

## GROWING UP IN LONGVIEW, MISSISSIPPI

I am Genevieve Wallace Swartzberg and was born fifth of six children in Longview, which is located just about 5 miles west of Starkville.

My parents were Ernest and Gussie Wallace who were very devout Christians who taught all of us children moral values, responsibility for your actions, honesty, courtesy, and importance of character representative of a Christian. We attended the Longview Methodist Church. We shared the minister with Adaton Methodist and Pughs Mill Methodist. We had Sunday school every Sunday but had preaching services every other Sunday. When we did not have church services, we attended the Longview Baptist church.

My father was from Winston County, Mississippi, and my mother was from Sturgis. They met at the Longview Boarding School, which I will tell you about later.

I have many fond memories of my growing up years in Longview. I would like to tell you a few of the memories of these days. We lived next door to my daddy's brother Odie Wallace and my aunt Audie Bell and family.

Perhaps many of you knew Fred Wallace and know Jack and Mary Jo Wallace. Fred and Jack were my first cousins and lived next door.

My father was a dairyman and farmer. We had 3 families who lived on our place and helped with the milking and farming chores. My older siblings also helped with hoeing and planting the crops grown. Being much younger, my sister and I did not help with these chores. Our playmates were the children of the families who lived on our place. My father and mother would drive to Starkville about once a month to take care of business and purchase items that were unavailable in Longview. My mother would always bring my sister and me a paper doll book. We never told mother but we preferred the paper dolls we would cut out from the Sears-Roebuck catalog. We played many hours with our paper dolls.

In later years when World War II began, some of the farm help moved to northern states and my youngest brother was drafted and left for war training and served in Germany 3 years. At that time, my father quit the dairy and farming and changed to raising beef cattle.

My mother loved her garden that only she and a helper worked, planted and gathered the vegetables. I am sure my mother was trying to find something to keep my little sister and me busy so she sent us into the garden with a jar and lid. Our instructions were to capture all of the potato bugs and put into the jar. My sister worked her row by picking off the bugs and putting into her jar. I was always the "scardy cat" and simply could not pick up that bug so I tried to take the lid and rake the bugs into the jar. That did not work. My sister worked my row after she finished hers.

During my growing-up days in Longview, there are many memories of jobs my sister and I were given. The winters were very cold with deep snows, etc. My father raised hogs and would select a cold day to butcher hogs. He always killed 3 with 2 for our family and 1 to share with the neighbors. My sister and I were given the job of taking meat – sausage, etc. to all the neighbors. We really liked this job because we got to run up and down the road and visit.

I will cite one more funny memory of my mother keeping my sister and me busy with work. Our chore was to gather the eggs from the nests. Doing this we had to really watch which nest had a setting hen. Other hens would get into the nest and also lay eggs and we had to determine which eggs were to be left in the nest. The

setting eggs were always marked. The old setting hen did not like you reaching in her nest and she would peck you. We would get a stick and lift her up and sometime she would leave the nest temporarily.

My sister and I had to create our own recreation – when my mother allowed us freedom to play. We built what we called a "play house" behind the house using the pine straw to make beds, chairs, etc. Mother furnished small planks and bricks, which we used to build shelves for our "make - believe" kitchen with broken dishes, etc.

Another type of recreation was skating. We had a concrete walk from our house to the road and we spent many hours on our roller skates causing scratched knees and elbows from falls.

I started to School at Longview in pre-primer it was called instead of pre-kindergarten. I attended school here through the 9th grade at which time the school was consolidated into Starkville high school in 1948. I graduated from SHS in 1951 on a Friday night and left for school in Jackson on the next day.

Another experience of my growing up in Longview. When I was in the 4th grade my sister was only in the 1st grade. We had been to the stores with our dad to buy cow feed. We heard him say, "charge it". So on our way to school – we had to walk even though a school bus came by our house daily, we were not allowed to ride because we lived too close to the school. Back to my story -- my sister and I would go by one of the stores and buy candy for all our classmates and tell the owner to "charge it". Mr. Sanders or Mr. Glenn, the owners, asked us if our daddy knew we were getting the candy and we assured them that he didn't care. However, at the end of the month when my daddy would pay up his bills, he found all these candy purchases on his bill. When he questioned us, we confessed that we didn't know "charge it" wasn't paying for the purchases. Whether we really believed that I am not sure.

There are many more experiences I could tell you but I want to tell you what I know and have been told about the town of Longview and the famous boarding school.

As a child I was told that Longview was a booming town at one time. The businesses listed in research I conducted were:

- 1) C. C. Seitz - general merchandise
- 2) Dr. G. J. Mansell – physician and surgeon'
- 3) L. F. Saunders - notary public
- 4) Dr. M. P. Journey - physician and surgeon
- 5) W. H. N. Seitz - ginnery and corn mill
- 6) W. H. Mccan - merchant
- 7) C. R. Sanders - general merchandise (highest price paid for Railroad ties and country produce)
- 8) J. B. Richardson - general merchant
- 9) G. B. PeaPearson barber
- 10) A. C. Jurney - general merchandise (headquarters for school supplies
- 11) F. W. Shropshire - general repair shop (buggies, wagons, mowing machines, etc.
- 12) G. W. Davis & son – all kinds of repair work
- 13) J. C. Lewis - general merchandise - hardware a speciality with Sherman Williams paints, stoves, plows, sewing machines & many other items.

