

You can have a piece of bread

When we got home from school, we were always hungry. The walk was long and it had been hours since lunch, so we always wanted something to eat. One or the other of us would find mom and coax her for some food. It really didn't matter what it was, just something to eat. In contrast to your home, there was no freedom to go into the kitchen and take whatever you wanted, whenever you wanted. None. We didn't dare take anything without explicit permission. If we even took two pieces of something when we had been told we could have "one" or "some", and tried to rationalize our action later after we were "caught" -and we always were caught- that excuse earned only ridicule and anger. Mom did not tolerate fools or foolishness. If she said "one" she dang well meant "one", and if you were so stupid as to take two, then you were going to pay a price for your cheekiness. No slack was cut for any excuse. She was the Lord High Executioner and if you were going to step over the line and take "two", then you hoped that it was "really good" to make up for the misery you knew you were calling down on yourself.

So when we came home starving we would approach her for something to eat. If she had made cookies, she might tell us we could have "one", or if she was feeling extravagant, she would let us have "two", my goodness, I can hardly stand it, please, thank you, grab them and run outside where you can't hear her out behind the grainery before she changes her mind and don't you dare make her mad you stinker, no it's your fault, you dummy. She would usually tell us we could have "a piece of bread." She cut her bread before she put it in a breadbox so we didn't have to. She didn't want any of these big fat slices....

A breadbox was an important part of an old farm kitchen. There was no refrigerator to store bread in, there were ants of various sorts, and a variety of flies. Plus the climate was bone dry so bread hardened rapidly if it wasn't covered. Our breadbox was constructed of metal with a hinged lid that sealed tightly enough to keep bugs out and moisture in. In the process, however, it acquired a peculiar odor, compounded of the smell of stale bread and the smell of the mold that filled the cracks of the box even when it was washed regularly with soap. After a loaf of bread had cooled enough to no longer sweat, it was sliced with the bread knife which had a serrated blade. This sliced loaf was placed in the breadbox.

When mom said, "You can have a piece of bread," we went to this breadbox, lifted the lid and examined the slices. Being manually cut, there were different

thicknesses, though the difference was not great because she was so skilled. Nevertheless, we would engage in an examination of these slices, practically using a micrometer to find the thickest one. If we took too long she'd yell, "Just take one!". She feared we were eating a third slice during the examination. We'd take one and sneak out the back door fearful that in her irritation she just might revert to style from prior incidents and tell us that she had changed her mind and that we couldn't have any bread because we had misbehaved, so wait until dinner. I do remember occasions when I was so hungry that my stomach ached but that wasn't something you admitted because she'd somehow use that to her advantage to lecture me about something. You just couldn't win with her.

Tonsillectomy

In those days it was common for kids' tonsils to be removed. The problem was that all kids got tonsilitis and since there was no ampicillin or other antibiotics with which to treat the infection, the kids were sick a long time, missing school, feeling bad, generally miserable. So moms and doctors finally decided sometime during the kid's early tenure on this ol' mudball, that the time had come to yank them out, sometimes with the adenoids which are adjacent to the tonsils. True to form, the time came for me to have this done. It sort of felt like it was my 'turn' to go through the process. All of our cousins and friends seemed to be having it done. A rite of passage.

Go back a moment. Look again at what I said was missing: antibiotics. Such a different world back then.

Good ol' Dr. Spendlove presided again. In those days, the hospital where surgery was performed in Vernal was a church building, denomination unknown to me, taken over for the purpose. The building had stained glass windows, a dead giveaway. When I went to the hospital for this procedure, I was as impressed with the fact that I was invading a foreign religious building as I was with the reality that someone was going to do bodily harm to me.

The experience was anything but religious. I was just a little kid and was taken like a lamb to the slaughter. Mom tried to prepare me for the experience but that's impossible. How does anyone get comfortable with the idea that he is going to be put to sleep with medicine at which time a piece of him is going to be cut out? I dreaded having to go but knew I couldn't outrun my mom and dad, and didn't have anywhere else to go anyway. After a restless night, I got up, got washed and dressed and obediently got into the car for the ride to the hospital.

I wasn't allowed to eat or drink anything that morning but I wasn't hungry anyway.

In the hospital, I was taken to a funny bedroom where I had to undress and put on a strange thing called a "gown", sort of a night shirt. Then I was laid on my back on a cold table with wheels. This table thing was pushed down a hall and into a white room where a few people stood around wearing white clothes. Staring at me between white cloth head covers, and white masks. Then I was tied down on a table and was given anesthetic.

You will never have to experience this type of anesthesia which is barbaric.

After I was immobilized on the table with a bunch of strangers standing around in funny looking costumes, one of them leaned over me and stuck a thing over my face. It was a wire cage that was covered with gauze like the one. It was set over my face and held in place by a hand. I turned my head to avoid it but couldn't because I was tied down. Then the person started dripping ether onto the gauze, which produced a horrible, sweet smelling inside the mask. I tried not to breathe in because it frightened me, made me terrified, while my mom had abandoned me and left me in this cold setting tied down, helpless and alone with strangers. I couldn't hold my breath forever so had to breathe the foul smelling stuff in. That was all those people had to do, just wait.

Because anyone is eventually going to have to breathe in, and as soon as they did, they would breathe in the ether would do it's job. The worst part of the going-to-sleep part is how long it takes. My ears started to ring loudly, I couldn't see straight, so I squinted my eyes terrified of the horrible experience. The nasty sweet smell was everywhere. The nurse told me to count after her "One", "One", "Two" "Two", "Three", "Three", "Four", "Four",..... . I remember counting to 23 before I passed out. That is a loooooonnnnnnnngggggggggg tttttiiiiimmmmmeeeeeee to be in the terrifying state, as frightening as any experience I have had. I passed out like all people do,



Figure 1 Ether Mask and ether in can
<http://www.uihealthcare.com/depts/medmuseum/wallexhibits/images/EtherMask.jpg>

while all those people in white with masks stared at me in my agony and terror.

After the surgery was over, I was put in a hospital room. When I started to wake up, I experienced the after-effects of ether which are as bad as the going under. If you haven't experienced them, then you ain't lived, brother. When you finally become semi-conscious, you are aware you are hurting mightily in the place you were cut on, your eyes are closed, so you crack them open, all the time breathing this execrable, sweet, sickening smell, and wonder where it comes from, where does that overwhelming foul smell come from, why is the room filled with the stuff. When you get your eyes open, another unpleasant truth is revealed: the room is spinning. Another unpleasant truth: you can't focus your eyes anyway. So you close them and lie there, feeling like you'll fall off the bed, smelling this bad stuff, hurting, dizzy, afraid that you are injured for life that you will now be like the mentally retarded people you've seen. A nurse comes by and murmurs something to you and suctions your mouth out.

You become nauseated and start to gag and retch. You try to sit up but can't. The nurse comes over and pushes you none too gently back onto the bed and tells you to relax. Can you believe that?! Relax? You, nurse, are as out of your mind as I am. Of course, the retching and gagging is precisely the wrong thing to do just after the doctor cut your throat open when he snared off your tonsils. So your throat starts bleeding. So you swallow the blood and that adds to the iron burden in your stomach that makes it even more upset that it was from the ether. So you gag some more, and you bleed some more and you swallow some more and so on. A thoroughly sunny experience. Later in the day, I could see through the hospital windows that the sun was setting when I went to sleep, a sort of authentic sleep-like-I-do in my own bed. I was taken home, though I don't know if it was that evening or the next day.

After I went home, I was put to bed on my army surplus cot and mattress. I felt privileged to have such a nice bed to sleep, so much nicer than having to sleep in one bed with Dickie. Mom kept the window blind closed I

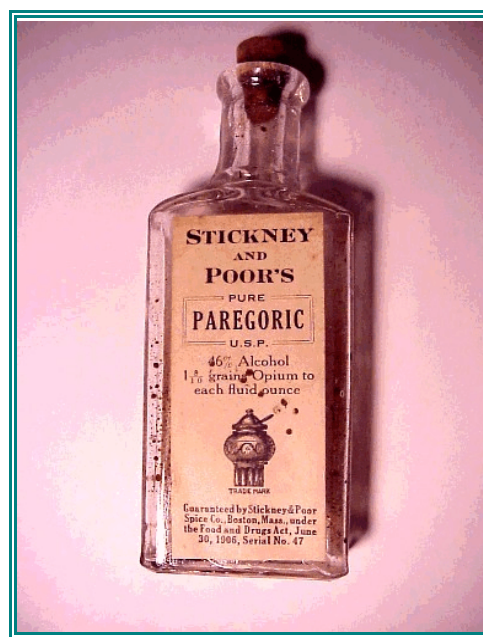


Figure 2 Paregoric
wings.buffalo.edu/aru/paregoric1.jpg

suppose so that I could sleep. The first days are fuzzy because mom used the old faithful remedy, paregoric, which I learned later was "anhydrous morphine". Can you believe it? This stuff could be bought off the drugstore shelf like cough syrup! Drug addicts in the '60's discovered that you could convert this stuff into the mainline version by heating it in a spoon over a candle flame which drove off a molecule of H₂O. For this reason it is now impossible to buy it in any state without a properly filled-out Federal Drug Enforcement prescription form that shows the doctor's name and DEA number, etc. This bottle is from 1906 but it was the same stuff when I was a kid being doctored up to keep me quiet.

