

The Carlin, Nevada Interlude

Sometime around 1926, my father and mother moved to Carlin for my father to work on the railroad. During his early years he had passed through all of the beginning years from Call Boy (they bicycled around to wake up the engine crews for their runs) to Brakeman, then Fireman, to the top spot of Engineer. So he was eligible for any of these positions. I think that he drove the train between Carlin and Sparks, Nevada on his run.

We lived in a log house made up of railroad ties.

Within the house was a player piano, one like you pumped with your feet to provide wind to actuate which keys would be played to produce the tune according to the rectangular slots that moved vertically across the paper. There was a slot in which you could place a nickel but we never tried to make it work.

We had electricity only on Thursday mornings for the women to run their washing machines. We had to use lanterns and candles for light in the house.

There were hundreds of matches under the train station. I discovered this by going under the small station house that was held up on stilts. Probably one or more of the tough kids in this neighborhood was planning to set the building on fire. These kids were really awful. They got my brother Eugene and I (we were the only children at this time) to crawl into a galvanized pipe that ran under the road. Then they built bonfires at each end of the pipe so that we couldn't get out without getting burned. Another thing that they did to us was to get us in a grain elevator and pack us in tightly with grains of wheat up to our necks. They left us there for a while and eventually dug us out of the wheat.

Another tough kid sat on top of his house and shot at people with a 22-gun rifle.

Another thing of interest for Eugene and I was seeing an old lady smoking a corn cob pipe every day.

My father took Eugene and me fishing on the Humboldt River on one occasion. One of the fish that was caught by our father had an undigested frog in its stomach that was pretty interesting for us to see.

We had a small, white wood LDS church to go to. There were two doors on one end of the church that swung open to disclose a staircase. A very young girl was teaching us on one occasion about the "Three Bears"--so much for giving a lesson concerning our Savior.

I don't remember how long we stayed in Carlin.

Unfortunately, I never asked my parents how long that we were there. However, I do remember about the trip home. We crossed the Great Salt Lake Trestle that had been built at great expense to avoid having to go around Promontory Point. I remember that the train slowed down a great deal as it was crossing this trestle. I also remember a fiery sunset in the west as we were traveling eastward. Incidentally those large poles that had been driven into the ground for the trestle are now being salvaged as very valuable timber.

When we neared the Ogden Union Station, Aunt Blanche, one of my mother's sisters, met us. It was a dark and rainy day going the rest of the way home in a baby buggy.