During my growing up days in Longview, none of these businesses were in existence. There were 5 general merchandise stores, a post office, and a wood-planer mill. The planer-mill had the only telephone in Longview. Later all who wanted a telephone were able to get one and all were 3-party lines. A telephone operator connected

a caller with the party they wish to call. Many listened in on another conversation. I was told that in the early days of Longview there was a bank and a jail.

Longview was a community of caring people who were neighborly, loving and took care of others in need or just needed a friend. Now I want to tell you a bit about the schools in Longview as they have a very interesting history. Very little is known about the first school in Longview recorded as early as 1887. The first known number of students and teachers was in 1895 with 34 students. The one teacher taught until 1899 at a salary of \$35 for a 6-week term.

In 1903-04 the teacher's salary was \$240 for the entire school year and the students had increased to 61. The total value of the school building, furniture and property was estimated to be \$120.

In 1908 legislature passed a law providing for the establishment of agricultural high schools. So, in 1911 Oktibbeha County took advantage of this opportunity and established one of these schools. At that time Longview was a booming town.

In order to help build the school buildings, Longview floated bonds in the sum of \$5,000. The Longview agricultural high school was built in 1912 as a boarding school on a farm of 26 acres and consisted of a high school building and 2 dormitories – 1 for girls with 26 rooms and 1 for boys with 20 rooms.

The buildings were steam heated with water provided from a dug deep well. The students all gathered in the spacious dining room located in the girls' dorm. The girls prepared the meals and the boys did all of the farm chores. On the farm the boys raised vegetables, chickens, and hogs, which were all, used as food sources. The school principal supervised the student labor on the farm.

Students came to Longview boarding school by train from far and near for their education.

To be eligible to attend high school, students must have finished the 7th grade or passed an examination. The tuition was \$7.50 a month; some students went to school for free because they worked to pay their tuition. Three hours per week were required of the boys and all over those hours they could earn 10 cents for all the work performed.

Each day at the school began with a song service, bible scripture reading and prayer. The faculty and students were required to attend. Sunday school and church services were held each Sunday – Methodist and Baptist. Students were required to attend these services and could choose which one they wanted to attend.

The rules for the students were interesting and very strict. From the resource material used, I could not list all but some are

- 1) No visiting in dorms between study times which were 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. All visiting between dorms Was supervised by the house teacher.
- 2) No smoking or drinking was allowed and any student found guilty would be dismissed from the school.
- 3) No firearms or deadly weapons of any kind allowed.
- 4) Students were supposed to be ladies and gentlemen at all times or the principal would deal them with and board of trustees.

By 1924-25 school year, student enrollment increased to 139, not counting the non-boarding students and grammar school children who all went to school on the first floor of the same building. This 2-story building was fast becoming unsatisfactory in many ways, so in 1926 a new brick building was erected for the grammar school

children. . A bond was issued for \$15,000 for this purpose. In 1928 Longview owed a debt of \$10,000 and was anxious to do more improving to the school. The old 2-story building was torn down and rebuilt into a 1-story building. All students from Bradley were transported to Longview bringing in more students.

A Mr. J. H. Seale was principal of the new grammar school in 1930 and remained through 1933 with 7 teachers and 200 students. Teachers earned \$50 per month. In 1933 the boarding school was discontinued. In the middle of 1934-35 a Mr. T. A. Patterson who was the principal resigned and a Mr. Victor Reed succeeded him. There were 12 teachers in both high and grammar schools with a salary of \$65 a month. Craig springs and Adaton were now sending their children to Longview schools that increased the enrollment to 300. Mr. reed guided the schools until 1939. During Mr. Reed's tenure as superintendent, new buildings were built and these were dormitory for the teachers (which still stands and is the home now of Jim Henry who more or less rebuilt the home).

Other buildings were a home economics and agricultural building, and gymnasiums that were all built from the old boarding school dorms. WPA workers provided a lot of work. The old home economics and agricultural building are now the Longview community center and is managed by the Longview school alumni association. The Longview Opry rents the building and is held every Saturday night. During 1939-40 school years, Mr. Kem Stallings served as superintendent. The schools still proceeded in their good work but were suffering from a decrease in number of students. Things went from bad to worse.

In July 1942, the Oktibbeha agricultural high school was no longer a fact. It was discontinued because of lack of funds but the public school was still in progress. I found no recording of this but World War II had begun this year and many of the boys were drafted into the military that was probably one cause of decline in enrollment. In 1943 the trustees were forced to release Craig Springs to Sturgis and Adaton to Starkville. Longview struggled along with a steady decrease in number of students for 3 years (1946-48) under Mr. J. O. Epps as superintendent. The number of teachers had been cut to 9.

The final blow came to the Longview high school in April 1948. A letter was received from the high school accrediting committee that the high school had been dropped to the non -accredited list to be effective at the beginning of the 1948-49 session. In may 1948 Longview high school made arrangements with Starkville high school for all the Longview high school students to attend there. The Longview grammar school continued the following fall in 1948 with 4 teachers and Mrs. Eugenia Thompson serving as the principal. There were about 120 students.

In 1951 another teacher was dropped because of the decrease in number of students that had dropped to 90. The grammar school struggled along with the small enrollment until 1957 that was the last year of the Longview grammar school. All students were then transferred to attend Starkville public schools. After the school was abolished, some of the 5 stores closed. The last 2 stores closed after the Longview Post Office was closed. I saw the demise of the town of Longview into the community it today with many homes and a Baptist and Methodist church still exists.

There still exist skeletons of stores in Longview. There is an old tin building owned by the Ed Buckner family who lived in Longview for many years. This building was used as factory during World War II to build some type of powder ammunition. After the war this building was used as a skating rink, an upholstery business and now is an empty "nothing.