

## ROOTS

As more people are reading my essays, questions are coming to me about my background, my personality as a child, the origins of my way of thinking. Was I born with a compliant nature that makes it easier for me to trust and obey God than, say, a person who was feisty and willful as a child? Some of these questions really make me think. I was basically obedient in childhood, though I recall being punished for misbehavior many times, especially for squabbling with my brother, and having to “go sit in a chair!” I can honestly say that I had a happy childhood, however, and my environment (my family, my church and my hometown) played a role in that, along with my nature.

My friend Tim, after reading “Anecdotes,” wrote that he feels he now knows me a bit more as a friend through seeing me in my stories, some of which were about my childhood. Then he sent me one of the stories that he has written about his own childhood and I understood what he meant. I certainly want to read more of his writings. What a pleasant way to get to know him better!

Debbie, my cousin Louise’s daughter, sent me a poem she wrote about Annville, PA, the town where she spent happy days as a girl visiting her grandparents. She mentioned that she likes and has collected my stories of Annville, which is also my hometown. I asked her if she had the one subtitled “An Ode to South Lancaster Street.” She didn’t. When I located that story on my computer, I was surprised to find that I wrote it exactly three years ago this month. We were still living in our house in Yorktown Heights, NY then. As I read it over, the thought came to me that this piece might well serve the purpose of giving more information about my background to those who want it.

For many years while I was busy raising our children I turned my back on my home area, and not only because it was more than 200 miles away. I liked living in the New York City suburbs where the population was diverse and ideas and views were broad and stimulating. Let’s say that when I weighed Lebanon County, PA and Westchester County, NY on the scales, I found Lebanon County wanting. Eventually God showed me the error of my ways (“Who are you to judge? Open your eyes and see!”) and when he did, a total transformation took place. I skipped right over neutral feelings and really embraced the place where I grew up and its people. I was overjoyed to find that I was welcome to rejoin the dear ones I had left. God bless them all!

The embracing included joining a group called Friends of Old Annville. In a newsletter early in 2003 the president asked people to write and send in their memories of Annville. The plan was to gather these stories and publish them in book form some day. In June of that year I sat at my computer and began to type. It took a while to capture on paper all the thoughts that rushed into my mind, but I felt it was time well spent. My writing showed me that the work of processing my roots (a job I needed to do to be whole) was complete; all was well with my soul.

The book has not yet been published. Instead, my submission is about to enter the collection of essays on which I am currently working. In the essay “In Its Time,” which explains my project, I said there would be some repetition in my writings. If you have read many of my previous essays, be forewarned: some anecdotes in this one will sound familiar. And now, for those who want to know about my early years, here is the piece I wrote in 2003 about Annville (only slightly changed).

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ANNVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA: MY HOMETOWN  
— or —  
AN ODE TO SOUTH LANCASTER STREET

BY VERNA ZIEGLER KWIATKOWSKI  
JUNE, 2003

“What are you thinking about?” my roommate Julie asked, having found me staring into space. It was the fall of 1951. I was a freshman at Millersville State Teacher’s College, on my way to fulfilling my lifelong dream of becoming a school teacher. That evening, though, my mind was elsewhere, back in my home town. “I was just thinking about Annville,” I answered, “about what a great town it is.” “Tell me about it,” she invited. And so I did.

I don’t remember exactly what I said that night, but one thing sticks in my mind. In my naivety I held up my hometown as one that could really be self sufficient: everything a person could possibly need was available or produced within its borders! There were farms and many gardens around. If Annville were closed off from the outside world, its residents would not starve! And we would be clothed, for all sorts of factories were there: a shoe factory, a hosiery mill, a dress factory, a knitting mill where polo shirts were made, and more, including one that produced handkerchiefs! We also had – among other things – two department stores (Hirsch’s and Batdorf’s), a Ben Franklin Five and Ten, grocery stores, a butcher shop, restaurants, two bakeries (Fink’s and Penway), lots of churches, a library, a movie theater, doctors, service shops, a great school AND Lebanon Valley College! For a town of less than 3,000 people, none could compare with Annville, I said. Julie, of course, recognized that I was suffering from a bad case of nostalgia, but she let me chatter away, providing the audience I needed that night. Wouldn’t our world be better if we would ask each other, “What are you thinking about?” and then took the time to listen?

