

Chocolate Covered Cherries

Lana Rockwell

Mother and Daddy were living in Iowa and really struggling financially in 1947. Daddy was working for \$.50 a day doing very hard work and it just wasn't enough to feed, house, and clothe a family of six.

Aunt Thelma (Daddy's sister), Uncle Robert and their only son Joe had moved to Boone, Colorado and Uncle Robert had started an electrical business. Somehow they got wind of the fact that our family was in real trouble so out of their tremendously generous hearts they wrote to my folks and offered Daddy a job and even offered for us to live with them until the folks could get on their feet.

When Daddy was a teenager, his dad (my Grandpa Horsman) became ill with tuberculosis. In those days, everyone knew that dry climate was better for that particular disease so they moved from Iowa to Colorado because there was a tuberculosis center in Colorado Springs. That facility was on the grounds of what is now the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. Daddy had suffered with asthma all his life and once they moved to Colorado, his asthma seemed to clear up.

With that in mind, they decided to accept U. Robert and A. Thelma's offer. What they didn't know was that U. Robert and A. Thelma were living in a very small three room house. The rooms were no more than 8 x 10 each. There was running water in the kitchen but no sanitary facilities at all. During that time, indoor plumbing was for the rich and there was only a couple families in that category in Boone in 1947. Everyone had outhouses. Bathing time was once a week – Saturday night. We used the wash tubs that were used when doing laundry. Ours were round and I've often wondered how the adults managed – obviously had their legs and feet hanging over the side. Everyone wanted to be the first to bathe because they didn't change the water between baths. Order of bathing was how dirty you were – meaning little girls (especially the littlest one - me) usually went first. That was the only time you had an entire room all to yourself but because so many were waiting their turn and the fact the water did NOT stay warm, bath time only lasted long enough to get the job done.

Boone was a very small town. Water was scarce so no one even thought about having a lawn or flowers. If there were trees, they came up volunteer. The thought of planting trees that you would have to water was unheard of and didn't come until much later when a water supply was put into place.

We must have moved to Boone in the fall of 1947 and we lived with U. Robert and A. Thelma through our first Christmas. Daddy worked for U. Robert and somehow they managed to scrape enough money together to buy each one of us a box of chocolate covered cherries for Christmas. Oh my goodness! My own box of candy. I thought I had died and gone to heaven, even though that was the only gift we received. We rarely had candy and to have my own box – it was one layer about 8" long by 4" wide – seemed too good to be true. I think we opened them all at the same time and I remember just staring at mine. I think Leroy and Delores dove right into theirs, but Gladys and I didn't. I'm not sure how long Gladys kept hers, but I didn't open mine for what seems like the longest time. I'm not sure whether it was days or weeks but when I finally opened my treasure and took a bite, I was a goner. I ate the entire box in one sitting! Well, my little system (remember, I was only 4) was not used to anything like that – it was used to very basic

food and not lots at any one time and so sure enough it rebelled. I was not blessed with savoring the last bite and looking back on my box of chocolate covered cherries with fond memories. From that day to this the thought of chocolate covered cherries turns me “green”.

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Lana Rockwell is the mother of three children and eight grandchildren and has been married to her husband, Dan for 43 years. Lana and Dan are privileged to both work at Woodmen Valley Chapel where Lana is the coordinator for the Pastoral Care Department and Dan is the Director of Facilities. One of the joys of her job is working with the 55PLUS group where she has been given the opportunity to help motivate grandparents and great grandparents write their memories.