

## MALVERN HISTORICAL COMMISSION CONTEST

When area residents were asked in 2007 to tell the Malvern Historical Commission about their favorite events, places, or memories of the borough, some wonderful responses arrived at the Malvern History Center.

21 years lived in borough. Ran a roofing business in Malvern for 25 years on the Old Lincoln Highway. Went to St. Patrick's School until 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Went to Malvern Public School for one year. Remember ice skating on Malvern Prep lake, sledding on Prep School hills, swimming in Prep Lake in summer. Playing on deserted Hires Root Beer building on King Street in Malvern. *[formerly at the northeast corner of Bridge and King Streets]* Big event every summer was the Malvern Fire Co. Fair. Lived in Malvern mailing area for 70 years.

--David A. DeRafelo

Some of my first memories are of the trains going by the back of our house...the hobos getting off occasionally and knocking on the back door, asking for a warm meal, and my Mom fixing something for them in a metal pie plate...having them sit on the back step to eat it...and some of the same ones coming year after year.

The gypsies coming through town in their open sided trucks, stopping and wanting to sharpen our kitchen knives, and Mom always telling me to never go near them alone because they were known to kidnap little children (I don't remember any of MY friends being kidnapped!) The rag man driving all over town calling "Rags! I'll buy your rags!" and mom taking things out to him and getting coins in return.

The air raid warden knocking on our door, telling us to cover our windows, that some light was showing through during the Second World War! The troop trains going through everyday, with soldiers waving, tanks and jeeps on flatbed cars...the Red Cross trains with wounded service men in their beds waving at the windows...saving the foil from cigarette packs, and any scrap metal we found, taking it to school for the "War Effort"...filling our savings books with special stamps bought for dimes and quarters and, when we got enough, getting a War Bond!

Great memories of walking to school each day, never carrying a lunch and always coming home at noon time for the lunch...always feeling safe no matter where we walked in the boro...playing in the RR Station lot...sliding down the sand pile in front of Nolan Feed (now where the shopping center is)...going to the Fire House each year at Christmas to see Santa and getting an orange and a box of hard candy...the Halloween Parades...the Memorial Day Parades when the planes would fly over the cemetery and drop flowers on the graves...running errands for the workers at the Platinum Works—getting them sodas and chips at the corner newsstand (owned by Sam Grubb, then Roland Ewing)...*[northwest corner of King Street and Warren Avenue]*...going to the side window of Lou Tomas' bar on Tuesdays to get a free pretzel...*[northwest corner King and Bridge Streets]*...watching my brother and his friends, all eight or nine years older than me, playing baseball on “Pigeon Hill” (named such because almost everyone had homing pigeons who lived over there between High Street and broad Street)...then also playing baseball up at Skin Diamond (between King Rd. and Monument Avenue)...

The many days and nights that we skated at Malvern Prep on both the “Little Lake” and the “Big Lake,” always having a bonfire...in the woods by the “Big Lake”...and fishing in the spring in the “Big Lake,” then swimming there in the summer...with the cows in the upper pasture...and sledding on the hill by the statue at Prep with the boarding students, some from South America who had never seen snow and would use the cafeteria trays for sleds! Playing in the hay in the barn at Prep...knowing all the priests who were so very kind to all the kids, joining us in swimming in the lake or sledding with us...

Going nine years to Malvern School, and riding our first school bus taking us to 10<sup>th</sup> grade at TEHS in Berwyn. Some classmates chose to go to West Chester and took the public bus. I remember the many dances for the younger set at the Club House...*[northwest corner of South Warren and First Avenues]*...Weaver's Dairy selling chocolate milk and Green Spot, an orange drink, for a nickel. The dances were run by Emily Smith and if you didn't have a nickel for a drink, you'd get one anyway. She would take many of us to Philadelphia to see the circus or the ice follies or to the movies!

I remember...rolling skating on the sidewalks of King St., rolling over the metal doors to basements on the sidewalks...going to Dr. LaRue's Drugstore (corner of King and Warren) for an ice cream soda, or to Mary Wilson's after school, sitting in the booths in the back room, having our Cokes and listening and dancing to “our music” of the day, and Mary NEVER chasing us

out, letting us have a place to gather...the Malvern Fire Co. Fair in the field across from Rusticraft or the block parties in front of the firehouse on Church St....

I remember how we would jump on the back of the ice truck, and snatch some chips of ice while the iceman delivered ice for our ice box...no refrigerators for us then!...packing a lunch and a bunch of us walking down and over the valley for a picnic and wading in the streams on the farms which are now buildings and corporate centers...And sledding down (*North*) Warren Ave. from the intersection with King, which would be blocked off for us...and riding down there on our homemade soapboxes, made with orange crates and roller skates, and trying not to hit the bridge.

Knowing everyone in town...and everyone knowing US...watching over us, correcting us when we were naughty, caring for us if we scraped our knees or got hurt...always feeling safe...Malvern was a wonderful place to grow up!

--Joan Stackhouse

One of my favorite memories of Malvern dates back a half century ago to the 1950s. As a child, I recall cold, snowy days when the north end of Warren Avenue was shut down so that children could go sledding down the hills, under the bridge. One year, during the Blizzard of 1958, amongst the laughter and excitement, front-end loaders drove up and down King Street dumping endless amounts of snow into the trucks to be taken away. Those were the good ol' days, before cell phones, computers, and video games, when all were able to enjoy the simple pleasures of life.

