Warner - Jamieson

Recollections

1 came across a newspaper clipping that read: "BUSINESS LOCATION, one mile west of Terrace, Immediately East of the High School: Store 20 x 40, 6-room House 24 x 36, one Acre, $7500.00 Cash.

As my thoughts took me back to the 1950s, memories from my childhood surfaced.

Our fraternal Great-Grandpa William Howey, and Grandpa Al Palmquist built the store as well as the house; being on the west side of Terrace, they, with Grandma Molly, named it appropriately: "West End Grocery".

Our three grandparents, together with Dad, Mom, and five children ranging in age; six months to five years, shared the house.

We played outside in good weather. I loved the yard full of wonderful flowers, their sweet fragrances swirling around as bees and butterflies flitted from blossom to blossom.

Sometimes the grown-ups allowed us to go over to the Store. Once we unwrapped ten packs of Juicy Fruit and Spearmint gum sticks, the fun lasted only until Grandma caught us. I remember Grandma saying to my mom, "We'll just sell them one stick at a time." After that, we could only go to the Store if someone was watching us.

The block of properties, between Loen, Scott, Sparks, and Kalum, were for the most part vacant; two barns and three houses, were the only buildings. The house we lived in faced Loen. One at the corner of Sparks and Loen, Great-Aunt Florence and Great-Uncle Charlie Renaud lived with their family. A third house faced Kalum; I do not recall who lived in it at the time.

The two old barns had attics full of sawdust, spider webs, plus old cloths we used for dressing up in. We also used the barns to play Anti-I-Over; this was a game of throwing a ball over the roof, while those on the other side would try to catch it. Mom grew mushrooms in the bottom of the larger barn; forbidden access, lest we trample her crop, we steered clear of it.

Our house on Loen had apples, cherries, saskatoons and currants, as well as wild strawberries that melted in our mouths. The smell of the lilacs, mock orange, and other flowers, their names forgotten, would remind me of Mom's tales of Great-Grandma Odelide, selling bouquets at the Train Station. We made necklaces and crowns out of dandelion flowers, while the boys played cowboys and Indians with toy rifles made from branches. There were fields of grasses so tall we could walk upright unseen, we would play Hide and go Seek, crawling through the furrows that Dad created when plowing the field.

In a clearing, halfway between Kalum and Sparks, the neighborhood kids gathered to play games, Mother May 1, Simon Says, Red Rover and Tug O' War were some of our favorites.

Sometimes, we went to "The Ranch" as we called it, Grandma and Grandpa Ted Johnston's home, originally built by our great-grandfather Albert Johnson. We would have family picnics; all the related families would come, and the great-aunts would bring potluck dinner. We would have competitions: Egg-in-Spoon, Sack, Three-legged and other races. We swung on the trapeze rope over the gully, laughed and played with aunts, uncles, and many cousins, until it got dark when all would find their way home to bed.

Autumn found me in my favorite place, the big Maple tree. I would tuck my feet under one branch, my butt on another, hanging backward, upside down. It definitely was a different way of looking at things.

The streets were dirt and gravel with potholes that could break an axle if you were not a careful driver. In winter, they were a great delight as we stomped through them breaking the ice in the puddles.

"Olson's Hill" was the ski hill. In the winter, we would take chunks of cardboard or whatnot, for use in sliding down the hill. One Christmas, we received a toboggan; it slid down the hill "to beat sixty" as three or four of us kids screamed or laughed our way to the bottom. One particular day, I was having so much fun that I delayed going home until the last possible minute. I arrived home, shivering. Dad told me that I had frozen my feet; he removed my boots, carried me outside and stood me in a snow bank, rubbing my feet to get the circulation moving. I recall a burning sensation as feeling returned to my extremities, deciding it was much too painful to do that again.

We attended Riverside School. To get there we went up and over Picnic Park, walked up Park Avenue to the old barracks, down past the Legion to the school.

The description in the newspaper ad opens a window to the boundaries of Terrace at that time, and one can only imagine what the West End Grocery property, these days known as Copperside II, is worth in today's real estate market.

The High School, "Kalum High", now known as School District #88 offices, across Kenny Street from the Copperside II, was where Mom and many other children went to school.

The house on Loen, erected by our maternal great-grandparents Odelide and John Baptiste Desjardins, was lived in until, no longer habitable; it was torn down and demolished in 1999.

The huge ski hill of yesteryear, now Kalum Trailer Park, has shrunk as the child has grown to adulthood.

The trees and picnic tables are gone from the property known as Picnic Park, now home to the hockey arenas and swimming pool.

The old barracks have long since disappeared, replaced by Twin River Estates, or "Wrinkle City" as I have also heard it called.

The Riverside School property is home to the Curling Rink and a baseball diamond.

Our families back then were large, Mom was the second oldest of sixteen. Can you imagine buying Christmas presents for them? Our family has expanded to infinite proportions, getting every one together these days, would take an enormous effort, acres of camping property and a lot of food.