

News from Nan

NEWS 'N' VIEWS

WE WANTED TO GROW UP TO BE COWBOYS

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I was inspired to write this post by the “costume” time of the year (Halloween is my favorite holiday) and the recently released Ken Burns series about country music, which featured Country/Western music in one of the early episodes.

We were cowboy crazy in our early years. We didn’t just dress the part for Halloween, but for awhile all day, every day. To augment the practical, Western-style clothes, like jeans and skirts, we also “needed” leather vests, chaps, and boots. Dick remembers that his mother once got a call from his teacher asking her not to allow him to wear his cowboy boots to school because the constant clomping was disrupting classroom activities. (I wore them to school, also, in the 5th or 6th grade.)



Dick, Karen, and my two older nephews, Dick and Bob

More fun than the clothes were the guns. My mother was horrified at first when I begged for two cap guns in a double holster, and at first she simply refused to discuss the matter, but eventually I wore her down and she relented.

At first we all had a great time pretending to mow each other down, shouting “I got you!” while our intended victim yelled, “You missed me!”

But eventually the pretend murder and mayhem got boring, and we looked for louder and more dangerous activities. We removed the rolls from our cap guns and piled up stacks of individual gunpowder-filled caps on the sidewalk. Then we whacked them with a rock or hammer, which resulted in a loud report and a satisfying acrid whiff of smoke.

What little hellions we were!

Dick’s special Western hero was Roy Rogers, and he remembers fondly his play set that featured Nelly-belle, Roy’s jeep. My favorite cowboy was Hopalong Cassidy, and I was the proud owner of a Hoppy chenille bedspread.

For me the cowboy love affair lasted until we moved to California, when I was 11. On January 1, 1952, I was thrilled to see Hoppy in person at the Rose Parade in Pasadena.



My hero, Hopalong Cassidy, in the 1952 Rose Parade

Both of us also loved Gene Autry and remember how popular his recording of “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” was in 1949, just a couple of years before we both moved to California.

- ◀ 2019
- ◀ CAP GUN
- ◀ COWBOY
- ◀ COWBOY BOOT
- ◀ GENE AUTRY
- ◀ HOPALONG CASSIDY
- ◀ ROY ROGERS
- ◀ WESTERN MUSIC
- ◀ WILLIAM BOYD