

## Steve Johnson

As I began putting these thoughts together late in 2023, my motivation came from the desire that both my children and grand children would enjoy reading them in the future and more fully understand and appreciate how growing up in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s was a wonderful experience. The small town of Palisade in western Colorado was idyllic. With a population of about 1,000 the streets were shady and crime was unknown. Probably the greatest danger was falling off your bike. Our town had one police officer and he drove a pick-up truck on duty. Something akin to the Andy Griffith television show of those days. Of course we didn't have a television set nor a tv broadcast that we could reach until KREX channel 5 came on the air sometime in the early 1950s. Our lives were very simple when compared to the present.

I will admit the Johnson family's lives became more complex when we moved to the peach ranch on East Orchard Mesa also in the 1950s. Most of the following revolves around my family, the peach ranch, and my experiences in the local public schools. I will also add, somewhat proudly, that I thoroughly enjoyed putting these thoughts together. It was delightful to relive those years and the more I wrote the more I remembered. I hope you will not be bored and that readers young and old, both near and far from Palisade can relate to some of my experiences growing up in the Grand Valley.

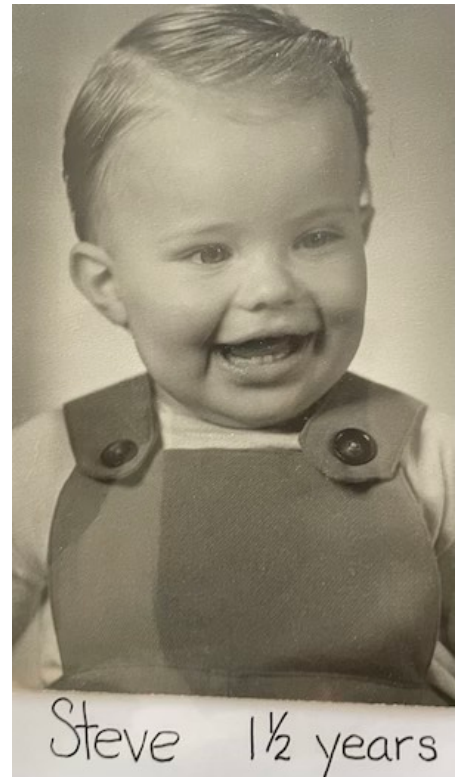
Finally, before I close, I want to offer a special thank-you to my parents, Jerry and Mary and my sister and brother, Judy and Jeff and to all the folks who taught and nurtured me during all of those years.

Thank you!

January 2024

## The Early Years

I was born in Boulder, Colorado on March 14, 1943. My father, John L. Johnson (Jerry) was working at the University of Colorado in the dean's office. They lived in an apartment in Baker Hall on the campus and dad served as a dorm monitor of some kind. My mother, Mary Johnson was a recent graduate of Colorado University. Mother was required to spend two weeks in the hospital (Boulder's was called a sanitarium) after giving birth. She used to tell an interesting story about an event that occurred on about the tenth day out. There was a mouse in the room somewhere above mom's head and she slapped at it and sent it flying across the room. That day she and dad insisted on a change of venue and she departed the Sanitarium in quite a huff.



I believe my dad was about to be drafted into the U.S. Army because of the continuation of WWII. With that in mind during the summer of 1943 they decided to return to my father's hometown of Palisade, Colorado. They moved into a home at 435 West 4th. Street in Palisade to begin preparations for dad's army service. Dad served in the army during the years 1944 and 1945. He was sent to the Philippines Islands. Fortunately his deployment occurred some time after the Japanese had been driven out and the islands were under allied control. After the bombs were dropped and the Japanese surrendered he was scheduled to be sent to Japan for the occupation. One of his army buddies, a man named Poole, dated a woman in the office in

the Philippines that selected those who would be deployed to Japan. Dad's friend got her to do a little switching of the cards and suddenly dad was being discharged and and soon returned to Palisade. How lucky was that!

I had the joy of living in a small little town as I began to grow up. I got to play with the neighborhood kids and life was pretty good. One of my first and most long lasting friend lived just about four houses west of ours. His name was Jack Miller. He was one year older but that didn't seem to matter to us and we became best buddies. We rode trikes and later bikes all over that neighborhood. During those years we developed an imaginary friend named Kernt. This guy used to tag along with us on our daily escapades. When we returned home at the end of the day and reveal to our moms what the three of us had done that day. Mom used to recall those conversations to me later in my life.



