



REMINISCENCE

by

Barbara Colman

I remember when my grandmother came to visit and spit out pea skins on a silver spoon.

I remember walking on ice mounds that dotted the Lake Michigan shore on my birthday (6) and falling in and not being allowed to have my present - a new navy blue coat - because we were not supposed to walk on the ice.

I remember being afraid of Cully Schwemer who rode a Very Large Tricycle and terrorized the neighborhood.

I remember when Nancy Drew ruled.

I remember walking up the bridle path with my bike and riding to school to play tennis as early in the spring and as late in the fall as weather permitted.

I remember August 14, 1945 when my father said, "If there are sirens today it will be because the war is over." And there were. And it was.

I remember hot nights when we would dip in the lake before we went to bed.

I remember skating every day after school and all day on winter weekends on a very large pond that had a wood stove heating shack.

I remember Larry and Paul Schwemer crossing the Bridge Lane/Barnett Lane ravine on the underpinnings of the bridge while I anxiously awaited them on the other side. The drop off was considerable and they were NUTS!

I remember when you dialed a number a person answered. (Some things were better then!)

I remember sneaking to the top of the Fleisher's garage to play doctor and being scared to death we would be found out.

I remember all of us living in our small, fireplaced study for three days one winter because our basement had three feet of water in it and we had no heat. (I don't remember how the problem was resolved!)

I remember my father's elaborate set of train tracks, the multi-switched control panel and many small gauge RR cars that circumnavigated the ping pong room at 7240 N. Beach Road, but, like Puff the Magic Dragon, for reasons unknown, it got put away for other things.

I remember many kind and generous neighbors who gave us pack after pack of playing cards to enhance our trading card collections.

I remember sitting on Eva's lap at dawn as the air raid sirens sounded.

I remember collecting skipping stones for months and having a blow out session when the summer was over.

I remember the empty lot that I had to pass when I walked home from Susie Fox's house (two houses away), which in daylight was a breeze, at night was scary, and in a windy rainstorm was terrifying!

I remember one really gigantic rock in very deep water out about a mile that Dad could always find and that was a great expedition to locate periodically.

I remember that while we could swim at home any time in the lake, the Hartman's pool was always a special treat.

I remember when nobody locked their doors.

I remember digging for Indian artifacts in mounds that we were sure contained buried treasure. They did not.

I remember when peaches and nectarines were only yellow.

I remember *finally* beating Larry in chess and never playing him again. He remembers *finally* beating me in ping pong and never playing me again. We discovered this mutuality fifty years later.

I remember wishing we had a paved driveway because it seemed classy. And then when we did I wondered what the big deal was.

I remember at 15 driving the car up to the house every morning so that the minute I turned 16, I would be able to get my license. Which I did. And which ended the valet service for my parents.

I remember the quiet, reassuring presence of my mother whenever we came home.

I remember when field hockey, basketball, volleyball, baseball, track, tennis, soccer, badminton and kickball were all played using the same shoes: sneakers or tennis shoes.

I remember when Larry and I found the Christmas present closet in November and had a field day looking at everything we were going to get. And then it was such a bummer Christmas morning when we knew everything ahead and had to pretend that we didn't.

I remember when girls wore skirts to school and women wore skirts to work (IF they worked).

I remember when ice hockey was played outdoors.

I remember being put to shame by 55 year old Aunt Opal who, fresh from the Oregon mountains' Odell Lake, leaped into 60 degree Lake Michigan as if it were a hot tub.

I remember carrying a clunky old Underwood to school on Thursdays my junior year at to learn typing. It was a real treat to have a brand new sleek (but still heavy!) Smith-Corona to take to college.

I remember racing barefoot on the Fox's gravel driveway to make our feet tough.

I remember when everything was pressed: shirts, pants, blouses, skirts, pillowcases, sheets, napkins, table cloths, handkerchiefs, dresses. (Some things were not better then!)

I remember earning 35 cents an hour babysitting, with 50 cents after midnight, and feeling lucky to be accumulating such wealth!

