

CARPENTER GIRLS STORIES

Catherine Rae Carpenter Nebeker (nickname KAY) Child # 7

Roberta Fay Carpenter Larsen (nickname ROBI) Child # 8

Children of Charles Felix Carpenter and Hannah May Collier

There we nine children born to our parents:

	BORN	DIED	AGE
1. Charles Edwin	3-21-09	3-23-1909	3 days
2. John Lyle	7-18-1910	1-29-1976	66
3. Theodica May	11-29-1912	12-16-1977	65
4. Wilbur	1-4-1916	1-19-1928	12
5. Beatrice Helen	1-16-1919	7-26-2009	90
6. Leah Alice	11-12-1920	2-14-2007	87
7. Catherine Rae	8-13-1923	4-27-2014	91
8. Roberta Fay	2-9-1926	12-2-2019	93
9. Douglas Bernard	12-22-1932	12-22-1978	46

These stories are from the memories of Roberta and Kay as they attempted to write them down for our Grandchildren. We have no way to tell exactly how old we were when they happened but hope you will enjoy stories from a time so long ago that it is difficult, even for us, to imagine a life so different than what it is now. The simple pleasures that were so wonderful to us would seem very mundane and silly to the sophisticated children of today, but we were happy and very appreciative of our good life. Our parents were wonderful people and loved us and provided a good home and above all other blessings they taught us the Gospel and guided us into adulthood with all the necessary tools that have enabled us to have good life.

These stories begin sometime after 1923 when Kay was born On August 13th and 1926 when Roberta was born on February 9th. They come from our earliest recollection of our lives.

We grew up in Vernal, Utah. We lived on 1st North just a block from our

Vernal 1st Ward meeting house.

We had neighbors on each side of the street from about First West down to Sixth East. (Sixth East (North) was the street that the farm we moved to in about (-----1938?) was located. Since we never owned any kind of a car moving to the 'farm' was a far out of the way place that it seemed like it took forever to get to high school. We were permitted to ride the school bus during part of the time we lived there.

We had two cousins that lived close by our home in Vernal. Robi had Ina May Collier (Uncle Ed's daughter, and I had Catherine Markey, Aunt Bessie Carpenters daughter). They were our chief playmates during much of our growing up...As sisters we played together during our very early years. Then we developed different 'wants' Robi reading books and Kay playing Croquet and other physical games. We each remember some of the good times we had together.

CUCUMBER DOLLS:

In the summer we would pick large cucumbers out of the garden, cut off one end and scoop with a spoon the insides and eat it, of course) and then when it was hollowed out we would cut eyes, nose and a good sized mouth in it to make a doll. We would take a serrated edged knife and cut around the top to make 'hair'. The doll was then fitted out with a 'diaper' made from scraps of cloth and pinned on the bottom of the cucumber and we would mix up mud pies and feed the baby and then needing to change the diaper we would take it off and wash it in the irrigation ditch that ran on the west side of our home.

We remember the ditch! The water flow seemed very large...but was, in reality, very small and there was a water gate made of made of wood that would divert the water into the various properties when it was their 'water turn'. This device was called a weir and the water slipped over it making a small little waterfall. We would hold our 'diapers' by the corner and wash them off and place them on the ditch bank to dry and then feed our babies more mud pies. It was a fascinating pastime and we played it for many of our growing up years.

One time Robi remembers is when our Mom was away and we needed 'diaper cloth' and could not find anything suitable and Robi took our Dad's silk handkerchief and used it as a diaper.

I lost the rest of this story...better luck to morno!

2/14/07

PLAYING FAIRIES IN THE outhouse:

Even though we lived in the 'city' about 2500 people!, we had no indoor plumbing for much of our lives.

Our house burned down when Kay was about six years old and they built the 'new' house and it had running water, a water heater and a 'real bathroom'. But not such a thing as central heating! More about the stoves later).

So we had an outhouse! It seemed a very long way from the house, especially in the winter time. One summer a 'not so desirable' family moved in across the street. The children knew things and did things that our parents tried to protect us from. They had a little girl about the same age as Robi. Her name was Winona . Eldridge. Mom would have us play dolls right under the kitchen window where she could listen to what was going on. We never knew until we grew up why that particular place was where we always played when Winonna and Billy came to play. Billy was somewhere near Kay's age and knew much more about life than she did....and was very willing to educate her.