While dad was serving his time in the U.S. Army my mother took a job teaching elementary school at Palisade Elementary School. She worked in the 1910 Palisade School which had at one time housed all grades from K-12 That changed when the Palisade High School was constructed. I believe she taught seventh grade. While my mom was teaching Grandma Bent arrived from the midwest to assist with baby sitting chores while mom taught school. Grandma Bent was the wife of a Presbyterian minister. Dr. Frederick Bent performed my baptism as a very young child in, Columbus, Ohio.

If only you could see the white outfit(?) I was wearing for the ceremony. Grandma Bent was, as I look back, pretty straight-laced. Well it sort of figures. I remember her trying to teach me to count by counting cars on the passing freight trains across from our house on fourth street. One other thing I remember was the corset! For our younger readers a corset is a device to be wrapped around a woman's body and buttoned and then cinched up with sturdy strings so that the wearer appeared to have a waist of about eighteen inches. Grandma Bent had to have my mothers help to get into the corset.



On February 14, of 1947 my younger brother Jeffrey Allen Johnson was born. He was and continues to be to this day a great brother. An absolutely solid citizen he has become a trusted confident and advisor. We were not terribly close while growing up and I don't remember much of our lives during the time we lived in the house downtown on fourth street. Things changed a great deal when we moved to the peach farm sometime in 1952 or 1953 as best I can remember. Much more on that in a later chapter.

On August 29, of 1949 mother gave birth to a daughter. Yup, Judy made her grand entrance right in the middle of peach harvest that late summer and mom and dad finally got their hoped for little filly. As an adult, I often wondered if that birth had produced another male, would my parents have rolled the dice and tried again for a girl. I don't think so. That would have meant a family of six-that's a lot of mouths to feed.

I mentioned peach season and you need to know that at that time we did not own any peach acreage. Dad's parents, Thomas and Margaret Johnson owned a fruit orchard in Vineland east of Palisade. All of my dad's



siblings had orchards all over the eastern end of the Grand Valley. As a result our family was deeply involved in that frantic two to three week time each August/September when all the fruit matured and was picked, sorted, packed and sent to market. Sheesh, makes me tired just thinking about it!

Dad's eldest brother Harold and his wife Doris owned an orchard up near the Palisades mountains east of town. His only sister, Ruth Echterbach and her husband Marion (Eck) owned orchards straight north of Main Street in Palisade, up between the Stub ditch the Highline canal. They later had an additional orchard on East Orchard Mesa. Dad's

older brother Edward, and his wife, Jane had what was called the "Home Place" because it was where the family parents Margaret and Thomas

Johnson had lived after selling the Vineland orchard.. That was a twenty acre spread on F Road on East Orchard Mesa. Ed later acquired twenty acres of peaches near the northern edge of East Orchard Mesa. He also leased an orchard on the north side of F Road just across from the Home Place.



(The photo above is of our 1951 peach crop. Frost killed the entire crop. The photo to the left are the kids all grown up.)

# School Days

The year before Judy was born was my debut in Palisade Elementary School. (1948-49) That year the district decided to open a kindergarten class in the elementary school. The classroom was in the basement of the three story building. My teacher that year was Mrs. Lancaster. What I remember with total clarity is having milk and cookies for nutrition during the day. Seems as if I also recall nap time after lunch. I excelled at both of these activities

Miss. Shepard was my first grade teacher (1949-50) and we as a class finally got out of the basement. Middle floor just next to the office of Avon Taylor the principal. I really adored Miss. Shepard, she could do no wrong and my experience in first grade was very pleasant and rewarding. Think she got me off to a great start. I remember the reading groups and how we did a thorough examination of Dick and Jane and their dog Spot. I think the family had a cat but can't recall its name.

Second grade was the domain of Mrs. Potter. (1950-51) There were two choices for teacher in each grade level grade and Mrs. Potter was the number one choice. Everyone wanted to be in her room. About all I can remember of that year is I began to experience some difficulty with math. I can remember mom working with me at home on arithmetic.

Third grade was instructed by Mrs. White soon to be Mrs. Hampton upon her marriage to Kermit. (1951-52) She must have been very young when she was my teacher because when I was an adult she and her husband were still very active in the local Methodist Church. I remember having difficulty with all the workbooks we were required to complete each week. Again, Mom came to the rescue and got me on track.



