

Chapter 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD 1930 to High School graduation 1948

I don't think that is much of a question that I lived in the best years to be alive in the history of the world. The major inventions and Discoveries happened during my lifetime.



I was born February 11, 1930 was born in the Idaho Falls hospital. Idaho Falls Idaho, Bonneville County, Idaho Our family is living on a farm about 5 miles north area called beeches corner. My father was Alfred Hess Bateman and my mother was Idella Van Orden,

What was it like in 1930? Conditions were tough. We were in a major recession. My Father was a school teacher and we lived on a farm and were better off than many people.

1930 was the first year of the great depression, Radio was starting to gain momentum but the high unemployment of 8.9% caused problems in every area of life. This was felt worldwide, and many countries could see political change starting for example Germany where Adolf Hitler's National Socialists become the second largest party.

Following the Wall Street Crash, 1350 banks in the US fail. My parents had their saving on one of those Banks. The year that I was born, my parents lost all their money that they had in the bank. Fortunately, they had their 80 Acre farm which was paid for.

Conditions in 1929 were very difficult for my parents. The recession was in deep depression and my parents had lost money in the banks and they were struggling. They were surprised and concerned when mother found that she was pregnant with me. But the money they had left was very limited. My Father had a Master's degree and was close to getting his Doctorate but couldn't complete his thesis as he would have had to go back East and he didn't have the finances that would have been required. It was the depression and times were hard.

A salary of \$12.00/week was considered a good salary, if you were lucky to enough to have a job.

In the 1930's more than half of American families earned between \$500 and \$1,500 per year. In 1935-1936 the median family income was \$1,160. An income of \$2,000 per year guaranteed a comfortable life-style and put a household at the top 10 percent of incomes. On an average annual income of roughly \$1,000, most families had between \$20 and \$25 per week for food, clothing, and shelter. Budgeting and stretching scarce resources were essential. In adapting to economic deprivation families used two strategies: they curtailed expenses and found alternative sources of income. Expenses were curtailed by using family labor to produce goods that used to be store bought, such as food, clothing, and home repairs. This responsibility typically fell on women, who did most of the household spending. The government gave guidelines for a family budget, recommending setting aside 35 percent of the family income for food.

There were no credit cards, laser beams or ball-point pens. Every family had a father and a mother. We were before gay-rights, computer- dating, dual careers, daycare centers, and group therapy. Our lives were governed by the Ten Commandments, good judgment, and common sense. We were taught to know the difference between right and wrong and to stand up and take responsibility for our actions.

Serving your country was a privilege; living in this country was a bigger privilege.

Man had not invented:

Pantyhose

Air conditioners

Dishwashers

Clothes dryers

And the clothes were hung out to dry in the fresh air.

Time-sharing meant time the family spent together in the evenings and weekends-not purchasing condominiums. We never heard of FM radios, tape decks, CDs, electric typewriters, yogurt, or guys wearing earrings. If you saw anything with 'Made in Japan ' on it, it was junk.

Ice-cream cones, phone calls, rides on a streetcar, and a Pepsi were all a nickel.

And if you didn't want to splurge, you could spend your nickel on enough stamps to mail 1 letter and 2 postcards.

You could buy a new Chevy Coupe for \$600, . . . but who could afford one?

Too bad, because gas was 11 cents a gallon.

Nikola Tesla was born in 1856 and died in 1943. He was the inventor of Alternating Current and laying the groundwork for much of the electronic technology of today. Thomas Edison, born in 1847 and died in 1931, is given credit for his development of Direct Current. Charles Duell United States Commissioner of Patents is famous for purportedly saying "*Everything that can be invented has been invented.*" He died before I was born.



On the Farm, in the winter there was no heat for the upstairs bedrooms or in the front room except on Sunday. We would take a Hot Water bottle or brick to bed to help get the bed warm enough to get to sleep. We sleep under many blankets which would finally warm us, but it was sure hard to get out from under them in the morning. My Brother Orden had to get up and go down and make a fire in the kitchen stove. When it got a little warm. We would grab our cloths and run for the kitchen. Our clothes would be warmed from of the large oven in the old wood/coal stove, then we would get dressed.

