I REMEMBER
THE EARLY YEARS
THE EARLY YEARS

I remember the place where I was born and spent my boyhood. It was a little out-of-the-way place called Saltair, Utah. Geographically, it was located on the southeast shore of Great Salt Lake, about ten miles from Salt Lake City. In spite of the proximity to Salt Lake, the village was isolated because there was very little traffic that passed through on what was called the "Saltair Highway," a gravel road that extended from Salt Lake City through Saltair to Garfield. In my early boyhood, very few people in the village had automobiles. There was a dependable form of transportation that most people used, however: the SLG&W railroad (Salt Lake Garfield and Western).

Saltair was an industrial village devoted to the manufacture of salt. At first the lone employer was called the "Inland Crystal Salt Company," but later the name was changed to the "Royal Crystal Salt Company." At the center of the development stood the salt mill, where raw salt was brought in from the ponds and processed into the finished product. It was first dried in revolving kilns. Then it was milled into various grades according to use, then bagged or packaged.

The company's claim was that the salt was 99.98% pure.

The people that lived here were all employees of the company. The houses were all owned by the Salt Company and were rented to the workers. They were somewhat more than wood frame houses, even though they were very plain. Each house had plastered walls and was provided with electric lights. There were no bathrooms. Each house was provided with an outdoor privy. In all, there were about 25 houses located in a semi-circle around the salt plant on the west and north sides.

There was a community building that was used for school, church and entertainment. When I started school in the first grade, all the classes were held in a single room. The grades extended from the first through the sixth grade. There were perhaps thirty or so students. On Saturdays, the building was often used for parties or dances, and on Sundays the church services were held there. Practically all the people in the village were Mormons, but they were not all active.
Hacken Home

View of our home - looking east.
ca. 1927.
Saltair P.O. Utah

Drawn from memory

[Signature]
Saltair, Utah

I was born in this house 14 Oct. 1912 and lived here until 1929 or 1930, when the new salt factory was built. House was moved to a new site about 5-6 miles east.
In this area there was no fresh water available, and all the wells drilled here brought up brackish water. Accordingly, concrete cisterns were constructed and water was hauled out from Salt Lake City in a tank car on the railroad. We had no plumbing of any kind. Water was hauled from the cistern for all our needs.

**Detachable Handle**

**Wash Tub**

**Copper Boiler**

**Iron**

**Designed to fit over two stove lids**
Our first washing machine

Washboard
I REMEMBER MY SCHOOLING
My schooling began in 1918 in the first grade of a one-room school at the Saltair salt works. There was no Kindergarten or other preschool offerings at our place in those days. Six grades, composed of about twenty to thirty students, were taught by one woman teacher, each class reciting its lessons while the others made an attempt to study.

This may seem an outmoded and inefficient way to teach, but I look back in amazement at the results of this seemingly primitive and archaic way of learning. Perhaps the small number of students made for a better learning experience. In some classes it was almost one on one. All the kids in our school learned to read and write (some better than others to be sure, but none of them came away from the sixth grade as illiterates). For a few, the sixth grade was their terminal education. Most of the others continued through the ninth grade after the Saltair School was closed, and the students were taken by bus to Garfield, about six miles away.

The school and salt works disappeared many years ago. Their demise came as a result of a fire that destroyed the factory, which in turn caused most of the residents of our village to move away. Some years later, the factory was rebuilt at a new site about four or five miles east of the old location.

I attended the Garfield School through the seventh, eighth and ninth grades. It was here that I was impressed with what I thought a school ought to be: a two-story brick building, separate rooms for each class, a teacher for each class, and -- of all things -- men teachers. There was also a "boss" teacher who was called a "Principal." He didn't teach at all. He had a separate office and seemed to do a lot of paperwork. Often called upon to discipline some students who got out of line, he was a kind man nevertheless, and I soon
learned to respect him. The Garfield School, along with the rest of the town, was torn down years ago. Nothing is left.

My high school years were spent at West High School in Salt Lake City. I traveled each school day on the electric cars of the SLG&W Railroad which took me within three blocks of the school.

The transition from Garfield to West High impressed me as much or more than the change from Saltair to Garfield. Here was a school that occupied a whole city block. The main building, a three-story brick structure, faced Second West Street and extended for much of the distance between Second and Third North Streets.

There was also a separate gymnasium, a mechanical arts building, and an older academic building in the southwest corner of the block. Taking up the center of the school grounds was the athletic field, consisting of an oval track surrounding a football field. On the west side of the field were the bleachers for the sports fans.

