Memoirs of a Wyoming Brat

By Russell F. Sherwin

“The time has come”, the Walrus said,
“To talk of many things:
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing-wax—
Of cabbages—and Kings—
And why the sea is boiling hot—
And whether pigs have wings.”

Lewis Carroll, Through The Looking-Glass, 1872

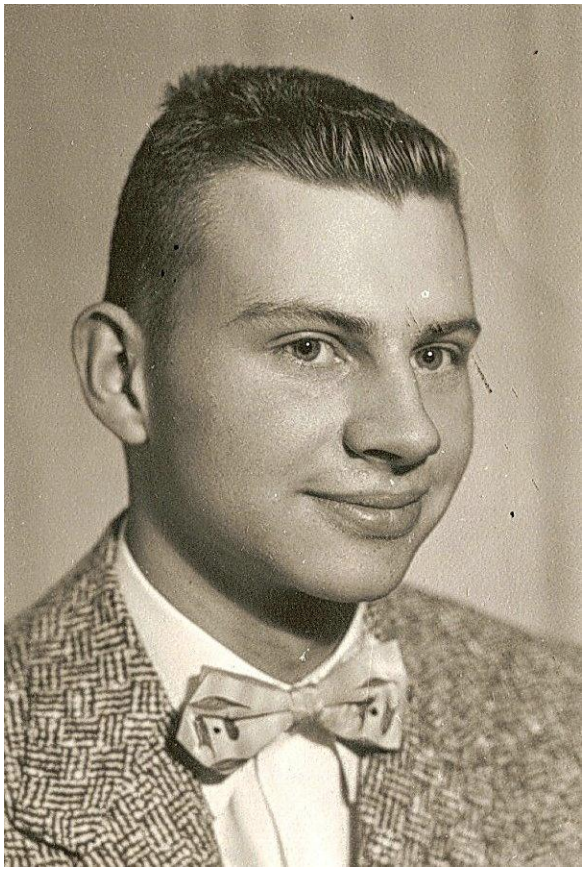

Photo: 1 - Russell Sherwin, High School graduation, 1955

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Part I – Wyoming

Prolog

This is a summary of some of the main points of my life. Not that my life is so remarkable, but I think those who are close to me might find some of it interesting. Mostly it's a chance to ramble on without anyone interrupting me. My own Dad, Wylie Grant Sherwin, hand-wrote his "memoirs" in ledgers over a period of several years, and I found them fascinating.

My Dad lived in an era quite different from me. He was born when automobiles were a novelty and horses were the common mode of individual transportation. Before computers. Before there was radio and television. Yet he died just two years short of seeing a man set foot on the moon. The changes he saw in his lifetime were extraordinary. His biography deals with his early life, before I was born, and that is the interesting part to me. I saw the rest of it; I was there too.

By the same token, I lived in an era and a place quite different from my kids. I, too, have seen many changes, including the birth of the computer age, the transistor, the first microprocessors, the first rockets and space satellites, television, automatic transmissions, the advent of Medicare, the end (or the beginning of the end) of racial discrimination, and many others.

So I'd like to give you a glimpse of what my life was like as a youngster and as a young adult. I'll tell you what we considered high tech, what cars were like, what my first car was, what things cost (to the best of my recollection), where I lived, who my friends were, the jobs I had, and lots of other things. I'll tell you of some of my major life decisions, those forks in the road that we all look back on and wonder, "What if I had done the other thing?"

This is not – cannot – be in chronological order. I have arranged it under major sub-titles which I hope will be readable.

"When you come to a fork in the road, take it."

Yogi Berra

Betty Sherwin Gunn, Virginia Sherwin Scholes, Nina Russell Sherwin Russell, Ted, Clifford Sherwin
Sherwin Reunion 1983

Photo: 2 - Taken at Cliffords place in Priest Lake, Washington, 1983. From right, Betty, Virginia, Nina, Russell, Ted and Clifford.

The Immediate Family

Mom, Dad, Brothers and Sisters

I probably should have run for president. After all, I was born in a log cabin in Wyoming. Isn't that the image that all politicians strive for? Well, I wasn't exactly born in a log cabin, but I lived in one until I was almost 20. I was born in Cody, Wyoming on March 26, 1937, in a white frame house on Rumsey Avenue. Betty Gunn, my sister, has pointed this house out to me on a couple of occasions. My arrival was a pretty big event in my two half-sister's and two half-brother's lives, from what I hear. Their mother, Dad's first wife, had died of tuberculosis, and Dad had married my mother, Nina. All of the "kids" were in their teens, so when I came along, I had four built-in baby sitters to take care of me.

Betty Gunn

My youngest half-sister is Betty, born in 1920, who was married to Harold Gunn. They

lived in Denver, then Albuquerque, where Harold worked for Sandia Laboratories up until the late 50's when Betty started a business selling travel trailers. It became very successful and Harold quit Sandia to work full time in the business. They sold that in the 60's and moved to Hawaii where Betty lives now. Harold died in 1993 at about age 89. They have one son, Timothy.

Clifford Grant Sherwin

My youngest half-brother was Clifford Grant Sherwin, born in 1919, who was married to Marjorie. They lived all their lives in Spokane, Washington. Clifford worked as a petroleum engineer and later operated a business selling scientific instruments. They have five children, Cherry, Alan, Peter, Anne and Martha. Clifford died of a heart attack in 1990, and Marjorie died of MS less than a year later.

Ted Burton Sherwin

Next up the ladder is Ted Burton Sherwin, born in 1917, who was married to Helen Lieb. They have lived for most of their married lives in Albuquerque where Ted worked for Sandia Laboratories in Public Relations. They have one son, Ted (or Billy, as he was known in my day), and one daughter, Susan. Ted Senior died in 2006.

Virginia Scholes

And finally, the oldest, Virginia, born in 1916, who was married to Wilbur Scholes. They lived all over the western United States. It would probably be easier to list the places they didn't live. The places that I know they lived are: Cody, Red Lodge, Denver, Albuquerque, El Paso, Spokane, and most recently San Mateo and Pleasanton, California. Wilbur worked more than 40 years for Safeway. They have one adopted son, Lee, and one daughter, Nina Jean. Wilbur died of cancer in about 1986, and Virginia died in December, 1995 at age 80, after watching a '49ers game the night before. The 'Niners won!

Wylie Grant Sherwin

My Dad, Wylie, was born December 26, 1895 in Brown's Valley, Minnesota. He moved with his parents, George and Hallie Sherwin, two brothers, Jim and George, and one sister, Lissie, first to Oklahoma, and then to a homestead near Lovell, Wyoming in 1909. In 1921, at the age of 26, he built the first of several cabins of what came to be known as The Trail Shop, on the Northfork of the Shoshone River, West of Cody. The road between Cody and Yellowstone park was at that time called The Yellowstone Trail, hence the name. It was unpaved and pretty primitive, but Dad figured with the sudden popularity of the automobile, brought about primarily by the Model-T Ford, the roads would improve, people would be traveling, and he could make a living selling gas and renting cabins beside the Yellowstone Trail. He was right for more than 40 years.

Nina Frances Sherwin (nee Russell)

Mom, Nina Frances Russell, was born February 9, 1906, in Lake of the Woods, Minnesota. She moved with her parents, Hans and Olava, two sisters, Vivian and Hildred, and two brothers, George (Buddy) and Almo, to the hardscrabble farming country near Billings, Montana when she was 13. They actually lived in a tent the first winter. Her father was a sort of jack-of-all-trades type who never had very steady employment. Her mother died suddenly the next spring during gall-bladder surgery. Nina completed high school, then, at about age 18, got a job teaching grade school near Billings. She was only 20-something when she got a letter from her good friend, Elaine Rhoads[1], stating that there was a job opportunity for summertime help at this place called the Trail Shop, near Cody.

Photo: 3 - The Russell family, about 1916. Left to right: Nina, Olava (seated), Almo, George (Buddy), Hildred, Hans, Vivian.

Elaine was already working there, and Mom came for a summer. She and Dad hit it off and were married in the early '30's. Mom inherited the four teenagers and immediately formed a lifelong bond with them. Betty has always said, "Nina just didn't get the concept that step-mothers were supposed to be mean." Nina was only 10 years older than Virginia and 14 older than Betty, so they were more like sisters than daughters.

[1] Elaine's maiden name was Neville. At this time, she was actually married to Harry Huntington, but that didn't last long, and she remarried Willard Rhoads. She has always been a Rhoads to us.

Paternal Grandparents

The only grandparent that I had any connection with was Grandma Hallie Sherwin, Dad's mother, She was born Hallie Milicent Barnett in Eau Claire, Wisconsin on February 18, 1874, died around 1954.

Photo: 4 - Grandma Hallie Sherwin (nee Barnett) at the Trail Shop, about 1952, age 78.

Grandma Hallie lived in Lovell, Wyoming in a large, 2-story white frame house with a porch running around three sides. She took in boarders, mostly guys that worked at the sugar beet factory in town, the only major employment other than farming. These were scruffy fellows, and they mostly were away at work or in their rooms upstairs, but they took their meals in the dining room, so we got the pleasure of their company when we visited. I remember one guy that would wipe his

Photo: 5 - The only photo I have of George F. Sherwin, probably around 1925, probably in Lovell, Wyo.

hands and face on the tablecloth! Another one would hold out his cup for more coffee, and then take it away while Grandma was still pouring. Then there was Doc. Doc lived in one of the rooms in Grandma's house for decades. Doc was a huge man, well over six feet tall with a shiny bald head. He was a chiropractor, but he also fancied himself a doctor, and he was the only one Grandma ever trusted for her medical needs. It must have

worked: Grandma Hallie lived in fairly active good health until I was in my teens, and died at about age 80.

George Fleming Sherwin was Dad's dad. He was born in Amherst, Wisconsin on August 18, 1870, died in Lovell in 1937. I have been able to trace George's father, Willard Sherwin, born in New York in 1854 to Francis H. Sherwin (1814-1895) and Mary Ann Wilson (1818-1865), and his mother, Milicent Fleming, but I have no further information. This is obviously where I got my middle name.

Maternal Grandparents

My mother's father, Hans Russell, died when I was very young, but I have a hazy recollection of a white haired, white bearded man of short stature, sort of like Santa Claus. This may be all wrong, but I'm sticking to it. Mom's mother, Olava, died of surgical complications in Billings when mom was about 13.

Nina Jean

Virginia's daughter, Nina, to her chagrin, has always been called Ninajean – one word. In fact, if you say it fast, like Virginia usually did, you can gloss over the a so that it comes out "9-jean". She has always been one of my best buddies, and here's why. The older

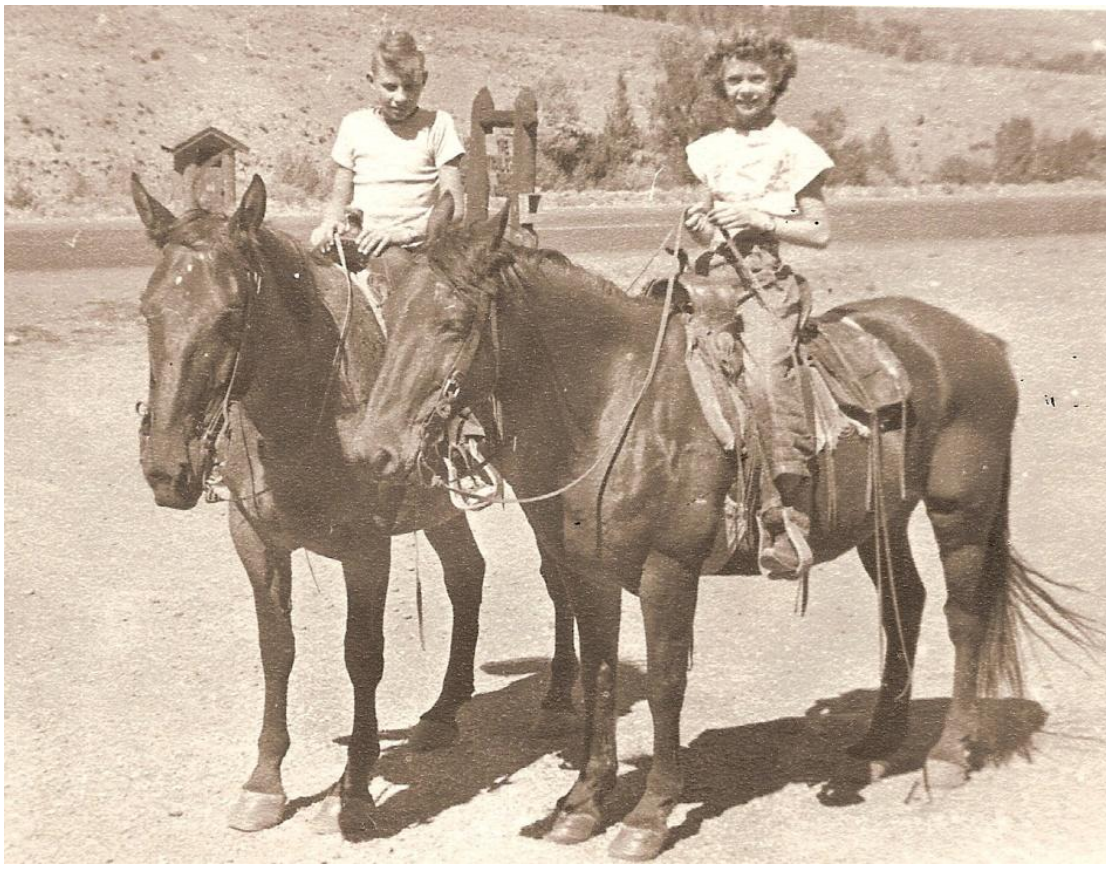

Photo: 6 - Nina Jean and Russ on horseback at the Trail Shop, 1948

kids' mother, Mildred Ellen Huntington, contracted tuberculosis in 1926. Dad took her to various sanitariums and treatment centers but there was nothing anyone could do. She died in Lovell, Wyoming on May 5, 1927[2]. Virginia came down with tuberculosis herself when Nina Jean was about 4 and they were living in Red Lodge, Montana. When Virginia went into the sanitarium at Galen, Montana, for treatment in 1940-41, Nina Jean came to live with us. We are nearly the same age, Nina and me. Nina is older (as I enjoy pointing out) by about 9 months. But we were close enough in age that we became inseparable. We had only to glance at each other over the dinner table to break into fits of gig-

[2] Betty has written a complete account of her illness and death, and I have included it in Appendix A.

gling. We would be drinking milk, and would laugh so hard it came out our nose. Dad had little tolerance for this. He would crack our heads together and tell us to stop. Of course, that only made it worse.

At Christmas that year, Nina and I together received a mound of presents that was purely shameful. All of the relatives heaped their largess upon us, and we spent hours on Christmas morning unwrapping boxes. We ended up with more stuff to play with than any 12 kids should have. And within an hour we were under Mom's feet, whining that we didn't have anything to do!

Mom would spend an hour getting us into our snowsuits, hats, mittens, scarves, and boots, getting one or both undressed again to "go potty", then back into uniform, in order to go out and play in the snow. Within 5 minutes, we would be standing at the kitchen window, bored, wanting to come in.

Aunts and Uncles

Aunt Vivian Russell, mom's Sister

I was blessed with all these aunts and uncles who were great fun to be with and took a great interest in me and all the other kids of the family. My favorite Aunt was Vivian Russell, "Viv", or "Biz", my mother's oldest sister. She was single, lived an exotic (we thought) life in California, drove sports cars, and was more than just a little scatty. It took very little to get Viv to laugh, and we spent many hours together telling jokes and making

Photo: 7 - Top row, left to right: Mark Ortmayer, George (Buddy) Russell, Almo Russell, Wylie Sherwin, Lola Russell (Bud's wife). Bottom row: Hildred Ortmayer (Mark's wife), Nina Sherwin (Wylie's wife), Ingeborg Russell (Almo's wife), Vivian Russell. Photo taken October 12, 1963.

up stories. She was a merry, if ditzy, soul, and I loved her dearly. One of my Dad's stories was about trying to teach Viv to drive, shortly after he had married Mom. There was a rock in the middle of the road where they were practicing, and Dad told Viv to try not to hit it. She went first to one side, then the other, and then back and finally hit the rock dead center.

Looking back on the situation, I'm convinced Viv was gay, though I had no concept of

that at the time. It was only in recent years, after Viv had been long gone, that the penny dropped. She was "single", but she lived with her friend Lettie for 50 years in a tiny, one bedroom house in Sacramento. When Lettie died, Viv went into a downward spiral of reclusiveness and alcoholism from which she never recovered. Mom and her brother, Buddy, finally went out and got Viv and brought her to Billings, got her an apartment and tried to help her, but she died about a year later.

Photo: 8 - Jim and Barbara Sherwin, Dad's younger brother, 1972

Uncle Jim and Uncle George Sherwin

Below are two photos I have found of Uncle Jim Sherwin and Uncle George Sherwin, Dad's younger and older brother, respectively.

Photo: 9 - George and Pauline Sherwin, Dad's older brother, 1974

We didn't see them very often, and I didn't know them as well as the other uncles and aunts.

Uncle Don Huntington

My Uncle Donald Glen Huntington (1914-1989) wasn't a real uncle to me, because he was the brother of Mildred Huntington, Dad's first wife and my half-siblings' mother. But he was my all-time hero. Don was a cowboy through and through. He was six feet three inches tall, slim, handsome, smoked roll-your-own cigarettes that he could roll with one hand, always wore a hat, and had twinkly, squinty eyes that always had a joke behind them.

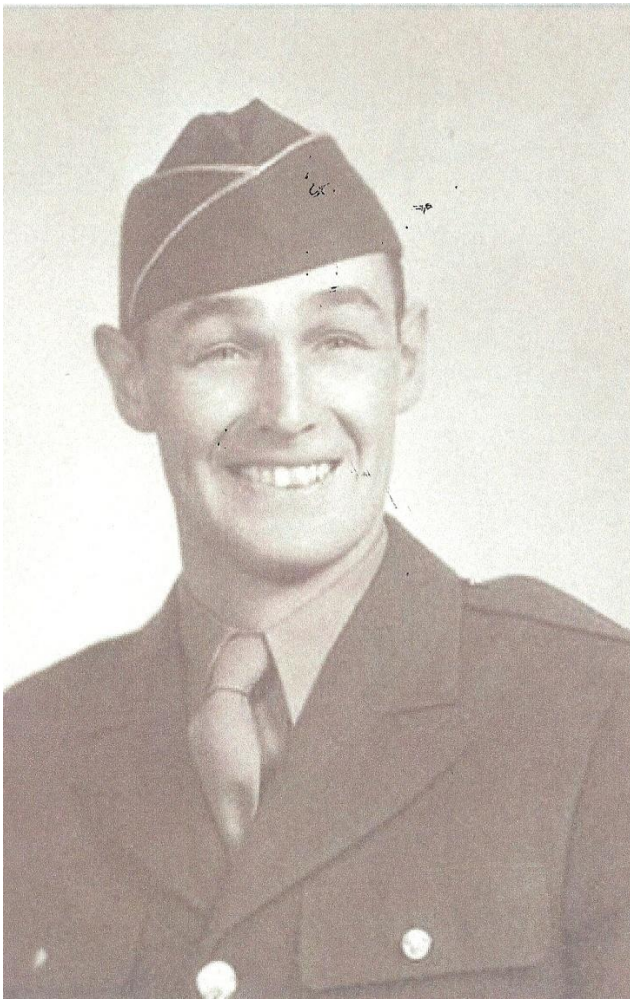

Photo: 10 - Corporal Don Huntington, 1945

The popular western painter, Frank Tenney Johnson, painted a picture of a cowboy on horseback just after sunset, lighting up a cigarette. Frank lived for a time at the Rimrock Ranch a mile or so south of the Trail Shop. He used Don as a model, set in the fields about 7 miles east of the Trail Shop, and it was a perfect image. All in all, Frank used Don as a model in about 7 different paintings, most of which are in the Buffalo Bill Museum in Cody.

Don was always around. In fact, he worked for my Dad for a couple of years and lived in one of the cabins. We had marks on the doorjamb between the kitchen and the back porch recording the heights of all the kids and various other relatives at various ages. Don was there too, the tallest one of all. I tried and tried to achieve his height, but never made it.

When he was in his 40's Don fell in love and married Virginia P. Norfolk, who was his exact female counterpart. She was tall, slim, beautiful, and had the same merry humor Don did. A perfect match. They continued to live at the Trail Shop for at least another year, working for Dad.

Shortly after they were married, Don undertook to make a bud-vase holder for Virginia. I remember this well, because I watched the whole process, being pretty much attached at the hip to Don, my Hero, at that time. She had been given a small glass vase, shaped like a test tube, in which you could put a single flower, but it wouldn't stand by itself and she

had no holder for it. Don started with a piece of elk horn, and over a period of several days, after he was done with the day's work, he cut, shaped, drilled and polished this piece of elk horn so that it would hold the vase. When it was finished, he went and got it, proudly held up the vase and the holder, dropped the vase in – and it fell all the way through to the floor and broke.

Uncle Mark and Aunt Hildred Ortmayer

Uncle Mark Ortmayer and Aunt Hildred, Mom's oldest sister, had an adopted daughter, Gretchen, who was a few years younger than me. Mark and Hildred had a 3500-acre ranch 20 miles east of Billings, and they raised flax, sort of like wheat, and cattle. He also had pigs, chickens, milk cows, and tractors. Boy, did he ever have tractors! Mark was a successful rancher, and he was always buying new farm machinery. Whenever we would visit, Mark had a new car, new truck, new tractor, new combine…something. And from the time I was able to see over the front end, I got to drive them.

