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Class Reunions Evoke 'A Mind Journey'

The class reunions that are being held in Crookston this summer are fun associations with the past. My big brother, Lyle, came from Michigan for his. He graduated a year before I did, and I tried to recall how it was then, just for him and his classmates.

--Girls wore skirts and dresses to school. It would have been breaking dress code not to. I remember how shocked we all were when one girl was sent home to change clothes when she wore a tank-top to school.

The guys wore slacks with narrow legs, not jeans. I remember wearing jeans a lot, but I think it was afterschool dress.

We got to wear Jamaica shorts or pedal pushers the last day of school while we took exams because we had to bring a sack lunch and sit on the lawn for lunch.

Do you remember how big those desks seemed without all the cancans?

--The Sweet Shop Café was where you could get a huge cinnamon roll and a Coke for thirty-five cents. Plus, you could see who was around. The café was open with low booths and the round, spinning bar stools at the counter. I think they were red.

I remember seeing the first cigarette machine I had ever seen in there.

--We had a choice of going to two theaters then. The Grand, which is still operating, or the Gopher Theater, which was smaller and had a balcony. I remember going to horror movies which started at 11:30 at night and lasted 'til nearly one o'clock. We felt so wicked staying up that late!

At one horror movie, right during the scariest part, some guy with a deep voice screamed "Mommy!" and cracked up the whole theater. We all thought it was Jack Pratt, but no one knew for sure.

The Grill Café was another hangout. It had high, black wooden booths that you couldn't see over. But luckily the bathrooms were way in back, so everyone walked in and went straight for the bathrooms so they had to pass each booth and see who was there.

Pop was served in bottles, ice cold, and with a straw.

The Grill was open all night so that was where all the police officers stopped for coffee.

Remember Lil Abrams, who was a waitress there, who fussed over us and mothered us? She was so nice, if we were.

--Widman's Candy Shop was another stopping place. I recall fountain drinks! They used syrup and added fizzy water right in front of you. One was called Green River and it tasted like 7-Up.

You could get a Coke or a rootbeer that way also. They served them in the Coke glasses with the narrow bottoms and always with a straw.

You could get taffy in the Winter, carameled apples in the Fall, and Easter candy in the Spring. The neat part is you still can. To step into Widman's even now, is the same as stepping back into your childhood. Who could pass that up?

--The beet plant road was where we did our "necking", although back then it was called "parkin" and kissing was called "packing". It was also the place where you could go to turn around to "cruise" back toward town to "drag Main".

The K-T road was tarred only for the first mile so that was where the drag strip was. I remember standing between two cars and counting down and flagging off two guys who each thought his car would be ahead before they had to slow down for the gravel.

Remember glass-pack mufflers? You weren't "cool" if you didn't have them on your car and the louder they rumbled the "cooler" you were. Guys would sit at the stop light and "rap them off" just to get the girls' attention. They got it too!

--This, of course, brings up the Grinders Car Club. I remember they all had matching jackets that said Grinders on them.

Someone had a shiny red car that nearly blinded you.

They were the elite guys in high school. At least I thought they were.

--Black leather jackets were a must and girls would borrow their favorite guy's jacket just to be seen in it. Everyone knew who you were going with by whose jacket you were wearing at the time.

Going steady started then and a girl wore her fellow's ring on a chain around her neck or she would wind two pounds of tape through it until it fit her finger. A lot of class rings got lost that way. Isn't it nice that kids still trade rings?

--Pony tails and can-cans, white socks and black loafers, religious release and black combat boots, Chum Gum and soda sock hop, black leather jackets and going steady, sock hops and drag racing.....I hope this has helped you all get in the mood for at least a million memories.

It is strange to me now, that at that time, you all seemed so much older than me, that one whole year. Isn't it nice that life evens things out a little as we get older?