

Broad Creek Village—Memories of Ted Creekmore (Andrew Theodore Creekmore Jr)

BACKGROUND— We moved to Broad Creek Village around March 1947 from a rented home in Oakdale Farms near Wards Corner. Dad came to Norfolk from Moyock in 1936. He received a certificate from Norfolk Business College and worked with Armour Meat Company as a salesman until WWII. He served in the Navy and rose to the rank of Chief Petty Officer. He took the GI Bill (1946-49) and became a first class electrician at the Naval Base in 1949. Mom came up from Stokes NC near Greenville in 1939, after a year at East Carolina College. She also attended Norfolk Business College and met Dad through a friend at the fabled boarding houses on Granby Street—Mrs. Gurganus's home (later Bond after Mr. Gurganus died).

BROAD CREEK VILLAGE (1947-1954)--We had a corner unit with 2 BRs and a small fenced backyard, 1180 West Woodlawn Avenue. Behind the units was a large open area and a wooded area with a set of monkey bars.

Mother likes to tell the story about some older boys asking me where I lived soon after we moved in 1947. I would say "Bawd-a-cek Village" over and over and they would laugh. They would get tickle and ask me over and over where I lived.

Linda Lee Creekmore joined us on May 22, 1947. We began to buy dogs as pets but it seems we had some problems keeping them from being stolen. We put the pets in the concrete coal been out back that we no longer used since everyone had gone to oil heat.

Mother sold Avon, and got to know just about everyone in the neighborhood and beyond. This seemed to get me involved with more people also.

My early memories of the village was that it was a very interesting place for a young boy. There was a big ditch behind the house which was great for exploring. I even stepped on a nail once and got the family all upset. I was rushed to the doctor for a tetanus shot. There was also an open area behind our homes that had enough room for all kinds of ball games. The woods behind the court held many mysteries. In the middle of what seemed a huge area was a set of monkey bars. We climbed the monkey bars many times. The nearby court was cozy and safe. I could walk to the court down the back path. This was an early refuge and playing area.

Rickey (Ritchie) Moore--The first major antagonist in my life. He would push me around and I would come home crying. Mom finally said, "You are bigger than him--get the picture!" I began to fight back, and things changed.

Forbidden territory was across the street and over the railroad tracks. At some point I got permission to cross the street, but never to cross the railroad tracks. On the other side of the tracks was a developing industrial park which was mostly vacant. We would sneak over and bend little trees over to ride them like horses. One day I was crossing the tracks coming home just as Dad drove up from work--need I say more! After my time at the "wood shed," I still crossed tracks, but I was very careful about where I crossed back over.

With so many children around there was no problem finding friends. I played with Ted Tyndle, Garnie Scot, Billy Hicks, Jerry Agolini, Gil Coburn, and Jimmy Freeman. Vernon Chandler or "Bub" was my best friend. Bub had a zest for life and was exciting to be with. His father loved to kid and he would take us to the amusement Park at Ocean View. I still remember how he rocked the chairs on the Ferris wheel and scared me to death.

Bub and I did a lot of crazy things, but the Lord looked after us. Once we crawled under Jerry Agolini's house and burned some newspapers! Boy are we lucky those houses were built high off the ground. Another time we knocked on the German lady's door (seems she lived next to Garnie Scott near the court) and hid under the wooden porch when she answered. Once she caught us and tried to pour hot water on us!

SCHOOL--The 1-3 grade 3-story school was located on Ingleside Road, about 3 miles from home. The bus picked me up at the corner of our home on 1180 West Woodlawn Avenue. Ingleside elementary had a large play area and a wooded area around a big ditch. The teachers were forever trying to keep us out of the woods and the ditch.

First Grade- Mrs. Boas was a standard disciplinarian type, about 40 years old. She is the chief and we are the Indians. I like to talk, and run into problems with her wooden enforcer. Once I determine how the discipline works I avoid any further contact with the enforcer. We have three different reading books. I normally read in the middle group. The kids that went to kindergarten are in the first group.

Second Grade--Ah, Mrs. Edwards, the special teacher that loves us into submission. She is young and pretty, and we are her babies.

Everything is positive and loving. The 1951-1952 year is one big warm fuzzy. At the end of the year, all the girls cry to see Mrs.

Edwards go. At first, I don't know what to make of all this crying. It is the last day of school, and shouldn't we be happy? But soon, I cry too. Even at 8 years of age, I realize the 2nd grade is special; we will never be loved this way again.

