

RANGE

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RANGE is an award-winning quarterly devoted to the issues that threaten the West, its people, lifestyles, lands and wildlife. No stranger to controversy, RANGE is a leading forum for opposing viewpoints in the search for solutions that will halt the depletion of a national resource—the American cowboy.

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Up Front

An orange, an egg, and money!

By C.J. Hadley

Jim Petersen's good story about the Gravelies in Montana (page 20) mentions his mother, who was typical of many during and after the Great Depression. Pretty much nothing was easy. "When she was 12," Jim writes, "she got a new pair of socks, a hard-boiled egg and a fresh orange for Christmas."

Sounds like England where I almost grew up. My dad's grandmother was so poor she was locked up in the workhouse in Birmingham. She scrubbed floors Monday through Saturday and was let out for a few hours on Sundays. Dad was the pickup boy and met her at the iron gate. "She wore a gray cloak, a bonnet and shawl, and earned sixpence a week. First stop was a pub where she



© DANIELLE FIGARELLE

Sawyer Figarelle was thrilled to find his photo on the Winter 2019 cover of RANGE at Barnes & Noble in Great Falls, Mont. He is in black hat, with mother and little brother. He bought a copy for his teacher. LEFT:

Maundy money, given by Queen Victoria just before Easter as alms for the poor. These are what great-granny left behind and are dated 1894 (1, 2, 3) and 1892 (4). She could have gotten three glasses of gin.

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bought threepenny-worth of gin. She drank another glass of gin on the way back."

My great-granny shared Sunday midday dinner with her daughter, Annie Burrup, son-in-law, Arthur Hadley, and their children. My father, Bert, was youngest and lucky enough to attend school until age 16. Most of the rest were working preteens. Because "Brum" was a coal and steel town—dank and dark with consumption common—there were plenty of debilitating jobs in smoke-belching factories.

I still have four tiny silver coins—Maundy money—inspired by Jesus' Last Supper when he washed the feet of his disciples and commanded them to "love one another." By the 13th century the royal family was taking part in similar ceremonies. By washing the feet of the indigent and giving money and gifts, they were showing humility and compassion. By the 19th century, the tradition changed, and the monarch simply gave people the money.

Queen Victoria's Maundy money (shown

here) came from great-granny. The one penny, twopenny, threepenny and fourpenny (the size of a dime) were especially minted for distribution to the poor just before Easter on Maundy Thursday.

Petersen birthed this reminiscence due to his mother and her fruit. My sister, brother and I also got an orange at Christmas. It was a serious and exotic treat, certainly better than turnips and leeks. And that reminded me of another thrill back there after World War I. My dad said he and his siblings each got one egg a year on their birthdays, because it was tough to afford six eggs all at the same time.

That was then and things have changed so much it's hard to believe our old family members. They had no guide star, nothing to compare it with, and wouldn't have complained anyway. They were simple, kind, honest people who died young, probably coughing.

All this nostalgic drivelt

came about as I think about my beloved America. Even with enormous incoming—many thousand emails await), I am hungry for news from all directions, including CNN, MSNBC, FOX, BBC, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*. I also devour fodder from blogs and liberal and conservative think tanks. It's a little heavy on the heart and too often portrays chaos, delusion and alternate universes, which also fret the soul.

When did we become so mean, rigid, arrogant and spoiled? When did we decide to destroy and deny history? (As George Santayana said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.") When did we expect free food, phones and housing and to not work for money? When did we start demanding something for nothing?

It is time to think of Jesus and people like him and start loving one another, or asking, "When do I get my next free orange?"

It's our choice. ■