During these years of elementary school as my parents worked I would spend numerous after school days at Grandma Johnson's home in downtown Palisade. It was easily within walking distance from school. Grandma Johnson was a wonderful cook. Earlier in her life she supplemented the family income running a boarding house when they lived in Cameo. Grandpa Johnson worked in the Cameo Coal mines. Grandma Johnson honed her cooking skills feeding a group of hungry miners. She accomplished this feat cooking on a wood burning cast iron stove. Dad used to say it was he and Ed's job, each morning, to cut the kindling and



the wood for grandma's cooking each day. She made fresh bread every day for the four members of her brood plus the boarders they had at the table at that time. On my afternoon trips to my grandmother's house I could almost smell the bread baking. Once I arrived she would set out a cinnamon roll for each of us and a glass of milk for me along with a cup of tea for her. Wow, I didn't know how good I had it. Naturally I sometimes would ask a friend to accompany me for a cinnamon roll and we were never disappointed.

## NEWS, NEWS, NEWS!! STOP THE PRESSES!!

"Right along about this time in 1952-53, Mom and Dad rocked our world!" It was a great day! They had made a big purchase! Twenty acres of Peaches on East Orchard Mesa. The actual address was and still is 587 36 5/8 Road. I don't know anything about the 587 but the 36 and 5/8 road actually means that road is 36 and 5/8 of a mile east of the western border of Colorado. It's also in Mesa County. The acreage was fully planted and

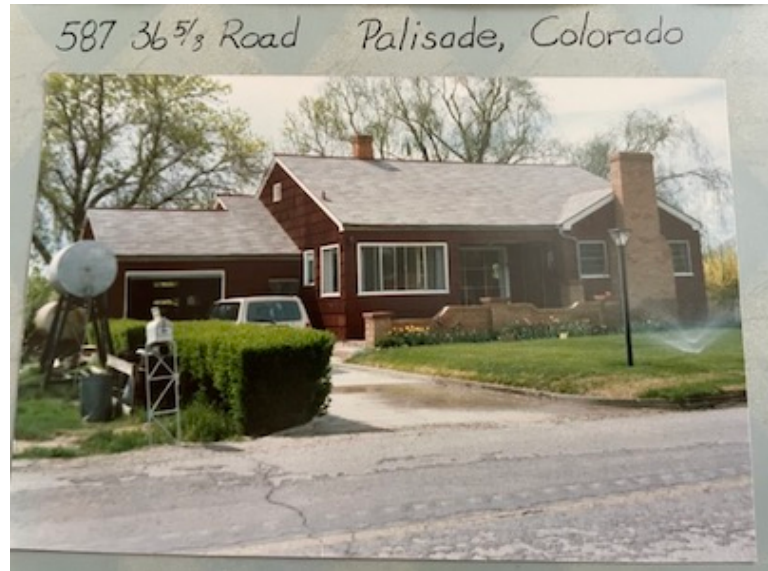
ready for our takeover.

The purchase included a large shed for sorting and packing peaches for sale. There was a full very large room upstairs for storage or whatever. A small house near the shed for housing hired workers during harvest time was included in the sale along with some orchard equipment.

“Speedy” a converted

“Model A Ford” was a flat

bed truck for orchard work. I believe there was a Ford tractor and a small trailer, plus a disk attachment for the tractor. As I recall the purchase, from Mr. Peeples, was for about \$20,000. It wasn't quite twenty acres because the northwestern corner was cut off when the canal was constructed. A large three bedroom house was included. It was huge when compared to the two bedroom house downtown on fourth street.. Full basement, with two bedrooms, and kitchen downstairs and three bedrooms and a fireplace upstairs. We all were in seventh heaven. Our leisurely, never a care in the world life, was turned upside down! And we were probably never the same.