I remember when there was more get up in my go.

I remember when the war was over, production changed, and we got a second car, a washer, a dryer, and a new refrigerator.

I remember the weekly bath day in Paris my Junior summer when M. went first, Mme. second, I, as the guest, third and then Gilles, Sofie, Anita, Christian, Bertrand, Bernard, Francois, and finally two year old Stephane. All in the same water.

I remember when skirts were:

- Above the knee
- Knee length
- Below the knee

And up and down again

- Midi
- Maxi
- Mini
- A Line
- Straight
- Slit
- Dirndl
- Pressed
- Unpressed
- Full
- Flared
- Wrap
- Gored
- Elastic Waist
- Hobble
- Pleated

And all the while the fashion industry smiled.

I remember Cully Schwemer (AGAIN!) leading me (only *I* went first) down the path to our garage because he knew there were wasps there who got me three times while he backtracked, laughing, at a furious pace.

I remember when fall Sundays meant The Packers (some things never change!). Vince Lombardi, Bart Starr, Fuzzy Thurston, Jim Cramer, Marv Fleming, Boyd Dowler, Willie Wood, Herb Adderly, Paul Hornung, Jim Taylor, Ray Nitschke, Forrest Gregg, Bill Curry, Willie Davis, Max McGee, Henry Jordan. They could do no wrong.

I remember when u was spelled you.

I remember when the Fuller Brush man came to our house. And the knife sharpener. And the milk man. And the doctor.

I remember when a quart of mayonnaise was 32 ounces
a pound can was 16 ounces, as was a pound of butter
a ream of paper was 500 sheets
a half gallon of ice cream was 2 quarts.

I remember when the patent number on the United Airlines barf bag was 2496796 – which I am willing to bet a significant amount is more useless information than anything in *your* Trivia arsenal!

I remember when the garage door opener was YOU.

I remember when Jackie Robinson was signed by the Dodgers.

I remember when the flight from Chicago to San Francisco took eight hours (see 2496796 – what else was there to do on a long red eye).

I remember when suitcases had no wheels.

I remember "Memories Are Made of This", "Pennsylvania 6-5000", Ella, "The Happy Wanderer", "That Lucky Old Sun", "Tennessee Waltz", "Cry", "Down by the Riverside", "Sixteen Tons", "Slow Boat to China", "Now Is the Hour", "Goodnight Irene", "That's Amore", "You, You, You", "The Wayward Wind", "Sloop John B", "Music, Music, Music", "Autumn Leaves", "Sincerely", "Mr. Sandman", "Catch a Falling Star", "Four Leaf Clover", "Naughty Lady of Shady Lane", "Watching All the Girls Go By", "Love Me Tender", "All-E-O", "C'mon a My House", "There's a Stream in the Meadow", "How Much Is That Doggie in the Window?", "I've Got a Lovely Bunch of Coconuts", "Rock around the Clock", "The Little White Cloud that Cried".

I remember Del Crandall, Joe Adcock, Roy Dittmer, Johnny Logan, Eddie Mathews, Wes Covington, Henry Aaron, Billy Bruton, Warren Spahn, Lew Burdette, Bob Buhl. The National Anthem ended with "The Land of the Free and the Home of the Braves". And then My Team moved to Atlanta and I learned about betrayal.

I remember the 4th of July at the Beach Road where we could see the fireworks from about 15 different parks all along the lakeshore. I remember when Eddie Gillespie, everybody's favorite policeman (and not only because he let us sit on his motorcycle), was the only person to buy lemonade from a stand set up at the end of our driveway (it was beyond the Turn Back Here sign so it would not have been a McKinsey or Booz Allen recommended site for a retail outlet) in a two day misadventure into private enterprise.

I remember when if you left the lights on in the car the battery died.

I remember staying at a country cottage where the refrigeration system consisted of a delivery truck arriving every morning with a large chunk of ice which was deposited into the Ice Box and kept things not very cold for not very long.

I remember sailing into New York harbor past the Statue of Liberty after a summer abroad feeling indescribably proud and happy at being an American coming home.

