

These are the recollections of a 74 year old man. There are no guarantees that they are correct, but they are as I remember them.

In the early 1930's the country was mired in the Great Depression. There was an unemployment rate of 25% One out of 4 was out of work with no hope of finding any. There was absolutely no safety nets – no unemployment insurance, no welfare, no social security, no disability benefits. If your family fell on hard times you couldn't hold them together. The children had to go into orphanages.

There were CCC camps to which adult males would leave home and work on government projects through out the country. The Work Project Administration (WPA) did the same thing but locally. They were make-work projects. One example is the Civic Stadium (the War Memorial Stadium) on Best and Jefferson.

My father grew up, an Irish Catholic, in Albion, NY. His mother had died at a very young age and his father, for whatever pressures, took off. My Dad went to Father Bakers' Home in Lackawanna. The young men there, with a great deal of sentiment, called themselves "Baker Boys". My father worshipped Father Baker and credited his time there for getting him started on the right path in life.

When Father Baker died in 1939 I was 9 years old. I remember my father taking me to the funeral services at the Basilica in Lackawanna.

My parents grew up in a time when a high school education wasn't necessary. My Dad at a young age went to work on the New York Central Railroad, eventually becoming an engineer.

My Mom was a dressmaker. She elected not to go to high school but worked for 2 years, with no pay, as an apprentice at Sibley's, a store in Rochester. There she learned her skill and craft as a dressmaker.

She ran her business from home. Clients, for example, would call her and describe a suit or dress they had seen at Bergers Department Store. Mom would go down, look at the garment, take notes and make the item. That was how skilled she was.

My parent's generation lived when there were few automobiles and telephones. Electricity was in its infancy. They were a generation of really hard workers who could take all kinds of adversity and deal with it. Their whole life was centered on providing a good home and a better life for my sister and myself.

Irving Terrace in the 1930's was more an open neighborhood. There were no privacy fences and kids would run through the backyards playing hide -go-seek. Not having dryers, laundry would hang in the backyards. Everyone pretty much knew each other and helped each other out.

A dividing line, Irving Terrace, was a balance between urban and rural America. On the west side was the Village of Kenmore, which was very well developed. Toward the south was the City of Buffalo but north the area was rural.

Mr. Henel owned the Henel Construction Company. He built about 25 or 30 houses on Irving Terrace, including mine at 127 Irving.

McKinley Avenue in the 1930's was a dead end street but it was generally understood that it would eventually run into Irving Terrace. Mr. Henel started to build a house right where Mckinley runs into Irving, between 124 and 136 Irving. He even built a brick wall behind the house facing McKinley. It's my understanding that the people on McKinley

formed an association and vehemently protested to the Town of Tonawanda. They later hired a lawyer, pursued litigation and won. The brick wall was taken down and the house was moved 2 doors down to 140 Irving, where it is now. The original owners were the Dorts.

The owner of 131 Irving Terrace, Mr. Fish, was a big coal dealer at a time when everyone heated with coal. He was a wealthy man and had the most beautiful house on Irving. It had a lovely rock garden in front and in the back a pond with coy fish in it. With all this talk about moving the house and running Mckinley Ave. through, Mr. Fish came and spoke to my parents. He thought Mckinley Ave would be cut through to Louvaine Dr. Knowing my mother and father didn't have any business experience, he offered to handle the sale of the house for them. When the doorbell rang - refer the people to him. Well it never happened. The doorbell never rang.

Argonne Dr. stopped at Louvaine Dr. The area beyond that was all fields and farmland. Mr. Ziggy lived over by Ellwood Fire Hall. His farm was bordered by Louvainne Dr., Wilton Pkwy. , Fayette Ave., and Worth St.

Mr. Ziggy would hitch his horses to a sled and ride us around the neighborhood in the winter. He rented rides to groups of kids, like the boy scouts and church groups. In the fall they'd go for hay wagon rides and have apple cider.

Lindbergh School was built in the 30's and I started attending it in January of 1936. The school was named after Charles Lindbergh who was the first to fly solo over the Atlantic.