One summer day our cousin Don Collier had come to help Mom in her garden. I was out in the garden talking to him when Robi and Winonna came to the outhouse. I paid no attention to how long they were in there but Don noticed and asked me what they were doing in there such a long time. So I went over to the door, which was locked with just a little wooden handle that worked for the inside, and asked what they were doing.

I can still remember Bobby saying, "Nothing"..and even though I was very young I knew that tone of voice meant something else. I kept asking her and finally told her to tell me what they were doing or I would go tell Momma.. She then said, "What will you tell her? That we are undressed and playing fairies".

That has been one of those wonderful funny stories that have followed us down through the years and the phrase used for many an incident to convey wonderfully meaning situations.

PLAYING PAPER DOLLS ON OUR 'HUGE' FRONT PORCH.

Actually it is interesting how, as children we view the size of things as being huge...only to discover as we grow older and revisit our past areas that huge, as with the huge front porch was actually a tiny little porch built on the front of the house and was about seven feet square. When I went back to Vernal and walked up that grassy path (no cement walk there) and saw the size of our "huge front porch" I wondered how it could ever have shrunk to such a little size. But we thought it was a magical place.

We had paper dolls that were very pretty. We cut out their clothes and attached them by little tabs at the shoulders and sides. They came usually in a book with the doll being on the front of the book which was heavier cardboard. Then the little clothes, which included hats, purses, dresses and coats...and sometimes even different shoes (which were very difficult to get to stay on the dolls feet .

We were somehow entranced with the idea of being 'RICH' as though that was the most wonderful thing anyone could ever be. We got to take turns being the LITTLE RICH girl...the one who had a bicycle and toys and all her heart could wish for. We don't remember to what end these sessions were directed...but the memory of the hours of playing 'dolls' on the front porch' has remained in both of our hearts and minds through all these years. **Get more from Robi about our set ups--and what you remember about this.**

When we did some remodeling in our home in Murray when Jeri was *(married)* _____? _____ we found such a doll under the boards in the floor, in a closet. **(See if Jeri still has her)** we recognized her immediately from the years gone by...

Jeri was so taken by her she claimed it as her own...and I hope she still has it.

CHRISTMAS AS CHILDREN:

Christmas was the most wonderful time of the year. It usually took about two sets of twelve months to ever arrive at Christmas every year! We didn't

get any toys between Christmases! Mostly it was dolls...how we loved our dolls. We got doll beds with tiny mattresses and quilts and pillows...th beds were made of wood and painted with pretty little flower decorations which were usually cut out of a piece of wall paper. We had play dishes...and spent hours and hours playing 'house'.

One year we got a whole set of blue willow ware dishes. The wonder of those beautiful little cups and saucers...with a little pitcher with a lid and a real little 'tureen' for serving the soup from...and a tiny little platter that would have been for the turkey...all pure magic. We had the new cupboard that year and played house out on the back porch in the summer.

We were charged very seriously to be careful and not let them get broken. One day as I was running in the house to get some water I slammed the kitchen screen door and it knocked a little blue willowware cup out of my hands and it shattered. Robi and I were in a panic. We had been told if they got broken they would have to be put away until we grew older and could take care of them.

This is another one of the examples of our mothers constant understanding of things that would be such perils to us. I can remember picking up the pieces and running back into the house crying for the loss. She comforted (and did not scold) me. We did not lose the right to play with our precious dishes and they lasted us for many years.

We had no such a thing as electric Christmas tree lights (I don't even know if they were available then)but there were wonderful little candle holders that snapped onto the branches...much like a clothes pin. We had, what it seemed to us dozens on our big tree which always touched the ceiling of the dinning room. We only lit them about twice, as we remember it. Once on Christmas eve...then they were left burning for a short time, with th e lights in the room out...and it was a 'glorious sight'. Again on Christmas morning they were lit for a few minutes as we came into the room to see what Santa had left for us.