Mark was amazingly unflappable. Once, when I was about 9, I was driving the new Dodge Power Wagon, a huge 4-wheel-drive truck, and Mark and my Dad were in the front seat with me. We were driving along the ranch roads between the fields. There was snow on the ground. I took a curve a little fast, the truck skidded off the road into the snow bank, and my dad nearly freaked. Mark just sat there, a little smile on his face, and coached me back onto the road.

Photo: 11 - A Caterpillar D-8 from the '40s

Another time, I was driving the D-8 Caterpillar tractor. A D-8 is a monster of a machine; the largest conventional Caterpillar made at that time! We were taking it from Mark's ranch to a neighbor's ranch along the county road. I was having a great time pulling the levers and steering the thing along the road until we came to a down slope, and the tractor went the opposite way I expected[3]. We went crashing down the side of the road toward the creek and all Mark said was, "try pulling the other lever". I did and we went thundering back up the side of the hill onto the road. The huge Cat never slowed down, just went over or

[3] A Caterpillar tractor steers by pulling the left lever to go left, the right one to go right. This releases a clutch on that side, and the drag of the disconnected track usually causes the tractor to turn that way. What Mark neglected to tell me was, if you're going down a steep hill, the disengaged tread will coast faster than the other one and the tractor will steer backwards! Pulling the left lever will make it go right, etc.

through everything in its path.

When we would visit, which was several times a year, I would be given a bed in a room in the basement. Although I loved being at the ranch, I hated that room. It was cold, dark and spooky, and there was a pump that ran intermittently in the basement that scared me. I would sleep fitfully down there, and never complain, but I was very happy to get up at dawn and go out to tend to the livestock with Mark. In the mornings and evenings, Mark would milk the cows and bring the milk back to the house.

There was a cream separator in the basement at the bottom of the stairs, and Mark would pour the milk through that while I cranked the separator handle. Cream would come out one spout and skim milk out the other. I thought it was magic. Perhaps it was. Gretchen and I would gather eggs, which involved lifting the squawking chickens up and snatching the warm eggs out from underneath them. I loved the whole process.

Photo: 12 - A Montgomery-Ward hand-cranked cream separator

Hildred was plagued with severe arthritis all her life. It got worse and worse with advancing age, and she was finally only able to get around in a wheelchair. Through it all, though, her disposition never changed. She was always laughing and enjoying life. In the evenings, my parents and Mark and Hildred, and sometimes Gretchen and I, would play cards around the large dining room table. Usually Canasta, and later, Samba, a variation of Canasta played with three decks instead of two. We also played Ziencheck, a rummy game that I loved where the rules change every hand.

I've been told, and everyone who would know is dead so I can't confirm it, that I fell into the sewage pit out at Mark and Hildred's ranch when I was about 2. They apparently spent some time discussing whether I was worth rescuing or not.

Uncle Jim and Aunt Lissie Cles

We visited my Uncle Jim Cles and Aunt Lissie, Dad's sister, frequently. They had a farm just west of Powell. They had one girl, Hallie-June, and three boys, Alvin, Raymond, and Leslie Paul, the oldest, a fighter pilot who was killed in WWII.[4] Alvin was about 12 years older than me.

Uncle Jim and Aunt Lissie were the prototypes for Ma and Pa Kettle. Uncle Jim was a short, skinny, wiry guy, probably about 5'3" tall, who couldn't have weighed 120 pounds with rocks in his pockets. He rarely shaved and always wore bib overalls that were 5 sizes too big for him. And he chewed tobacco. Aunt Lissie was immense. She was taller than Jim and I would guess her weight at 350 pounds, and maybe more. She rocked from side to side when she walked, puffing like a steam locomotive. (I called this mode of walking Auntieing) She made enormous farm-style chicken dinners when we would visit, with all the trimmings. They were fantastic, but certainly partially accounted for her size. Neither Uncle Jim nor Aunt Lissie ever bathed, or not that one could tell. The house reeked, and you didn't want to sit next to either one of them. Uncle Jim and Aunt Lissie always treated me fine, and I liked them a lot in spite of their disgusting personal attributes.

Photo: 13 - An Apple Cider press of the '40s

As a young lad, fascinated by machinery of any kind, Uncle Jim's farm was a treasure trove. I would sit on the old junk tractors and cars and pretend to drive. One day, when I made my usual beeline for the farmyard, I got chased by a turkey that was nearly as large as me. It flapped and squawked and tried to peck me, and I was terrified until Uncle Jim came to my rescue.

In the fall, we would go down there and make cider out of the windfall apples. Jim sold most of his apples, but those that were on the ground were ours. He had a big iron cider press. You put a

[4] See Appendix I for a news item I found about Leslie Paul.

basket of apples in the hopper, turned the crank and out came cider. We tried to keep the bug and worm content down to a few percent. Boy, it was sure good!

A historical note: Uncle Jim and Aunt Lissie drove up to visit at Dad and Mom's new house, just east of the Trail Shop, on Friday, November 22, 1963, the day President Kennedy was shot. I was visiting there from Denver at the same time, with my 4-year old daughter Cindy, (Ellie and I had split) and they arrived just as Walter Kronkite broke the news.

The Trail Shop

Wapiti Valley

The north fork of the Shoshone River starts in the eastern part of Yellowstone Park. It runs east to the Shoshone Reservoir where it is joined by the south fork of the river. The

Photo: 14 - The lower Wapiti Valley and Buffalo Bill Reservoir west of Cody. Northfork of the Shoshone River in foreground, Southfork off to the right.

two valleys thus formed are called Northfork and Southfork. If you tell someone you live up Northfork, they know it's somewhere between the reservoir and Yellowstone Park. Southfork was a farming community with active farms and some dude ranches. If you continued far enough up the Southfork road, you eventually got to a narrow dirt road that came out in the Northfork Valley, near Wapiti School.

The Wapiti Valley was a local delineation that was a subset of the Northfork. It ran roughly from Wapiti School to about the Shoshone Forest Ranger Station 5 miles west of the Trail Shop. There were no signs proclaiming Wapiti or Northfork; you just had to know. To get a sense of the lay of the land around the Trail Shop, and the folks who were our friends and neighbors in the 1940s, here's a list of places and people.

Going east from the Trail Shop:

- ¼ mile east: Mountain View Lodge, a tourist lodge similar to ours, Craig and Marge Thomas, owners, son Lyle and daughter Lynn. (Craig Lyle Thomas became a Wyoming state senator.)

- ½ mile east: Lonnie and Jake Royal, farmers from "Nawth Carolina" with a heavy southern accent.
- 1 mile east: Jim and Maude Legg, farmers. Jim and Dad had grown up together in the Crooked Creek area of the Bighorn Canyon. There were a whole bunch of Leggs.
- 2 miles east: The Lazy Rocking-A Ranch, Cack (Catherine) and Frank McClellan, two sons Brad and Mike about my age.
- 2-1/2 miles east: The Frost Ranch, Chu and Alberta Frost and son Bill; also the "old man", Ned Frost and his wife Mary.
- 5 miles east: Wapiti School.
- Across the road from Wapiti School: "Sox" Sanzenbacher, farmer and school bus driver.
- 5-1/4 miles east: The Green Lantern, another tourist lodge similar to The Trail Shop. Owned by Ben Simpers when it was the Green Lantern, George and Inez King in the early '50swhen it became Wapiti Lodge.
- 15 miles east: The D-N-D ranch, my father's best friend, Willard Rhoads, my mother's best friend, Elaine Rhoads, and my best Wapiti School friend, Jody.
- 18 miles east: Shoshone Reservoir, canyon, and dam, and "the Dam(n) Hill".
- 22 miles east: The West Drive-in Theater (in the 50's).
- 25 miles east: Cody.
- 2 miles east of Cody: The Park Drive-in Theater (in the '50s).
- 20 miles east of Cody: Uncle Jim and Aunt Lissie's farm.
- 22 miles east of Cody: Powell.
- 50 miles east of Cody: Lovell.
- 90 miles north of Cody: Billings, Montana.
- Between Billings and the NE of Yellowstone Park: Redlodge, MT.
- 450 miles southeast of Cody: Denver, Colorado.

North and south of the Trail Shop and west toward Yellowstone Park:

- Across the river and north about 4 miles at the base of Trout Peak: The Circle-H Ranch, Budd and Chella Hall, and Harry Van Waggoner. A working dude ranch.
- Across the river and northeast about 2 miles: The Walter Rosenberry place; not a ranch, just a summer home.
- Up in the hills about 1 mile south, behind the Trail Shop: The Rimrock Ranch.

Owned by Earl and Mildred Martin.

- 2 miles west: Name-it Creek Lodge, collapsed in ruin in the ‘40s, later refurbished and owned by Eugene and Ida Petty.
- 5 miles west: The Shoshone National Forest Ranger Station.
- Between the Ranger Station and Pahaska, there were about a dozen other tourist lodges, too numerous to mention and of no consequence for this story.
- 25 miles west: Pahaska Teepee, the largest tourist lodge on this side of Yellowstone, and the only other one, besides the Trail Shop, that was right on the highway. All others were set back out of sight. Owned by Henry Coe, this was Buffalo Bill’s old hunting lodge.
- 28 miles west: The East Entrance of Yellowstone National Park, and the Ranger Station.
- 30 to 37 miles west: Sylvan Pass, a long, winding, steep grade taking you from about 6000 feet to 9000 feet.
- 54 miles west: Fishing Bridge, the first tourist lodge on the east side of Yellowstone Park.
- 1100 miles west: San Francisco, California.

The Beginnings of the Trail Shop

Park County, Wyoming, extends from between Cody and the town of Powell on the east to the boundary of Yellowstone Park on the west. Cody is the county seat. The Shoshone

Photo: 15 - The Trail Shop around 1921

National Forest is an area about the size of Yellowstone that begins 25 miles west of Cody and extends west to the Park boundary, as well as north into Montana and south to Lander. We were in a district, not a town, named Wapiti. It was the Wapiti Valley, the Wapiti Post Office, and the Wapiti School District. The word Wapiti means Elk[5] in the Shoshone Indian language.

Dad's idea was to build The Trail Shop on homesteaded land as close to the eastern boundary of the Shoshone National Forest as possible. You couldn't own land within the Forest, and it was difficult to get permission to build there. So, based on a recent survey done by the Forest Service, Dad built the first cabins just outside the boundary. A year later, the Forest Service came along with a new survey and insisted that he was inside the

[5] Or at least it means "large, four-footed animal with big pointy horns", if not precisely Elk. The word Shoshone (we pronounced it show-shown, not show-shoney) means "stinking water" because of the numerous sulfur hot springs along the river.

forest boundary, and he would have to tear down the cabins. The new boundary was some several hundred yards to the east. So Dad tore down what he'd built, which wasn't a lot, and rebuilt just outside the new boundary. A year or so later, again came a new survey, and once again, he had built just inside. This time, somewhat red-faced, the Forest Service agreed to give him a 99 year special use permit[6] and let the buildings stay rather than tear them down again. Dad ended up with 10 acres of homesteaded land just to the east of The Trail Shop, and about 10 more acres of leased Forest land on which the buildings stood.

The front door of the Trail Shop faced north toward 12,280-foot Trout Peak, part of the Absaroka Range of the Rocky Mountains, about 12 miles distant, which always had snow year around. The Trail Shop, at an altitude of 5750 feet, was nestled between two nearby mountain peaks called The Twin Peaks because they were so nearly identical in size and shape. They tower about 1500 feet above the Trail Shop and can be seen from 15 miles east, serving as a fairly close marker of the Shoshone Forest Boundary. The one on the north across the river was Flag Peak and the southern one just behind the house was Signal Peak. Nearly every spring, someone, frequently me, would hike up one or both peaks and plant a flag on top. My Dad went up several times, Mom once or twice, and I probably climbed one or the other at least 10 times in my life. In August of 1975, I climbed Flag Peak for the last time[7], accompanied by my son, Tom, who was then 9. Directly behind the Trail Shop and about 10 miles south, is Ptarmigan Mountain, nearly as high as Trout Peak on the other side, with snow all year round.

The Main House

The main house had two bedrooms, a living room, a huge kitchen, a back porch, which would be called a "mud room" in the East, and a large front room which was the store during the summer and closed off and not used much in the winter. It was laid out as a large "H", the front room on one leg, kitchen in the middle, and the living room, first bedroom and the second bedroom (mine) on the other leg. I had to go through my parent's bedroom to get to my own. My bedroom window faced west, which was the direction of the prevailing wind. The house was built of logs with "oakum[8]" packed in the cracks, and ¼ round logs nailed over that. This was a fairly standard way of building a log house in the early 1900's, but it wasn't exactly weather tight. During the winter, I would frequently get a little drift of snow across my blankets because of the wind driving it through the cracks in the logs.

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[6] There were several dozen places, both private homes and businesses like the Trail Shop that had these permits in the Forest. But one of the requirements was that it couldn't be visible from the highway. Dad's place had to be an exception to that rule. There was only one other exception that I know of: Pahaska Teepee, just outside the East Entrance to the Park.

[7] Or at least I thought it was the last. I had to partially climb the peak in 2006 to rescue daughter-in-law Soraya and granddaughter Daniela from a rimrock situation they had gotten into.

[8] Oakum was made of wool or cotton soaked in tar. It was packed tight into the cracks between the logs.

We had no heat in the bedrooms. During the winter, when I got up in the morning, I would check my mother's water glass beside her bed to see if there was ice on it. There frequently was and I would poke at it and break it. We had an oil heater in the living room, but it was seldom used. It was difficult to light, and once it was going, it was hard to control and would roar and shudder like it was going to explode. During the remodeling in the late '40s, we added a fireplace that we used all the time. Up until then, the major heat for the house came from the kitchen stove. It was an enormous cast iron thing about 6-feet long and it burned wood or coal. Mom would get up early in the morning to start it, and when I got up, I could sit on the open oven door to put on my socks and

Photo: 16 - The "new" Trail Shop around 1923

shoes. In fact, the stove was so big and heavy, that Mom, Dad and I could all sit on the oven door at once!

Water and Electricity

There was no running water, no hot water, and no electricity. We had a hand operated pump in the kitchen sink in the very early days, later we had a cold water faucet just in the kitchen sink that drew water from a cistern up on the hill. The pipes to the cistern would frequently freeze up in the winter, and we would have to go down to the river and bring back buckets of water. The ice on the river would get about a foot thick, and we'd have to keep opening up the hole with an axe so we could dip water into the bucket. This was also where we'd take the cow for water twice a day.

I said no electricity, but that isn't exactly true. It was common for farms and rural houses

in those days to have a wind generator and a set of batteries. You could buy a complete 32-volt dc system from Sears Roebuck or "Monkey" Wards. We had a system called a WinCharger, a set of sixteen two-volt lead-acid batteries, and a 4-cylinder Onan gas generator. With that setup, we were able to have lights in all the cabins and the main house. I have always thought it supremely ironic that a week after we received a connection to "real" electricity from the REA[9] in 1946, a sudden strong wind appeared and blew our windmill, which had survived more than 20 faithful years, into pieces and scattered it over half an acre.

We had no electric refrigeration or any appliances that ran on 32 volts. During the winter, we needed no refrigeration; just setting food out in the back porch or in the large front room that was the store was sufficient to refrigerate it. During the summer, we had an icebox that used blocks of ice put up during the winter and stored in the ice-house under blankets of sawdust. Harvesting the ice was a community affair, as most of the residents of the Northfork had to store ice just as we did. It went on for a month or more, during January and February when the Shoshone Reservoir would freeze to a thickness of 1 to 2 feet close enough to the bank that we could get a truck out onto the ice. Dad and one or two other men (and me for supervision) would cut chunks of ice a little more than 1-foot on a side, using a crosscut saw with one handle removed. They would haul the ice up onto the truck, then drive it to its destination and unload it into the icehouse. The ice was packed on top of a first layer of sawdust a foot or so thick, and the blocks were separated by 6 inches or so of more sawdust. Then a 6" layer of sawdust was put down on top of the first layer of ice and another layer was begun. Our icehouse was just a low, heavy log shed built over a 10-foot deep pit dug out of the ground so that most of the ice stack was below or even with the surface of the ground. With all the sawdust insulation, the ice would keep all through the summer. The icehouse was about 10 feet wide by 15 feet long, and the stack was about 6 or 8 feet high, about 1000 cubic feet of ice. During the summer, we'd go to the ice house several times a day to get out a new block of ice, hose off the sawdust, and drag it into the back porch with the ice tongs where it was loaded into the top of the icebox. As it melted, it cooled the lower part of the icebox where the food was and the melt water ran out through a hose to the ground outside.

There is a spring about a half a mile west of the Trail Shop, on the opposite side of the river, and there is a trail that begins there at the spring on which you can ride a horse up to the top of Flag Peak. The peak looks so formidable from below you wouldn't think that was possible, but my Dad and I did it once. This same spring was the source of some wonderful fresh mint that grew wild there, and also chokecherries[10] from which Mom

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[9] REA stands for Rural Electrification Association which brought power to many isolated communities in the 40's and 50's. The REA ran power distribution lines from the Shoshone Dam near Cody up the Northfork and Southfork of the Shoshone River, serving several hundred houses and farms. For the first time, we had 120 volt, 60 cycle power.

[10] Chokecherries are little berries about the size of a large pea. They have a large, smooth stone and very little berry around the outside. They are sweet, but very "puckery", hence the name. They make absolutely dynamite jelly and syrup, but aren't very good when eaten by themselves.

made chokecherry syrup and jelly. The river at the outlet of the spring was also a favorite trout fishing hole of Dad, Harold, Ted, and others.

The land on which the house and cabins were built sloped uniformly and gradually from the foothills on the southeast down across the road to the river's edge on the northwest. Going from Cody toward Yellowstone, the road took a 90-degree turn around the north side of the house to the west side, then curved 90-degrees back to the west and disappeared up and over a hill toward Yellowstone Park[11]. Going east from the Trail Shop, there was a 10-mile stretch of level, straight road through the Wapiti Valley, then it started into the Shoshone Canyon, past the Shoshone Reservoir, the Shoshone Dam[12], down the Dam Hill (or Damn Hill as we called it in the winter), out past the power plant and into Cody. We were 25 miles from Cody and 27 miles from the East Entrance of Yellowstone Park, just inside(!) the Shoshone National Forest boundary.

All the land surrounding the house was covered with sagebrush and rocks. The surface rock is mostly volcanic and is rough, craggy and crumbly. Riverbed rocks are hard and smooth. There was a dry creek bed running behind the house, and all of this natural structure provided marvelous exploration and hiding places for a youngster. One year, the dry creek bed, which was actually one of two branches of a running creek a half mile or so to the south, became active because of heavy rains in the mountains that fed the main creek. The water ran deep and swift, and we could hear boulders the size of Volkswagens being rolled down the channel. It sounded and felt a lot like thunder. The other "dry" branch also ran huge amounts of water. Later, in the early 60's, Dad built their new house across this second branch of the creek, swearing that it would never run water again. So far, to this date, it hasn't.

Dad The Rock Hound

Dad was always interested in rocks. He collected them everywhere we went. Montana and Wyoming are rich in moss agates, petrified wood, obsidian, and jade. Agates were his favorite. One of his most prolific collection spots was out at Mark and Hildred's ranch in Montana, where he would walk along the plowed fields and pick up agates by the bushel basket.

Dad bought a rock saw and all the polishing equipment to go with it in the late '40s. It was a garage full of stuff that someone was getting rid of, and it came with boxes full of rocks. A rock saw consists of a blade about 12" in diameter, 1/16" thick, and embedded around the edge with diamond dust. Diamond is the hardest naturally occurring sub-

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[11] This double curve was the first in nearly 10 miles of straight road coming from Cody, and was the cause of numerous accidents. In the late 1980's, the Wyoming Highway Department began negotiations with Mom to buy her house, located about 1/8 mile east of the original Trail Shop. Her house and the Trail Shop were going to be bulldozed in order to re-route the highway and straighten out this "S" curve. She waged war with them for years, eventually sold her house to them in 1990, and in 1998, after she was long gone, they re-routed the highway to pass in front of her house and behind the Trail Shop, sparing both.

[12] All of this has been renamed the "Buffalo Bill" Dam, Reservoir, Hill, etc.

stance, and it is therefore harder than any rock. If you ran your finger over the edge of this saw, you wouldn't feel any cutting teeth; they are so fine they feel smooth. The blade turned only about 200 rpm and a screw-feed drove a vice into which you chucked a rock sample that you wished to cut. The saw blade ran in a bath of oil and the whole thing was enclosed in a tub with a splash proof hood. For a typical agate of the size of an orange, you could cut it in half in about 3 hours. Softer rocks, like petrified wood, would cut much faster. The saw had an automatic shut off switch that turned it off when the vice holding the rock went sufficiently past the saw blade.

Dad would frequently go out to the shop in the morning before breakfast and chuck a rock into the saw and start it running. Sometime after breakfast it would be done and he could see what he had. Each agate was different. Moss agates are formed when volcanic glass covers and embeds pieces of organic materials in it. From the outside an agate just looks like an ordinary rock, but if you look closely, you can see little segments of bluish-white glass on the surface. A cut cross section of agate has many colors of blue with black patterns formed by the moss. It is truly beautiful. Like cloud formations or rock formations, your imagination can work on the patterns of moss agate to create pictures. Rorschach blots, as it were.

Dad would cut slices of agate when he found a good one. These were usually about 1/16" thick and ranged from about 1" to 3" in diameter, roughly round. These slices were popular with other rock collectors who would buy them to make ring sets or necklace stones or key fobs out of. He would have these slices in baskets on the counter at various places around the store and people could paw through them to pick out the ones they wanted. Some were polished, some were just rough cut. They sold for as little as a dollar up to several dollars.