Third Grade--Mrs. Barrett is a sort of cross between Mrs. Boas and Mrs. Edwards, tough but positive. I run into problems with my talking, but otherwise do well. Mrs. Barrett knows how to get our attention. She makes us sit with the first grade as discipline. This is embarrassing, sitting with those "little" kids! About 1/2 way through the year, we transfer from Ingleside to a temporary school in Broad Creek Village. I think the school might have at one time been a post office. The move splits the class with the Ingleside bunch staying. Mrs. Barrett moves with my group. The young girls from Ingleside cry when they say goodbye on our last day. I would rather stay also. Maybe Mrs. Barrett could go.

Fourth Grade--We move up to the "big" school and no longer can ride the bus. I ride my bike the less than 1 mile to school. There are a lot of "big" kids at this school, and one must be careful of the bullies. Mrs. Bowens is my teacher, but I don't remember much about her. I become aware that there are a number of "pretty" girls in the 4th grade. They wear "sophisticated" clothes and behave with more maturity than the boys. Sometimes I get to school early and shoot marbles. We play keepsees and these boys can clean you out in a hurry. On the way home, I stop by the drug store for a coke, or a Pepsi float (10 cents). Sometimes, bigger boys threaten me, and I must take the long way around to get home. Once I stop to talk to 2 boys that are playing around a large truck trailer behind the grocery store. They grab me and shove me into the trailer, claiming they will lock me in. Somehow, I get loose!

STORIES OF BROAD CREEK VILLAGE--Thou Shall Not Steal--Once I take a quarter from the dresser at home. Garnie Scott and I have a great time. We buy drinks at the drug store and candy bars. Mom sees me with the candy bar and asks where I got it. Of course, I try to lie my way out of it. You guessed it, I'm not successful!

Drinks and Things--Garnie Scott and I are sitting at the drug store food counter waiting to order a fountain drink. A route salesman comes in and flirts with the waitress. He keeps saying; let me buy you a milk shake. The waitress keeps refusing. As this continues, Garnie says, "We'll have one!" The salesman buys us two cokes!

Sorehead--The railroad across West Woodlawn in front of our house is always a big draw for kids. We are not suppose to cross the tracks, but we do everything but. We yell at the caboose when a train passes, and sometimes the man throws out large sticks of chalk. We put pennies on the track and marvel at how the train mashes them. I am playing in the ditch near the track one day when two boys start throwing rocks from the tracks at us. The rest of my buddies run, but for some reason I hesitate. Maybe I don't want to be intimidated. It is a mistake. A rock hits me on the forehead and I fall into the bottom of the ditch! For a moment, I lay stunned in the ditch. Soon I get oriented and run home. Through someone's backyard, across West Woodlawn past the Court, screaming and bleeding all the way!

This alerts the whole neighborhood. Several women stand outside as Mom wipes me off and drives me to the doctor. The doctor asks if I want clamps or stitches to close the 3/4 inch gash in my forehead. I am terrified of "stitches" and opt for the clamps. I look a little like a Sheik with the large bandage over my forehead.

Dad comes home and we play detective. After a thorough review of the episode, we drive around the neighborhood near the rock throwing. I think I remember the person that threw the rock. We stop at a few houses, and soon find the culprit. The boy admits throwing the rock! I'm not sure how Dad handled the finances of my Doctor's bill with the boy's father.

Twirling--I like to rotate my body at a high rate until I get dizzy and fall down. Once, I rotate with too much zest, fall down, and hit my head on a piece of the slate of our walkway. I am out for awhile. Dad comes home and gets very upset. He holds the cigarette lighter in front of my eyes, but I cannot see it. Mother says that I will be alright, but Dad says, "He can't see anything." I recover quickly.

The Overpass and Highs Ice Cream--Broad Creek is bounded by Va. Beach Blvd. on the South, Princess Anne Rd on the North, the railroad tracks on the West, and Broad Creek on the East. We live on the extreme West, near the railroad. The underpass under Virginia Beach Blvd attracts the young boys. If we are feeling adventurous, we ride our bikes up the hill of the underpass and fly down the hill. For some reason, none of us seems to get hurt. We have to avoid the railroad tracks at the bottom!

Down the tracks a bit in the opposite direction on Princess Anne Road sits the High's ice cream store. They are sort of the MacDonald's of ice cream. You get 2 scoops of ice cream for 5 cents while most other store only sell 1 scoops for a nickel. The walk down the tracks to the High's is a highlight of any summer day.

The Ice Cream Truck--Each summer day finds the ice cream truck ringing a bell and driving through the neighborhood. The truck attracts many children and Mothers. We seem to get ice cream less than 50% of the time. I don't know exactly why. It has

something to do with the fact that we don't have a lot of money plus we should save big dessert times for when we visit our Grandparents.