One Christmas when Robi was very little..about three or four years old, we were standing around the magical tree with the little candles burning when all of a sudden Teddy (our eldest sister), grabbed Robi's head and smacked it, rubbing her hand down over her hair. She had short little hair

that was all fuzzy from sleeping on it and she had backed up too close to a candle and caught it on fire. Teddy was quick enough to put it out or it could have turned into a terrible tragedy.

Our Dad was a great joker and loved to tease us. He was always the one who handed out the Christmas presents. Kay had asked for roller skates...a really big 'luxury item' for us. Robi wanted a baby doll. So as Daddy was handing out the gifts he gave Robi roller skates and me the doll. I was devastated. I loved dolls and we played with them a lot...but roller skates was my current 'heart's desire.' We usually just got one 'big' gift and so I didn't expect that Santa could have made such a mistake. I remember our Mom getting worried that I was so upset and she said "Charlie...!!!!" I remember her tone of voice...I remember Daddy laughing and reaching around under the tree pulling out a pair of beautiful roller skates and saying, "Well look at this the tag says to 'Kitty'...I guess you wanted skates and not the doll so we will send the doll back" I hugged the doll and said I wanted it too...and then he gave Robi her skates and the world turned into a magical place once again!

Our mother had learned the art of candy making. What a wonderful thing that was to us. We never had much candy through out the whole year but Christmas was our day to anticipate the miracle of a whole pan full of homemade candy. We had what we called the milk pans. They were round and rather shallow (like a cake pan but deeper. They were used to pour the fresh milk in and let it set over night and the cream rose to the top and they could skim it off to either eat it or make butter and there was always enough for both things as we always had a cow or two.) These pans were given to each of us with a variety of Mom's wonderful candies. There was always enough for about a week of gorging and for New Years the supply was replenished a little...ah...it was wonderful. The wonder of it all...as the 'older girls' Teddy, Bea and Leah' helped in the kitchen as batch after batch of magic poured out and was cut and put on cookie sheets and stored for the Big Day.

We always had to have breakfast before we started on the candy. We almost never had such a thing as fresh oranges but on Christmas day there was a big beautiful orange in our 'socks'. We could eat that and some cereal before we were turned loose on the candy. Robi had a very touchy tummy all her life. She needed something in it very soon after she got up or she got terrible cramps. Mom learned that she could give her 'ginger tea'

and little cubes of cheese or bread and she would be all right. The tea was made from hot water or milk with ginger powder to flavor it. It was very warming and tasted very good. It was used to calm stomach aches, and other ailments that kids got.

One year, it may have been the year of the blue china dishes, Daddy made us a little dish cupboard and Teddy had painted and decorated it. It was a sturdy little thing and was in our family for years. Another year Daddy made doll beds for our new dolls. Teddy and Mom had painted them and they were both very much alike. We each had a bed, little mattress quilts and pillows. These were things that were not even available to buy because there was no where to buy such stuff. The great society of merchandising had not come into being in those days.

We lived in Vernal...a town of about 2500 ? In those days our clothing was made at home...there was very little 'store bought' clothes...for who could afford such stuff anyway??? Our mother was an accomplished seamstress and for some time owned a small sewing shop where she made clothes for people and hats...wonderful, beautiful hats. One year she made Robi and me an Easter Hat...and I would love to have a picture of them.. We thought they were the most beautiful things we had ever had. She also made us brown taffeta dresses that were alike. They must have been a lot of work because they had tiers of ruffles for the skirts. The taffeta was not strong enough, however, and the edging on the ruffles frayed out . I can only remember wearing it for a few times.

They were Sunday Only dresses and one Sunday, with that beautiful dress on I rolled under the benches from the back of the little chapel to nearly the front. Then I noticed the stitching was off part of my dress...and I felt so guilty..never confessing what had caused the disaster.

Mom owned a sewing machine called a Hem stitcher. It finished the edges of cloth by some sort of zig zag stitch and then I t was carefully cut in between the two rows if stitching to make a neat non-turned up edge.

She did ' hem stitching' for people in her shop for so much a yard. I remember how much noise it made as she used the foot peddle to make it go.

We never picked up on this again when we talked in the morning after our walk - Maybe it is not too late - ???
Lor U -