

On April 7, 1977, a tiny, triangular, piece of land at the intersection of Ellison Avenue and Reutlinger Street was donated to the City and dedicated as a Louisville City Park in honor of Frank Adam and Mary Catherine Gnadinger---"Gnadinger Park". According to the *Guinness Book of World's Records*, this would become the smallest Public, Municipal, Park in the world if paperwork was officially presented to that group. This has not yet been done.

The top picture shows the newly developed park. The Gnadinger home is the second house from the park on Ellison. The lower picture shows four of the seven members of the family who were among those present for the dedication. From left to right those in the picture are: Carl and Bernard Gnadinger, Louisville Mayor Harvey Sloan, Louisville Alderman Steve Magre, Norbert Gnadinger, Mary C.(Gnadinger)Wantedland and the Mayors Aid, Mr. Mershon. Keys to the City were presented to all seven members of the Gnadinger Family.

This event occurred approximately one hundred and sixteen years after my Grandfather, Edward Gnaedinger emigrated from Karlsruhe, Baden, Germany to the United States. There were three brothers who emigrated together, traveled through Cincinnati, Ohio and settled in Paris, Kentucky. All three were skilled Bakers. John Ignatius Gnadinger remained in Paris for the rest of his life. Anton Gnadinger and my Grandfather, Edward soon moved on to Louisville where they obtained jobs as Bakers.

These events all took place during the Civil War. In 1864, my Grandfather married a young German girl named Catherina Gehrig, the Aunt of Lou Gehrig, the baseball first baseman with the New York Yankees. In 1871, Anton Gnadinger was married in St. Joseph Church to Pauline Riedle. Shortly after this event, Anton and Pauline moved to Winchester, Kentucky where they started up their own Bakery business called, naturally enough, The Winchester Bakery.

These three brothers had emigrated in order to remove themselves from the constant turmoil and wars then associated with Europe and the many political units that now make up the country of Germany. An uncle, also named Anton, had settled in Chicago and had encouraged his nephews to follow him to America. Another uncle(?), Louis, had made it to Montreal, Quebec, Canada, and had set up a successful trade in furs.

Just off the present boundaries of Germantown and Paristown were located two Catholic Churches. The French Parish of St. John and the German Parish of St. Martin of Pours. St. Martin is still a thriving church today. It is said that neither the French nor the German people in the area would speak to each other and there would be "heck" to pay if a boy and girl of separate heritage would date each other or attempt to marry. During this period, my Grandparents, Edward and "Kate" Gnaedinger lived on Marshall St. at Shelby and attended St. Martin Church. They and their children later moved to Madison St. before finally settling down at 631 E. Mechanic(St. Catherine)Street and attended the "new" St. Vincent de Paul Church and School. They now lived way out in the suburbs in Germantown.

There were then two schools available to children in this area. The Germantown Public School(later Isaac Shelby), located in a large, old, farmhouse on Mary St., and St. Vincent, a small, two story, brick building located on the corner of Chester Ave.(alley) and Milk(Oak) Sts. Just behind the present church. All classes were taught in German and it was in the early 1890s when the Municipal School Board decided that English would become the language of choice and that all subjects would henceforth be taught in English. It must have been very difficult for some students to make the change.

As was the custom in those days, Edward and Kate Gnaedinger had a large family, eight children, three girls and five boys. The eldest, Mary Catherine married a Jacob Stober. The next in line, Andrew married Rosina Huber. Joseph married Rose Kleier, Pauline Rose married Fred Schuster, Elizabeth married Peter Klein and moved to Chicago, Edward married Lille Rupp, John married Agnes Metz and the youngest, my father, married Mary Catherine Determann. Did you notice the German sur-names?

It is very strange that none of my Grandfather, Edward's, children followed him in the bakery business. They took jobs anywhere they were available. They were bricklayers, worked in a brickyard(there was a brickyard, Progress Pressed Brick, located where St. Xavier High School is now situated), Edward, Jr. was a professional ballplayer, several worked at Ahrens and Ott(the present day American Standard) as molders finishers and machinist, some worked for Oertels or Fehrs, makers of fine beers, which were in the neighborhood of Henry Vogt Machine Co. and the girls mostly worked at the woolen and cotton mills. My father, Frank, was a machinist at Ahrens and Ott and my mother was a wrapper at the American Chiclé Co., later the famous, *Kiss me Gum Co.* on Shelby St. near Market.

