

HOME SWEET HOME!

[Dad](#) used to say, "You have a roof over your head and something to eat. What more could you want"? Truly, a shelter, a home is most important for protection against the elements and malfasants. My parents rented when they were first married, and Mother would tell a story on my dad. He had served in the motor transport in France during [World War I](#).¹ He was captivated by the French culture, and of course, was of partial French descent. He loved the aroma and taste of their good bread, and noted that they made it in stone ovens. When they had their first home, he wanted to duplicate the French tradition. He theorized that if he poured a concrete slab in the new gas oven, he would accomplish the same results. The aftermath was not at all what he expected. He was astonished to see the whole bottom of the oven collapse. [Mother](#) had an entirely different reaction. [[Also see here](#). Picture alert. 😊]

Later, they were able to buy a new house on [Locust Road, Ardsley](#), PA. This was a short, new road located behind the [Mt. Carmel Presbyterian Church](#). When I mention a new road, I do not in any way want to have anyone misconstrue this as a finished road. The surface turned to a molasses-like ooze in wet weather giving rise to the name of our home, "the mud house". On January 13, 1926 this became my address, although my residency was delayed a few days following my first view of daylight in the Abington Memorial Hospital. [As stated in my introduction, this hospital is now called [Jefferson Abington Hospital](#) and remains at 1200 Old York Road | Abington, PA 19001.]

On that particular day my mother found herself with the urgent need to go to the hospital, but Dad was at his place of business in Philadelphia.² He owned and operated a garage there, and was not able to fulfill his husbandly duty at the moment. His brother, my [Uncle Tom](#), was summoned to come with his car to convey mother to the hospital. He assisted her to the proper medical personnel, and left saying, "I want to get out of here before they blame this on me". When he learned that they named me Nancy he commented, "Every horse is named Nancy," to which my mother retorted, "Yes, but every cat is named Tom". [Here is a [link to a picture of Thomas A. Diehl Sr.](#) He was Fire Chief of the [Glenside Fire Company](#).³

¹ Retrieved June 1, 2024 | [Also see here for an informational graphic on World War I](#). | Retrieved April 26, 2025

² That would have been the former [Diehl Motor Truck Works](#) at [N 30th St & W Sedgley Ave](#). At another time, Mom writes, "After the Diehl Motor Truck Works was discontinued (perhaps 1921) the building was turned over to a public garage and operated by Earle." Here is a [link to a short biography Mom wrote about her father Earle](#). Which I have annotated and expanded

³ Retrieved April 14, 2024

Indirectly through Uncle Tom, we will learn more about Mom's early years. This is because of the graciousness of [Mr. Jim Woods](#). He is the historian for the Glenside Fire Company. We will meet him again in Chapter 5, **FAMILY VISITING**. In a August 2024 e-mail, he suggested that also I post to the Facebook page, [You know you grew up in Abington, PA, if you remember...](#) So I complied, and [made this post](#) on August, 16, 2024.]

Some days before I was born, Mother's due date was well past, and my dad was getting nervous about it. He felt that some exercise would help nature along. There was a large water tank a few miles away, and he drove Mother over there, and wanted her to climb its ladder. Apparently, she thought it might help and tried to do so without success. It must have rubbed off on me though. As a child I climbed everything in sight. There wasn't a tree or structure that I wasn't up in to the extremities that were able to support me.

Naturally, at a young age I didn't have many memories about "the mud house". From the photographs of it we can see that it was a bungalow. It was built on a slope, and the kitchen door was entered from a small porch accessed by climbing a flight of wooden stairs. This became a pivotal part of a near fatal tragedy involving yours truly.

In a July 2024 e-mail, Jim provided very specific information about Mom's first years. I was confused. It turns out that I was putting the wrong thing in the search engines. Living in Glenside, Jim knows his way around Glenside and the vicinity. So do *most* of those who are part of [You know you grew up in Abington, PA, if you remember...](#) Jim says, "[Locust Rd](#) (Ardsley /Glenside) is only 2 blocks long crossing [Hazel](#) and [Hawthorne](#) just off of [Edgehill Rd.](#) - just before [Jenkintown Rd.](#)"

Here is a picture of that house along with help from [Michelle Cressman](#) of [You know you grew up in Abington, PA, if you remember...](#) I will follow this with three baby pictures of Mom. In one picture her sister and my Aunt June is pictured. As with many baby pictures, be prepared for a cuteness alert. Just maybe I am a bit prejudiced. ☺



Note what Mom wrote on the right side of the photo. "Locust Road, Ardsley PA - Where I was burned."

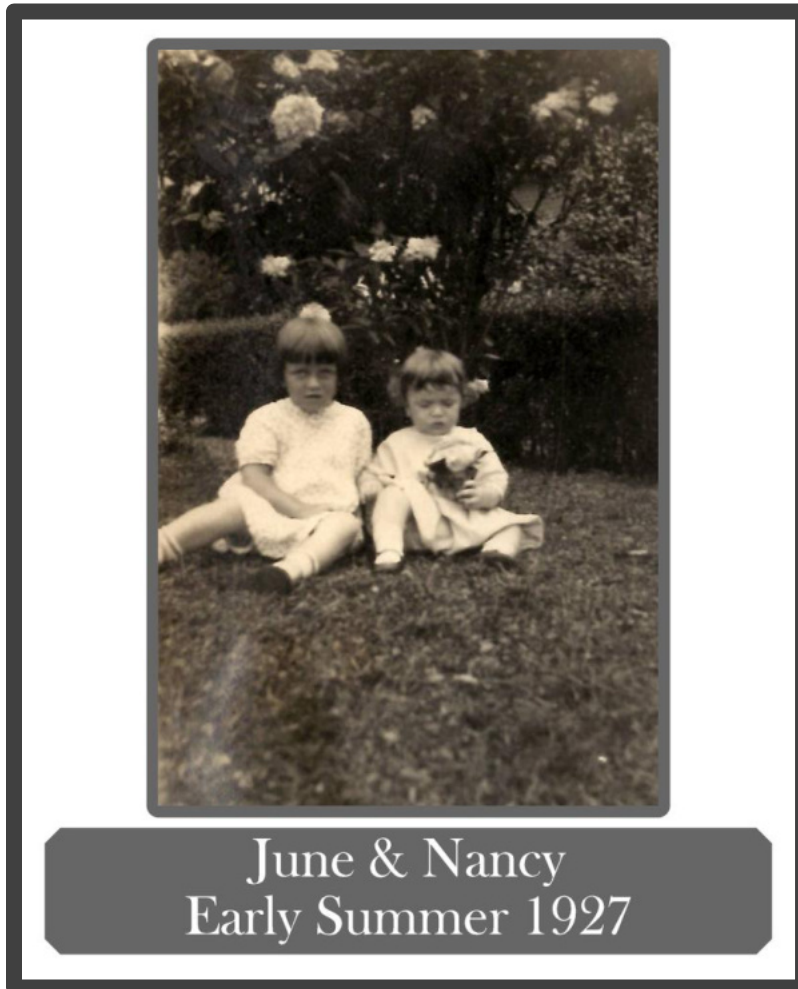
The folks of [You know you grew up in Abington, PA, if you remember...](#) were most helpful in trying to find this house for me. They could not do it.

[Michelle Cressman](#) "I will walk Locust today and see if that house is there. I'm on Elm, one street away."

