

Life In Silver Run In the 1930's

by

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It was mid-afternoon on a rather bleak wintery day in December of 1929. I was three years old. My father took me to see Santa Claus. The air was cold and crisp. Our Model T Ford had no heater, so Mother bundled me up in a sweater, coat, wool scarf, knitted woolen cap that could be pulled down over my ears, and scratchy woolen mittens. I was bound in so tightly that I could hardly move. Meanwhile my father heated a brick on the front ledge of the old black cast-iron wood stove which provided supplementary heat in our dining room. When the brick was hot, it was wrapped in a heavy cloth and placed on the floorboard of the car to help keep my feet warm as I sat on the edge of the seat in eager anticipation.

The five mile drive to Littlestown, Pennsylvania, took a very long time for a three-year-old, but soon after crossing the state line, we came down the long straight hill and onto the main street of Littlestown, and after crossing the railroad, Dad parked the old Ford, and we walked to the decorated town square with its pine garlands and many colored lights. Beside the sturdy bank building on a parklike vacant lot on which stood a huge fully decorated Christmas tree, a crowd had gathered awaiting the arrival of the honored guest. Just before sunset while the local band played Christmas music, Santa Claus himself arrived clad all in red trimmed in white fir and wearing shiny black boots. His very appearance left a real impression on me. I had never before seen a man with a long white beard, and it nearly frightened me. On the way home, Dad explained to me the meaning of Santa Claus. That made me anxious for Christmas to come. I became quite concerned when I learned that Santa Claus was supposed to come down the chimney, for although our house had two chimneys and mantles, both fireplaces had been boarded up on the inside and wallpapered over. My parents then explained to me that Santa Claus could come in other ways. That Christmas I first came to know what Christmas was about.

We lived in the large old brick parsonage on spacious grounds next door to St. Mary's Reformed Church in the village of Silver Run, Maryland. This community of 200 people stretched out along both sides of what was then U.S. Highway 140, the main thoroughfare between Baltimore, 35 miles to the South, and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 13 miles

to the North. Two side streets led off from Main Street, but became narrow and winding roads going to even smaller communities several miles away. We lived a block off of Main Street on Church Street, which is now known as Mayberry Road. It was then called Church Street because the old two-story St. Mary's Union Church (Lutheran and Reformed) had stood at the entrance to the old cemetery on the knoll along that street. When the two congregations separated near the turn of the century, they each built their own building a block apart along the same street. The only industry in the village was the A.W. Feezer Canning Factory, which specialized in canning green beans, peas, and tomatoes. The imposing Feezer mansion stood on a small hill across Main Street from the Lutheran Church.

Next to the mansion was Frock's General Store. Mr. and Mrs. J. Wilmer Frock and daughter, Helen, the owners, were active members of our church. The store was a large two-story frame building with an inviting porch with railing all across the front, and rocking chairs where townspeople and farmers could sit and share news and views. What seemed to me as a small child an insurmountable number of concrete steps led from the street level to the front porch. On a landing beside the steps was a single hand-cranked gasoline pump which usually supplied regular gasoline for our car. As the customer entered the front door of the store, a bell rang, and one of the Frocks would suddenly appear from behind a curtained door at their kitchen just beyond the wall on the right. Their home was in the same building with the store. They had three outside entrances plus the door leading into the store. Mrs. Frock cooked wonderful, tasty meals on the old black, cast-iron wood stove in the meagerly furnished kitchen. I ate many a meal there in my early years.

In the store itself on the left side were rounded glass display cases filled with all sorts of loose and packaged candy and chewing gum. There were luscious red, yellow, orange and green gum drops, and licorice sticks, and ribbon candy, and other tantalizing types which could be purchased by weight or even individually by children who had little or no money. Those that could be bought two for a penny were especially appealing. Next to the candy counter was an open counter complete with balance scales and a coffee grinder. Lining the high-ceilinged wall behind the counter and behind the clerk were shelves filled with boxes of cereals, canned goods, and other grocery items. On the counter and shelves on the opposite wall to the right were bolts of cloth, ready-made clothes, boxes of shoes, and other items listed as dry goods.