When I was in 2nd or 3rd grade they had a big shindig in front of the school on Irving Terr. We all went out and lined up by class. There were politicians there and I have a recollection of Mr Lindbergh himself being part of the festivities.

The principle of Lindbergh School, Arthur Fulton, lived on the corner of Irving Terrace and Argonne Dr., on the east corner. Mr. Fulton used to walk back and forth to work every day. I was a bit of a devil in school. I soon learned I had to be on my best behavior because sometimes when he would be walking home from school my mother would be in front of the house and of course the first question from her would be "How is Robert doing?" If I had caused a little trouble that day she got a report and I got in trouble.

Behind the school was a terrific playground. There was a sandbox about 20' by 20' with a roof over it, sets of teeter totters, a couple of big swings, 3 merry-go-rounds, a slide and monkey bars. Later on, in the far corner, they built a softball diamond.

Louvaine Dr. had only a few houses on it. Directly behind us was a field and pond. In the winter the pond would freeze up and after shoveling the snow off it we'd go skating. In the summer we'd catch polliwogs. We'd capture them and watch as they sprouted legs. I can't remember any of them living long enough, though, to become a frog.

The last 3 or 4 houses on Mckinley Ave., behind 124 Irving Terr. weren't there. It was just a field. The Mckinley Ave. parents would build a great ice skating pond on it. It was really neat.

There were also fields behind the property line of the houses on Irving Terrace. Behind 124 and 120 Irving the men built a horseshoe court with lights. At night they would get together to pitch horseshoes. During the day the kids would play.

My favorite climbing tree, which still survives is in front of 136 Irving Terr. As I recall, Wardman Rd. did not come all the way through to Hiler Ave., or Hiler Ave. to Argonne Dr. In that area was a woods with chestnut trees, which we used to climb and collect chestnuts. We referred to it as Kenmore Woods. Some of those trees are still standing in the backyards.

When I got older, probably 12 or 13, we went over to Ziggy's Farm with some sickles and lawn mowers and cut out a baseball diamond. We'd play softball in the middle of his fields.

We would dig holes in the ground and play marbles. We'd play kick the can. For those who don't know – a can was set up at the end of the driveway. One person was "it" and everyone else would run through the yards and hide. "It" would find someone and bring them back. If someone who wasn't caught yet kicked the can everyone got freed and the game continued until everyone was caught.

July 4th everyone had fire works. You could go down Hertel Ave. or Delaware Ave. in Kenmore and all the merchants would have tables piled high with all kinds of fireworks. If you lit a match around one of those tables you would have blown up the whole street.

During the day, unsupervised, the children would play with the firecrackers. At night we'd get together on the porch at 119 Irving Terr, Mr. Valance's and his son's, home with a couple of other families. There would be skyrockets, roman candles, sparklers and all the night time fire works you could shoot up into the air.

The Ellwood Fire Hall was, as is today, volunteer. A fire siren would go off and often it was for a field fire. The volunteers would show up with brooms to beat out the flames.

At Louvaine Dr. and Argonne Dr. there was a little cabin. I don't know who owned it but they had bicycle races there. Starting at the cabin they'd race down Louvaine Dr. to Wilton Pkwy. over to Fayette, down Worth, and back Louvaine Dr.

In the 30's my mother and all the people on the street would can and preserve things. I remember we would go out to Niagara County and get bushels of pears and peaches. My mother would make jelly, current jelly. I remember my Dad, to get the juices for the jelly, would squeeze the sacks of the fruit.

My mother also made chili sauce. And if you haven't had my mother's chili sauce you haven't lived. I used to have delightful chili sauce sandwiches on bread . My mother used to get upset with me wasting her chili sauce but I loved those things.

My mother had a meat grinder, and old metal grinder and all the leftovers were saved. She would then grind up the leftovers and make some kind of patties out of them. Sometimes it was potato, carrots, or other vegetables. Who knew?

My father came from an Irish, Catholic background and he was a very devout Catholic even though the rest of us were Presbyterian. Dad was a lifetime member of St. John's Church. In those days if you were Catholic you ate fish on Fridays. Our fish, because of the depression was cream salmon and peas on dry toast. Now if things were going pretty good for us there was more salmon than peas and if things were going not so good there were more peas than salmon.