Immediately, it seemed, there were a many things that needed to be done. Most of those jobs involved something that needed to be done in the orchard. We all dove right in and did what we could depending upon our ages. Mom and Dad of course did most of the heavy lifting but as the years went along Steve, Jeff and Judy had plenty of responsibilities around on good old 302. This orchard soon became the Jerry Johnson Place but to avoid confusion with the other Johnsons on Orchard Mesa it was referred to among family members as 302. That was the number that The United Fruit Grower's Association (UFGA) assigned to dad and mom's orchard. All of our peaches were sold through them and all of the orchard expenses were charged to them. Each year after the harvest UFGA would do the adding and subtracting and hopefully write us a check for the balance. Ed and Jane's place was given the number 304 with UFGA and



helped all of us know where we were going that morning and where our parents could find us later. We sure could have used cell phones!

## Peach Harvest

Owning an orchard, as with any other form of farming, was HARD work! Just a few examples are: Harvesting, sorting, packing and shipping the fruit during the hottest part of August/September was never easy. Picking the fruit that you had been tending from spring through nearly all the summer until late August was a very hot, itchy (peaches are covered with fuzz) and difficult job. The fruit is heavy and you have to set a heavy wooden ladder under each tree and climb up the ladder with the peach picking bag strapped to your shoulders and begin removing ONLY the fruit that is market ready. Pickers had to ask themselves, “has this peach matured enough to meet minimum size requirements” and dad always wanted each peach to have at least a little color showing to attract a potential buyer. “OKAY, now pick that peach by gently twisting the fruit from the branch and place it in your picking sack.” Then the picker would repeat that process until his picking sack was over half full. He would then descend the steps of the ladder and gently lower the sack into one of the famous UFGA picking boxes and carefully release the peaches into the box. Once many of the UFGA boxes were full it was my brother, Jeff and my job to bring the tractor and trailer and pick up those boxes and take them to the shed to be processed or to be sent down-town for processing at the UFGA facility before shipping.



We employed many pickers during the harvest season, usually late August. Many years Uncle Ed and dad had a working relationship with a man and his wife who lived in Phoenix, Arizona. That man would recruit workers from the central city or wherever they could be found. Many were down on their luck for various reasons. This man had an older school bus and on Ed and dad's signal he would "leave outa" Phoenix with a load of workers and start the trip to Orchard Mesa. Some years we had between 12 and 20 men living in the little house or upstairs in the shed. The man's wife cooked for our men using the kitchen in our basement. They ate what she cooked and many gained weight and healed their former conditions with Colorado sunshine and a little hard work. Dad paid them .90 cents per hour of work. They could earn a ten cent bonus if they stayed and worked the entire harvest. Most earned the bonus. Dad kept all the records of hours worked, names etc. He also provided them with an opportunity obtain some things like soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, underwear, tee shirts, white socks and tobacco products. They did not leave the orchard, they would place an order and mom would go shopping for them during the day. The cost of those things were deducted from their wages on final pay day. I often tried to imagine my mother buying men's underwear, cigarettes, and plug tobacco and explaining how she planned to use her purchases. That was part of her job as harvest rolled along. She also met daily with the cook to prepare the menu for the up coming meals and go to the grocery for supplies. I'm sure the men paid a daily price for their meals. Dad used to report that many came to him and told him about how good they felt after drying out and getting plenty of exercise and good food for a change. We actually began to think we improved their lives with their journey to Western Colorado to harvest our peach crop.

A wide variety of other hard work went on during the spring and summer. Trees needed irrigation and Jeff, Dad and I got up early many a morning to go out and change the water to a new setting and then return to the house for breakfast. In the early summer the peaches needed to be thinned out, so the fruit remaining on the trees could grow and mature to full size. Many years we thinned with a bamboo pole with a hard rubber ball attached to the end to knock little green peaches to the ground. Several years dad employed most of the basketball team to do the thinning. We worked from five a.m. until noon. Then we went swimming in the ditch, had lunch and



had a nice relaxing nap in the afternoon. Spraying: This was one job none of us kids got to do. It was dangerous! Many moving parts on the spray rig and some spraying was done at night. Dad was in charge of that. Many times I felt so sorry for him. He had to wear all this protective gear to avoid exposure to the spray. These are just a few of the jobs that need to be done on 302. It did,

however provide us kids with plenty of together time. Dad always had a list of jobs to work on after school and before he got home in the evening. Jeff, Judy and I spent plenty of hours going up and down the rows of trees performing some job. I will always remember there were 36 rows of trees and I think each row was 72 trees long. When Dad got home from school he would want to know how much we had accomplished that afternoon. There was always another task we had to work on if we were free.