I can remember taking baths in a portable long tub that would be placed in the kitchen and the water heated on the stove.

I can never remember only having an outhouse. I remember that there was an outhouse, but I don't remember that it was used. However, our farmhouse only had one bathroom. I remember that it was in the back of the house off what was once my parents' bedroom and was later the Separator room.

The Separator room was where we would bring the milk in and put it through the separator to get the cream so that it could be sold. My brother, Orden and dad would get up way before daylight and milk the six cows. This had to be done early enough so that breakfast of hot cereal could be had and dad as a teacher could get to school on time. I can remember cranking the Separator, which was a hard task for me at my age.

I am told that I use to sit for hours on my little red chair on a kitchen cabinet looking for Dad and Orden and Helen to come home from town.



From when I was born until going to first grade, I had no one of my age to play with or associate with. Our dog, Snowball was my best friend. We had large sheep herds going up highway 91 past our Farm. I found a baby Lamb that got into our Farm fence from one of the herds going north. I

fed it milk from a bottle and raised it to be a full-grown sheep and we spent a lot of time playing together. It liked to run up from behind through my legs and I would end up on its back. It did that one time when we just were getting home from church and we both went into an irrigation ditch. I had my only good clothes on. It upset my mother and she said that it was time that we need to get it in cans for the coming winter. She tried to explain that due to the depression, that we needed it for food. That was really hard on me, but she didn't force me to eat the meat. It took me a long time to get over the loss of my friend.

Later my Grandfather, Bateman brought his famous trotter racehorse as it was now too old to do any more racing and it was time to retire the famous horse named “Hal Direct”. The horse was a new friend, but it wasn’t mine and didn’t play with me and it seemed that I only got to ride Hal Direct when no one else wanted to ride. It wasn’t long until Hal Direct had a heart attack and fell into a ditch and died. I had lost my other friend



My Brother and Sister had neighbor kids their age and were over to play. But no one my age and I was left out of things most of the time.

The children in our rural area went to small country schools, one and two room schools. In that dad was a school teacher in town. We went to schools in Idaho Falls, a drive of about five miles. The snow was higher than the top of the car, so we didn’t see much. Dad would have to dig into the snowbank to make a place to leave the car. The snow level was much higher than the fences

The City kids treated us farm boys like we were the scum of the earth. They harassed us and did their best to let us know that we were not wanted with the City Kids. Part of it was that I was a farm boy and had not experience companionship being alone on the Farm.

I had a one friend and he was able to come up to stay overnight several times.

I remember being at the Jensen's just North of us. They only had an Outhouse which was located behind their house. The only thing that they had for toilet paper was that you tore a page out of a Montgomery Ward Catalog. The pager was softer however in those days. I can remember looking though what was left of the catalog at the pictures of all the neat things that they had for sale. It was called a wish book. I remember spending time in their outhouse, ‘not needing to go to the bathroom’, it was my first view of the outside world. We had no television, no news paper, no magazine. I had never been in a store. Things on those pages were things I never new about.

There weren't very many "toys" in those days. I had several toy farm equipment that my father had from displays. As he was an Agriculture Teacher and involved in setting up displays and would access to the toys when they were no longer needed. The only time that we received a toy was at Christmas and you only received one toy if you were lucky to get that. Most gifts were clothes include a new pair of shoes. The new pair of shoes that you got for Christmas was for best, mainly for wearing to church. The old "best" were for school and then the old were for regular wear. They usually had holes in the soles, and you would put cardboard inside to keep the rocks from hurting your feet.

I always looked forward to the visit with the Grand Parents at their Farm North of Lewiston, Utah. There were cousins my age and when we did get together with cousins and other kids, we did play games. One of our favorite games was "Kick the can" where one person would be "it", and the others would go out and hide and the "it" would try to find them. When you see a person, you would race them to the can and jump over it and say "Over the can for whoever-giving their name".