When 1941 came along and full employment and more money, we then had yellow pike. My Mom could really make a delicious yellow pike.

Automobiles were far from what we have today. I remember my Dad would have to go out to the garage and put a crank in the car below the radiator. He'd have to crank the car to start it.

The house was heated with coal. Every night we had to shovel coal into the furnace and set the damper so the fire would stay lit all night. My father worked day and night so I also had to shovel the ashes out. I soon learned to put water on the ashes before I tried to carry them upstairs and out of the house. It kept the dust from flying up into my face.

Milk and bakery goods were delivered to your house. We had 2 bakeries, Hall's Bakery and Kenmore Bakery. Each bakery and the dairy had it's own sign which you'd put in your window if you wanted them to stop. They'd come with big wagons driven by horses and go house to house. The bakery man would have big baskets of baked goods to select from.

The milkman would come to your backdoor and remove the empty glass bottles from the milk box and replace them with full ones. The milk wasn't homogenized so the cream would rise to the top. My mother would have a fit if I'd sip some of the cream off. It was delicious.

A popcorn man also came around pushing a wagon, which had 2 big wheels. It had a steam whistle so you knew he was coming. The kids would run out and buy popcorn, fritters – all sorts of things. I wasn't much for popcorn but I really liked the corn fritters.

A 1935 or 1936 truck would come down the street. It had a produce structure on the back with a hanging scale. The driver would park in different locations and the women would go out, look at the produce, make a selection, weigh and buy it.

A small grocery was located at Kenmore Ave. and Colvin Blvd. There were no big stores as there are today. The store was owned by Mr. Bryant, who was the butcher and Joe Betzer who, with his family ran the grocery.

In the 30's you couldn't afford a private phone line so everyone had 2,3 or 4 party lines. We had a 2 party line, which we shared with Mrs. Morgan. There were rules of etiquette. If you picked up the phone and someone was on the line you excused yourself and hung up. You didn't listen into the conversation. If you had an emergency you would again excuse yourself and the party on the line would immediately hang up so you could make your call.

On Sheridan Drive and Eggert Rd., where Rosa's Store is now, was an airfield. It was known as Curtis Airdome. It was a Sunday drive in the country with the family. We'd go out by the curb and watch the airplanes take off. It was really something to see.

In those days I could go up and down the street and tell you who lived in each house.

I remember Mr and Mrs. Cottrell at 140 Irving Terr. On Halloween they'd invite us in. We'd sit around the kitchen table and have cider and doughnuts. They were the nicest people.

An elderly couple, the original owners, lived at 135 Irving Terr. When I was 5 or 7 Captain Peterson and his wife would invite me over during the summer to sit on their porch. They had an awning over the front porch. There was a glider swing and they would give me cookies and tell me stories. As I recall he was a retired Great Lakes sea captain.

In the 30's there was a huge lake industry. Boats would bring in the grain to be refined and stored. Freighters carrying ore would come in and out. There was a special run

between Buffalo and Detroit. People would book staterooms on these boats just as they do on cruise ships today and sail the Great Lakes.

Captain Peterson's daughter and her husband, Tom Goodwin lived across the street at 124 Irving Terr. He was vice president of Liberty Bank.

John Gerkin was a lawyer and one of the early town councilman in the Town of Tonawanda. In the 1950's Mr. Gerkin sponsored a drive to unite Kenmore and the Town of Tonawanda as a city to be called The City of Kenmore. It failed.

There was a dress salesman. Mr. McCarthy worked as a lineman for the telephone company and Mr. Valance was an executive with Spencer Kellog. Mr. Sanders owned a roofing company. They all got along together, did things together and helped each other out.

I can't remember the exact address -- 54 or 58 Irving Terrace -- lived Dr. Henry Eddy. He and Walter Bikerton, a lay missionary established the Irving Terrace Presbyterian Church. Dr. Eddy, a remarkable man, and his wife, Wilma, opened up their home for church services. On Sundays the whole house became a church. Services were held in the dining room and living room on folding chairs. After services we had Sunday school which was held all over the house including the basement and garage.