Mom would actually administer the stuff to us before we went to SLC in the car, ostensibly to "keep us from getting car sick" but more likely than not given to keep us from fighting in the back of the car. She took a quarter cup measuring cup -one made of plastic, a new substance in my short life which is why I remember it was plastic- and measured out a teaspoon of paregoric from the four ounce bottle. Then she filled the measuring cup to the top with warm but not hot water and stirred it to mix it. Then I'd have to drink the stuff which wasn't too bad. It was sort of sweet with a weird flavor that was neither attractive nor offensive. I discovered later that the odd flavor comes from camphor, though I don't know why camphor is mixed with the morphine. If I didn't want to drink it, she'd use whatever threats she had to use to get compliance. Each time I'd go to sleep.

I was not allowed to eat food for some period of time because of the risk of causing some bleeding but that wasn't a problem. I couldn't have eaten even if I had been threatened with a whipping. Instead, I was given what seemed to be delicacies that were rarely provided otherwise. My favorite thing was jello. Mom would make jello but instead of allowing it to set up, she would offer it to me in the thick, liquid form. That was easy to drink and the sweetness and orange flavor made it something I'd drink freely. She also gave me popsicles, and later some pudding. Soft sweet cool foods that were easy and pleasurable to eat.

Pedal Cars

I wanted one of these. Badly. I saw them in stores and in town and imagined myself pedaling bravely around, steering it while roaring around corners, nearly tipping over. So much more elegant than our wooden wheel barrow and carbide barrels. There were also airplanes that you could pedal like this. Sigh. We didn't even have tricycles to ride. An American Flyer Wagon was the only rolling stock on the place, other than small toy trucks. We'd see toys like this on the lawns in town.

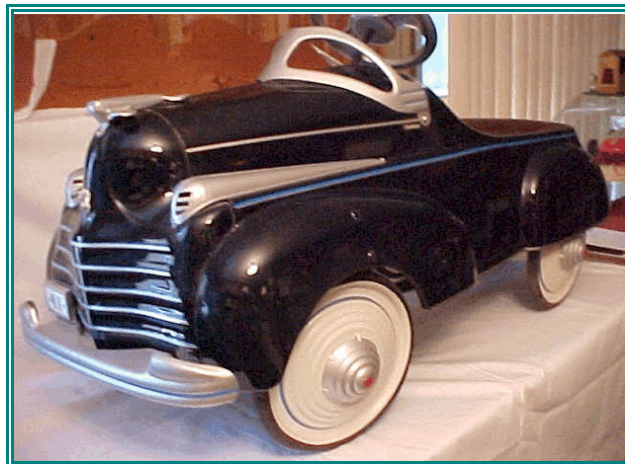


Figure 3 Pedal car

<http://www.antiqueshopsusa.com/clpart/pedal%20car.jpg>

First Aid

When we cut ourselves badly enough mom would apply something medicinal to the injury and then put a bandage over it, though she tried to save those because they cost money. Her preferred antiseptic was Mercurochrome and merthiolate. I found out later when I oversaw the Infection Control program at St. Alphonsus Hospital that both of them were about as effective as dishwater. That's an exaggeration because the alcohol portion of the stuff did something, but the "active" ingredients weren't too active.

Unguentine was another first aid product that was advertised that sounded interesting. I wanted to try it but which never used. It seemed to be sort of a first aid and sun burn product. We lived



Figure 4

<http://www.antiqnet.com/cgi-bin/texis/scripts/mainsearch/detail.html?did=3d459f380>

our whole summer in the sun so didn't understand the notion of sun burns. That seemed to be something that city people experienced.

Band-Aids existed but weren't much used. They were too expensive. Plus they didn't stick too well anyway so came off in the dirt and grime we lived in.

Kewpie Dolls

These odd little dolls showed up in carnivals as prizes when you played games of chance.

They were obviously human forms but had few features to indicate whether they were boy dolls or girl dolls. The eye lashes gave it away through. Girls.

They were made out of thin plastic so were probably made in molds, not very sturdy but cheap. The plastic had a peculiar odor. They were hollow and crushed easily.



Figure 5

<http://www.antiquesshopsusa.com/clipart/doll,%20kewpie.jpg>

Bob Hope

This man was a giant. He was a dominant character who entertained the troops over seas and acted in movies that we watched. I understood most of his humor which was clean compared to the stuff you hear today. He did a series of movies with Bing Crosby that had "on the road" in the title. I saw

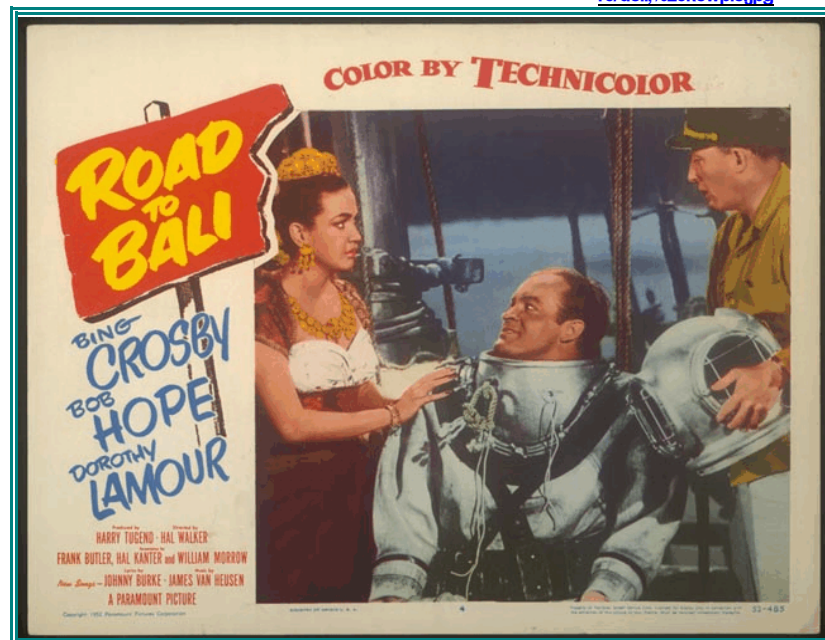


Figure 6 <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/bobhope/images/s70.1p1.jpg>

this one in Vernal or Seward and liked it. Dorothy Lamour was one of the famous actresses of the time.

1940's Party Line Telephones

You've heard the stories and descriptions of how telephones used to be, what it was like to live in a house where they were the only connection a family had with the outside world. Your lives today are filled with cell phones which to my child would have been impossible dreams.

The stuff of the Dick Tracy wristwatch radio. Impossible. Yet they are here as you and I reap the benefit of technology. I call Julie in New York at 10am, Lisa in Phoenix at



Figure 7 1936 Charleston Central

<http://www.dailymail.com/static/speciaisections/lookingback/lb0618a.htm>

11 and Nancy in Boise at 12. On my cell phone. A slim little thing stuck there in my shirt pocket, weighing only a few ounces, waiting for me to push one number button and then push "CALL". At which time a miracle is worked. The thing hands me your voices. As clearly as if you were in the next room. I'm glad I'm sitting each time I hear your reply. No distortions, no degradation in quality. I hear you laugh, I hear your uncertainty and reservations, your questions and thoughts with a perfection that was impossible when I was a kid.

The image of Charleston Central above reveals a great deal about how Bell operated. Look at the operators seated in a straight row on the right side of the room. Behind them, evenly spaced, are supervisors who are experts, monitoring, poised and prepared to help any one of her "girls" who need help with an unexpected question. On the front left sits the big shot, the supervisor of supervisors, who watches carefully the operations, keeping track of individuals, of how things work, preparing her evaluations of people, her assessments for her supervisors. Bell ran a tight ship and was concerned with providing high quality service.