However, if the found person got to the can first, they would kick it and anyone that had been caught could then run and hide again.

"Olly Olly oxen come in free. If you do not come now, you will be "I" - "T". This meant that you would have to be the person trying to find those hiding and all the players would come in.

My first and second grade teacher was "Miss Boyce" As country boy, we didn't get along very well. Especially when I would tip back on my chair. I remember when dad would have to wait for me for an hour when I would have to stay after school, sitting on the floor.



My favorite person was Tom Mix. He was called “The king of Cowboys” He was a movie star and radio personality. Thomas Edwin "Tom" Mix (born Thomas Hezekiah Mix; January 6, 1880 – October 12, 1940) was an American film actor and the star of many early Western movies. Between 1909 and 1935, Mix appeared in 291 films, all but nine of which were silent movies. He was Hollywood's first Western megastar and is noted as having helped define the genre for all cowboy actors who followed. When an injury caused football player John Wayne to drop out of USC, Mix helped him get a job moving props in the back lot of Fox Studios. (Years later I was able to have a short conversation with John Wayne in St. George.)

He was on the radio at the “K I D”, a Radio Station in Idaho Falls. My mother took me to the studio so that I could possibly see him. I remember going up the stairs as he and some others were coming down. He stopped and talked to me for several minutes.



I remember seeing airplanes flying in the air over the farm but didn't know what they were. In 1935, Ford Tri-motor airplane landed at the Idaho Falls Air Port. This was the first real airplane that I saw in my life when my Mother took me to the airport to see it. It was so large that a car could drive under its wing. This experience created a great interest in Flying.

I don't remember much about the car or cars that my parents owned, but I do remember that it was only one car. I remember that one time when Helen fell out of a tree in our orchard, a neighbor took her to the Doctor in a Model T Ford. Dad purchased a new 1936 Buick after he sold the Farm. And that was something special.

My father was offered a job in Garland Utah working for the Farm security in June 1938. Beginning of the third grade we moved to Garland Utah and lived in a small apartment. The

main thing I can remember about this apartment is that the Lions Club met in the room down the wall and during their meetings you could hear them roar like a Lion.

I attended third grade at the Garland elementary school which was about three blocks away from where we lived. The main thing I remember about going to school at the Garland Elementary was the school lunches. It was different than the Peanut butter/honey sandwiches that we had in the first and second grades. It was the first time I'd seen school lunches. One of the main events that I remember was that when they were putting pepper in the soup that top came off and the pepper was very heavy in the soup but were required to eat it anyway.

My parents had some very good friends living in Garland his name was Charley Last. Across the street from where they lived, was a family by the name of Northman. I got acquainted with their daughter her name is Judy Northman very beautiful young girl with ringlets. I guess that was my first girlfriend

In the later part of 1938, my father changes jobs again and was employed at a temporary Federal Job requirement to move Morgan Utah. We rented a home on the main road into Morgan is located just across the street from the main railroad line. All trains at that time were pulled by a steam locomotive which created a lot of noise with steam operation including the steam whistle. It took weeks to be able to learn to sleep with all the noise and trains created.

Across the street was an underpass that the main road came under the railroad tracks. It was quite steep going under and coming out on the other side. This created quite a noise for trucks and other vehicles as exhilarated to get up the steep inclement.

The elementary school was some distance from where I lived, I had my first experience of riding the school bus to school. This was about the first time that I had friends my age.

The family lived next door to us by the name of Clark. I remembered that they had a water line mounted high in the air running all winter which made a large pile of ice in the winter time.

Come the warmer weather they would pile straw on top of the ice, which they would cut and sell the ice the following summer.

They had a son that was my age, which I don't remember much about him other than he was able to get me to take a draw on a cigarette which was my only try. Several years later as I was driving through Morgan, I stopped at the Clark's to see what was happening with the Clark Family. The son that I was looking for just returned home from a mission and he had been driving a new car back from Detroit for local dealer. He got into a bad accident and really banged up the new car. This had caused a lot of stress, so I didn't stay long.

