in the late 1940's as part of the response of the country to the cold war threat and the possibility of nuclear



attack. Civil Defense plans were based on the concept of this network of highways that would allow the large scale movement of people and goods away from or toward whatever areas were designated by the government for such movement. Civil defense was as much a reason for constructing these monstrous freeways as was the need for interstate commerce.

In those days the transcontinental highways were narrow 2-lane affairs that hugged the contours of the land, winding around, instead of through, mountains. The most famous of these cross-country highways was Route 66, immortalized in the lovely jazz ballad. But in Vernal we had Route 40. The region relied on it to an extent that a little kid couldn't really comprehend. The dependence arose from the fact that there was no railroad access to Vernal. None. Even attempts to get the Uintah Railroad extended to Vernal failed. And commercial airlines simply didn't exist. Vernal only had a tiny airstrip with a dozen or so small planes like Piper Cubs and a funny-looking crop duster. US 40 was our connection with the rest of the world.

For the purposes of a little kid, US 40 started in Denver way out there in the east, a place I'd never seen, at the edge of the known world where the map was gray and had images of krakens and Neptune and other wondrous mythical beasts in terra unknown. In fact I'd rarely been east of the bridge over the Greenriver in Jensen. From that point eastward was mystery and tingley excitement. There was nothing out there but coyotes, rabbits and sagebrush with some juniper and mule deer. On the west side of Vernal US 40 went up the mountains through Strawberry, Roosevelt and Fort Duchesne to Salt Lake City. At least I'd been to SLC so knew the road went that far. Period. As far as I was concerned, 40 just dead-ended there. From there on the map must have shown the same kraken and mythical beasts as in the east.



Sunshine Ranch

This is the same tribe that was riding a few moments ago on hobby horses and rolling stock, with the addition here of a few older cousins to keep us from hurting ourselves out on the Sunshine Ranch. These kids represent four of the Merrell kids' families.



Figure 17 unshine Ranch Cousin Bunch

There must be 500 descendants of Teen and Fuller today. No kidding.

The back row, left, is Marion Cook, a favorite cousin. She baby sat us after school when mom was working at JC Penny's. Gave us a few cookies and milk while we listened with our imaginations to wonderful radio programs after we had walked home from school. Next to Marion is Dallas Merrell, Ross' oldest child. Grew to 6 feet 6 inches and was always nice and became a world class specialist in un-sticking drill strings frozen miles below the surface. Magic in those fingers that couldn't be taught. When the giant oil company had a 2 mile long drill string freeze up, they needed him and ASAP. So it was Lear jet flights at odd hours with carte blanche because the company loss for the stalled drilling rig for each hour of down time was vastly greater than the



fine fees he received. He'd sit down, scan the instruments, review drilling logs, try some soft experimental things and more often than not he unstuck the drill string to jubilation in headquarters. His brother Norman is to his left and developed terrible arthritis that disabled him in his 40's. The next row was Cook children, ending with Jim. The third row started with Tommy Handy who looked like Buckwheat in "Spanky's Gang" with elephant ears like his. Those ears got us in trouble more than once. On the ground are Ruth Handy, Dick and Diane Cook.

Shoes were not always a necessity and in the summer when everything is dry and kids were on a rough farm, they were dispensed with. Sometimes. Thistles, tumbleweeds and cockleburrs were painful but feet toughened so they were less of a bother as the summer wore on.

I'm not very clear about who lived on the Sunshine Ranch, whether it was grandpa Merrell or someone else. Nor do I understand the form the occupancy took, ownership, lease or rent. In any event, someone in the family lived on the Sunshine and I remember going out there in the summer. Aunt Pearl and her family seemed to be the residents on these visits. It was located a few miles north of Jensen, west of the road that went on to the turn off to Split Mountain Gorge ending at the Dinosaur National Monument. It was a fair distance in my mind from Naples to the ranch. But so was the trip in 1953 from Naples to the ranch on the Greenriver that Grant occupied. It seemed like an hour to get out there but years later when I went through Vernal, I saw that the ranch must have been something like 10 miles out, not far at all. Time and distance can dilate dramatically for a kid who has little life experience and less judgment about such things.

Out on the Sunshine Ranch five particular activities stand out in memory:

- 1) Catching toads
- 2) Riding a space ship,
- 3) Picking raspberries for pay,
- 4) Swimming in the small reservoir, and
- 5) Eating watermelons in the field.

The toad business was a messy one. In a desert they don't spend a lot



of time in the sun. So you find them in moist areas. The problem was that part of the moisture was from human bodies too pained to trek all the way back to the privy by the house. One of the places we found toads was basically an unused root cellar. The dirt floor was hard packed even though the door was missing. In the afternoon we went down to explore. Sure enough there were several small toads.

The fascination with toads derived from their poor jump. In contrast to the sleek shiny powerful *rana rana* who lived in irrigation ditches, these little guys jumped weakly. That made it easy to catch them. It was always satisfying somehow to chase any wild crittur and actually catch it. The fact that these poor things could hardly jump didn't detract from the sense of accomplishment. Not to a little kid who really couldn't run fast either and whose motor skills were only developing. But the toads always got their revenge. As soon as you picked one up, it peed in your hand. Every time. Why, you ask, did we persist? I don't know. At least the pee looked and smelled like water.

The aged travel trailer was parked out of the way on the Sunshine on some unused land in the back yard. It was abandoned and had been completely stripped of wheels and furnishings. What remained was rough bare plywood walls and closets without doors or windows. The notion of a house on wheels was novel in that era. It is impossible to guess today how a trailer could have been that poorly used in the few years it had been in existence. Nor can one imagine how a thing that was owned mostly by the wealthy ended up on this isolated farm perched out there in the dry eastern Utah desert. Whatever the facts are, the carcass of the thing was there for us cousins to play in. It must have been appropriated by some Arkies or Oakies to get across country, using it up in the process. We knew them by reputation and by sight because they came looking for work and a livelihood.

