

## **Momories Carol**

**I would like to start by going back into the fragmented disks in my brain and bring back some memories of my growing up years.**

**I do not remember much of the Carmangay experience of this family. My memories start in the brick house. It stands as a monument to our mother, because she was not about to leave her brick home for any reason. When I was a teenager I liked to turn every light on in the house so the house was lit up and could be seen when all the cars went by to the Alston dances.**

**I remember always having a house full of people during Christmas and other holidays. I think Mom would just get the beds clean and the pies and buns made and then we would get company again. One Christmas our Dad took us down to the frozen river and pulled us behind the car on a sled. We could sleep about a lot of people. I think Arlen and Wayne were in the bathroom.**

**I remember taking Sunday drives to the River Place to check on the cattle. I was scared to look out the window of the car, because our Dad would drive very close to the water. He also drove down the north hill and across the river with the car. I remember sometimes going to a swimming hole as the river was much higher in those days.**

**I remember how Aunt Vera liked to come home to Champion, especially for the New Years dance. I wasn't that old but I remember standing by mom's dresser and watching her put on her rouge. Aunt Vera and her two brothers were a close threesome. They all loved to dance, sisters with brothers, it didn't matter, just as long as they were dancing.**

**We went to Lethbridge sometimes, but it was a long way. We went on the old gravel road through all the little towns. I remember how nice it was when we reached the smooth pavement at the Monarch rail tracks. I remember getting a new pair of shoes in Lethbridge. I must have had them on my lap to look at on the way home. When I got home I only had one shoe. I had fallen asleep on the way home and I guess our Dad had stopped the car for some reason. I must have thought that we were home, so I opened the car door. I guess I dropped the new shoe then. Our Dad phoned the school bus driver the next morning and he was able to find the shoe, right where we had stopped.**

**I grew up with brothers on both sides of me, so I had to be tough. I remember getting on a horse because I thought it would be fun to ride, but my brothers would scare the horse. I was on the horse once and it took off on a runaway down the lane. I think I was saved by my Dad. I don't think I ever became a horse woman after that. I was also bitten on my shoulder by a horse when I was in the barn.**

**I do remember the day our father was taken from us. I remember all of us cramming into the car to go down to Carmangay when it happened. I remember our mother holding his big hand and sobbing. I remember everyone coming to see him in the casket which was in the living room. He had a tear running down his face. My mom wore a great big black hat. Uncle Fred was beside our Mom and held one of the little girls. It was a big funeral, because our Dad was a very social person. He loved to visit with joke around with people  
It was a very sad time.**

When school started in September, I was in grade 5, in the same class as Errol, Uncle Fred's boy. They asked us to fill out papers with our parents names on it. I remember going up to the teacher and telling her that I could not write it because my dad had died that summer.

In August of 1951, just a few weeks after we lost our Dad, Uncle Fred's family came to live with us for a year. They moved all there stuff from Washington. It poured rain all that August when they were moving in. It was fun to have then there, but also a big house full. We had seven school kids get on the bus every morning. We had great kick-the-can games in the evening with our cousins. We got to know those Fred Smith cousins quite well.

The harvest did not take place in 1951, the grain stayed in the fields in swaths all winter because the snow came too early and they could not get it in.

Our family fit just perfectly in our station wagon. There was Mom and Arlen in the front, Eldon, Carol and Richard in the middle seat and the three little girls in the back. Mom always chose turquoise or blue cars, I didn't know they made other colors. I noticed in Arlen's written memories that our Dad's last car was green. I do remember that green car. He liked green, just like I do. When he was a single guy he wrote in his diary that he painted his car green. He must have looked different because all the cars were black in those days.

Mom and I and Eldon were coming home from Vulcan one night, when the car started to swerve from side to side on the icy roads. We hit the ditch and crashed our car. Jim Strauss came by just behind us and they took us to the hospital. I had hit the dash and Mom hurt her leg. My eye lid that had been stitched got a very bad infection. While the car was being fixed we drove the boys old Model-T around. It was fun riding in it but a bit scaring when you can see the road through the floor boards.

We learned to love babies. Mary could always supply us with a two year old to play with. When I was 16, I thought I had my own baby when Billy Forsythe came to live with us for a few months. I got very attached to him.

We didn't have T.V. until we were teenagers and then it wasn't much. Arlen was always inventing things. He would make his own rafts. There was a little pond by the end of the driveway where he would sail it.

I remember our Dad taking us kids to see a boxing match in Lethbridge. I guess that was a sport in those days. I cannot understand why he would have thought that I was interested in seeing a boxing match. It is disgusting.

Champion used to have a lot of businesses. When we were in school, we usually walked down town during lunch hours to get a chocolate bar for 5 cents or go to the drug store for school supplies. We sometimes went to wait for the train and see them throw off the mail etc. I remember seeing our Dad down town as he was just leaving to go to Conference in Salt Lake. He had bib overalls on just like Uncle Fred used to wear.

There was a lot of excitement in town on Saturday night. All the farmers would come to town to see the show, just to visit, go to the dance, or the bar or to shop in the stores. You could not find a parkin place on main street and all the stores were open. We drove great big cars with huge fins on the bumpers.

We went to visit Uncle Fred in Tacoma Washington, I think about 1950 because all the little girls had been born. We had a lot of cousins together. I remember Aunt Zina's house. We ate watermelon by the ocean.

So, no T.V., videos, Nintendo, skis, or any of the things that kids do now. What did we do? Well we went dancing. We had an 'Old Timers' dance every year that was a high light of the year. Me and my brothers got in on the end of all the ethnic dances that people did then. They had brought these dances from the old countries. There was Italian, Norwegian, German, Scandinavian, Irish, Scottish, Dutch and lots of other families in the area. Some of them had their own languages, but it was not cool to teach their kids the old country language, so they learned English. We learned dances that came from all these countries. They were fun. We were second world war babies so we had the influence of the old music and the music of the big bands of the war times.

I had a friend whose father tended the stove at the Alston hall for the dances. I remember being envious that she got to go to the dances when she was so young. I think I was about 12 when I got to go. I usually had to go with my brothers. They complained about having to take their ugly sister. I guess that hasn't changed. I remember having to wait in the car or on the street corner while Eldon said good night to his girl friend. I had lots of girl friends because they wanted to go out with my cute brothers. Bruce was a real swinger too.

Every Friday and Saturday there would be a dance somewhere in a 50 mile radius or 120 miles to Waterton. Some week-ends we would get the station wagon full of kids [lots of cousins] to go to Waterton for the dance. In the fifties we wore big shirts. I had to take a big ice cream container with my crinolines in it because we wore lots of petticoats. I would put my clothes on at one of the camp ground bathrooms. We did Elvis rock and roll stuff. After the dance we would either curl up somewhere in the camp ground or make our way home. We sometimes got as far as Aunt Clara's or even all the way home. Arlen was a sleepy driver, he kind of went from one ditch to the other, but we had the road to ourselves.

I remember Emma Smith telling us that the big skirts and petticoats were going out of style, I thought she was crazy to think such a thing.

I had three little sisters that were a bit pesky at times. They were always moving their dolls and dishes around and making a mess. Lots of times I wanted to go with Mom and the rest when they were going to the city. I was so relieved when we could drop the little girls off at Mary's for the day. When I left home at seventeen, Linda had her shoes right by my door, waiting to move into my room.