My father, Francis Adam Gnadinger, was born in February of 1882. His father, Edward, died in January of 1882, a month before his birth. Now Catherine was left with the responsibility of raising eight children, alone. It was very unlikely she could find another husband willing to help raise eight children. There were no child labor laws in effect in those days and very few children even finished grade school. In this family it was assumed that as each child made his First Holy Communion at age twelve(then), and they would immediately quit school and find some sort of meaningful employment. Some dropped out of school at even a younger age. Even so, my grandmother surely had a rough time raising her kids on the dribbles of money which came in from their wages. Naturally, all of their income went to their mother and, maybe, they received an allowance if any money was available.

Francis (Frank)Adam Gnadinger and Mary Catherine Determann were married on August 7, 1906. Their first home was located at 1008 Ellison Ave. in the new Ellison Section of Germantown. Here, in this four room, one story, shotgun house (with an outhouse, and, a grape arbor) was born all seven of their children, one girl and six boys. All of the children attended and graduated from St. Vincent de Paul Church and School. Since my Aunt Rose Gnadinger also lived with us, there was a total of ten persons living

in that small house. Two years after I was born in 1921, and before the house exploded from all the humanity, my Mom and Pop built a new, ten room, house at 1027 Ellison Avenue, their final home. Even so, we still had to double up in the bedrooms. It was nice to now have a full basement and indoor plumbing and a coal furnace.

The seven children, beginning with the eldest, included Robert F., born Aug. 18, 1907 and who married Pauline Denham and had six children of their own. Robert was always connected to the retail furniture business. Robert spent one year studying for the priesthood. Bernard G. was born Mar. 13, 1910. He never married and worked in the retail grocery business and retired from the American Standard. Carl J. born May 30, 1912 was married to Nellie Bertholf, had eight children, was in the Army in WW II, worked in the retail grocery business and retired from the American Synthetic Rubber Co. Stanley L., born Dec. 26, 1913 was married to Mary Jane Bogdon, had two children, worked as a commercial artist and retired from the printing trade. Mary C., born May 28, 1916 was married to William Wantland, a home builder. They had three children. Frank J., born Mar. 23, 1918 was married to Emma Lee Hudson, had four children, was in the Air Force during WW II and retired from the Courier Journal Newspaper where he worked as a Linotype Machinist Foreman his entire working days. Norbert E., born June 27, 1921 was married to Helen Buchter, had four children, was in the Navy during WW II and was the only member of the family who attended collage and received a BS in Business from the University of Louisville. He retired from Tube Turns, Inc. as a Nuclear Process Engineer. At the present time, 2003, there are well over a hundred descendants of Frank and Mary C.(Mayme) Gnadinger still living with over ninety percent still in the Louisville area. Unfortunately, there is only one Gnadinger still living in Germantown.

Gnadinger's Germantown

When I was a kid growing up on Ellison Avenue, there was one sure way to know you were walking the streets of Germantown. As you walked, or rode your bicycle, you could see many of the small, well kept, homes with white washed porches. You knew everyone and they knew you. If you got into some mischief, your mother probably learned about it before you returned home. You always felt protected and were because the neighbors were interested in you. I've tried to recall a police presence at that time but nothing comes to mind. I'm sure that police patrolled the area but I had no contact with any of them. When you became a grownup, you probably married someone in the area. I married a girl who was raised one street over on Charles St.

We were famous for creating our own entertainment. In the 1920s and 1930s, auto and wagon traffic was so light along the streets that most of our games were played in the middle of the streets. We played baseball, peggy, kick football, etc. in the streets even before the brick streets were covered over with asphalt. When that happened, the asphalt added to our enjoyment because we could now roller skate everywhere. Our sports equipment was meager, at best. A broom handle, a small Wilson Milk can and roller skates was all you needed to enjoy a game of shinney(?). If you got hit in the shins with a short broom stick, you tried not to cry. Our sports equipment usually did not include a baseball glove. When we finally knocked the cover off our baseball, we made it like new again by wrapping it with electrician tape. Our ball bats were seconds which we begged from the Hillerich and Bradsby Bat Co. then located just off Preston and Broadway Sts. On Finzer Street. One of the big events during the day in the summer time was the pass through of the, horse drawn, ice wagon. You followed him from door to door until he had to chip down a large ice block and the ice man would allow you to grab the large chips. That was real living. Each household that bought block ice had a card marked on the four edges with the money amount of ice they needed that day and they put the card in the window with the correct amount of money purchase facing up. Businesses such as Donaldson Bakery and Ewing Milk Co. made home deliveries using a horse and wagon all the way into the 1940s. The horses were so well trained that they would follow the driver along the street while he was making house to house deliveries. All it took was a whistle. At night, you could learn all the facts of life sitting on a curbing under a street light listening to the older, worldly, boys brag about their vast knowledge of life.

