

CEDAR CITY UTAH

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TODAY "THEY PAVED PARADISE AND PUT UP A PARKING LOT"

Another icon of my youth has been destroyed. An example of the growth, progress and modernization of Cedar City and the reinforcement of my own aging mortality.

As my wife, Ruth and I were leaving Kent Corry's office after putting the finishing touches on our living trust which included conversations regarding burial plots, (another testament to my mortality), I saw them take the first bite from the roof and eaves of Grandpa George and Grandma Olivia Nelsons' little white house with blue trim—the last one standing on the corner of 700 West and 200 North. It so affected me that I had to pull into the Taco bell parking lot, (which in my youth would have been Haken Andersons front lawn), and observe the proceedings. As I watched the giant front loader and the smaller track hoe attack the tiny house, feelings of extreme sadness along with memories of happy, exciting experiences engulfed me. There has to be change, I know, but it does not seem fair to leave only memories with no tangible support.

Grandpa Nelsons' small home, with a large lot, was a place where I felt comfortable and befriended as a young boy developing my baseball skills. For some reason Grandpa Nelson and his large heart took the time to provide me with one on one pitching instruction in his side yard under the big tree. He taught me such things as the basic foot position on the rubber; how to push off; how moving on the rubber could change the location of my pitch in the strike zone; how to wind up; how to position my arm; the follow through; how to charge the bunt; how to pitch to the batter attempting to bunt; (high and tight), how to move from the mound to cover first base and numerous other techniques. He also taught me the secret to the greatest mystery confronting a young pitcher--how to throw a curve ball. Not only that, he took me beyond the realm of the supernatural, and taught me how a right handed pitcher could break a ball into a right handed batter. He showed me how to strengthen my arm and improve my control by throwing at a small target painted on the wall of a shed. A practice that I am sure was appreciated by my parents as I painted an exquisitely executed white bull's eye on the front of our small shed and turned our driveway into a pitchers

mound. Whole nine inning games were thumped out day in and day out as boards were replaced and re-nailed and a young pitchers arm was strengthened and his control was improved.

Many meals were delayed as "quick trips" to the Westside Grocery were greatly lengthened by visits and baseball talk with Grandpa Nelson on the way. I knew it was time to return with the purchase when I saw my mother standing on the sidewalk looking up the street trying to figure out why a walk of one and a half blocks to the store would take 45 minutes or more. The time passed all too quickly with a friend like Grandpa Nelson. Of course there were also a thousand other things to divert a young boy's attention on that block and a half trip to Westside Grocery. My friend's houses were also on the way, (Leo Larson and Victor Hasfurther's), the irrigation ditch, and the old underground gasoline storage tanks outside the store that you could open and put your nose near enough to the opening to inhale those wonderful gasoline smells. We dropped rocks into the tank and listened for the splash or ring to see if they full or empty. I can only imagine what they must have thought when they removed those tanks and found a goodly layer of rocks in the bottom dropped by us kids...

My wife and I sat parked on Haken Andersons' front lawn/Taco Bells parking lot and watched Grandpa Nelson's tiny house resist the efforts of the mechanical monsters. The jaws of the track hoe chewed chunks out of the eaves and roof and crushed holes through the walls. The house still stood. The giant front loader attacked the southeast corner pushing the entire house completely off the foundation as the mechanical jaws continued to tear large bites from the side and roof. The house still stood. The operators of these destructive monsters finally quit for the day giving no thought and having no idea of the history of, or the life shaping events that took place on that piece of property. The house still stood, broken and off its foundation but as enduring as the principles taught and the friendship given by Grandpa Nelson to a young boy.

CAL HAIR