## Back to School

Fourth grade (1952-53) was very special for several reasons. First, you made it all the way to the top floor of the building. This building, I should add was at one time the High School in Palisade. This top floor was the gymnasium for good old PHS. There were only three gigantic rooms upstairs; two classrooms and a music room used by the whole school. Mrs. Crow was one of the teachers. I was overjoyed to be in her room. She was absolutely beautiful. I had a huge crush and anything she said was the truth and I would defend her honor to the end! Mrs. Crow played the piano and that year I think I learned love to sing. Another thing I vividly remember about fourth grade were the spelling tests! Not that I loved memorizing or learning to spell the words BUT if you got a 100 percent on your Friday test you got to go out to recess by sliding down the fire escape! Whopee! Talk about an incentive! The fire escape was a silo construction model with the spiral slide inside. You talk about a Disneyland attraction,





that was it. Kids from other grades would greet us as we exited the famed fire escape for recess, perfect spellers all. I studied those words on Thursday night like it was a matter of life or death.

For Fifth grade (1953-54) at Palisade

Elementary there

were again two choices. Mrs. Gaither was one and Helen Maurer the other. I think that over the years at this school I had had several encounters with Mr. Maurer. She and Mom taught in the same building and were friends. She always seemed somehow happy and completely upbeat! Moreover she always had time to speak to me when I was around. I desperately wanted to be in her class so much so that I worried about the placement most of the prior summer. When the lists were posted I nearly had a stroke when I realized my name was on Mrs. Maurer's roster. To say I enjoyed fifth grade would not be an adequate description. I was enthralled, I loved every aspect of my daily life in her fifth grade classroom. She loved music and we sang daily. Sometimes we would just burst into song and she would sing along. Other times she went to the piano and pounded out a verse or two of some tune that seemed to fit with what we were studying. Then there was art, arithmetic, spelling, U.S.A. history-all were exciting! Some days we would go up to the music room and sing for ten or fifteen minutes before recess or lunch. Her love of music was contagious! The days just flew by and soon it was spring. Mrs. Maurer wrote, directed, and accompanied our class as we preformed an operetta about the history of Palisade. She wrote the words and made them fit into the music of the, songs we had been singing all year. All we had to do was learn the words because the music was already in our heads. Some of us



had solo performances. Yours truly sang "Mammy!" What that had to do with little old Palisade, and not Alabama, I have no idea. Al Jolson made the song famous many years before but I guess my rendition did pretty OKAY because it produced a rousing ovation.

Both sixth grades (1954-55) were in the basement of the Palisade Elementary School. I can't remember who the taught the second sixth grade was but I do remember Mrs. Caldwell. She was a very nice lady and I was in her room. Sixth grade days seemed very long. Following Mrs. Maurer was not an easy task and I was always looking for a way to spend some time out of the classroom. At first, the only thing that came to mind was a trip to the lavatory. Both Boy's and Girl's lavatories were housed in a smaller building just outside the back of the larger main school building. I now recall that I observed loads of Palisade coal being delivered to that building so I'm sure they heated water there and burned coal in a furnace to attempt to heat the main building. Going to the restroom was a cold trip up the stairs and out into the cold weather to climb another icy set of stairs for a five minute classroom break. Couldn't waste valuable time in the Loo during recess or lunch. So a couple of trips each day was par for the course. Then I got a real break. Once a week I was tapped to deliver morning milk and cookies to the kindergarten classes. That happened mid-morning and was something to look forward to each week. Mrs. Caldwell also liked to read to us each day for about ten minutes after lunch. That of course led to several of the students to catch a quick snooze. Another memory that I have involved a new friend. Larry Arend and his family moved to Palisade and he joined our sixth grade. We became good buds. His father worked at the Chevrolet dealer on west Main Street in Grand Junction. I recall loving to go in there and drool over the new cars being offered for sale. A few thousand could get you as nice Bel Air two door in the 1950's. My final memory of sixth grade was my first crush in life. Her name was Kristine Anderson and she wrote me a note to announce her feelings. As usual, I was the last to know. It really floored me. I think we held hands at the end of the year concert. Ahhh young love!