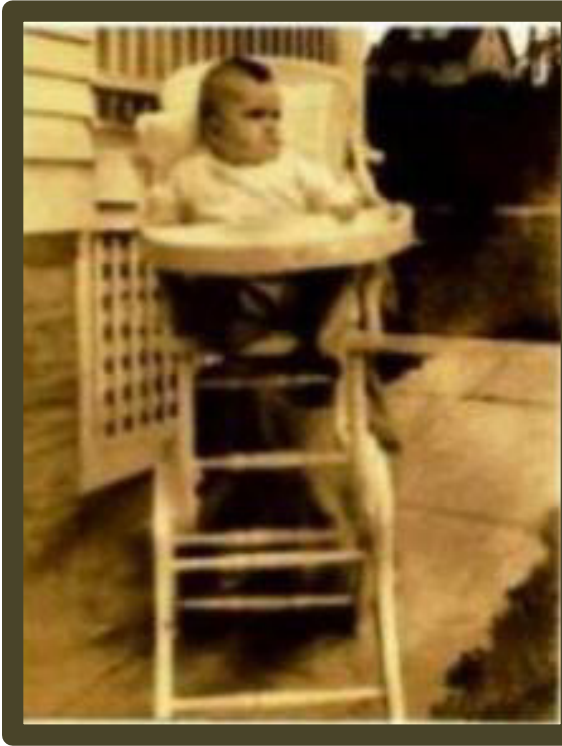
[Myself](#) "Thank you very much. If you happen to spy it and have a smart phone, please snap a pic."

[Carol](#), “It’s not here. Either they drastically changed it or removed it. I walked the whole length of Locust.”

[Michelle](#), “Thank you very much for your efforts.”



As [June Diehl](#) was born May 10, 1923, she would have been around four years of age in this picture. Nancy Diehl would have been one and a half years of age. Remember, [Mom](#) was born on January 13th. While no location is given, perhaps this was taken at the “mud house.”



In the original picture Mom wrote "Nancy" on the bottom of picture. She was just shy of age two in this picture.



Mom wrote "Nancy Diehl 1928" as the picture file name. Note the broom in her hand. She must have liked cleaning at a young age. 😊 Not really. She enjoyed the results, but not the process.

Apparently, [Aunt Mabel](#) (mother's sister) was visiting with her son(s). I was two and a half at the time, and have been told several versions of what must have happened. It was around Halloween and they were burning candles, but [my cousin Ken](#) was also lighting cigarettes.

Evidently, the lighted matches captivated me. The next day I found matches in the cellar-way that were used for the coal stove. I took them outside to the bottom of the above mentioned steps, and practiced striking matches. At that age it didn't take too long before I ignited my dress in the lap area. This was the beginning of an incendiary story.

← Here is a picture of my great Aunt Mabel with Ken's older brother [Charles](#) circa 1911, almost twenty years before this incendiary story. Note: Mom wrote "Charles - Mabel" on the bottom left of the picture.]



Aunt Mabel and her son Charles circa 1911. Note: Mom wrote "Charles - Mabel" in the lower left corner. Mom was burned in 1928.

First, let us go back a few hours earlier. My sister, June, was about five and a half years old, and was "potty trained" years before. Was it an accident or divine intervention? - but that night she created the need for her blanket to be washed. This freshly laundered blanket was hanging on the line strung at the porch. It was still wet! Mother had been busy - perhaps in my sister's bedroom - when she heard dreadful screams coming from her younger daughter. She dashed out the kitchen door to see her daughter climbing the steps with clothing ablaze. With presence of mind she ripped the blanket from the line and enveloped me in it to smother the flames.

Concurrently, the neighbor who also heard the screams and saw what took place called to my mother that she would summon Dr. Mayer who lived on Easton Road. Within five minutes he was there to come to my aid. I was rushed to the place of my birth, where I remained until ready

to be released. The flames had enveloped my lap, chest, arms, and face, but the third degree burns were on my left leg, abdomen and left arm. All areas had scars which needed to be cauterized daily, because of "[proud flesh](#)."⁴ Each day Dr. Mayer drove to our home to perform this painful procedure. Mother said, "You started to cry when you heard his car coming down the road."

⁴ Retrieved September 1, 2024

Although, I have no memories of this accident, it seemingly made a believer out of me concerning fire. I developed a healthy respect for any conflagration. My first memory at "the mud house" was during a post Christmas burning of the trees. Neighbors were disposing of the holiday trees by burning a large pile in the center of a vacant lot. I was so frightened that they would be burned too, and asked Mother to tell them to stop. She tried to help me to understand that it would be all right.

A second memory entailed a cute little stuffed dog that I had been given. It is also pictured in a photo prior to a disturbing event. I was the individual who was disturbed. I cried! My brother, [Lyle](#), was always experimenting with something, like taking my father's expensive camera apart – permanently. This time he wanted to see if the dog's hair would grow back if cut off. My nice soft, furry pooch was now a hairless variety. Lyle would have been about nine at the time.

As children we were not aware of the things that were going on around the nation. The stock market had crashed, and the country was sinking into depression. Dad's business was failing, which also meant mortgage payments were not being met. One's name on a title is of little value when the bank is pulling the strings. The little home on Locust Road was now going to belong to someone else. We were on the move.

Park Avenue, [Glenside](#), was perhaps a mile away. We rented the end section of a row house. Today we call them town houses. We were next to the spacious [Glenside Park](#), which had a swimming pool. Certainly, my parents had a lot of problems to face, but I wasn't aware of these. During the summer I could go to the pool with a season token, which looped on a swimming suit strap. There were other kids my age, and I had a lot of fun except when Lyle was dunking me in the pool. I think he wanted to see how long I could be under and still come up alive. This was a practice he repeated through the years until I no longer swam where he was.

Again, Jim Woods gives us a helping hand. He even has a picture of Mom's 1920's /1930's Glenside home in July/August 2024. First of all, he gives us some local information about the roads and the municipalities in Glenside. He didn't forget about the pool either. I give us some additional information, based on his knowledge. Are you ready?

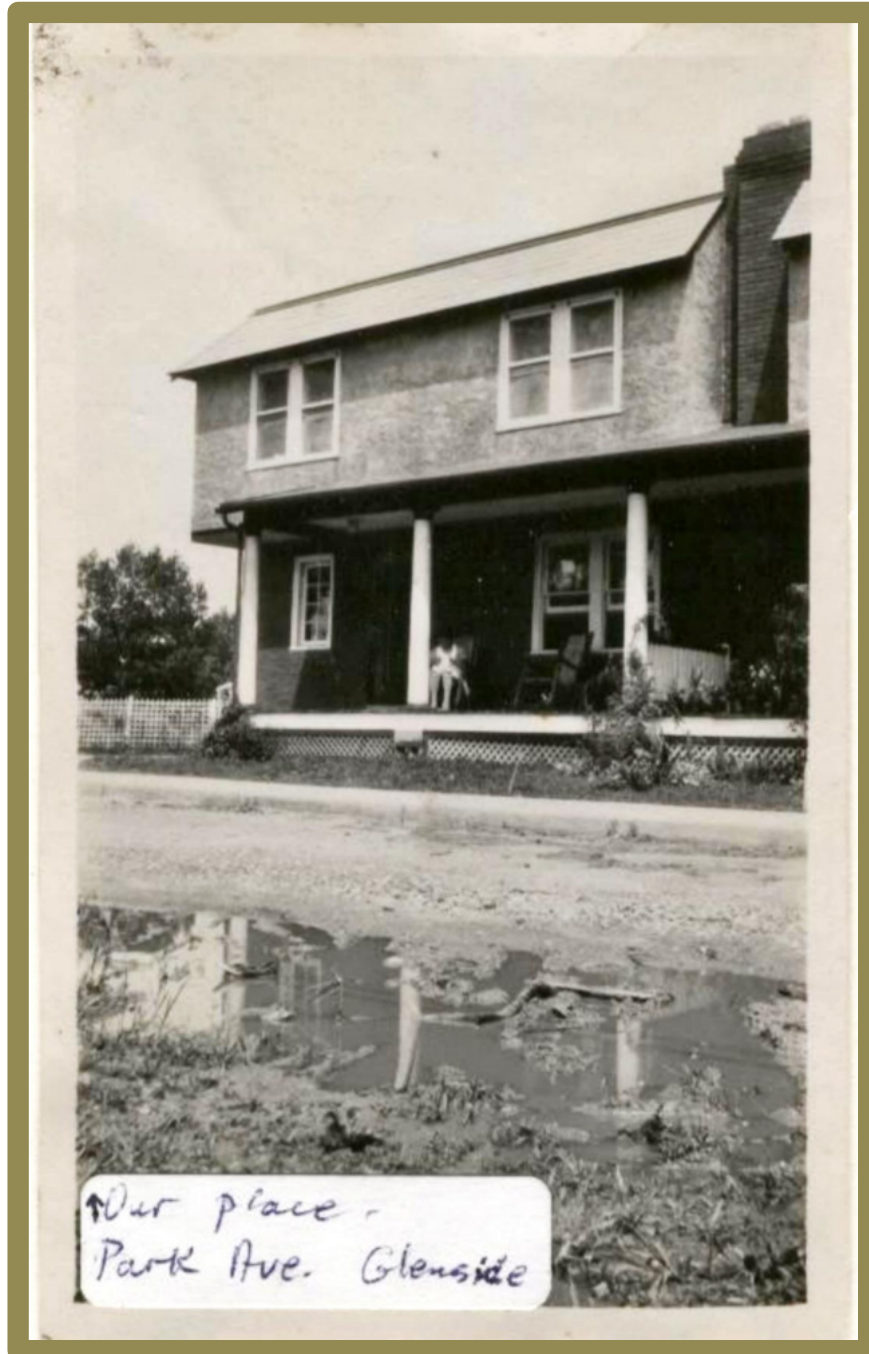
“Glenside is a rarity as it is split in half between [Cheltenham Township](#) and [Abington Township](#).” Park is now called [Parkside Ln](#), and the house in the picture is right behind my house! The house was refinished about 5 years ago.” Jim.

