

Carl Taylor – some memories of the teen years:

In the early-fifties we bought a house on 150 West at the south end of Cedar City, Utah. That street was known as “X-Street” (because it was the only street in town that was not a whole number) and our gang of boys was called the X Street Boys. Several of the gang were older than I. That was a period of hunting, first dates and riding up and down Main Street – trying to be really cool.

We boys were awkward and shy with girls at the mandatory school dances. So my mother secretly arranged for our gang to get tutored by a college girl. Came the next dance, we were sensational as we nonchalantly invited girls to dance and then really rocked and rolled. Left the other guys in the dust!

Some memorable experiences during my Cedar City time:

- I spent a great deal of time combing the hills west and south of Cedar City for arrowheads. Most of the small projectile points in my collection were gathered at that time. Most are Fremont Culture points. The Fremont are a bit of an archeological mystery; a puebloan people that seemingly disappeared from the Four Corners. No evidence that Hopi or Zuni people descended from them.
- We X Street Boys did several stupid things: poaching ducks and geese and in the process shooting a farmer’s cow; finding a box of old dynamite in an abandoned mine and driving across the desert at high speed throwing out sticks of dynamite – which exploded on impact (and never realizing that a bump in the truck could have blown us to bits), etc.
- I can’t recall why we decided to go poaching ducks. It was not duck hunting season, and we did not have licenses anyway. We killed a number on a desert pond (primarily me with my scoped rifle) and then we went exploring. As we approached a small community, a group of quail ran across the road. My friend Gardner Dalley jumped out with his shotgun and blasted away. A cow in the adjacent corral went down – and we took off. The rancher was in hot pursuit as we raced through the hills. When we thought we had lost him, we were at a reservoir with lots of Canada geese. So I shot one – and the rancher came roaring around the curve. Anyway, we had to make things right by paying the rancher for his cow! Not something of which I am proud, but the point of a memoir is to tell the true, not glossy, story.
- Working at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon for the Union Pacific RR. The minimum age for this work was 18 and I was only 15 (but had reached my adult height) – so I lied about my age in order to get a job as a kitchen helper. Being away from home and being responsible for work was a seminal experience for me. I had many adventures, and ended up as Linen Boy, a coveted outdoor position without direct supervision.

Some anecdotes from my Grand Canyon experience:

First, I would never have guessed that decades later I would become an elected official whose district included the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, where I had worked as a lad.

I was assigned a roommate whose last name was Ott. Of course, we nicknamed him “Zero”. He could not stop using the middle of our dorm room floor as his bathroom in the middle of the night and was soon collected by his family and taken home.

I managed to instigate a riot in the Boys' dorm, which is humorous, but not a source of pride. I had fashioned a bow with arrows using metal clothes hangers and started shooting out the hallway light bulbs. Others got into the mischief and first thing there were people tearing up roof shingles, throwing furniture and generally misbehaving. Next morning the Lodge Manager (the Big Boss) ordered us all locked down and began personal interviews of the miscreants. When he came into my room he said, "Carl, I know you wouldn't be part of what happened, but I need to know who was." I told him I didn't know, and he shrugged and left.

Some of the male employees had cars and wanted to take their dates to the movies in Kanab, Utah, which was an hour and a half away. They needed someone to cover their work shifts, so I would do that for a dollar an hour (this was good money, considering that we were normally paid \$.38 per hour for our labors). Sometimes this meant working two straight shifts, but I had no real social life to compromise anyway.

I also augmented my income that summer by collecting the chicken wishbones that were left in the big steam cooking kettles after making soup. When these were cleaned and dry, I would sell them for \$2 apiece to young suitors who would gaze into the eyes of their girlfriends while making wishes.

When promoted from the kitchen to the outside job of Linen Boy, I was responsible for collecting all of the dirty linens from the tourist cabins and dorms and leaving fresh ones from the laundry for use by the maids. I invariably forgot to yell "man in the dorm" when I was delivering linens to the girls' dorm. Scandalous!

On one of my days off, I explored a side canyon nearby and found an ancient Indian granary on a ledge part way down the cliff. I continued to the bottom and found that the attractive greenery was, in fact stinging nettle. I was pretty miserable for the next several days.

I also hiked down to Roaring Springs in my steel-toed miners' boots. Rubbed the skin off the tops of my toes and spent a week in slippers. Did see a couple of interesting snakes, though.

- I had a crush on Penny West, who worked as a maid at the North Rim Motel – a long walk through the woods. I'm not sure that she ever knew that or that I was fabricating reasons to come and see her.
- I had the amazing experience of seeing clouds and a lightning storm down in the Canyon, below my perch on Bright Angel Point. I tried unsuccessfully to photograph the natural drama.

We left Cedar City for Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1956 – a totally different adventure!

Carl Taylor