Kids naturally form a pecking order based on:

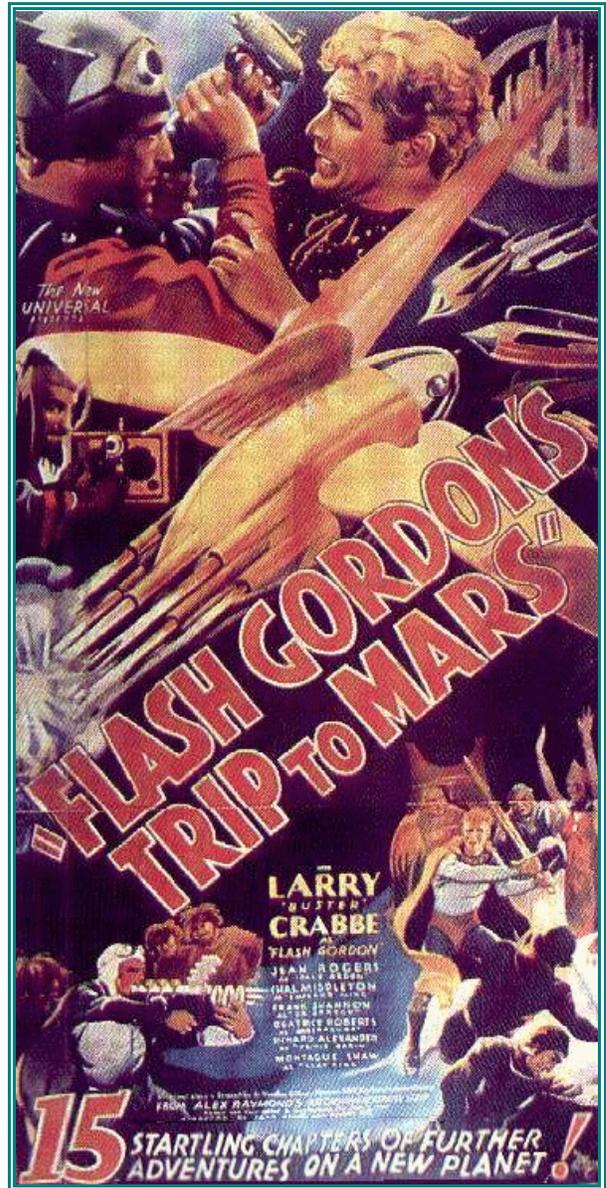
- 1) who's the biggest,
- 2) who's the meanest,
- 3) who's the oldest,
- 4) who's the smartest, and



5) who likes who.

We always did that. Not surprisingly, the biggest, or oldest or meanest kid got to be the captain of this space ship. That's what this grimey hulk turned into in the hot golden afternoon sun that slanted softly across us all as we crouched at our positions in doorways and windows, Flash Gordon fantasies from the Sunday comics playing through our minds. While the captain barked orders and described for us what he was seeing up there in the command center. Us little kids out there in the rear of the ship couldn't see a thing so we were all moved by the drama of his shouted, hurried descriptions to "Hold on!" or to "Shoot!", or "Drop the bombs!", or "Fire the flamethrowers!", or to "Watch out for attack!", or to "Prepare to board another space ship!" We had no conception of an atmosphere so weren't hampered by facts. None.

Whatever came to his mind was gospel to us, and we executed his instructions as quickly and fully as we could. Even if we didn't have a clue what he was telling us to do. We turned invisible knobs, and we sneered at the enemy and we ducked and we crouched as the play progressed. We did not want to be the one responsible for the fiery crash of our ship and the scalding deaths of us all. I vividly remember standing behind a lime-green half-wall, holding on for dear life,



shivering with excitement as the entire ship shook and careened out of control from one near-miss to another. Actually, I think an older cousin was jumping up and down in the center of the trailer to make explosions and shock waves. It worked. And my stomach churned.

Picking raspberries for pay was another new idea encountered out there on the Sunshine, a most unlikely source of learning things preached in "Das Kapital.". My introduction into labor relations and employment and payrolls and performance standards and the unfair demands of management on poor over-worked powerless laborers took place right there. Right by the dingey lime green space ship. All of those things Aunt Pearl did to me when she handed me a lovely enticing blue aluminum tumbler and announced that she'd give me a nickle each time I handed it back to her full of raspberries. So simple and innocent. She just wanted some raspberries for jam.

I thought the nickels were a great idea. A candy bar or five pieces of Fleers or Bazooka bubble gum - which had tiny comics wrapped around each piece with offers of neat prizes for a quarter and so on. The Bazooka comics were about Joe Palooka, a regular comic book hero. Each piece was a mouthful. So the tempting offer from management was sufficient. I went to the fields. These colored aluminum tumblers were new and a joy to hold. Our house only had clear glass tumblers so these pretty colors -green, blue yellow, and red- were exotic and seductive to hold.

Probably cousin Jimmy, one of Pearl's sons, went out with me into the raspberry patch, early in the day before the sun was hot. The canes were taller than we were so they made narrow tunnels for us little kids to walk through. We each at the ripe old age of 5 had a tumbler and started picking berries. Sampling was allowed by management - and irresistible anyway. As we went down the row looking for berries ripe enough for management we discovered that it's hard to tell whether a berry was really ripe enough for the tumbler without tasting it. In our tasting we excelled in telling which berries were at their peak and which ones were not quite ready. By the time we got to the bottom of the first row the bottoms of our tumblers were scarcely covered. But the nickel beckoned so we turned and started up the second row. Half way up one of us needed to go pee so we took a potty break and went to the privy. Pearl noted that we were on break, but couldn't dock our pay since this was a piece work contract. She was in a jam making mood



so wanted berries ASAP before the day got too hot - and she wanted to straighten and prepare the kitchen for some earnest canning. But we would not be hurried. We knew our rights.

We did return to the field with our tumblers but somehow the notion of standing there in these prickly canes and the increasing heat was less enticing than when we started. The bloom was gone and Pearl's exhortations to "Hurry up!" didn't motivate us. It made even the tasting less enjoyable. In the end -which was probably no more than half an hour- we gave up on the project. The wish for a nickel evaporated and we returned the half-full tumblers to Aunt Pearl who clucked her tongue and went about her business. She knew this was going to happen but tried optimistically one more time to bribe kids into doing some of her labor. She would have been shocked if she really did have to pay that much money for that few raspberries.

The Sunshine had a small reservoir to collect water during the winter and spring for the cattle during the summer. Perhaps it was also intended for irrigation but I don't remember that part. The reservoir was not really large, in retrospect, but at the time it seemed like a big lake. We were cautioned to be careful when we played around it and we were. But water being what it is and little boys being what they are, the two would join forces here and there.

Swimming is what we called it. But it hardly qualified for that fine name because the water was hardly deep enough to swim where we dared go in. And because we entered the water in our clothes after carefully taking off shoes if we wore them that day, and more significantly, because the water along the shore where we went in was mud. A foot deep. After we churned around in it for a while, it mixed with the small amount of water and made a sort of soup that we played in. We were covered from head to toe in slimy tan mud. Our skin and clothes were the same color. Mud.