I didn’t socialize much with the West High crowd: every afternoon, right after school, I had a train to catch home to Saltair.
After high school I worked for a time at the salt works and then filled a church mission to Germany. In 1936 I entered the University of Utah at Salt Lake City, aspiring to a Bachelor’s Degree in Civil Engineering.

The university was another new experience. It differed from high school in many respects. There was no prodding or cajoling. You were on your own, and to be successful you had to rely on your own discipline and determination. Whether you succeeded or failed depended on how you performed in class. Another new aspect of campus life was that you were addressed by your professor or instructor as "Mister" or "Miss," as the case might be. This was a good stimulus to the ego and boosted self-esteem. Everything here was on a more mature level. I liked that.

I enjoyed my college days. I commuted to school, as did a lot of my school friends. The "U" in those days was quite well known as a commuter school, drawing students mainly from the Salt Lake Valley. With an enrollment of about 4,500 students, it was the largest institution of higher learning in the state. Today, I am told, it has an enrollment of about 25,000 and is still a commuter school for the most part.

Having completed my studies in 1941, I received my Bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering and entered Federal Government service: first with the Constructing Quartermaster at Ogden prior to the outbreak of World War II, and then with the U.S. Corps of Engineers in Sacramento, California.
UNIVERSITY OF UTAH,
SALT LAKE CITY
When I was a child, my mother often visited with a woman friend in Salt Lake City whom she had known in Germany many years before either of them had come to America. Since coming here, both of them had married and were now raising families. My mother had two boys, my brother and me. Mrs. Brinkman had five children -- four girls and one boy.

The Brinkmans lived in an area on the western edge of Salt Lake City. Their house faced west on Redwood Road just north of the Surplus Canal bridge. In addition to the house, there were a barn and some out-buildings on the property. There was also some acreage on which the family raised garden produce. They had no automobile, but kept a horse and a nice surrey carriage for their transportation.

I got along very well with their son Reinhart, although he was about three years older than I. My brother, on the other hand, could not get along with him at all. The girls in the family were named Rebecca, LaRayne, Rachel, and another daughter whose name I can't recall.

On one occasion I was invited to stay with this family without my mother. It was my first time away from home. It was also the first time I got homesick. I suppose that I was about eight years old at the time of this episode, but I remember it as plainly as if it were last week.
One day Reinhart hitched the horse to the Surrey and took me, along with LaRayne, who was about my age, to a locality known as Poplar Grove, a semi-rural place about a mile and a half away. The road from the Brinkman house (Redwood Road) led northward on flat ground, then rose over the grade of the Union Pacific Railroad and again descended to the level of the surrounding ground. About a block north of the tracks, Reinhart turned right onto Indiana Avenue and drove to a store where he bought some household goods for his parents. LaRayne and I stayed in the back seat of the carriage. The horse’s reins were tied to a hitching post, but reading the body language of the animal, we realized that he was anxious to get a drink from the watering trough nearby.

When Reinhart emerged from the store, he returned to the carriage and placed the things he had purchased under the front seat. He then untied the reins from the hitching post, ignoring the obvious wish of the horse to get to the water. The horse seemed very insistent and Reinhart was just as stubborn in denying his wish. It was a contest between man and beast. Just as Reinhart moved to mount the seat, the horse suddenly bolted, taking the carriage and two helpless children on a wild erratic course and leaving Reinhart standing in bewilderment in the road. The last I saw of him from the jolting, swaying carriage was a panic-stricken figure running after us as fast as he could go.

By then the horse was running full gallop, fortunately back in the direction of home. The sharp turn from Indiana Avenue into Redwood Road nearly upset the carriage, throwing up a cloud of dust that enveloped us so that we could hardly see. The scene was one of wild confusion. The loose reins had fallen between the wheels and were trailing uselessly along the ground. LaRayne and I were sitting on the back seat, crying in terror and holding on to the roof supports until our hands ached. We were helpless and very badly frightened.
The sight of the horse in front of us galloping away -- with his mane flying wildly in the wind -- was a nightmare to us. As the carriage jolted crazily over the railroad tracks, I thought the wheels would be smashed to pieces. But they survived and the horse raced on, ears back and the bit in his teeth. The carriage was lurching from side to side, and we expected momentarily to be thrown into the rough gravel along the road's edge. But the Lord was with us, for as we approached the house, LaRayne's sister Rebecca caught sight of the runaway and ran to the road to intercept us. She stood in the middle of the road, waving her arms to direct the horse into the yard. She held her ground, and the horse slowed to a trot. He was probably getting tired anyway. Turning into the yard, he didn't stop until he reached the flowing well near the house.