According to Montgomery County Property Records Search 217 Parkside Lane is in [Montgomery County](#). It is a 2-story row home built in 1928. It was remodeled in 2019. It is LOT :255, and it is in [Cheltenham Township](#).⁵ – Carol

“There are 7 row homes on Parkside. The street is a dead-end, and the Glenside pool *was* located at the end of the street. It was moved in the late 60's a few hundred feet.” Jim. Via hyperlinks, here are Jim's pictures. [The former Glenside pool is now a basketball court.](#) [Here is the Glenside pool in July/ August 2024.](#)

This matches Mom's description of things. Here is Mom's picture of the house in the 1920's /1930's followed by Jim's picture. There is an informational section on Ken McKnight and World War II. Last of all, someone took a picture of Mom at the pool. She would have been four years old.

⁵ Data retrieved August 22, 2024 | Through the wonders of technology, [here is a PDF file to prove the above data information.](#)



Mom wrote "Our place Park Ave. Glenside" on a label which she put on the lower left-hand corner. This was Mom's 1920's/1930's home.



Mom's 1920's /1930's Park Avenue, Glenside, PA home is now known as 217 Parkside Lane, Glenside, PA. Obviously, it is the grey one. Jim tells us, "The house was refinished about 5 years ago." The above property records confirm Jim's statement.

My cousin Ken rented a little "stand" or kiosk about fifty or so feet from our house. He sold sodas, candy, and like things to the summer crowd to raise money for cars and dates. At four and five years old I thought all of this was free, and wondered why he was distressed when I kept asking for more. He had to put limits on my freebies.

More pictures anyone? Why not?

Here is a picture of Ken either during or post-World War II. According to Mom's records, he was a Sgt. in the [Air Transport Command](#) as part of the [United States Army Air Forces](#) in the [Second World War \(WWII\)](#).⁶ In totality, Mom's Davis Family Tree entry for Ken reads as follows. I have edited it slightly for the sake of clarity. I am hyperlinking the places where Ken served/flew to help the reader understand

⁶ These last three links, which are Wikipedia links, were retrieved June 2, 2024

the scope of World War II. It also shows the dogged determination that it took for the Allies⁷ to win the war. This picture right below this text is Mom's Cousin [Frank Kenneth McKnight](#). I never knew that his first name was actually Frank. He was the son of [Mabel Hurst Davis McKnight](#), the older sister of my [Grandmother Diehl](#).



Frank Kenneth McKnight (b. Feb. 17, 1911; d. Aug. 10, 2008) Sgt. [Air Transport Command](#)⁸ Ser.# 39705306 (with 11th Trans. Sq., 2nd Foreign Trans. Gp., Sq. B. & Sq. H, in succession) He was based at P.I.A.A.F., ([Presque Isle Army Air Field](#)), [Presque Isle, ME](#).⁹ Ken flew as [flight engineer](#)¹⁰ with Capt. Wm. Hamlin from 1943 to 1945. He flew ([B-17 Flying Fortresses](#)) and ([Consolidated B-24 Liberators](#)) from Wilmington to [India](#). He flew flights from P.I. to [England](#), [France](#) and [Africa](#) via [Harmon Field](#), Newfoundland ([Newfoundland and Labrador](#)), [Goose Bay Lab](#), ([Canada](#)), [Iceland](#), [Azores](#), [Bermuda](#), [Mitchell Field](#)., L.I. ([Long Island](#)). In 1945 In 1945, Ken flew "[Snowball](#)"¹¹ runs—fast-deliver missions from P.I. to [Orly Field](#) ([Paris, France](#)). This was done on a [C54 Douglas Skymasters](#). (Please also see [Douglas C-54, Presque Isle, 1945](#)) They traveled at 3 1/2 miles per minute. He/they were transporting mail, personnel, high priority war freight, wounded infantrymen from the

⁷ "[Allied powers, coalition](#) of countries that opposed the [Axis powers](#) (led by [Germany](#), [Italy](#), and [Japan](#)) during [World War II](#). The principal members of the Allies were the [United Kingdom](#), the [Soviet Union](#), the [United States](#), and [China](#) (the "Big Four"), as well as [France](#) while it was unoccupied. The Allies also included every other signatory to the [Declaration by United Nations](#) (January 1, 1942): [Australia](#), [Belgium](#), [Canada](#), [Costa Rica](#), [Cuba](#), [Czechoslovakia](#), the [Dominican Republic](#), [El Salvador](#), [Greece](#), [Guatemala](#), [Haiti](#), [Honduras](#), [India](#), [Luxembourg](#), the [Netherlands](#), [New Zealand](#), [Nicaragua](#), [Norway](#), [Panama](#), [Poland](#), [South Africa](#), and [Yugoslavia](#). Later wartime signers were [Mexico](#), the [Philippines](#), [Ethiopia](#), [Iraq](#), [Brazil](#), [Bolivia](#), [Iran](#), [Colombia](#), [Liberia](#), [France](#), [Ecuador](#), [Peru](#), [Chile](#), [Paraguay](#), [Venezuela](#), [Uruguay](#), [Turkey](#), [Egypt](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [Syria](#), and [Lebanon](#)." | Retrieved from [The Encyclopedia Britannica >> Allied Powers World War II](#) on August 1, 2025.