Some of the bigger cousins would also play. They were braver and actually did swim out into the deeper water, yelling and splashing. And generally having a grand ol' time. There was some sort of head gate affair on the east end. These big guys climbed up on it and used it as a diving board making "cannonballs", holding their noses and screaming as they launched themselves out into the water. The cleanup sequence of this story was erased. Mercifully, probably.



The watermelon business is a scant memory, but there is a sense of something illicit about it. Seems that I got caught with the older kids sort of stealing a watermelon after being told not to take one. The effect on the total number of melons in an acre of taking one probably was negligible. The problem was being told not to do something and then doing it. It was late in the afternoon and the watermelon was warm from the sun. The style of opening the thing was real primitive. It was simply dropped on the ground. After it 'busted' open, we scooped out handfuls of the heart and broke off pieces to eat, getting drenched in the sweet juice, running down our arms and chins, cutting light streaks in the dirt that we were covered with. That was probably the evidence that got us into trouble when we went back to the house.

Grandma, Nasturtiums and Petunias

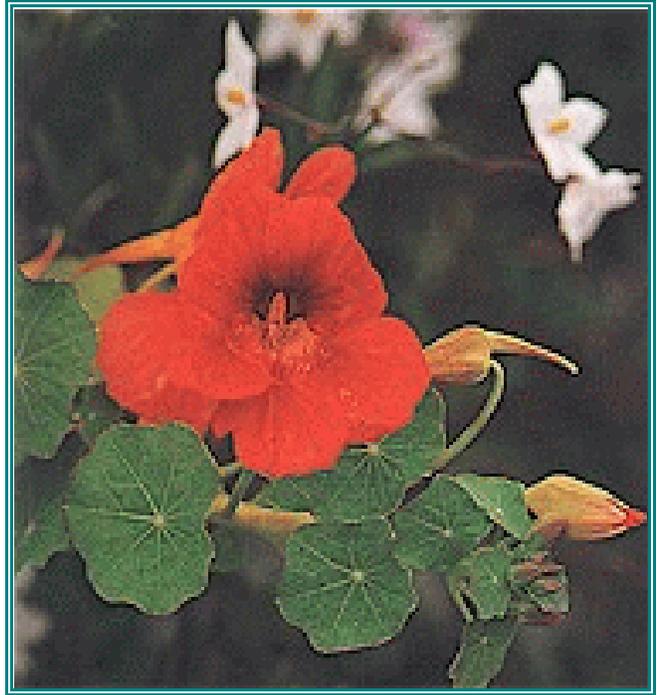
Most farms did not have resources to spend on fancy landscaping. The concept of spending money on shrubs and plants just to decorate the yard was viewed suspiciously. Indeed, it was wasteful. And the idea of putting fertilizer on the grass when it could profitably be used on vegetables was irrational.

Few resources were expended in the yard but there was a battalion of old-fashioned flowers that grew well and created spots of color if tended regularly. Petunias, asters, and nasturtiums. Peonies grew in some yards, large puff balls of bright color in the cool spring. Bachelor buttons, sweet pea and Sweet William's were reliable. Snap dragons, especially after seeing "Alice in Wonderland", fascinated us little kids who pressed at the base of the flower to make its jaws open. And imagined music.

Other plants were borderline. Hollyhocks and sunflowers. Weeds or flowers? Giant sunflowers matured in the hot summer, heavy heads sagging by the time frosts started. The seeds set in fascinating patterns that swirled out like speckled spinning starbursts. Good example of the Fibonacci series I learned later.



Grandma loved color in her dry brown yard so planted various kinds of flowers. Nasturtiums were the exotic ones. Flat round leaves were abnormal. Leaves should be elongated and pointed on at least one end. The blossoms were equally unusual, looking more like the mountain columbine than an honest, god-fearing flower, with backward-projecting spikes. The real surprise, however, was the fact that grandma ate nasturtiums. She said they tasted like water cress. That in fact was true. But I wasn't a real fan of water cress so didn't get too excited about nasturtium leaves in my salad. She loved the tingly flavor - which I do, too, today.



Water cress was scarce because it didn't grow in irrigation ditches. It requires cool, fresh, free-flowing water. Mom liked cress, when she could find it, in a sandwich.

Grandma also grew petunias. They had split personalities. On the one hand, their bright colors were pleasing. They thrived and bloomed all summer. But on the other hand, they stank. I still dislike the smell of petunias. But they were rewarding flowers for a country wife to grow because they require little attention, some water and are exuberant in their blooms all summer long.

Iris and gladiolus were grown in town. On a field trip in third grade to her own yard to see the "Four O'Clocks", Mrs. Schofield stopped us by a white picket-fenced yard filled with glads. They were arrayed like soldiers in tidy, manicured rows. The owner had collected as many varieties as she could so the yard sparkled with a variety of bright colors. In spite of their size and color, I dislike glads. They are the flower of funerals, massed together in crushed crowded gaudy displays that dishonor the flower and the deceased.



A women's club in tiny downtown Vernal had flower shows each summer. I heard the town women discussing various exhibits. Snippy, sniffling superior comments. I didn't understand it. All flowers are beautiful and if one person liked one more than another that was OK. The comments seemed more social commentary than insights into the qualities of flowers.

Slaughtering hogs

Slaughtering hogs is a major project for any family. I remember grandpa doing it and how much work it was. We were chased away when the hog was killed with a shot to the base of the skull or a mighty blow with a sledge hammer. It all started early in the morning and took all day. The first, early part was men's work out by the corral, but second part was women's work in the kitchen.

The day before the hog was killed, a 55 gallon barrel was set securely over a fire pit on blocks to hold it steady. Then it was filled half-way with water. This fire pit was located beneath a stout branch so that a block and tackle could be hung right over the barrel. After the pig had been killed and gutted, the carcass was fastened to the block and tackle by his hind legs and hoisted up into the air. By now the fire had raised the water temperature to near boiling so when the hog was lowered into it, he was scalded. The men raised and lowered the hog a few times just to scald him, not to cook him. Then they took large butcher knives and holding them on both ends, scraped the hide to remove the dirt, the bristles and hair.

Once the hide was basically free of bristles and dirt, the carcass was lowered onto a table near the fire pit, which is where the butchering really began. Grandpa was experienced at this so knew how to divide the hog into quarters that were manageable. An axe and a hack saw were used to section the legs and back. Then the hide with the fat layer was removed and taken straight to grandma in the kitchen.

