

Myron Kern – Clayton Memories

I was born in September 1941. My grandmother, Artie (Mrs. Victor W.) Kern told me several times she wrote a letter to me and put it in the 1941 cornerstone of the Bracken Building. Maybe someday I'll find out what she said. I remember the building as the Clayton House, since John Bracken was the superintendent during my early years and was a close family friend. It probably was renamed after he died.

My grandmother was School Board Secretary for 27 years or so until about 1952 when she got sick. A heart pacemaker would have cured her. I can remember her with a large checkbook periodically making out a pile of pink paychecks and other district bills right there on her dining room table. No automation!

My grandparents and my dad moved to Clayton in 1919 on North Bemiston at Berlin Avenue with the #14 streetcar line running on it. After the Great War, they changed Berlin to Pershing for obvious reason. A neighbor across the street had a cow she would take there and tie up to graze all day. During the second war, I would sit on the curb at that corner and pop the tar bubbles with a stick and sing "From the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli", not having a clue what that was about. I guess everybody was singing it, then.

My dad, Victor F. Kern, known then as Floyd, went through Clayton schools, attending Forsyth Elementary and the old high school. He was the last surviving graduate of the CHS class of 1929, having died in 2006 at 94 years.

Clayton has a special importance in my family. When I was 10 we moved next door to my grandparents to help take care of her. My sister, Mary Ellen Cotsworth is still a Clayton resident. Her 3 kids all went through Clayton schools. They attended Captain and CHS. She and I and our other sister, Carol, still own the house on Bemiston (and are looking for a buyer).