Dad also had some of his agates made into jewelry for sale in the shop. He didn't actually make the jewelry; that was beyond the capability of the equipment that he had, though he certainly had the talent to do it. He would furnish the pieces of stone, blanked out to the approximate size of the set he wanted, and a jeweler would do the final shaping and polishing, and create a ring, necklace, or something else in which to set it.

A variation of the moss agate is the geode. A geode is a nearly spherical agate about the size of an orange that has a hollow center. When cut, it looks like the inside of a cave. Some of them are extraordinarily beautiful, especially with a light behind them.

Dad built a "tumbler"; a rock polishing machine that consisted of an octagonal plywood container about 24" in diameter and maybe 9" across the face. It rotated on an axle and was driven by a small electric motor. There was a door you could open on one of the octagon faces to pour in a gallon or so of small rocks. Usually these were agates, or petrified wood, but they could be any small rock up to the size of a small egg. The inside of this container was lined with sandpaper, and you would pour in a mixture of sand and polishing compound along with the rocks. Then the whole thing would tumble for days. When you opened it up and washed off the rocks, you had a bunch of highly polished stones that would sell for 50-cents or so for key fobs, pocket stones, keepsakes, whatever. They were highly popular. Some folks bought bags of them to put in jars or bowls or

aquariums because they were very colorful.

Indoor Plumbing

After we got indoor plumbing, the pipe from the cistern to the house would freeze at least once or twice during the winter, and we had to melt snow for house water. Dad would dig down through the frozen ground to expose the pipe, pile brush and wood on it and light a fire. Sometimes it worked, sometimes not. Another way was to get Joe Kelly to come up with his electric arc welding outfit. He would clip the high-current wires onto the pipe about 20 feet apart and turn it on. The current would heat the pipe. It usually wasn't a simple process. It frequently took many tries over many days to get water flowing again. Over the years, Dad gradually buried the pipe deeper and deeper into the ground, and packed straw around it for insulation. The instances of freezing diminished, but never totally went away.

The cistern where we captured water for house use was a concrete lined underground tank about 10 feet deep and about 10 or 15 feet on a side. Water ran down a ditch from Canyon Creek about a mile up in the hills. The ditch required constant attention because it would frequently wash out or get clogged and no water would flow into the cistern. When a heavy rain happened up in the southeast hills, Canyon Creek would suddenly become a raging torrent of muddy, roiling water, which would come down the ditch and into the cistern. Dad would run up as quickly as he could and turn the water away from the cistern, but he was frequently too late and we got a cistern full of muddy water. Once a year, we had to drain the cistern and go down into it with buckets and shovels and get the muck out of it. Then we would whitewash the walls.

During the winter, the creek would freeze a foot thick with icy cold water running underneath. Dad had to go up and chop a hole in the ice to get the water out of the creek. The ditch would freeze too, and it took daily trips along the entire ditch to chop out the ice and get the water flowing.

Legally, Dad was not entitled to any water from Canyon Creek. The water rights all belonged to the farmers like Lonnie Royal and Jim Legg. And, the point at which we took water into our ditch was on Lonnie's land. Lonnie was always shutting it off. During the early days, this sparked a test of wills wherein Dad packed a pistol when he went up to divert his water from the creek into the ditch. Finally they reached a truce; after all, the amount of water we took out of the creek was minuscule compared to them.

Elkhorn Novelties

Along with the Christmas tree, we would frequently find deer and elk horns buried in the snow. In fact, we made other excursions during the winter with the toboggan for just that purpose. We would bring them back and add them to the growing pile beside the garage at the Trail Shop. The tourists loved the pile of horns, and would frequently buy one, or a matched pair, to take home. We put some of the more attractive specimens up on the gables of the house and cabins. We also made elk horn novelties that we sold in the store during the summer and mail-ordered during the winter. Elk horns are useful as coat racks,

Photo: 17 - A ladies' belt and necklace made of elkhorn, laced with leather

tie racks, boot removers, and almost anything else that requires a forked or pointed end.

Winter came early one year. In the middle of August, Grandma Sherwin was visiting and she and Mom were putting up (canning) vegetables and jam. August was the height of the tourist season for the Trail Shop, so this canning activity had to be fit in around all the tourists, but there were usually some hours during the afternoon when it slowed down a bit. That afternoon, it commenced to snow. It started snowing up near the top of Sylvan Pass inside Yellowstone Park, and quickly closed the road. Traffic began backing up to Pahaska, the tourist lodge at the entrance, and soon the road was closed almost all the way to the Trail Shop. We rented all the cabins within an hour, and there were cars pulling into the parking area for the rest of the afternoon. People slept in their cars, Mom and Grandma stopped canning and began preparing food for those that needed supper. By the next day the Wyoming Highway Department had managed to run a plow up to the East Entrance, so the stranded people could at least get back to Cody and find rooms, but the Park remained closed for several days more.

Remodeling the Trail Shop

After the War was over, Dad began remodeling and rebuilding the Trail Shop. I was old enough to be at least some help by then. We began by tearing out a closet that adjoined

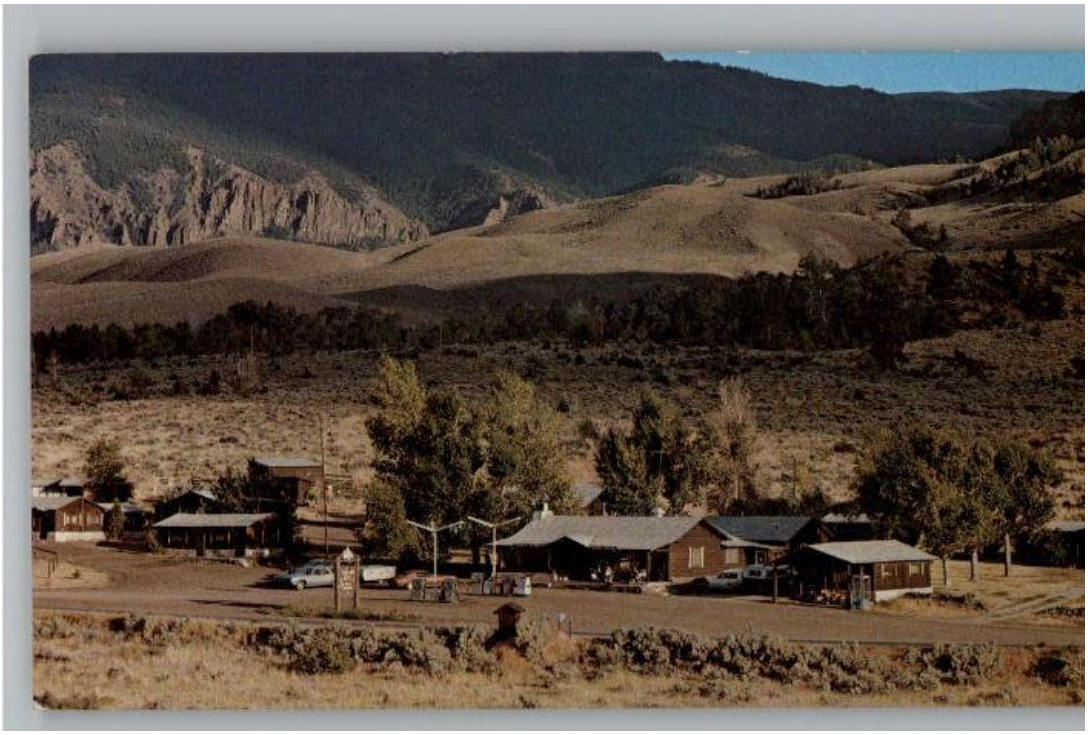

Photo: 18 - The Trail Shop, 1965, around the time Sherwins sold it

my bedroom and my parents' bedroom and turning it into a bathroom. We had never had running water in the house before, so this involved drilling a well, adding plumbing and a hot water heater. We had power now, thanks to the REA, so we also added electric lights. It took all winter, and it was around 1947 or 1948. Finally, we were able to actually take a bath in a real bathroom in a real bathtub with hot water.

This was a big deal, because up till then, baths were taken in a tin washtub in the kitchen. And, just like you've heard in the stories of the Wild West, we took one bath a week on Saturday night whether we needed it or not. Really! We had big tin washtubs that we used for laundry, and Dad and Mom would fill one half full of water, then hoist it up onto the big iron cook stove to heat. When it was warm enough, they would set it on the kitchen floor and I would get the first bath. Mom would get the next one, and Dad was last. Same water, warmed up a little with the teakettle if necessary. Frequently, when I was a little lad, people would visit while I was in the bathtub. This annoyed me no end, because they never seemed to visit when Mom or Dad was in the tub.

After the bathroom was finished, we moved on to the rest of the house. Dad replaced all

of the old logs that had been attacked by rot, and put up interior walls of knotty pine paneling. Behind that was thick insulation, so there was no more sifting of snow through the cracks of the logs. He installed pre-fabricated Anderson windows and built bookcases around the corner window in the living room. He added a fireplace to the living room.It took a couple of years for all of this, but when it was finished, we had a really comfortable, modern, house.

Then he started on the cabins. All of the cabins had been built in or around 1921, so they were beginning to deteriorate. Post-war travelers had proven to be a persnickety bunch, and were beginning to balk at staying overnight in cabins without bathrooms. So over the next two or three years, Dad and I tore down some cabins, built some new cabins, and remodeled those that could be salvaged. By then I was the electrician. Dad had never gotten accustomed to the idea of two wires running inside a single jacket, and he could never remember to shut off the power[13], so after the third or fourth time he cut through a "hot" piece of Romex, melting his dikes and nearly setting the cabin on fire, he let me do the wiring.

Dogs, Cats, Horses – and Bears

I had a dog, a collie/shepherd mix named Butch. He and I were the same age and constant companions. There were no fences, and Butch was never tied up or confined, so he had the free run of Wyoming. Sometimes he would be gone for a day or more. One of his favorite things was to find something dead and roll in it, then come back to share its aroma. Fortunately, he was not very often a house dog. Dad took a dim view of animals in the house, but he eased this prohibition when there was a thunderstorm. Poor Butch was so terrified of thunder that he would bolt into the house and cower behind the great cast iron stove in the kitchen until it was over. Butch nearly always slept outside, just in front of the kitchen window. In the winter, we would see him through the window, curled up, covered with snow, sometimes with one or more cats on top of him.

Butch developed cancer at about age 12, and, although we tried various treatments, it was clear that his days were numbered. One day, Dad took down the 22 rifle and told me to stay in the house. He and Butch went off together and Dad came back alone.

We had a series of cats as well, but Mom wasn't fond of cats and didn't like them in the house. I loved cats, and still do. They were mostly wild, though over time they would allow people to approach them, and sometimes I would adopt one and it would live in the house some of the time, in spite of Mom's objections.

All three of us, Mom, Dad and me, had horses. Dad's horse was named Chief, and was a reddish brown color. Mom's was Papoose, and he was white. My horse was Prince, and

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[13] Wiring in rural buildings was frequently 32 volt. It was installed using knob-and-tube techniques, in which you ran individual wires supported off the beams of the house by ceramic insulators. Since it was low voltage, you didn't have to worry if the circuit was "hot" or not; you just cut and spliced anyway. If you touched the wires, you didn't get shocked, and they didn't make much of a spark if you shorted them. All this changed with the advent of 120 volt, 60 cycle power, running in paired Romex cable.

he was mostly black and smaller than the other two. I was never much of a horse person, so I pretty much ignored Prince. On the rare occasions that Dad and I rode together, I rode Papoose. The horses pretty much fended for themselves during the summer. We would turn them out on the south side of the river, and we would catch sight of them every so often, grazing along the side of the mountain. In the fall we would go and catch them, something of a project because by then they had become accustomed to being on their own and didn't want to be caught. We'd bring them down to the corral in back of the house. Dad would use Chief as his lead horse for hunting trips, and Papoose was usually relegated to being the pack horse. Prince never figured into the equation, and, as I seldom rode him, he was sold.

We actually had a pet bear cub for about 3 days one summer. A hunter brought this little black bear cub, maybe a couple of months old and about the size of a cocker spaniel, to the Trail Shop. He had found its mother shot, and its sibling[14] dead as well. He didn't know what to do with it. Neither did Dad, but he took it anyway. We strung a wire between two trees in the back yard about shoulder high and 10 feet long, and we put a collar on the bear and tied a rope to the collar. Then we clipped the rope to the wire so he could run back and forth along the wire to the extent of the rope. He was very active, and he was not intimidated by us. We could feed him, and pet him (with gloves; he snapped at us) and he became an instant tourist attraction. All we had to say to gather a crowd was, "do you want to see our pet bear?"

He would climb up one of the trees and hang with his front legs over the wire and swing back and forth. He didn't like the dog, Butch, at all, and the feeling was mutual. On the third day, the Forest Ranger appeared. This was not unexpected; we were violating a whole book full of regulations about keeping wild animals. The Ranger took the bear, and I don't know what became of him, but presumably he lived out his life somewhere in the Forest.

One night another bear encounter happened. It was early evening, still light, and we had a full camp of tourists. They were all getting settled in, unpacking their cars, starting their suppers, and socializing with one another. It was a balmy summer evening, so almost everyone was outside. Suddenly, a small black bear cub came tearing from behind the cabins, down through all the parked cars, through the front yard, across the highway and down toward the river. It ran within 10 feet of me, and I was as open-mouthed as all the tourists.

[14] Bears almost always have two cubs.

Yellowstone Park Busses

During the summer months, from June to Labor Day, the Yellowstone Park Transportation Service ran busses from Cody through the Park. These were tours in which tourists would arrive in Cody by bus or train, then board these Yellow busses and have a 3 to 5 day tour through the Park. They would stay at night at various Park lodges or Hotels. The busses normally stopped at the Dam and at Pahaska right at the East Entrance. Dad somehow finagled the Park service into getting them to stop at the Trail Shop also. There was a bus from Cody to the Park around 10 AM, then there was the opposite bus, taking people from the Park back to Cody in the afternoon. Each bus held about 14 people. Sometimes there would be only one bus, sometimes many – we never knew in advance. The busses would frequently be late, and then they wouldn't stop at all. But when they did, the tourists came in and bought novelties, ice cream, candy, pop and postcards.

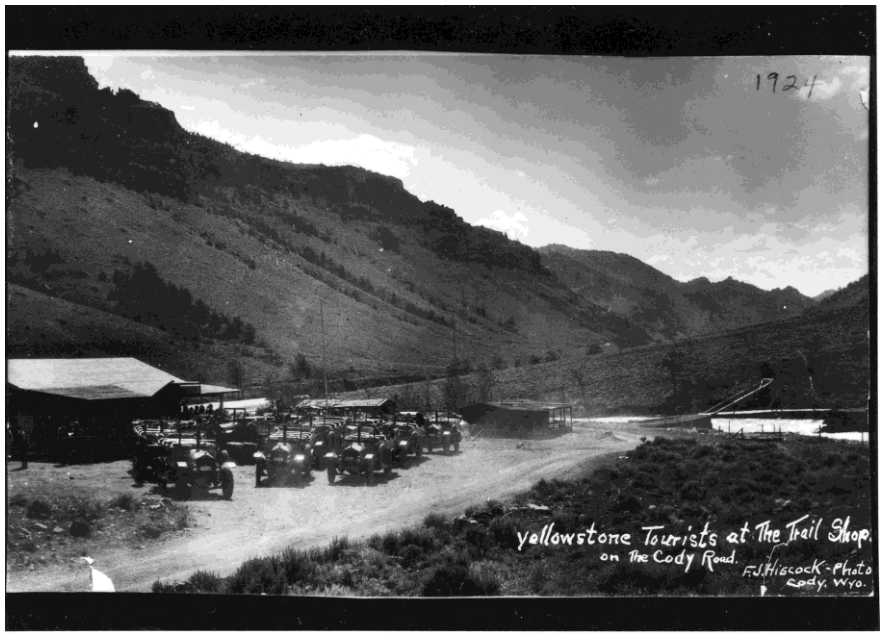

Photo: 19 - 1921-22 Vintage Yellowstone Park tour busses at the Trail Shop, 1924.

The bus drivers were young guys, usually college age, hired for the summer. They were derisively called "90-day wonders" by the permanent Park employees[15]. Many of them came back year after year and they were my buddies. They would usually get assigned a specific bus for the summer, so we could tell by the number on the door who it was driving. The original busses were 1921 vintage Whites. They were open touring cars like the one shown on the left.

[15] The employees that actually worked inside the Park, at the hotels, restaurants and campgrounds were called "Savages". I don't know why. The Savages would usually leave right after Labor Day, so it was (and still is) tradition to celebrate Christmas among themselves on August 25th.

The new busses were built around 1937 by the White Motor Company. They were a unique shape and style. Many are still in service in the various national parks, and there is a new version that looks pretty much the same on an updated chassis that has gone into use recently. They had canvas tops that rolled back on nice days so the tourists could view the mountains and the scenery. I frequently helped with this job. It was held along both sides of the bus with a long bungee cord that looped under a set of hooks. You undid all of these, started at the front and rolled it back, then tucked it into a compartment at the rear and put a canvas boot over it. We would do this while the tourists were in the Trail Shop loading up with candy and ice cream. It would rarely last more than a mile or so. After the bus took off again, someone would complain that it was too cold, too hot, too windy or too dusty, and the driver would have to roll it back by himself.

Photo: 20 - A replica of the 1937 bus with a Ford V-8 engine and hydraulic brakes. These are currently used in many National Parks. Photo by Russ Sherwin

We prided ourselves on selling high quality goods in the Trail Shop. We had a nice assortment of genuine Navajo silver and turquoise jewelry, and Navajo rugs. We had deerskin gloves and deerskin jackets that were very expensive, but really fine. We sold leather purses that were made in the Wyoming State Penitentiary by inmates. And we sold our own elkhorn novelty items like belts, bracelets and keychain fobs that we made during the winter.

I had a little stand out in front of the Trail Shop, on the front porch, and I sold rocks. This was an entrepreneurial activity handed down to me from my earlier siblings, Ted and Clifford, who had also sold rocks. I collected specimens of petrified wood, agates, obsidian and other stuff, and I sold them to the tourists for 5 or 10 cents up to a dollar, depending on size and quality. A cute little kid selling rocks, how could you resist? During a typical summer, I could make about $300, which was a lot of money for a 10-year old.

Mobilgas Station

I helped with the gas station. We sold Mobilgas[16] out of two pumps, one for regular and one for hi-test. We sold gasoline for about 16 to 20 cents per gallon. In the early '50s, this became about 30 to 36 cents. A quart of oil was 25-cents. The pumps had a 10-gallon glass tank on top, graduated in fractions of gallons, and a hand pump that you used to pump the gas from the underground storage tank up into this glass tank. You drained out the amount of gas the customer wanted, and wrote down the quantity based on the sight gauge in the glass. If they wanted more than 10 gallons, you drained one glass full, then pumped it full again and kept doing that, writing down 10, 20, 30, etc gallons for each glass full. Around 1950 we got modern electric pumps that had meters on them like they do today.

Photo: 21 - Mobilgas sight gauge pump Courtesy of Vintage Gas Museum, *www.vintagegas.com*

We would sell about 300 gallons of gasoline per week, and our tanks held about 500, so once a week during the summer, Walker "Chad" Chadwick or Sam Francis from the Mobilgas station in Cody would drive the tank truck up and refill our tanks. Sam or Chad would always call first to see if they could bring anything for us from town, and usually Mom would call the Cody Trading Company and put in an order for groceries that he could pick up.

My principal job during the day was to watch the gas pumps and serve customers when they arrived. Dad would be off doing other chores and couldn't see them come in or hear the bell. But my attention span was limited. I would sit there on the porch, waiting for a gas customer, sometimes for an hour and none would come. So I would get interested in a project, or wander up behind the buildings to the workshop, or go down to the river, and as soon as I was out of sight, a car would arrive and honk for service. I would come racing back from wherever I had strayed to find Dad, fire in his eyes, already pumping gas.

Cabins

We always had two or three cabin girls, young women of high school or early college age who worked for us during the summer. Their principal job was cleaning cabins, but when the busses came, it was all hands on deck, especially if there were a lot of people. One

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[16] Mobilgas was the trademark of the Socony-Vacuum Company, and the symbol was the flying red horse, Pegasus. In the '50s, dad switched to Standard and relocated the pumps in front of the main store.

year when I was about 8 or 9, one of the cabin girls was Marie. She was a good buddy to me, and I was always following her around, kidding with her and playing jokes. One day Marie was making the rounds of the cabins, stripping the sheets off to take down to the laundry room. I hid under one of the beds, and when Marie came in, I grabbed her ankle. She dropped like a rock. I thought I'd killed her! She was only out for a moment, though, and when she came around, I thought she was going to kill me!

One of our main sources of income was renting cabins. Dad always drilled into me that I should always try to interest people in staying overnight. If they stopped for gas, I was to mention that we had cabins. If they just stopped out by the road to look at a map, Dad would stroll out and introduce himself. He carried a bunch of pictures in his pocket showing the road in both directions from the Trail Shop. If they were going west, he would show them pictures of Sylvan Pass; if east, he would show them pictures of the Shoshone Canyon and the Dam(n) Hill. He would couch it in terms that they didn't want to miss the scenery. The message that came through was, this is a real bitch of a road and you don't want to travel it at night. Better stay here tonight.