I remember when my father turned down the position of Headmaster of Country Day, in part because *his* father *had* become the Head of St. Albans in Washington, and had forever regretted that he had not stayed in the classroom, which for both of them was their first love.

I remember when living together before marriage was way beyond respectability.

I remember when girls' basketball was played on half courts: offense on one side and defense on the other.

I remember when you took Kodak film to the drug store to be developed.

I remember Sunday afternoons with The Shadow and Nick Carter. And Sunday nights with Jack Benny and Amos 'n Andy. And Monday evenings with The Lone Ranger. And listening to Beulah at 10:00 with my ear pressed to the radio, turned way down because it was after lights out and certainly after Radio Time. And when were Baby Snooks, My Friend Irma and Our Miss Brooks? Fibber McGee and Molly?

I remember when the air conditioning in cars was an open window, and in all but a few houses, was non-existent.

I remember the time of Mutual Assured Destruction when Russia and the United States were enemies with nuclear weapons. While we didn't make a lot of changes in how we lived (no bomb shelters in the back yard) it was a relief to have the Cold War end. And what a disappointment it is to see those tensions on the rise again.

I remember when tennis racquets were all the same size with no open throat, were made of wood and had to be kept in a press to avoid warping. Good strings were cat gut and stretched if they got wet. Periodic restringing was required.

I remember when butter, Bordeaux and beef were all BAD for your health. Now with all of them ascendant, the world would be perfect if sugar would join them on the approved list!

I remember when garages were detached.

I remember when a body washed up on the shore at Susie Fox's house and a very pompous coroner pronounced her dead – which we could have said without the benefit of his expertise.

I remember when you did research at a library.

I remember when watches were wound.

I remember when you addressed a Christmas card to “Mr. and Mrs. John Martin” instead of “Sandra and John Martin”, and certainly not “Sandra Adams and John Martin”.

I remember when Sri Lanka was Ceylon.

Zambia was Northern Rhodesia.

Myanmar was Burma.

Pakistan and Bangladesh (East Pakistan) were India.

Tanzania was Zanzibar and Tanganyika.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia were Yugoslavia.

Armenia, Latvia, Lithuania, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Moldova, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan were the USSR, commonly referred to as Russia.

I remember when Eva told Larry that The Eating Man would get him, after which her many decades' tenure with Dad's family ended.

I remember dictionaries and encyclopedias.

I remember when people took trunks to college.

I remember when watermelons had seeds.

I remember Gary Cooper, Doris Day, Richard Burton, Cary Grant, Lauren Bacall, Jimmy Durante, Betty Hutton, Donald O'Connor, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse, Fred Astaire and Eleanor Parker, Fred Astaire and Rita Hayworth, Humphrey Bogart, Dean Martin, Jimmy Stewart, Katharine Hepburn, James Dean, Judy Garland, Gene Tierney, Charles Boyer, Ava Gardner, Joan Crawford, Lana Turner, Vivian Leigh, Henry Fonda, Barbara Stanwyck, Clark Gable, Grace Kelly, Betty Grable, Myrna Loy, Claudette Colbert, Irene Dunne, Sophia Loren, Brigitte Bardot, George Raft, Peter Lorre, Gregory Peck, Joan Powell, Dana Andrews, William Holden, Frank Sinatra, Joan Fontaine, William Powell, Jeanne Crain, Ingrid Bergman, Kim Novak, Natalie Wood, Lawrence Olivier, Shirley Jones, John Gielgud, Tony Curtis, John Wayne, Joe E. Brown, Ray Milland, Bette Davis, Orson Welles, Raymond Burr, Clifton Webb, Jack Lemmon, Mickey Rooney, Jane Russell, Robert Taylor, June Haver, Rosalind Russell, Bing Crosby, Abbott and Costello, Marlon Brando, Marilyn, Rock Hudson, Susan Hayworth, Valli, Elizabeth Taylor, Howard Keel, Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds, Bob Hope, Leslie Caron, (I do NOT remember Valentino, Douglas Fairbanks, Clara Bow, Mary Pickford, Garbo, Jean Harlow, Carole Lombard!)

