

Living in a Store

In spring of 1941 our family took a drive from Columbus up to the O'Shaughnessy Dam area for a picnic. As we drove through Powell there was a "For Sale" sign on a little store. Being the eternal salesman, my Dad wanted to be in business for himself and so he investigated and eventually bought the store business. On June 18, 1941 he opened Plummer's Confectionery. He took with him a radio, coffee pot and a salesman's enthusiasm. There was not much stock in the store, but he kept improving on that.

This was a dream for my dad, but certainly not for my shy, quiet mother. For her it meant giving up my brother Jimmy, an eight year old Downs Syndrome Child, to someone else to care for as she was expected to help in the store because my dad retained for a year his job as a house-to-house deliveryman at Moore's and Ross Milk Company in Columbus. My baby sister was only 2 1/2 years old. Fortunately for my mother, my baby sister was a shy quiet child that stayed put and did as she was told, unlike myself. When we moved to Powell, I was 10 years old and not always "into things" as I was when I was a small child. My mother had to give up living in a modern 3 bedroom house in Columbus to living in the back end of a store with no central heat or running water or bathroom facilities. They gave much of their furniture to my Grandmother Plummer. The living quarters consisted of a kitchen with a sink and a pitcher pump, an old wood-fired cook stove and table and chairs, two bedrooms (actually only one big room with dressers dividing it into two rooms) and a living room with a pot-bellied stove. There was only space for a couch, chair and a desk. My mother and father had both grown up with these facilities, but after they married they had always lived in a modern house. This was quite a come down for them. For me, I was **not** pleased to have to go out back for toilet facilities or bathe in a small tub in the dark beside the kitchen stove.

One of my after school chores was to carry a bucket of drinking water from a house down the street that had good well water. We had only a small cistern. Now I really did not mind going for the water, most of the time, because I could see people to talk to along the way. Of course if I visited too long, I got in trouble with my Dad. I can remember being "switched" on the legs for taking too long to get a bucket of water. Another chore of mine was to carry in the coal for the living room stove. Now, this I **did** mind because the coal shed was out back with nobody to talk to and besides it was a dirty job! I can remember my dad badgering me to get the coal carried in. He said he could have it done in the time it took him to nag me to do it. I remember *thinking* "well, then, why don't you do it!" Of course I didn't say that out loud. This was when I learned about curse words. I studied in my mind on the meaning of asking God to damn someone (like-the one making me carry coal!). I don't know how long it took me to figure it all out, but I decided I did not want to use that kind of language because I did not want God to damn anyone.

There were good times to living in a general store. The summer I was 10 years old, moving pictures were projected onto the side of the old hardware store down the block and the people sat on their blankets in the empty lot beside the store. When they had intermission time, the people came to the stores for an ice cream cone or some candy (there were two other stores

open). For a nickel you could get two dips of ice cream in a cone, any kind of candy bar, cracker jacks, lifesavers or chewing gum. Do you remember Black Jack or Teaberry Gum? Of course there was Dentyne and Wrigley's Spearmint, Juicy Fruit, and Doublemint. My job was to man the candy showcase and sell penny candy. I can remember penny Tootsie Rolls, packages of Kits taffy –five in a package for a penny, BB Bat taffy suckers, penny sticks of licorice-red or black, jaw breakers, Dum Dum suckers (Tootsie Roll Pops were two cents), penny Guess Whats and nickel Guess Whats. I have to confess something here. I was so curious about those Guess Whats. The penny ones had two pieces of taffy candy and a small toy inside a rolled piece of paper. The ends were folded in to hold them closed. But the nickel ones had much better toys and more pieces of wrapped candies. I was not interested in the candy, but I was curious as to what kind of toys the manufacturer put in the Guess What's. So when the intermission crowd died down, as I put the candy case back in order, I would very carefully open up the Guess What's just to what was in them. And then close them back up again. Maybe the name Guess What is what made me curious. And now I don't even remember what the toys were. I hope my Dad never knew I did that. He never told me that he knew, but I'll bet he did!

Evalyn Plummer Anderson
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**This is how the store looked when we moved there in 1941
The multi-paned windows were soon replaced with plate glass windows**

Carol, age 2 1/2, is sitting on step petting a dog owned by a customer, Parke Davis



Penny Candy