The cabins didn't have running water, which meant no bathrooms. This was not that unusual in the 1940s – many rural establishments didn't have them. We had a centrally located restroom with running water (most of the time) and showers and, by the late '40s, we even had hot water. But some cabin patrons were uncomfortable with having to make a night-time trek from the cabin to the restroom at night (bears, you know) so they would ask for a chamber pot. Nearly every night, to my extreme mortification, I had to deliver one of these to a cabin. There is absolutely no way to disguise a chamber pot. It is what it is, and everyone knows it. I would take a circuitous route from the laundry room where they were kept, around behind all the cabins, through the sagebrush and rattlesnakes, to avoid being seen, popping out at the front door of the target cabin at the very last second. I would knock, hand them the pot and run. But the fun wasn't over yet. The next morning, I had to empty and wash the damn things.

Early on, the cabins had little wood stoves in them for heat. Another of my jobs, therefore, was delivering firewood and "fire starter" to the cabins on demand. People loved the wood fires and would make a fire when it was 90º outside. Fire starter was a mixture of fuel oil (diesel fuel, essentially) and sawdust that Dad made. He had it pre-mixed in coffee cans beside each stove, and you scooped out some, put it under the firewood and it started the fire beautifully. We kept a 500 gallon tank of fuel oil beside the workshop and we used fuel oil in our living room heater during the winter.

There was a building that housed the summertime help, the laundry room, the gas station office and a carport for our own car. In the laundry room was a gasoline powered washing machine, three large galvanized tubs for rinsing, and a mangle. The washing machine was situated so that the wringer could swing to deliver the washing from the machine to tub #1, then from tub #1 to tub #2, then from tub #2 to tub #3, progressively rinsing the soap out.

The cabin girls, frequently assisted by Mom, would arise around 6 AM and begin stripping the beds as people left the cabins. One would start the washing while the others

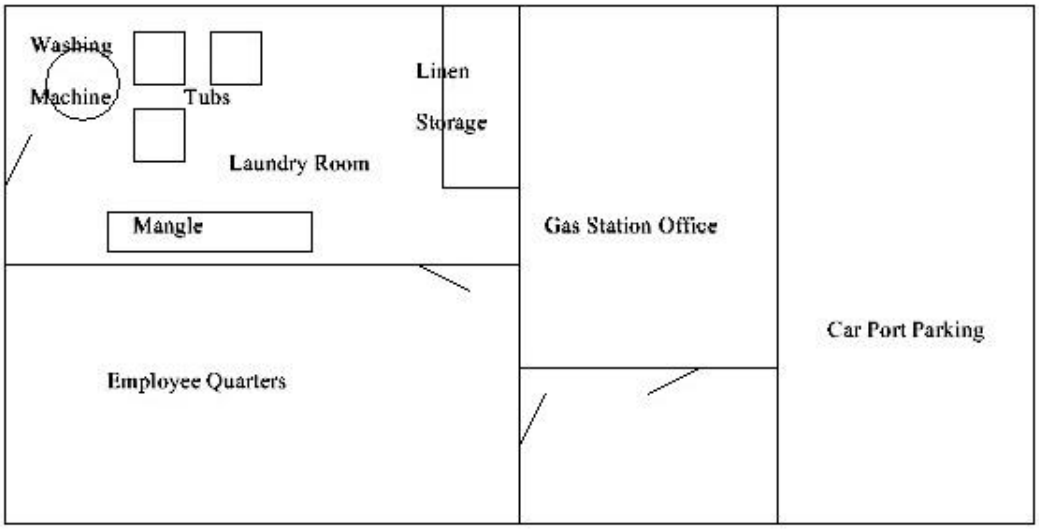

Photo: 22 - Approximate floor plan of utility building

brought down the dirty sheets and towels and began cleaning the cabins. As each load was washed, the sheets and towels would be taken in a basket out to the clotheslines behind cabin #12 where there were hung out to dry. There were four lines strung from the back of the cabin to a set of posts about 20 feet away. After they were dry, the sheets were brought in and run through the mangle to iron them. The mangle was a new addition, arriving in the late '40s after we had electricity. Prior to that, I guess they just remained wrinkled, though this went against my mother's sense of how things should be done. The mangle was a padded roller about 8" in diameter and 5 feet long that was turned by an electric motor. It turned very slowly and pulled a sheet, or anything else you wanted ironed, between the roller and a heated metal shoe in the back. The shoe was heated by propane gas.[17]

Photo: 23 – A Maytag gas powered washing machine of the 1930s.

We always put out little individually wrapped soap bars in the cabins. They didn't have running water, but they

[17] By 1945, we had not only electricity, but propane gas to all the cabins and to the house. The gasoline powered washing machine was replaced with an electric one that looked very similar.

had a little stand with a wash basin and a pitcher to carry water in. When the girls cleaned the cabins, they brought the partially used remnants of these little bars of soap to the laundry room and threw them in a can. Dad would periodically grind these up and the chips were used as our laundry soap.

We served meals only to the cabin guests. We didn't serve to the general public, because we had no full time cook, only Mom, who didn't want to cook all day. But cabin guests usually wanted supper, so we offered a ham dinner. That was it – ham. You didn't like ham, you didn't eat. No breakfast in the morning either. Sometimes, when things were really busy, it was difficult to get our own meals in. And, there were occasions when we actually served our own dinner to the cabin guests because we ran out of ham.

Although, having said that, The Trail Shop had been started early on with a sign out front advertising "Waffles and Honey". And I know they made ice cream. So for a while, at least, they served to the public at large.This was before Mom's time, however.

Dad loved to schmooze with the tourists. Occasionally, he would become friends for a day with someone, very much like I did with my age group. Tourists from "Back East" loved silver dollars, because they were strictly a western phenomenon. Only in Montana, Wyoming, Idaho and Nevada would you get silver dollars in everyday transactions. After a certain camaraderie developed with someone, Dad would say, "do you have any silver dollars"? If the answer was yes, Dad would bet that he could guess the date on the dollar within plus-or-minus one year. Usually the tourist would take the bet, and Dad would say, "1922". Of course, he usually won the dollar, because 95% of the silver dollars in circulation at that time were either 1921, 1922 or 1923. Others were vanishingly rare.

Photo: 24 - 1922 Silver Dollar

Sometimes, when the busses were there and people were milling around in the yard, I would pick out someone and strike up a conversation with them. After a while, I would direct their attention to one of the Twin Peaks where a flag would be seen waving. Then I would point out the other peak which also had a flag. We would talk a little about the difficulty of climbing the peaks, and how hard it was to find a flagpole. Usually a little knot of people would gather. Then I would say, "There's a wire that goes between the two peaks. See it? It starts right at the base of the flagpole"? They would squint into the sun, and finally someone would say, "There it is! I see it!" And pretty soon they would all see it and I would quietly fade away leaving all of them pointing up at the wire. Of course, there was no wire.

One day a car with Iowa license plates and four people in it stopped out near the highway. Two couples, mid-sixties. They were there a long time, poring over a road map and after a while, Dad strolled out to see if he could entice them into the shop. They had come from Cody that morning, up through the Canyon and the Dam(n) hill, along the edge of the reservoir, through the seven single-lane tunnels, past the precipitous drops into the lake, and they were shell-shocked. They had never seen roads like this in Iowa. There was a long straight, benign, stretch of road once you left the canyon, all the way to the Trail Shop, but they could see – gasp! – *mountains* up ahead. Dad had his bunch of pictures in his pocket and he showed them the magnificent "scenery" they would be going through. The pictures convinced them, scenery be damned, they were going to die! After about an hour of discussion, they drove up to the porch where Dad had retreated after exhausting his repertoire, and announced that they had decided to go back to Iowa. And they did.

Once in a while, after counting up the day's receipts, Dad would announce that we had had a $100 day. That was a big thing. Considering that the season ran from mid-May until mid-September, there were about 4 productive months, and the early and late ones were pretty low. So, if we averaged $80 a day for three months, that would be a total of $7200 of income, of which at least half went for cost of goods or employee wages. So we might have made $3000 clear each summer. That wasn't bad; in fact, it enabled us to live pretty well.

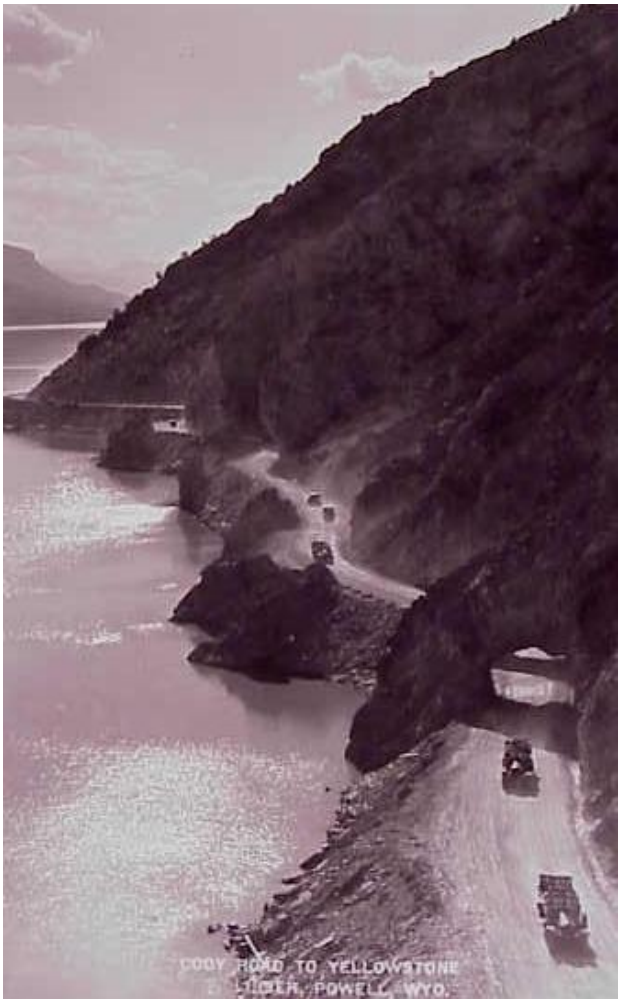

Photo: 25 - The road between Cody and the Trail Shop; except for being paved, it was like this when I was growing up.

Rural Life in Wapiti Valley

Delivering the Mail

For several years during the 1930's and early '40s, Dad had the contract for Postmaster, and the Wapiti Post Office was located at the Trail Shop. He had built a long desk-like structure with a fold down work surface and many pigeon-holes in back in which to sort mail. The mail was delivered from the main Post Office in Cody, Dad sorted it according to the recipients, and then they came down and picked it up. A first class stamp at that time was 3¢. After the War, people were outraged when first class postage skyrocketed to 5¢.

Dad gave up the postmaster job in the '40s. The Green Lantern, owned by Ben Simpers and located just east of Wapiti School, was a similar establishment to the Trail Shop. Ben Simpers became the postmaster. The Green Lantern was sold in the late '40s to George and Inez King and renamed Wapiti Lodge. George won the contract for postmaster, and continued in that capacity for as long as I lived in the valley, in fact, Wapiti Lodge is still the Post Office today.

Mail was sorted in bulk in Cody, and the various rural mail carriers brought it to the Wapiti post office for sorting to individuals. After sorting, the individual mail was put in a cloth sack with the addressee's name on it. The mail carrier waited for the sorting process to be completed, then took the stack of sacks containing mail and delivered them up the valley, putting the mail sack in the mail boxes beside the road. If there was outgoing mail, he would find it in a similar sack inside the mailbox.

Our Northfork mail carrier for many years was Louie Prante. Either Louie or his wife, or both, would drive up from Cody to the Green Lantern or the Trail Shop, whichever was the Wapiti Post Office, every day except Sunday, wait for the mail to be sorted, then drive all the way up to the Park entrance delivering it. On Sundays, Louie and his wife would go for a drive – up to the Park entrance and back! During the winter months, the mail delivery stopped at the Trail Shop and people further west had to pick their mail up at the Wapiti Post Office.

Wintertime in Wapiti

We got snow in the winter, but not as much as most people thought we got. Yellowstone Park would stay open until the first major snow, which was usually in October. Tourist traffic all but ceased after Labor Day, because of kids having to get back to school. There were a few stragglers all through September, and there were locals who found September a dandy time to visit the Park, after the tourists had gone. So we did some business during the fall, and even after the Park closed, we sometimes rented cabins to hunters.

The east side of the Rocky Mountains was a temperate climate, compared to other spots further east. We would have temperatures down in the 20's frequently, but it would seldom get below zero. Serious cold, 20 or 30 degrees below zero did occur, but rarely. Out of the entire winter season, from November 1 through the end of February, there might be

a total of 10 or 15 days of below zero weather. Dad and Mom were married in January, during a particularly brutal cold spell. Dad used to quip that Mom had told him it would be a cold day when she married him. When it got to 44 below zero, he went after her.

When it did snow, the wind would drift it around the house. On the east side, a particularly large drift about as high as the house would form. By January, this drift would be pretty solid, and I would dig snow forts in it and make igloos. You could walk up onto the

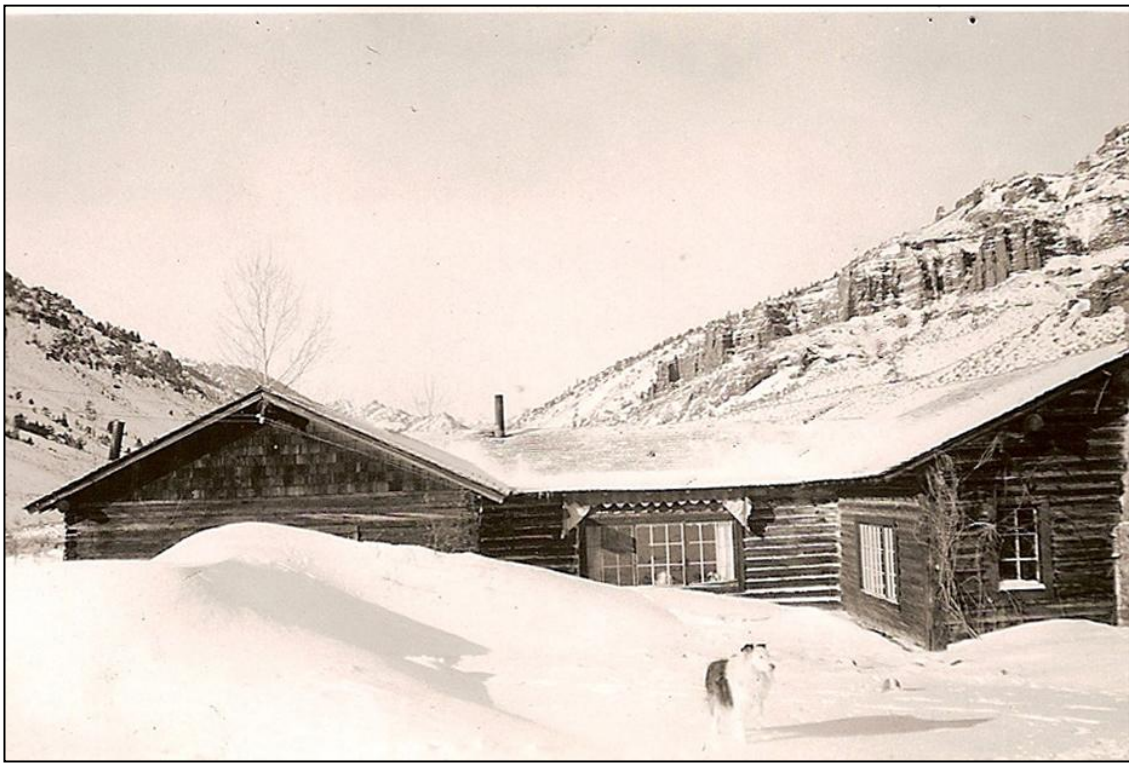

Photo: 26- The Trail Shop main house and living quarters around 1943 looking west toward Yellowstone. Kitchen in the center; Bedrooms on left; Store on right. My Collie-Shepherd dog, Butch, in foreground.

roof from the top of the snowdrift. My dog, Butch, loved these igloos. He was an outdoors dog and could sleep inside the igloo, out of the wind, snug and warm.

After the winter got fully underway, days could go by without seeing even one car go by on the road. We were seldom actually snowed in – the Highway Department kept the highway open up to the East Entrance and all the way to Cody, but we seldom went anywhere, nor did anyone else if they didn't have to. Sometimes Dad would hitch the toboggan to the back of the car and pull us down the highway on the packed snow. This is a practice that gives me the cold robbies now, thinking about the danger of carbon monoxide poisoning as well as an out-of-control toboggan sliding into the path of a car. But we did it many times.

The toboggan was great fun. It was about 6-feet long and 2-feet wide with a curved front,

made of polished hardwood and waxed on the bottom like skis. It had ropes running along each side that you could hang on to. It would hold 4 or 5 people at a time. We would find a hill off the side of the road and go blasting down through the trees to the bottom. A few runs and we had a snow-packed track that was really fast. And it had other uses: a couple of weeks before Christmas, Dad and I, and any relatives that might be visiting at the time, would take the toboggan in the back of the truck or on top of the car and go up one of the back roads to find a Christmas Tree. It meant slogging through knee deep snow, finding a tree we could cut down, then "topping" it for the part we wanted. We would put it on the toboggan and drag it back down to the truck, then home.

Once we had the tree in the house, we would decorate it with strings of popcorn and cranberries, and paper cut outs and chains that we made. We had a box of decorations and some glass bulbs we would hang on the tree. But the final touch was…candles! Actual candles, clipped to the branches, and we would light them! I cringe now, thinking about fire on a tree inside the house, but, year after year, we did it.

When we could find a clean, freshly drifted bank of snow, not too tightly packed, we would make snow ice cream. You scoop some snow into a bowl, add sugar and vanilla, and it makes a fine treat. Sort of like a sno-cone.

Haystacks and Buckrakes

We were not farmers or ranchers, but many of our neighbors were, so we saw and were involved in a lot of farming activity. One of the major activities was putting up hay. This was before hay bailers became widely used. These days, when you see a stack of hay, it is a stack of hay bales or rolls. In the 1940s and before, hay was just stacked in a pile.

First you cut the hay, and this is done by an 8- to 10-foot long oscillating blade running parallel to and about 6 inches off the ground. It's called a sickle, and it's mounted on a set of wheels that can be drawn by horses or by a tractor. After cutting, the hay is allowed to dry for a few weeks before it's stacked.

Photo: 27 - A homemade buckrake

Farmers and ranchers are inventive and very creative. They build a lot of their own machinery and tools. They can weld, work with metal and wood, and have the ability to create fairly sophisticated hydraulic systems to lift or move things. Old cars were plentiful and free, and provided a cheap source of power and mobility for special machinery. One such was the buckrake. Every farmer that raised and stacked hay had a buckrake or three. It was al-

ways homebuilt, because you couldn't buy such a contraption, and no farmer would have paid much for one anyway.

To make a buckrake, you first found an old car that still ran. It didn't have to run real good. You unbolted the body, threw it away, and kept the frame, engine and running gear. You bolted on a seat facing backwards. You unbolted the steering gear and the pedals and mounted them so you could use them sitting on the seat. You welded up new linkages and cables and stuff to make it all work. Finally, you jacked up the rear end, unbolted the rear axle and turned it 180-degrees[18]. What you ended up with is a front wheel drive vehicle with the engine in the rear that has 1 gear forward and 3 backwards! The back is now the front and the steering wheels are now in the back.

Now you put an 8-foot wide set of hay forks on the front (used to be the back), and some hydraulic controls so you can raise and lower the fork and tilt it. You drive this thing around at high speed, scooping the hay off the ground with the forks. It's low to the ground, highly maneuverable, and pretty fast, not having all that body weight to haul around. When you get a load of hay, you raise it up, push it up onto the similar forks of the haystacker and go get another load while the haystacker dumps this one on top of the stack.

Photo: 28 - A haystacker. The truck that pulls it up is seen off to the lower right. Courtesy Utah State University Library.

The haystacker is a rectangular frame that sits flat on the ground. It's about 50 feet long and maybe 20 feet wide. It's staked down so it can't slide or tip over. At one end of the frame is a big hinge and attached to the hinge is another frame similar to the one on the ground with a set of forks on the end. This one is made to take a load of hay off the ground, pivot

[18] If you rotate the rear axle 180-degrees, the drive gear in the differential swaps sides so that, if the engine still turns the drive shaft the same direction, the rear wheels rotate backwards from what they normally do.

90-degrees to vertical and dump it on the haystack. It is pulled up by a cable and set of pulleys attached to a team of horses or a tractor, or perhaps another old car that has been pressed into service[19]. The pull is usually 90-degrees to the action of the haystacker.

On top of the haystack are 1 or more people with pitchforks. They tramp around on the growing pile of hay, arranging each load with the pitchforks, and packing the loose hay down as they go. Every now and then, one of them tosses a rattlesnake off the haystack with the pitchfork. When the haystacker dumps a load on the haystack, it's a really good idea to stand off to one side because of the snakes. In a hot field in the summer, there are a lot of snakes. There are also mice, rats, gophers and such, which are, after all, what the snakes are after.

As the haystack grows in height, the haystacker's moving frame can be lengthened by unbolting the side pieces and re-bolting them further out. Once the haystack is completed, at a height of maybe 30 feet, the haystacker is un-staked and dragged to another location in the field and another haystack is begun.

Telephones

A rural telephone system consists of a single wire with maybe 20 phones connected to it. It is a party line system. If one person is making a telephone call, everyone else on the line can listen. We had one line for the Northfork, one for the Southfork, one for the Sun-light Basin, and a central exchange in Cody that allowed calls to be made anywhere in the world, if you were patient enough and could afford it.

Our telephone number was 06F5. Other numbers were 06F23, 06F11, etc. The 06F part designated the line on which the call was to be placed. The last number was a code that determined how you would be signaled if a call was for you. It also alerted everyone else that you were getting a phone call and they should drop whatever they were doing and listen. The "5" in ours meant 5 short rings. The 23 in one of the others meant 2 long rings and 3 short ones: "Riiiiiiiiiing, Riiiiiiiiiing, Ring, Ring, Ring".