⁸ Retrieved June 2, 2024

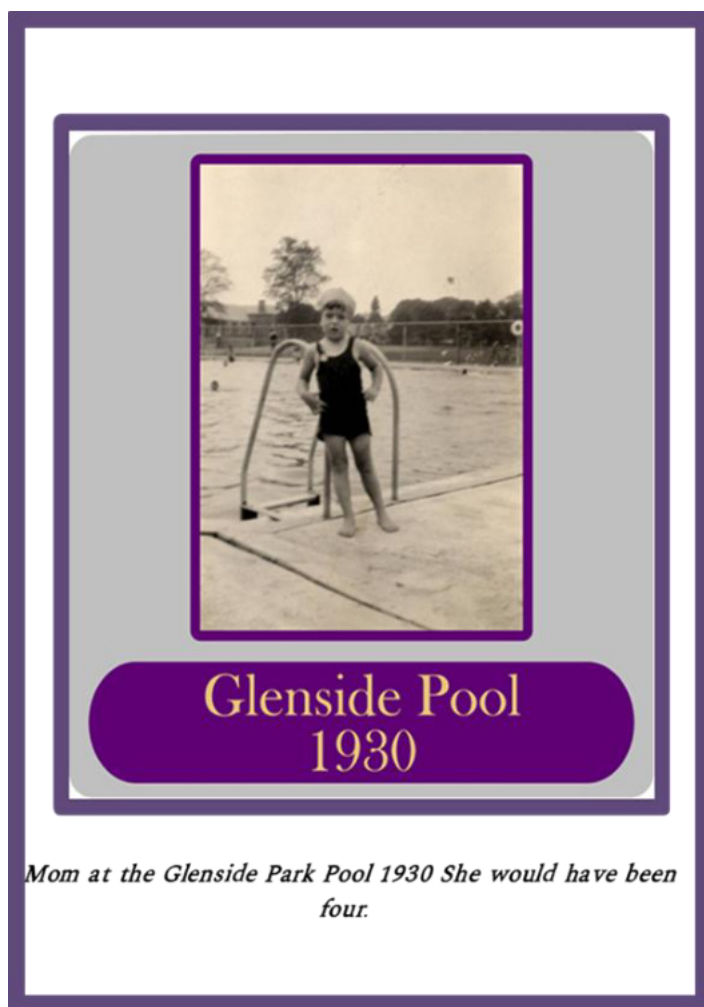
⁹ Retrieved August 4, 2025

¹⁰ Retrieved August 5, 2025

¹¹ Retrieved August 4, 2025

[Western Front](#) On one trip they even brought back 56 huskies that came home to P.I. after aiding the [Belgium evacuation of wounded Yanks](#).^{12/13} I have created a picture/text file on [P.I.A.A.F.](#) I also created [another document on Ken](#). Here you will see another picture of Ken, his W.W. II draft card, and his marriage license to Willa Dudley. Sadly, Ken married four times. Willa was his second wife and the mother of Kenneth Dudley McKnight (Bill) (b. July 11, 1946) and Carol Anne McKnight (Missy) (b. Aug. 12, 1948) Ken's first child is Betty Jean McKnight Townsend (b. Jan. 23, 1936)

Mom has saved three Diehl family pictures and one of herself. They are from their time in Glenside. Mom has given them the dates of 1930 and 1931 for two of them. The third my brother, Glenn, gave the date the date of 1930. However, my cousin Wendy Leaver Heinemann notes their clothes seem to be the same in both pictures. Did Mom make a typo? We don't know. Perhaps they were taken at Glenside Park? After these four pictures we will resume Mom's story.



¹² This Chat GBT (artificial intelligence) generated information was retrieved August 1, 2025

¹³ The rest of the links in this paragraph were retrieved August 1, 2025



Diehl Family: Babette, Nancy,
Lyle, June, Earle

Mom dated this picture 1931. Perhaps it was taken at the "...the spacious [Glenside Park](#)"



Mom has written, "Nancy, Earle, June, & Lyle Diehl - Glenside" across the bottom of the picture. She dated it circa 1930. I have turned the picture to gray scale to hopefully increase clarity.



Lyle, June & Nancy
Glenside Park

My brother Glenn found this picture for Mom's memorial service, which was April 20, 2024. He added the time frame of the 1930's for the file name. This would make sense.

Billy and Jean Ruple lived two doors down. Billy was asked to gather sticks that fell out of the trees, I suspect for kindling for their stove. He would get a big armful, and while he was picking up the next stick two or three would slip out of his arm and fall. He really worked hard to get what his mom wanted. Jean and I were pals, and were always into something. That is, I did what Jean wanted to do, and when my mother would censure me, I would say, "how did you know?" "Oh, a little bird told me", was her reply. I would have shot those birds if I knew how. I couldn't understand what they had against me.

Why did we move again? Perhaps Dad's business was totally gone by now, and he got a job at Butler Buick in [Ardmore](#).¹⁴ Dad was a mechanic, and this was his work there. Where to live now? [Roslyn](#) was a small community just above Glenside. Right next to the railroad tracks on Charles Avenue were four single two story homes. We were located at the foot of a hill. I was now about five, and this was the beginning of my love affair with trains.¹⁵ I would go over to the

¹⁴ Where did Granddaddy work? In March 2025 I reached out to [The Historical Society of Fort Washington](#) at 473 S Bethlehem Pike, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Robin Costa replied.

"Searching the electronic versions of old Ambler Gazettes through the Wissahickon Valley Public Library (online) I found an ad for Butler Buick in the Ambler Gazette of 6/14/1928. It indicates the Ambler agent is John C Moore and gives a phone # but no address.

Another ad from 1930 shows Jenkintown Buick's Ambler location as M. R. Steele, Ambler location 437 Church St, Ambler.

12/11/1930 ad from John Moore-buy a used Buick with address of 701 Butler Ave, Ambler. This address today is outside Ambler, probably due to renumbering. I believe from some property records that Butler Buick was probably at the location of [Weavers Way Co-op \(Grocery\) at 271 E. Butler Ave.](#) [Website link and address retrieved March 24, 2025. It does show that it is in Ambler. I don't live there. It could be outside of Ambler with an Ambler mailing address. 😊]

I also looked at some Gazettes in the 40's but didn't find any more Buick references.

This is the best I could do.

¹⁵ This is so true. At Singerlea on the walls in the north entry hallway is or was a small section of "all things trains." There are or were three sand blasted train spikes that have been painted black. They relate to monofilament and hung on the wall. The spikes most assuredly came from the short-lived and troubled [Quakertown and Eastern Railroad](#) which ran through the bottom of our property at [Cooks Creek](#). In 1983 Mom and Dad were on some sort of outing to [Altoona, PA](#). Mom could just not pass up this picture opportunity! Mom labeled the picture, "Nancy on the Nancy in Altoona 1983." No wonder Mom had a smile on her face. [Here is a link to that picture.](#)

