

# Sunday Drives Were Good Medicine

By Richard Edgington, Columbus Grove, Ohio

WHILE there were few psychiatrists, psychologists or drugs for anxiety or depression in the late 1930s and early '40s, there was the Sunday afternoon drive to raise your spirits.

We lived in Lima, Ohio, and it was a treat to go for a drive out in the country.

We'd help Mom with the Sunday dishes because she wouldn't think of leaving the house with dishes in the sink. Dad would check the oil and kick the tires of our old Model A Ford; then, we'd be ready to go.

Mom and Dad sat in the front seat, and usually Mom had a baby in her arms that she was caring for.

Whoever else wanted to go piled with me into the rumble seat with a couple of spare tires.

We left the paved roads at the city limits and soon were whizzing along at a jaunty 45 mph down a deep, rutted road with Mom admonishing Dad to slow down before he had an accident.

Mom enjoyed looking at the houses with their pretty flowers while Dad growled at all the other Sunday drivers, who never drove as well as he did.

Dad would holler to me and point out the window at a hawk sitting atop a telephone pole or a buzzard circling an animal that had met its demise—things I'd never seen in the city.

It was nice to smell the clean air or the new-mown hay. I'd take lots of deep breaths, hoping they'd last until next week.

As we bounced along, I wished I could live in the country. Everything seemed to be slowed down from the hustle and bustle of the city. Cows contentedly munched grass; sheep and their lambs were in the shade of huge trees; and hogs did whatever hogs do.

Sometimes, we'd stop for an ice cream cone or a cold root beer, which was a real treat.

We'd make a big circle, maybe 30 or 40 miles, and use up a dollar's worth of gas before heading home. Mom and Dad seemed rested. Dad had quit growling at other drivers, and Mom was singing softly to the baby.

When we got home, Dad would sit down in his easy chair to finish reading the Sunday paper, which soon covered his face while he took a nap. Mom would be in her rocker with a sewing basket in her lap; sometimes she would nod off a little. Even we kids quit squabbling for a while.

It seemed as if everyone was preparing for the week ahead. We were in the Great Depression, and times were hard.

We were the only ones in the neighborhood to have a radio. In the summer, Dad would put it on the front porch and soon the yard was full of people forgetting their troubles for a while.

Dad was a good barber, and some of the men waited in line for him to cut their hair, usually for nothing. Then they would leave; I guess that was their Sunday drive.

The Sunday afternoon drive was like a pit stop in the race of life. It was special medicine then, and we all took a big dose, hoping it would last until next Sunday.