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More than fifty years after that night of reverie I still think Annville was a wonderful place to grow up; at least, it was good for me. In 1933 I was born in the last house before the railroad on North Lancaster Street, Annville. My parents, William and Florence Ziegler, were renting the house and before they moved, my brother Harold was born in 1935. The only memory I have of that house is of hobos knocking on our door and asking for food. Usually Mom would make a sandwich and coffee, which the man would eat out on the back porch. I’m sure our proximity to the railroad (as well as the hard times) had something to do with our frequent visitors.

We then moved to East Maple Street, Annville, where we lived as tenants for a year or so. I remember a small store across the street run, I believe, by Liddie Keller, where we could buy ice cream. And there on Maple Street I began to socialize. I remember having “tea parties” with Kathleen Starr and Patsy Matz, for example. I still have some pieces of that tea set! Another fond memory is of being taken by Dad to a large house on Sheridan Avenue in Annville where various new toys were laid out in rows on a spacious lawn. Harold and I, as well as many other children who were there, were allowed to choose one toy each to take home. I remember walking up and down the rows, looking carefully for just the perfect toy, and choosing a little kitchen cabinet with drawers and doors that opened and closed. I was so pleased! And even now I marvel at the generosity of the person who provided free toys for the children of Annville during those difficult years.

In 1938 my parents bought their first house, a double house at the very end of South Lancaster Street, Annville. Except for two brief periods of time, that is where we lived for the rest of my childhood and teenage years, and when we did move in 1951, it was just next door, where Dad had a new house built in what had been our side yard! That new house was home to me while I was in college, and for a short while afterwards. Then in 1957 I got married and moved out of the area.

The first time we left Annville was in March, 1942, when we moved onto a farm in Hamlin, PA, near

Fredericksburg. We rented our side of the S. Lancaster Street duplex while we were gone, and when we wanted to come back in February, 1943, the tenants were unable to leave immediately. So Dad bought a house at 315 Church Street, Annville and we lived there for much of that year. As soon as possible Dad sold that house and we went back to S. Lancaster Street. I was ten years old when we lived on Church Street and have some good memories. The Horner's lived a few doors from us and they sold candy from their house! Of course, I had new playmates there and remember forming a sewing circle that summer, where both boys and girls would come sit on our side porch, embroidering and talking. That year I joined Christian Endeavor at a nearby church on North White Oak Street and also became a member of the brand new town library, which started out in a corner of an office building on N. White Oak Street. That was fine with me! I loved to read and was so glad for this new supply of books. Also while on Church Street we got a piano, sold to us by the former owners of our house, and I started taking piano lessons at 50 cents each from Mrs. Saylor on College Avenue.

Between our two interludes away from S. Lancaster Street a wonderful change took place in our house: in May, 1946, we welcomed my brother Bob into our family. Something similar was taking place in many other homes in Annville and elsewhere: it was the start of the baby boom! That summer, because Mom was occupied with our new baby, I was put in charge of getting lunch for Dad each workday. I walked uptown to a restaurant located just west of the Annville Bank and ordered a hot dog with mustard (or was it two hot dogs?) and a bottle of Pepsi to go. Then I walked up N. White Oak Street to the hosiery mill where Dad worked for years. I went in the side entrance and onto the floor where rows and rows of knitting machines were noisily producing stockings. Dad was in charge of a double row of machines not far from the door I had entered. We were glad to see each other; I enjoyed my job that summer. While Dad was eating I walked up and down between his machines and kept an eye out for any runners that might be starting in a stocking. Whenever I found one, Dad would stop the row of machines, mend the runner, and then start the machines up again. How I admired his ability to do that!

Then in August, 1947, our family rented our house, furnished this time, and left for Sebring, Florida, where we stayed until April, 1948. When we got back, we shared our house for a time with the tenants, the Parkers, until they could relocate. It was good to be home again.

