

What Did I Value As A Child?

Nobody asked but ...

I was fascinated by Skyler's article this week about his wife's childhood and their discussion of what values might abide in a child's view of life. This led me to revisit the belongings and likely belongings of my ancestors, and then to reflect on my own childhood. In 19th century rural Kentucky my grandfather was raised in a log cabin with a few beds and a bureau. I'm sure they had hand farm tools. Perhaps they had a book or two, because my grandfather was literate when he went to the Spanish American war and then to work on the Panama Canal construction. Next my thoughts turned to my mid-1940s to late-1950s childhood. I don't remember many "things," but many ideas. Physically, I had an Elvis album, a bicycle, many books, a James Dean windbreaker, and some good local movie theaters to use. But the "things" I valued were time, friendships, family, opportunities, travel, and experiences. These are the "things" that I wanted my daughters to have, as well as my grandchildren and great-grandchildren. My Dad, who will be 93 at the end of this month, in the recollections he recounts, seldom talks about hardware "things" (excepting the manual typewriter he bought from Sears Roebuck, but had to return, by carrying it 15 walking miles to the railway station, because Gramp didn't think they could afford it — and this story is really about lost opportunity, anyway, not a typewriter). I hope the children have these same eccentricities. I'm pretty sure they will.

Kilgore