Back in this era, there was not even a dream of cell phones because the technology did not exist. Telephones of the time were controlled from this type of room, usually named "Central". Where women, always women, sat on high chairs, put a headpiece on to hear and speak and faced their own panel of several hundred little metal holes arrayed in neat grids, with a set of shiny flexible rubber hoses tipped with metallic jacks that they had to connect in the correct patterns in those little metallic holes.

Young women neatly dressed listened to customers who wanted to talk to someone else in town. To you kids, that is no big deal to use the phone, but it was back then. It was. The idea of just picking up this black plastic thing and holding it to you ear to wait for a human voice to come through it was novel, was startling, even a kind of witchcraft. The nice voice would say, "Central. May I help you." Or "Central, who do you wish to speak to" or some variation on the theme. Then you bravely, for an old farmer it required bravery, said the name of the person -the "party"- you wanted to speak



Figure 8 "Central"

http://www.myinsulators.com/commkid/telephones/1950s_telephone_ads.htm

to and waited.

The operator said, "One moment please" while she riffled through a paper - not digital- directory of telephone subscribers, which was only a small percentage of the homes in town, for the number of the 'party'. Then she'd pull up the right combination of black and red cables and connect them in the right holes in the panel in front of her. And magic. The phone of the other party would ring and the party would pick it up and start talking. Impossible. No need to go out in the weather and walk a few blocks or drive a ways. Just pick up the phone and call. These operators had to keep their cool and handle the load when things got busy because so much individual initiative was required. It was totally manual. The miraculous phone switches did not exist. These women were the switches.

"Party lines" were an inconvenience but an economic necessity. Imagine that the small phone company wants to add phone service to four families who live 5 miles out side of town. Wires are needed to do this. No wireless things then. So the phone company had to pay to buy the wires and poles and supplies and pay men to run the lines out there to those families and had to later maintain and repair them. That was expensive and today it looks to me like the phone company could actually be accused of being altruistic because it was unlikely that it would recoup its investment in the life time of those few new subscribers. Today no self-respecting corporation would be guilty of such extravagance. "Tsk tsk, sorry can't do it folks. Our accountants say it doesn't make sense."

But while the phone company did provide phone service to those four families out there, it did not spend more than it needed to. It would run one phone line out and would hook the four families up onto that one line. Technically, that was a simple thing to do, and economically it made sense. The problem was,

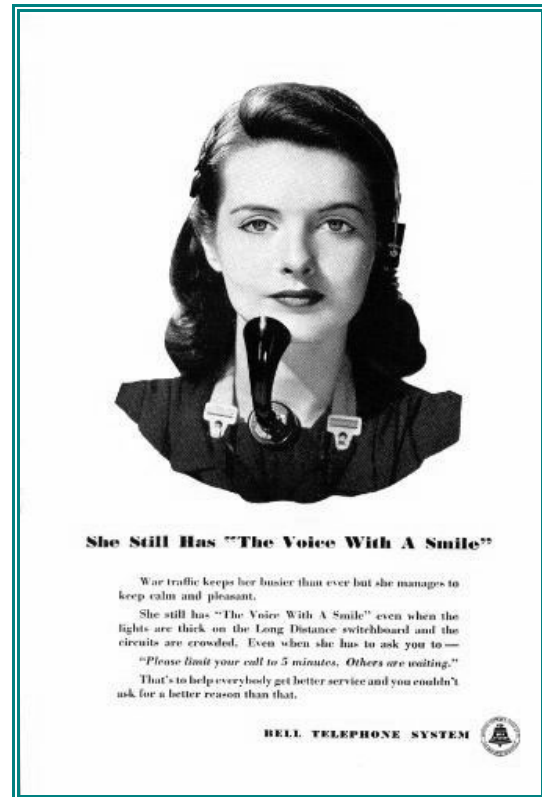


Figure 9 Operator Up Close
http://www.myinsulators.com/commokid/telephones/t940s_telephone_ad.htm

that when Central dialed one of the phones on that "party line", all parties on the line would hear the ring. The way the phone company distinguished between the four parties on that line was to assign each one a distinctive combination of rings. One family would be assigned two short rings, another would be assigned one long and one short ring and so on. That way, each of the four families would know whether or not the phone was ringing for them or not.

But the parties would all know who was being called. Worse, any party who wanted to could pick up the phone at the same time and eavesdrop on the entire conversation. So boys and girls did not have smoochy sweet phone conversations, did they. It was irritating to know that someone else was overhearing the conversation. Because it was none of their business. In addition to the invasion of privacy, there was a technical problem when multiple listeners were on the line. The loudness decreased because there was a fixed amount of electricity in the line which was divided by more users than it was designed to handle.

When I was in Silver City in the 1980's with some of you kids, I asked a woman in the library/museum for some assistance. Silver City still had one of these primitive phone systems that had battery packs hanging from each telephone, which required the user to manually turn a crank to make the bell on another phone ring. I asked her about making an appointment to take a bunch of you kids up to the little church that was usually shut. She said she'd call so-and-so down in a small town nearby who was the caretaker of that old church.

While I waited, she lifted the handpiece off the phone base and turned the crank to dial So-and-So. While she waited, someone who obviously heard the ring picked up their phone, needing some entertainment. Silver City was a pretty dead town so it was understandable I guess. The lady who was helping me recognized who that someone was that had picked up the line. She said, "Mabel! Hang up the phone! This call isn't for you!" Apparently Mabel hung up. But that's how these phones worked. Every set of parties had at least one of those nose pokes, who would eavesdrop just to eavesdrop, and it drove the others nuts.

The phone we used was a black, sturdy, table top model. This model is perhaps the exact model we had. The



Figure 10 1940 phone

<http://www.collectorville.com/fone-fotos/202-497.jpg>

white paper on the front had the phone number which was a short 4-5 digit number. The cable was a straight woven fabric-covered wire. None of the fancy coiled plastic coated wires of today. Sturdy, simple, no-nonsense design.

Reddy Kilowatt

The image of a man made out of lightening bolts captured my interest. Whoever it was that provided electricity to Uintah Valley in those days used this character in its ads. He showed up in ads, urging something or other on the reader. The lightbulb head fit with the concept of electricity and light. His friendly smile and antennae attracted kids to him. It was a surprise to learn years later that this man was not created in Utah. He came from the east originally but was adopted by electric companies for obvious reasons. He showed up on billboards and in newspapers so was part of the background of the valley.

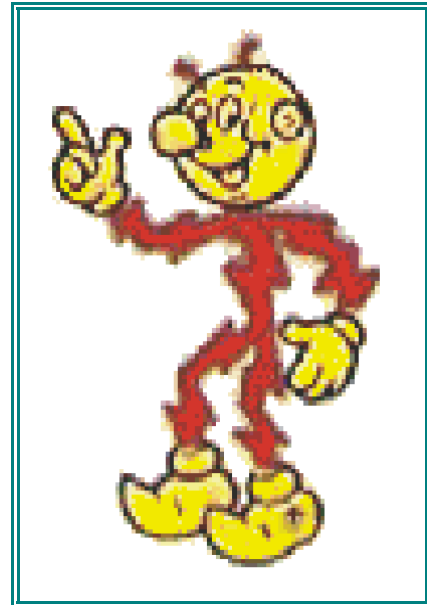


Figure 11

Coal Burning Stove

This is what our cook stove looked like. Ours was a different brand with some white enamel surfaces not present on this model but the design was the same with the fire box on the left. The large door in the front of the stove is the oven door, with a large handle. When the door was opened and allowed to fall onto its hinged, it jarred heavily, the floor resounding from the thump like a bass drum. The round dial



Figure 12 Kitchen Stove
<http://newdeal.feri.org/images/s37.gif>

on the front was the thermostat that registered oven temperature with some degree of accuracy though you didn't really believe it.

The way the oven was heated was ingenious. Obviously, the firebox would heat the left side of the oven but that would allow a big temperature difference between the two sides of the oven, meaning half cooked cakes. In those days you had to turn your cake while it cooked, not a real problem, except that cakes made from scratch could easily "fall" if bumped at the wrong time, resulting in a dense sponge that was only hogs would eat. There was a critical period of time when the leavening had created fluffy bubbles in the cake that wasn't yet firm. If the mass was jarred at that point, the bubbles would collapse. To minimize the variation in the temperature in different parts of an oven, stove manufacturers designed the firebox in such a manner that the heat and smoke were directed up over the oven, instead of straight out the back of the firebox. After the heat flowed across the top of the oven it went to the back and up the chimney. Look at where the stove pipe is - right in the middle of the stove, not behind the firebox on the left.