Grandma had cleared the kitchen by now in preparation for the event, so she had space to work on the projects that went with butchering a hog. The first task was to start rendering the lard from the thick layer of fat. She first cut the large sections of hide with the fat attached into smaller



pieces, several inches square. There was nothing scientific about this process which was simply to get the skin into pieces small enough that they could be put in the skillets on the stove. After the fat had been rendered from the hide, which left large quantities of fat in the skillets, which, when it congealed was called lard, grandma made cracklin's. To do this, she pulled the shrunken bits of pig skin out of the skillets and laid them on cookie sheets. Then she baked it all in the oven where it dried and puffed up enormously. Meantime, grandma was cutting and wrapping the pieces of pork into steaks, chops and roasts that were later taken to a commercial freezer where they rented a locker specifically to hold their meat, whether from hogs, beef or venison. As she made the packages up, she trimmed the pieces to make them more presentable when they were cooked.. The scraps were what she minced and mixed with spices to make sausage. This sausage was converted into pound size portions for freezing to make patties later, or it was used to make sausages.

Sausages required that she take long lengths of guts and clean them thoroughly so that only the lining itself remained. These limp whitish flaccid tubes were then cut to manageable lengths and slipped over the end of a sort of funnel. Then as the minced, spiced meat was pushed with a plunger through the funnel, it filled the guts. This process continued until the whole length was filled. It was then twisted at regular intervals and tied so that individual sausages were produced.

The process of slaughtering a hog was a strenuous, day-long exercise. It had to be completed in a day because meat would start to spoil, become "tainted" as it was described, in a day so haste was imposed on the enterprise by mother nature in the form of tiny bacteria that set up housekeeping ASAP.

Light bulbs and Darning Needles

Ever noticed how quickly the heel and toe of a sock wear out if you wear them everyday? There is something about that kind of use that must compress the fibers and thereby allow them to wear through. Whatever the process is, it also happens with slacks and shoes. If you alternate pairs of



slacks everyday the total life of the two is longer than if you wore each pair daily until it wore out.

Bathing every day wasn't done nor were clothes changed every day. The result was that things not only got pretty heavily soiled, they developed holes in areas of heavy wear. Socks were the most often affected this way because they were worn everyday so toes and heels rubbed in the same spots.

Early settlers of this country had to spin their own threads, weave cloth from it and make whatever articles of clothing they needed. They also knew how to repair holes in cloth, whether it was a sock, shirt or coat. Grandma like a lot of farm women retained the skill of repairing holes even if the other skills had generally disappeared.

Grandma Merrell had 11 kids. Frugality in a household with limited resources dictated that any tears or holes in clothing be repaired as many times as was reasonable. It made no sense to discard an otherwise sound shirt if there was just a hole in the sleeve. The idea of actually purchasing the replacement for what was basically a good shirt made her recoil. Shocked. Why would someone do that? Her large household produced a large number of things needing repair.

The process is called "darning" and is a lost art today except for a few specialty shops that can still do it. The idea behind darning is simple: re-weave the fabric that is missing using threads that match the original fabric. This is done in two steps that replicate the process of weaving on a loom. A long thread of the correct color is threaded through a darning needle, a thick, not-too-sharp needle with a large eye. The thread is used to place one set of threads side-by-side over the hole in the fabric. It doesn't matter whether these are the woof or warp threads. After the defect is completely covered with this first set of threads the process is repeated in the other direction. This step is more complicated, however, because these threads have to be woven up and down across each one of the first set of threads. This weaving actually re-creates fabric that closes the defect.

The quality of the newly woven fabric obviously varies depending on the skill of the darning. As with any manual skill, there is a host of details to master. If the knots that are used to start the thread are too large, the wearer of that sock will note the irritation and may grow a blister. If the new threads don't start far enough back from the edge of the hole they will



eventually pull out and leave an even larger hole. If the darner misses threads when weaving, the new fabric will be flawed and be more like to wear out quickly. If the thread used to weave the patch is too thick, the wearer of the sock will be aware of the patch because it will be thicker than the original fabric. The thickness problem is always present in any event because the patch relies on threads placed in the intact cloth which means there is a doubling up of thread all around the edge of the patch. The durability and wearability of the patch depends on the skill of the darner and the location of the patch in the garment or sock and whether the patch will be subjected to constant wear.

When grandma did the washing -not laundry- she examined each sock for holes. Any that had a hole were put into a pile to be darned. The longer she let a sock be used with a hole in it, the larger the hole got and the harder it was to mend so she didn't like them to go another week. She also watched for rips and tears in shirts and pants and held them out for mending.

When she set down to darn socks, she used an old light bulb as an armature, though there were polished wooden shapes for this purpose that pre-dated the bulbs. The bulb was pushed into the toe or heel where the hole was. This held the sock securely and uniformly tight. Then she could see the size and shape of the defect and re-weave the fabric while holding the sock over the light bulb. If fabric with a hole that needed mending was flat, as in a shirt sleeve, the round bulb obviously wasn't going to work. In this case she would use something like an embroidery hoop to hold the fabric taut while she darned the hole.

When an article of clothing got too ragged to be repaired, it was put in the "rag bag". From that point on, it could be used in any manner by whoever needed a rag. But these discarded clothes were used yet again. Two household arts utilized the contents of a rag bag: quilting and rug making. Grandma did both. I have a quilt that she made as a wedding present. The pattern was called "Grandma's Garden" and consisted of rosettes like flowers that were created from smaller blocks about 2 inches across. She did the entire process by hand because she lived in an apartment in SLC and didn't have the equipment that she had previously in her Naples home. That was typical of a woman from her era who relied on herself to do whatever she deemed necessary and who wasted nothing.





Federal Ration Stamps

As noted previously, this used ration stamps during WW II. That probably strikes you as something incredulous, is dad just kidding us? But I'm not. Grandma Jensen still has booklets of some of these stamps. The government issued them to each family based on the number of people in the family to enable them to purchase commodities they needed. The reason for rationing was simultaneously the tail-end of Depression as well as WW II which forced the country into a conservation stance the like of which I've not seen since. For example, rubber tires for personal automobiles were almost luxury items because rubber was being conserved for our troops in the various theatres of war, gasoline and sugar were rationed..

