

Reminiscing Of The Good-Old-Days On My 82nd Birthday

The U. S. Supreme Court unconstitutionally legalized same sex marriage on June 26, 2015 – my 60th wedding anniversary in 2015 and now on my Groundhog 82nd birthday – Feb. 2, 2018 we have the release of the FISA memo which will be talked about for many days to come and may turn out to be the biggest Constitutional crisis scandal ever in America. I can remember on the campaign trail when Trump said Hillary Clinton should be in jail but now he says they (violators) should be ashamed of themselves and a disgrace which sounds like he's going soft again. Frankly, until I see some of the corrupt government officials go to jail, I can't get overly excited. I'm sick of it all as I'm sure most of you are also so I'm going to change the tune today because it is my birthday.

It has taken me 82 years to realize the significance of my birthday and the difficulties my parents encountered on that day. Because babies come when they are ready, there was absolutely no way my father could have prepared for the event. In addition, they had no electricity so he couldn't plug a heater to the car at night. It was a cold, frosty day in Eastern Washington on the farm where I was raised when the birth pains began in the wee hours and the car wouldn't start. There was no 9-11 to call for help so my dad had to saddle up his favorite horse and hook it up to pull the car while my mother sat at the wheel pumping the accelerator hoping some little spark would get that car going. After the car got started, they had to drive about 12 miles to the birthing center in the doctor's home. I was born just as the sun was coming up. The Doctor asked my mom if he should pull the shades so I wouldn't see my shadow and maybe crawl back in. She smiled and said, "No let her stay."

For some strange reason before I fell asleep last night this story came to mind and as I related it to my husband this morning, tears came to my eyes thinking about how blessed we are today. I began to remember even though the city folks didn't have 9-11, they did have electricity as did farms close to the main arterial but our particular farm did not. I remember my first telephone hung from the wall when we moved to town and we had to turn a lever to connect with an operator who then would connect us to whomever.

We got our water from a well that had to be cleaned out every spring so water could be pumped back in for the winter and we had to often break ice to fill our containers. That was my job as my dad lowered me into the well to scrub it clean. My mother cooked on a wood stove and in the fall after the harvest we all got into a truck and drove to find wood for the winter. They did have an oil heater to warm the bedrooms. And I won't go into detail about bathrooms which were non-existent. We took our baths in a tub behind the wood stove hanging towels for our privacy.

The tubs were used on Monday mornings when my mother started up the old fuel driven wash machine that we hated in the summer months when we were home from school because it made so much noise in the mornings when we wanted to sleep and the clothes hung on the line to dry. Tuesdays was the day to iron and irons were put on the stove to get hot.

Summer was time for the wheat harvest and I learned early to help out in the fields from 6 a.m. often until 8 p.m. There were no child labor laws. At age about nine I was put into a truck to drive around the field to meet the combine at the next stop. My dad would get off the combine, put the truck in compound and get me started and then I'd look through the steering wheel until I got to the next stop where I turned the key off to stop the engine and wait for the combine. I may have kneeled but I can't remember. I think I earned \$40 for 20 days of work. We went to town and I purchased my first

bicycle. This routine went on until I was 15 years old when my dad decided I was perfectly capable of driving the wheat truck to town as any man. I said, "But dad, I'm not old enough and what if I get stopped by a cop." Although normally he was an honest man and obeyed all the laws but this time he grinned and said, "I play poker with the sheriff!" The first trip I made to the elevator found the employees stretch their necks at the window as I made the 90 degree turn onto the scale to weigh. After that other fathers began to put their girls into the wheat trucks. Yes, all that before [Women's lib](#).

I explained earlier about our living conditions on the farm but at about age 12, my brother age 8 and my parents moved into the biggest house in our small town of about 100 people when our landlady wanted to move to a house on some lake and I got my first bath in a big bathtub. My parents paid cash for the big two-story home not necessarily from savings from farm wages but I have reason to believe my dad was a good poker player because the IRS never could figure out how we could live on so little farm wages. My folks never had a credit card and paid cash for everything. Maybe the sheriff helped subsidize them, do you think?

So as I remembered the day I was born, I can't help but wonder what my mother was going through out on the farm without anyone to help her deliver the baby except my dad which I'm sure caused her a great deal of concern but they made it and I'm here today giving praise and thanks to these wonderful folks who raised me. My mother died of cancer at age 61 in 1975 after burying my brother who at age 33 in 1973 was killed on railroad track along with his wife and daughter. My father lived with us for eight years passing away at age 88 in 1996.

I watch our spoiled generations today and shake my head. We tried to raise our children in a Christian home and they've all turned out well but we did lose our daughter at age 40 to cancer in 2003 leaving behind three children ages 13, 9 and 6 which their father has raised.

I hope this story is much more interesting than the constant drip, drip, drip of politics much of which we can't always believe. Now all I have to do is try to think of a good title for the story.

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