Helpful Fathers-The community always had fathers that supported us. Mr. Hicks would play football with us. I remember he could kick a football over the tall trees in the Court. David Gurganis (son of the famous Mrs. Gurganus that Dad roomed with on Granby Street) fixed my bike kickstand so it would stay up. It was a temporary fix but lasted the life of the bike. Vernon Chandler loved to play games of math. He would add and divide and multiply numbers and put Bub and I in a contest. I was a year older and usually won.

Mutt-In 1953 Dad and Linda went to the local dog pound and picked up a little mongrel dog which Dad named Mutt. He was mostly white with brown spots and had snoozer and spaniel blood. Because previous dogs had been stolen or lost when we put them up in the coal bins, we put Mutt in the kitchen. Dad built a little fence to keep him there. I remember how he cried during the night because he missed his mother. He could not walk well on the slick kitchen linoleum, and he slipped a lot. Soon he became a member of the family. We were all young and full of energy. Mutt and I would race down the footpath behind the house to the court. He would run around the corner so fast he would do a 360 degree flip and keep on digging. Mutt never held back with his running.

A Trip to the Base-Dad rode to work in a carpool. He got up around 5:30 and worked the 7-3:30 shift. Once he forgot his ID and when they drove through the gate he flashed his fishing license. Later he phoned Mom and asked her to bring his ID. It was in the summer so Linda and I rode along. Mom kept saying, "I hope those sailors don't whistle at me!"

It was hot and the '50 Ford had no A/C; she had Bermuda shorts on. We stopped at the gate and Mom walked over to sign in. Three sailors saw her and let go with big whistles! She was embarrassed!

Cub Scouts-I joined the cubs when I was 8 in 1952. Mother was a Den Mother. The highlight of the cubs was a 2-3 mile hike to Wayside picnic area off the fabled Military Highway (near Indian River Road?). It was the interstate of its day. I remember the long line of brown clad boys walking beside the highway. With the cars flying by, it did not seem safe to me. We had a great time cooking hamburgers, hot dogs, and marshmallows. The parents came to get us at dark.

Snowstorms-These were always extra special times. Mom would make snow cream and we would play in the snow until we froze. We always made a snowman and dressed him up with a pipe and hat. During one big snow we made a bunch of snowballs to get Dad when he came home. We hid behind the house as he drove up. Out we stormed, loaded with snow balls and ready to get Dad! But Dad was young and fast. We never did get him!

Halloween-This was a great time of trick or treat, pumpkins, crazy costumes, and candy delights. The usual route was around the large block that we lived in. We would turn left from the front door of 1180, go through the court, past Bub's house and on around Parkland Road. We would turn left on East Woodlawn and then turn left on Sewells Point Road, past Peggy Baxter's home. We could do the whole run in less than an hour and have a large bag of candy by 6:30 PM. I always wanted to make another run but Mom said I had enough candy to make 3 boys sick and made me stop. I said I would take a chance on getting sick! The big kids cut a much wider area, and would trick or treat as late as 8 PM. One evening a group of 4 or 5 older boys appeared on our front porch about 8:15. While they were waiting, Dad slipped around behind and lit-off a cherry bomb! Whoom! That boom sent those treaters home in a hurry!

A Bird Nest-Mom planted a rose bush on the South side of the porch. A white wooden frame supported the bush. One spring a bird built a nest in the bush, about 4 feet from the top of the porch. We were very excited and Mom cautioned us not to tell anyone because the birds could be disturbed or killed. When the little birds began to fly from the nest and run about, everyone found out. All the kids in the neighborhood wanted to hold them. A few times the little birds fell from the nest, and willing hands hurriedly put them back. I can't remember if the birds survived or not. When the eggs were hatching, our dog "Mutt" would try to sit on the front porch or walk in the front yard. The birds were afraid for the nest, and they would attack Mutt in a dive bomber fashion. Mutt never seemed to understand why he got so much attention!

The Saturday Morning Movie-We began a tradition of going to the "kiddies shows" on Saturday morning. I want to say it was the Park Theater, but I am not sure. The movies lasted from 9-1. Mom packed lunch and we would all get excited. You can imagine how loud the theater was. The movie began with an hour of cartoons and one of several serials such as Captain Kidd the reformed pirate. Then we would watch a feature such as the Long Trailer with Lucille Ball and Desi Arnez. If the weather was nice Gil Coburn's older sister Charlene would lead us on the 20 minute walk to the theater. Jerry Agalini, Gil Coburn, Bub Chandler, and a few more, Charlene would have her hands full getting us there in one piece. We loved the movies and had the greatest time

Money and Mowing Lawns—I was tall for my age and started mowing neighbor's yards when I was about 7. Dad had a small mower with about a 3/4 horsepower motor. You had to mow regularly because that engine would not cut high grass. In one of my early mowing jobs at home I was about 7 and wearing sandals. Somehow I slipped down and the front part of my sandals got caught under the lawn mower. Mom thought my foot was being cut, but my luck held. My foot had slipped out of the sandal! I had to give up mowing for that year. By the time I was 9, I was making 3 or 4 dollars a week cutting lawns during the summer. I usually got \$1 for mowing the little lawns in Broad Creek. They took about 30 minutes to mow. I remember mowing Mrs. Anderson's yard next door and some ones yard on the other side of Bub's house. Soon the new riches affected my life style. I began to carry 6 50 cent pieces in my pockets. The clang of the money was music to my ears!