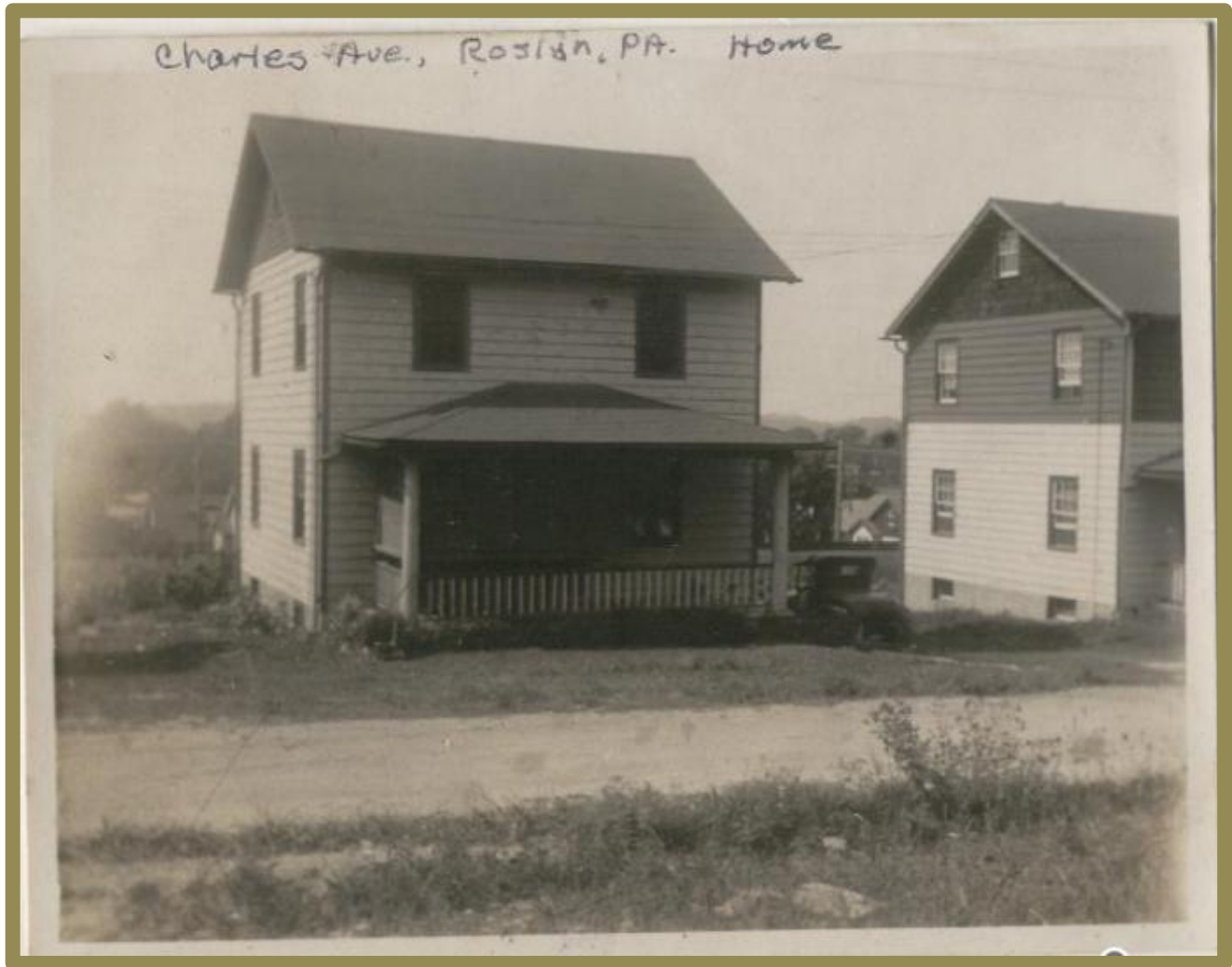
station,¹⁶ which was only about a block away. I would admire the big behemoths smoke, steam, and whistle. They were more exciting than the single electric cars that went by frequently.



The original Roslyn train station, perhaps as Mom saw it. This station was demolished in 1980 in favor of a modern facility. The above picture is also a picture link.

Mom saved a picture of her home on Charles Avenue for us. See right below for a replication of a 90+ year-old picture. We will then turn to the kind people of [You know you grew up in Abington, PA, if you remember...](#) for help with this location. Indeed, street names have changed, but history remains untouched. After Mom's picture and the group's help, we will return to Mom's 1996 text.

¹⁶ This undated picture of the **original** Roslyn train station comes to us courtesy of [Jim Frisby](#). He posted it to [You know you grew up in Abington, PA if you remember...](#) on [March 24, 2025](#). His written post reads, "Who remembers the old Roslyn train station? Many of us have probably taken the train on the old Reading Lines or more recently SEPTA into Center City Philly or perhaps other local destinations." Wikipedia article for the [Roslyn station \(SEPTA\)](#) tells us this, "**Roslyn station** is a [SEPTA Regional Rail](#) station in [Roslyn, Pennsylvania](#). Located at the intersection of Easton and Susquehanna Roads, it serves the [Warminster Line](#)...The original station was built by the Reading Railroad. The building was demolished in 1980 in favor of a modern facility." Therefore, this linked picture would be the train station to which Mom went, "...beginning of my love affair with trains." Wikipedia page variously accessed and last retrieved March 24, 2025 | [The Mapcarta link is this..](#)



Mom wrote "Charles Ave., Roslyn, PA. Home" across the top. In 2024 Mom would have written "[Grovania Ave, Roslyn, PA Home](#)" across the top.

From [Betsy Coe](#) from [You know you grew up in Abington, PA, if you remember...](#) writes on August 17th [in reply to my post](#):

"[My] son has a 1927 railroad atlas that shows Charles Avenue just above [Roslyn Train Station](#) branching off from Easton at [Susquehanna](#). There are four houses built at that point, right at the intersection of Charles and [Albright](#), between Charles and the tracks for the [North Penn](#) branch of the [Reading Line](#)." [This matches Mom's text to a T.]

The Atlas is this. [Atlas Of The Reading Main Line / Volume One / Montgomery Co. Penna / ...Compiled And Published By Frank H. M. Klinge / Engineers & Publishers / .../ Philadelphia, 1927 / Copyrighted by Frank H.M. Klinge Phila PA...](#)

Between comments within the post thread and an e-mail, Betsy shared the following additional information. She shared two plates, or pages, from the atlas. They are [Plate 19](#) and [Plate 14](#). She also posted both plates and [part of Plate 19](#) within the replies to my post. This helped others participate.

In a private message, we exchanged the following.

“Your atlas fits Mom’s text to a T. Mom was rarely wrong.” Carol

“It's funny, I was thinking "maybe she was wrong, Charles Street is a long way away," but my mom is the same, so I looked more carefully. “

“We just bought this atlas last week, so your timing was fated.” Betsy

“It looks to me like you want the modern [Grovania at Albright](#). [Grovania](#) and Charles are two separate roads divided by undeveloped property on the atlas [[Plate 19, right half, approximately middle of the Plate](#)], and it appears that they were eventually connected and merged as Grovania.” Betsy’s reply to my post.

“You want Plate 19 for Charles Avenue and Plate 14 for the station that shows the rail and trolley lines.”

“Charles is right at the bottom of the map. The road running along the divide between plates is [Susquehanna...](#)”

The group agrees with Betsy. There have been several options presented by the group as to Mom’s 2024 Charles Avenue house, which is now Grovania. [Betsy Townsend](#) thinks it could be [1163 Grovania Ave](#). Several agree. [Vicki Evans](#) suggests [1160 Grovania](#). She says, “It is difficult to see due to trees out front. It would only be a 5-minute walk to the train station. The tracks run right behind the house.” [Montgomery County Property records Search](#) tell us that 1160 Grovania was built in 1900. They even provide a picture, but they do not give a date. There are no boxwood I saved the picture. For some reason, I can’t find property records for 1163 Grovania. [Norm Bauer Sr.](#) posted several pictures. The houses all look quite similar.

Taking this information, I looked at Google Earth and Google Maps, Street View. I clicked “See latest Date” in the small black box in the upper left-hand corner of the web page. This revealed earlier pictures of the same property. The latest Google Maps date is June 2022. What I take to be box wood trees obscure the front view of the house. However, in the August 2007 view, you can still see much of the front of the house. It sure seems that it might be Mom's 1930/1931 Charles Avenue home. What do you think? I have saved the image and lightened it a bit, as the

picture was taken on a cloudy day. I also put a red dot next to “Aug 2007” in the bottom left of the small black box. Here is what some of the people at [You know you grew up in Abington, PA, if you remember...](#) think may well be Mom's 1930/1931 home. I agree, especially if you take the Property records Search picture into consideration. There seems to be only one thing against this 1900 house. As you look at the 1927 [map](#) with 2025 eyes, you would think that one would make a left onto Grovania/Charles from Albright, and you would find Mom's house to be the fourth house on the left. Such is not the case. Was Albright Avenue re-constructed? It would not be the first time that this has happened.