In the middle of the store and standing about five or six feet high was a divider with shelves of greeting cards, stationery, and other office and writing supplies. In front of that was a dark red pump and a large tin can with a handle and spout for pumping motor oil by the half gallon and taking it out front to put under the hoods of cars. At the rear of the divider was the pickle barrel which, though covered with a rough wooden lid, always emitted interesting smells. In the middle of the rear portion of the store on a three-foot square piece of molded tin sat a small black, pot-bellied cast iron coal stove with its six-inch in diameter black stove pipe stretching to the ceiling and then curving at a 90-degree angle and heading out through the rear wall. Large, dark and massive store counters like those on both sides of the front half of the store were also found on both sides in the rear portion. There were boxes of buckles, bolts and all sorts of small items of hardware. Behind these were larger hardware items. On the other side of the rear portion of the large room were horse collars and bridles and other types of harness for horses. There were also automobile tires and belts for car motors. There were long wooden benches with several dingy and well-used spittoons nearby on the badly faded and worn linoleum floor covering. Along the back wall on one side was an old walk-in refrigeration unit filled with fresh meats and glass bottles of milk. On the other side was a large desk-size ice cream cooler with six holes for dipping bulk ice cream into tempting cones or into quart cardboard containers. Nearby was another chest-type cooler filled with bottled soft drinks, especially Coca Cola, Sasparilla, Root Beer and Ginger Ale and Gherry Soda.

Frock's Store was always a fascinating and delectable place to go - whether or not one was making any purchases. There was also a section for non-prescription drug store items. Out behind the store and on the same level as the back door was a small patch of grass with some flowers surrounding the well with its old pump and handle. Just beyond was the fence with a swinging gate wide enough to drive a car through. Then came the chicken house and small red barn and barnyard. At the very rear were several cherry trees. Each year the Frocks invited the Pecks to bring buckets and pick the luscious red cherries to our heart's content. So at an early age I learned how to climb trees with a bucket in hand. Oh, how we enjoyed those fresh-baked cherry pies and cherries that Mother canned for use in winter deserts!

Up Main Street three houses and across the highway was another, but smaller General Store owned by "Pickle" Biemiller. He was a Lutheran. Somehow, most Lutherans gravitated to that store and most Reformed

Church people patronized Frock's Store.

Two doors up Main Street from Biemiller's Store was a large, old white frame two-story house with black working shutters on all the windows. There was no front lawn, but a large expanse of side and rear lawn and garden area. This house was owned and occupied by Maurice and Bertha Dutterer, elderly brother and sister and neither one ever married. Miss Bertha used to "baby sit" for me in her home frequently when my parents were tied up in meetings or shopping or other activities. The entire left side of the first floor of the house was a large, yet cozy, country kitchen. Along the middle of the outside wall was a large, old, black cast-iron cook stove which also provided heat for the room. Some of the best Parker House rolls I ever ate were baked in the oven of the wood stove. Across the hall was the living room or parlor complete with piano. On second floor were four bedrooms and old-fashioned bath. In later years this house became our "home" or headquarters when we would return to Silver Run after moving more than 600 miles away. Three doors further up Main Street was the town's small general auto repair garage.

Our parsonage in Silver Run was a large two-story, very substantial brick house with full attic and part basement in which was an old hand-fired coal furnace. On the large front porch with full railing was a porch swing on which I spent many hours each summer. The front door opened into a hall with stairs leading to the second floor. The stair banister was ideal for a boy to slide down. After all, that was much more fun and quicker than walking down the stairs. On the left of the hall was the massive living room with windows on three sides. Across the hall was the large dining room with its three doors - one opening near the front door, one at the rear hall by the basement stairs, and one opening into the kitchen. When these latter two doors were open into the dining room, they met and formed an almost square enclosed area and a wonderful place for a small boy to hide or play house. The kitchen was large and cheerful and contained built-in cabinets along the wall shared with the dining room. Along the opposite wall was a white electric stove with oven on top and four 30-inch legs supporting the oven and four burners. In the corner was a large pantry next to the white porcelain sink with a window above it. To the left side of the sink was the back door leading to the screened-in rear porch. On second floor were three bedrooms, study, sewing room, and bath. From the back hall a door led out to the second floor screened-in porch. In the summer we often slept on that porch. From the sewing room the back stairs led down to the kitchen and up to the full attic, which contained all sorts of interesting cast-offs and

several old steamer trunks loaded with old family photographs and scrap books and other things to keep a boy involved for hours on rainy or snowy days, along with wonderful old Christmas and Halloween costumes.