At last he took his long-delayed drink. We jumped from the carriage, glad to be on the ground again. We were no worse for the experience except for the harrowing mental torture we had just passed through.

Not long afterward, a badly-shaken and exhausted Reinhart stumbled into the yard and nearly collapsed. His concern for us was evident in the relief he showed at our being safe and unhurt.
THE PEDDLER

During my growing-up years the peddler was a visible part of the American scene. He was the itinerant green-grocer of his day. I have a vivid memory of the fruit and vegetable peddler with his horse-drawn wagon who came to the salt works about twice a month. From the time he arrived at one end of the village until he left at the other end, we kids would follow him and watch and listen as he made sales to the various mothers who bought his wares.

He had a great variety of vegetables: potatoes, carrots, onions, celery, lettuce, and a host of others, including peanuts which he kept in a hard-to-get-at place in the wagon to prevent temptation. In season he would have apples, pears, peaches and plums. I loved the smell of them all, especially the apples.

The smell of the vegetable and fruit-laden wagon was hard to describe. The overall effect was a delicious mixture that I still recognize now and then when I go through that section of the super-market. All I have to do is close my eyes, and I am there once more: watching the peddler make his rounds through the salt works.

The peddler was a small swarthy man who spoke with a Greek accent. However, he seemed to have little difficulty in communicating with his customers. Foreign accents to us were no novelty, because many of the villagers were immigrants themselves. My mother, for example, had great difficulty with the English language. The peddler’s name was Jocko -- or at least that is what everyone called him. Jocko was a household word throughout our community.

Jocko began his peddling in Magna and traveled through Garfield to the salt works. For a horse and wagon, that was quite a distance, perhaps six miles each way. But the pace was much slower than it is today, and he did not have to buy gas or oil.

Jocko came to the salt works for many years. Eventually, however, the automobile spelled the doom for peddlers like him. Some peddlers with small automobile trucks came and went, but the age of the peddler had passed. People with autos could now go to town, away from their little communities, and buy their goods there.
Jocko the peddler still remains a vivid memory. It is not difficult for me to recall this little Greek immigrant with a drooping cap and worn coat, waiting on the women of our community.

**THE ICE MAN**

The ice man and the coal man were seasonal visitors to our community. I suppose that we were among the last of the families to acquire an ice box. It must have been sometime in the middle or late twenties. My parents bought it in Salt Lake City and had it shipped out to the salt works.

I remember how modern we felt when the ice box arrived and was set up in the kitchen. It was not a large one, but to me it was beautiful. Made of oak, it was finished in a golden stain covered with a gleaming varnish. The top part of the box held a fifty-pound block of ice that sometimes lasted a week before it was completely melted. I was given the responsibility of keeping the drain pan from overflowing. However, sometimes I was a little late, and the floor got soaked.

At certain intervals the ice man came around in an old truck to keep the ice boxes of the village filled. Using an ice pick, he chipped the huge blocks of ice in his truck into smaller blocks of 100, 50, and 25 pounds. Then with ice tongs he would sling the block over his shoulders, carry it into the house, and drop it into the ice compartment with a thud. We kids scrambled for the small pieces of ice that were wasted in the chipping. They seemed to be delicious to the taste as we ran our tongues over their chilled surface (to give our tongues a sleigh ride). The ice cubes of today just can’t match the delicious ice chips of yesteryear.

Today we give little thought to the old ice box when we open our modern refrigerator, except, of course, when we old-timers refer to it as the "ice box."
[Editor’s note: The manuscript also includes a short list of similar traveling workers for whom N.R. Hacken apparently wanted to include reminiscences, including:

1. The gypsies
2. The sheep herders
3. The junk buyers.

Only for #3 is there a short, completed paragraph:]

**THE JUNK BUYERS**

About twice a year there would be junk buyers who came to buy old rags, scrap metal, bottles, and almost anything of value. We kids would collect old bottles along the lake shore and keep them in gunny sacks until the junk man made his appearance.

My mother would keep and collect old rags and sell them, too. As a result, there was a corner of the yard devoted to the storage of this junk until the rag man or junk man would make his visit.