I remember a report card from 8th grade which was great except for a C in penmanship. The good news is that the hieroglyphics cannot be attributed only to advancing years.

I remember when women wore nylon stockings for every day life, and girls wore them for dress up. In the fifties, with the advent of the circular knitting machine, we were spared the constant monitoring necessary to avoid the anathema of *crooked* seams! And before there were pantyhose, a girdle was required! (More NOT better then!)

I remember saving bacon fat and tin cans during the war. And planting a victory garden which yielded only a bumper crop of radishes and was thankfully abandoned the minute the war was over. And rationing: sugar, butter, meat, gasoline – all were in short supply.

I remember Bridge marathons in high school when four of us rented the Prange's house on Lake Michigan in Door County and played for a week from early morning till late at night.

I remember when there were no credit cards. You paid cash or wrote a check for everything except those items for which you received a monthly statement.

I remember when the local bank held your mortgage.

I remember when people RSVP'd.

I remember when all the 7th (?) 8th (?) grades in Milwaukee County got together for an incredible concert in the Milwaukee Auditorium. Several schools from each area practiced together and sang one song, and the finale was all those unexceptional voices creating a most exceptional sound.

I remember when cars did not have:

Seat Belts	Power Steering	Wireless Ignition
Window Washing Fluid	Power Brakes	RPM Indicators
Automatic Windows	Sun Roofs	Thermometers
Remote Door Locks	Wire Wheels	Seat Warmers
Automatic Transmission	Automatic Choke	Front Wheel Drive
Turn Signals	Garage Door Openers	ABS Brakes
Consoles	Emergency Flashers	Speaker Systems
Automatic Trunk Unlocks	Back-up Lights	FM Radio
4 Wheel or All Wheel Drive	Speaker Systems	Cassette Players
Wire Wheels	GPSs	DVD Players
Maintenance Warning Lights	Rear Window Defrosters	Compasses
Hot & Cold Cup Holders	Self Parking	Wi-Fi
Automatic Lane Tracking	Follow the Car Ahead	Reclining Seat Massagers
Air Conditioning	XM Radio	Rear View Camera
Traction Control	Battery Operated	Automatic Braking
Battery Operated	battery chargers	if you hit something
Tire Inflators		

I remember when cars DID have: Flat Tires

I remember when my college tuition was \$750/Year. Board and room the same.

I remember when the Cent sign was on a keyboard.

I remember when "Made in Japan" meant junk.

I remember the smell of coffee in the Fox's summer house where Mrs. Rein was always sewing.

I remember when “Sanforized” was a must in cotton clothes.

I remember going to the Cedarburg Theater on Friday nights to see Westerns. Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, Gene Autry, Hopalong Cassidy, Tom Mix. The good guys!

I remember when copies were made with carbon paper. And edits were made with an eraser that invariably smudged.

I remember when “Damn!” meant you were *really* angry.

I remember when every small town had:

- A Hardware Store
- A Bank
- A Five and Dime Store (usually Woolworth's)
- A Grocery Store
- A Record Store
- A Movie Theater
- A Diner
- A Drug Store (with soda fountain!)
- A Gas Station
- A Dentist
- A Cleaners
- A Library
- A Shoe Repair Shop
- A Beauty Shop
- A Barber
- A Post Office
- A Bus Stop
- A Florist
- A Jeweler
- A Police Station and Fire Department

I remember life before:

