

9d Conversation Starters

**Did you grow up on a farm or ranch in the 40's? You know all about social distancing!**

I was born in Teague, Texas in the 1940's. When we moved into town (pop. 2,000) from the farm, our habits didn't change. We went into town on Saturdays. After breakfast on Saturdays, my grandmother would apply her makeup carefully and pencil a line on the backs of her legs to emulate nylon hose. She dressed me in my Sunday best, donned her hat and gloves, straightened the vertical flag in the window with two blue stars—one for my Daddy and one for my Uncle Joe who were infantrymen in Europe— and we'd set out for a one-mile walk to downtown. Right before we left she'd put the 20 lb. sign in the window for the iceman.

Wealthy planters, especially Germans, kept "Sunday houses" in town to visit on weekends.

Everybody came to town on Saturday. There were as many horse-drawn wagons and horses tied to hitching posts as there were cars. Saturday was provisioning day.

We spent most of the day downtown, visiting with friends and neighbors and window shopping.

1. Did your father, uncle, or cousins serve in World War II? Where did they serve? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Did you or any of your age-mates serve in Korea or Vietnam? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you remember relatives talking about World War II rationing? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Did your Mother ever wash clothes in a cauldron in the back yard? Make her own starch? Hang clothes on a line?

\_\_\_\_\_ Iron with a flat iron heated on a wood stove? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Did your family have an "ice box" and have ice delivered to your home? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Did your family have a garden and "can" their own fruits and vegetables? \_\_\_\_\_ What did you grow? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Did your Mother make clothing for the family? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Did you know any girls who wore "flour sack" dresses? \_\_\_\_\_

8. As a child, did you play outside a lot? Did you have balls and bats, or did you use cardboard boxes as toys? Did you Swing the Statue? \_\_\_\_\_ Jump rope? \_\_\_\_\_ Race? \_\_\_\_\_ Play Hide'n Go Seek? Climb trees? Were you allowed to stay outside until dinner? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Who was the first person in your family to own a car? \_\_\_\_\_ Before I was born, my maternal grandfather, whose family had weathered the Depression fairly well, bought a used Model T for \$32 and a pig.

In the last three generations, I believe people's lives have changed more dramatically than any other time in history. When I was born, the average young married woman worked physically very hard to grow, harvest, prepare, and conserve food for the family. Two full days a week was devoted to laundry. Many young men worked in the fields or factories, in mines and shipyards.

10. List some of the technology that has changed our lives in the last 75 years: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you think these laws have changed our lives in the United States the last 100 years?

Women's right to vote 1920 \_\_ Social Security 1935-40 \_\_ Medicare and Medicaid 1964 \_\_ Civil Rights Act 1964 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Isn't this an extraordinary time to have lived? Aren't we blessed in so many ways?**