Around 1939 it had grown so successful that it move to Deerhurst and Colvin. It was known as Deerhurst United Presbyterian Church. It is now the Deerhurst Presbyterian Church USA and has grown quite large. It is a real tribute to Dr. Eddy and his wife who gave so much of their home to the missionary work.

The 1940's were like day and night economically. After 1940, December 7th, because of World War II there were 5 to 7 years of full employment. It's absolutely amazing. The

country went from depression to full employment over night. Industries, defense industries developed in Buffalo. You had Irving Parachutes making parachutes, Curtiss Wright making the P40 fighter planes, Bell Aircraft making the P39 Bell Aerocobra fighting planes, all kinds of ammunition plants. Everybody that wanted a job had a job.

A problem, because of gas rationing and travel restrictions, was there wasn't a lot you could do with your money. There were no ocean cruises and air travel wasn't what it is today. Travel was by train. If you wanted to go anywhere in your car you were restricted. If your car was old you couldn't buy a new one. They weren't selling or making any cars between 1941 and 1945. The country was busy making military vehicles and tanks. Fortunately my Dad bought a car in 1940 just before the war broke out so we had a fairly decent automobile. It was a 1940 Pontiac.

During the war things were rationed. I remember gas rationing. You had the A, B and C stickers. Everyone got an A sticker that was to give you enough gas to get you around town to buy your groceries and minimum travel. Depending on your type of employment and how important it was to the war effort you'd get an additional sticker, a B or C.

Because my Dad was a railroad engineer and most, in fact, all movements of troops, equipment and vehicles were done by railroad my Dad got an A and a C sticker . He pretty much never had to worry about gas.

The summers he would take a week off and we'd go up to the Adirondacks where my uncle had a cabin back in the woods at Old Forge. I didn't realize until much later that my Dad never got a paid vacation. Every time he took time off from the railroad he didn't get paid. It was a nice vacation.

During the war food was short. Butter, eggs, meat, those things were in short supply. God bless Mr. Brian and Mr. Betzer because they made sure we had everything. It was nice of them.

Behind our garage we had a vegetable garden, probably 20' by 20'. These were called Victory Gardens. Where St. Joseph's High School is now there were fields and these were subdivided into little plots and people could go over there and grow their own vegetables.

I was going to Kenmore Jr. High School on Delaware Rd., now Kenmore Middle School, and we would run metal drives. The school or boy scout troop would collect scrape metal for the war effort. This was done over and over again.

Knit one, purl two. Believe it or not I learned to knit at school. We made afghan squares to keep the soldiers warm.

During the war at 375 Mckinley Ave, a friend of mine's father built a chicken coop behind the garage so they could have fresh eggs and chickens to eat.

War bonds were sold at a cost, as I recall, of \$18.75. After 10 years they were worth \$25.00. If you didn't have the \$18.75 you could get a booklet and buy stamps. When you filled up the booklet you'd trade it in for a war bond.

The war broke out when I was eleven years old. Every Saturday we would go to the Kenmore Theater, which is where the Kenmore Towers is now. For a minimal amount of money you could see a full length movie, a cartoon, and the news. The movie was a serial so the kids would come back each week. I remember "The Adventures of Flash Gordon". There was no TV so the newsreels were delayed news of WWII.

Above the theater, the length of the block was a bowling alley. I think it was named The Ten Pin Bowling Alley. When I got a little older I worked there stacking pins.

I also had a newspaper route and I sold magazines. I would go around the neighborhood ringing doorbells and selling subscriptions to Collier's Magazine, American Home Magazine, etc. Points were earned which you could redeem for merchandise. I remember getting my mother a coffee table. She was so pleased she kept that table until the day she died even though by then it was all beat up.

We used to have air raid drills, though neither the Japanese nor the Germans had airplanes that could fly to Buffalo and back. The air raids were part of getting the people involved in the war, I gather, rather than actually protecting us from an attack.