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Now, about South Lancaster Street ...

The street bordered the school grounds, a large playing field studded with ball diamonds for both softball and baseball, all of which we were free to use for our neighborhood games. Our yards were small, but with the school grounds available to us, we didn't mind; we had plenty of space for playing, even for flying kites. Up near the large greystone building, which then housed grades 3 through 12, were banks that were great for running or rolling down – an activity that required no equipment at all. The steepest banks (not where we rolled!) were covered with beautiful rose bushes, all colors of gorgeous roses. What a treat for the eyes! The school grounds and the rose gardens were well tended in the 1940s by school employees Joe Lloyd and Pappy Nace.

Behind the school was a large paved area where we could ride bikes and play games that required a hard surface. In the mid-1940s this space, both the paved area and the grassy area adjoining it (above the banks), were turned into a town playground. Now we had access to tennis courts, playground equipment, basketball hoops, shuffleboard and paddle ball courts, tether ball and table tennis. And during playground hours there was someone available to teach us various crafts, if we wished. I loved the playground and still have some of the crafts I made there. For the summer of 1955, after my graduation from Millersville, I was hired to work as a playground supervisor, along with my high school classmate Elma Jean Swope, at the very generous pay of two dollars per hour! This was when minimum wage, I believe, was seventy-five cents an hour. The town's Washington Band gave concerts behind the school during the summer. Those of us who lived on S. Lancaster Street could enjoy the lovely music from our porches, if we wished, though I liked to go up to the school for a better view and to join others who had gathered there.

The last block on S. Lancaster Street consisted of five double houses, ten families in all. We owned the last one, renting the one half and living in the final side just before the street ended. At first we had relatives living in the other side of our house: my mother's parents, Norman and Annie Hicks and their daughter Mildred and son Irvin (Pete). Mildred continued living there after her marriage to Harold Becker and the birth of her daughter Barbara. It was a treat having extended family so close. In 1943 my grandfather died and in 1947 Grandma remarried and moved away. Then my parents sold that half of the house to Jesse and Dot Shenk and their two young sons. (Our half was sold in 1951 to Grace Hitz and her mother.) Incidentally, the Shenks had rented an apartment from us in our Church Street house. The Shenks were wonderful neighbors. Dot taught me how to knit and loaned me books to read. Jess introduced me to major league baseball in the exciting time when the Phillies were becoming strong and heading for an eventual pennant! And I spent many hours babysitting for their boys, at the going rate of 25 cents an hour. Most of the money was deposited into my account in the Annville Bank, recorded in my personal bank book, and earmarked for college expenses.

When we sat on our porch we were directly across from the backstop of the high school baseball diamond, which was also used by the Annville Merchants team during the summer. No wonder baseball became – and still is – my favorite sport! The backstop did not protect us from all foul balls, however. Some of them bounced right up onto our porch and through the large front window! The team responsible always paid for the replacement glass we needed.

Along the other side of the baseball field, where High Street is now, there was nothing but weeds and then the Liskey's potato fields. This was very advantageous for us children, because foul balls often got lost in there. After the games were over, and the search for the balls given up, we would go looking ourselves, often coming up with the prize. These were the balls used for our neighborhood pickup games. As for bats, we took the cracked bats discarded by the teams and taped them up until, for us, they were useable.

In the 1940s there were many children in the ten families on our block. Harold and I – and yes, Bob, too – all had classmates from these families. I still revel in the fact that there were four of us from those houses in my class of 1951: Jean Bixler (Noll), Patsy O'Donnell, Raymond Fry and I. True, Patsy left us after the eighth grade to attend Lebanon Catholic School, but she was still in the neighborhood as a friend. There was always someone around to play with when we were children. Often in the summers we gathered at our house because of its location: last on the block. My parents also owned the next few lots adjacent to our house. This gave us a side yard, big enough for playing croquet. AND we had a two car garage, a wonderful structure for playing Highly Over – a game that involved throwing a rubber ball over the roof – or as a backdrop for our carnivals or dramas. (Our spook houses were indoor ventures, held either in our basement or the Fry's.)