There was no need for a pocket watch or even an alarm clock, if you could, maybe, afford either one. Our lives were controlled by the sounds of the factory whistle and the church bells. Each whistle and bell had its' own distinctive sound which you soon memorized. From our house, without insulation to deaden the sound, we could pick up Bradford Mill on the corner of Reutlinger and Oak Sts, the Louisville Textiles Co. on Goss Ave at McHenry St., the American Radiator and Standard Sanitary Co, the Louisville & Nashville RR shops, the B.F. Avery & Sons plow and farm equipment manufacturer and others which I have since forgotten. The whistle signaled the start of work, lunch time and quitting time and these times varied by company. The church bells were rung to warn you that services would soon begin and rung again when they did start. The bells also signaled the noon hour and, I believe, six PM. If the wind was blowing in the right direction, you could also hear the steamboats on the river announcing their arrival or departure. That was a mysterious and lonely sound.

There were two important Hardware stores in my life located in Germantown. One was Harprings on the corner of Shelby and Shelby Parkway. The other was Johnsons on the corner of Texas St. and Goss Ave. If you needed skate wheels, a spoke for your bicycle wheel or a patch for your bicycle tire, you went to Johnsons. If you were allowed to buy a BB gun, you usually bought it at Harprings. Otherwise, these two stores pretty well handled the same hardware items. I must mention at this point that we usually wore the skate wheels down to almost the axle before we replaced them. This was before they came out with roller bearing wheels, an improvement over the solid wheels then in use.

Wintertime brought its own type of fun. I never knew anyone who owned ice skates in the neighborhood(except my mother). Our fun in the snow usually involved a piece of roofing tin or a sled. Every family seemed to have at least one sled. Ellison hill down to Swan St. was the most popular in our area. We usually built a "Bon" fire in the middle of the large expanse at the intersection of Swan, Dandridge and Ellison(just before this period, Oak St. ended at Dandridge and Swan Sts. and Dandridge St. traveled up the hill, curved around past Fisher and Schiller and ended at Beargrass Creek). Everyone was expected to bring "footins" (sticks) to add to the fire and sometimes we roasted potatoes if they were available. Our other "sleigh ride" sites were Krieger St. hill from Samuel St. to Goss Ave. It was a little dangerous because we had to try to stop by dragging our foot or hitting the curbing rather than slide out into Goss Ave. Sometimes we would walk all the way out Poplar Level Road To where George Roger Clark Park is now located and we might walk to Tyler Park under Baxter Ave. But, Ellison hill was the best.

If you decided to get sick, your parents or someone of your neighbors would have a cure which had been passed down through the generations and most of the time it worked. I remember being treated with the syrup of onions, sugar and maybe a touch of vinegar or whiskey and which was used to treat a lot of ailments especially a sore throat or a cough. Onions, wrapped in a cloth and tied around my neck seemed to have the same affect. After awhile, Vicks "Vaporub" became popular and, during the cold(croup) season, every classroom at school smelled of Vicks. It did help open your nasal passages. Having our tonsils removed also seemed to have a helpful affect. If the home remedies did not work, your friend, the doctor, would visit you at your home. He might prescribe the same things you were already taking. If not, whatever he did prescribe would taste awful and so, had to help you.

Lets suppose your condition was so serious that the doctor decided to have you admitted to a hospital for treatment. You were in luck because there were two fine hospitals just at the outskirts of Germantown. St. Joseph Infirmary was located at the corner of Eastern Pkwy and Preston Street. It was a very large facility and you could get there by riding the streetcar. Most of the well-known physicians and Surgeons in Louisville were on the staff there. The second hospital was St. Anthony's, located on the corner of Barrett Ave. and St. Anthony Place. This hospital was more family oriented. If you were pregnant and did not have your baby at home, you would most likely have the delivery at St. Anthony's. Supposedly, more babies were delivered there in one year than all the rest of the hospitals in Louisville put together. All in my family were born at home with the expert help of a mid-wife and Dr. John M. Keaney of 1226 S. Shelby St. next door to the Shelby Theater. The mid-wife(nurse?) had probably delivered the baby before the doctor arrived.