McDonalds	Office Depot	La Quinta	Copy Machines	Liposuction
Pizza Hut	Best Buy	Ramada Inns	Fondue Pots	Conditioner
Denny's	Banana Repub	Embassy Suites	Washing Machines	DNA
Taco Bell	Old Navy	Fairfield Inns	Automatic Toasters	Television
Kentucky Fried	Pier One	Econo Lodge	Flat Screen TVs	Dryers
Wendy's	Gap	Red Lion Inns	Digital Cameras	Mixers
Burger King	Michael's	Hampton Inns	Home Freezers	Blenders
Arby's	Toys R Us	Sleep Inns	10 Key Adders	TIVO
Red Lobster	Barnes & Noble	Holiday Inns	School Buses	Stereo
Starbucks	Target	Motel 6	Digital Cameras	
Long John Slvr	Amazon	Comfort Inns	Security Systems	
Custard Stands	Costco	Courtyd Marriott	Word Processors	
Frozen Dinners	Ikea	Days Inns	Barbecue Grills	
Subway	Sam's	Red Roof Inns	Coffee Grinders	
Dunkin Donuts	Walmart	Super 8	Microwaves	
DQ	K-Mart	Wyndham	Flat Screen TVs	
Trader Joes	Home Depot	Homewood Stes.	Auto Coffee Makers	
Olive Garden	Pottery Barn	Microtel	Crock Pots	
Hardees	Office Max		Computers	
Appleby's	Ann Taylor		Dishwashers	
			Microwaves	
			Keyboards	

I remember ditto machines in which you made a master which invariably got indelible purple ink on anything and everything. It was then attached to a crank machine which had a very strong chemical smell and you churned out however many copies you needed.

I remember when the most trouble you could get into on a week-end was too much beer.

I remember when a McDonald's hamburger was 19 cents (where is the cent sign when I need it?!)

I remember "One small step for man; one giant leap for mankind."

I remember when red and white Burma Shave signs in a sequence enlivened any car trip. My two favorites were:

In this World
Of Toil
And Sin
The Head
Grows Bald
But not
The Chin!

Breathes there
A Man
With Hide
So Tough
Who Thinks
Two Sexes
Aren't enough!

I remember when South Pacific, Call Me Madam, Kiss Me Kate and Oklahoma took Broadway by storm.

I remember babies before Car Seats and Booster Seats, Baby Bjorns, Wipes, Pampers, Monitors.

I remember when the world's population was just over two billion. (It reached 7 billion in October, 2011).

I remember when our telephone was a "Party Line" which meant there were several households on the same line. Mrs. Hoffman was one and she talked a long time which meant no one else could use the phone. And there was an operator. No dial phones, and certainly no touch tone phones or cell phones. The phone was a black table model which had about a six foot cord on it. No answering machine. No voice mail. When you talked on the phone you were tethered to the spot the phone was located.

I remember my favorite soap was "Our Gal Sunday". "Can a girl from the little mining town of Silver Creek, Colorado find happiness as the wife of a wealthy, titled Englishman, Lord Henry Brinthrope!" And the answer is??? I will never know.

I remember when the trip navigator used a map.

I remember Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca, Milton Berle, Dragnet, Huntley-Brinkley, Red Skelton, The Untouchables, What's My Line, Hitchcock Presents, Ironside, Jack Benny, Perry Mason, Burns & Allen, You Bet Your Life, Bob Hope Christmas shows.

I remember the TWX which was a communication sent or received on a clickety clacking machine that produced a copy on very brittle paper that faded quickly and was useless if needed after more than a couple of weeks.

I remember when my mother spent all day Monday – literally – doing the laundry and all day Tuesday doing the ironing and mangling – in the summer listening to Bert Wilson broadcast Cub games to relieve the boredom. (Definitely NOT better then!).

I remember when you didn't use a preposition with which to end a sentence.

I remember when a drive across country meant going through every hot, dusty, pedestrian infested, stop lighted, pot holed, annoying, delaying, speed limiting town. A 12 hour 500 mile day was big and 600 was huge. There were no timed lights and in bigger cities you felt lucky to get two green lights in a row – and teeth-gritting frustrated when it was red after red, and you still had 300 miles to go!

I remember when a long distance phone call meant trouble.

I remember when every gas station had a mechanic.

I remember when a penny post card was – you guessed it!

I remember sneaking into the creek bed to try cigarettes.

I remember tobogganing down the huge hill behind our house and having a sentry at the bottom to ward off the very occasional car as we shot across the road onto the driveway.

I remember when people went to a store to buy things.

