

## Hilliard, Ohio 1916 By Edna Wade Boland

Hilliard, Ohio in 1916 was just a tiny village. Its sole existence was to serve the surrounding farm area. Main Street was an extension of Rome Hilliard Road and ended when it turned into Avery Road at Weaver's Woods. There were hitching racks here and there to accommodate the people who used horse drawn vehicles. There were quite a few of them but there also was an ever-growing number of automobiles, mostly Fords.

Houses were scattered about in the area bordered by Cemetery Road, Avery Road, and Rome Hilliard Road. There were sort of well-worn wagon tracks and paths that kept them together. Norwich Avenue was a residential street. It was paved and had sidewalks on one side of the street. Norwich ended at Cemetery Road. That was Tarbox Comer. The Tarbox family had a farm and dairy. My brother and I walked down there every evening to get our milk for the next day.

Main Street had a bank, our church, three general stores, an ice cream parlor, barber shop, meat market, garage, a pool room and a hardware store. Across from the bank was the town pump and watering trough. The trough accommodated the horses and there was a tin drinking cup hooked onto the pump to accommodate "whoever".

The Pennsylvania Railroad intersected Main Street about halfway. The railroad connected us to the rest of the world. There was a mail train that didn't even slow down for Hilliard. The mail clerk hooked the mail bag onto the mail arm as the train sped past. Mr. Romick, the station master, would retrieve the mail bag and take it to the Post Office, which was located in Winterringer's store. There were two very important trains that stopped every day. The 8 o'clock morning train took people to work or to shop in Columbus. Those people then returned to Hilliard on the 5:20 evening train. That train brought newspapers and freight as well as passengers.

The area around the railroad station was a well-kept lawn. Beside the lawn and next to the street was another watering trough and a flagpole.

There was a watchman's shack by the railroad track. The watchman was Mr. Wheeler who at the approach of a train warned traffic with the wooden stop signal. Mr. Wheeler was a great friend to the kids. If you happened to be a little late on your way to school he told you to speed up or you'd be late.

The Winterringer store faced the railroad. They sold clothing and shoes, but most interesting was the peanut roasting machine which was when operating filled the whole town with mouthwatering aroma of roasting peanuts.

Also facing the railroad was the Hilliard Auditorium. There we watched silent movies (piano music by Helen Breeze or Esther Winterringer). We had basketball games and school programs there until the new school building was built

I was seven years old when we moved to Hilliard in late 1916. I was in the second grade. My teacher was Nellie Traftzer. That school building is now the Masonic Hall. There were four classrooms each with two grades of students. Every morning, recess and noon time we lined up according to our grade and marched to our rooms. We marched to time being struck on a metal triangle by one of the older students.

My third grade teacher was Dr. Jesse Jasper. Near the end of that year we moved to the new building which was located between Cemetery Road and the turn onto Main Street. The next year this school became a consolidated school. Children were transported in from surrounding rural areas. The first year or so that transportation was horse-drawn school wagons. For the most part the drivers of those wagons were high school boys who after delivering their students (Elementary and High School) had to stable and care for their horses at the stables on the high school grounds. Motor buses were put into use within the next few years and several of those were operated by high school boys. Looking back, that was a lot of responsibility for those teenagers.

Hilliard had electric lights. The power was generated by a mill wheel located in the mill operated by Mr. Schaffer. That wheel looked really big to me. It was fascinating to watch and it was wonderful to turn on a switch and have lights in our house and lights on our streets. There was a catch--the power went off at 12:00 midnight. At 11:45 the lights blinked three times and gave you 15 minutes to lights out. Mr. Holt tended the mill wheel. He and his wife lived in a little house close to the mill. They had come to America from England. I wonder how they came to live in Hilliard?

Back of Alder's Hardware store was a blacksmith shop owned and operated by Mr. Ben Frank. He was a big, not very friendly man. We kids pretty much kept our distance from him but we loved watching him work. The flame and sparks from the forge were wonderful to see. We also like to watch him nail shoes on horses.

Hilliard suffered greatly during the war years, especially 1918 and the "flu" epidemic. Many young and old died. It was a sad time. People suffered with the illness and with the grief for the loss of friends and loved ones and the worry about our soldier boys fighting overseas. Toward the end of the war Hilliard's young Dr. Renner was killed.

Dr. Reason was the community doctor for many years. He was really more than just a doctor. He was a healer. His wonderful personality made a patient feel better when he came through the door.

Saturday night in a small town was looked forward to all week long. Only something really serious would have kept folks from coming into town. They came to buy groceries and supplies for the following week, but mainly they came to visit with friends and neighbors. It was the only time the streets were crowded. The women and little ones visited in the stores. The men got together on the street or in the poolroom. The young people paraded up one side of main street and down the other. It was a great time.

My childhood in that little town was so good. Imagine living in a place with no police, no fire department and no jail. There was just no reason at that time to have those things. I guess we were really our neighbor's keeper.

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