

Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment,

Some of us are still hanging around, left overs from the Eureka elementary school days of the Great Depression. To those of you who fall into the category, some of us have tried to preserve memories of that time. I am happy to be able to recall some of the events as though they just happened yesterday. Others have become pretty hazy. Yes, I am going to reminisce so if you are turned off by stories of the old days, it might be better for you to change frequencies for three minutes. Let's start with school lunches. Today, either the student is supplied with lunch money to buy a well-balanced meal at the school cafeteria or lunch is prepared at home and accompanies the student in a well-designed container. The contents are chosen according to budget, taste and nutrition (not necessarily in that order). Way back in the nineteen thirties, mother prepared lunch from whatever was in the house, many times leftovers. There was no cafeteria located at the Washington School (now the Senior Center on California Street). There was a program at school where the student could buy a small bottle of milk with 'milk money' from home. A paper bag held your lunch with lunch buckets for those who could afford it. Wax paper was most welcome to wrap the contents to protect them on rainy days. An average lunch consisted of one or two sandwiches, a piece of fresh fruit and something sweet. Contents were kept simple for a number of reasons. One was the trip to buy groceries. Those families with little or no access to transportation shopped together as a unit so everyone went along to help carry home the groceries. You did not jump in the car and go pick up one or two grocery items as is done now. Another was the lack of refrigeration both at home and in the store. With limited trips to a grocery store, the neighborhood store really saved the day. Prices were a bit higher than a large market but you usually had an idea of how long an item would be kept on the shelf. With a pretty boring lunch menu, many of the kids would trade part of their lunch for someone else's. I remember one of my friends doing a lot of trading during bear season. His dad was a hunter and had a large supply of bear meat during the season with Earl bringing bear meat sandwiches most every day. I remember my mother preparing sandwiches made of beef tongue. I was never able to trade a tongue sandwich because no one else wanted it either. When World War Two broke out our government would hand out fresh fruit to the students to supplement our diets. Every once in a while, when attending a gym class in Junior High, we would be lined up and each given a fresh apple, orange or grapefruit

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