The war was a reality for me, not some news item read off during the 6:00 p.m. news. My Uncle Grant came home from WW II with a broken back and wore a back brace for years. Part of his treatment required him to hang a contraption in a doorway and to suspend himself in it to apply traction to his back. His injury was caused when the LST he was on landed at Guadalcanal in what was one of the famous battles of the Pacific. He was unloading ammunition cans that were heavy square metal boxes. Something happened as the line of men walked down the long ramp into the surf and the man behind him tripped with his ammo cans. And fell directly onto Grant, breaking his back. His return home was sad but it was also somehow a matter of pride that he had paid that price for our freedom. Today we get disgusted if someone is patriotic and cares about paying the price of freedom, but do not be deceived. The price of freedom is blood. Period. And a free people that is unwilling to pay that price, regardless of the wisdom of its politicians and manufacturers will cease to be free. I was proud of my uncle, and I remember wearing his too-large hats and shirts stored in the basement of his house in Naples. Proudly. For my mom and Grant and grandparents to see.

Birthday Party for the Cousins - on the Lawn

When I was about 4, near as I can tell (don't rely on me) I had a large birthday party on the front "lawn" of Grandpa Merrells's house. Here we sit,



about 12 of us, about the same age. Sitting on the "lawn" on quilts made by grandma and her daughters. Picking at the goodies that were provided which consisted of home-made cupcakes or home-made cake, and vanilla ice cream. With some sort of punch, probably "kool aid".

The old Nash is there sitting in the garage, ready for a getaway if needed. It looks like aunt Nellie, -Harold's wife- is standing there in the middle of the picture, which means that cousin Sandy is somewhere in the photo. Her home was bout half a mile to the right of this photo, taken at the "new house" that Fuller built after living a while in the original log cabin that was located left of this photo.

The garage that we lived in sits there in the background, with the structure on the front -or behind if- visible. The photos of mom in her dresses were taken just in front of that garage.

The lack of leaves on the trees together with the lack of winter coats suggests that this is a March 31st birthday. Winter was gone, but spring had not yet had its day, so we celebrated in the coolish weather as if it were warm.

I can't tell who the other women are in the photo. The photo elsewhere of me sitting by mom, wearing a hat when I was about 3 years old, was taken with mom and me sitting at the end of the "walkway" that shows in the front of this photo, going out of the left side of the photo to the front porch of the house.

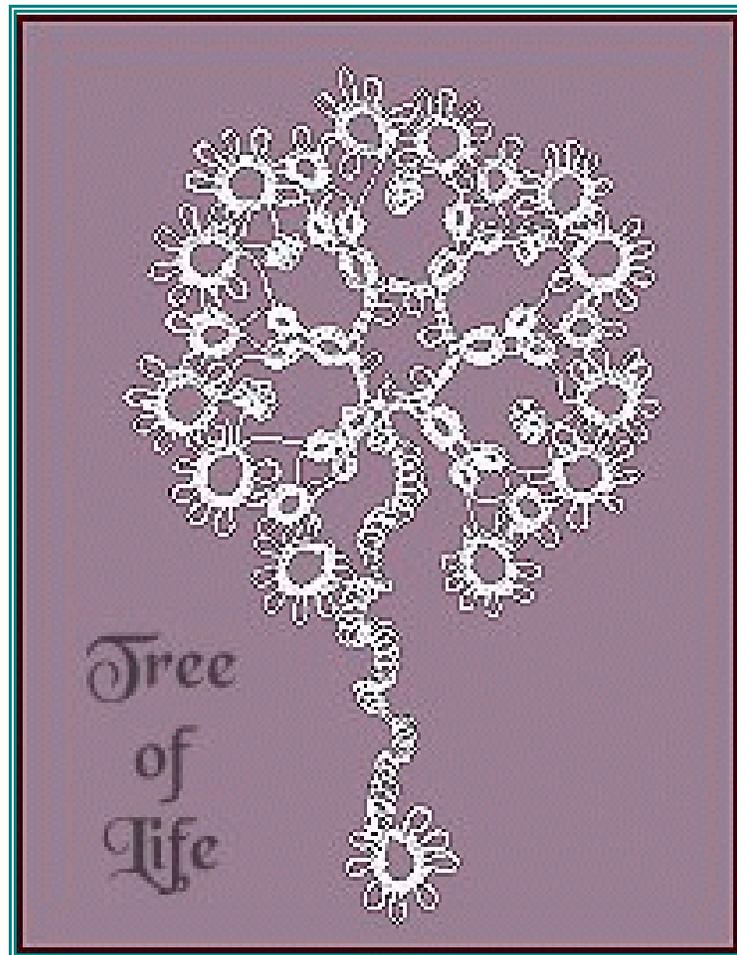


Aunt Helen, Tatting Lace and Louisa May Alcott

Question: What does Aunt Helen have in Common with Louisa May Alcott?

Answer: Henry Seton.

In case Louisa is an unknown to you, she was the famous Early American writer who wrote "Little Women." And Aunt Helen was Grandpa or Grandma Merrells's sister. I can't remember which. Since LDS genealogy sheets don't show the MATERNAL lines, I can't tell from my family group sheets or pedigree charts. She lived in a small house beneath two large cottonwood trees on the west end of the large property that the Merrells first occupied in the 1930's, as far as I can tell, the land they acquired after leaving Rainbow. Helen was an odd old woman that struck me as being slightly crazy. I was nervous any time she tried to talk to me because of her appearance and demeanor. To get to her front yard from the road, you had to walk on a narrow bridge across the large irrigation canal near a large headgate. In a crazy way the headgate created conditions comparable to being in Helen's old



house. The water flowing over the concrete headgate created a pool of swirly bubbly roiling water and a great deal of noise. It was scary. So was she.

I don't recall any specific conversations with her, just memories of the emotions I felt whenever I saw her or interacted with her. She always wore a housedress and apron, had a perpetual scowl, sharp nose and close-set light eyes. The few white whiskers on her chin made her into a witch. There was even a large wart somewhere on her face out of which grew hair. Her speech was somehow difficult for me to understand. Her home was not a place that welcomed children.

Aunt Helen was a tatter. She tatted lace. Instead of crocheting and embroidering like most women, she preserved a form of lace-making that was disappearing for reasons I don't know. Tatting is done with an odd-shaped metal shuttle about 3 inches long that holds one bobbin. The bobbin is loaded with the thread one wishes to use to make lace. Then in a manner I don't understand anything about, this single strand of thread is used to create lace, sort of magic really because there is no fabric for it to grow out of as in crocheting, no hoop to hold it in place as in embroidery, and no cushion and needles to anchor it as in bobbin lace. It was simply formed out of air and thread. Aunt Helen would do this, muttering to herself.