The lady has the door to the firebox pulled open so that she can feed a small split log. Just below that door there are three round protuberances. Those are the draft controls. You turned the knobs on the end to change the size of the spaces through which air entered the firebox which altered the amount of fire, hence, heat, produced by the fire. Below these draft controls is another door. That is the space that collected the ashes as then fell from the firebox. The fire rested on a grate rather than on a flat surface. This grate allowed the air to flow upward along the entire bottom of the fire.

Hauling ashes was a chore for big people usually, though toward the end of our stay in Vernal I remember having to do some of this work. The first principle in dealing with ashes is to be sure the fire is completely out and that the stove is cold. Otherwise, you could have some exciting times when a hot coal fell out onto the floor or you. The coal scuttle was used. The first step in removing ashes when you burned coal especially was to shake the grate. There was a handle that you used like a crank. It had a square hole that you fit over a square peg end of the grate.



Figure 13 Coal bucket and shovel
http://www.civilization.ca/hist/lifelines/lipo_e01e.html

Then you quickly rotated the handle back and forth to wiggle the halves of the grate. This loosened the clinkers and chunks of ash that were hung up in the grate.

The coal bucket was set beneath the door and a shovel designed to fit in the firebox was used to pull the ashes out and into the bucket. This was done slowly because any enthusiasm produced clouds of fine ash dust that mom didn't like much. After the bucket was full, it was taken outside and the ashes were spread on the snow and ice-covered paths to make them less slippery.

Sitting in the center of the stove top between the teakettle and pan, you see a flat iron, the kind that mom used to iron our clothes before dad bought her a fancy Sunbeam electric iron -that went from zero to 260 degrees in about a minute. You could scorch your shirt in a second when the thing was warmed up, popping and crackling in enthusiasm to work. Mom had two of the flat irons and one handle. The handle was affixed by pushing it down into notches in the flatiron made for the purpose, while twisting it to the right. That engaged parts of the handle and the flat iron. To remove the handle you just reversed the process, after you had set the cool flat iron back on the hot stove. The two irons were alternated, one always heating and one always ironing.

To the left of the flat iron you can see lines in the top of the firebox. Those are the outlines of the three lids that set over the firebox which could be removed. Two of them were circular and rested on a third piece that set between them shaped sort of like a diaper. When a wash boiler was to be heated, all of these lids were removed and the boiler was set directly over the fire. The special tool that was used to lift the lids off the top of the firebox is hanging up on the left side of the stove, out of the way but easily accessible.

Above the stove proper are a pair of doors that enclosed spaces that obviously stayed warm when the stove was burning.

These warming ovens were perfect places to set bowls and pans of food to keep warm for dinner, while other things were being prepared, or while mom was waiting for someone to come in for dinner. On top of the warming ovens mom usually kept a salt shaker or salt box and a pepper shaker, all industrial size. A box of large kitchen matches for starting the fire was hung



Figure 14 Copper Boiler
lorenzo.uwstout.edu/cheese/ch_14.jpg

on the wall to the left.

In the winter in particular, welcoming heat then emanated from the door and the oven and stove and when I didn't feel well, sitting by it was comforting inducing a delicious listlessness. When we wanted something to eat, mom would sometimes butter homemade bread and sit it on a rack in the oven to brown. A cup of hot cocoa completed the meal. Especially when mom dropped a marshmallow in to float and melt, sweetening the drink with vanilla. When we were sick, mom would fix us toast this way. We didn't get an electric toaster, a new-fangled Sunbeam contraption, until about the time we went to Seward.

A coal stove is a wonderful thing, sort of the center of the family universe. When it is stoked and hot, its heat fills the entire room, glowing and comforting. It was a lovely thing to sit between the back wall and stove when it was not really hot. There is something reassuring about warmth, particularly in the gastronomic center of the house. We took our Saturday night bath in front of this stove.

Unfortunately the stove was not capable of being banked sufficiently to last through the night, so in the morning the house was icy cold. Literally. That was particularly true in an uninsulated house in cold Vernal winters. Sometimes the water bucket on the kitchen counter had a skin of ice that formed after the fire went out and the house cooled off. In the morning you broke the ice by pulling the dipper out. Dad would start the fire again, and we'd grab out clothes and run to stand in front of the stove to change from our pajamas.

We kept some painted turtles in the kitchen in a flat Pyrex dish, and one night they froze. Solid. We thought they were dead but dad put the dish on the stove shelf and forgot about it. Later someone noticed that the turtles had thawed out and were moving energetically now in the hot water.

Mustard Plasters

These things have to be experienced to be appreciated. They were applied to your chest to "cure" a cold or flu and they worked. Because you would do about anything to avoid being treated again. They came from grandma Merrill, the only mean thing she ever did to me.

These painful things start in the kitchen. A thick yellow pasty curdled soup is prepared on the stove with large amounts of powdered mustard and wheat flour. Then a piece of outing flannel was laid on the table and liberally smeared with this warm paste. Then I was sort of tied down in bed on my back while the thing was laid on my chest with the paste directly on my skin. It was then covered with

something to keep the sheets from being soiled, blankets were piled on top of the plaster and I was left there to stew. I did. The mustard started to burn badly. It was painful to lay there for however long it was the thing was left on. I'd guess something like half an hour because mom and grandma knew that it took more than a few minutes for the plaster "to draw out" whatever it was supposed to draw out. Even after the miserable thing was removed my skin hurt although warm soft flannel was put over my chest.

Home remedies were all most people had to rely on unless there was a life-threatening problem that did need to expensive attention of doctors. There was no such thing as health insurance and few doctors. Families did everything they could to care for and heal each other. Some of the ideas were silly. One of dad's sisters, who I won't mention by name in case extended family members read this and get the idea I'm ridiculing her, had a sure fire cure for smelly feet and it wasn't washing them or your socks. It was an enema.

BB guns in the dairy herd

As noted elsewhere, the Cooper dairy herd was a constant source of irritation to our 2 acre farm. Before dad installed the cattle guard that effectively stopped their entry. When they were inside, the cows would graze on anything green in our yard. This is where us kids made a heroic entry. We were granted an extraordinary dispensation by mom and dad.

They had given us Red Ryder B-B Guns, and poor you if you fail to comprehend the magnitude of this boon. Boys waited to get a BB Gun, their first step into manhood, their first firearm. Then I saved pennies so I could buy more BBs

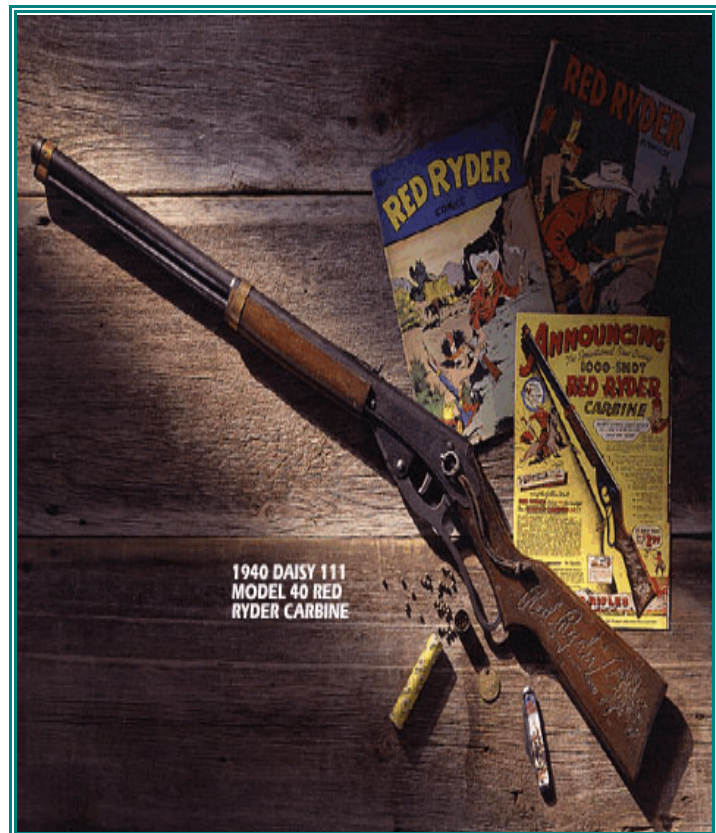


Figure 15 1940 Red Ryder BB Gun

http://popularmechanics.com/outdoors/outdoors/1999/7/Daisy_Air_Rifle/index.phtml

because I shot a lot of them. You pulled the handle down to pump a compress air into a cylinder. Then you returned the handle to this position before you pulled the trigger.

