

Remembering 1011:

Gma loved attending Navy Mother's meetings. She was so proud of Ed's service. Before she attended she would gather small flowers, put them in a hair comb, then carefully place them to an upper side of her gray hair. Her flowers were carefully tended with water she kept in a pitcher where she placed all egg shells during cooking.

Gma looked forward to family visiting 1011. She believed that when Ed's came, she needed to fix what she thought was their favorite "Skillet Dinner" for their arrival meal, which was in the evening. She never figured out that they eventually arrived too late for a meal, which was to avoid that entrée.

Remember the two-hole dark, fly swarming, out house in the garage? When the upstairs bathroom was busy, the only other option was to gingerly walk down the back walk and relieve yourself. When Gma became more disabled, a bathroom was created in the pantry next to the kitchen.

Remember the white swing located to the right of the steps as one exited the back door? When the adults were visiting in the front rooms of the house, the cousins would swing daringly high to grab some of the white grapes hanging above. We also daringly ran under the swing to the other side when it was believed to be safe. Our parents did not observe this choice.

When wanting to find Gma, we could always locate her in the kitchen, busily soiling what seemed to be huge stacks of pots, pans, and dishes. As she began to wash them, extremely hot water would pour from the faucet. Meanwhile, not even flinching, she rinsed the dishes so one could dry them. Most of the time the clean items were too hot to handle.

Remember Gma's hands – especially her ring finger? Her wedding ring was embedded so deeply into her finger, where, no way, was it going to come off.

Remember how Gma loved to bake? She would make the round yeast coffee cakes sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar. The house would be filled with the aroma of her products. As Gma became more handicapped, she would cook from her wheelchair. What an amazing woman to watch as she tackled that feat.

Did you eat a meal when Uncle Rudy crunched on carrots and celery? Gma would fix volumes of them for him. It was amazing how many he would consumed as he crunched.

Whenever preparing for company, Gma would have definite instructions regarding the dishes to be used. We were never to use the beautiful monogramed glass plate form "Oley" unless she was going to be there. It was stored in the glass-front cabinet in the dining room. By the way, who has that plate?

A very common site when company visited was the Sheepshead game played in the sewing room. Sitting at the table was Gma, Gmpa, Aunt Elsie, and Uncle Ed. Sitting on the table near Gma was a small purse with her gambling money (all nickels). Interestingly, the size of that purse never increased nor decreased. As the years passed, grandchildren would step in to play. This included Gene and Jenny.

In that same sewing room was Gma's treadle sewing machine. When she used it to mend, it was amazing to watch the process of using her feet and hands at the same time to speed through the process.

As technology came on board, another use for that room was to watch TV. Gma was addicted to "As the World Turns" and others. She would stop all work to keep up the soap operas.

Gma loved to go the Bartel's to shop. She received a discount on her purchases from Gmpa being a retailer. She would purchase sheets, pillowcases, towels, and Christmas gifts for the family. The grandchildren were recipients of a large red apple studded with raisins, marshmallows, cloves, etc. to resemble a face.

I (Jane) cleaned 1011 every Saturday. This took me about 6 hours. I was fed a good lunch and had snack breaks. For this labor, I received \$1.00. After cleaning the house, and drying all the dishes, I went next door to Aunt Jenny's to sweep her rug in the front room. I was to sweep it for 30 minutes. Thirty minutes mind you! It was so boring, however, I loved Aunt Jenny, thus I tolerated it. I was paid 25 cents.

Aunt Jenny's husband, Uncle Lester, created some fear in the visiting Fienning children. We would not dare to kick a ball into his yard! He stood outside most of the time we were playing in Gma's yard. His reddish mustache would wiggle if he was mad. He planted these tall sunflowers and it seemed he was just daring us to hit one of them.

After any company left I (jane) on the next cleaning day excitedly reached my fingers deep into all stuffed furniture to retrieve coins which had escaped the pockets of the men. Generally, there was a meaningful lot of coins. Thank you for those coins!

A real treat for the family gatherings was Uncle Ed paying the piano (without music!) and Aunt Ruth and Esther (Mother) playing their ukuleles. Singing as a group was always inspiring!

Dr/nurse Aunt Martha was well known for her apothecary drawer full of medicine which she illegally dispensed for any of your ailments. One could describe their ailment/s and then she would find a medicine in her drawer to heal that ailment. She was a dear, dear aunt, so who was going to turn her in, especially after you felt better?

The cousins loved the attic. There were good hiding places up there. It was scary at times as someone could sneak up without us hearing them arrive.

Gmpa loved all the company. His smile was so genuine. He was proud of his family.

It was a puzzlement to view Gmpa, as he became bald before we were aware of his hair loss. He would emphasize that it took him longer to bathe in the morning because he had to wash two faces.

Gmpa loved to have the Grandchildren around, but one thing he didn't like was when he perceived they were disrespectful to their parents. Without being invited. Gmpa would verbally lash out with "Don't you ever talk to your Mother like that!" Believe me, he was effective! Grandpa drove an old, noisy black Plymouth sedan. We could hear it coming down the street before it got to our house. Our parents would not let us drive with him even though he went very slow.

Since our house was only a block from the grocery, it was not uncommon for Mother to send us to the grocery for short orders. She would send us down there to get six slices of bologna for our supper sandwiches. Grandpa would usually let us go to the bulk cookie containers and take one cookie.

Uncle George was a favorite! He owned a wholesale candy and cigarette/cigar business. He drove a big truck and when he came to the family grocery, we kids often heard the his big truck coming and we would make a dash to the grocery because he always had a big smile and always gave us a candy bar. This was a treat as during World War 2 we didn't get candy very often because it was sent to the troops overseas.

Jane and I stayed with Grandma and Grandpa for several months while our Mother was pregnant with Jim. Two things I remember: On Saturday night, Gma washed Jane and my hair and she always rolled my hair in strips of rags which I tried to sleep on all night. Sunday morning I was so beautiful as I went with them to Trinity Church! The second thing I remember was since it was Spring, Grandma sent me across the alley to a field next to Bleompkes to dig dandalions so she could make her cooked dandalions. I did not like this special favorite dish of GMas and used every excuse I could think of to avoid it.

As children, we always were excited when our out-of-town cousins arrived for a visit. When the Morris twins were babies, Jane and I always had a discussion over who was going to get to push them in the buggy up and down 8th Street. The older kids would hang out in the attic and tell stories. Sometimes we got in trouble with those stories. I remember many times going to the Richmond train station because cousins were arriving by train. You could hear that coughing, puffing train long before you could see it. Often, Aunt Martha was coming or going on the train.

As the Grandchildren grew up, we got to see their special talents when we gathered at 1011. Betty June took acrobatics and she would stun us with her amazing contortions. She would bend over backwards and pick up a small cup of water in her mouth and then straighten up and drink it! Several of the grandchildren played the piano. Everyone was given the opportunity to showcase their talents. The time together always encouraged Uncle Ed and/or Mother to get going on the piano with timely favorites.

When Aunt Ruth's family came to visit, we would tease Gene about the small rubber tubes placed on each side of his thumbs to discourage sucking them. When he was missing, we would find him hiding behind furniture to carry out his habit. He hid pretty often!

Jenny
Zimmerman