Photo: 29 - Wall mounted hand-crank telephone

The telephones were in wooden boxes about 15" high, 8" wide and 6" deep. They were mounted to the wall. The front opened so you could put in batteries, and there was a crank on the side for generating the ring signal. The mouthpiece that you spoke into was on the front and it tilted up or down to accommodate differing heights of users. You lifted the receiver, which was shaped somewhat like a grinding pestle, and put

[19] Dumps and piles of old cars and machinery are extremely valuable on a farm. Willard Rhoads used to call them "future-use piles".

it to your ear, which connected the telephone to the line. There was no dial tone.

We could talk to anyone on our line just by ringing them directly. For example, the Mountain View lodge just a little east of us was 06F23, so we would crank the handle two long turns, then three short ones. The correct protocol was to listen first: if you didn't, and there was someone already using the line, they got an earful of noise like BRRRRRRRRRRRRR. If we wanted to call someone in Cody, we signaled the Cody operator by ringing one looooooooooong ring. She would answer, and we would tell her what number we wanted. All numbers in Cody were three digits. For example, my friend Seth Moore's number was 206. That was also his house number, 206 Circle Drive, and his license plate number, 11-206. You can do things like that in a small town.

If we wanted to place a long distance call, we had to call the operator, tell her the number and the person's name, and wait. It might take an hour to make a call to Denver, and the operator would call us back (if the line wasn't busy) when she got our party on the line. It was a major thing to make a long distance call.

You could tell if other people were listening in because the level of the sound would drop a little bit for every person that lifted their receiver. If it was a really good conversation, it would become so weak you could hardly hear, and you would have to yell at people to "get off the line, please!" Then you would hear soft clicks and the sound level would gradually come back up as they hung up their receivers.

The telephone line from the forest boundary up to the Park entrance was just a single wire supported by poles. The return line to complete the circuit was the earth itself. The line was maintained by the Forest Ranger. In the 1940s this was a man named Buck Cypher. Buck and his wife and my parents were good friends and played cards frequently. When there was a problem on the phone line, which was frequently, Buck would drive slowly along the road inspecting the wires, looking for broken insulators, trees fallen across the line, or some such trouble and fix it.

One day, Dad got a new radio. Radios required antennas, so Dad just ran a wire out the window of the house and connected it to the telephone line. That was a great antenna. We didn't notice that there were no telephone calls any more, however, until we saw Buck a day or two later driving down the road in his truck, carefully scrutinizing the phone line. As soon as Dad saw him, he realized what he had done and quickly went outside and un-hooked the antenna. When Buck got to the house, he came in for a cold drink and told Dad about the phone trouble. "Huh!," said Dad. "Wonder what that could be?" Just then the phone rang and Dad answered. He turned to Buck and said, "Seems to be OK now, Buck." Buck left, and it was 20 years later, over cards one night, that Dad told him what he'd done.

The War Years

Strangely enough, though I was only 4 going on 5 at the time, I remember Pearl Harbor. I guess I remember it, not so much as an event, but because of all the commotion surrounding the event. I remember the voices of H. V. Kaltenborn, Edward R Murrow, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt on the radio, and of course, The War was all my parents and their friends talked about. A lot of our friends and relatives had young men killed in the War.

I was really spooked by the War. I heard about blackouts on the radio, where people had to cover their windows and turn off all the lights. I used to worry about that, because we never covered our windows and I used to go outside and look up to see if the bombers were coming yet.

There was a Japanese Relocation Camp located just east of Cody in which Japanese-American people, most of them natural born US citizens, were held, having been forcibly removed from their homes and businesses and their property seized; a notably dark and shameful period in US history. The "Jap Camp" as it was known, was just a bunch of hastily built barracks on about 1000 acres of barren ground between Cody and Powell, Wyoming, but the relocated Japanese made the best of their terrible plight, planting gardens and selling produce, honey, chickens, eggs, pork and beef to locals. They weren't exactly prisoners, but they weren't free, either. There was a fence, a gate and a guard station at the entrance. I remember stopping there on the way to my Grandmother's house in Lovell or my Uncle's place in Powell to The Japanese that I met were unfailingly polite and cheerful, despite their circumstances. In later life, I met several people who were about my age and admitted being residents of the "Heart Mountain Relocation Facility". Many stayed near the area after the War to start their lives anew.

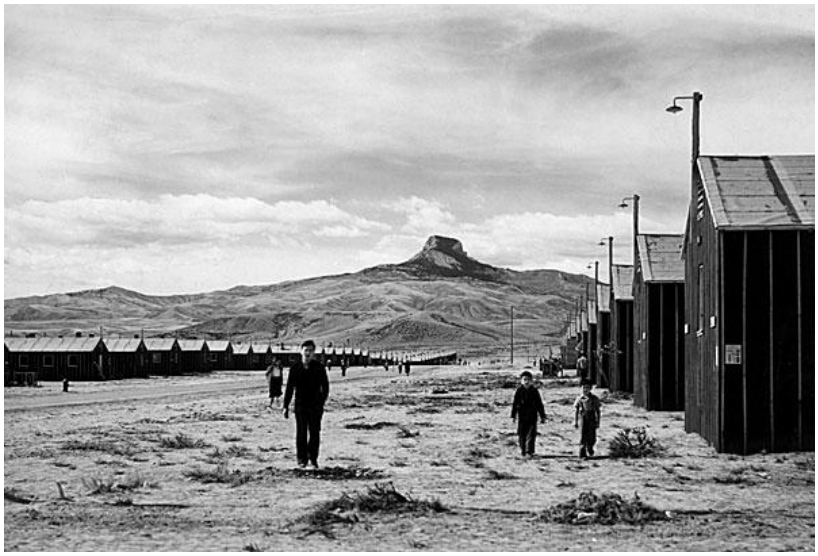

Photo: 30 - Japanese relocation camp at Heart Mountain, Wyoming

Tires and gasoline, as well as lots of other things, were rationed during the War, so travel through Yellowstone Park ceased, for all practical purposes, and so did our income. My Dad got a contract to build guardrail in the Park, which he did for about 2 years, then he took on individual jobs in the neighborhood. For example, there was a ranch nearby called the Lazy Rocking-A that was owned by Frank and Catherine (Cack) McClellan. They were recently arrived from California, drove fairly fancy cars, and had much more money than most everyone else. They had a full time cook and housekeeper. They had inherited this ranch from Cack's father. It needed a lot of work, and Dad contracted to re-do the kitchen. Dad was a master cabinetmaker. I don't know what he charged them, maybe a few hundred dollars, but he built cabinets and repaneled all four walls of the kitchen and it looked wonderful.

Civilian Exclusion Order No. 5

WESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY
WARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION
Presidio of San Francisco, California
April 1, 1942

INSTRUCTIONS
TO ALL PERSONS OF
JAPANESE
ANCESTRY
LIVING IN THE FOLLOWING AREA:

All that portion of the City and County of San Francisco, State of California, lying generally west of the north-south line established by Junipero Serra Boulevard, Worchester Avenue, and Nineteenth Avenue, and lying generally north of the east-west line established by California Street, to the intersection of Market Street, and thence on Market Street to San Francisco Bay.

All Japanese persons, both alien and non-alien, will be evacuated from the above designated area by 12:00 o'clock noon, Tuesday, April 7, 1942.

No Japanese person will be permitted to enter or leave the above described area after 8:00 a. m., Thursday, April 2, 1942, without obtaining special permission from the Provost Marshal at the Civil Control Station located at:

1701 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, California

The Civil Control Station is equipped to assist the Japanese population affected by this evacuation in the following ways:

1. Give advice and instructions on the evacuation.
2. Provide services with respect to the management, leasing, sale, storage or other disposition of most kinds of property including: real estate, business and professional equipment, buildings, household goods, boats, automobiles, livestock, etc.
3. Provide temporary residence elsewhere for all Japanese in family groups.
4. Transport persons and a limited amount of clothing and equipment to their new residence, as specified below.

(OVER)

Photo: 31 - The order, in April following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, which relocated thousands of Japanese to camps away from the coastal areas because they were thought to be a threat to the US.

We were not poor, but we watched our pennies carefully. I remember one time when Dad was away working in the Park and my sister Betty was visiting. Mom and Betty decided that the kitchen looked seedy and needed new linoleum, but of course we couldn't afford that. We got three cans of paint; red, blue and yellow. Using cotton balls, we stippled the existing floor in alternating colors. The whole floor! It took days of crawling around on all fours. The outcome was passable, if a little amateurish, and lasted until after the War.

I also remember the three of us going fishing one day during this same time. We went up the river about 3 miles to a place called The Devil's Elbow, where the river made a sharp turn past a fallen rock. This was a great place to fish. We caught one pitiful trout, about 8" long, and pan-fried it. Divided up three ways, it made a sparse dinner.

Since there was no tourist traffic during the War, we made novelty items out of wood and elk horn that we mail-ordered to people around the country. Dad would saw sections about the size of a fifty-cent piece out of elk horn, drill holes through them, polish them, and shellac them. Then we would string them together with flat leather lacing of various colors to make bracelets, belts, and necklaces. They sold for a dollar or two each. Dad made cribbage boards out of elk horn, and the pegs were also made of elk horn and stored in a little compartment with a sliding cover in the base of the horn.

Dad also made inlaid tables, lamps, picture frames and other things. These were not for sale, but for his own (and others') pleasure. It would take weeks to make something like a picture frame, and months to make a large table. They were inlaid with pieces of wood of various types, like cedar, oak, walnut, and also elk horn. The pieces were anything from 6" or so square (or diamond shaped, or some other shape) down to a fraction of an inch. There were hundreds of pieces, each one having to fit perfectly like a jigsaw puzzle. The general pattern was like you would find in a Navajo rug; highly geometric. He was a master at this, and made most of the furniture in our house, as well as gifts for family members and close friends.

Dad acted as a hunting guide during the fall season. He would take hunting parties of 6 or 8 men up into the high country for mountain sheep, moose, deer, and elk. They would be gone 1 or 2 weeks, camping in tents in the snow. We had meat from these animals, as well as deer, so we had no danger of going hungry. We would also trade for or purchase a hind quarter of beef or pork from our relatives in Montana who had a ranch, and we raised chickens, and had a cow of our own. We had a small garden, and Mom and the neighbors got together for canning sessions periodically. We made pickles in a large crock. Mom even figured out how to can fresh caught trout. Everything we canned, or "put up" as the phrase went, went down into the cellar under the house. All in all, through my parents' resourcefulness and hard work, we got through the War in good shape.

Miscellaneous Early Recollections

I think the very earliest experience I can remember, and I remember it vividly because it was so traumatic, was when I was about 4. My Mom was washing dishes in the kitchen sink, and she had poured some pear juice from a can of pears into a glass that was sitting next to the sink. Thinking it was dishwater, I poured it out. Mom told me that was the pear juice she was saving for me. I was heartbroken for days! This probably permanently scarred my psyche, and may account for many of my life's problems.

Or maybe it was the Cod Liver Oil. Mom forced me to take a tablespoon of this vile stuff every morning. I don't know what it was supposed to prevent, but whatever it was, I don't have it.

I loved anything mechanical, so at around age 5, I began taking apart alarm clocks. I had dozens of them, and neighbors would bring me their old clocks. I didn't fix them; I just took them apart to see what made them tick (literally). I made motors out of some of them to drive toys with. And locks. I was fascinated with locks. At the time, all the locks (which we never used) in the Trail Shop cabins were the skeleton key type. These were really easy to take apart, and so I did. I remember once "wiring" the house with a bunch of old switches and electrical parts that were in the garage. The "wire" that I used was string.

I played a lot with the tourist kids during the summer. These were brief friendships, usually lasting only one day while they were staying in one of the cabins. One of these "friends" inexplicably picked up a rock and flung it at me, catching me just above the left eye. It bled profusely, but wasn't life-threatening, though I saw stars for a while. Dad pasted it together with band-aids and it healed just fine, though it left a scar. Then, the next year, I was running up to the ground-level kitchen window to tell Mom something and I tripped over my wagon tongue, and fell into the window, cutting my head in the exact same place as the rock. Once again, Dad taped it shut. No trips to the emergency room in those days; Dad took care of all such medical emergencies.

But not the time I ran my hand through the lawnmower. This was later in life; probably I was about 15 or so. I had built a power lawnmower by mounting one of my many gasoline engines on the old hand-push mower we used. It drove the cutting reel with a pulley and belt. It worked just fine, and I was mowing the lawn with it one day, when the belt began to slip. For some reason, sanity deserted me for an instant, and I reached down and grabbed the belt, to feel the tension, I guess. Anyway, the belt instantly tightened, the engine was still running, and my fingers were pulled around the pulley. This cut my left index finger across the top of the first joint down to the bone, severing the tendon. I was going to patch this one up myself, and was in the bathroom washing it off, when Dad, sensing something amiss, came in, just as I passed out. That was worth a trip to town, where the doctor tried to recover the severed tendon and sew up the finger. I was in a cast up to my elbow for six weeks to let the rejoined tendon heal, but it didn't work. I still have a droopy finger.

I don't remember if this was before or after I set fire to the utility house by running one

of my engines inside, with spilled gasoline on the floor. Don Huntington came to my rescue that time, and put out the fire. We were all pretty cavalier about gasoline. It was common for cars to spit gas back at you when you were filling them. Don would come in after getting soaked from his belt buckle down to his shoes and stand in front of the fireplace to dry out!

My friends and I found endless amusement in prowling around the various dumps to see what treasures we could find. There were a lot of them, because in those days, people just found a gully somewhere and started dumping stuff into it. There were no official landfills. One day, Brad McClellan and I were visiting the big dump up behind the Trail Shop. We found two cases of canned goods with no labels. The cans were full, though, and we had to find out what was in them. We smashed one with a rock and discovered three things: 1) the cans split neatly along the seam when smashed with a rock; 2) the contents squirted a really long way in whatever direction the seam was pointed; and 3) it was creamed corn. Thus began – and ended – the Wapiti Valley Creamed Corn War, short but very satisfying, in that both sides got equally coated with creamed corn.

One day, Mom and I decided to go fishing. It was a slow day, mid-summer and Dad was on hand to watch the place. We took the fishing poles and walked down to the small bridge over the river. We climbed down the embankment next to the end of the bridge to a small sandy beach. We could see trout swimming in the water. Boy, was this going to be great. I never got to go fishing with my Mom – she was always too busy. We always used grasshoppers for bait. There were millions of them, and we would just crawl around the yard, trap them under our hand, pick them up and put them in a Prince Albert tobacco can. Mom undid the fishing line and we baited the hook. She let out some line, and reared back to cast it out into the river. The line went back over our heads and whip-whip-whip about 400 times around one of the bridge cables. We spent the next hour freeing up the line and that was the end of the fishing for that day.

So we tried it again a few weeks later. This time, Mom just walked out on the bridge and dropped the line in the water and immediately caught a huge trout! It was about a 3-pounder, which was a big fish for this river. Mom had not thought this all the way through. Here she was on the bridge, 20 feet above the river, with a 3-pound trout below. She carefully hand-over-handed the pole through the bridge supports, then worked her way down the steep bank to the river's edge, and began reeling in the trout. Just as it came up on the sand, the trout broke free. Mom did a flying tackle right into the water and grabbed it. I was really impressed! We had trout that night.

We used to swim in the river at this same place. During the summer the river was pretty calm, with only a small amount of water flowing. The water under the bridge and next to the little sand beach was calm, but fairly deep. And cold. We would swim until we turned blue, then come back up to the house to get warm. Nina Jean and I have reminisced about this, and we can't imagine letting our own kids swim here.

School Years

Wapiti School

I started first grade in 1943, so I was in third grade when FDR died in 1945. I remember that really well, because Mom was our teacher for the last three months of the school year. We had been especially hard on teachers that year, two having quit during the previous six months. Mom was asked to fill in. Dad had been to Cody and stopped at the school house on the way back home to pick us up. He had been listening to the car radio and it had just been announced that FDR had died.

The school that I attended was a typical rural school with one classroom, a boys' and a girls' bathroom, a "library" room, and a teacher's quarters. It was common for a teacher, usually a young, unattached female just out of college, to take a job in a rural school for a very modest salary and free room. She (rarely a he) lived in the teacher's quarters in the school house. Since many of these young women came from "Back East", and had no idea of what living in Wyoming in the winter entailed, they frequently didn't last the school year. If they did, very few came back for a second.

Photo: 32 - Wapiti School, 1946, when I was in third grade.

The best I can do on names is the following:

Top row from left: #1, Jeanetta Miller; #2, don't know; #3, Diane King; #4, Marlene Dixon; #5, Earl Souerwine; #6, #7 don't know.

Bottom row from left: #1, Mary Jo Hlavachek; #2, Jody Rhoads; #3, Russ Sherwin; #4, Bertie Sullivan; the rest I don't know.

A rural school normally teaches grades 1 through 8 in one room with one teacher. The discipline and organization required is daunting. The younger kids are taught by the older ones while the teacher takes another group off to one side for another session. Of course, there are never very many kids in school at one time, and not necessarily all grades are represented. The highest number we ever had was 14 or 15, and I can remember years when there were only 6 or 7.

The highway ran right past the front door of the school, about 50 feet away, and there was no fence. The school building was made of logs and built in the shape of a T with the

pedestal of the T being the classroom and the crossbar containing the Library on one side and the Teacher's Quarters on the other. The big double entry front door was in the middle of the crossbar. The school actually had electricity and running water and indoor bathrooms, something many of the kids' own houses, including ours, lacked. We also had outhouses, but they were seldom used, except on the rare occasions when the inside pipes froze up.

The schoolyard was just hard, lumpy, rocky Wyoming dirt. No grass except for the stuff that grew wild around the perimeter. It was enclosed by a pole fence, not intended to keep anything in or out, just to delineate a boundary. Outside the fence on three sides was sagebrush, cactus, and rattlesnakes[20]. We had a swing set, a teeter-totter, and a round, horizontal wheel with handholds hanging down that you could grab and swing around on.

We frequently played "anty-anty-over" which involved two teams, one on the west side and one on the east side of the classroom part of the building. You would throw a tennis ball over the roof from one side and the ones on the other side would try to catch it. You could throw it hard or dribble it over the roof, thereby faking out the catchers. If the ball was caught, the catcher could run around to the other side and try to tag the fleeing members of the throwing team, who were then "out". Later, when I was probably in 5th or 6th grade, we took to playing a version of field hockey, which was sort of a cross between hockey, polo and croquet; in fact we used a wooden ball from someone's croquet set. We made our own mallets by attaching broomsticks to pieces of firewood. These would survive about three hits before they came apart. One of the bigger kids, Bill Frost, had a complete workshop at home, and was pretty handy with it. Bill made the Mother Of All Mallets by pouring lead into a coffee can with a pipe handle. It was brutal! Once the M. O. A. M. contacted the ball, it either split in half or sailed all the way to the river.

The schoolhouse had a full basement and a huge coal burning furnace with air ducts to each room. There was a coal bin, and the whole basement was always filled with coal dust. When you are a small boy, a coal bin has an absolutely magnetic attraction. You can get marvelously dirty jumping around and sliding down on the coal, coal is light, it throws well, and it crumbles nicely in your hands. The furnace itself was fascinating. We discovered that if you pulled up the grate over the cold air return in one room, you could crawl from there to any other room, popping up like gophers under the teacher's feet. This would frequently lead to hysterics, which, of course, was the point. This activity, coupled with pouring water through holes in the floor upon the weeping teacher, who had fled to the basement after trying in vain to get us to come out of the furnace vents, was what lead up to my mother teaching school the last three months of the1944-45 school year. Needless to say, our furnace exploration days ended abruptly.

There was a creek just west of the school yard that ran fairly steeply down to the river. During the winter, this was a veritable Disneyland. The water would freeze, and then the

[20] Although I can't remember ever seeing a snake near the school, they were there. They were no big deal to the farm kids, who were used to finding them in the fields, but I lived in mortal terror that someone would bring one to school, as they were always threatening to do.

creek would overflow into the adjacent fields and freeze again. It would continue layering more ice upon existing ice and create a vast, slippery lake. We would launch our sleds as far up the creek as we could trudge during lunch hour, and then ride like the wind, negotiating hair-pin turns, blasting Calvin-and-Hobbs-like under barbed-wire fences and between trees at breakneck speed, until finally diverting just in time to avoid going in the river. Occasionally the ice would freeze around a dead animal, like a cow or deer. Because of the warmth of the decaying carcass, the ice would be slushy and we would blow through it in a cloud of detritus, or come abruptly to a full stop in the middle of it. Marvelous fun! Why we are still alive I will never know.

At least once a month during the winter, always on a Friday afternoon after school was over, we would push the desks to the side of the big room and clear the way for dancing. On Saturday night, the local women would make sandwiches and pies and cakes and casseroles, the men would make coffee that would peel paint[21], and the entire community would gather. Dad or someone would get out the can of dance wax, a powder that you sprinkled on the floor to make it slippery. It was mostly square dancing, and Dad was one of the callers. We would usually have someone who could play piano, someone else who could fiddle, and another on drums.

The main classroom had a roll up vinyl curtain attached to the ceiling about 1/3 of the way from the front. It had advertisements of a dozen or so businesses in Cody who had paid for the curtain. When it was rolled down, it divided the room into an auditorium and a stage for when we put on plays. We always put on a play at Christmas, and usually one or two other times during the year. We would set the stage and drop the curtain. People would begin coming and would have to file along one side of the stage, averting their eyes so that they wouldn't spoil the surprise, and take seats in the back part. When the time came, we would all take our places, and we could hear the breathing, whispering and rustling of the audience on the other side of the curtain. Someone would pull up the curtain, and we would each look around for our parents, then, thus reassured, the play could start. I can remember having to sing "Away in a Manger" when I was in first grade, for the Christmas play.

