

In our last issue we talked about a donation of a scrapbook made to us by Mary Barr Pezzimenti, Eileen Barr Shabala and Ellen Barr Peck. This is a brief story that Ellen wrote about the places shown in the scrapbook – we know you will enjoy it.

A TRIP BACK HOME

By Ellen Barr Peck

A few years ago I was taking a writing course at JCC and our assignment was to write about a place. So I went back to my old neighborhood and walked back into my childhood.

I parked my car in the Pizza Hut parking lot where the old hickory nut tree used to stand in the corner of our back yard on West State Street. Crossing Park Street I went behind Arnold's house (Burger King) trying to find the old road, now overgrown with brush, to where Newton's Greenhouse used to be (K Mart). Nothing was left but the foundation. I sat down on what I imagined was the front porch of the office, and began to reminisce about my childhood.

It was a warm September evening when we all gathered on the porch of the office of the greenhouse, an old brick building with the greenhouse attached to the back. The porch had a cement stairway in the middle and four posts that met the apartment above.

We had made our plans earlier in the day to play "capture" that evening. Capture was a game played by the neighborhood kids using the whole neighborhood as our playground. We divided into two teams, one team hid in the yards and woods between the greenhouse and Allegany Street and State Street and Cherry Street.

The other team gave them about ten minutes before they went searching for them, leaving one member on the porch to guard the jail and watch any prisoners taken so they wouldn't escape. After everyone was captured it was the other team's turn to hide.

About six o'clock everyone began to arrive. There were me and my twin sister, Eileen, and our brother Danny Barr. Mike Fahy, who lived in the apartment above the office. Tom and Jimmy Newman, Joe Arnold, Dick and Susie White, Carol Layton, Bill Ensell, Punky and Judy Monroe, our cousin, Nancy MCKinney, and others whose names escape me also played.

We chose our teams and the game began. I remember Bill was the captain of our team and we got to go first. At about ten years old I was one of the youngest of the players.

I hid myself behind White's garage on Park Street and waited to see if I would be spotted. It wasn't too long before I saw Mike and my brother getting close. Should I run? They would surely capture me; too late, they saw me. I ran as fast as my little legs would carry me beside White's house and through the forbidden front yard of Mr. Gleason. I reached the fence on the edge of his property, climbed to the top and jumped into the brush on the other side. I laid flat on the ground, my face in the weeds not daring to move a muscle. Behind me I heard Danny and Mike talking; "I know she came this way, she must be close." They stood on the edge of the road by the fence not more than seven feet away from me. I could feel their eyes on the back of my head. I didn't dare move. They left, never walking through the brush to look for me. I can't remember which team won the game that evening but I'll never forget outsmarting my big brother.

I continued my walk going through the ruins of the greenhouse past the only building that remained of the old place; a two story brick and tile monster that held as much mystery of its contents that day as it did years ago.
