

MEMORIES

You could say that I've lived in this neighborhood a long time, if you include Va. Heights, Raleigh Court, and Grandin Court.

I grew up in Va. Heights-the first 18 years in the same house, 2046 Westover Ave. Thus my first story:

Before the Morris Apts. were built, my address was 614 Northumberland Ave., then, after they were built, it changed to 646 Northumberland Ave. The city renumbered blocks starting from Jefferson St. for East-West and Salem Ave. for North-South streets, so now I lived at 2046 Northumberland Ave. (I'd go to the bottom of the hill and look East over Grandin Road at Westover Ave.!) The City soon changed the name from Northumberland to Westover Ave. Thus I then lived at 2046 Westover Ave., my 4th address without moving!

As a little boy just big enough to leave the sight of my house, I'd go up and around the corner of Brunswick and Northumberland and sit on the wall next to the sidewalk, and look at the backporch of the house across the street. I believe a Mrs. Stevens lived there, and she kept a Parrot on the latticed porch. I'd talk with the Parrot, although I don't remember him saying more than just words or noises.

I left my Northumberland Ave. home at the end of '44 during WW two and was in the Navy for 2 years, then spent the next 4 years at Va. Tech. We (I was now married) returned to Roanoke on Laburnum Ave (Raleigh Court) in 1950. We moved to Memorial Ave, then to Livingston Rd. (in Grandin Court) and finally to Mount Vernon Rd. (back in Raleigh Court) where we still live.

So I've been "HERE" for 74 years! I've seen a lot of changes, but not really so much.

Grandin Village is a big thing now. As I remember Grandin Rd., the West side of the first block had a Texaco station on the corner, then about an 8 or 9 family apartment house, with Dr. Kirk's house on the corner. Now that was some place! But first, about the White Apartments (as they were known). About the time the theatre was built, it was jacked up and moved back onto a new foundation, to give room for a store fronting Grandin Rd. (the Natural Food Store?). The Apts. gave way for parking! Now about Dr. Kirk's. Shrubs and/or fence surrounded the property with a driveway entering from Grandin Rd. between the house and the White Apartments, and exiting from behind the house onto Northumberland. The big backyard had Rosebushes and a Greenhouse for more flowers. (You know, I cannot remember a time of a rock being thrown through one of those glass panes! I guess parents had pretty good control of children then.) Dr. Kirk was known worldwide for his Roses, and I believe a variety was named for him. For many years there were only houses from the second block up to this (Presbyterian) Church except for the Morris Apts. at Northumberland, and the Swanola Apts. next door.

Now the East side of Grandin Rd. started with Barr's Dime store, Bob's Resturent, the theatre, Brices Drug Store, an alley, a small Luthren Church, High's (or Canada's) ice cream store, Meridith's Grocery, Clores Drugstore and I believe another grocery store. The 2nd block started with an A&P Grocery, then mostly houses on up to Raleigh Court, which had big gray stone columns on each side of the street. There was a building of some sort with apartments upstairs, on the Southeast corner at Bluemont Ave. It's still there. The Methodist Church and the Del Monte Apts. were there then.

From town there were streetcars running on tracks that came up Va. Ave. (Memorial Ave. now), turning and going up Grandin to Brandon Ave. On the first block of Grandin was a double track section where the North and South bound streetcars could pass each other.

Thinking of the early 30's, Va. Ave (Memorial) went up the hill from Grandin Rd. and went onto a dirt road off to the left (now Edgewood). I remember my Aunt taking us for a ride over that road and having to ford the creek (Mudlick) to get on the paved Brandon Ave. Also, our elementary school was a two story building with wood steps and floors. It had an enclosed spiral slidingboard as a fire escape. We had fire drills which many looked forward to, but some dreaded! It was known as the Little Building, where the western part of the Va. Heights Elementary School is now.

I remember in the mid 30's going to a swimming hole in the creek down below Lakewood Park. The area is now covered with the buildings on the Southeast corner of Brandon and Brambleton.

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