

Ellen Buckalter Mumma's

Personal Memories of my Buckwalter Grandparents

At our annual summer Buckwalter family reunions throughout the years we have been getting together, we seem to continue having conversations regarding our Buckwalter grandparents – our father's mother and father, and I am going to continue the tradition.

I turned 8 years old just a month before our grandparents passed away so what I do personally remember is rather limited.

I will begin by saying we called our grandparents grandpap and grandmam. Do you wonder why? I do! I am guessing it was carried from earlier generations and as small children we presumably heard them being called that. Anyhow, grandpap, Freeland Neff Buckwalter, was born 1853 – 8 years before the start of the Civil War in 1861. He lived 80 years. Grandmam - Henrietta (known as Hallie) Zimmerman Buckwalter was born in 1868 – 7 years after the start of the Civil War. She lived 65 years. (She was 15 years younger than Grandpap. They were the parents of 2 sons – the oldest Isaac Zimmerman, a successful business man, was known around town as I.Z. Their young son, my father a farmer, was Freeland Neff Buckwalter Jr. He thought his name was too long and often used the initials F.N. He was born in 1902 and was 31 years old when his parents passed away.

There are a few things I do personally recall about our grandparents. In their senior years they lived in Lancaster PA in a brick 2 story duplex on the 600 block of New Holland Ave. This section of the street is located between N. Franklin and Reservoir Streets. I do distinctly remember a 2 ½ story light colored single family dwelling that definitely stood out from the many smaller duplex houses located across the street from where our grandparents lived. It would be more or less in the middle of the 600 Block. Today the street looks pretty much as it did when they lived there and the single 2 ½ story house helps me locate my grandparents duplex when I drive by.

So I do remember my grandparents living on New Holland Ave. As children do I enjoyed spending time alone with my grandmam (without parents and siblings). On this one particular day grandmam and I were in her kitchen doing whatever grandmams and their 7 or 8 year old granddaughters would do, when there was a knock at her front door. Somehow my grandmam knew it was someone she did not care to deal with so she told me to be quiet and we stayed in the kitchen in a out of sight area till whoever was there left. Could it have been a door to door salesman who were quite plentiful during the depression days? Also I recall after our family visited our grandparents there on New Holland Ave., when we left to go home grandmam would walk with us to the car parked along the street next to the sidewalk. This did impress me enough at the time to remember it throughout the years before I knew it was a natural thing for a grandma to do.

I also remember grandmam wearing a black wool shawl in the wintertime. I do not recall seeing her in a coat. I recall the trolley cars (also called streetcars and the Toonerville Trolley) were an important mode of transportation in Lancaster when our grandparents lived on New Holland Ave. and of course for many years later. But the trolleys were not only used in the city, they also travelled to outlying towns in the County. This included the Ephrata trolley that left the city traversing New Holland Ave. Today it is hard to imagine a trolley on New Holland Ave. or any city street. Where would there be room for a trolley car? Of course, a great big help would be a lot less street traffic at the time and traffic did not move as fast.

But having a trolley travel by their house would have been real handy for residents including our grandparents - grandpap did not own or drive a car nor would he have had a horse and wagon in the city. So it is very obvious the trolley car would have been their main means of transportation. There were many places they could use the trolley to get there, but it's quite certain there were not as many places in the early 1930's for them to go to as there are today:

For example -

Milk was delivered to their door

Bakery truck brought bread

Butcher came by

and surely there was a neighborhood pop and mom grocery store for them to walk to. etc., etc.,
Living situations were quite different than today.

And then I remember our grandparents visiting our family when we lived on the farm north of Leola. But how did they get there? Very obvious by trolley since it passed right by their house and swung and swayed on tracks along side the New Holland Pike to Leola. From Leola it did not follow a road but continued its trek north thru farmland. I recall at one place it passed between the farmhouse and barn and stray animals in the area were sent scurrying. To reach our farm they would have left the trolley at a stop a mile or so north of Leola. The tracks ran approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from our farm so our father would pick up his parents at the trolley stop and bring them to our house. When they visited they at times helped in farm chores. I remember grandpap planting sweet corn and helping in the garden and doing odds and ends chores for our father. Our sister Kathryn was the baby of the family, and when our grandparents visited Kathryn would get most of grandmam's attention! After their visit our grandparents again boarded the trolley for the return trip to their New Holland Ave. home.

Then on October 1933 after visiting out Uncle Issac's family and walking several blocks to reach the trolley stop, as they attempted to cross Columba Ave., they were struck by an automobile. They were severely injured and grandpap passed away at the accident scene and grandmam died later that night in the hospital. On that eve the trolley that was on its way to stop and pick them up continued traveling to New Holland Avenue without them.

Amazing as it may seem with all the technology we have today, my family, did not have a telephone in our house in 1933 and the news regarding his parents death did not immediately

reach our father. So with no phone or any type of fast communication, how did the news reach our father? As I remember a neighbor of Uncle Issac's drove by car the 9+ miles from Lancaster to our Leola area home with the news later that night after we children were already in bed. It was not till morning that we young children (Leon age 9, Marian age 5, Kathryn 2, and myself - age 8) were told about the tragedy that happened to our grandparents.

I recall being with my Huber grandparents at the funeral held at Mellingers Mennonite Church located just east of Lancaster along Route 462. Their gravesite is in Mellinger's Church Cemetery. And the epitaph on their gravestone reads, "Lovely in life and in death they were not divided" which is part of a Bible verse from first chapter of II Samuel.

Written by granddaughter
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daughter of son, Freeland Jr.
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