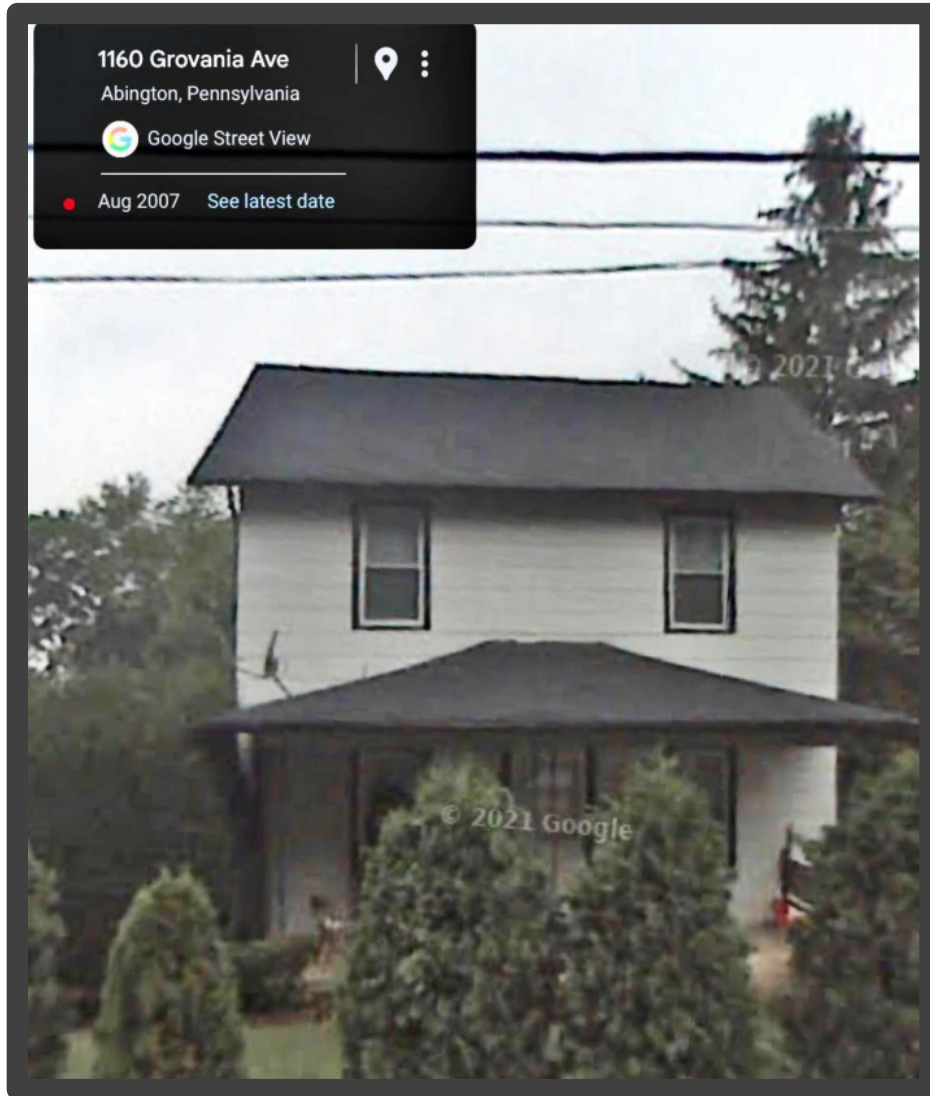
I continued to think. What is the distance between 1160 Grovania Avenue and the train station at 1096 South Easton Road & Susquehanna Road? Remember Mom just said, “We were located at the foot of a hill. I was now about five, and this was the beginning of my love affair with trains. I would go over to the [station](#), which was only about a block away. I would admire the big behemoths smoke, steam, and whistle. They were more exciting than the single electric cars that went by frequently.

Without much effort I found these things. According to [Map Developers](#), [as a straight line it is: 0.17 miles, 908 feet between Mom's house and the station. In a car it is 0.19 miles, 1019 feet between Mom's house and the station.](#) This would give credence to Mom's memories and her text in her story. According to the website [Conversion Units](#) and [Convert mile to city block \[East U.S.\]](#) .19 of a mile is just shy of 4 city blocks. Still, we can easily imagine a 5-year-old walking around 1,000 feet or 4 city blocks in the early 1930's [Roslyn](#) and, “beginning my love affair with trains.”

FINALLY, here are both pictures.



*This house **seems** to be Nancy Diehl's 1030/1931 Charles Avenue home in Roslyn, PA. This picture comes to us from [Montgomery County Property records Search](#) . No picture date is given. Charles Avenue is now known as Grovania Avenue. The house number is 1160.*



*This house **seems** to be Nancy Diehl's 1030/1931 Charles Avenue home in Roslyn, PA. This picture was taken in August 2007. Charles Avenue is now known as Grovania Avenue. The house number is 1160.*

Just below the station was the cemetery where my two uncles were buried. Mother's only

brothers were pre-schoolers¹⁷ when they died of [diphtheria](#).¹⁸ I didn't know it then, but that is where my parents, maternal grandparents, nephew,¹⁹ and two aunts would be laid to rest in the course of time.

Our next door neighbors were the Ritchies. I thought they were rich because of their name. Their daughter, Doris, and I were friends. On the first Christmas we lived there, I went see Doris' tree and toys. They had a little white fence and lots of cotton around the base of the tree. It looked so luxurious that I just knew they were rich.

One summer day in the early thirties I was lying on the lawn behind our house. Lots and lots of airplanes were flying over. I can't remember, but think most of them were single engine planes. It seemed like they were going over for hours, but then time is nebulous for children. Many years later I read a report about this event, but it was not my paper so I couldn't cut it out. I believe the country was trying to make a show of force for some reason.

My brother was ever the troublemaker. I had been given a kiddie car that I would pedal up and down the road. Ritchie's house was at the intersection of a road that went up a hill. Lyle had taken my kiddie car up the hill, and came flying down crashing into Ritchie's hedge. He must have done this several times, and Mrs. Ritchie brought this to Mother's attention. Mother called us all into the house, as it was not clear to her who the culprit was. Lyle and June ran upstairs and ducked under a bed. I didn't know why, but I followed them. My problem was that I didn't fit under with them in the way. I was the recipient of some pretty hard whacks on the posterior. As usual, Lyle got off scot- frees.

Our move to [Edge Hill Road](#), just a few blocks away, was of short duration. It was a nice sized, gray cut-stone structure, with bright, sunny rooms. It was here one dark evening that I had

¹⁷ Mom's maternal grandparents were [Charles Livezly Davis \(March 13, 1859 – May 1, 1946\)](#) and [Josephine Wade Close DeBinder Davis \(November 7, 1862 – August 2, 1936 \)](#) Those brothers were [Charles Livezly Davis Jr. \(December 1, 1982 – December 7, 1987\)](#) and [Joseph Davis \(October 18, 1886 – June 15, 1900\)](#)

¹⁸ [Merk Manuel Consumer Version](#) (Retrieved May 24, 2024) | [Also see HERE.](#) | The diphtheria vaccine was developed in 1923. "Routine vaccination has made diphtheria rare in high-resource countries." – Merk. | I was first vaccinated against diphtheria September 29, 1961. It is a series of vaccinations. It is part of the DPT vaccine. "The DPT vaccine or DTP vaccine is a class of combination vaccines to protect against three infectious diseases in humans: diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), and tetanus (lockjaw)." [Wikipedia article for DPT vaccine](#). | [Diphtheria prevention poster from the UK \(around 1939-1945\)](#) >> [Wikipedia article for Diphtheria vaccine](#). This part of this informational footnote was retrieved March 24, 2025.


¹⁹ This would have been my cousin [John Charles Diehl \(May 21, 1946 – May 21, 1946\)](#). [Uncle Lyle](#) and [Aunt Flossie](#) never had any more children. 😞

a disconcerting experience. I was sick in bed, and undoubtedly had a high fever. I was tossing and turning when suddenly there appeared at the foot of the bed such horrible creatures. We have all seen pictures of the masks that witch doctors wear in countries like Africa. To design these masks the people would have had to experience something like I did for the faces looked much like those masks. These faces would rise individually from below the footboard, hover over my chest then drop back down again. I must have screamed as my mother came to my room. She told me I was dreaming, but I asked to have the light left on.