One time I forgot to do that. I intently sighted on a sparrow that was bouncing around in the lilacs, and when I pulled trigger the lever whacked back up on my hand so hard I thought I had broken my fingers. I don't know how I managed to get my hand out of the lever but I did. Fear is a more powerful stimulus than pain. I struggled out there on the back porch, frantically trying to find a way to hold the stock stationary so my good hand could pull the lever to free my hand. While my hand hurt, I knew that if I reported to senior management to get help to pull the bb gun off my hand, that I would be soundly abused for my stupidity. That is what it was in my excitement to get the dang birds. Getting hurt was getting hurt twice around our house if you reported the injury. Because you always got a painful lecture about how stupid you were to have hurt yourself that way. So you never wanted to admit that you were hurt. Far better to just conceal the hurt and deal with only that hurt. Tongues inflict pain worse than bb gun levers.

After getting fed up with these damn dairy cows grazing on the peas and beans, and leaving cow pies all over the place, mom and dad decreed that ANYTIME the herd showed up in the yard, we were free to blast away at them as often and as painfully as we could. We even understood that in so doing we were actually assisting the welfare of the family. Perish the thought that mere kids should get a glimpse of the fact that their efforts contributed to the welfare of the family. [See discussion of Boston episodes below for elaboration on this issue."] Man alive, that was heaven. Running and hollering after the herd out in the front yard, stopping to cock the lever, not even sighting before squeezing off the next shot. The cows kicked into the air when they were hit and bellowed but weren't hurt. The yelling and screaming probably upset them more than the BB's but it was a great sport to be allowed to shoot the stupid critturs that were damaging mom's flowers.

National Geographic

As far back as my memory goes, we had the National Geographic in the house. Dad was in love with it so it found its way into the house each month. That provided an enormous amount of fascinating fodder to occupy us when it rained the winter when it was too cold to go outside. I don't think I ever

heard him explain his fascination with the magazine but it obviously had to do with his love of nature and art and places and cultures, all of which showed up regularly.

I picked up his love and to this day delight in seeing a new National Geographic magazine. My only regret today is that it's become too politically correct, that it changed its old stilted journalistic style that I like, that it tries to cater to the boob tube generation by trying to emulate the boob toob. But I still like it anyway. At 5111 you all saw the collection I acquired over some 20 years. Those were in leather bound slip cases, and came with detailed indexes so you could actually use the set like a small library. It's too late for you now, but that was what I was trying to produce for you. I hope whoever got them appreciated them.

Anthropology probably became the love of my life through the medium of dad and his magazine. Exotic monkeys, dark dangerous jungles, naked African women, treacherous rivers with boiling rapids, high mountains, gorillas, big game hunts, Indians, and so on

peopled my imagination. But perhaps the most vivid images I remember clearly today are those accompanying an article about Cappodocia in Turkey. Such bizarre landscape. It looked like moonscape in those black and white photos and you can see the similarity. This volcanic region was used by early Christians who moved here to escape persecution.

They excavated their homes in the volcanic rock, making the bizarre landscape even more bizarre by having people living in these structures.



Figure 16 <http://www.turkishodyssey.com/gallery/images/s1326.jpg>

Roy Rogers & Trigger, Inc.

This man is the ultimate cowboy, the one we admired the most. I don't know why. He stood head and shoulders above them all for some reason, probably Madison Avenue and it worked for us. His horse Trigger was also the best, the one we wanted to ride. Roy and Trigger were tops.

Madison Ave blended in the toy store. Roy Rogers cap guns, shirts and hats were marketed to use impressionable kids, though we could never afford to have any of this stuff.



Figure 17 Roy Rogers

<http://www.fiftiesweb.com/western.htm>

Breaking and Entering at age 6

Dick and I went to visit the Coopers one hot summer afternoon because we were bored at our place. We walked the half mile on the soft, hot native asphalt road. When we arrived at the Cooper places, two families of them, no one was home. Not at either home. That wasn't unusual but this day we did something unusual. We opened the front door, which was always unlocked, just like at our own home, and entered the house. What possessed us to do that I'll never know, but we went in. We had been trained rigorously to never go into some one's house without permission and to never take anything that isn't ours. But we experienced a sort of moral break that afternoon. We went in and then we did something very wrong.

We wandered around the house looking in rooms that we already knew well. We played there all the time, for cryin' in the rain barrel. But we were compelled to do this thing, perhaps because of the novelty of the action, or perhaps the thrill of risking "being caught". Who knows. When we got to the kitchen, we poked around in the cupboards, completely without moral compass by now. And we did the unthinkable. We opened a package of powdered sugar and made a sort of glaze with water like mom would make. Then found the box of graham crackers

and put the glaze on some of them, like mom did, and put another on as a lid. Then we ate them. Until we were full.

About now our moral compass, our moral gyroscope, kicked in. We broke out in a cold sweat and knew we were in trouble, even though no one had come to the house. We were beset with ghosts by now about punishments that would be about as exciting as bamboo splinters under the finger nails. We tried to put things away as best we could and slunk out of the house, shutting the door quietly, just in case. And wandered nonchalantly home. But it didn't work.

There is something about a child who has done something wrong, that is, a child who has been provided a moral compass, that produces a neon sign over his head for mom to see that says, "I did something wrong." That happened to us. We hadn't been home too long before mom figured out something bad had happened. I suspect today that the telltale signs were powdered sugar on our shirts and glaze on our faces. The Coopers weren't home yet so she hadn't received a phone call saying that the kids had done such and such. Indeed, the Coopers really wouldn't know for sure who did the deed in the kitchen. But mom knew something was up, so she began to grill us in a mild exploratory way at first that quickly became a full-scale inquisition. "You what?!" I am grateful today to see that I was unable to lie to her once she got the drift that we had done something wrong. I am glad about that.

She drug the facts of our misdemeanor out of us and then rehearsed one more time the magnitude of our sin. We had gone into someone's home when they weren't home, without their permission. Sin number one. Worse, we had gone into the kitchen and stolen their food that they needed for their own children, 6 of them. Sin Number Two. There were probably more than that, but these were the biggies.

Now the humiliating punishment. She was teaching a lesson that hurt because she believed it should and because she believed it was deserved -and probably prayed it would make a difference. She handed us the unopened box of powdered sugar out of our own cupboard and ordered us directly to walk back to the Coopers and to tell the parents what we had done and to give them back the powdered sugar we had stolen. Period. Nothing fancy about it. Just do it and do it now before I give you a hiding so you can't sit for a week.

What choice did we have? None. If we had failed to do it ourselves, the worst thing could have happened. She would have personally dragged us along and towered over us in the Cooper household while she ordered us to do such and such

and so and so. We did go to the Coopers and we did confess our sin and we were mortified because some of the kids were there to witness this shocking scene and we did hand the parents the box of powdered sugar. Then we turned around and walked home, wishing the earth would open up and swallow us up.

After we went home, the lecture was repeated. There was never a shortage of words when mistakes were made and teaching was indicated. Worse, we had to literally give up our own desserts to atone for our sin. That box of powdered sugar was the one mom would have used to make the same desserts for us. Powerful object lesson here. You have to remember the penury we lived in to appreciate the magnitude of our mistake and the magnitude of the punishment.

ST 37 and Camphophenique

The over-the-counter remedies marketed when I was a kid have mostly disappeared, perhaps for the better. But I remember various of them and was impressed with the promises given by the manufacturers. Mom and dad used these two regularly, as indicated.

ST 37 came in pint-size, cobalt blue bottles and was a precursor to Listerine, indeed later coexisted with Listerine and promised to keep your breath smelling clean. The ads for ST37 even had drawings of bacteria that were killed by the stuff. Microscope slides were drawn to illustrate the organisms that caused bad breath -"halitosis" was the disgusting name for the disgusting stuff. The ads promised magic and long life and success in love, etc. if you would use it.

Dad used it for another reason. He "gargled" with it when he got a sore throat. He must have gotten strep throats because he really got painful infections that he'd treat with this stuff. He'd pour some of it into a glass of water, stand at the sink, fill his mouth part full, tilt his head back, and proceed to blow air up through the stuff that rested in the back of his throat. This was supposed, I guess, to circulate the "medicine" in the oropharynx to kill the nasty bacteria. I don't know whether it worked or not because I didn't get to use the stuff.

If I was supposed to gargle, I was given a small glass of warmish salt water and told to do the same thing. I did and it felt fine, but I can't say that it made any difference. Maybe it did, but not so I could notice it.

