

# Short Memories

## Road Roost

MY PARENTS, Frank and Veronica Swanson, ran an 80-acre farm in Kewanee, Illinois. Among the many animals was my mother's special pet, a Rhode Island Red hen that would lay her eggs on the back porch of our house.

One day, in 1943, my mother told me we were going to take the car to Uncle Carl's grocery store, a rare trip because of the gas rationing during the war. Being a very cautious driver, my mother slowly drove the 3 miles into town.

As Uncle Carl brought the groceries out to our car in the alley, he said, "Veronica, did you know there's a large red hen sitting on the back bumper of your car?"

My mother laughed when she saw the hen sitting very comfortably waiting for us. Uncle Carl said he'd get a box for the hen and carefully put the hen in the car. "I'm sure she'll enjoy her ride home even more inside the car," said my mother.

The next day, when my father took the milk to the dairy, he told everyone there about the red hen's adventure as our extra passenger, helped by my mother's very slow driving.

—Marjorie Craig, Champaign, Illinois

## Bringing Home Dinner

WHEN MY DAD was a brakeman/conductor for the Rock Island Lines railway, he had to wear a uniform. I was so proud to walk down the street with this handsome man who wore a suit, not noticing how old and faded the uniform was.

My uncle Pete Geil was an engineer for the Rock Island Lines, and he and Dad made quite a pair. During every hunting season, Uncle

Pete would spot a pheasant and slow the train down. That was my dad's signal to head for the caboose, where he kept his shotgun. Dad would shoot out the back window, and if he got the pheasant, he would jump off the train to get his bird.

—Faye Dawald, Missoula, Montana

### **Fish Reeled Them In**

IN THE EARLY 1960s, when we lived in Westminster, South Carolina, I caught a 5-pound bass while fishing with my dad. Being very proud of the catch, I drove around showing it to friends.

In downtown Westminster, I spotted my cousin in a car, pulling up beside a curb. I pulled up behind him and honked my horn. A man stepped out from the passenger side, and I realized he was a highway patrolman.

The patrolman came back to my car and said, "What's the trouble here?" It soon dawned on me that my cousin was taking his driver's-license test.

Red-faced, I said to the patrolman, "I didn't know you were in there and I wanted to show this fish I caught to my cousin." When the patrolman saw the fish, he called to my cousin, "Come back and look at this fish!"

I apologized for interrupting the driving test, and they said, "No problem." I never did find out if my cousin passed the test.

—David Adams, Lithonia, Georgia

### **Fateful Find**

IN 1945, I was going to graduate from high school in Protection, Kansas, and money was scarce.

My mother, my sister and her two little girls and I were going to a neighboring town to try and find some material to make my graduation dress. My mother was a wonderful seamstress and

made most of our clothes.

On the way, one of my little nieces got a call from nature, so we stopped the car and went under a bridge to do the task. There we found a box. We opened it to find some beautiful white satin material!

The box also held some letters, which, to our later regret we left. We reflect back as to why the box was left there and wonder if that material was for a wedding dress and if the letters were love letters. Perhaps someone had broken off a relationship or a boyfriend was killed in the war and the girl was getting rid of memories.

Out of the material, my mother made me the most beautiful graduation dress. We felt we were led under the bridge that day by the good Lord to find that material for my dress.

—Violet Hughes Hendricks, Enid, Oklahoma