Wildflowers grew in abundance along the edge of the school grounds and in the fields beyond the end of S. Lancaster Street. Every time I see Queen Anne's lace and chicory (Dad called it chickweed), my mind sends me right back to my home area. What a lovely combination: the beautiful blue of the chicory mixed with white lace! And there were hollyhocks, tall stems of multicolored flowers that I seldom see anymore. Bluebells covered large patches of the fields near the Quittapahilla Creek and violets graced the lawns as well. I remember wanting so much to have a house plant of my own that I dug up a wild violet from our yard, planted it in a flower pot and brought it into the house. The venture failed.

The creek was an important feature of S. Lancaster Street. Clearly seen from the back of our houses, it served as a boundary assuring that there would never be a street full of houses where our gardens were. The bend of the creek just behind us, where Mr. Clodoveo farmed, was used at times as a swimming hole, though not – to my knowledge – by children from our street. I didn't trust the creek. I knew it was home to the snakes that came into our yard from time to time and that was enough to keep me at a distance. The creek also caused considerable damage to our gardens every year by flooding after rain storms. It's amazing that my dad, Mr. Clodoveo and the others didn't stop planting the lower part of the fields, but they never did. By the way, those gardens all down the row of houses flourished during World

War II when everyone was encouraged to have victory gardens.

My first paying jobs came from working in gardens. When Mr. Clodoveo would cut his long rows of spinach, he would send word to our neighborhood. Any child who wanted to work could get a bushel basket from him and fill it with spinach (no weeds allowed!) until it could hold no more for five cents a bushel. The farmer wrote down our names and kept an accurate record of our filled baskets, and when we had enough of the work, would give us what we had earned – as much as 25 or 30 cents a day! We also were allowed to work in the Liskey's fields at times for pay. At home Dad farmed several lots, his own and those owned by my uncle, Allen Hicks. Harold and I worked in those fields as part of family responsibility, but Dad did pay us to collect Japanese beetles from the corn silk and put them into bottles that contained gasoline.

Before I talk about the rest of S. Lancaster Street, I need to mention the front porches: ten front porches, well used in those days before air conditioning. There were chairs, gliders or swings on each one. I can still remember walking down the street approaching our block and checking to see how many porches were occupied at the time. Why? Because that is how many greetings I would have to give as I walked. No one would be so rude as to walk past people without saying hello, unless the folks were so occupied with each other that a hello would be an intrusion. Yes, we knew who our neighbors were!

Just to the north of our block, still on S. Lancaster Street, was the Keystone Knitting Mill, a place of employment for us as well as a wonderful source of materials for child's play. There was a small building next to the factory where refuse was incinerated, and we children were permitted to take things from the piles slated for burning. There were two main treasures: knitted fabric and cardboard boxes. We girls, who were learning how to sew, had an endless supply of new knitted material for making doll clothes. The discarded fabric usually came cut into recognizable shapes: a stack of pockets or sleeves, perhaps, and occasionally larger pieces, all excess as far as the factory was concerned, but a treasure trove to us. And the empty boxes were LARGE – strong, too. We would gather a number of them, take them to someone's yard and build a house, with each box (turned on its side) being a room big enough to sit in. It didn't take much to make us happy in those days!

Marshall Street was perpendicular to the factory and ran up the side of the school field and then the front of the school. There were sidewalks all along Lancaster and Marshall Streets (as well as everywhere else in town!). From our block, walking to the factory and then turning up Marshall to get to school was called "going around," as opposed to crossing the field, which was much shorter. "Going around" was usually saved for days when the grass was wet, though sometimes we took this route to stop in at a very special place. The Yorty's lived on the corner of S. Lancaster and Marshall. Mrs. Yorty's mother (Mrs. Trotsel, I think) had a candy store in the back of the house along Marshall with a separate entrance. She had a large supply of penny candy, as did Lightner's in their variety store farther up S. Lancaster. Two sources of candy, so accessible! All we needed was the money, some of which we could get by turning in to stores the bottles that we found along the road. Every two cents counts!