The lawn area consisted of about one acre. In the front were four massive pine trees and several stately old maple trees. In the back, an unpaved driveway led from the edge of the church's rear parking area along beside the huge hydranga bushes to the small barn, which accommodated two cars plus a stall for a horse and storage for hay or straw and all garden tools. Behind the barn was a wire fence-enclosed vegetable garden and beyond it the chicken house and yard. Leading from the rear of the house to the barn and garden was a large grape arbor, which produced countless wonderful grapes. A second grape arbor ran parallel to the side of the garden and formed a covered walkway to the chicken house. Across from the back porch of the house and just beyond the well with its modern electric pump was the old brick wash house with its one small room with open fireplace on the rear wall for heating water for washing. Of course, we had our modern electric wringer-type washing machine in the wash house, which sometimes doubled as a playhouse. Behind this small out-building was a beautiful boxwood hedge which separated the back yard from the front lawn area. Between the hedge and the row of pine trees Dad and a man of the church had built a large concrete goldfish pond complete with waterlilies. Yes, one time when I was about seven years old, I fell into the fish pond. To the side of the large back yard beyond two big apple trees and overlooking the Lutheran Church down the hill was our large garden plot and strawberry patch. It was a wonderful place for a boy to grow up and play and explore.

By the time I entered first grade, I had a best friend. We were the same age (and still are), and were together in Sunday School, church, Mission Band and Junior Choir. We then went through six grades of school together. In fact, we were together most waking hours of nearly every day. Martha Almeda Knouse and I were almost inseparable. She lived a block away along Main Street. Her father, Roy D. Knouse, was a Superintendent at the A.W. Feezer Canning Factory and an Elder in our church. Martha had an older brother, Jimmy, and a younger brother, Bobby, who sometimes got in our way.

Martha and I usually walked to school together, and almost always walked home from school together, frequently holding hands even while we were in the early grades. We walked 1/2 mile along the main highway (learning early to walk to the left, facing traffic), to Charles

Carroll School, the old high school. There we boarded the school bus and rode another 1/2 mile or more to the old Academy Building in Union Mills, the next village toward Westminster, the County Seat of Carroll County. Our first two grades were in an old two-room school with outside toilets out back. Our first grade teacher was Miss Anna Koontz, who was just out of Teachers' College. She was a very special teacher, and even in 1995 Anna Koontz Leister and I were still exchanging Christmas cards and letters. Her sister-in-law sits in front of me in church every Sunday in Orlando, Florida, in 1996. Among my other classmates in grades 1 through 6 were Kenneth Brown (my second best friend), Anna Dutterer, Bernard Maus, Imogene Koontz (youngest sister of our teacher), John Humbert, Roy Shorb, Preston Crowl, Amidee Warehime, Billy Bechtel, Elizabeth Groft, Catherine Brown, Marion Messinger, Melvin Brown, and others. Our second grade teacher was Miss Madeline Bankert. Grades 3 through 6 were in the old Charles Carroll High School building on the hill half-way between Union Mills and Silver Run. At Charles Carroll School the classrooms were situated on three sides of the auditorium which doubled as a gymnasium and had a stage on one side. The principal was Mr. Schwartz, who also served as a professional guide at the Gettysburg Battlefield, 14 miles to the North. Although I got along very well in school, I fully dreaded going into sixth grade because the teacher, Miss Maraud Nussbaum, had a reputation for being a demanding and terrible teacher who would often discipline pupils by hitting them on the hand or wrist with a wooden ruler. In actuality, I got through her year of classes with no problems, and found her to be very fair and a good teacher. Of course, it helped that both my first grade and sixth grade teachers were active members of our church, and knew me very well.

As a small child, I was very afraid of dogs. So, in an effort to help me overcome this fear, my parents bought for me a young Fox Terrier dog that was white with brown spots. Toodles was my dog, although my father enjoyed him as much as I did. I remember many times seeing Dad come in from working in the garden or cutting the grass in our large lawn and lie down on the linoleum kitchen floor and play with Toodles and romp with him. Toodles and I became great pals. Most nights he slept on a small rug beside my bed. When I was about 4 or 5 years old, I often took Toodles for a walk down the sidewalk toward Main Street and the Lutheran Church. One such time, Mr. Clinton Yingling was working in his small front yard six houses down the street. He stopped working and came to talk to Toodles and me. After petting Toodles, he said to me, "Wayne, that's a fine dog. I'll give you \$5.00 for

him." I was reported to have answered, "No, sir, we paid a dollar and a half for him."