One of the main points about living in Morgan was the Commo Springs resort. My parents got me a season pass and during the summer I went swimming their everyday.

I also have a bad experience when I was returning home from Commo Springs swimming Pool. There was an old-fashioned gas station which comprised of the two of the old-fashioned gas pumps that's the clear glass with the numbers inside of the glass to tell you how many gallons that you took they were filling the gas tank in a car and I like the smell of gas so I went over and took a great big intake of gas fumes which really left me dizzy and sick to my stomach which lasted a couple days.

Another thing I remembered about living in Morgan was that my brother got up Sunday mornings and made waffles for breakfast. Most of times they were pretty good. But one of times he made peppermint waffles that I will never forget.

The street we lived on was like an old western town.

In the summer of 1939 Dad was able to get a permanent position with the Soil Conservation Division of the US Agricultural Department. They told him that they had an opening for a position that they hadn't been able to fill as it was in a terrible location. Dad was told that if he would accept the position, he would be hired into the permanent position.

The terrible location was St. George, Utah where no one wanted to live due to the extreme heat condition of the area. At that time, there was no air Condition in the Small population

area of 2400 residence. Dad had a master's degree and was close to a PHD and met the educational requirements.

My parents wanted to get the family moved and settled before time for school to start. Mother, Orden, Helen and I packed what we could in the Buick and headed South on the old Highway 19. You could see a cloud of dust down the road and it was moving toward you and you knew that it was another car. Once the car and cloud of dust got even with our car, both cars would pause next to each other to let the dust settle so that you could see the road and then you could drive on. This was the condition of the dirt-graveled road from Provo south to St. George. As we passed through the St. George Entry Tunnel, we could see the small town of St. George.

I remember Mother having problems with me as she was tired and was letting Orden drive the car. I think that Orden was only 15 and didn't have a license. As a nine-year-old, I didn't like my brother driving and made a big fuss, so Mother had Orden stop the car and I jumped out and ran up in the hills. After being threatened to be left out in the hills, I repented and showed better behavior on the rest of the way to St. George.

We rented the main level of the Jed Fawcett home, just south of the Brigham Young Winter Home. Doctor Gates, a Dentist had his office in what was Brigham Young's bedroom. I visited the Gate's home several times with my Mother visiting Mrs. Gates, in the home, but don't remember Dr. Gates. I did try to look in the back window of the little building just east of the Gates Home and found it was piled full of storage. There was not a south door to the building at that time. Little did I realize that the Gates Home was formally Brigham Young's winter home and the little building was Brigham's Office? This was the Official headquarters for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when Brigham was living there, he moved to St. George in the winters due to his health.

I remember asking why did the Fawcett's rented the main part of their home to us and live in the basement. Come the following summer, I found out. It was terribly on the main floor and much cooler in the basement. We really suffered from the heat. I remember sweating so hard

that the sheets were wet the next morning and would stick to you and you would have to peel them off from you.

There were some homes in St. George that had fans and some homes shortly thereafter had one of those new things called evaporated Coolers. It wasn't long before my parents purchased an Evaporative Cooler and put it in their bedroom. We kids had to put up with the heat and after a while got use to it.

The St. George Elementary School was in a newer building just a few short blocks and I started the 5th grade with Ferrand Stucki as my teacher. It was a good year and I didn't feel any of the outsider feelings that I had experience previous. I had lots of friends and activities. Mr. Stucki was a very likeable person and school was a lot of fun. I remember riding on the outside of his Model A Ford with other students piled all over the car. It was a good year.

The only negative thing that I remember was that a girl sitting behind me in class took the cork off her ink bottle and dubbed it on my shirt, just for meanness. Each desk had a small bottle of ink that we would use to write with (pen & Ink). I only had two shirts to wear to school and I was so upset that I cried. Mother did buy me another shirt and the marked-up shirt was used when I wasn't at school. We had very few clothes to wear and our older shoes required cardboard to cover the holes in the bottoms. Cardboard to cover the holes in your shoes were common in those days and I think at times, the shoes that I wore to school were that way.