Lightner's store was half way down a grade that we called Lightner's Hill. This was where we went with our sleds on snowy winter days. Snow stayed on the roads in those days and there were far fewer cars than now, so we felt safe using the street. We would go to the top of the hill, start running, take a belly-flop and hope that we could get all the way down to our block. Sometimes we did! I must say that the distance does not seem so great when I look at it now as it did back then. Marshall Street had a good slope for sledding as well and we also used the banks on the school grounds for this purpose.

It was especially safe playing in the street in front of our house as that's where the road ended. There was a gravelly kind of shoulder to S. Lancaster Street on the side adjoining the school field. It was perfect for playing Catty, one of our games that used homemade equipment. The catty was a short piece of an old broomstick, pointed at both ends and the catty stick was longer and pointed at one end. (We used pocket knives to do the shaping.) We would dig a hole in the gravel with our catty stick, lay the catty across the hole, scoop it out with the stick and hope it would not be caught by the opposing team. If

caught, we were out. If not, from where the catty landed we would strike with our stick one of the pointed ends of the catty, trying to get it to pop up in the air. If it did, we tried to whack that catty way out onto the ball field and score lots of points! We spent hours and hours every summer playing Catty, sometimes joined by adults.

Behind each house were metal posts on which rope wash lines were strung when needed for drying clothes, usually on Mondays. Long wooden poles were used to prop up the center of the lines so the wet clothes would not touch the ground. There was a sense of commonality seeing all the wash lines down the row filled with clean clothes billowing in the fresh air at approximately the same time. Hanging up and taking down the laundry was a chore we children could help with. But once the wash lines were taken down again, the posts served another purpose: they became boundaries or bases for games that needed them, such as Kitty Wants a Corner. When the rope wash lines eventually broke, we made jump ropes from what was salvageable, shorter pieces for solo jumping on the sidewalks and longer pieces for group jumping out in the street.

Our block had two street lights, one at the first house and one in front of my grandma's side of our house. The latter became our gathering place at dusk to play "Hideygo" Seek or its variation, Tin Can Hidey. A wide range of ages could play games like these and certainly boys and girls both joined in the fun. Children from other streets often joined us in our play. We had a good time on S. Lancaster Street in the 1940s! It was healthy play: active, carefree, impromptu, creative. We were all developing into who we really were; some leaders, some followers, all important. We were adept at running games – remember Crack the Whip? – and we also could spend hours on someone's porch reading comic books or playing board games or just talking and daydreaming. As daylight faded we caught fireflies in jars (yes, we had punched holes in the lids) and after summer evening rain storms, we hurried to our front porches to marvel at the beautiful rainbows showing in the eastern sky. (Where are those rainbows today? Was our air so much purer then?) This is what leisure time was like for Annville's children before television brought us indoors as the 40s ended.

It was from S. Lancaster Street that I started school in 1939. There was no public kindergarten in Annville at the time, so we started out in first grade at the age of six. There was a building on Queen Street that housed the first and second grades, two rooms of first grade on the first floor and second graders upstairs. There may have been some third graders in that building; the memory is not clear, as I had my third grade year in the greystone building.

To get to my first school, I would walk up S. Lancaster, past the factory, past Rohland's yard and house to Queen Street, turn left and shortly thereafter be at school. Or I could turn left at the factory, go to the back, turn right and then walk in an alley adjoining Rohland's property to school. It was not a long distance, but we had to make the trip twice a day, as we went home for lunch.

One day, while returning to the Queen Street school at lunch time, I decided to go by the side of the factory and through the alley. There was a grating along the edge of the alley, used, I suppose, as drainage for rain water. On this particular day a number of children were gathered around the spot, looking downward. When I joined the others I was horrified to hear a boy's voice coming out of that grating. Someone was UNDER THERE!! I turned and ran the rest of the way to school with my emotions awhirl, for in my childish mind I thought that boy was doomed to die! I thought there was no way out! After a number of years passed I realized that if a boy had really died we would have been told about it. I wonder who that boy was? He might be living to this day.