Camphophenique was a more potent product. It came in small bottles, was oily and had a powerful smell. Because it is made of camphor among other things. This package is the modern version but closely resembles the version we used. The bottle was green glass with a screw-cap.

Its major use in our household was to treat cold sores, things that I seemed to get frequently. I don't understand why I rarely get them today when I got them so often during the winter in Vernal and Seward. Whatever the reason, I am glad. They were really painful. I've heard that small pox vaccinations would reduce the frequency of cold sores, herpes, for some people.

The treatment consisted of pouring a few drops of the oily liquid onto a small cotton ball. The cotton ball was daubed directly onto the cold sore and did not usually cause any pain. The treatment continued until the cold sore was healed.



Figure 18 Camphophenique
<http://www.virtuallyshopping.com/cgi-local/index2.cgi?http://www.drugstore.com/brand.asp?brand=8038&aid=223483>

Re-loading Ammunition

Get the brass! Collect the brass!", he said. So we scurried around like obedient little

rabbits hunting eagerly in the sand for the empty cartridges ejected from his 30.06 or mom's 30.30. The exotic acrid smell of cordite and spent gunpowder filled the air around us. The reason for collecting the brass wasn't concern for the environment. That's proven by the fact that the spent rim-fire cartridges from .22's weren't collected. They were left where they fell - because they couldn't be reloaded. The big cartridges were collected to save money and to give dad the pleasure of re-loading his own ammunition.

The only time I collected .22 shells was in Alaska. Dick, Billy Schafermeyer and I would round up some shells and shoot them off using a technique learned at scout camp. But in this method, the empty cartridge itself became the projectile. To do this you first had to take leave of your senses and second, you had to think that you were invincible. We could have lost an eye in a second if the technique had mis-fired. I'm not sure I'd allow my own kids to do this -which is not to say we had dad's approval either.

It's disarmingly simple. Take a couple of large matches out of your waterproof match-holder. Break the heads off so that there is no stick left on the heads. Drop the match heads into the empty cartridge. Then find a board, a log or stump with a vertical surface. Now hold the open end of the cartridge up against the flat vertical surface. And hammer the cartridge tightly into place using any rock that was handy.

Up to this point the process is benign. There is no risk from anything done so far. The risk arises in the next simple step. Take another match and yell to the other kids that you were about to shoot off your cartridge. If they are smart, they will turn their backs to you. Do they? No. They avidly turn to watch. Now, you light your match, sit to the side of the embedded cartridge, and hold the match flame up against the brass. It takes only a few seconds of direct heat to ignite the two match heads inside the cartridge. At that instant -and it is only an instant- you hear and see a small explosion and the cartridge shoots off so fast that you can't even tell where it went.

Just like a bullet. Which is pretty dang exciting. As long as you don't really understand the risks. If the cartridge had been lodged in the board in such a way that one side was more tightly embedded than the other, it would explode off the board in an arc toward the tighter side. If your face was too close, the effect would be not much different than the slug fired out of a rifle. We thought this technique was pretty exciting, and were amazed at the amount of energy in those match heads that left a small blacked spot on the board around the circular cut left by the cartridge. We heard of kids having their eye put out while doing this, but knew it couldn't happen to us.

Re-loading ammunition was fascinating. A complete industrial process right there on the kitchen table. Dad couldn't afford to buy the re-loader so borrowed it from the gunsmith he worked for. None of my gun-shooting uncles could afford one either. The expendable supplies were all he bought: projectiles or "slugs", smokeless gun powder and primers. It was years later that I saw regular black powder fired. It makes a large cloud of black smoke that practically obscures the shooter's vision if the wind blows the right way.

The reloader consists of a stout vertical metal shaft affixed securely to a base or clamped to a table top. On this shaft is a device that works like an Arbor Press. A variety of tools and dies are fitted into the press to perform various functions on each cartridge as it is being prepared.

The reloading process is straight forward, based entirely on the structure and function of a cartridge. A loaded cartridge is simply a brass tube that has the projectile clamped in one end, a new primer in the other end, and gunpowder in between. The cartridge is slipped into a similarly shaped firing chamber of a rifle and locked in place. When the gun trigger is pulled, a firing pin is released and strikes the center of the primer. The cordite in the primer explodes, igniting the gunpowder that is touching it, firing the projectile out of the brass cartridge and rifle barrel. That's the basic process. So re-loading is simply the process of refurbishing and reloading the cartridge so that it can be fired again.

After the brass has been cleaned, the spent primer is ejected by being pushed out with a metal rod long enough to reach it through the center of the cartridge. When a cartridge is fired, the brass tube will actually expand if the firing chamber is larger than the cartridge which it usually is, so it needs to be resized. The shoulder needs to be reformed and the neck needs to be reshaped and so on.

Deer hunt in rain

When I was around 5 or 6 the whole family went deer hunting, the only time I have clear recall of doing that together. The reason we didn't go usually was probably because kids get bored, are noisy and slow things down. If you have to wait for kids to catch up or to finish playing in the trees, breaking camp and getting out on the trail is a slow process that the men



Figure 19 Reloader
<http://lonegun.safeshopper.com/184/1541.htm?729>



Figure 20 Mule Deer and Fawn
<http://www.bcadventure.com/adventure/wilderness/animals/deer.htm>

didn't tolerate. Plus the men wanted to be in their blinds early before the deer were moving about. There was also the risk of being shot, which did occasionally happen though not as often as later when the Californians came on the scene. They'd shoot a cow and swear it looked like a mule deer.

Deer season starts in October so the weather is turning bad. It rained while we were up on the mountain so we spent considerable time in an old canvas tent. These tents were heavy and difficult to pitch, not like the small miracle-fabric tents today that are set up with internally-placed fiberglass rods. They had to be laid out and laboriously staked every few feet and suspended by guy lines to trees so that an unexpected wind would not blow them down. At night it was like being in a peculiarly shaped cave that smelled peculiar from the preservative applied to the canvas to prevent mildew and rot that would otherwise grow from any retained moisture.

I learned an important lesson about these heavy tents, as usual, the hard way. Dad said not to touch the inside of canvas tent when it was wet. He probably explained what would happen if we did but it didn't convince me. In fact, his prohibition was an invitation. I needed to find out for myself what the result was. So one evening when it was raining, and the inner surface of the canvas was glistening wet and sagging from the weight of the water, I reached up to that shiny surface and drew my finger along it. Sure enough, the glistening disappeared. That was a discovery and seemed to be what he was talking about but that wasn't all I learned. The next thing that happened was that the rain water began to drip through the mark I had drawn on the tent, as if a dam had been removed. Whatever was below the drip obviously got wet and dad wasn't too happy about that one. So I got the usual lecture about, 'Why don't you listen? Why don't you do what I tell you to do?' I didn't know the answer to either question then and still don't today. I'd do the same thing again I suspect. The interesting thing about the tent was how magical it seemed that it could hold out water until you touched it. Miraculous.

We spent a weekend up there I'd guess, wandering around, exploring and checking out things that were new to us. The mountain flora and fauna is markedly different from that on the farm in the dry valley. The most remarkable plant we encountered was a toadstool. We had toadstools around home, but this one was 10 inches tall and that big across. Simply stupendous. We knew that is what it was because it was shaped like one but it seemed impossible that one could be so huge. A piece of the umbrella had been chewed out by a deer, someone said.

I had mixed feelings about killing deer, anything really. I was never taught to be a bleeding heart and grew up where animals were grown and slaughtered to feed us. That was how things were. But inside of me there was also a respect for life that seems to have come with this model. I didn't like killing very much. Indeed, in Alaska, a story that will be told in the next volume, I was finally ready to shoot a mountain goat after a long stalk, and I froze. I couldn't do it. So dad blew its head off with his rifle which didn't particularly upset me, but when I sighted on the animal I just looked. I couldn't pull the trigger. Dad didn't say anything about it even though he had saved it for me. So I don't really know what his reaction was that his kid couldn't shoot a goat. I don't really like even killing insects or snakes if it isn't necessary. I don't make a crusade out of it, but I don't. On one of the rafting trips on the Payette, Robbie and the Thompson boys wanted to kill a small cold snake we found on the early morning bank and I wouldn't let them. They were confused but that was how it was when I was the leader. There was no danger and nothing to be gained so let it alone.

