

More Haworth History

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What was it like growing up in Haworth? I would like to share my memories with you...

My first memory of Haworth was when I was 3 or 4 years old and living at 612 Sylvan Place. I would ride my tricycle up and down the sidewalk. I recall thinking how hard it was to peddle up that hill! NOTE: Today when I see that "hill", it is only a rise in the road. When I was 8 years old, we moved to 428 Jefferson Avenue, Mom, Dad, Albert, Jim, Robert and me.

I attended school beginning in Kindergarten with Miss Landis. NOTE: It is the same Kindergarten Room today. Some of my other teachers were Miss Gaffney, Miss Misuriello, Miss Day, Mrs. Townsend, Mr. Vandembre and Mr. Simmons. In the fifth grade, with my teacher Catherine Mulhern, we memorized our times table. During the sixth grade, when they were adding on 2 classrooms to the school, we attended split sessions, half of the year in the morning and the other half in the afternoon. In seventh and eighth grade, we rotated from 3 classrooms with 3 teachers covering all the subjects. My favorite teacher was John Simmons in eighth grade. He was young, tall and handsome and prepared us for High School. He taught us to win and lose, be honest, respect people's property, and study hard to achieve good grades. He was my mentor and we kept in touch with each other until he died.

There were lots of places in Haworth where we would "hang out" with friends.

One place was the railroad station. The ticket agent was Mr. Richter. He showed us how to send a message on his ticker tape. There was a big potbellied stove which kept us warm on cold winter days. NOTE: This potbellied stove now is located in the Borough Hall on Haworth Avenue.

A lot of our time was spent at the tennis courts. Everyone played tennis and the season ended on Labor Day weekend with the finals in every category: Junior Girls and Boys, Ladies and Men singles, mixed doubles, men and women doubles, boys and girls singles. Beautiful trophies were awarded to the winners and refreshments followed.

The tennis courts did not have a water fountain so, after a rigorous game of tennis, we would ride our bikes to the "Spring" on Owatonna Street. This was and still is an artesian well. It was dug in 1890 by Mr. Hollbrook. The water was cold and a treat to cool off. During the most serious droughts, the well never ran dry and to this day, it still bubbles up freely out of the ground. This is my favorite spot in Haworth and I still maintain it as a historical and memorable part of Haworth.

Another special place to hang out was the Police Station located on Terrace Street. NOTE: Our first policeman was "Pop Weiss" who did his job by walking all over Haworth. In 1925, Ed Menze became our first patrolman (along with his motorcycle). By 1930, Oscar Johnson was hired to assist Chief Menze. After Mr. Johnson died, Henry Gripenburg was hired in 1944. The police station was cool in the summer and warm in the winter. I liked being there, sitting around this huge council table with my friends, talking about how we would run the town. Chief and

Henry were good to us and we begged them to take our fingerprints and lock us up in the jail cell. There was a special respect and admiration that developed between us.

White Beeches was very special to Haworth. A good memory for everyone was when White Beeches treated us to fireworks on July 4th every year. I can remember being a part of this celebration gathering at the Club House and cheering for each burst of color accompanied with loud explosions.

Before I was eight years old, polio was a dreaded summer disease. We avoided swimming pools and our relief from hot weather was the family sprinkler or hose. We lived next to the golf course and took our cars, etc. and played in the big sand traps. I don't remember anyone getting polio in Haworth during this time.

At the 18th hole at White Beeches was and still is a pond. My winters were spent ice skating on that pond. We would build a small fire to keep our cold feet warm. During a big snow and ice storm, we would ice skate from our house to the pond on Sunset Avenue. In the warm weather, we would catch pollywogs or frogs and maybe see a snake. When golfers would hit a ball into the pond, I would wade out and find and return it. Sometimes they would give me a quarter which was big money in those days.

When the Oradell Reservoir was built, Haworth received most of the dirt that was removed. Lots of pine trees were planted at this time. Over the years, we finally called it the "desert." We would call ourselves explorers and would head out with a bag lunch, a knife, an axe, and a big stick to protect us as we spent the day in the desert. There were times we feared we were lost and climbed a tall tree to find our way home. Seeing a garter snake was a special reward of the day.

There was a big field in front of our house and it became our baseball playground. We used rocks or cardboard for the home plate and bases. The Birkins Family lived around the corner from us. Their back hall had every kind of sport equipment and we were allowed to use what we needed, only, if we put it back in their house after using it. There were nonstop baseball games going on in the field with all the neighborhood kids. We only stopped to go home and eat lunch.

My friends and I discovered a 20' tall dog run belonging to the Hall Family at 4 Myrtle Street. With their permission, we ran many miles hanging on to the cross bars.

Tank Hill was a famous place in town. No matter how hard I tried, I was never able to ride up to Schraalenburgh Road without walking my bike the last 15 feet. But, during the winter, Tank Hill was the most popular place to sleigh ride! We all took turns to stand at the Valley Road intersection to stop cars from crossing while we sled down that steep hill. If you had a big toboggan, you could coast all the way to the railroad tracks! During the summer, we walked, rode our bicycles, or roller skated wherever we went. I remember when Haworth Avenue was resurfaced. It was so smooth that I roller skated from the school to the railroad tracks with long, smooth strides. It was during World War II so there were no cars to watch out for.

The Post Office and Borough Hall on Terrace Street were the center of life in Haworth. When I graduated from eighth grade, I attended Tenafly High School. A school bus picked us up at 7:30am in the morning and dropped us off at 3:45pm. I walked down town as did all of us to wait for the school bus to arrive. The girls waited in the Post Office and the boys waited in the Police Station. During those 4 years, you never saw the boys or girls ever together waiting for the bus.

We owned a '32 Plymouth, a radio, refrigerator and washing machine. This was before computers, email, cell phones, clothes dryers, ipods, television, garmins, ez pass, hearing aids, dishwashers, microwaves and air conditioning.

I can drive all over Haworth, and every street and house and business reveals what a wonderful life I had growing up in the best town in the United States.