I remember when the only recorded music was on 78 rpms. Then 45's, 33 1/3s, then tapes, CDs, and finally, i-PodsPadsPhones.

I remember newspapers, magazines and books.

I remember going to the Teweles' house where they had an actual soda fountain in the basement replete with many kinds of ice cream and more toppings than you could imagine. And I knew Envy!

I remember the summer I worked in Drs. Schmidt, Brewer and Miller's office (developers of the Milwaukee brace - for all you orthopods!) - and money started disappearing out of the Petty Cash shortly after I started. They talked to my parents about it, and I was horrified because I couldn't prove I hadn't done it. Luckily the culprit (Rose Petronik) had got used to the perk and continued after I left, or my reputation would have long been tainted by it.

I remember when kitchens did not have islands and houses had pantries.

I remember life before plastic. All storage containers were glass - as were Coke bottles. No plastic bags, plastic toys, plastic furniture, plastic rain gear, plastic sleds, bats, balls, glasses, plates, wrap, boats, flowers.

I remember Uncle Bill, with his terribly scarred face (from a childhood fire) and how once you talked to him for one minute, you were never put off by his appearance again.

I remember when my nasty neighbor had me treed in the apple tree behind their garage and the growing feeling of distress as I realized I had no idea how to deal with the situation. To this day I have no recollection of How, but *somehow* Larry made the problem go away. I can still feel the relief and gratitude that accompanied my escape.

I remember when Test Pattern was on TV for most of the day on the only three channels available.

I remember the Charleston (second coming NOT the twenties version!), Jitterbug, Fox Trot, Waltzes, Dancing School (AAARRGGHHH!!!) and Fred Astaire Dance Studio which Larry and I, much against our better judgment, attended because our parents thought we should know how to do a turn or two.

I remember my mother playing Russian Bank and Casino with me when I was sick.

I remember when my brother Larry and I were in high school, we both took Chemistry the same year, he as a Junior at his school and I as a Senior at mine. We usually were able to wrestle the homework on our own or with each other, but on occasion we would run into a problem that needed the aid of our father. The conundrum was that we knew if we asked him, it would take the *whole* night – with the *whole* course – to get the one or two word answer which was all we really wanted. We tried to devise questions that would short circuit the process. Without success. We tried waiting till bedtime to approach. Equal lack of success. In the end we were forced to flip coins to see which of us would sacrifice the evening for the common cause.

We never knew if he was 1) trying to make us figure it out on our own; 2) hoping to give himself a little peace and quiet the next time; or 3) just exhibiting the unparalleled and uncontrollable exuberance he felt whenever a test tube or thistle tube or Bunsen burner or beaker (or slide rule or clamp or switch or wire or steel ball or adhesive tape - especially adhesive tape...) crossed his path.

But I would bet the homestead on number three.

I remember the feeling of freedom as we played baseball, tobogganed, played tennis, slept over, water skied, took the bus and street car to Henry Aldrich movies at the Shorewood Theater, rode bikes, skipped stones, played kickball, ping pong, went swimming, dug for treasure, played with paper dolls, canoed, played in the sand, skated, made coke floats, traded cards, went fishing, watched Ed Sullivan, GE Theater, Victory at Sea, played pom-pom pullaway, Monopoly, went from one house to the next, sailed, rode horseback, did cartwheels, kayaked, climbed trees, picked grapes from the arbor, played marbles, Parcheesi, chess, badminton, croquet, checkers, authors, war, Chinese checkers, dirty eights, bridge, I Doubt It, Oh, Hell!, hide and seek. The Halcyon Days of Youth for sure. Nostalgia has been defined as the recollection of pleasures of times past without the pain. If so, I'm all for it!!!

I remember the day Bill was born.
And David.
And Kendall
And Bob.

And when Jenny and Quincy joined Bill and Bob.

And the day Tommy was born.
And Lily.
And Sean.
And Jackson.
And Cooper.
And Anna.
And Duncan
And Lulu.

And all of them were GLORIOUS!!!!!!!