Tumor removal

When I fell into the bonfire I burned the right side of my head and over the next year it developed a large tumor. Right on the top of my ear. Dr. Spendlove -who got to know me really well and who had this gorgeous daughter "Penny" who made my voice disappear- pronounced it a "fibroid tumor" and recommended that it be surgically removed. I don't remember whether I had any role in the discussion, whether I wanted it off for cosmetic reasons or not, or whether it was just somehow medically right that it should be removed. Whatever the strategy was, the thing was removed.

The tumor was exactly on the top of my ear and was an inch long and half an inch high, a pretty conspicuous mass that attracted kids' interest at the least. In this 3rd grade photo it shows as a small lump on my right ear. It grew much larger. The rudeness of kids was the major reason to have it removed because it wasn't painful. Perhaps there was a problem. I was wearing glasses back then because I was far-sighted, in which case the temple would have rubbed on and irritated the tumor, particularly after it grew larger. Note the tinting of this photo. Manually done. Also note the home-made shirt. That dark stripe should have been over the shoulders, not the front - perhaps it was and I just put it on backwards but I wouldn't have escaped the house that way.

I obviously had to be put to sleep for the surgery. Back to the same religious hospital, the same drill. I hated it. I had ether three times as kid, once for my tonsils, once for this tumor and once in Seward for surgery on my leg. Mom hauled me to the hospital on the fateful day, and parked me again with people I didn't know. And we repeated the procedure that I'd just gone through to have my tonsils cut out. They assured again I would be fine the same to me. I knew better. I had to take my clothes off, embarrassing, and told to put on what seemed to be a folded piece of cloth that I wore like a shirt. No pants. I was put on a cold stretcher and pushed down a hall into the operating room. And away we went. The same horrible induction and same horrible recovery. The being tied down while I was intentionally suffocated with a weird gas is one of the worst things I've experienced.



Dr. Spendlove had to remove a substantial piece of tissue to get the whole tumor. That left a large area without skin so he cut a small piece of skin from my hair above my ear and moved it down into the bare area where it healed in place and hastened the growth of new skin. Only problem is that there was hair in that skin so I have an odd patch of hair in a defect on the top of my ear today that puzzles barbers when they see it.

Saturday Night Bath

After the washing was done it was our turn to get clean. Saturday night was the time to get ready for Sunday, the time to wash and be

refreshed. During the week mom would give us clean clothes as needed, meaning when we got the others too dirty to wear by her measure. We'd wear anything as long as she'd let us. Hand, face and neck washing was a fairly regular weekday event though it wasn't a religious ceremony. I tried to avoid it as much as I could. Took too much time when I could be outside investigating a sparrow nest or chasing a cat.

One of the two large round galvanized tubs that had been used to rinse clothes a few hours earlier was set on the kitchen floor in front of the stove, obviously a welcome location in the winter. The following photo captures the setting well, stove tub and floor. This represents accurately what it was like when Dickie and I had to take out baths every Saturday night - and only on Saturday night.

Water was heated on the stove that was literally sitting that close to the tub set between the kitchen table and the stove. The water was heated in a large teakettle there on the stove. In preparation for the bath, the tub would first be filled perhaps half full of cold water using the bucket under the water pump on the kitchen counter. Then mom poured boiling hot water from the teakettle into the water, stirring it with her other hand, until the water was just right. Well, about just right. If it was too hot, Mom then cooled the hot water by pouring water again from the water bucket under the pump. She tried to find the right balance between making the water cool enough that it was tolerable but not cooling it so much that it got cold too fast because then she'd have to heat more water on the stove. During the bath if we did feel cold, we'd ask her to put more hot water into the tub and sometimes she'd oblige. I can see her holding the teakettle over the side of the tub, slowly pouring hot water in, telling us to stir it around so we didn't get scalded.

Mom and dad would bathe first and then we bathed. Some of the water

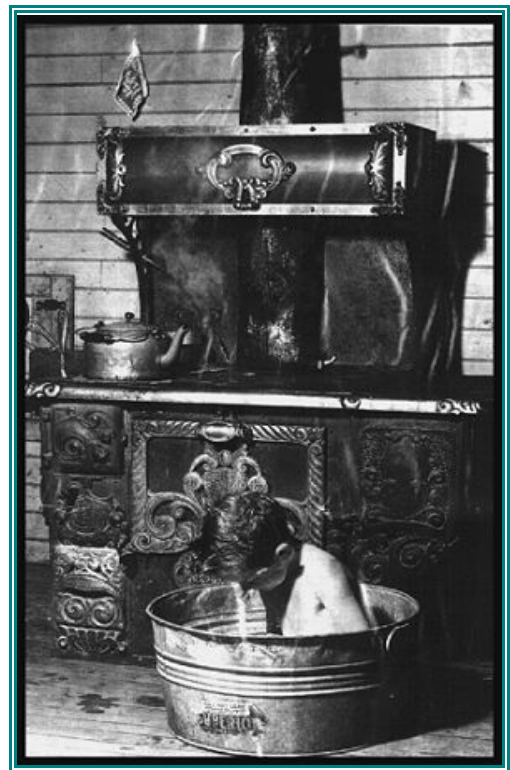


Figure 22 Saturday night bath in a wash tub in the kitchen

might be pulled out with a bucket and replaced but not all of it. Pretty shocking, isn't it. Can you imagine yourself actually getting into a tub of water that someone else had bathed in? I bet you recoil at the idea. But that is what we all did. Dad usually bathed first followed by mom. In the same water. The only difference between each tub full of bodies was the addition of more hot water to warm the water up. Otherwise, each person just added his or her residue to the mix and the next down on the totem pole got the results. It didn't bother us in the least. We had no idea what we were doing. If you don't know that you are doing something that others dislike, you have no way of knowing that.

The concept of showers that constantly flushed soap off you with fresh water was foreign. I had never heard of such a thing until we visited some people in town who had one. When I first tried a shower, it was not as satisfying as a tub where I was covered with hot comforting water. So hot sometimes that it burned my feet in which case I would squat in the water, not sitting down, and cover my feet as best I could with my hands which were also burned. But it was satisfying to sit in water that you can splash on your legs or belly to warm yourself.

We weren't allowed in the kitchen when mom and dad bathed. That was a private matter so we played in our bedroom until it was our turn. When we went into the kitchen, mom had our clean clothes lying on the kitchen table or a chair. By the time they had bathed, the well water which had a high mineral content, was white with soap and was covered with a floating scum. We undressed in front of the stove and took our turn in the tub and didn't think twice about the business of the soap scum. We knew that soap bubbles, i.e. foam, were fun and viewed the floating scum as a sort of foam which we would push around like little boats on the surface of the water. Mom would pour more water from the teakettle if the water was cold and finally we'd get out, teeth chattering and shivering, to be dried in front of the stove.

Finally, the best part of the bath on Saturday night. After getting toweled off by mom while we stood in front of the hot stove, simultaneously feeling hot on the back side and cold on the front side, we put on clean underwear. And then freshly washed, air-sun-dried pajamas and were ready for bed. Pajamas were always flannel. When they were warmed in the oven it was like wearing fluffy heat. Comforting, reassuring. I swear I slept best on Saturday nights for those reasons.

Hot 2-Door Chevy with noisy pipes

There it is again, the beat up old car that got dad in trouble. Because he made the serious mistake of not consulting with mom before he bought it. A serious mistake, really, in any relationship. But mom was somehow forgiving of his spendthrift ways, and continued to be until he died. She'd get angry that he wasted money on some frippery but she never made such a scene about it that their relationship was made worse by it.



Figure 23 The Hot Old Chivy

This car is an example of that behavior. Somewhere in Vernal dad ran across this old Chevy and decided that he needed to have it. The old Nash we had used was indeed older than this so from the standpoint of age, this Chevy was a good deal. The problem was that the darn thing was beat up as you can see here. The paint is wearing off. The back seat was missing and the upholstery was badly worn, but he got it. He decided he had to have it, so he did it.

A suspicion I have is that he bought it because compared to the sedate old Nash, this was a hot car. I don't know a thing about the engine but I remember a specific ride we took with him shortly after he bought it. Dickie and I knelt in the back of the car. I don't remember mom being along, just the three of us - so why were both of us in the back? I don't know. In any event I think what he was doing was taking the thing out for a test drive to check out its capabilities. He got us into the car, pulled out of the driveway, and turned north toward Vernal where our road connected with US 40. The he turned west on the highway and cruised out of town. When he hit city limits, he put the hammer down. He accelerated that old car to an extent I had never felt. Like I was going to be pushed out of the car. And it blatted and smoked down the highway probably burning gallons of oil. While he madly drove grinning wildly, loving the experience, showing the real reason he bought the dang thing. It had wonderful pipes sort of like the blooie

pipes of a motorcycle, which he obviously loved, and it had acceleration that the heavy Nash didn't have.