Fast forward now to Christmas of 1958. We were invited to Henry Seton's home. He was a wealthy man who "clipped coupons", dined at the Harvard Club and dabbled in paleontology at MCZ, the museum that dad worked in at Harvard. Dad knew him from the lab and treated him well, which was a bit unusual apparently because Henry didn't invite anyone else from the museum to Christmas Dinner. Henry's wealth was inherited so he didn't need to accomplish anything to thrive. It sounded like his presence at the lab was almost a source of irritation because he was a dabbler dilettante who came and went as he pleased, being therefore unreliable assistance if one



wanted to get a particular job done, He was tolerated because he contributed regularly and largely to the college.

The size of his income is reflected in the gift he gave his only daughter on her 18th birthday: a red Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud convertible. The family residence was a historical landmark. It was the home built by Ralph Waldo Emerson, The Ralph Waldo Emerson, on a hill that overlooked Walden Pond to the west.(Turns out that Walden Pond was disappointingly small, no where near as large as it's Thoreau-generated reputation. But it was lovely in the setting of large deciduous trees.) A vista from the house toward the Pond was created by selective cutting and pruning of trees in front of the verandah. Standing inside, one could look down the hill and see through the trees the pond, no other habitations being visible.

The first time we went to the house for Christmas, there was an enormous, ancient, hairless, horse hair couch in the enormous living room. The second time, there was a new couch sitting in front of the old one that was pushed back. The third time, the new couch was gone.

The house was not plumbed when it was built so it was retrofitted with pipes at a later date. This was apparent in the small guest bathroom that was off the large entry way into the house. It struck me as incongruous that such a wealthy family in such a prestigious house would tolerate this sort of crude plumbing. It didn't bother them in the least. They had nothing to prove.

Presenting a gift when we visited for Christmas dinner -or whatever the dinner was because one of them took place in the winter but not at Christmas- was de rigueur, and intimidating. Mom's and dad's resources were limited so choosing an appropriate gift that they could afford was a problem. The year in question, mom cast about for something personal in our house that she could give to Mrs. Seton. We had little, but in the linens she had carted to Alaska from Vernal, and then across the country to Boston was a pair of pillow cases edged with Aunt Helen's tatted lace.

Mom consulted with dad about the appropriateness of presenting this hand-made set. Probably having no more opinion than money, he agreed it seemed reasonable to do that. So the pillow cases were washed, starched, ironed, folded, boxed and carefully wrapped. When we went to dinner, the present was dutifully presented at the door and graciously received and



opened. For all of their wealth, they were plain-spoken, good people and their thank you's were sincere, relieving mom and dad. After pre-dinner conversations in a large fire place room, mostly between the adults while us sports-coated, tied, teenagers politely listened, we retired to the dining room where plates were handed around by a waiter. We could look out the french doors and see the Pond. Dinner was good and we went home.

But that wasn't the end of the story. Mrs. Seton was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, an obvious measure of her pedigree, and had involved herself in a historical reconstruction project. That, I suppose, is the charter of this blue-blooded group. The next time she saw mom, she begged her forgiveness, and told this story.

She explained that her pet project was the rehabilitation of Louisa May Alcott's home. As the DAR members and hired specialists worked their way through the house, going from room to room, each item was thoroughly examined. The object of the examination was to determine whether the thing was appropriate for that period of history, i.e. the proper fabric, the correct pattern, right color and so on. Mrs. Seton and Co. were nearing the end of their work, being able to restore most items in the house. One of the remaining challenges was to find period linens because fabrics didn't survive like wooden or metal items did.

While casting about for linens, Mrs. Seton recollected the lace on the pillow slips that mom had given to her. So she took Aunt Helen's pillow cases to an expert for an examination. His opinion was that Helen's lace pattern matched those known for that period. They were qualified to be used in the residence. Mrs. Seton donated the pillow cases to the Alcott residence. They are probably still on the bed in the master bedroom of Louisa's home.

Grampa Merrell and Potato Candy

The first home-made candy I remember seeing made was Grampa Merrell's favorite, an old-fashioned sweet off the farm, potato candy. It was simplicity itself, using three ingredients without any cooking and checking of temperatures.

The principal ingredient was potato, stuff that was available in



abundance on the table every day. The second ingredient was powdered sugar, a bit more exotic but something that could be easily obtained when his sweet tooth needed to be satisfied. And the third ingredient was peanuts. The latter was also easily obtained but it was never the oily, shelled peanuts in plastic bags on aluminum cans that are most commonly encountered today.

These peanuts were the kind that were roasted in the shell with a small amount of salt in the shell. They were available in the dry goods section of the grocery store in an open gunny sack set in a small wooden barrel that had been used to transport nails. If you were being fancy, you'd use a large metal scoop to dip the peanuts out of the sack into a paper sack provided for that purpose. Otherwise, you'd just scoop them out by the handful. In those days there was not much anxiety about spreading diseases by food handling. You got to be up close and personal with what you bought.

The scales used in the dry goods section to weigh whatever needed weighed varied by the store. Some used the kind with a white glass table that you laid your purchase on, in this case the paper sack of peanuts. This kind of scale showed the weight of the thing in a little window that was sometimes back lighted. Other stores used the kind of scale that hung from a hook in the ceiling. The principal parts of this kind of scale were a large circular face like a clock from which hung a wide flattish metal scoop that you put your purchase in. The weight of the produce pulled down on a spring inside the clock-face and turned the needle on the face to show the weight. Still another kind was a bar scale. It was a long rod that rested on a knife-edge pivot point. The produce was suspended in a bag from the long end of the rod. On the other end were different size weights that were moved back and forth until the lever was level. The weight was read off from graduations on the bar.

Shucking peanuts was fun. You cracked the shell and extracted the peanuts which were glossy and dry. The husks were always removed from the nuts because their flavor was sort of bitter. The nuts that I produced were generally cracked because I didn't have a sense of how hard to crush the shell, but Grampa produced whole nuts that I envied. We'd naturally have to eat some of the crushed nuts so it took a long time to get a cup or so of nuts. After he had enough nuts, he would lay them on the table folded in a dish towel and then roll a rolling pin across them. He didn't push so hard



that they were pulverized because he liked chunks but by crushing them he could extend them for a larger batch of candy. I think my preference for super chunky peanut butter stems from this time.

Meantime grandma had taken care of the potato. Either she boiled several potatoes or took a couple that were already cooked for the next meal. The potatoes were simply mashed, just like ones she was preparing mashed potatoes for dinner with gravy. But she didn't add any salt or butter. Just plain ol' potatoes was what was chiefly needed.

Now he was ready to make his wonderful candy. He took a cupful of powdered sugar and mixed it into the mashed potatoes. Measurements and recipes had no place in a country kitchen. The target was known so the cook just added ingredients, tasted the result, added more ingredients, tasted and so on until the target was reached. He tasted the mass to see if it was sweet enough, and if it wasn't he'd added more sugar until it was.

