

East Falls Past—Harry Prime

The Fallser, May 2021, by Wendy Moody



Harry Prime at 95

Again this month we're sharing the memories of Harry Prime, the big band singer from East Falls. Growing up here in the 1930's, Harry vividly recalls what he did for fun:

Where did you go for recreation as a child?

Every day I practiced baseball at Dobson Field - each kid would bring his own glove. I couldn't wait to get my school clothes off, practice ball, and then play the game at 6

p.m. Baseball, football and boxing were the three big things. We'd played tackle football near where the Hohenadal beer trucks parked. Basketball didn't mean anything then.

Sometimes, we'd play football at P.H. Kelly's, where Mifflin School is now. That was a wonderful place with a huge lawn for football. All the players had nicknames - Sonny White, Booby Ledley, Dimmo McCann, Iceman, "Torch" Gotwols (he had red hair).

Your memory of the library?

The library was a big Friday night place to meet girls. The guard had a uniform, big glasses and a gray mustache. We'd taunt him about different things and get him to chase us. We were all so agile we would jump from the top of the library steps onto the lawn.

What about the Bathey?

That was the free public swimming pool - girls one day, boys the next. It was small, but if you wanted to take a dip, it was the place to go. You couldn't get in there because it was so crowded. They didn't restrict who came, as long as you had a bathing suit and were clean. Most of the time when you dove in, you hit people, it was that crowded. I never liked the Bathey.

Where did you go instead?

Woodside Park, right across the Falls Bridge. We'd walk under the B & O Railroad tunnel and come up to Chamonix Lake. The story was the lake was 1000 feet deep to scare all of us kids. Past the lake was wonderful Woodside Park with its roller coasters,

Cyclone, Wildcat, a ballroom, soda pop, ice cream and a Midway. You could throw darts at the balloons.

What about the movie theatres?

Ah, that was the Falls Theatre at Frederick and Midvale. If you had a quarter, you were there every Saturday - a Mickey Mouse cartoon, an “Our Gang” comedy, another short, and a feature. Mothers couldn’t wait to send their kids there. Everyone I hung out with when I played football, baseball, or taunted the guy at the library, was there. The theatre was small – the screen was almost on top of you.

Do you remember any movies they showed?

One thing I’ll never forget. El Grendel was a comic and he had a film called: ***The Year 2010***. In 1930 that was an eternity away. Well it’s here now. The amazing part was they showed all these spaceships and dammed if they aren’t exactly like they look today! Someone had enough visionary talent to picture what it would be 60, 70 years in advance! What a brain that guy had. When I see spaceships today I think, “My God! That old Grendel movie!”