How I loved going to school! I was not long in Miss Evans' first grade class before I knew that I had to become a school teacher. I never wavered from that thought and in the fall of 1955 my dream came true. Another of my lifelong interests was stirred up in the first grade: music. We had a music teacher who came to our room on a regular basis. Sometimes, to my delight, she would bring a box of rhythm instruments with her. There were just one or two of some special instruments and after these were handed out, the more common ones – wood blocks, sticks, bells, clappers, etc. – would be passed down the rows of

students, each row having just one kind of instrument. Then she would put on a record of some lively music and direct us in playing along rhythmically. What a joy that was to me! I felt as if all the music were coming from us, and we were good! Rhythm is still one of my strong points.

I was in Mrs. Shroyer's second grade class. As a young future teacher, I was fascinated by the beautiful colored stickers she used to reward those who handed in perfect arithmetic and spelling papers. Such variety! Seasonally appropriate, too. She had an interesting set of rubber stamps that she used as well. She would put the stamp first on an ink pad and then on your work sheet, making a good imprint. I kept my second grade school papers until I was out of college, all because of those lovely stickers and stamps.

My fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Loose, had a big influence on my life. She knew I wanted to become a teacher and encouraged me in many ways. She predicted that some day I would take her place (I didn't!). At the end of that year she gave me two pencils, one with red lead and one with blue, and an unused attendance record book that she had on hand. That was enough to keep my imagination happily occupied for years! I also got some of her well-worn books that she had kept in a bookcase in the back of the room and now was discarding. We had few books at home, so these were treasured. I talked with Mrs. Loose a couple years ago about these memories and found that the bookcase and the books in it were her personal property. She said many former pupils remember how she would read books to her classes at the end of the day, chapter by chapter. I remember that, too.

We had tragedies as well as good times in Annville in the 1940s. It was safe for children to walk all over town, but we still had to be careful of certain places. I remember in 1943 hearing that three young boys had been seriously burned in an accident in the quarry at the western edge of Annville. One of them, Robert Fasnacht, was a fourth grade classmate of mine. All three died. Tragedy hit our block of S. Lancaster Street also when Mrs. Anspach was burned in an accident at the shoe factory and, sadly, died soon afterwards.

Besides the residents, their visitors, and ball players and the spectators, who came down S. Lancaster Street and why? I remember a rag man coming with his horse and wagon, announcing his approach in a loud voice: "Raaags! Haaags!" (At least, that's what it sounded like to me!) Mom would have him check her rag bag and pay her for what he wanted. An ice man came in the early 40s. My grandma had an ice box in her out-kitchen that needed frequent refilling. The delivery man would give us children ice chips, freshly manufactured with his ice pick, if we asked – and we did. A few years later the ice man no longer came, but an ice CREAM man did! What a treat on hot summer days! Mom would give us a nickel and for that we could buy something I have never seen anywhere else: a ChoCho. It was on a stick and had a delicious malted milk flavor.

Mr. Dipper came down the street with his horse and plow every spring as Dad hired him to prepare our fields. One time as Mr. Dipper was leaving to return home, his horse dropped dead right at the end of S. Lancaster Street. It's funny, isn't it, the things we remember. I don't know how the horse was removed, but in my mind I can still see it falling and lying there by the side of the road. A bakery truck also drove down our street, I believe from Fink's Bakery. Mom would send me out to buy day-old sticky buns or cinnamon buns and bread. My mouth is watering now as I envision sticky buns with nuts and raisins! I think for a while a butcher truck also came down our way. Certainly the milkman did. And so did the newspaper carrier. I can't say paper BOY, because for a long time our paper was delivered by a classmate, Elsie Sweigert. There was equal opportunity in the work force!

Each of our houses also needed regular coal deliveries. I liked to watch the coal man insert a chute through our opened basement window and send the coal pouring into the various bins in our cellar according to the size of the coal. To reach the farthest bin, the chute had to be supported by a rope that Dad kept hanging there for that purpose alone. I say that because I tried to use that rope as a swing one day, broke it, fell onto the coal, injured myself slightly and received quite a scolding from Dad. I never did it again!