After the mass was sweet enough, he'd mix in the crushed peanuts until they were well distributed. After he was satisfied with the flavor, he'd take a piece of wax paper and form the mass into inch wide logs. He'd sprinkle these logs with a bit of powdered sugar and then let them sit for several hours.

The best time was obviously when he allowed as how they'd probably dried enough so let's get a sample. Wow. Sure. A bite or two showed it wasn't ready so we'd have to sample it again in half an hour to see. By the time dinner came half the candy was gone. It's a great candy even today.

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid in Split Mountain Gorge

Cowboys were a real force when I was a kid. Grandma Merrell told me about them, and she didn't like them. It was unusual for her to show anything negative so it caught my attention when she said something pejorative about anything. Mom says that grandma never showed anger in her entire life. Living in that country meant we saw cowboys all the time, at least the guys who herded cattle and lived on ranches and were called 'cowboys'. But the cowboys that Grandma was talking about were the ones who raised cain while she was a young girl.

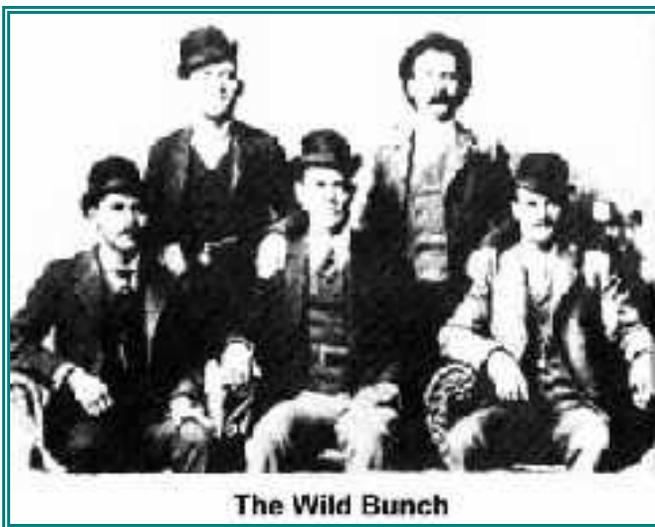
Grandpa Merrell said he knew where Butch Cassidy hung out when he



clear.

When the group went to the Vernal area they were known as "The Wild Bunch" and looked like this:

"Among Vernal's more famous visitors was the infamous Wild Bunch. The group consisted of: Harry Longabaugh (Sundance Kid), Ben Kilpatrick, Robert L. Parker (Butch Cassidy), Bill Carver, and Harry Logan" <<http://www.vernalcity.org/>>



The Wild Bunch



Marie the Dressmaker

Mom's hand-written notation on the back of this photo is "Marie M. Jensen 1944." Without definitive documentation about the dates of their moves, it is impossible to say with certainty where mom was, and where dad was in 1944. But by my reckoning, in early 1944 they still would more likely than not have been together in Naples, having just left the Remington Arms Plant in SLC in late 1943 or early 1944 after the plant went on "stand by". So dad probably took this photo. Subtle



The dress she wears is doubtless one of the many she made. She was an excellent seamstress and made all of her own clothing. She purchased shoes and hats and dickies, but she made virtually all of her other clothing. She learned from her mom how to sew well and took some classes from the Singer Sewing Company as part of their campaign to persuade you to purchase their sewing machines. She always had one, usually a Singer.

When we moved to Waltham, dad shot his wad and bought her a Necchi sewing machine for her birthday. It turned out to be a bitter experience for both of them. It was a fancy machine with cams -this was in 1957- that could be assembled in different combinations of three cams, thereby creating different stitches, yet it never worked properly. That was their lament. He spent an enormous sum on her because he loved her and wanted to show his love by providing her a top of the line machine, the kind she had never owned before. But it turned out to be a dog. They both would have been better off and happier if he had purchased a cheap Singer that was reliable and dependable.

Here she is posing for dad but I obviously got into the picture when I wasn't wanted. So dad snapped a candid of her shoeing me away so that she could stand serene and beautiful alone.



The garage obviously had a sway back. Mom stands here posing for dad in a pinafore that she doubtless made, hand in the pocket. She wore ribbons in her hair and a lovely smile. She was a beautiful girl, and I see why dad was captivated by her. She doubtless was just as fiery as he was, indeed, may have been more fiery. She, not he, is the one who captured for ever the soul of the other.

The yard is humble. No money or time was spent on keeping it up. Weeds grow in profusion by the garage and debris covers the yard. That was life. I knew no different. It wasn't until we moved to Boston when I was 14 in 1956 that I lived in a house with a bona fide yard that needed to be mowed. Strange concept really. Spend money on water and fertilizer to then mow the result and discard it. What sort of screwy world was that?

The single set of windows on the south side of the garage here is the one where "Green Eyes" watched me occasionally, as reported below.

Note that she is wearing a nice pair of shoes, high heels. She has



always taken great pride in her appearance and has in particular loved shoes. She never lacked for good shoes for any occasion.

I am surprised today at how close the garage is to another building - or that there was some type of structure on the front of the garage. My memory is that the front was distant from any other structure and completely unobstructed. I am obviously wrong.

Mom is wearing a suit she made with a hat she purchased - at least I think she purchased it. I don't remember her making hats during my childhood.. In her nice shoes. In the weeds and bushes by the garage.

I can't tell what the white thing is behind the bushes. That is where the front door to the garage was.

This is the next view of her in the same outfit. I think these must have been posed for dad

after he returned from Hanford. I say that because in his mechanics tool box there is a miniature of one of these shots, a keepsake that he kept in front of him each day by its presence in the lid of this tool box that was his source of security and accuracy as a mechanic.

The boulders outline a walkway from the back of the main house to the



garage. Pretty humble, wouldn't you say? At least there was an attempt to beautify the property. But the board sort of gives it away.

She looks fairly serious here, but there is no evidence to explain why. In the preceding shot in the same outfit and same spot she is smiling. Perhaps she's not quite sure what dad's doing. This was a camera with a fixed focal length lense so he had to physically move himself about when changing perspective in which case she may not have been aware that he was taking a shot when he did this one.



This is a typical "Marie" smile when she was happy and feeling good. A happy sort of look with peace and comfort in it.

I loved it when she was happy, when she smiled, when she was OK with the world. It meant

that my lot, too, was easier and less painful. She was a good mother I suppose, though she was generally a severe woman who demanded total obedience. I unfortunately was not able to provide that. Something in me went against the grain in this regard. I resisted obeying blindly her instructions in spite of the knowledge that my actions would result in pain - to



me.

