

# SYLVAN B BUHLER

## HOW I REMEMBER HIGHLAND AS I GREW UP THERE

I was born at home rather than in a hospital as most babies were back in 1936, with the doctor coming to our rural home in Highland. I was also born to a large family being the 10<sup>th</sup> of 11 children in the Alma & Hazel Buhler family. We lived on a farm in a small wood frame home of approximately 800 square feet. You will notice that through the years houses keep getting larger while families keep getting smaller. This was on the main corner of Highland across from the only church that then existed in Highland at what is now 6000 West and 10400 North.

I was a young boy growing up in Highland between the years of 1941 and 1945 during the second world war. I was totally incomprehensive at my age of the severity of the war, and of heroes being made in defending the freedom and wonderful way of life I was enjoying. Because television was not yet invented, I only saw pictures of happenings in the war when our family attended a movie at the movie theatre when news clips were presented on "MOVIETONE NEWS." Later in my married life, I met one of these war heroes at a social event in Highland----his name was Walter Stewart who was a B-24 bomber pilot during the war, risking his very life to preserve my way of life while I was a small boy growing up in Highland.

I grew up unaware of how blessed I was to live in such a wonderful and beautiful place in this world among such good people. Highland was a beautiful small farming community filled with fields of grain and alfalfa, abounding with orchards, gleaming in the sun with seasonal crops of corn, peas, tomatoes, melons, berries, & cucumbers.

Our dad always gave us kids a place to grow cucumbers to earn some money for ourselves, which had to be picked every three days through the whole summer. We sold them to customers coming around or to the Aro pickling company at their pick-up station. We made good money, more than enough to buy all of our school clothes. I remember we kids really found it humorous when city folk would come to our farm to buy fresh produce or fruit, and would insist on locking their cars that sat at the top of the field. We never even locked our house when we left home.

I was put in as the ward clerk when I returned from my mission in 1960, replacing Clarence Greenland who had been the clerk all of my growing up years until I moved out of the ward in 1963. There were 65 families in all of Highland when I moved. I can still tell you all of their names & where they lived. The ward clerk was no different than everyone else who knew every person because we all worked together and played together, like softball in some ones pasture every Thursday night through the summers. I remember our bishop, LeGrand Adamson, who could run faster than any person I ever knew with his short legs seemingly able to catch any fly ball one would think impossible to catch.

My dad did almost all of the grain cutting with a binder, first pulled by horses and then by a John Deere tractor driven by me (which tractor was also in this year's Highland parade). The binder would cut the grain, putting it into bundles in preparation for the big thrashing machine. I remember cutting the grain several years on the corner of 10400 North and the Alpine Road where the Highland Heritage park now is. There was not a tree on that field back then. We kids would be so excited to see the big thrasher pulled by a big tractor come around where all the farmers of the community would trade help, working together farm by farm to haul the bundles of grain by tractor and wagon into the thrashing machine. I remember us kids having a lot of fun holding our fingers upright underneath the big belt to see the static electricity jump at least five or six inches from our finger tips to the rotating belt. I hated to stack the straw though that was blown out of the thrasher via a long pipe. I remember my mother would make a big dinner for all of the thrashers on thrashing day.

We had a great Collie dog called Ring that went everywhere with us when we got on our bikes, whether it was up to Uncle John's service station to buy a Nehi root beer or a candy bar for a nickel, or downtown, or to a friend's place to play. We quite occasionally threw Ring in the canal for a bath, and then would take off on our bikes before he could swim to shore & come and shrug off on us. For most of the years growing up all of the roads were dirt, and I remember when they paved them and how much easier it was to peddle our bikes--we kids thought we had gone to heaven to have all the roads paved for us to peddle on!!!!!!

We kids were very innovative, making many of our own toys, like darts made out of a cut up worn out broom handle with a cut off nail in one

end of the four-inch piece of broom stick and chicken feathers in the other. Outside toilets were favorite targets. There was no city water or sewer systems in Highland when I grew up there, everyone having their own well. Flippers were popular made from a tree limb crotch with rubbers cut from an old tire inner tube. Mumble peg with a pocket knife, yard foot ball, outside basketball, or ice skating in the new rink by the church inspired by Marie Greenland were a lot of fun.

We not only had a lot of fun growing up, but kids back then on the farm also learned how to work. We not only had our own chores and work on our own farms, but also worked for other farmers planting & picking tomatoes, picking up potatoes, picking cherries & other fruits, cleaning chicken coops, baling hay, and working on the pea viner. At one time there were five large permanent pea viner stations in Highland.

The Highland church building was central to our community. Most everyone came to church, and **EVERYONE** whether they ever attended church or not, came to the annual **GOLD & GREEN BALL** with the whole hall beautifully decorated with stringers of colored crepe paper. All of the kids learned special dances for the very special floor show & the girls of high school graduation age were honored as queens. For many years Venoy and Eva Turner were ward dance directors who taught the youth these dances.

This ward was like a big family where everyone knew each other, where everyone seemed to attend a funeral, and where the ward sent probably ninety five percent of it's young men on missions throughout the world. Young people going on missions felt supported by all the members of the ward both in attitude and testimony and with a contribution to the departing missionary at the sacrament meeting mission farewell. I got about \$200.00 when I left on my mission, which was quite a lot of money back then and very much appreciated.

I will close my remarks by again expressing my gratitude to God for the wonderful opportunity and privilege I had to grow up in Highland.