There being no Junior High School building the seventh grade (1955-56) was housed one final year in the basement of the Elementary School building. There were about fifty to sixty students so we were split up evenly and my mom, Mary Johnson taught English, Composition, Spelling and

Ancient History. Mrs. Lancaster was my homeroom teacher and she was responsible for Science and Math and Health. We all moved from one room to the other for our instruction. So the administration was trying to encourage us to begin to grow up and think for ourselves. I really liked the classes and the subjects mom taught but I had a real tussle with Ancient History. The Greeks, Egyptians, and Romans got me really confused. I just couldn't keep the kings, rulers and emperors straight. Mom and I had a few extra credit sessions at the kitchen table drawing tables and anything else she could think of to get me a passing score. Thanks again, Mom!



Eighth grade (1956-57) was a watershed year! We all got to join the Palisade High School classes in their building. We were the under, underclassmen! We still had two teachers Mr Faulk and Mrs. Potter. (Remember my second grade teacher? Yup, that's her) I was assigned to Mr. Faulk's class. I should point out that my mother was still absconded in that dreaded basement teaching seventh graders but now I had to deal with Dad. Yes, he was the assistant Principal and freshmen civics teacher at good old PHS. Now I got to ride to school with him each morning! Wow, what a deal. Back to Mr. Faulk and eighth grade. He

was responsible for Language Arts; English, Spelling, Composition and Health. But really all I remember is the conjugation of verbs. He got some funds from somewhere and bought each of us one of these small pocket sized booklet that contained every verb ever dreamed of and all of the correct spelling of each tense for both singular and plural verbs. That became our bible! We tested one another, we joked about how we were doing and Mr. Faulk quizzed us constantly. We could almost imagine him springing out from behind some corner as we approached and demand the

singular form of some obscure verb. But it became a sort of a game or challenge and I for one really got a kick out of it. I still recall I, you, he she or it on the singular side and we, you, they on the plural side. What a great way to get a group of kids all seeming to be moving in the same direction. Mrs. Potter, taught Colorado History and American History, an unusual combination.

## Palisade High School

At the beginning of my Freshman year (1957-58) at Palisade High School the student body and each individual grade level held elections of officers. I figured what the heck I'll give it a whirl. Jay Reader was my campaign director and we were attempting to get me elected as Freshman Class President. We made signs and hung posters all over the building and passed out all kinds of promises and managed to win. So started my political career. Really didn't seem to be too much to it, just see if you can have more friends than the other candidate. We had a few class meetings and some fairly small jobs each class was expected to complete. Produce an acceptable float to enter in the Homecoming Parade, nominate a class princess for homecoming, attend the football game and go to the Homecoming Dance. Pretty easy stuff. Later in the year there was the winter carnival which required both a king and queen nomination. Then which ever class made the most money in ticket sales became the King and Queen of the carnival. After that the Jr/Sr Prom (which we didn't attend) and then Spring rolled around. Other pursuits as far as I was concerned were hum drum most of the time. I had a mad crush on Linda Arend, my friend Larry Arend's sister. She was way out of my league. Not only was she very good looking, she was an upperclass girl. We never dated or even held hands. No, this was puppy love I guess you would say. I remember she would come running up behind me in the hallways and want me to carry her books to the next class. What a treat, off we would go and I would invariably be tardy to my next class. It was worth every moment to just be near and seemingly dear to Linda. I went out for football and soon learned I really did not like getting pounded into the ground while carrying the football. I didn't put forth much effort and as a result I didn't make the first cut. I did go out for basketball and was lucky enough to have a coach I really liked, Mr. Plonkey. He was about six feet, six inches tall

and taught English and journalism. I made the Frosh team and we did fairly well against other local schools.

