

## More Haworth History

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### Reminiscing

In 1888, a new railroad station was built at the intersection of Haworth Avenue and Houston Place.

In 1900 there were 36 homes and 350 people living in Haworth. By 1920 there were 214 homes and 748 people.

The railroad became the most popular mode of transportation for Haworth residents. Most men worked in New York City. It was quite a sight to see all the wives driving their husbands to the station to board the 7:20, 7:43 or 8:32 trains.

Mrs. Dorothy Pearman of 145 Haworth Drive was one of those wives. Every morning she would drive Walter to the train station, kiss him goodbye, and then return home to continue the day. One morning when she turned to kiss Walter goodbye, he wasn't there! She was so used to the same routine every morning she didn't realize he wasn't next to her in the front seat. He was home wondering why she left him behind.

When the 5:20PM (mail train), 5:45 and 6:15 commuter trains returned in the evening, these same wives would be there waiting to drive their husbands home to dinner. Many were the times when a wife, dressed in a bathrobe, hair in curlers, would sneak into the post office to buy a stamp or mail an important letter.

No one knows the date, but immediately after the Haworth Railroad Station was opened, Harvey Langham was transferred from Dumont to the Haworth Avenue crossing. Harvey, a "flagman" had a seven foot stop sign which he used to stop cars from crossing the railroad tracks when a train was approaching. The railroad provided Harvey with a shack which included a pot-bellied stove. This was located on the north-west side of the railroad crossing.

When the warning bell would ring, Harvey would stand in the middle of the road to protect the children going to and from school from crossing the tracks. Harvey once told me the hardest part of his job was keeping the cars from crossing the tracks after a train had gone by, but another train was coming from the other direction.

Harvey loved our kids and they loved him too. He could fix anything that was broken on our bicycles-flat tires, broken spokes, worn-out wheel bearings, etc...

Between the wooden bridge and the Haworth Avenue crossing, in 1918, a freight train derailed, piling its cars high on top of the other. One car loaded with chickens broke open and the chickens ran all over town. You can imagine what everyone had for dinner that night...chicken in the pot.

The freight building was a rebuilt railroad car. Shipments were stored there until they were picked up by the owner. The story goes that one time a shipment of dynamite was in the freight car. Some boys in Haworth broke into the freight car, split up the dynamite and hid it in

their garages. Chief Menze said there was enough dynamite all over Haworth to blow up the entire town.

Steam engines were powered by coal, and they spewed out a shower of black cinders. Most of the ladies wore hats to protect themselves. Others held the daily newspaper over their heads and some, who did nothing at all, picked the cinders out of their hair all day long.

In the horse and buggy days, the A.A. Randall home was located at 378 Haworth Avenue and was built in 1870. Just east of the barn was a well and a windmill, the first one ever to be erected in Haworth. Water from the well was pumped by the windmill into an attic tank. Most homes had wells for drinking water and used hand pumps.

Francis Holbrook built his home on Haworth Avenue, just north of the present pond located across from the Borough Hall. He dug an artesian well east of his home which supplied all the water he needed. Today the spring is still on the northwest end of Owatonna Street and a small amount of water still comes out of the spring and flows into the reservoir.

Silver Lake was located on East St. Nicholas Avenue. If you walk passed Haworth Hardware, heading east, you go down into a small valley which borders Owatonna Street. The lake had a diving board and was used for swimming and fishing in the summer and ice skating in the winter. One day Frank Osmer II was sent downtown to Joe Guarino's for groceries. Coming from Schraalenburgh Road, he had to go by Silver Lake. He was about 5 years old. Of course he stopped to play in the water as little boys will do. But he fell in and cried for help. Victor De Troy, a 12 year old boy was nearby, heard his cries and rescued him from drowning. Frank Osmer I was in the jewelry business and gave Victor a gold watch as a reward. As a result of this incident, the lake was drained which made some people happy and others very sad.

North of Silver Lake, the water traveled under Haworth Avenue and formed an oblong pond which was shaped like a hot dog. It had a dam on the northern end of the pond. This also was a delightful place to swim, ice-skate and have a picnic.

Recently one of the Bergeron boys who lived above the 1914 post office building on Terrace Street told me how he fell into this pond and started to drown. His older brother ran home to get his mother who quickly pulled the boy from the pond. Eventually this is another time when the dam was removed and left as a brook running through town.

Another pond in Haworth was called the "Old Mill Pond" located between Lake Side East and Lake Side West, just south of Haworth Avenue. One day, on his way home from school, Chuck Wendell fell into this pond. His sister, Wendy, rescued him. This was the 3<sup>rd</sup> pond in Haworth where the dam was removed and today it is a brook.

Mr. Rudesill, who lived at 427 Harland Avenue was always late getting to the train station on time. He would leave his home, detachable collar hanging by one button, and a plate of scrambled eggs in his hand. By the time he finished his eggs, he'd put the plate and fork behind Harvey's shack and boarded the waiting train. At noon when his daughter Laura came home from school for lunch, she'd pick up the plate and fork left behind Harvey's shack and continue on her way home.

It was during 1946 that Chief Menze apprehended 3 Czechoslovakian prisoners who escaped from Camp Shanks, N.Y. After making their way south on the railroad tracks, they were sleeping in the area of the Valley Coal Company (now Crocker Place). As the Chief marched the 3 prisoners to the jail at Headquarters, he passed Emmy Cato on her way to church across the

street. When she realized what was happening, she fainted dead away. Years later, one of the prisoners returned to Haworth and asked the Chief to show him where he was captured.

I will conclude my reminiscing with my favorite place in Haworth...the "SPRING" on Owatonna Street. As long as I can remember, the cold, fresh water poured out of this SPRING. We were free spirits playing tennis and baseball, riding our bikes, relaxing in the RR Station or the Borough Hall Police Station – But – we always ended up at the SPRING to drink that cool water. Why don't you check out the SPRING on Owatonna Street?

May your memories of Haworth be as precious to you as they are to me.