Most every street corner in Germantown contained either a Tavern(Beer Joint), neighborhood grocer, drug store, bakery, dry goods store, chain grocery, barber shop and etc. Some street corners had more than one tavern in competition. My Pop made a very good home-brew but he sometimes needed beer from Russ's Tavern at the corner of Krieger and Charles Sts. He would send me there(I was eight or nine) with our lidded beer pail and a quarter. On the way home, I would sneak a swallow or two as a reward and I know my Pop knew this. For years, if my Mom didn't cut my hair at home, I went to Joe Hahn's shop at 1135 Logan St. Joe Hahn had almost one wall covered with personal shaving mugs. His shop was just across Logan St. from Mason's "Electric" shoe repair shop. During the depression, our family went to the shop of "Pete, the Barber" on Krieger St. in Jake Hellman's apartment building. Our favorite "Drug Store" was Sommers on the corner of Ellison and Krieger Sts. Where Vinny Schneider would give you two scoops of ice cream for a "Silver' Dime. Before this, we shopped at Votteler's, the druggest at Shelby and Oak Sts. This store later became Lichtefeld's "Pharmacy" and even later, Ed Reichert took over the store. Votteler's had moved to the corner of Bonnycastle and Bardstown Rd. On the corner of Shelby and Camp Sts. was located the very fine, Seiberz Pharmacy.

Have you ever heard of the "Ellison Ave. Dump"? Yes, there was such a thing. On both sides of Ellison as you approached Beargrass Creek was a low area which everyone thought should be filled. A common concensus said that the left side would be filled with dirt, concrete pieces, bricks, etc. Houses were later built on this fill. On the right side as you faced the creek was dumped, "garbage". Anything that would stink or burn, and the dump caught fire quite often. When I was a little kid back in the 1920s, It seemed that the smoldering fire of the dump, with the help of a wind, would flare up about every other day. Someone would report it and soon the horse drawn(?) fire engine pumper with smoke pouring from its stack would fly by our house on Ellison Ave. on the way to put out the fire. I put a question mark by "horse drawn", because I am sure I remember this but I might just remember seeing such a thing in a movie. After all, I was only four or five years old. This "fire engine" came from the fire station located then at 1024 Logan St. The abandoned station has since been converted into living quarters and can still be seen at that address. The often burning dump was finally filled up, covered with about six feet of dirt and taken over by St. Michael" Cemetery. I don't believe the dead would care one way or the other. Ellison Ave. from the intersection of Reutlinger, Spratt and Thomas St.(now St. Michael) all the way back to Barrett Ave was a dirt road. Before the 1937 major flood it was blacktopped. A good thing it was for Ellison was the only outlet from downtown to the highlands during the flood until backwater from the river finally flooded the intersection of Swan and Oak Sts.

Even though most housewives canned(put up) almost everything that was eaten by their family, there were small, family oriented, grocery stores scattered all over the city. In Germantown alone there must have been thirty or more. Our most convenient one was run by Jake Hellman. He started out at 1000 Ellison Ave. When I was very small, he moved to 1000 Charles St., one block away. He had the old building torn down and built what we thought was a tremendously large two storey building with stores below and apartments above. My uncle, John Steinmetz had a grocery store on Shiller St. in Paristown. He made deliveries from a Model T truck and my mother bought what she needed from him, naturally. During the depression, at 1024 Charles St., the Schlegel family ran a small grocery from their front room. On the corner of Krieger and Goss Ave. was a Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Co. (A & P) grocery. At 1244 Shelby St. was a Piggly-Wiggly and at 1247 Shelby was another A & P. Quaker Maid and Steiden were also popular in the area. Later, Kroger and Winn Dixie, national chains, moved into town and bought out or bankrupted our favorite groceries. I believe Winn Dixie took over Steidens. One grocer, Hartstern's, on the corner of Ash and Shelby Sts. I'll always remember. Mr. Hartstern also made and sold Turtle Soup. He would order a large "sea" turtle (four foot in diameter?) and keep it in a pen outside the door of the grocery long enough for everyone in the area to notice. He would then slaughter it and so, had no trouble selling the soup. On the corner of Logan and Mary Sts. was the famous Fritsch Grocery Store and at Logan and Oak Sts was Langolf's. Mr Langolf also sold feed, seed, hay and straw from a brick building behind his store next to the L & N RR track All of the owners of these small stores either lived upstairs over the store or next door.