When I was about seven years old, I had to help pick a bumper crop of strawberries. My parents then told me that if I sold the strawberries to our neighbors, I could keep the money received and put it into a savings account. So I filled my little yellow wooden wagon with about 15 pint boxes of strawberries and went from house to house on our block asking the various neighbors if they wanted to buy the luscious large red strawberries at 10 cents a box. I was amazed when I sold all and had to come back home to replenish my supply.

As a part of our church's observance of Lent in 1931, my father as pastor had arranged to have a guest minister from North Carolina for the Holy Week special services. The Rev. W. C. Lyerly, the husband of one of my father's first cousins, was traveling from Salisbury, North Carolina, to Washington, D.C. to Westminster, Maryland, by train. Although we lived in the South (three miles South of the Mason-Dixon Line), we were still in a snow belt. On March 31, 1931, we awakened to find the ground covered with snow and a regular blizzard underway. After breakfast, Dad put chains on our black 1929 Chrysler, and the two of us headed toward the train station in Westminster. Because of the blinding snow storm, it took us more than an hour to drive the nine miles. Upon our arrival at the station, we learned that the train was running 8 hours late because the heavy snowstorm extended through the entire mid-Atlantic area. By this time telephone and electric lines were down because of the weight of the snow. So my father decided that in order to put my mother's mind at ease, we would drive back home and leave me there, and he would then return to the railroad station. The intensity of the storm resulted in it taking nearly two hours to drive the nine miles back home. After lunch, Dad put the Chrysler in the barn and put chains on the 1923 Model T Ford coupe and started back to Westminster. Fortunately, he knew the road well and could tell where it was supposed to be by certain landmarks - trees, houses, barns, mailboxes, etc.. The Model T had high enough axles that it could get through snow banks fairly well. He managed to arrive back at the railroad station before the much-delayed train arrived. Then he and Rev. Lyerly had an exciting drive back to Silver Run. By that time a snow plow had opened up one lane for traffic, but high winds were causing the snow to drift back across the road in many places. When they finally arrived at home about 7:00 P.M., we had three feet of snow covering everything. It was truly a winter wonderland even though Spring had officially come 10 days earlier.

By nightfall the snow had stopped falling, and the next day snow plows got the main roads open, and a handful of adventurous souls actually braved the elements to come to the evening worship service at our church.

We were in the midst of the Great Depression in the early to mid-1930's. Money was very scarce, but fortunately, St. Mary's Reformed Church had to skip only a few months of paying my father his salary check, although his annual salary ranged from \$1,200.00 to \$1,800.00 during the 11 years that he was pastor there. A saving factor, though, was that it was a church of 500 members, the majority of whom were farm families. And farmers continued farming throughout the Depression. What we lacked in money, we would get in farm products. Many times we found a bushel of potatoes or beans or corn or tomatoes on our back porch. And, of course, we had our own large garden and apple trees and raised our own chickens. My mother did a lot of canning, and sometimes the local canning factory would give us seconds of canned goods. We never went hungry, but we often could not buy shoes or clothes, so we learned to take very good care of what we had. And, of course, from time to time, there were the surprise "extras", such as weddings and funerals. Because our church building was a landmark on a hill and visible for several miles, from time to time couples from out of the area came through wanting to get married. On one such occasion during the Depression years, my father performed the marriage ceremony for a couple from Pennsylvania. Afterward, the groom asked Dad how much he owed him for marrying them. My father replied, "Whatever you think the bride is worth." With that, the new husband handed Dad two \$1.00 bills and drove off.

Even in the height of the Great Depression we had a large wall telephone with its crank handle for calling the operator, "Central". The telephone was in the dining room. Our telephone number was 4-J. We were also privileged to have a radio, an entertainment medium that was still rather new to rural America. Amos and Andy and Lum and Abner were mainstay radio programs regularly in our home. But for our special entertainment, we went to the movies in Littlestown, Pennsylvania, five miles away, or in Hanover, Pennsylvania, 12 miles away. Hanover was our main trade area for major shopping. My parents took me to see almost every Shirley Temple movie that came to the theaters. Usually, Martha Knouse went with us, and she and I would sit together and hold hands. We also saw many operetta-type movies starring Nelson Eddy and Jeannette McDonald, who were favorites of my Mother.

