

THINGS REMEMBERED Loretta (Wright) Brown

Dad always did the grocery shopping at Al Simmons grocery, corner of St. Johns Ave. & Catalpa. He took a basket about 15" x 30" (approximately) with handles to carry the groceries home. One day, I was 2 - 2 1/2; he carried me into to the store in the basket, put it on the counter & left me sitting there. Everyone thought it was funny, but me. Another time (8 or 9 years old) I went with him and Mom had just permed my hair - it was still in curlers, and Al said I looked like a peeled onion. Mom & Dad were good friends of Al and Alma Simmons & we all went to Wesley Church, 511 E. Second St., Lima.

During the war we had to take ration books for items that were scarce. Mom sent me down one day to ask if they had any pork chops. They laughed at me - again. I remember big glass jars that held penny candy. The store was small but in the 50's (?) they added on to the front taking it clear to the sidewalk & probably doubled the size. The store was later bought & run by Tom Manderly who at one time worked there, stocking shelves, etc. He retired in 1997. Our Uncle Frank Coolahan, Aunt Annas (Mom's sister) husband, was manager of Kinneys Shoe Store in downtown Lima (on High Street). We would always go in to see him when we shopped, and he always gave me a toy from the toy chest (it was for customers). My first remembrance of Church is the preschool classroom with a long table & little chairs. My teacher was Dora Butterfield & she lived o Fairview Ave. Later I sang in the choir & taught a first grade class; also bible school classes several summers. Aunt Catherine & Uncle Harold (My Dad's brother) were janitors & I sometimes went with them because Jerry (their only child) and I were always together. He was 1 1/2 years younger than I & died in June of 1995. We had some sort of code with flashlights back & forth. We lived across from each other. They on the NW corner & we on the NE corner of Catalpa & Carlisle Ave. The mailman did not come as far as our house & we picked our mail up at Grandma & Grandpa Wrights house (701 Catalpa). I stayed with them a couple of times when Mom & Dad had to go out of town (probably for his job at Buckeye Pipeline Co.) so I wouldn't miss school. It was very cold. The only heat upstairs came through grates to the first floor & a small heater in the bathroom. She (Grandma Wright) made the best chocolate Angelfood cake. They had a dog & several cats. The dog was named RIP. Grandma would put a plate of food on the floor for RIP and say, "now get that clean so I don't have to wash it." It was a joke -- I think. One litter of kittens had a runt, born with both back legs backward. Everyone had to pick it up & it didn't live very long.

When I was in the first grade I remember the teacher (Miss Christ who was Randy & Lance's teacher also) telling Mom I had a high IQ. I guess it went down somewhere along the way. I would play on the playground before I started school and would & would go inside with Mom for some reason (probably Owen or Barbara were in trouble ha ha). There were no restaurants near & Mom used to cook lunch for the teachers & we all ate together around the big dining room table. At that time there were no doors to the hallway. Dad later moved the French doors from the south room (we called it the sun parlor) to the hallway. Until then there were blue velvet drapes that we could close. One day when the teachers came for lunch, I hid by wrapping up in the drapes. I'm sure my feet showed beneath them, but the teachers acted like they didn't know where I was. (We didn't have a TV for entertainment).

When the Snow White movie came out (1941?) I was staying with Aunt Gladys (Mom's sister) in Cincinnati (they were always leaving me somewhere) and she took me to see it. Maybe Barbara too. For Christmas that year Mom & Dad brought Barbara the Snow White doll & bought me the Dopey doll. Even though I was only 5 or 6, that significance was not lost to me. I remember wondering what they meant by that.

Mom was a schoolteacher before she was married & when I went to Jefferson she did some substitute teaching there. One day she taught my class. She had gray hair & the kids thought she was my grandmother.

Jean (Waggoner) Ingle moved a block away when she was 4 & I was 6. We were best friends but would fight sometimes & not talk for 2 - 3 days then back to friends again. May Ann (Wren - Sneary) Coplin has been my friend since 1st grade. They are still my best friends (is that enough friends?)

Barbara was a Sr. when I was in 7th grade at South. I used to be really short & Barbara once said she could always find me in the crowded halls between classes, because there would be an empty spot among the kids.

MORE THOUGHTS

Oct 98 - This should be good - since I don't remember what I wrote the 1st time. This time of year reminds me of the Fall Festival held in the square. I don't remember how we got there or what we did. I do recall walking home in the dark (with Mary Ann or Jean) pretty late 9:00 to 10:00 PM. Wouldn't try that anymore.

I was maybe 8 or 9 when I had the measles & had to stay in bed with the blinds closed. Mom brought my meals & read to me. It was boring. Of course all our shopping was downtown Lima with an occasional trip to Columbus. Once Mom & I went to Columbus with a friend of hers from Wesley & her spoiled only daughter. She got all kinds of clothes. But I think Mom felt sorry for me & bought me 2 plaid skirts of which I was very proud. Most of my clothes Mom made & some from feed sacks. There is a house on Greely Chapel Road just south of Ryan's that was a turkey farm in those days & we got feed sacks, they were patterned material, removed the seams, washed them & that was material for our blouses etc. - play clothes mostly. I learned to sew using the feed sacks.

My Uncle Frank Coolahan, Aunt Anna's (Mom's sister) husband was manager of Kinneys Shoe store on High Street. We always went there for our shoes, but we usually stopped to see him when we went to town. Some of my favorite toys came from the treasure chest that held toys for customers. At Christmas window displays was a small fake fireplace, & after Christmas Uncle Frank gave it to me for my playhouse that Dad had built for me. It had 2 rooms & the fireplace fit perfectly - even had a little logs, which we carried in and out like we were gathering wood for a fire. "We" being Jean (Waggoner) Ingle & Carolyn (Newman)? Carolyn lived where David Neal's family live now. She played the organ at the church for our wedding & Mary Ann sang. Jean was pregnant & so wasn't in it.

We had a swing in the basement, roller-skated on the tennis court & there was a double slide on the playground. The sides were wood & I got a big splinter in my hand. I used to hang by my knees & feet from the playground monkey bars. Something else I wouldn't try anymore.

When I went to Jefferson there was a boyfriend for several years named Glen Pierce. In 1st grade we were in a play that 6th graders put on. We were the only 1st graders in it. There was a big wooden frame that opened like a book & we were the open & shutters. Each time we opened it a kid in a costume was standing there & said their part. It had something to do with studying different countries. Also 1st grade we had a band and I played the triangle. I was first to walk into the room - the parents came to watch - and I wore a pink dress & big pink bow in my hair. (See page 1 & 5) *"Something else I wouldn't want to try anymore"*

Once (4th or 5th) grade Glen's mother took us to the library in her car. My first date!

Comic Relief: I had to walk to South Jr. & Sr. in the snow sleet & rain - backwards, not really. But I did sometimes walk when everything was covered with ice & it took twice as long to get there sliding back every now and then.