During the "great" depression of the 1930's, many people "got by" by opening small stores in their homes or by opening small businesses. Anything to make a nickel. I have already mentioned the Schlegels on Charles St. In the 900 block of Charles was the Dolfinger Dry Goods. At 1000 Goss Ave. was the W. F. Hauck Dry goods. George Hauck is still running this store today. Sarah Arnold's Dry Goods at 1008 E. Oak sold anything that would sell. Sam Lauyans of 1100 Goss Ave started out selling and delivering ice. He was better known later for storing bottle beer in his icehouse and selling it by the case. Fort Hill Ice Co. at 1400 S. Shelby did the same. There were more than several enterprising women in the neighborhood who became well known as "hair dressers"(giving permanents), menders and stitchers who were good with sewing and some who made a few dollars stretching curtains. Some men repaired automobiles in their garages behind their house on the alley. One I knew well was Stan Peters who started out on Krieger St. and ended up on Oak St. next to the old Bradford Mill. Peter Matz of 935 Ellison was a flooring man, WJ Rolfes of 903 Charles was a paperhanger, JA Heil of Charles St. was a Tinner who worked only on tin roofs and Joe Wahl had his poolroom at 1153 S. Shelby. Some of these small business people gained more success and eventually earned a good living. All of these started out small. Ben

Paslick the painter from 926 Ellison, Bernie Kleinhenz the Blacksmith from 1247 S. Shelby, Reiss-Dabney Cigar Co. (light and dark Certified Bond Cigars) [in the alley behind Reiss-Dabney was the Courier and Times paper station from which I carried the Courier under Mr. Tyler], James Clark Electric Co. on Bergman St., Louisville Soap Co. (Tag Soap) on the corner of Shelby and Bergman Sts., Herman Poll, Packers and Movers at 1001 Mary St., Smith's Dept. Store at Shelby and Oak Sts., B & B Motors on the corner of Shelby and Shelby Pkwy, Macy's Dept Store across the street from B & B (Broadway Dept. Store was there before Macy), Harry Rotherber's Theatre Inn Restaurant at 1221 Shelby, the Liberty Print Shop at 1234 Shelby, Weis Pet Shop at 1225 Shelby and Chas. Heitzman from next to St. Elizabeth on Burnett opened a branch bakery store at 1264 Shelby St. Doctor C.G. Russman of 1041 Goss Ave. branched out by starting a "Funeral Parlor" and just a few doors away at 1053 Goss, John Taphorn ran a successful Tavern. My neighbor on Ellison Ave., Kelly Thome, was his bartender.

I mention these four locations together because they pretty well abutted each other. The first is Shelby Park. No one who lived in Germantown could have really lived without spending a great deal of time in that park. I played amateur football one year on the Shelby Park team when we played one game against the St. Xavier freshman team. We only lost to them 6-0. Our team played in street clothes and "Tennis" shoes. I just had to bring that up. Other than that occasion, I was only an observer of the sport scene. Several of the kids had beat-up tennis rackets and we would bounce balls back and forth on the tennis courts. We always showed up to watch the girls play fast pitch softball at night. But, the number one activity was walking around the large swimming pool flirting with the girls and, sometimes, actually having enough money to enjoy swimming in the pool. My greatest success was the first time I swam across the eight foot deep section. I was scarred to death. I believe they furnished a swim suit and towel. I had learned to swim in Beargrass Creek out past Eastern Pkwy where the water was usually shallow enough so your feet could touch bottom when you got tired. We boys, alone, always swam in the nude. Out at the creek was Eleven Joneses Cave where we got our drinking water from the spring. Our swim "holes" had names such as "Baby Hole", "Bathtub" and "Blue Hole".

The second of the four special locations was the Louisville Free Public Library on Oak St. at Hancock and backing up to the Park. Once I discovered the wonder of this library, I was hooked on reading. The library made a more profound impression on me than most any other happening in my life. I feel that I must have read half the books in the stacks. The east wing of the library contained the children books. I was soon checking out more interesting reading from the west, or adult, wing. During some boring times in the middle of summer, I would read three or four books a day while laying in our front porch swing.

A dog pound may not seem very glamorous to make number three on this list, but, the Louisville Dog Pound located in an alley off Hancock Street between Oak and St. Catherine Sts. was a part of our neighborhood life. Quite often our pet dogs were picked up as strays and after looking all over the area for the pup, we would head for the pound where it could usually be found. There was no charge for the dog and no license was needed. If you wanted a pet, some where around, someone had a litter of pups and you could take your choice. Otherwise, it was easy to get a dog or cat from the pound.