I recall one special day in the spring of 1932 when we drove to

Hanover to buy the only brand-new car that our family ever had. We traded our black 2-door 1929 Chrysler on a beautiful, shiney new 1932 Plymouth 4-door sedan that was dark blue with bright yellow wire wheels. And this new car was wired for radio installation, but of course there was no radio in it. That would have cost too much. As I recall, my father paid between \$400 and \$500 for this new Plymouth. It was a wonderful car for several years. Then in August of 1936 we drove it to Baltimore and there traded it in on a 1935 light green Studebaker 4-door sedan with a trunk. Of course, all along we had as a second car our Model T Ford coupe, which my father needed to travel the muddy back roads with deep ruts to make calls on many of the farm families. In February of 1936, Dad and an Elder of our church drove the 1923 Model T Ford to a Synod Meeting in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. On the return trip, near Gettysburg, the rear end of the Ford went out, and at a gas station on the spot, Dad traded the old Model T on a newer car. When he arrived at home that night, he told us what had happened, and said he bought a new Ford. I couldn't wait the next morning to run out to the barn to see our new 1936 Ford. What I found was a 1926 Model T Ford coupe which Dad had bought for \$10.00 the night before. It was three years newer than the old Ford had been and was actually more modern in appearance. After driving it for two years, in August of 1938, when we were about to move, Dad sold the 1926 Ford, for \$25.00. Oh, how I wish we could have kept it, for in the 1980's, it would have been worth \$25,000.00!

During my formative years special days had real significance. May Day was always the time for a festival of flowers and a May Pole Dance at school. Mother's Day was always special at our church. Literally everyone coming to church would wear a red or white flower - red to indicate that his or her mother was alive, and white to show that she was dead. There was always recognition in the church service of the oldest mother and the youngest mother present and the mother with the most children. Halloween was always observed, not only with a Halloween Party in the church basement and Halloween decorations all over the village and at the school, but there were also the Halloween tricksters. On the morning after Halloween one year we found a buggy on the church basement entrance stairs roof, several porch swings on the tops of telephone poles, and other porch furniture from various houses perched precariously on tree limbs.

Of course, Christmas was the most special day of all the year. By early December each year the farmers would gather what seemed like hundreds of pine and hemlock boughs from trees in the forests. On a

designated Saturday a number of the church members would gather in the church sanctuary and cut the pine boughs into short lengths and tie them with wire or heavy string to long ropes, thus making long pine garlands, which were then hung from pillars and high corner posts around the church, the chancel area, the choir loft, the organ pipes, and along the chancel rail. Wreaths were made for all church doors and many windows, and a large Christmas tree was decorated at the side of the chancel. One of the primary garland makers was Miss Emma Bechtel, a rather elderly lady who always dressed in long, black clothes and black shawl and walked with a cane. Miss Emma lived alone just four houses down the street from the church in a very plain and simple frame house, the rooms of which were literally wallpapered with newspapers.

The church choir always worked long and hard on the Christmas music, and the Sunday School children performed a different Christmas play each year. We usually had a church service on Christmas morning at 10:00 o'clock. Often my father and I would get up before dawn on Christmas morning and drive the nine miles to Westminster to attend the 6:00 A.M. Christmas Service at the Reformed Church there. This was a wonderful way to begin Christmas Day. We would then gather around our large Christmas tree in the corner of our living room and open our presents after returning from celebrating Jesus' birth at the church in town.

Christmas of 1937 was both a wonderful one and a difficult one for me. I had written Santa Claus a letter asking for a bicycle. And, oh, how I wanted one now that I was 11 years old! And on Christmas morning there beside the tree in our living room was my very own first black bicycle trimmed with white stripes on the fenders and a red bow on the handlebar. Then I looked out the window and discovered to my dismay that the ground was covered with snow and it was still snowing hard - not very conducive for safe bicycle riding for a beginner even on our sidewalk or driveway. Nearly a week passed before it was safe for me to ride. And by then I had become very ill. In very early January Dr. Getty in Littlestown diagnosed my illness as appendicitis, and I was admitted to the Hanover General Hospital to have my second operation - an appendectomy performed by Dr. Wright. I had had a tonsillectomy almost exactly one year before. After being discharged from the hospital, I had to recuperate at home for some weeks. It was late in February before I could first ride my Christmas bicycle.