It didn't matter to dad that the car was mechanically shot. It really didn't, and perhaps that's part of the reason that mom didn't belabor the point. Dad was a machinist-mechanic par excellence and there was no mechanical thing that he couldn't repair himself. Indeed, he liked doing that sort of work so this two-door chevy was a do-it-yourself dream. I loved it because I liked the mad acceleration and the noise, and because he loved it.

The dialect of Vernal called a car manufactured by Chevrolet a "Chivy". I remember saying it that way and remember the shock later in Alaska when I realized that the spelling and pronunciation were two different things.. I was learning to spell and was an excellent speller. I sometimes won the spelling bees that regularly held. We didn't have any of the modern day crap that NEA teachers foist on poor kids, crap that only makes the poor kid feel stupid after while because they really can't learn to read. What is chiefly needed is a good paddle on the bum with the order to "LEARN those words." That works and the kid is better off than with some pap foisted off as superior education. So as I was memorizing the sounds because that would help me sound out and pronounce new words -what a novel idea- I learned that the letter "e" often had the value of "e" in the word "pet". As I talked about "chivys" with Billy Schafermeyer and thought about how the word was spelled, it unexpectedly dawned on me that in the Vernal dialect -not quite in those terms- the "e" of "chivy" was being pronounced like the "I" in "pit". That wasn't right. I realized that the "right" way to say the word was with the "e" of "pet".

If you would really like to understand what was going on in Vernal, the explanation is probably simple. That dialect apparently simplified its vowel quadrilateral and merged some of its mid-high and front vowels, sort of generalized them into the "I" of "pit" so that "chevy" was "chivy" and "creek" was "crik". It would be interesting to see whether or not that was the residue of dialects of the British Isles because there was a grundle of those immigrants in the region.

Art Linkletter

It was in Vernal or Seward where I became aware of a radio show that I c this man MC'ed. Art Linkletter His radio show was "Kids say the darndest things!" and he made a song out of it, sold books with that title, and generally made us all laugh.

I don't know how he got into these situations with little kids but each week he'd interview some of them on the air. During their conversations, the kids always ended up saying the "darndest things" that made me laugh. They were so silly and so funny and innocent.

I think that the thing I liked the best about him is evident in this photo: Art actually liked little kids. He loved talking to them and while he was the clever smart adult, he was able to enter into our world and speak to us in words and with ideas we understood and related to. That there should be humor there was irrelevant. It was simply where we were and he had this wonderful capacity to bring out the humor without making us feel bad. Indeed, he made the kids feel important when they said the funny things they said. Those two little boys remind me of Dick and me at the same age in the same era.

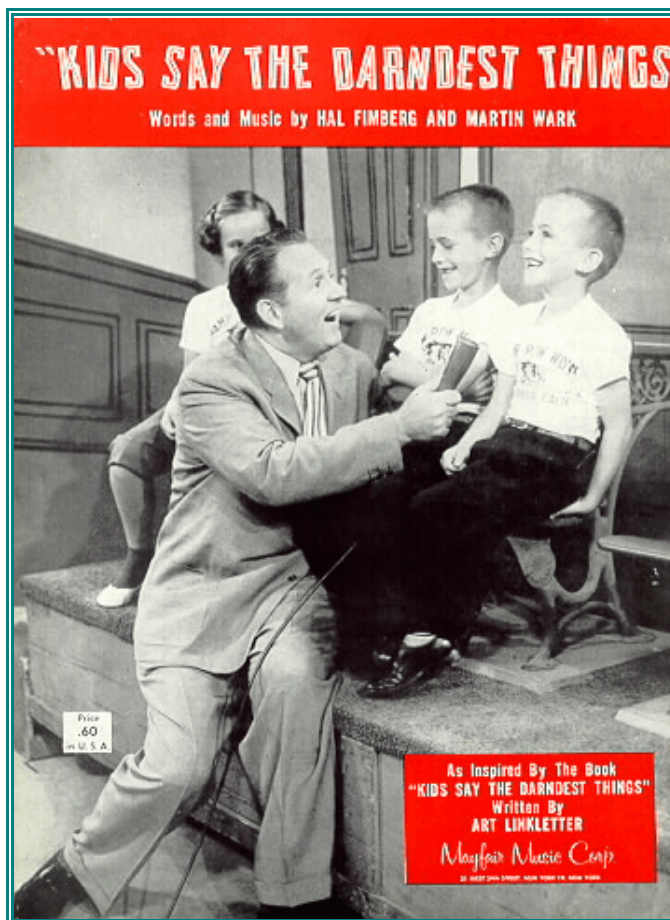


Figure 24 Art Linkletter

<http://www.sheetmusiccenter.com/60/136.jpg>

Sabre Dance

Katchaturian's "Sabre Dance" loomed on the horizon there in Vernal.
What a name.

I'd never heard such an odd name in my short life. However, it was an interesting name that sounded exotic and I never forgot it. The music was a piece that dad introduced into the household. I don't recall that he ever talked to us about it. He rarely actually looked at us so that we could see both of his ears when he spoke to us. But we heard him talk about things, in this case this music. Since he liked it, we liked it. I look back again and marvel that I should have become familiar with and fell in love with this kind of classical music out there on that little farm. Our neighbors didn't show much interest in such things, indeed they might have considered it pretentious had they known.

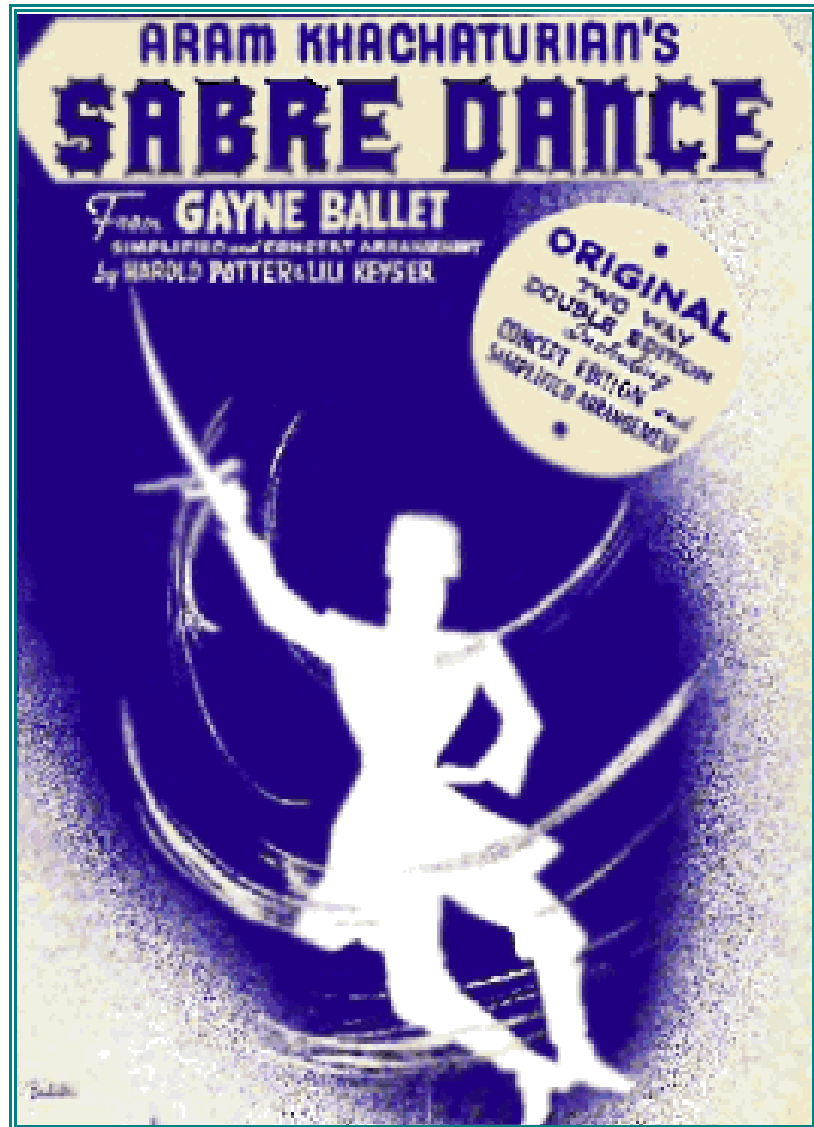


Figure 25 Katchaturian's Sabre Dance
<http://www.streetswing.com/histmain/z5sword1.htm>