Dad and several other locals were on the school board. They hired the teachers and did all the maintenance on the school grounds. They also let the contracts for the two school bus routes; one ran east from the school and the other ran west towards our house. They were not busses; they were private cars, and the drivers were just our neighbors. They were paid a small amount to pick up and drop off kids in the morning and evening. An old farmer, "Sox" Sanzenbacher, that lived directly across from the schoolhouse drove my school bus for a number of years. Sox had a 1937 Packard four-door sedan that he used for the school bus. I have mentioned the lack of running water in houses, and therefore baths were a rarity. For Sox, they were almost unheard of. We used to have fights about

[21] Coffee was made by boiling water in the huge pots, then throwing in a can or two of ground coffee and letting it stew for a half hour or so. Then some eggshells would be thrown in to "settle the grounds". It smelled wonderful, tasted awful, and we drank it out of tin cups.

who had to sit next to Sox. It's impossible to hold your breath all the way from school to home, but I tried! Right after the War ended, a young cowboy from the Circle-H ranch named Harry Van Waggoner bought a brand-new 1947 Chevrolet station wagon with wood trim, and he won the contract for the school bus. We LOVED riding with Harry, because he wasn't much older than us, late 'teens, and the car smelled new, looked new, and Harry told the most amazing stories on the way to and from school.

I would take a lunch bucket to school. One of the rituals just before school started in the fall was to get down the lunch bucket and paint it. Once in a while I got a brand new one, but not often. These were the kind that look like a small mailbox with the thermos in the top half and the lunch in the bottom. My lunch sometimes consisted of hotcakes rolled up with butter and sugar and held with a toothpick through them. I loved those. I got an apple, an orange, or sometimes a tomato with a little container of salt. I had a thermos with sometimes hot chocolate, sometimes milk, sometimes cool-aid, sometimes fruit juice. I went through thermoses fairly rapidly. If you dropped your lunch box, which I did fairly often, the thermos would shatter, and then the contents would drip down on your lunch.

I went off to Wapiti School on my first day in first grade with a shiny new lunch pail and spiffy new clothes, including brand-new cowboy boots. I got bravely into the school bus with the other kids, and the school day was everything I thought it would be. We began by reviewing the alphabet, and when I came home that night, I immediately went to get the newspaper, thinking I would surely be able, finally, to read the funnies by myself. Alas, that took a little longer than one day.

We had a roving preacher who would inflict himself upon us, unannounced and uninvited, once or twice during the school year to show us Jesus movies and preach to us. I really hated this. I had no use for religion of any sort then, and I still don't. He would drive his car into the school yard below the classroom windows, and use the car battery to power his projector.

I was usually a pretty good student, and fairly bright, but sometimes I didn't get it. Our second-grade teacher, Mrs. Lottes, assigned us to write invitations to everyone in the valley to come to our Christmas play. She wrote a pro-forma example on the blackboard beginning "Dear Mr. and Mrs. Yates: Wapiti School cordially invites you…" and so forth. We were to each do 10 invitations. Using my very best handwriting, I laboriously wrote out my 10, all addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Yates.

Harry

Harry Van Waggoner came to the Circle-H ranch in his early teens. He was essentially an orphan – I don't know the circumstances, but Budd and Chella Hall took him in and he became their de facto son. They had no other offspring. Harry constantly amazed everyone with his energy, his good humor, his talent and his hard work.

The Circle-H was a working ranch, raising cattle and hay, but during the summer, Chella and Budd took in dudes. Between June and the end of August, they would have a dozen or so people staying in cabins on the property. All three of them worked hard, but Harry worked non-stop. He would be up at four, out in the field cutting or putting up hay, or wrangling cattle, then by mid-morning he would come back to take a bunch of dudes for a horseback ride somewhere. After that, he would be cleaning out the barn, repairing farm machinery, or working on the road. Then there would be supper and he would be helping with serving and cleaning up afterward. After supper, (no television, of course) he would entertain the dudes by playing cards or telling stories until they drifted off to their cabins. Then he would finish the chores he hadn't gotten to that day.

On weekends, he would call square-dances, either at the Circle-H, at Rosenberry's place, or the schoolhouse. Harry had a great singing voice and knew dozens of variations of square dance calls. These would end around 2, and he'd be up at four to start work again. And in the winter, for a couple years, he drove our school bus. The road up to the Circle-H was a tortuous four miles of twisty dirt and gravel, and it would sometimes take 2 hours to get down to the highway because of the snow. Harry would shovel his way out, and he was never late.

Every summer, one or more of the female dudes would fall in love with Harry. Harry was handsome, outgoing, funny – the epitome of the Wyoming cowboy image. But he never had time for serious relationships.

It was always assumed by everyone in the Valley that Harry was the heir-apparent to the Circle-H. After all, he did most of the work, he had been there since he was a child and the Halls had no other relations to leave it to. But sometime in his early 50's, Harry made a big mistake. He fell in love. He married, and moved a trailer house onto the property for them to live in. The Halls turned on him and cut him off without a penny. He eventually moved to Cody, and the Halls, by now in their 80's, continued on without him. They eventually died and I don't know how the ranch got disposed of, but it wasn't to Harry.

Jody and the Jeep

My best friend and companion during grade school was Jody Rhoads, daughter of Willard and Elaine Rhoads who owned the D-N-D Ranch 10 miles east of the school. Willard was dad's best friend and Elaine was mom's best friend. We spent lots of time together as families.

Jody (Joanne Lorraine) was only 2 weeks older than me, and we pretty much grew up together. She was my competition, too. If either of us got a better grade on something, the other would redouble his/her efforts the next time. We entered spelling bees and alternated winning. We were the best readers in the school. We were math whizzes. We were on a fairly equal footing, all things considered, until, one day, when Jody and I were about 12, Willard bought a Jeep. It was after the War had ended, and Jeeps were available on the surplus market cheap, so everyone was buying them. A Jeep! And, of course, the first time I heard about it was when Jody and her Dad came driving into our place with Jody driving[22]. Jody had a Jeep! I was beside myself. For at least a year after that, whenever we would visit the Rhoads's, my first thought was, let's get the Jeep and go exploring. And we did, but Jody nearly always drove! Once in a while she let me drive. This elevated Jody to near Priestess level in my opinion. Anyone whose father had a Jeep and let them drive it any time they wanted…well! I was green with envy. And of course, MY father said he didn't think we needed a Jeep. And we didn't get one either.

Photo: 33 - A post-WWII Jeep

Town School

When you got finished at Wapiti School, you went to "Town School" in Cody. Usually this was at the conclusion of the 8th grade and you went to High School in Cody. Jody suddenly announced near the end of summer that she was going to go to "Town School" for the 7th grade. Well. This left me high and dry. I had to suffer through 7th grade at Wapiti, along with a herd of country bumpkins that could hardly write their own names, while Jody went off to the sophistication of the big city. But I had a year to lobby the parents, and the next year, it was me that went to "Town School" for the 8th grade.

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[22] You have to understand: this was Wyoming. This was the country. The whole state had maybe 50,000 people. There was virtually no traffic, except in the summer, and there was only one highway patrolman for an entire four county area. All the kids drove cars, trucks, tractors and Jeeps at a very early age.

Although we only lived 25 miles west of Cody, it was a hard 25 miles. The road was formidable. It was carved into the side of a canyon; there were lots of places that two cars could not pass. You had to back up if you met another car coming. There were 7 tunnels, and there was a very steep hill called the "Dam Hill" or the "Damn Hill" depending on how it treated you, that was prone to frequent rock slides. It was not easy even in the summer, and in the winter it could quickly become impassible. So, the way you did "Town School", if you were a country kid like Jody and me, was, you found a family that lived in town that took in boarders. Jody boarded with the Tommy Trimble family, and I stayed with George and Mildred Rickell. Boarding cost about $45 per month. We usually got dropped off on Sunday night, and picked up Friday night after school, spending weekends at home. Sometimes, if the road was closed, we had to spend the weekend in town, too.[23] Lots of rural kids went to "Town School" this way.

Photo: 34 - The Cody road to Yellowstone in mid-1930's This is the "Dam Hill" a 17% grade that Dad called "The steepest highway hill in the United States". The dam forms Buffalo Bill Reservoir. We are looking west, toward the Trail Shop and Yellowstone.

The Rickells had two kids: Larry, two years older than me, and Ann, the same age as me. In addition, Mike and Brad McClellan also boarded with the Rickells in different years.

But, alas – Jody had had a year to develop new friends, new interests. She had gained the high ground on me, and it was irretrievable. We remained friends, but no longer did we go prowling in the Jeep, or compete in spelling bees, or try to outdo each other in math.

[23] Oh, Darn! And without parental supervision, too!

High School

Seventh Grade Junior High was a prelude to Cody High School, so I was not as much of a fish out of water as some of the rural kids for whom their freshman High School year was their first exposure to city life. The school was only three blocks from Rickell's house which was my home during the week, so I could easily walk. And I could walk home for lunch, on occasion, though I didn't do that every day.

I took all the math and science classes I could, as well as English literature, composition, and my mother insisted I take typing. I was one of only two boys in typing class, the other being Jerry Reed. I liked typing, though I wasn't sure what good it would do me in later life. But it proved to be one of the most valuable things I ever learned. Thanks, Mom!

I was usually a well behaved and trustworthy kid, but all kids get crazy sometimes, and I was no exception. I, along with Brad McClellan or Seth Moore, or both, would play pranks. Like: Putting someone's garden hose with sprinkler attached into their front porch, turning it on and ringing the doorbell. Like: carefully removing the doorbell push-button, twisting the wires together and running like hell. We stole car radios out of the junkyard down by the river. We'd crawl under the fence with flashlights and tools and remove the radios. I don't know how we got away with this without being arrested, shot, or eaten by Dobermans, but we did.

I spent all four years of high school hating physical education – PhysEd. I was never a jock. I was always the last one chosen on any team. Whenever we were sent out to play some sort of game, I spent the whole time hoping nobody threw a ball to me, and cringing if they did. I was ball-challenged. I couldn't throw, hit, bat, kick, putt or catch the things, and had no interest at all in learning. Still don't.

In spite of not being a jock, I was a fairly popular kid in high school. I went to most of the school functions like dances and football games, and I dated lots of girls. One girl was Pat (Patty) Tracy, the daughter of Walt Tracy, the owner of the Buick agency in Cody. Pat and I dated off and on for a couple of years, and after we got our driver's licenses, Walt would sometimes lend us a brand new Buick to go to on a major date like the prom.

The Rosenberrys

Around 1950, a man named Walter Rosenberry, from New Jersey, moved out to the Wapiti Valley and bought an old, run-down place across the river from the Trail Shop. I had explored this place many times. The roof was falling in, the windows were all gone, the floors were falling through to dirt, and it was infested with rats. It was more than just run-down, it was a wreck! Walter spent the first summer rebuilding the place and turned it into a beautiful summer home.

Walter had two high school age girls; the oldest was Eloise and the other I can no longer remember. Walter and the two girls spent the summers in the new "Rosenberry place", as it was now called. Walter loved to throw parties, and every couple of weeks he would invite a bunch of Cody High kids, me included, to gather at his new place for a square dance. Walter was up in years and a little on the porky side, and he never danced. But there was never any doubt that he enjoyed every minute. Harry Van Waggoner, the young cowboy from the Circle-H ranch further up the creek, was usually recruited to call the square dances. The Circle-H was a dude ranch, and so the dudes were invited to the square dance as well. In fact, anyone Walter heard of or knew about was invited, and if you just showed up, that was fine too. Everyone had a wonderful time. This tradition continued every summer that I was in high school, and I can't remember more gracious, fun-loving hosts than the Rosenberrys.

Photo: 35 - Square dance at Walt Rosenberry's place, 1951

Top Row, from left: Mike McClellan; Jody Rhoads; Walter Rosenberry; Walter Rosenberry Jr.; Betty Blair (Betsy's mom); Betsy Blair; Jeannie Lilly; Brad McClellan; Russ Sherwin; (unknown); Naomi Swisher; Nancy Ludke; (unknown); Kay Baumgartner.

Bottom row, from left: Clyde Johnson; (unknown); John Dominick; (unknown); David Dominick; Diane King; Budd Hall; Harry Van Waggoner; Eloise Rosenberry; Bob Richard; youngest Rosenberry girl.

High School Years

The Town of Cody

The town of Cody is Buffalo Bill's home town. It's full of Buffalo Bill this and Buffalo Bill that, and the Irma Hotel, directly across from the Cody theater, was named after his daughter. There's a main street, Sheridan Avenue that is about 10 blocks long. On the west end of Sheridan Avenue is a large bronze statue of – you guessed it, Buffalo Bill. The road goes all around it. This statue was the focal point for a lot of social events in town. I marched in the Cody High School band, and one of the march drills was to march around the statue. Parades started here, and the high school kids, "dragging the main" in their cars, would chase each other around the statue at high speed, with the one and only cop in hot pursuit.

During the '40s there was one blinking yellow light in the center of town on Sheridan Avenue. In the '50s, this was replaced by an actual traffic light, and another was installed at the east end of Sheridan, where the road splits to go either south toward Meeteetsee, or northeast toward Powell. During the 50's I lived on Cody Avenue, about 3 blocks from the High School. I could easily walk to school, and did up until I got my first car. Then I drove. After a while, I was driving all the way across town to pick up Seth Moore, then all the way back to school. When I would leave in the morning, I would always get stopped for half a minute at the traffic light at the east end of Sheridan, and it annoyed me no end. So I came up with a plan: I would walk out of the house toward my car, and just before touching the door handle, I would stop and count out 30 seconds. Then I would get in and drive to Seth's. That fixed the problem. I rarely got stopped at that light after that.

Photo: 36 - Cody Theater, 2008

The main store in town was the Cody Trading Company, right on Sheridan Avenue at the traffic light. It mostly sold groceries, but you could buy shoes, pants, shirts and other things too. It was very modern for the 1940s, in that it had photoelectric sensors to operate the front doors. They called them "Magic Eyes", and as a kid, they fascinated me. I could put my

hand in front of the light beam and the door would open. Magic, indeed! They also had a pneumatic tube system at the checkout counter that would take canisters with money, bills, receipts, etc., and whoosh them up to the accounting department. When you bought things on credit, as we most often did, the cashier would ring up your purchases, put the totaled list in the pneumatic system, and a few minutes later, back would come your updated account statement. Pretty advanced for 60 years ago.

When I say we bought things on credit, it wasn't that we were too poor to pay cash. It was for convenience. This was before there were credit cards. We had accounts at all the stores in town, and we could charge all our purchases during the month, which might be a number of different trips for different things, then Mom would write a single check to each of them at the end of the month. Most of the people who lived outside of town did this.

In the spring of each year, most years, Dad would go to the First National Bank, just across the street from the Cody Trading Company, and take out a loan for $1000. That was front money to stock up the store with novelty items and jewelry for the upcoming summer. Dad and the Banker would pass the time of day for a while, talk about the weather, business in general, then Dad would sign a piece of paper, they would shake hands, and he would have the money. Along about August, we would go back to the bank and Dad would write out a check for $1000 plus interest. It was a quick, simple process because Dad knew everyone in town, and everyone knew him.

Theater Projectionist

Earl Corder owned the Cody Theater. It was a large and nicely equipped theater for a small town, the front of it faced in black granite. There was a small ticket window out front, and a large lobby inside. The auditorium held about 200 people. The lobby was high-ceilinged and directly above it was the projection room. To the left of the theater, and faced with the same black granite was a tiny ice cream store where you could get a Frosty or a Popsicle or a bag of popcorn before the show. Between the theater and the ice cream store was an unobtrusive door that led up a long flight of stairs to the projection booth. You turned right into the booth, and if you went left, you came to Dixie Lee Jones' apartment. Dixie Lee was about 4 feet tall and considerably past the age of consent. She rented the apartment from Earl, and had been there since the Civil War as far as I could tell. She called Earl "Ducky-Pew". Earl was a very quiet, business-like person, very reserved in his manner, and you could tell this irritated him. But he couldn't do anything about it. And, even Earl had to admit, when Dixie Lee screamed down the stairs, "Ducky-Pew, goddammit, get up here!" it got his attention.

Seth Moore, my best friend from Junior High, was a relief projectionist at the Cody Theater. To me, this was the height of glamorous jobs. I visited the projection booth with Seth several times, and was impressed with the big machines, the carbon arc lamps, the film handling equipment, the sound system… the whole works. Johnny Schultz was the full-time projectionist, but Seth had been filling in for him for a couple of years whenever John wanted some time off. Seth and Johnny both took the business of running projectors

very seriously. The rule was, whatever happened in the projection booth, never let it show up on the screen. If you were on fire, knee deep in water, or being attacked by Freddie Krueger up there, the patrons were never to know about it.

Earl was about to open up a drive-in theater east of Cody called the Park Drive-In. Seth was going to be the full-time projectionist. That left an opening for relief projectionist for both Johnny and Seth, and I was asked if I would like the job. Wow! Of course I would. So I "broke in" to the art of running theater projectors, mostly under the tutelage of Johnny. There were lots of little things to remember: don't open or close the curtain without shutting off the air conditioner blowers, because the curtain will stick to the screen and the belt will jump off the motor; don't start the arc lamp without making sure the light damper is down or it will melt the film shutter; don't talk above a whisper, because the people in the auditorium can hear you; and so on.

The uncontrolled factor was Dixie Lee. Nearly every night, Dixie would come into the booth and sit in the corner, filling up the place with cigarette smoke, and talking. Since she sat right next to an open window that looked down into the auditorium, the audience could hear her. She was incapable of talking quietly, and we would start getting complaints from the patrons, and the booth phone would ring, and it would be Earl telling us to please shut Dixie up. Then Dixie would get on the phone and tell Earl what she thought of that idea.

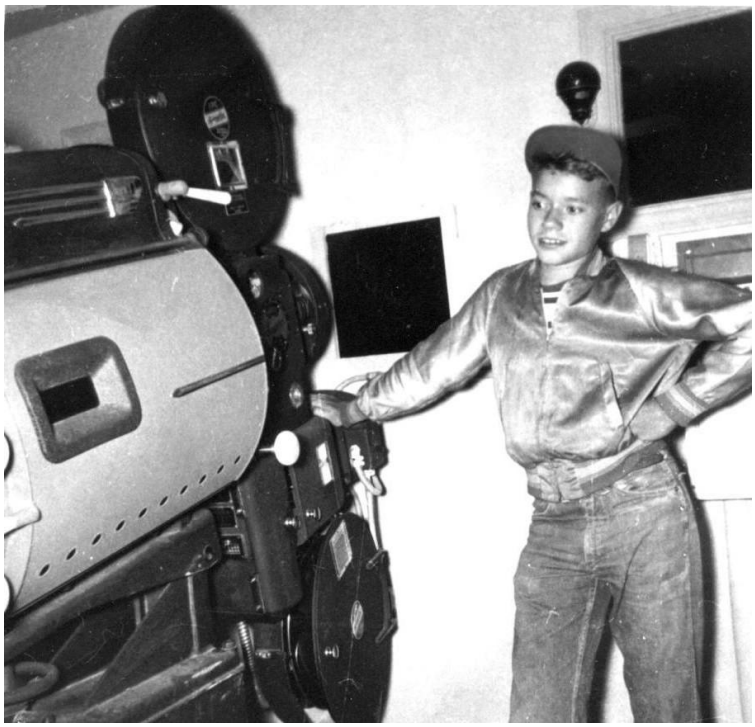

Photo: 37 - Seth Moore, age 13, running Simplex projectors at the Park Drive-in. Seth died in Tucson, Arizona in August, 2009.

It turned out I was pretty good at running projectors. I took the same serious attitude toward it that Johnny and Seth had, which pleased them, and it also pleased Earl, who ultimately was the boss. The Park Drive-in Theater was a success, and soon I was working as relief one or two nights a week.

In the early '50s, a farmer from Powell by the name of Dick Haberman, built and opened another theater, the West Drive-In, on the west side of Cody. This one also became popular, and in 1954 I began working as a relief projectionist for "Red", the kid Dick had hired the first

summer. It soon became apparent to Dick that I was far better and far more dependable than Red, and in the spring of 1955, Dick offered me a full time job. Well, that left the three of us, Seth, Johnny and me, with a need for a relief projectionist, so I "broke in" my good friend, Brad McClellan. Brad was also very good, and worked for years as relief projectionist for all three of us, and then full time for the West Drive-in after I left.

I used to visit either Johnny or Seth in the projection booth when I wasn't working. One night, I was visiting Seth at the Park Drive-in, and we were in the middle of the show. The projection booth was a small building, very low so people could see over it, and the projector beams came out at about shoulder level through little open windows in the front. Seth and I were chatting, and as he stepped up to make a changeover[24], someone threw a dead snake in the projection room window. Seth and I were both deathly afraid of snakes, and this is one changeover Seth didn't make.

The men's restroom door was right next to the projection room door, and they looked the same. One night, a guy came bursting into the projection room, pants unzipped and all ready to go. Quick-thinker Seth grabbed a mop bucket and shoved it toward the guy, but he backed sheepishly out and went next door.

Dick Haberman's West Drive-In flourished in spite of the competition with two other theaters in town. In 1956, Dick decided to increase the size of the screen to accommodate the new wide-screen movies. I volunteered to help, and Dick agreed to pay me $10 if I would come down on Saturday to help him. Once I got up on top of the screen tower, I froze. I always was afraid of heights, and this was a long ways up. I couldn't do much of anything but hang on. Dick paid me the $10 anyway, but he never asked me to come back.