--Tony Mancini, Jr.

It was election day—always a day filled with excitement and curious anticipation in our little town of Malvern. It was 1935. My mother was about to give birth, and waiting for Dr. Clarence Kurtz to walk across the street at his usual slow gait, whistling and carrying his familiar black bag. Most of her children were delivered in our home in the same unpretentious manner. This day, however, it was important for her to delay my arrival until AFTER she had voted...and she did! Elections were key events in Malvern.

One fond and indelible memory comes to mind...several decades later, as a teacher in the Great Valley School District, I occasionally spent a day at Malvern School. On one such day, I

stood by a second floor window and reflected, and in one moment, a lifetime of experiences flashed before me. From this window in the school where I had attended nine grades so many years before, I could see the Maple Tree lined street where I learned to ride my two wheeler, the house where I was born on that Election Day, so long ago, the spiraling steeple of the church where I was baptized and married, as were some of my ancestors, siblings and children (and where I had occasionally pulled the rope to ring that colossal bell). I could see, as well, the schoolyard where all of Malvern's children gathered to play together in the evenings, the street where we watched and clapped to the oompahs of the parades, the slope where we raced downhill on our sleds on winter nights, the woods we tip-toed through to reach the icy waters of Rustic Pond to swim and the cemetery where my parents and ancestors lay quietly at rest. It was all there—and more—in one glance.

--Fran Cox Nodland

My favorite memory of Malvern was when my boyfriend, Roger, proposed to me at Alba Restaurant on King Street in February. We met when he moved in across the street from me on Miner Street in 2005. We discovered that we had almost met a year earlier, when I applied for an apartment in the building he was living in at the time on Arlington Avenue. The funny part was that neither one of us is from Malvern—he's from West Grove and I'm from Philadelphia—but we both chose it as our home, which fatefully brought us together.

--Heather Alexander

My parents moved to Malvern from western Chester County when I was 11 years old (1946). I have lived here ever since. My favorite memories are just having such a wonderful place to grow up in. One of my fondest memories was sledding on North Warren Ave. They would put a barricade across the top at King St. so we could all sled. We would throw a lot of snow under the tunnel so we could sled through. This is just one of the many things I enjoyed doing as a kid growing up in Malvern.

--Kenneth L. McComsey

One of my favorite memories of Malvern was in September 1985, when the circus came to town and set up camp at the Paoli Memorial Grounds. I was 8 years old and I entered a

coloring contest at Malvern Federal Savings to win tickets to the event. I spent hours colorfully decorating the clown on my entry form. To my surprise, I won the grand prize, and was given the opportunity to be the honorary ringmaster of the circus, blowing the whistle to start the show. I still remember it well, as it was a moment to treasure for a lifetime.

--Gina Mancini

My favorite memory of growing up in Malvern was living next to the Malvern Fire House which was on Church St. We lived on King Street for almost 40 years. Our back yard and their back lot were side by side. For many years the siren was right behind our back yard. People have no idea how loud that siren was.

When we had cookouts and parties, when the siren rang, most people would run inside to get away from the noise or hold on to their ears. Not us Falcones. I guess we were used to it after all.

--Jim Falcone

I have many favorite memories of Malvern. One that will always stay fresh in my mind is at the age of 7 when World War II ended. The news went over the radios, and within moments, the Malvern Police car, the Malvern Fire Company's fire trucks, ambulance, and mounds of cars entered the parade going on King Street and through all the streets in the Borough, with sirens and horns blowing. In the end of the Parade, people were standing on the street with the American flags and shouting, "THE WAR IS OVER!" Tears of joy were shed. I remember my Grandmother Venditti crying and waiting the return of her sons Frank, Sam, Louie, and Carmen. We started decorating the house with "Welcome Home" signs and bought tons of crepe paper to decorate the front porch. What a welcome my uncles found when they returned to 232 E. King Street.

--Anna Venditti Novelli

#### 1950s to Early 1960s

- \* Easter Sunrise Services at the Monument Grounds
- \* Junior Auxiliary of the Malvern Fire Co.—marching in area parades

- Lions' Club bus trips to Phillies games at Connie Mack Stadium (cost 50¢)—met at Dodson's building
- Red Cross swimming lessons at a private home on Swedesford Road
- Friday night kids' youth group at Malvern Bible Chapel
- Visiting & singing at Sowell's Nursing Home on Monument Avenue
- Sledding down Warren Avenue (road was closed for sledding)
- Painting store front windows for Halloween
- First Baptist Church bus trip to the New York World's Fair
- Large scoop ice cream cones from Rado's served by Dick Kilgore
- Vanilla cokes from Mary Wilson's (also penny candy)
- Penny candy from Ewing's
- Hoagies from Puccini's (Old Lincoln Highway) Best around!!
- Grocery shopping at Stackhouse's & Scheidel's (three locations)
- Square dance lessons at Malvern Public School with Chris Sanderson
- Field trips from Malvern Public with Mr. Hibberd

--Lois Thorpe