In the Spring of 1934 I had noticed that my mother seemed to be getting fatter. Sometime along the way my parents dropped a hint that at

some future time I might have a baby brother or sister. My reaction was that I didn't care much one way or the other. Then on Sunday morning, May 27, 1934, of all times, I knew that something was going on, but I didn't know what. My father called Dr. Louis Wetzel, a member of our church and our family doctor. His son-in-law, a Lutheran minister from Pennsylvania, was visiting the doctor and his family for a holiday weekend. Dad asked if he would on very short notice conduct our church service and preach. He agreed. I was sent next door to Sunday School and church with instructions that after church I was to go home with Martha and her family for dinner and the afternoon. I did so, and had an enjoyable time. At the dinner table Mrs. Knouse informed me that what was going on was that my mother was having a baby. In the late afternoon Dad called and told me I could come home. When I got there, he took me to his bedroom and introduced me to my baby brother, Larry Brevard Peck, who had been born during the morning worship hour. This was a new and different event for an almost 8-year-old. The very next day news came over the radio of the birth of the Dionne quintuplets in Calendar, Ontario. I couldn't understand why they got so much publicity and my baby brother got none. And this all happened on Memorial Day Weekend.

In the summer of 1936 I had my first experience of being in a parade. It was the time of the 175th anniversary of the beginning of Carroll County, Maryland. Because our church was one of the oldest in the county, dating from 1762, we had a float in the parade. The old circular, wine-glass type pedestal pulpit from the original church building was resurrected and painted and installed at the back and top of the cab of the large flat-bed truck. Facing it were rows of original pews from the old church and an old pump reed organ. Various church members dressed in costumes of the late 1700's sat in the pews, while the organist played hymns, and Dad, dressed in a cutaway suit, stood in the enclosed pulpit. Martha and I were part of the congregation. We drove the float the nine miles to Westminster and then joined as part of the long, historical parade complete with marching bands through the main streets of the county seat. Our church came away with a prize for such an outstanding float.

We had the advantage of living only nine miles from the campus of Western Maryland College and Westminster Theological Seminary, both institutions of higher education related to the Methodist Church. My father commuted several times a week to the seminary from which in 1938 he received his Doctor of Sacred Theology degree. From time to

time we had music majors from the college working with the choir of our church. One of these was Jimmy Richards, who became a Methodist minister and with whom I have maintained some contact even into the 1990's. Another college student, Richard Weagley, served for several years as our choir director. Twenty-five years later he was choir director at the Riverside Church in New York City. Dick Weagley was also an excellent pianist, and it was decided that he would become my piano teacher. He tried for several years to turn me into a pianist. Unfortunately, I didn't do very well. Richard Weagley had a close friend who from time to time played our pipe organ for our church services and even presented several organ recitals. He was really good! In later years, until his untimely death in 1980, he became one of the greatest organists in the world. His name was Virgil Fox.

On July 3, 1938, I became an observer or witness to what I learned in later years was an event of great historical significance. The main road from Washington, D. C., to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, came right through our village and only a block from our house. For several days prior to July 3rd, north-bound traffic had been very heavy, including many military vehicles and busses. Then on July 4th, the four Pecks drove the 13 miles to the Gettysburg Battlefield. We were present for the Encampment, celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg, one of the most decisive battles of the Civil War. Sections of the Battlefield were crowded with khaki-colored tents separated by wooden walkways. I found myself actually walking down the boardwalk separating the tents of all of the remaining veterans of the Union Army from the tents of all of the remaining veterans of the Confederate Army. These were elderly men now, and here I was actually meeting and talking to soldiers who had fought heroically in the Civil War. In addition to the veterans, there were dignitaries everywhere - Senators, Congressmen, radio personalities, newsreel cameras, and even several movie stars. There were many speeches, and much patriotism filled the air. The highlight of the Encampment was President Franklin D. Roosevelt being present to light the eternal flame and officially dedicate the Eternal Light Monument, the flame on which has never gone out except during the years of World War II. It was a never-to-be-forgotten experience!

