

in order to eat our share and get full. We used to walk by in front of a lady's house. She was an elderly, white lady and she used to wave her arms and shake her fist, cuss, and tell us to quit walking in front of her house or she would get the sheriff. We were always startled by her but we never paid any attention to her. Never saw a sheriff, either. One day I was walking by her house and she said, "Hey, you there, the tall, skinny one with the light hair--come here!!" We all looked around and I being the only one with light hair, and taller and skinnier than the rest, sauntered timidly over. I was expecting the worst--a verbal outburst, a thrashing, shaking me until my teeth rattled--but none of this. Instead, she gave me a sweet, little old-lady smile and said, "Here's some gingerbread cake I want you to have." I almost fell over backwards. "What ya want me to do with it?" "Eat it," she screamed. Then I really fell over backwards. I bolted back to my friends. "What is it?" they clamored. "I don't know--but she said, 'Eat it'!" We all tasted it at first then we tore into it. Huge, choking mouthfulls. Every now and then, we'd look back to see if she was coming. We crossed fences and high weeds to avoid her on the way back.

I guess that adage, "Blondes have everything," applied even then. Unbeknownst to me, I had my first lesson in discrimination. But, alas, the older I grew the darker my hair got. My nickname at the school was "Flash Gordon."

Because I was so skinny, I and several skinny kids (underweight might be more appropriate) would have to run up to the mess hall and drink all the milk and eat all the cookies we could hold at 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. everyday. We didn't know if we were privileged or cursed. I guess it never helped me because when I went into the army in World War II, I was 6 feet 2 inches tall and weighed 145 pounds. I'm still 6 feet 2 inches tall, but now I weigh 230 pounds at 46 years of age.

There was a time when TRACHOMA broke out among the school children. For those of us who didn't catch it and have to go to bed in a dark room with our eyes full of some kind of salve and a bandage across our eyes, there was an eye inspection. They