There was an air raid warden on the street, several, I think, and they would blow the air raid whistles. There were mounted on the telephone poles. When the whistle blew you had to turn all your lights off. The streetlights would go out. The whole area was dark. The air raid warden would put on his white helmet, a big arm band and patrol the street making sure all the lights were out. You had better make sure they were. This meant that if you went out at night you couldn't leave a light on in case there was a drill while you were gone.

My second cousin was in Patton's Tank Corp. throughout the war. He was in Africa, Sicily and entered France on D-Day where he was wounded. They sent his property back to my mother. I still have the telegram from the War Department, a German helmet and invasion money up in my attic. The money is about 1/2 the size of a dollar bill and was used in the countries the American's were liberating.

In the 40's my Dad took me to the corner of Elmwood Ave. and Hinman Ave. Down the street, where the clothing factory and Home Depot are, was the Curtis Wright plant where they built planes. President Roosevelt came to Buffalo to visit the factory. He drove by us, about 15 feet from me, in his big open car wearing a fedora and his spectacles, waving to the crowds. In the 1980's I visited the Ford Museum in Dearborn Michigan and low and behold, there was that same car.

Sheridan Drive in the late 40's still wasn't developed. Pat's Hot Dog Stand was on Parker Blvd. and Sheridan Dr., Brinson's Hot Dogs was on Colvin and Sheridan, where Key Bank is now, and on Niagara Falls Blvd. and Sheridan Drive Mr. Higgins owned a stand. He was a schoolteacher from Tonawanda. I'd ride my bike there and worked at the hot dog stand summers and in the evenings.

From that corner to where Kmart is now, on Niagara Falls Blvd., there was absolutely nothing, just fields. On the Kmart site was a drive-in theater and a radio station, WXRA.

On Kenmore Ave. by CVS there is a laundromat. That was the location of Your Host Hot Dog stand, which I worked at after leaving Mr. Higgin's stand. It was the first Your Host, which developed into a chain owned by Al Durnbirger and Ross Wesson.

In the 1940's and 1950's there were two boats to Crystal Beach, the Americana and the Canadiana. I remember when I was going to UB every year our fraternity would take over one of the boats, the Canadiana I believe. We would rent it for the evening and then sell tickets. We'd have an orchestra on the 2nd deck for dancing. It was a 3 hour boat ride out on Lake Erie and came back. Of course our fraternity would get the profits.

I mentioned my Dad worked for the railroad and we had passes and could travel free. In the 1940's and 1950's if you wanted to go somewhere you would go by train. Things

that struck me when I was young, we would go in pullman cars where you would have a private room to yourself and the beds would unfold at night out of the wall, which was really neat. There was a dining car with tables, tablecloths and china. You ate a full meal while watching the countryside go by out the window. It was really a nice way to travel if you weren't in a hurry.

When I was young my father got permission from the railroad for me to ride in the engine between Buffalo and Syracuse. The train was a steam engine and you had to shovel coal all the way there and back. It was quite a thing to see, this big fire making the steam out of water.

I went on the last run my father made before he retired. Then the engine was diesel and a lot cleaner.

The New York Central Terminal in the city of Buffalo was a huge, magnificent terminal. You can't believe, looking at it today, how beautiful it was. Inside there was a magnificent area where they had a huge restaurant and in the center they had a stuffed bison. This was later replaced by a cast metal bison.

There were all kinds of businesses: a barber shop, a big newsstand, a liquor store owned by Duke Hedden and his wife, friends of my parents. In the concourse where the trains came in there were 7 or 8 ramps going down with tracks on each sides. Passenger trains came in and out all day. There was an area where the mail was sorted and put on the trains for other cities. A big board listed all the trains and their schedules. A public address system announced when the trains were coming in and leaving, and on what track.

There were 2 main entrances to the terminal. On one side there was another large entrance for taxicabs. Charles Montana had the franchise, the Van Dyke Cab Company. He always had 15 to 20 cabs out there. The tower of the terminal had a clock in it, at night it was lit and you could see that clock all over the eastside of Buffalo. I can't emphasize enough how beautiful the terminal was. Today it's just a mess.

These have been the recollections of a now 76 year old man. I'd like to especially thank my parents, teachers and those who have touched my life.

