

Gerry (Mrs. Gideon) Schiller – Clayton memories

Many of my friends are my age and older and have lived in Clayton almost all of their lives so that their and my memories are truly Clayton memories...I did not see any of their names on your list. My personal history includes living on Southwood, North Rosebury, Ridgemoor, Byron, Hanley Road, Davis Place, and Carondelet Plaza (I covered Clayton from one end to the other) Schools. Community, Glenridge, Wydown and Clayton High.

My first thoughts are about the enclave of apartments and homes starting with Northwood to Clayton road It was teeming with children and was the impetus of De Mun School now called Captains. The summer evenings were theater of small groups of children...on the way to the drugstore, or playing games in the alleys between the streets. Teens were constantly out and about...my brothers who were 10 and twelve when we moved there were always with friends...it was an amazing social scene for youngsters. Later we lived in the Glenridge area of Claverach and the Moorlands, but it was sterile compared to the DeMun area...maybe because the Demun area of my life was in the 20's and early early thirties...and the Glenridge was in the thirties.

I attended Community school as a child walking from our apartment of South Rosebury every morning...I mostly remember the silence of the streets, because Community started later than DeMun...I also remember the snowy days when Community kids slid down the hill in paint pans (you used to mix your colors in these pans) and what a thrill it was (looking at it today it is a miniscule ride).

There used to be night watchman on the streets, who tapped the residents for donations for their services. There also were itinerant photographers or at least one that I have proof of who traveled with a cart and a goat to take kids pictures driving the cart. I remember the ice man and the milk man...the former disappeared but the milk man endured into the fifties.

I specifically remember the summer days at Shaw park pool when it opened and then capping it off with the thick milkshakes at Green Lea (Boyd's the office building)...it was heaven. Of course, you will hear about the "Dump "at Clayton High School..it was the racy part of our high school years...the tamer group ambled down to Pevely and subsisted on cokes and cheese crackers filled with peanut butter and cost only 10 cents. Speaking of Pevely, the fountain was an absolute summer night draw. I remember starting to go when I was taken in my 'jammies" as a night time treat before bed.

The Clayton of my youth was a magical place, where you could spend your whole life completely fulfilled...Saturdays were devoted to the Shady Oak...you could walk there and home...or you could take the 04 the streetcar that ran down Wydown. If your mother didn't fix lunch, no problem you could go to Greengards or Glasers, sit at the counter

and have lunch, or a treat at any time. Drugstores seemed to be everywhere and they all did the same thing.

When I think of Clayton, I think of the luxury of a community without barriers to a child, where safety was the norm, when a child could explore with impunity a microcosm of world depicted by Norman Rockwell. I know there were bad people and bad things happening, but my memory is of a benign time

I was the first class at Wydown...in the seventh grade...it started in the 7th because Glenridge was over burdened with children when the Moorlands was being developed in the thirties. In retrospect it is amazing to realize that despite the worst depression, Clayton kept growing and expanding and still is! Gideon was an integral part of that expansion...he was the lawyer that changed the zoning enabling him and his partners built the first high rise in Clayton.

When we were married, we lived on Hanley road...Gideon used service cars to go to work, I shopped at AP or Kroger's down the street...we could park on Hanley, we lived close to the railroad overpass, near the Attucks School. Clayton was the county seat but really a sleepy commercial center, with Gutmans being the main store. My husband moved his law office from the Railway Exchange Building in 1953 to Clayton, and we lived in Davis Place which meant we were a complete Clayton family.

If the DeMun area was magical for me as a child. Davis Place, and Meramec school was its Counterpart for young married families with young children. It was a very social enclave, complete with school shows conceived, directed by and performed by the parents of the Meramec classes...they were great fun, and eagerly awaited. At this time Clayton was again a special place where there was a lot of community activism...I remember specifically the parent meetings that were heavily attended to bring the schools into the world of Sputnik (the Russian science threat). I would characterize the period as the rising of the community think and expectations for a better future for themselves and their children. It wasn't all fun and games...there existed an intellectual yearning that was part of the community and a burst of community concern which brought a whole new group of political (though non-party) activists into the Clayton government with hard fought elections and active electioneering.

Clayton always had a mixed bag of residents with a common bond, by and large most were successful in their chosen fields be it teaching, law, medicine, newspapers, business or other professions. We have just moved back to Clayton and again, I am experiencing its unique community spirit, its mix of small and large homes, small and large apartments, small and large condos, small and large office buildings, restaurants, hotels...again a microcosm of a much larger world confined to a relatively small geographical space sort of a Disneyland community. I apologize for this rambling account...but in writing it so many memories come rushing to the fore...just now an apple tree on the grounds of the Clayton Science center which when we lived on Ridgemoor was close enough so that we could pick apples off in the early fall of the year...I am rambling again so enough is enough.