One night, the movie we were supposed to show didn't show up at the freight dock in Powell. Dick usually went and got it and brought it with him, but it wasn't there. When he got to the drive-in, he started making phone calls and finally located it, but it was nearly show time. We had a packed theater and no feature film. We had some cartoons we could show for about 15 minutes, so Dick started those while I took Dick's enormous Packard sedan and raced into Powell to get the movie. I got back just as the Looney Tunes logo was closing with "T-t-t-that's all, folks", raced into the booth, threaded up the projector and started it and we made a graceful fade into the main feature. Like I said, never let the customers know you have a problem.

Being a farmer, Dick was a bit cheap, and he was used to fixing things that broke. One night, a fiber spur gear broke in one of the projectors. We finished the show on one projector. Dick was astonished at the price of a replacement, so he removed the two halves

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[24] There were two projectors in the booth. A movie was divided into reels of film, and each reel ran about 20 minutes. So for a normal length movie, you had 5 or 6 reels of film. You alternated between the two projectors, making a quick "changeover" from one to the other at the appearance of two cue marks just before the reel ran out. This was not hard, but it required concentration or you flubbed it, and about 3 seconds later, the film ran out and the screen flashed a bunch of numbers, then bright white. It was mortifying to a projectionist to have this happen.

of the gear and took it home with him. When he came back the next night, the gear was neatly joined back together with fishing line and glue. It worked for the next 10 years.

Dick was miserly about the carbons that the arc lamps used. They were ¼ inch in diameter and 12 inches long when they were new, they were expensive, and they burned about 4 inches per reel of film. When they were about 3 inches long, you couldn't clamp them into the lamp any more, and you had to discard them. Dick fretted about this: he felt he was losing 25 percent of the carbon. So he worked out a way to splice two 3 inch sections together by banding them with tin cut from a tin can. This allowed you to burn the stubs all the way down to nothing. We had a running fight about this, because sometimes the tin would burn through and drop off the stub and the light would go out. Very big no-no. I refused to use these contraptions, but I would save the stubs and let Dick use them on those rare nights he subbed for me.

Dick was a smart guy. I don't know what ever prompted a farmer to get into the drive in theater business, but he took to it just fine. Only problem was, he was third in line to get any good movies. Earl Corder had been in the theater business for decades, owned two theaters and had all the contacts in the industry that Dick didn't. But in the winter of 1954, in November, Dick somehow managed to get the rights to show Walt Disney's Vanishing Prairie. This was a first run movie that was well advertised by Disney, and it promised to be a rave success. But at a drive-in theater, in the middle of winter in Cody, Wyoming?

The drive-in had been closed for a couple of months. Dick usually shut it down in October because nobody goes to drive in theaters in the snow. Dick booked the movie, advertised it for weeks leading up to the event, and a couple of days before the show opened, the weather turned warm, the snow disappeared, and on opening night people came in droves. We ran the movie five consecutive nights to a full house every night, two showings per night. Then we closed the drive-in again for the rest of the winter, and it commenced to snow the very next day.

The Forest Service

Concurrent with my summers working at the West Drive-in Theater, I also worked for the Forest Service. The Shoshone National Forest Service headquarters was 5 miles up the road toward Yellowstone from the Trail Shop. Dad put in a word with the ranger, and I got a job. Unlike most of the forest employees, I didn't have to live in a tent at the headquarters; I lived at home and drove to work every morning. I put in a full day, then returned home for dinner and a shower (oh, the marvel of indoor plumbing) and then off to the Drive-in, returning home usually around midnight. I was paid $35 per week at the Forest Service, and $45 per week at the Drive-in.

Photo: 38 - The original Wapiti Ranger Station of the Shoshone National Forest

My duties were mostly cleaning camp grounds. My good friend Tim Newhart and I, along with one or two others as the need arose, did most of the cleaning. We were allocated two days to clean all the campgrounds each week. We soon found that we could easily clean all of them in one day, so these were two really easy days and we did a lot of goofing off.

At one campground, there were two recently built privies. Our regimen was to mix up a 5-gallon bucket of coal tar derivative (disinfectant) and while one of us held the door open, the other would slosh the bucket of disinfectant into the privy, then broom it down the walls and floor and let it dry. One day we were talking and not paying much attention on our way to the privy with our bucket of "stuff". Tim flung open the door, I cocked the bucket, ready to throw, and the woman inside nearly fainted.

Tim was a great practical joker, and he was an electronic enthusiast like me. He had contracted with the Forest Service to use his own pickup, a 1947 International, to clean campgrounds. They were short of vehicles, and he made a little extra money this way. He had a sound system installed in the pickup. No, not a stereo: we didn't have those yet. This was a PA system with large speakers mounted on the roof. He could shout at tourists

with it, among other things. So one day, at this same campground, we ran a set of wires from the truck, parked discretely some distance away, to this same privy in which we had nearly drowned the unfortunate woman. We suspended a small loudspeaker below the seat of the privy, and we sat in the truck and waited. A woman entered the privy, and after waiting for her to get settled, Tim picked up the microphone and said, "Hey, Lady! Would you mind moving over to the other hole? We're painting down here."

Tim loved to find a line of cars stopped to watch a moose grazing. He would stop the truck, get out and mingle among the tourists. He would find some guy with 18 cameras around his neck, and he would say, "Go on down. Get up close to the moose and take some pictures." Of course when he tried it, the moose would snort, paw the ground, lower his head and chase him back up to the highway. Tim would be gone by then, chuckling.

One day, our foreman, Bill Johnson, took the Forest Service pickup up about 3 miles into the back country to check on a beetle infestation that was starting. He came back to the pickup for lunch, and while he was eating, suddenly there was a tremendous jolt and the truck lurched to one side. Out the side window was a moose, pawing the ground. For about 20 minutes the moose charged the truck, caving in the passenger side door and cracking the window. Since he was alone, Bill had a hard time explaining to the Ranger when he got back that the damage to the pickup was done by a moose. This was not uncommon: there had been reports of moose charging Yellowstone Park busses when they stopped to look.

In addition to cleaning campgrounds, we had to maintain trails, put out forest fires, create and repair campsites, put up signs and posters, and dispense information to tourists. There was a standard sign board that was nailed to trees or posts for information posters. It was carefully described in a construction plan, and through the years, many forest service employees had built these sign boards. The standard was, one person could build two or three of these sign boards per day. Bill assigned me the job of building sign boards. He needed 100. This would have taken me all summer, he figured, but I took all the materials down to the Trail Shop and, using my Dad's power tools, I turned out all 100 signs in less than a week.

We borrowed a winch truck from another Forest Service headquarters. It was an old 1941 International. We needed to make some new camp sites, and this meant moving rocks and big logs into place for barriers and parking areas. We had no training at all in running a winch truck. We just hooked onto something and pulled. It didn't take long for this to turn into a contest to see just how big a rock or log we could lift. Eventually, we tipped the winch truck straight up in the air with a rock too big to lift. Of course, this killed the engine, so to get the front wheels back on the ground, we had to turn the winch shaft by hand to let out the cable, which took about an hour.

We were setting rocks to delineate camp sites. A tourist had parked his trailer in a place we wanted to block off, and we asked him to move. He refused. Day after day, we asked him politely to move, and he still refused. He had his trailer all set up and wasn't interested in moving. So one day, we just put rocks all around his trailer. He called the Forest Service and complained to the Ranger, and the Ranger told him he would take care of it,

but he told us, with a wink, to take our time moving the rocks.

Then we got a dump truck. Another loaner; another old International. We didn't know any more about dump trucks than we did about winch trucks. The idea here was to haul gravel to the campgrounds and spread it evenly along the roads. Bill was the expert, having once walked past a dump truck sometime in his life. We would arrive at the designated place with a load of gravel, and Bill would hoist up the bed of the truck, grab the release rope and charge down the road with the truck. Usually, one of two things would happen: either no gravel would come out, or it would all come out in one place. So we peasants with shovels would have to spread it by hand while Bill sat in the truck. Each evening, on the way back to the station, Bill would bring a load of gravel to spread on the Headquarters approach road. We usually got back first, so the other two crews, who were out doing other things with the other vehicles, would come back to find a huge mound of gravel they had to spread before they could get home.

Cars

I have always loved cars. In fact, I love anything mechanical or electrical. The first car I ever knew was my parents' 1937 Buick Special. I know it cost $900 new, because I remember Mom asking Dad if the money they had borrowed from Grandma Hallie for the car had been repaid, and that sum was mentioned. It was a fine car. It was black, had four doors, and an overhead valve straight-eight engine[25]. It had a three speed manual transmission with a long shift lever on the floor. In the two front fenders were two spare tires with wheel covers over them

Dad always parked the Buick beside the kitchen facing toward a rock wall that separated the lawn from the parking area. He always parked the car in first gear, and he never set the parking brake. This sets the scene for a sweet little boy, about 3 years old, fascinated with cars and eager to drive, to climb into the Buick, knock the switch on with his cute little head, press the accelerator with his adorable dimpled hand, and drive the Buick halfway through the rock wall onto the lawn. This charming, towheaded little lad peering innocently up over the steering wheel was, of course, me.

Photo: 39 - A 1938 Buick Special

As I got older, Dad would sometimes let me steer by sitting on his lap. He also let me shift gears. He would put in the clutch and I would move the lever from first to second, then from second to third. I can remember several times when we borrowed a neighbor's truck to spread fertilizer on our garden and I would drive. I wasn't old enough to even reach the pedals, probably about 6 or 7, but Dad would get the truck pointed in the right direction and put it in compound-low gear, pull out the manual throttle a little, get it moving and I would steer while Dad pitched manure. When we came to the end of the field, Dad would jump off, get in the cab, turn the truck around, and I would "drive" to the other end.

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[25] It was called, by Buick Marketing, a "Fireball-8". It was a huge, long engine and made the Buick's hood as long as a yacht. It developed about 120 horsepower. The Buick also had a very complete owner's manual that described exactly how the engine, transmission, differential and other systems worked. I spent hours poring over this manual.

One of the stories Dad used to tell was the time he had to rush Ted into town to the doctor because Ted (age 2 or 3 at the time) had run his hand through the gears underneath the washing machine. Dad had a Model-T Ford at the time that you had to hand crank. After they got Ted patched up, they loaded him into the car and Dad went around to crank it. Model-Ts were cantankerous beasts, frequently backfiring and spinning the crank violently around the wrong way. Dad didn't get his arm out of the way quick enough, and before they could go home, he had to go back to the doctor to get his broken arm set. I think it was this incident that caused Dad to have a slightly withered and clawed left hand.

Photo: 40 - A 1947 Buick Convertible

Because of the War, automobile production was suspended in 1942. There were a few cars produced in 1942, but then no more until 1946. Couple this with the fact that we had virtually no income during the War, and it is easy to see why we continued to drive this 1937 Buick….and drive it….and drive it. When I was 12 and nearly a teenager, the charm of this old wreck had worn thin. I was nagging my father daily about getting a new car. "Everyone else is getting new cars!" I whined. And it was true. Even old Lonnnie Royal, who had been driving a 1934 Ford longer than we had been driving the Buick, had gotten a brand-new 1949 Ford and was merrily rolling along between home and his favorite fishing holes at his usual 25 miles an hour.

Photo: 41 - A 1949 Oldsmobile Rocket 88

Production had begun again in 1946, but the few cars that emerged that year were just 1942 models, really. There had been no engineering done during the War years. The 1947's began to show some differences, and the McClellans bought a green, 1947 Buick Special Convertible[26] that was the Most Beautiful Thing I had ever seen. Frank and Cack and their two sons, Mike

[26] Nobody had convertibles in Wyoming, for heaven's sake! This was the "Hollywood folks" showing off. If they hadn't been such nice people, we would have despised them.

and Brad, liked to go to the movies a lot, and during the summer, this meant the drive-in. I was almost always invited. We would go in the Buick, with the top down, no matter how cold. Frank was a fast driver. Coming back afterwards, through the canyon, through the tunnels, watching the stars whiz by overhead, huddled in the back seat freezing to death and loving every minute, is an experience I have never forgotten.

Photo: 42 - A 1941 International 1/2 ton pickup

It wasn't until 1949 that cars really changed. To me, the 1949 Buick Special was a dream. Gone were discrete fenders front and back; the fender line was continuous now. The windshields were more rakish, with curved glass. The grilles were horizontal rather than vertical. And there were a raft of new V-8 engines with higher horsepower; the venerable straight-8 relegated to history. And the new Buick even had portholes on the front fenders: three for the Special and Super models, and four for the Roadmaster.

By then, I was subscribing to all the automobile and mechanics magazines I could find, and the ads for the new cars were like a narcotic. Most of the 1949 cars even had optional automatic transmissions, something that General Motors had offered experimentally on their Cadillac and Oldsmobile cars in 1941; the Hydra-Matic. I thought I had Dad sold on a 1949 Buick Special. I really did. And then, one fall day, he came back from town driving a 1949 Oldsmobile Rocket-88! With Hydra-Matic transmission, no less. Man, I was in love! The Olds was tan on the bottom, brown on top and it had a 135 horsepower V-8. It cost $2700. By now I was 13 (nearly). This was my due. My parents' owed me this. This more than made up for the Jeep problem of a few years back. An Oldsmobile 88 was the top of the mountain as far as I was concerned.

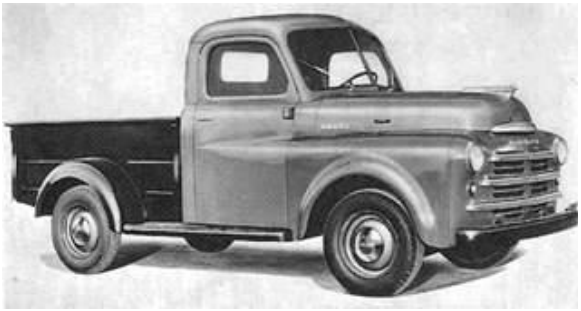

Photo: 43 - A 1948 Dodge 1-ton pickup

When we began remodeling the Trail Shop, I convinced Dad that we needed a pickup truck, and we found a 1941 International for $150, about as primitive and ugly a beast as you could get. Then, when I was 15, we got a red 1948 Dodge for $350. This became "my" truck, and once I got my driver's license, I was able to ferry myself back and forth to Cody for school. I also used this truck to pick up and sell scrap iron that I would find, load and car-

ry to Cody. One day, as I was grinding my way in low gear out of a dump site with a full load of scrap iron, the tie-rod connecting the two front wheels fell off and the wheels turned inwards, plowing ground and stopping the truck. This gave me the creeps, because if it had happened just a few minutes later, when I was on the highway at 50 miles an hour, (top speed for the old Dodge) I wouldn't be here now.

Photo: 44 - A 1953-54 Oldsmobile 98

But it was the Olds 88 that nearly killed me. I had taken the car to town, and had picked up some friends. Not the sort of friends that Dad would have approved of, either. We were headed east toward Powell, a long, straight 2-lane road ahead of us, and I was prompted to "see what she'll do". I put my foot down and we were soon approaching 100 miles an hour. In 1949, Detroit had learned how to put big engines in cars, but that's all. The car was all muscle and no finesse. At 100, the car had a fairly loose relationship with the road because of the spongy suspension. It also had drum brakes. These worked well enough under average conditions, but under extreme situations, such as we were currently in, the brakes would fade to nothing before you got the car stopped, as I was about to find out. A tractor pulling a trailer load of hay pulled out of a side road about ½ mile in front of us. I stood on the brakes, and the car fishtailed furiously, thought about rolling, then changed its mind, decelerated to about 50, then the pedal met the floor. No more brakes. I pumped furiously, got a little braking action, then, at the last minute, swerved around the tractor, narrowly missing oncoming traffic. We were very quiet on the way back to Cody. I dropped my friends off, continued on home, and never said a word to Dad.

In the fall of 1953, Dad traded the Olds 88 for a new Olds 98, also tan and brown, but with 165 horsepower. This was a much bigger car, and it cost $3500.[27] I was now a licensed driver, and I could be sent to town on errands during the summer when Dad was too busy to go. I LOVED going to town, especially in the new Olds.

[27] Buick Roadmasters were going then for about $4000 and Cadillacs for about $4500. Chevys and Fords were in the mid $2000 range.

Now here's something else I never told Dad: In the canyon between the Trail Shop and Cody was this very steep hill that I have mentioned. The Dam Hill. It was so steep that, during the tourist season, the Wyoming Highway Department would station a tractor at the bottom of the hill and offer a free tow to anyone attempting to pull a trailer or boat up the hill. Many people would decline the offer and start up the hill anyway, only to get stalled about 1/3 of the way up. Along comes Russ, heading back from town in his (Dad's) hot new Olds 98. This car was pure muscle! It had a low-geared Hydra-Matic transmission and it would practically climb trees. I could hook onto a stalled car and trailer, the Olds would hunker down, screech the tires, and claw its way up the hill, gaining speed all the way. Of course, it sometimes smelled kinda funny when we got to the top, but, Oh well! It was great fun.

One day, Brad McClellan and I were going into town in the Olds. We came out of the canyon onto the straight stretch past the West Drive-In Theater, and I, suffering from a little lead-footedness, goosed her up to about 75 and blew past a tourist car, scattering a little gravel on his windshield. Brad and I had a merry old time in town, and when I got home late that afternoon, Dad was in a stormy mood. He sat me down and proceeded to grill me about my driving habits (who, me?). It seems that this fellow we had sprayed with gravel had looked up the license number in Cody and dropped a dime on us. I was normally a pretty good driver, and I knew Dad thought so too, so I was chagrined that I had been caught doing something stupid.

Later that summer, Seth Moore and I took the Olds to Yellowstone Park. I drove off the road into the sand near the north edge of Yellowstone Lake, and the Invincible Olds sunk into the sand up to her axles. Push and dig as we might, we couldn't free her, until a fellow came by in a Lincoln and offered us a tow. You cannot possibly understand how mortifying it was to be towed out of the sand by a Lincoln, and from New Jersey, yet. Gad! See, there were Ford people, and there were GM people, and there were Chrysler people. Whichever camp you were in was a fraternity. It was like being Republican or Democrat. I was GM all the way, and so was Seth. But we had to grudgingly accept the fact that the Lincoln had freed us, and we would have been there a long time without the help.

Photo: 45 - A 1953-54 Chevrolet 4-door sedan

Before I got my first car, I had a couple of doodle-bugs. These things were tiny scooters, powered by a one-cylinder Briggs and Stratton 4-cycle engine. They were about 3 feet

long, had wheels about 9 inches in diameter, and would go maybe 25 miles an hour. One of the interesting characteristics of the doodle-bug was, if you hit a bump, the seat would fly off and your butt would land on the spark plug.

The first car that I owned myself was a black 1930-something Model-A Ford. I think I paid $100 for it. I only had it for a brief time, and I remember painting it with a brush and a bucket of black paint. I don't remember what happened to it. Then there was a 1947 Chevrolet four-door sedan that I bought in 1953 for $250. Then, a blue, 1952 Pontiac, only 2 years old at the time, for $850. I finished High School with this car, and Seth Moore and I took a 2000 mile trip to California and back in it the spring after we graduated. Then that fall, I drove it to Corvallis, Oregon when I enrolled at Oregon State College. It blew up at the beginning of my sophomore year and I bought a green, 1953 Chevrolet 2-door for $1100.

Photo: 46 - A 1947-48 Chevrolet 4-door sedan

The '47 Chevy was the second car that tried to kill me. Or, I should say, was a passive participant in an involuntary suicide attempt. At the bottom of the Dam(n) Hill was a tunnel. Going from Cody toward home, you went through this tunnel, then immediately started up the steepest part of the hill, so the protocol was to "get a run at it", grab second gear, and the momentum would carry you far enough up the hill that you could make it the rest of the way in second. If you didn't do this, you usually had to grind up in first gear. The problem was, the hill was so steep that you couldn't see traffic coming DOWN the hill until you were through the tunnel. And the tunnel was only wide enough for one car. So late one night I was coming back home, and I floored it, got the Chevy up to about 30 or 40 in the tunnel, grabbed second gear and …here came a truck, down into the tunnel from the other direction! He was going almost as fast as I was, and somehow… somehow… we passed in the middle of that tunnel without touching anything. It was just a WHOOSH! And he was past. There couldn't have been a layer of paint between us or the tunnel walls.

It wasn't too long after this incident that, once again, I was coming home at night, and I started through the tunnel and up the hill and…. something just didn't feel right. I

stopped on the hill and rolled the window down. I could hear rocks rolling, falling off the side of the road and hitting the bottom a long, long way down. It was dark enough that I couldn't see much, but I put the car in gear and crept a little way further up the hill. There was no road. It was completely blocked by a landslide. I turned around and went back to town, and slept at the Rickell's house that night. It was three weeks before the road was re-opened. I learned later that Jody had driven home just a few minutes before I had, and the road was open. So it happened in about 30 minutes between when she went through and when I attempted to go through.

One more: the '47 Chevy was wired such that everything in the car, headlights, taillights, radio, heater, everything – went through one fuse. I was coming home, again late at night, same tunnel, and just as I started into the tunnel, the fuse blew. No lights, pitch black. Fortunately there was no traffic that night (there rarely was) and I just backed out of the tunnel to the parking place and fixed it.

Graduation Trip

When we graduated from High School in the spring of 1955, Seth Moore and I took a 2-week trip. We had planned this from the time we were juniors, and our parents both bought into it and even gave us a little spending money. We set out from Cody in early June in my blue, 1952 Pontiac. We spent a day in Yellowstone Park, out the South Entrance to Jackson Hole, then to Salt Lake City where we stayed with Seth's relatives. We spent a couple of days in Bryce Canyon and Zion National Park.

