

MEMORIES OF BARRINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



From Gary Bassett:

I always walked to school.

We lived on Bedford Rd., just north of Tremont Rd., and according to Google Maps, the distance was .499 miles, (I think we can accurately refer to this as a half-mile walk.) Of course we didn't have Google Maps then. I cannot remember being driven to school. When it rained we took umbrellas. When it snowed, we wore boots. I rarely walked alone. There were plenty of neighborhood kids to meet up with for the walk.

As I got older, I was allowed to bike to school. Of course, you had to be careful to lock your bike or there was a chance someone would "swipe" it. This happened to me a couple of times when I neglected to lock it up. Somehow the bike would always show up somewhere. "Hey, was that your bike I saw in Triangle Park?" (Bedford, King, Cambridge Rds) I'd go and look and sure enough, someone had "ditched" it there. Try as I might I could not ever understand why kids would steal a bike. But there were a few "bad" kids and I learned to stay away from them.

I went to Fishinger Rd school in kindergarten and most of 1st grade, so I missed those experiences at Barrington. Before moving to Old Arlington I had lived on Kentwell Rd. There was no Kingsdale Shopping Center then, and everything north of Fishinger Rd. was corn fields. But back to Barrington.

The stand-alone structures along N.W. Blvd. had just been completed. My 2nd grade class was in one of them, my teacher was Miss Grote. She would write difficult words on the chalkboard and we were to draw them. One word was dandelion. I drew a picture of a very happy lion, while other kids mistakenly drew a picture of a yellow flower.

In 3rd Grade I moved into the main building, my classroom faced Barrington Rd. on the 1st floor. My teacher was Miss Ewing who mid-year became Mrs. Dresden. I was slightly afraid of her. She had a reputation for being mean, but in retrospect, I can't remember that she was ever anything but kind and fair. We had a geared planet model which showed the motion of the earth around the sun and the moon around the earth, it fascinated me. We also read the from the 'Dick and Jane' series of readers.

4th Grade moved me up to the second floor along Barrington Rd, but facing the playground. My teacher was Mrs. Ward. I remember exactly 3 things from 4th Grade: the brand new reading machine, the great games of 'marbles' we played at recess, and the first girl I ever had a crush on.

The reading machine was a projector that scanned along the words projected on the wall, and you had to try to keep up with it. I dreaded the reading sessions and resisted it as best I could. The process was a competitive, level-based system that I found utterly boring.

The games of marbles during recess were more fun. Two players would face off and take turns rolling their prized marble toward the other. The person who hit the other players marble won the marble as a prize. There were no boundaries and it was common to use the entire playground in the course of a good game.

And lastly, I will forever keep secret the identity of the young lady who caught my eye in the 4th grade. I would have been embarrassed to the point of death had someone found out my secret crush. Consequently, I never, ever spoke to her. Oddly, when school was out for the year, I quickly forgot her and moved my attention to someone else in the 5th grade.

5th grade found me in the class of Mrs. Willis, in a room on the second floor along the Andover side, facing the playground. Mrs. Willis would have been my favorite grade school teacher. During the year we studied Ohio History and we all made large relief maps of the state, which was an activity somewhere between Ohio History and Art.

And finally, in 6th grade I was back to ground level in a room along Andover which looked out across the High School football field. My teacher was Mrs. Boggs. Two things of note happened in the 6th grade which shaped my life in years to come. First, I started playing trombone in the elementary school band, and second, I was selected to be in the 6th grade choir.

Anyone could be in the band, all you had to do was convince your parents that you wanted to play and have them procure an instrument for you. We met in the cafeteria several times each week. Mr. Wagner was the director. I grew to hate practice cards. You were supposed to practice 30 minutes a day, so I dutifully exaggerated my ten minute practice to a full 30 minutes. I remember one of the

kids had parents who were scrupulously honest and his practice card said 6 minutes, 7 minutes, etc. When the director read his card aloud in rehearsal, he was clearly embarrassed. He dropped out of band by 7th grade. I thought that was sad.

(As an aside, I have 5 children, all of whom play instruments. When they would bring practice cards home I'd tell them to put anything on the card they wanted and I'd sign it. I wasn't going to have MY kids embarrassed and dropping out about something as minor as practice times!)

Playing trombone served me well as I went on to be in the Ohio State University Marching Band, playing in two Rose Bowls and marching in two Rose Parades. I also have played in a couple of different brass sections in R&B bands. Thanks Barrington.

And the 6th grade choir? Well, in music class I never realized that the teacher was listening, but she selected the kids from all the 6th grade classes whom she felt sang well and they became the 6th Grade Choir. I always enjoyed singing and I was flattered and surprised to make the choir. This beginning has also served me well as I continued through Junior and Senior High choirs, including a 9th grade ensemble. And finally, I was in the very competitive Ohio State Men's Glee Club, a group of 40 men's voices that performs at various places across the country. Once again, thanks, Barrington.

I have numerous other memories, but these would be the highlights.

Respectfully,

Gary Bassett