LINDA LEE

My little sister was born on May 22, 1947 when we lived at Broad Creek. I remember pushing Linda around the court in a stroller. The other children wanted to push the stroller and play with Linda. But I was very protective of her safety and would run them off.

CHRISTMAS AT BROAD CREEK

Mom and Dad would really get us pumped up for Christmas. We visited both Grandparents and received gifts all around. Dads family lived in Moyock, NC. Mom's family, the Butlers, lived in Stokes NC. Yes, I got teased about being from Virginia!

Christmas at BCV was the greatest. I would usually get a lot of little things such as model cars, planes and boxes of little cowboys and solders. I could play forever with these little men! One year I got an erector set. I built countless airplanes, car, and boats for the little me to get around in. I spent hours setting up fight scenes between the good guys and bad guys.

Santa Claus was an early problem for me. I could not understand how he brought all the gifts to the many houses in Broad Creek. We had no Chimney's to speak of, and there were so many children. How could he possibly bring all those goodies in a sled. But we always left some food our for Santa Claus and he usually ate it. And how could he get in if the doors were locked? I decided he must drive a big truck. Mom said they left the doors unlocked Christmas eve. I decided to stay up all night and greet Santa Claus when he came in. Dad would stay up with me. It seems that no matter how hard I tried, I could not stay up late enough but would always fall asleep.

Children at school would talk about Santa Claus, but I would not believe them. Mom would pooh-pooh their remarks. I would not come to any conclusions about Santa until I left Broad Creek.

VIRGINIA BEACH/OCEAN VIEW--We went swimming frequently. It seems we went to Ocean View early in the summer. It tended to be calmer and warmer. About August, jelly fish would become abundant in the warm Ocean View waters, and we would move to Virginia Beach. Many times, several women and children would pile into a car or two and head to the beach in the late afternoon. We would find some picnic tables, and wait for the fathers. I remember, they would get one women to watch us kids in the water, and the rest would socialize. She would watch us closely. We got to "go out deep" when the fathers showed up in the 5:30-6 PM range. Boy those hot dogs and hamburgers tasted good!

CHURCH--Daddy was a Methodist and Mama was a Baptist. In the early years, Mama started going to a small Baptist "start-up" church. It was located nearby in a small ranch home, and I want to say off Princess Anne Road. All I remember was that everyone was very friendly, and the little ranch house did not look like a church. But Dad was not fond of the little church. When he went with us (not regularly) we went to a large Methodist Church nearby. It might be the present Norfolk Methodist, 1520 Halstead Avenue. The photo of Norfolk Methodist on the internet looks familiar. I recall that the church seemed large to me. They had a lot of visitors. The kids had to line up outside, so they could match groups with teachers before they went inside. We never had a permanent "church home" until we moved to Moyock in 1954 and attended Dad's home church, Moyock Methodist.

RETURN TO BROAD CREEK--About 1955, Mom arranged for me to "return home" to BCV. I had somehow met Joe Green (1944-); he may have been a classmate in the 4th Grade. Anyway, Joe came to Moyock and spent the night, and I stayed a night with Joe. Joe did not live in my neighborhood, but it was nearby, I want to say he lived on Parkland. I don't remember the details, but we walked through the old "neighborhood." Most of "my" people were still there and it was very sweet to return home. We played ball on the old field, walked across the feared railroad tracts (we were older now and could handle anything!), bent trees in the vacant industrial area and "rode" them, and ordered Pepsi floats at the drug store. Guess I did not know in 1955 that all would soon be gone, like the lost planet of Atlantis.

POST VISIT—At some point, we become aware that the village is being torn down. We drive over to our old address to check it

out and maybe find some memento of our years at BCV. My memory is not clear here. It was about 1959-60. It seems all or most of the homes were gone, but West Woodlawn is still there, just no homes. Our old slate walkway is all that is left. So we grab one of the slates and carry it home. If Mom and Dad were alive, they might remember whatever happened to that slate!

POST POST VISIT—At some point in my adult live, maybe 1980, I attempt to find West Woodlawn Avenue. Ingleside is still there, but I can't find W Woodlawn. Best I can figure, the old location is part of a parking lot of an industrial business.