Across the street from me in Silver Run lived another friend and playmate. Janet Saltzgiver was one year older than I was. Her home was the Lutheran parsonage. Her father, Rev. Willard Saltzgiver, a stern man with no sense of humor, was pastor of St. Mary's Lutheran Church down the street. Sometimes Janet and I were instructed not to leave our respec-

tive lawn areas. So occasionally we sat on the curbs on the two sides of Church Street to talk or play verbal games. Janet was very fond of my dog, Toodles, so eventually her parents bought her a puppy. She was so proud of it. On a particular afternoon, Janet was forbidden by her mother to bring her puppy across the street, so again we sat on the curbs. The puppy, being somewhat inquisitive, crossed the street by himself to come to me. I petted him and played with him for quite a while. Then Janet's mother called for her to bring the puppy into the house, so Janet called for the puppy to come back across the street to her, and the puppy started across and then stopped in the middle. Just then a big truck loaded with green beans bound for the canning factory came over the hill and failed to see the puppy. The left rear wheel of the truck ran over the puppy and squashed it. With our screaming, the truck driver stopped, and seeing what he had done, tried to console us both. I ran into the house sobbing and cried the rest of the day. Janet did the same. The truck driver, who was a member of our church and knew us both, was also quite broken up about it. The truck remained parked in front of our house for at least 30 minutes while the driver talked to Mrs. Saltzgiver and Janet and to my parents and me. He then took a shovel and carried what was left of the bloody remains of the puppy down into the woods about a half block away and buried them. Fortunately, no one was actually blamed for the puppy's death, for Janet had called for him and I had sent him out into the street when it was entirely clear, but the pup had stopped in the middle of the street when the truck came over the hill, and the driver did not see the young dog. And Mrs. Saltzgiver acknowledged that if she had only given Janet permission to bring the dog across the street to our lawn, it would not have happened. Nevertheless, for many years I felt guilty for having caused the death of that puppy. Fortunately, within a few weeks, a replacement dog found its way into our lives.

One Sunday afternoon in February of 1937, the four Pecks decided to drive to Westminster to call on a church member who was ill. We had driven only one mile when my father realized that he had forgotten something that he wanted to take along, and so we turned around and went back home to get it. Upon opening the front door, we smelled smoke. We looked into the dining room and saw flames going up the wall. Sometime earlier my father had bought a small wood stove and placed it along the outside wall of the dining room with the stove pipe and flue going into the chimney. This stove was to provide supplementary heat in my 2 and 1/2 year old brother's play area. His little white wooden table, two small matching chairs, and a toy box were beside the window nearby. During

the very short time that we were out of the house, a burning piece of wood in the stove exploded, sending a spark out through the edge of the door. The spark from the very hot stove hit the curtain on the window and ignited. Seconds later the drapery was afire. Within minutes Larry's little wooden table and the wallpaper were ablaze. With buckets of water we were able to get the flames extinguished, but if we had not come back home when we did, the entire house probably would have burned. We never did get to Westminster that day. The repair of the fire damage in subsequent days required sanding and refinishing the floor in that area, sanding and repainting the window sill and frame and small table, hanging new wallpaper, and getting new curtains and drapes. Never again did we leave the house with fire burning in that small wood stove!

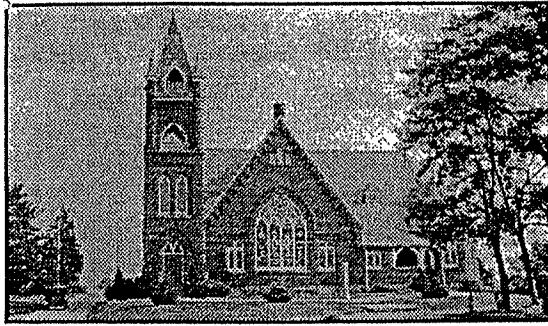
For the first 12 years of my life, the most important person in my life, other than my parents, was my best friend, Martha Knouse. During pre-school years she and I played together almost every day, either at her house or mine. We lived one block apart. Neither of us could have a birthday party without the other being there. One time our door-bell rang and Mrs. Knouse asked if I could go for a walk through the cemetery and woods with her and with Martha. My mother had just washed my hair, and said that I couldn't go with them because my hair was wet. Mrs. Knouse said we would have the walk some other time, but it never happened. Of course, several years later, Martha and I frequently took walks in the woods by ourselves.