The next year with Mr. Neilson as teacher for the sixth grade was another good year.

I was in the school setting in the same desk six days a week. The sixth day was church. Our Ward met in the Elementary School where we held primary also and a church class used the same room as I did the other five days.

There were three wards in St. George at that time. The North Ward met in the elementary school, the South Ward met in the only chapel in town and the St. George Center Ward met in the Tabernacle.

We moved into another home near where the St. George City buildings are now located. This was near the St. George Dixie Sugar Loaf hills. We did have a small barn yard where we had chickens. This was a big plus for me as mother would let me take eggs to the local bakery and trade them for penny candy Called "Guess what" This was a small container that had two chewable wrapped pieces of candy and a timey toy. We had very little access to candy and only at Christmas or when we went to visit relatives.

Snowball and I spent many hours hiking around in the hills behind our house. Even though Snowball was the "family Dog", she was my very special friend starting back on the Farm, when she was my only friend.

I played a drum in the Drum and Bugle Corp and threaded the Maple tree. It was a sad day and it took me a little time to understand what the attack on Perl Harbor December 7th 1941 really meant.

Dad was transferred to Cedar City and I attended the seventh and eighth grades in Cedar City.

Moving to Cedar City, it was difficult to find a place to live. We moved into an apartment on the third floor of Eden Apartments. It was a one-bedroom apartment with a murphy bed (folded out of the wall) in the front room where Orden and I sleep, and we had a roll-a-way bed where my sister Helen slept. There was no place to keep our cloths, but we had very few cloths anyway. We did have a small one car garage where we kept the Buick, but no place for the Model A Ford car that Dad had purchased, and it was sold. I don't remember in ever riding in the Model A Ford and remember very little about it.

Moving into the apartment, we were not permitted to keep our Dog Snowball and it had to be kept somewhere else, I don't remember where. Another tragedy came into my life when Dad told me that Snowball was hit with a car and killed. I really knew that Snowball had to be got rid of as we had no place that we could keep her. It was very hard to accept, but I did have neighbor friends' by then.

My first income was from selling “night crawlers” worms that I would catch at the Cedar City Park after dark. I would make up a sign and sell them for 10 cents a dozen to people going fishing. And I could sit in the shade to sell them and not have to work in the Sun all day as was the case working on the Farm. My first day at selling night crawlers I made over one dollar. That was big money for me.

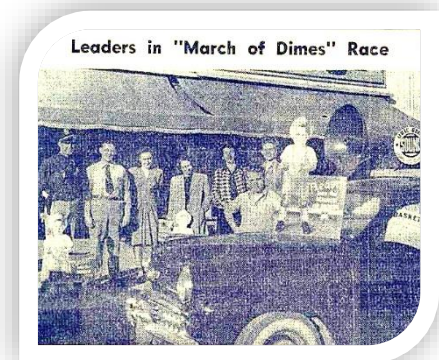
Living in a small apartment, I had no place to keep things. The apartments had small garages for rent for \$2.50 a month. That was a lot of money, but I wanted a place to spend time and keep my stuff.

1948-01-13 March of Dimes Washington County News (Volunteer assignment)

Left to right: Orin (Zug) Bennett, Larry Leonardi, Mrs. Evelyn Lee, Miss Erma Bentley, Mrs., Maxine Spencer, and Mrs. Ann Peterson, with Russell Bateman in the foreground

*Under the direction of Frank Holland, County chairman; Larry Leonard, city chairman, **Russell Bateman** with his sound system common and the entire and efforts of Evelyn Lee, Ramon Bentley, Maxine Spencer, and Peterson, the March of Dimes race developed as a unique stunt and cleared over \$70 for the polio fund.*

Everybody was hailed if he appeared on the streets and reminded those young ladies to play the game – and made a real game of it too.



The BPW members donated their services, also, on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings at the theaters