And then one day a most unusual object came down and forever changed S. Lancaster Street: A HOUSE! Yes, our street was being extended and a new one, High Street, was being built perpendicular to ours between the edge of the school grounds and what had been Liskey's potato fields. The house rolling down the street came from a triangle of land on S. White Oak Street in front of the school. It was to be placed on a foundation at the end of the new block that had been opened beyond our house for this purpose. That house came slowly down Marshall Street, turned at the factory and moved down our block, being for a while right in front of our house.

It didn't take long for other houses to appear along the new roads. My father helped to put them there, for in about 1950 he left factory work and became a building contractor. He put several houses on the new portion of S. Lancaster Street, including one for our family built literally in our former side yard. He then began building in Palmyra, and after my brother Bob graduated from Annville-Cleona High School, my parents and Bob moved to that town into another new house that Dad's crew had built. From then on Palmyra was the place I went to visit my family. Occasionally, though, I would make a side trip to see Annville, my old hometown, when I needed to refresh my memory, to enjoy, to reminisce ...

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There are a few more things I want to mention about Annville. First, Annville Picnic Day. What fun that was! I remember the picnic being held on the school grounds at least once, but the ones in Hershey Park stand out in my mind. All the stores and businesses in town closed for the day in July (I think it was the last Wednesday) and we packed lunches and went to Hershey. First we gathered to play games organized by age group, hoping to win prizes donated by Annville's merchants. Jean Bixler and I were a cinch to win the three-legged race because we had been practicing at home! After lunch we went on the amusement rides, using the free tickets we had been given by our Sunday Schools. (Annville had many churches. Most children were members of Sunday Schools.) More food and visiting and perhaps a band concert followed before we went home, content and tired.

I also remember Halloween, celebrated as a season, rather than just a day. For about a week we could expect Halloweeners to show up in costume. They were invited into the house where the residents would try to guess who they were. Masks came off to reveal identities and then candy was given. There were some pranks as well, such as letting the air out of the tires on Dad's car. It was parked in our side yard in the dark, perfect cover for the prankster. Mostly, though, we threw dried corn – sometimes mixed with confetti – on people's porches. To be sure that was annoying and required some cleanup, but it was harmless enough, certainly not vandalism. I can still "hear" the sound of dried corn kernels hitting a wooden porch!

In February, 1947, the Annville Church of the Brethren on Maple Street was totally destroyed by fire. This was the church our family attended. The community responded immediately. The next day and for months afterwards our congregation used the gym and some classrooms in the school building for services. After that we met in the auditorium of Lebanon Valley College until the new church structure was completed.

I need to enlarge on the place the college had in my childhood. It felt good just to know it was there, to begin with. I wanted to attend college some day, and having one in town was inspiring. The grounds were well kept and pleasant to walk across, and I often did that. In the summer I attended Story Hour, which was held under a large tree behind the science building. College students would read to us children there, much to our delight. The science building had a museum that we were allowed to visit. And in the summer of 1947 I took clarinet lessons at the college. This gave me an experience I truly valued: at the end of the season I got to play in a band concert! I faithfully blew into my clarinet every time a note came along that I recognized!

Finally, the Annville train station served as a symbol of adventure to me. The train brought my Aunt Sarah, Uncle Robert and cousin Louise Kiebach to us from Philadelphia for a week's vacation each



summer. What a thrill it was when they arrived and what sorrow when they had to leave again! In the late 1940s the song Faraway Places was popular. It included the words “I start getting restless whenever I hear the whistle of a train ...” I was one of those getting restless. I wanted to go beyond the borders of Annville – to breathe, to see, to experience. Finally one day, after my freshman year in college, I went up to the train station and, for the first time, got on board and headed off into marvelous new worlds of adventure. I was born in Annville, nurtured by Annville, and launched from Annville – and I am grateful.

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I have enjoyed recording some of my memories. Now I pass them on to you, hoping that as you read, your own memories may be stirred. If they are, write them down so I can read them too!

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