Photo: 47 - A 1952-53 Pontiac

In the parking lot at Zion, I took a picture of a car that I couldn't identify. Both Seth and I were very much into automobiles and kept up on all the new stuff that was being introduced, but we had never seen anything like this. It had no markings at all. It was a much different shape than most cars in 1955, and the front passenger seat was filled with electronic recording instruments. There was nobody near it, and we puzzled over it, took the picture, and moved on. Later that summer, there was a write-up about this


Photo: 48 - 1956 Lincoln Continental Mark II

particular car in one of the magazines. It was the prototype for the Lincoln Continental Mark II, a new breed of personal luxury car.

We went up to Boise and across Oregon to Bend, where we visited my girlfriend Gail Thompson and her parents. We spent several days getting through Oregon, stopping briefly at Corvallis to see Oregon State College where I was probably going to go to college, and Northern California, seeing the forests, the seashore and the redwoods, finally getting to San Francisco. We stayed a day or two with my sister Virginia and Wilbur at their house in Walnut Creek. The morning we left, we had no sooner gotten onto the freeway, headed south toward Los Angeles, than we had one of those near misses that you think back on and shudder. A car went past us at a fairly good clip, and just as he pulled in front of us, his left front wheel came off. We not only had to dodge the car, plowing up pavement in front of us, we had to escape the wildly bouncing wheel right beside our car. The wheel continued careening along the road at 60+ mph, then off into the median strip where it finally died. The car was driven by a young army guy, I forget what rank, who had picked up his commanding officer's car from the garage where they had put on new tires. And forgotten to tighten the lug nuts on the front wheel.

1 1952 Pontiac 4-door

When we arrived in Los Angeles, it was the most exotic place we had ever seen. We were just blown away by the freeways; multiple levels, exits everywhere, confusing signs with arrows pointing in all directions, and 4 lanes of traffic moving at 70 mph – this was something these two small town boys had never seen, or even imagined. We took a fast-lane exit that looped up and over a couple of other freeways and emerged at a high rate of speed amid a clot of other traffic onto – Hollywood Boulevard! Just where we wanted to go! It was the wrong end of Hollywood, of course, but it fit our budget. We stayed in a nondescript motel, and the next day, we found the actual Hollywood. We took tours of the movie stars homes, we visited Universal City, we saw The Brown Derby, and we saw movie stars drive past in their cars. We were walking around with our mouths open the whole time looking like hicks.

We saw Leslie Caron and Fred Astair in the musical comedy film, Daddy Longlegs, which had just opened at Grauman's Chinese Theater. We spent a day at Disneyland, which had just opened. We visited Knott's Berry Farm.

We went on to Las Vegas and stayed in a motel right next to The Sands[28]. Of course, we couldn't gamble because we were only 18, but we had a great time anyway eating in the restaurants and soaking up the glitz and flurry that is Las Vegas.

We took the famous Route 66 to Albuquerque, where we stayed either with Ted and Helen, or with Betty and Harold, but I don't remember which. They both lived there at the time. Then it was back home, through Denver, Laramie, and Casper to Cody. The end of

[28] The Sands Hotel was world famous at that time, but has since been demolished to make room for much more extravagant hotels.

a marvelous trip, no problems at all, and memories that I have always treasured.

The Experimenter

Old Radios, Old Motors, anything electrical or mechanical

I was annoyed by the fact that the tourist kids would wander around the Trail Shop, poking their noses into things they shouldn't. The garage/workshop was one of those places. We seldom kept the car in the garage – it was more for the workshop and for storage than for cars. The garage was about a hundred feet from the house, and it had a large wooden door that slid horizontally across the front. I took an old electric egg-beater that Mom had thrown away and rigged it so that it would wind some cord around the beater stem when you turned it on. I attached this to the garage door along with a bucket of rocks, a rope and a pulley. The egg-beater would run, winding in the cord which would pull the door off the place where it sort of stuck when it was open, and the bucket of rocks on the rope would pull it the rest of the way closed.

I ran some wires from the garage to the house where I could watch out the living room window for trespassers. I rigged some relays and a push-button that would activate the egg-beater. When a tourist kid approached the garage, I was ready. He would step inside, then a little farther, then he would hear an egg-beater whirring. The huge door would start to slide, gain momentum, and, with a shuddering rumble and a crash, close behind him. It was pitch black inside the garage, because there were no windows. Marvelous fun!

When it got dark out, we had several yard lights we would turn on. But we were always forgetting, and it got real dark out in the yard and around the restrooms without the light. So I built a photoelectric device that turned the lights on automatically when the sun went down. This was from a construction article I read in a magazine. This was before the age of transistors, and everything had to be done with vacuum tubes.

My Dad's 1953 Olds had automatic headlight dimmers called the Autronic Eye that I thought were really cool. I loved anything automatic. When I got my 1952 Pontiac, I developed a system to turn on the windshield wipers automatically if rain was detected. I put a little sensor out in front of the windshield that consisted of an insulated screw with a wire attached. When moisture bridged the insulation between the screw and the metal support, it biased a vacuum tube that tripped a relay that tripped a bigger relay that turned on the wiper motor. When the homemade sensor dried out, the wipers turned off.

I built a set of turn signals for the 1948 Dodge pickup. This was a large box full of stuff, and it consisted of a motor that drove a cam that operated some switches. When you set a switch for a turn, the motor started up and drove the switch open, closed, open, closed and blinked the appropriate set of lights. It was amazingly complicated for such a trivial function, but you couldn't buy turn signal stuff as an add-on, and very few cars had them.

I was an early adopter of seat belts, long before any production cars had them. That didn't happen until the early '60s. The car magazines in 1950 were beginning to buzz about seat belts, how to install them, how they would save your life in the event of an accident. We could buy surplus aircraft seat belts for a few dollars. We (meaning my techhie friends, like Norman Johnson and Tom Osborne) would drill holes in the floorboards of our cars

and mount them with U-bolts. I had seat belts in every car from the 1947 Chevrolet on up, and used them faithfully, and I installed them in my parent's cars and insisted they use them.

Old radios, particularly old car radios, were amazing sources of electronic parts. I would take them apart, clipping out the resistors and capacitors and adding them to my carefully cataloged hoard. I would use these to build stuff and experiment with. All of this electronic experimentation earned me a not entirely undeserved reputation. Once, when we were visiting friends Margaret and Leslie Stewart, on their farm near Billings, I was assigned an upstairs bedroom for the night. I had no sooner climbed the stairs than the lights in the whole house went out. "Russ!" shouted Dad. "What did you do?"

I built a gun that by rights should have blown my face off. (Another thing Dad never knew about.) I manufactured a stock out of a piece of oak flooring, and mounted a piece of ½" galvanized pipe on it. The back end of the pipe was closed by a pipe-thread plug with a small hole drilled through it. I would unscrew the plug, put a firecracker fuse through the hole, and screw it back on the pipe. Then I would put a marble down the pipe and pack it with some paper to keep it from rolling out. I knew this was potentially dangerous, so I had a piece of window glass attached to the stock behind the firecracker. I could sight through the glass, along the pipe. I would light the firecracker and it would send the marble several hundred feet. It had abominable accuracy, that is to say, none. I couldn't hit anything with it.

When I was about 8 or 10, I had an Erector Set. I kept adding parts to it until it was a formidable bunch of stuff. It had a motor that was driven by a variable voltage transformer. I could power my Erector Set creations with it, and it also had other uses. I attached the motor to the wall above the door to my room with string attached to the door. I had a switch near the bed and I could open and close the door.

I learned a lot about electricity and mechanics before I was a teenager. I acquired an automobile ignition coil at one point. I didn't know exactly what it was, but it had terminals on it, and a large open hole where the spark plug wire went in. I jammed a piece of rod from my Erector Set into that hole and scratched a wire from my variable transformer on one of the other terminals. When I picked myself up from the other side of the room, I had learned something important about ignition coils.

Ham Radio

I had two friends a couple years ahead of me in High School, Norman Johnson and Tom Osborne. Both were radio hams who had studied under the tutelage of Phil Barnhardt. Phil was the electronic guru of Cody. He was chief engineer of KODI, the local radio station. Phil knew everything about radio, and Norm and Tom hung around him like pet dogs. I was on the periphery of this group, but I, too, was fascinated by anything electronic, so I was tossed some crumbs occasionally. Norm and Tom were very bright, and they studied for and passed their Ham exams when they were sophomores in High School. They both had "ham shacks" to die for – separate areas in their homes full of equipment.

I had many electronic interests. I built audio amplifiers, preamplifiers, switching systems,

intercoms, pa systems. A lot of the equipment was my own design, but I also built Heath-kits – very popular in the '50s and '60s. Electronic equipment was built of vacuum tubes then, and was very labor intensive to build, so kit electronics was practical. But taking a plain aluminum box, laying out the components, and cutting the holes, wiring it up and making something like an amplifier that actually worked was my passion.

My interest in electronics was greatly enhanced when my brother, Ted Sherwin, gave me an old, dog-eared copy of a 1942 Radio Amateur's Handbook. It was already worn out, but I finished it off, reading it from cover to cover many times and salivating over the many construction projects it described. There wasn't much radio amateur gear for sale, I couldn't afford it anyway, and the purpose of the hobby, in my opinion, was to build it yourself. I ordered parts from Allied Radio in Chicago. You could get anything there. I still remember the excitement of planning a project, drawing the schematics, ordering $50 worth of parts, and waiting a week or two for them to come.

The summer after I graduated from High School, I got serious about ham radio. I took the Novice exam from Phil Barnhardt, passed it, and was assigned call letters WN7CPA. This was a very big deal. I was three years behind Norman and Tom, but I finally had a license. When I went off to college at Oregon State that fall, the first thing I did was build a transmitter.

I had brought a bunch of parts with me, and a large, steel chassis box about 12" x 17" x 3". I didn't have a workshop, of course, and very few tools. The steel chassis was brutal to work on. I was used to having a workshop (Dad's) with drill press, vices, and a work-bench, and normally I used aluminum chassis, not steel. In the dorm room, I had virtually nothing. I had a hammer, a sharp awl, a couple of screwdrivers, and a file. I would pound the awl through the chassis with the hammer, wiggle it around to enlarge the hole enough for the screwdriver, wiggle that around enough to get the file in, and file out a hole about one and a half inches in diameter to mount my tube sockets. It took about a month to build a 75-watt CW[29] transmitter for the 40 meter band. But it turned out to be a very good transmitter, it worked very well, and I used it for a couple of years.

I strung an antenna out the 5th floor dorm room window, across the roof to the window of another room, whose occupants let me tie the other end to their steam radiator. I had an old ARC-5 radio receiver that I had bought for $10. These were World War II surplus, readily available and very popular with hams. You had to modify them a little to make them work. In the spring of 1956, I went up to Portland, Oregon and took the General Class exam[30]. My call letters changed from WN7CPA to W7CPA, dropping the child-like and shameful N for Novice.

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[29] CW means Continuous Wave, which is Morse code. Novice licensees could only use 75 watts or less of power, only on certain very limited bands, and only Morse code.

[30] You could only be a Novice class ham for 1 year. You had to take one of the higher class exams then, or drop out, and you could never be a Novice again. The Novice exam was much easier than the other classes, with only 5 words-per-minute code instead of 13 wpm for General, 20 wpm for Extra.

When I came back to the Trail Shop for the summer, after my first year at College, I built a new ham rig for the car. I worked on it all summer, building a 150-watt voice transmitter and a 5-band receiver from scratch. These were not kits, they were pieced together designs from magazines and the Radio Amateur's Handbook, modified and adapted for my purposes. I even built the microphone, a tiny little aluminum box with a speaker inside and a push-button switch on the side. I installed all of this in my 1953 Chevy. That allowed me to participate in more ham activities, such as Fox hunts. I was the fox, sometimes, and sometimes the hunter. The idea is, the Fox has a mobile transmitter and he goes somewhere and hides, like under a bridge or behind a hill. He transmits very short messages on a regular schedule, like every 15 minutes. The other folks, all with cars equipped with mobile transmitters and receivers and directional antennas, some on foot with hand-held equipment, try to locate him.

I continued with my interest in ham radio after college and through the next several years. In those days, whenever you moved to a different ham radio district, you were assigned different call letters. When I moved to Denver in 1957, I was assigned call letters K0RQP. Later, after moving to California in 1963, I became WB6LRC, and I took and passed the Advance Class license exam. Then I sort of lost interest. In 1970, when I was working at Western Microwave in Los Gatos, California, I happened to pull my desk drawer out and noticed both my Amateur Radio License and my First Class Commercial Radiotelephone license there. They had both expired several years before. I didn't do anything more with ham radio until I finally took the Amateur Extra exam on September 10, 2001 and was re-licensed as AD6ZL, my current call letters. The date on my license is 9-11-2001, the day the Twin Towers fell.

Oregon State College Days

Weatherford Hall

It has to be said that one of the main reasons I chose Oregon State College was because of Gail Thompson. Gail and I dated as often as possible throughout the summer of 1955. She was pretty, she was smart, she was from Bend, Oregon, but she lived during the summers in Cody, and she was going to OSC. It wasn't entirely Gail; Willard Rhoads had gone to OSC and touted it as a good college. My Dad trusted Willard's judgment. It seemed as good as any to me, and with Gail there, well…why not?

Photo: 49 - Weatherford Hall at Oregon State College, Corvallis, Oregon. My room was at the very top on the opposite side. Photo by Russ Sherwin, 2007.

So I drove out to Corvallis in the fall of 1955 in my 1952 Pontiac. I signed up for all the engineering classes I could, and became a resident of the fifth floor of Weatherford Hall. This was a men's' dormitory; an old building with an elevator. It was a creaky old thing, the elevator, but it was better than climbing 5 floors up the stairwell. It was pretty much a freight elevator. It had an accordion type door across its front, and each floor had a door with a window looking into the elevator shaft. When the elevator arrived you could look through the window and see into it. The door wouldn't release until the elevator was

stopped at that floor, but, because the elevator was old and the switches were a little loose, you could stop it anywhere along its route by pulling forcibly on any one of the doors on any floor. If you pulled on the door long enough, the elevator would "forget" where it had been going and you could press another button to make it change course.

One Sunday afternoon, all of us fifth floor Weatherford guys were sort of lazing around, doing nothing, when we heard the elevator stop, the accordion door slide back, and out rushed about 10 guys from an adjoining dormitory, all armed with water balloons. They pasted us good, then they ran back into the elevator, the door closed and they began to descend. Big mistake. We ran to the door, pulled on it and held it until we heard the relay drop out right above us in the equipment room. We released the door, pressed the call button and back they came. Then, when the elevator stopped, we cracked the door to hold it there. We peered through the little window at them, frantically and futilely pressing the down button. We opened the door. We smiled. We saw the panic in their eyes. Did you know that you can actually immobilize someone against the back wall of an elevator with a fire hose?

The fifth floor rooms were too small to have beds. There was only room for two sets of desks, bookcases, etc., for two guys. We had a communal sleeping porch where all the bunks were. They were double bunks, top and bottom. Periodically, guys from one of the other floors would sneak up to fifth in the middle of the night. They would pick out one of the bunks and, very quietly tie both occupants to the bed by passing a rope around and around the bunk. Then they would get two on each end of the bed and flip it over, leaving them upside down. We couldn't retaliate in kind because all the other floors had their beds in their rooms.

The Skunk Incident

My roommate Bill and I were standing on the balcony of fifth floor Weatherford one day, looking down. We saw something in the flower bed. Something black. And white. It looked like… a skunk? Could it be a skunk? Bill allowed as how it was probably the deodorized skunk that a neighboring sorority had as a pet. An idea blossomed in Bill's head for a minute, and then he was gone. Down the stairs, out the door, into the flower bed, and there he was, holding the skunk. By the time I got down the stairs, Bill was holding the skunk by the tail, he had one eye closed, he smelled really, really bad – and he was laughing. "I never caught a real skunk before," he chortled. I had to agree, this was probably a first, but the brutal fact was, he was MY roommate. I had to sleep in the same room with him.

Photo: 50 - Bill's new friend

I got a job on campus to help with expenses. I worked for a professor of agriculture who was doing experiments on potatoes. He had several bins of rotting potatoes, and my job was to sit inside the bins and take the eyes out of the potatoes. I would put them in various cans which held preservatives or fertilizers. Every evening after class I would go and work on the rotten potatoes for an hour or so.

The Hot Dog Entrepreneurs

The next semester I moved down to Third floor, Weatherford, and discovered a business opportunity. There were a lot of very studious guys on Third, and they got very hungry, and there was nothing to eat. There were no kitchen facilities, in fact, food was forbidden in the dorms. It was a long way to town and the school cafeteria was closed after about 8.

Photo: 51 - A toaster used to cook hotdogs

This was long before microwave ovens. I figured out a way to cook hot dogs by sticking nails in the ends and connecting the stripped ends of a lamp cord to the nails. You plugged this into the 120 volt outlet for about a minute and voila! Cooked hot dogs. We ignored the minor problem of potential electrocution if someone touched the nails. I would cook and my roommate would serve. We sold the 'dogs for 25¢ each. They were rave best sellers at about 9 pm and we had guys lined up in the hallways waiting for hot dogs. It was so successful, in fact, that we couldn't cook hot dogs fast enough with the nails-and-lamp-cord idea, so we went down to the local flea market and bought a toaster – one of the old-fashioned 1930's kind with doors that fold down on each side that you put the bread in. We could stack about 4 hot dogs on each side. Now we could keep up with the demand. The aroma of cooking hot dogs reached all the way to our old buddies on Fifth.

It wasn't too long, of course, that the dormitory super, humorless soul that he was, shut us down. In fact, threatened to throw us out if we continued selling hot dogs. Something about being a fire hazard and not being licensed as a campus food vendor. Who, us? But we didn't let this deter us. We just took the business in another direction: we bought a refrigerator. Refrigerators were strictly forbidden in the dorm. We operated on the lock in a closet near our room in the hallway, changing the tumblers such that our room key would work but the super's passkey wouldn't. In there one late night went the refrigerator. The super would come by periodically to make sure we weren't selling hot dogs. We weren't: we were now selling cold cuts and cheese and soft drinks and beer. And renting space to other dorm denizens. The humming he could hear in the closet bothered him, but his key just wouldn't open the door.

3 Toaster used to cook hotdogs

The Original Phone Phreak

Down the hall from Kurt and I lived another pair of Engineering students. I was amazed to see one day, a phone booth beginning to materialize in John's room. At the same time, had I been watching, I would have seen a similar phone booth gradually disappearing from the corner of First and Main. It took about a week, and there it was, phone and all, connected up and working. John was a Phone Phreak – one of the originals. This was in 1956, you understand, and most long distance calls were operator assisted. John had been working on a device that would retrieve the money from a pay phone after you put it in and before the operator pressed the button that dumped it into the coin box. He was having trouble with this. It frequently didn't work and the phone ate the coins. John hated that.

Having his own phone booth solved the immediate problem. When the operator asked for the money, John simply put it in his own phone. Nothing could be simpler. It was impractical, of course, to carry a phone booth around with you, but having one in his own room allowed John to continue his research into the portable version of the electronic coin return box he was working on. And after a couple of weeks, he got a version that worked. It was quite simple: you clipped on a set of leads from the magic box to the phone wires, usually available in all phone booths up near the ceiling. Then, you made your call, waited for the operator to get off the line, and pressed a button. A capacitor discharged into the line, and bingo! Back came the coins. Worked every time. What's an engineering education for if you can't do practical things with it?

The End of my College Experience

I moved off campus into an apartment with Jerry Skaife, another radio ham. Ham radio was far more interesting than class work. The apartment was far enough from campus that the annoyance of attending classes was greatly reduced. This allowed me to spend almost all of my time building and fussing with radio gear. But Oregon State didn't give credit for ham radio, and my grades began to suffer. Calculus, I found to my horror, required actually studying, perish the thought. I had always before been able to get good grades without much of that, but no more. Calculus and I diverged rapidly, and by the spring of 1957, I was only pulling a little above a C average (a 2.1 GPA) that was threatening to turn into a D. I dropped out of school at the end of my sophomore year, "for a rest, just a year or so, I'll be back". Of course, that never happened.

Philosophical Beliefs and Explorations

I have never been religious and have never "belonged" to a church, or even attended church. We never discussed religion at home, and neither of my parents ever attended church. I think Dad believed in a God, judging from his later writing, but I didn't have any indication of that when I was growing up. Mom used to go into town to church on Easter, mostly to hear Chella Hall, our neighbor across the river, sing. For a brief time when I was about 10 or so, my mother enrolled me in a correspondence bible study

course. I dutifully completed and returned the assignments and got good grades, but none of it stuck. The more I read, the less I believed. The bible stories seemed very much like other myths, legends and fairy tales I had been reading. In grade school, I used to wonder if there was something wrong with me, because most of the other kids seemed to "believe" and I didn't.

While in college I became interested in things like past-life experiences. I read *The Search for Bridey Murphy* and *Many Mansions*, the story of Edgar Cayce, and many other books about reincarnation and past lives. I had a roommate, Glenn Plaisted, who was somewhat older than I was, and who had served in Korea who fed my interest in these things and we had many late-night discussions. In time, though these were interesting topics, I filed them away under "Improbable" and eventually dismissed them.

So I finally realized that I'm a benign atheist. What does that mean? I don't wish to tear down crosses from mountain tops, or forbid Nativity scenes in store windows. I have no problem with religion of any kind as long it is by choice. In short, live and let live.

The End