Through the early years Martha and I were nearly inseparable. We were together in school and going to and from school. We were together in church and Sunday School and Junior Choir (of which my mother was the director), and Mission Band. We went to movies together. We went for walks together. We played together almost daily. We had long talks together. Most of the people in our school and in our church felt sure that eventually, when we were old enough and through college, we would marry. I felt this way, too. At least, I hoped so! Consequently, it was a real blow to me when my parents informed my brother and me in the summer of 1938 that we were going to move away from Silver Run, Maryland, for Dad had accepted a call to become pastor of the Milton Avenue Evangelical and Reformed Church in Louisville, Kentucky. It was a very difficult day when we had the public auction sale at our parsonage in early August to dispose of some furniture and all of our garden tools and other things that we couldn't take along to Louisville. Still worse was the news that we couldn't take our dog, Toodles, along. So, very carefully we were able to find him a new home with a nice farm family.

When the moving van pulled away from the parsonage in Silver Run on August 15, 1938, Martha and I were both in tears, as were many other people of the church. But, at least, Martha and I agreed to write to each other frequently. But we soon found both of our lives changing as we both entered junior high school the next month. Correspondence continued with some degree of regularity for several years, but it was not the same as being together in person. I was delighted, though, to be able to return to Silver Run in the summer of 1940 enroute to the New York World's Fair. And while we were in Silver Run, we stayed at the home of Miss Bertha Dutterer.

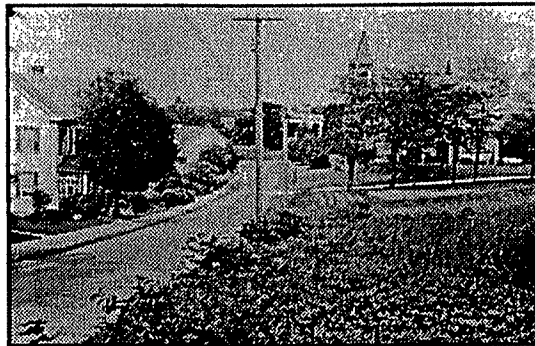
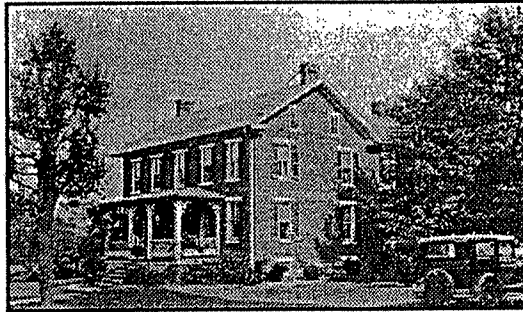
On a Sunday afternoon Dad borrowed a car (we had travelled by bus) and Martha went with us to a church in Taneytown, Maryland, some 18 miles away, to hear a concert by a family of seven children who had just come to America from Europe. They were called the Von Trapp Family Singers. Little did I know then the impact that they would have on my life 25 years later when I saw their life story in the wonderful movie, "The Sound of Music", or 30 years later when I played a minor role in the stage production of the same musical, which is still my all-time favorite!

Our move from Silver Run, Maryland, to Louisville, Kentucky, in August of 1938 closed the first chapter of my life and started a second and totally different one.



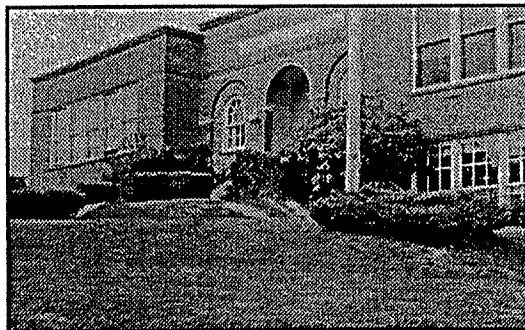
St. Mary's Reformed
Church, Silver Run,
Maryland - 1933

Parsonage of St. Mary's
Church - 1933
The house where I grew up.



Looking down Church
Street from our
parsonage in Silver Run.

Charles Carroll School for
grades 3-6 in the 1930's.



Wayne Peck is a retired minister
now living in Orlando Florida.