We had a set of [rattan](#)²⁰ furniture, which included not only the sofa and chairs, but also had additional pieces like the [fernery](#).²¹ This set was in the front room by the big glass windows. Why kids do these things, I don't know, but we jumped up and down on the sofa cushions. Poor Mother was always trying to stop us from doing something bad.

Dad must have sensed that the days ahead would be difficult. More and more people were losing their jobs. He wanted to move to a farm, where he felt we would have more security. He would hold me on his lap, and my sister and brother on either arm of the rattan rocking chair. As he rocked he would say, "We are driving to the country to look for a farm". In the days ahead we actually did go to several farms, but they were either unsatisfactory or the rent was too high.

I was seven when they settled on what was know as the [Rumph Farm](#). (Today, the shrine of [Our Lady of Czestochowa](#)²² is located next to this place. The priest's house had been our home.) It was perched on a hill, and would be a place that we could have pigs, chickens and a milk cow. There would be a garden for good vegetables, and there were a lot of fruit trees. Dad could still drive to his job in Ardmore.

 In 2010 Mom printed a Google Map and showed us where the Rumph Farm was. I think that it will help us get our bearings, so to speak.

²⁰ Retrieved September 1, 2024

²¹ This is and [Etsy](#) listing of an "Antique Wicker Fernery in Original Colors Circa 1920's." It gives us an idea of what *may* have been in Mom's Edge Hill Road home.

²² Retrieved May 24, 2024 | The Shrine's address is P.O. Box 2049, 654 Ferry Road, Doylestown, PA 18901. This is in [New Britian Township](#), Bucks County, PA. (The [Place Names entry is on page 279 ff.](#))



To see all the details that are visible on the screen, use the "Print" link next to the map.

Location of Rumph Farm. Barn stood in area of swimming pool



It was the summer past my seventh birthday, about the month of July. A down and out fellow named Chester was going to come live with us. He knew nothing about farming, and would keep saying, "I'm green yet". He was to stay there the first night by himself, and the rest of us would move in the next day. He was so scared that he went back to Roslyn the next day on one of the return trips for more furniture.

Our neighbor to the south of us (where the shrine now is) lived in a small frame house, next to the ruins of a stone farmhouse and barn. He was "teched in the head" as the locals said, and he would walk aimlessly about the fields at times. It was said that his family was wealthy, but was embarrassed by him, so kept him out there where he wouldn't be a problem. On a series of nights we heard a strange moaning, that Mother insisted was the neighbor. The sound turned out to be the wind blowing through a ventilator in our window. However, in time the poor fellow died out in a field, and the family found him long afterwards. The buzzards had done a job on him. It was surely different back then.

Wild strawberries grew abundantly in one of the stony parts of the field. We used to pick them and Mother had a recipe for making jam in the sun. She put out trays of the berry mixture, and the sun did the cooking. Then it was put in jars and sealed. It was delicious.

Not only was the strawberry jam delicious, but we had all kinds of good fruits and vegetables preserved. We had a big cook stove, but in the summer we used a three-burner kerosene stove. I still remember Mother canning all that food, and perspiring on the hot summer days. There were no electric fans if you didn't have the power. She also canned the various meats when we butchered, like canned sausage.

My sister and I were in high school, when we were summoned to the principal's office. My mother had gone to the neighbor's to phone the school. There was an emergency at home, and we were to start walking. She would meet us with the car. The above mentioned oil stove had started to smoke, while Mother was in the chicken house collecting eggs. Everything had seemed all right, and she thought it would be safe to leave for a short time without turning the burners off under the food she was canning. Upon her return to the house, she saw black soot floating through the air. She quickly turned the burners off, but the entire house was covered with soot. She must have sat down and cried, because she said she couldn't face the clean up alone. We would have to help. We washed bedding, bureau scarves, table cloths, and just about anything you could name. Every dish, every pan, all the furniture, the floor, the rugs, anything and everything was coated with flakes of soot!

Dad fixed one corner of the enclosed back porch to put in a bathtub that had been in his parent's home. It was real long and took a lot of water to fill. Since we did not have running water, the water was heated on the cook stove and carried to the tub. There was a drain hooked

up, but this "bathroom" was only used in warm weather. You would have frozen to death in the winter. We kids got washed in the big round wash tub, which would be parked in front of the stove to benefit from the heat.

There were a few pieces of horse drawn equipment on the farm when we arrived, but we needed to buy some more pieces. Dad was able to find some second hand equipment. It was all of the horse drawn variety. He cut the [equipment tongue](#)²³ short, bolted on a metal hitch, and now could use it. There was one problem. We didn't have a horse or a tractor, so Dad tried to pull a plow with our old Buick. He pulled the rear out. That old Buick sat there in the field for a long while. Then Dad took an old Diehl truck frame and motor with the name "**DIEHL**" on the top of the radiator (my grandfather manufactured trucks for awhile), geared it down, bolted cleats on the rear hubs, and voila - he had a tractor. Later on he was able to buy an old Case which became the primary tractor.

Here are pictures of that truck/tractor and the Case. After this, we will return to Mom's story.



Mom labeled this picture, "Earle Diehl & Lyle ca 1934 Rumph Farm"

²³ This is a self-made file. It contains four pictures of a wagon tongue. It was from a [Mecum Auctions](#) auction in 2018. Here is a [link to these pictures](#). I perceive that the principle is the same for other horse drawn equipment. I retrieved the pictures and created the file August 29, 2024.



Mom labeled this picture, "Earle Diehl ca 1940 Case Tractor." "Later on he was able to buy an old Case which became the primary tractor." - Mom 1996.

A huckster came around selling certain vegetables and stale bread. It was probably day old, and he would sell a big sack of bread for a small amount of money. We not only used it for the table, but also fed bread to the dog and cats, and if a lot was left over the pigs and chickens would benefit. The man was a Russian and we couldn't pronounce his name. We called him Gee Whiz. Years later in the 1970's I met him again. He was retired and staying at the [Baptist retirement home](#)²⁴ where Web's mother and aunt were staying.

There was a fish store near the garage where Dad worked. On a few Friday evening's, he would stop there and for a song would buy seafood that did not sell, nor could the shopkeeper sell it as fresh the next day. It would be packed in ice at the bottom of a barrel. There would be oysters galore, along with all types of seafood. Mother would make oyster stew, but at that age

²⁴ While this link takes you to a 1930's postal - front and back - of the GERMAN BAPTIST HOME FOR THE AGED at [7023 Rising Sun Avenue, Philadelphia](#). The home didn't change a lot between the 1930's and the 1970's/1980's when [Grammy](#) and [Aunt Norma](#) lived there. Now the facade is different.

I only wanted the broth. Now I would just love to have a big bowl of stew filled with oysters like we had then.

Some time after we moved to the farm, Dad was laid off at Butler Buick. He suspected it would happen because there was almost no work for him to do. He would come home in the evenings exclaiming that he sat on the bench all day again. It was in the middle of the summer, and there was a lot of grain and hay to get into the barn for winter. Dad kept trying to find other work somewhere near, because we had no income now. Everyone was trying to find some kind of work if only for a day or two.

Winter came, and money was a thing you only dreamed about. He would walk through the snow to the different towns, because we didn't have gasoline, and he didn't have the money for a license either. He was getting desperate. It was about 1935, and he finally walked to [Doylestown](#)²⁵ to apply for relief. President Roosevelt had pressed to get some programs to help the people. We really needed help! (I would add that my grandfather also experienced great financial difficulty too. His business was so bad that they were just squeaking by, and could not help us).