Her dress is doubtless her own creation made of a fabric that looks sort of like seersucker. Don't ask me what kind of cloth that it. It is just fabric that has puckers in it, on purpose. Her shoes are high heels. At 5 feet 2 inches she was acutely aware of her smallness and compensated I suppose by heels.



imaginary being created out of words I heard but didn't understand, which involved me. Coming from a fundamentalist background where god was omnipresent, omnipotent and not just a little mean, it is more likely than not that he transmogrified, to borrow Calvin's wonderful term, into a pair of watchful, sort of critical eyes, that hung in the sky and air, popping in at unexpected times to check me out. I was indeed fascinated and nervous about them.

Grandpa and the Morning Glories

Farming men worked hard in the fields. Their duty around the home itself was to keep things operational and safe. Beautification of the homestead was pretty much outside the scope of those duties and in the sphere of influence of the women. But grandpa seemed to my child's mind to have taken personal affront at one brand of weed which grew well in the area. Morning glories. This was the only "beautification" project I remember him taking interest in, a flower, albeit a weed.

His dislike of the flower puzzled me for two reasons. First, in contrast to grandma's interest in growing beautiful flowers, his interest in



morning glories was in destroying them. Other garden variety weeds around the place that really were ugly didn't seem to attract much of his attention, but this one did. Second, morning glories were seductively beautiful flowers to my mind, so why would they incite him to fits of destructiveness.

They are members of the sweet potato family. I think. Their beauty stems -haha- from their shape and coloring. The flower is like a long trumpet shaped like an old-fashioned lampshade. Long ribs extend from the narrow base outward, flaring into a wide horn. These long, narrow, flat-sided, flaring trumpets are subtly tinted with pastel violet-blue. At the bottom of the throat the lovely tint was darkest, and decreased in intensity up to the mid-point of the throat. Some had a yellowish cast, and all were a feast to look at, eye candy, that I couldn't look at long enough wondering at their beauty.

Their other interesting feature was their manner of wilting. Petunias sort of dissolved into lengths of sad looking colored tissue that hung limply on the plant. Unattractive, pathetic wisps that dishonored the gaudy large blossoms. But morning glories had class. As they ended their lives they also wilted. But instead of just collapsing like the petunias, they chose how they would deal with their death. They started their wilt carefully at the outer-most margin of their trumpet. This narrow band shrunk and tightened while the rest of the flower remained firm. As a result, the wide flare began to decrease. As the contraction progressed down the flower the tightly contracted zone pulled to the center like a rubber band and rolled up on itself, sort of like a window shade would do if it were circular. Finally, the process encompassed most of the flower, at which point there was a compressed fist ready to whack whoever was responsible for this business.

Grandpa's dislike of these curious flower wasn't something I could understand. But grandpa was grandpa and what he would he did so I watched. At irregular interval these "noxious weeds" would catch his attention. His sole objective where they were concerned was to annihilate them. Not just beat them back a bit, bit annihilate them. He used a hoe to dig at them - not dig them out because that wasn't possible. Then he tried an herbicide. Nothing



worked. The fascinating thing about these plants was the proliferation of stems that grew out of each hole in the ground. In contrast to most plants that erupt with a single stem these guys pushed up half a dozen tendrils at a time, each of which matured into a climbing vine. His attempts to dig or poison them had little effect on the general population. If he beat them down in one spot, they erupted in another. His hacking and complaints did not change the size of the seed pool from year to year but the effort he expended seemed to satisfy something inside him.

Mulberry Trees and silkworms

During the era that Brigham Young, of the LDS church, was attempting to create an independent culture and economy, i.e. not-dependant-on-anyone outside his faith, he created a string of 120+ colonies that ranged from Alberta, Canada down to the Juarez Colonies he founded in Mexico. This grand experiment - perhaps the largest in US history- required that the group undertake an enormously wide range of activities in order to sustain and maintain their autonomous economy. One of the experiments was the importation of silk worm to produce silk, and the necessary adjuncts to create a hospitable environment for them to thrive in.

One of these was mulberry trees. With fruit that resembled skinny elongated soft raspberry berries that stained your clothes if



you got the juice on them. The flavor was mild, sort of like a mulberry. Ross had two enormous old mulberry trees left over from Brigham's experiment out in the back of his farm acreage, sitting next to the irrigation canal. I bare-handedly caught an exhausted trout in that ditch in the early morning of the summer of 1957.

These trees were large-enough in which to build tree-houses, a reasonable measure of any tree, and their dense foliage created darkness, sort of a tunnel without light along the little ditch. They were far enough from the house that traveling to them was basically an expeditionary process. We would pick and eat all of the fruit that was accessible to us but didn't understand until many year later what Ol' Brigham had attempted to do.

I was astonished around 1990 in my mucking around in TMG -the chapter about the 89th section with the surprising conclusion- to discover that Brigham had allowed one of his favorites, none other than Orrin Porter Rockwell of "Man of God, Son of Thunder" fame to set up and operate a medium volume whisky still. This was while Ol' Brig was still alive in SLC. He allowed on of his men to manufacture and to sell wine and whisky. I love the location where Orrin was allowed to do this: "Point of the Mountain" that, as you know, subsequently became the State Penitentiary. Isn't that wonderful? Theologically, this is actually a significant issue, though I won't go into it here. If you are interested in the implications about the health code, go to TMG to "Chapter 25. Coffee, Tea or Milk?" It amuses me to see how far even Brigham deviated from the mainstream tenants of the faith he ostensibly represented.[³] He cheapened his faith by his willingness to allow Orrin to

³ t was in spring 1964 that I heard Milt Backman of BYU state that the first LDS generation to "live" the health code was the newest living at that time. In retrospect, I see that probably my own maternal grandparents or relatives drank coffee, an act that subsequently assumed in that faith the significance of whore-mongering .R.L. Dewey stated in his 1986 book "Porter Rockwell":

"...he [ed. Porter] purchased sixteen additional acres near Point of the Mountain...Here he constructed a tavern/hotel...The bar was later added January 1861, but by August, 1860 the premises had been titled 'Hot Spring Brewery Hotel'...(there was) a brewery capable of



manufacture and sell spirits.

making 500 gallons of beer per day.." (1986:246)

The source documents for this quote are:

Utah County Deeds, 1851-1864.

-William Marsden, Inspector of Spirituous Liquors and Beer

-Journal History, August 29, 1860