The two main things I remember about my Sophomore year (1958-59) in Palisade High School were the subjects Algebra and Biology. I'm sure I had other classes, oh yeah, I recall a Speech I class from David Longnecker, that was a breeze, but Algebra, wow, how abstract! Ask me to find X, ha, I didn't know it was missing. But somehow with mom and dad attempting to help me locate the missing X and with the continual encouragement of Mrs. Milleman, my instructor, I managed to survive. Biology was just as daunting to me! Learn, and spell correctly 206 bones of the human body for a test before the end of the month? Didn't think I could do it, but once again with mom and dad and Mr. Ash pushing me along I managed to pass the quiz. I remember little else that year with the exception of making the traveling basketball team. That was a big deal for me, as that meant you also were playing on the junior varsity team. (Mr. Plonkey was still our coach) Those games were played both home and away before the varsity games. Travel to those away games in the Gunnison Valley League we went by personal car. Both the varsity and junior varsity coaches drove cars and my dad who was now the Principal of Palisade High School also drove the family car. I think the traveling team was about twelve to fifteen boys. One of the best parts of a trip was the after game dinner that the coaches provided. Away games I remember were: Gunnison, Paonia, Hotchkiss, Cedaredge, Olathe and Fruita. Some years we played Grand Junction, Central, Glenwood, Rifle, Montrose, Delta, and perhaps Meeker and Steamboat Springs in the preseason. They were larger schools and we didn't win very many of those contests. I remember some years schools smaller than Palisade were on the schedule. De Beque and Collbran and Carbondale come to mind. We could usually win but there were some upsets.

In the 1959-60 school year I was a Junior and academically I was making average or above grades and finding most of my classes to be a challenge but still doable. Then Chemistry came along. All of the abbreviations for various elements and the formulas for combining those elements into compounds. Putting them together and taking them apart was a real mystery to me and many others in my class. Mr. Ash was my science



instructor and we seemed to get along well but he realized that I was certainly in trouble in Chemistry. Most of our study was in the text but we did occasionally go back to the lab in the back of the room and work with a partner on our Lab book assignments. Her name was Carol Reed and she helped get me through chemistry. Without her as a partner I would still be trying to get the bunsen burner started. Thanks Carol. Another challenge was Algebra II. As if finding the value of X wasn't difficult enough now in Algebra II it was finding X, Y, and Z! Whew, this time I turned to my Uncle Ed, dad's brother to tutor me. He was amazing! I began to get with the program and even Mrs. Milleman could see that I was turning the corner. Thank goodness. I continued with basketball in the winter months. Mr. Stewart who had coached at PHS for about 35 years resigned from his coaching position and a new guy came along, Mr. Smith. I guess he was all right but his methods of coaching, practice and game instructions were very different from Coach Plonkey, and Coach Stewart. We had a pretty miserable year. I'm not sure we won five games. I tried to put it out of my mind, and hope for some improvement as a Senior next year.



In our Senior year (1960-61) we had finally reached the pinnacle of Palisade High School. We were BMOC! We finally got to look down on everybody else! The year started with the annual Student Body elections. Again as had happened as a freshman I decided to throw my hat into the fray. However this time I went for the big time. Our school didn't have a President and Vice-President but somewhere along the way they instituted a leadership team made up of a Head Boy and a Head Girl. The other officers were a secretary and a treasurer. I opted to enter the contest for Head Boy. Larry Arend was my campaign manager

and along with a committee of helpers we dove into the campaign. There were rallies at lunch, speeches to classes and posters and banners all over the place. When the final vote was counted Gayle Brooks and I had been elected Head Girl and Boy. Whoopie! Let the party begin!



NEW PHS OFFICERS — Pallsade High School's student body officers for next year get together after the final balloting. They are, from left to right: Steve Johnson, head boy; Gayle Brooks, head girl; John McLean, vice president; and Becky Harris, secretary-treasurer. Sentinel photo by Bob Grant.

This job turned out to be sitting in on a lot of planning meetings with staff members and other class leaders. It was different and we got time off class but we still had very little power. Most school activities were already scheduled so all we basically did was rubber stamp something and helped encourage classes to participate. The same old homecoming, winter

carnival, and Jr/Sr Prom activities went off as scheduled and I really don't remember anything I did as Head Boy that made a real difference. Maybe that was always the plan. That year I completed my high school basketball career with Coach Smith. Our team was made up of all Seniors and one Junior. In addition to me, Steve Johnson (point guard 5'10") there was Dick Ballou (center 6' 4"), Gordon Stewart (forward 6' 2"), Fred Pahler (Forward 6' 2") and Larry Gilbert a Junior (forward 6'2"). As I remember the bench was pretty thin but we were experienced and did very well in league play and then got bounced out of the tournament by Paonia in a squeaker. I remember making two free throws toward the end of the fourth quarter to tie the score but we lost the game by a few points in an overtime period. In the paper the next day they referred to me as a "gutsy little freshman, Steve Johnson" who dropped two free throws to tie the game late. I was shocked to see my name in the sports section with incorrect information. Oh well, it is what it is.