After being on relief a month or more, Dad was given a job on the Works Project Administration better know as the W.P.A.²⁶ He worked hard at a lot of projects. He did a lot of work with concrete like making park benches, paths, and other similar things at schools, parks, and other public places. He also did roadwork. They were to take sledgehammers and crack large stones to make gravel for filling in where it was needed. After things picked up at the end of the depression,

²⁵ [Place Names](#), page 133 ff. [Also, please see the Mapcarta entry for Doylestown, PA.](#)

²⁶ The letters W.P.A. stand for the either the *Works Progress Administration* or the [Works Project Administration](#) depending on the year in question. According to Wikipedia, “The Works Progress Administration (WPA; renamed in 1939 as the Work Projects Administration) was an American New Deal agency that employed millions of job seekers (mostly men who were not formally educated) to carry out public works projects, including the construction of public buildings and roads. It was set up on May 6, 1935, by presidential order [[Franklin Delano Roosevelt](#)], as a key part of the Second New Deal.” It was dissolved June 30, 1943. Further quoting, “...the WPA supplied paid jobs to the unemployed during the Great Depression in the United States, while building up the public infrastructure of the US, such as parks, schools, and roads.” The whole Wikipedia article can be found at the above link. Retrieved April 5, 2024

he was able to find work in a machine shop in Doylestown, and later worked for Brewster,²⁷ and the Navy in [Warminster](#).²⁸

All the people with jobs looked down their noses at people on relief or on the W.P.A. When we were on relief, we could get certain food items that were especially marked in big print, "Not To Be Sold". People would see you with these items and talk behind your back. When they would see a W.P.A. worker along the road they made fun of them. Not many cars would go by, but they figured the workers should not rest even these few times for a breather. The work was hard using sledges and shovels, and a lot of the people were not so young. Dad was already in his forties. We kids never wanted anybody to know that Dad worked on the W.P.A., so at school we said he farmed. He did, so we really weren't lying about it.

Dad would go to work during the day, and Mother would stay home doing housework and some of the chores with the chickens. She wanted to try a different breed of chicken called the [Black Minorca](#),²⁹ which resembled a [Leghorn](#)³⁰ with the exception of the color. They were black as crows with bright red combs, and yellow beaks. They laid nice large white eggs, but the real disappointment came when it was time to sell them. Their flesh was very dark, and they didn't sell well at the auction.

²⁷ This is the [Former Naval Air Warfare Center](#). From the website [NAWC/NADC Warminster Historical Information](#), Doug uploaded a newspaper picture from the Bucks County Courier Times. Thursday, Nov 12, 1998. It is entitled *A Mark of History*. Part of the caption reads, "[\[beginning\] as Brewster Aircraft Corp., its World War II-era \(1941\) takeover by the U.S. Navy](#)" Should you care to read about this facility, you can peruse the above website This page seems to be updated regularly, and it offers a window to the past, even WW II history. In turn, it offers a window to Mom's story and that of my grandfather. Continuing , here is a [link](#) to an aerial view of this 817 acre property with the address of 926 Lowell Road Warminster, PA 18947. It seems as if the picture was uploaded May 23, 2022.) [There is this Historical Marker](#). The Marker reads as follows. "This site was acquired by the U.S. Navy during World War II from the Brewster Aircraft Corporation; it served as a strategic locale for weapons development and testing of modern aircraft. Later, it was a training facility for America's Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo space programs." The coordinates for the marker are [these](#). "The former Center is now home to an industrial park, Warminster Community Park, a housing development, the new [Bucks County](#) morgue crime lab, Ann's Choice, a senior citizens' housing complex, a [Costco](#) and the IHG hotel "Holiday Inn Express". Stormtracker6, the [Doppler weather radar](#) for [WPVI](#) is also located there." >> [Navel Air Welfare Center Warminster | Wikipedia](#). The informational links, which comprise this footnote, were retrieved in June 2, 5, and 7, 2024.

²⁸ [The Place Names entry for Warminster is on pages 416 and 417.](#)

²⁹ Retrieved June 6, 2024

³⁰ Retrieved June 6, 2024

Fortunately, the eggs that I had set under "clucks"³¹ were from [New Hampshire Reds](#),³² and brought a good price. I was especially happy the one year when I made enough on my few chickens to buy a pair of snow-pants from Sears' catalog. These were heavy woolen outer pants that would be similar in concept to ski-pants. They were so welcome on those long walks to school.

I will finish Chapter One by sharing the illusive W.P.A. picture Mom mentions in the Addendum along with two more W.P.A. pictures. It is also time for another mini history lesson. The Great Depression obviously was not a time of financial prosperity. However, it gave our nations things that don't have a price tag.

[Here is a link to an interesting perspective piece Mom wrote](#) on the W.P.A. when it came to the hamlet [Pleasant Valley](#),³³ [Bucks County](#). ([You may choose to use this link to reach the story](#).) Of course, that is my hometown. However, I would not be born for another 25 years, give or take.

In September 2024, I found another version of this short perspective. Mom *seemed* to include it in a letter to her friend [Betty Ritter](#). It was also dated August 27, 2005. Here she gives us perhaps the full title. It is a mouthful. [Reminiscences from Family Stories by Nancy Singer, formerly from New Britian Township and now living in Pleasant Valley for the past 53 plus years.](#) - W.P.A. Comes to Pleasant Valley. In this version the last paragraph reads as follows. Here Mom includes the letters [C.C.C.](#)³⁴ At the very end she also adds a personal footnote.

³¹ "The characteristic sound made by a hen when brooding or calling its chicks." To the best of my knowledge, Mom means "to sit on or hatch eggs." As I remember, "clucks" won't move readily. They just sit on their eggs. This is a combined definition using the entry for [cluck](#) and [brooding](#) at [The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, 5th Edition](#). This was done on June 6, 2024.

³² Retrieved June 6, 2024

³³ [Place Names](#), page 326 ff [Please also see the Mapcarta entry for Pleasant Valley](#)

³⁴ "The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was a voluntary government [work relief program](#) that ran from 1933 to 1942 in the United States for unemployed, unmarried men ages 18–25 and eventually expanded to ages 17–28.^[1] The CCC was a major part of President [Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal](#) that supplied manual labor jobs related to the conservation and development of natural resources in rural lands owned by federal, state, and local governments. The CCC was designed to supply jobs for young men and to relieve families who had difficulty finding jobs during the [Great Depression in the United States](#). There was eventually a smaller counterpart program for unemployed women called the [She-She-She Camps](#), which were championed by [Eleanor Roosevelt](#).^[2]" This is the first paragraph of the [Wikipedia page for the Civilian Conservation Corps \(CCC\)](#), and it was retrieved September 1, 2024.

When it was learned that he could do cement work he was put with a crew to go to various sites to improve them with paths, benches, and a number of other projects. One such assignment was at the Springfield Township High School in Pleasant Valley, Bucks County. I'm not certain of the year although that might be noted in old school records, but I would guess that it was around 1936. The crew put in cement paths around the school and made cement benches. Perhaps other crews did other work in Pleasant Valley, but the village was not overlooked in the plethora of valuable deeds that were accomplished through the W.P.A. and the C.C.C. around the nation. The wages were very low as to be almost pathetic but they kept food on the table and a roof over one's head. Many of these projects remain today in the nation's parks, government buildings and additional places.

I might add that when he was almost done on each of the two jobs that I mentioned, he took my mother, sister and I to each site to see what was accomplished. He wanted us to see how beautiful Pleasant Valley was too. I never knew at that time that I would be living here. By Nancy Diehl Singer August 27, 2005



Using all of the information available to me Mom labels this picture Mom labeled this photograph “Earle Diehl left front” and “Works Project Administration Project Circa 1935 In The [Rich Hill](#)³⁵ Area of Bucks County - Earle Diehl Left Foreground. “

³⁵ [Place Names, page 351.](#)



Using all of the information available to me Mom labels this picture "Earle Diehl W.P.A. 2 " and "Extended View in Opposite Direction. No Identification of Workers.



Mom labeled this picture, "Earle Diehl W.P.A. ca 1936." Evidently my grandfather is in the third/top row on the right. Note the arrow drawn in blue ink.