Just a couple blocks from the Dog Pound at Kentucky St. and St. Paul Court was the fourth part of this series, St. Xavier Athletic Field. St. X High School was in a cramped location on Broadway near 2nd St. There was a gymnasium located on the lot but nothing else but the school building. So, this field was used for all other school sports such as football, baseball and track. The field is worth mentioning because, besides watching the St. X practices, we were allowed to use the field for our own teams and sport leagues. Today there are apartments on this property.

In Germantown, we went to the "Show". Not to the theatre but to a show. Our show of choice and convenience was the Shelby Theatre. Others shows which were close enough to walk to were the Broadway between Shelby and Logan on Broadway, the Shelmar on the corner of Shelby and Market Sts., the Preston on Preston near Atwood, the Preston Airdrome on Preston St. near Camp, The Dixie Theatre on Preston near Caldwell, the Towers near 4th and Oak Sts., the Baxter on Bardstown Rd. near Highland Ave., and the Uptown on Bardstown Rd. at Eastern Pkwy. The Broadway and the Uptown Theatres were larger and more classy than the others. They had balconies. It was said that the Preston and the Preston Airdrome were co-owned and always featured the same films each week. When there was a double feature being shown, the different films were exchanged by auto while the comedies and newsreels were in the projector. During the 1920s, when silent films were still shown, a skilled pianist would accompany the film. You would read the words on the screen that the people in the film were saying but the piano music, fast, slow, dramatic, would make the action come alive in your imagination. I don't remember the name of the first movie shown in Louisville that had a sound track, but, in it was Al Jolson, in blackface, who sang the spiritual(?), "Mammie". It took place at either the Strand or Brown Theatre downtown. Since downtown was a recreation center, the length of 4th St. between Liberty and Broadway was loaded with "Movie Houses". I know I won't remember them all but here are what I do remember. Beginning with the Rex at Liberty, there was the Mary Anderson, the Majestic, the Alamo, the Strand, the Rialto, the Loews, the Kentucky, the Ohio and the Brown Theatres. One popular attraction during the 1930s and 40s, on New Years Eve was a first run movie downtown on 4th St. You attended the late movie which "let out" just before midnight. Everyone exited to the street and sidewalks to bring in the new year with hugs and kisses and listen to the church bells, auto horns and fireworks. Our group usually celebrated from the Loews or Rialto Theatres if we hadn't gone to a New Years Eve dance somewhere instead.

If there was a focal point representing all of Germantown, I think it was, Shelby Street, and, most likely, its crossing of Oak St. Our street cars of choice was the Portland- Shelby line which circled Schnitzelburg and had a car barn at Shelby and Ormsby (which later housed large boats and trailers) and the smaller Oak St. line which connected us to the West end and the Highlands. Do you remember when the Oak St. line made a left turn on Schiller St., then a right turn on Kentucky and a right turn on Barrett and then a left turn on to Winter Ave.? This was before the bridge had been built over Beargrass Creek at Heady's Funeral Home. Next to the Shelby Theatre was the Libery Bank (Previously the German-American Bank of WW I) and next door was Dr. JM Keaney. Upstairs in the Harpring building was Dr. JO Gable, the Dentist (Dr. King's office was at Jackson an Oak Sts. with Dr. Tracy). The next block had a Ben Franklin 5 and 10 cent store and on the corner of Shelby and Goss was located Van Camp Foods (later Durkees Famous Foods). Out toward Burnett St. and on the right was the Red Cross Hospital and Nurses Training Center, just for black people at the time. I'll mention Logan St. at this same time because of these important businesses. At 901 Logan was the Charles Buddeke Coal Co, at 1011 Logan was the Frey Planing Mill Co., at 1201 was the Baird Lumber Co with the Standard Oil Station just across the street,

Ale Bornstein the Contractor was at 1217, Tube Turns, Inc. from which I retired after 38 years was at 1250 with the Air Reduction Sales Co. just next door. Even though these two were not in the neighborhood, they were important to us. We bought a lot of our clothing from the basement of Levy Bros. Clothing on the corner of 3rd and Jefferson Sts. and had some of our photographs made by Beckmann Studios (Photographer) upstairs at 318 W. Market St.

This picture represents, to me, what the "old" Germantown was all about. All of my memories are of the simple things of life I learned in my childhood. Today, this street crossing, railroad gates, control station seems primitive, but, at the time, 1920s, 1930s, it was the latest in hydraulic technology. My explanation may not be completely accurate but I'll give it anyway. Inside the second story lookout were several hydraulic hand activated pumps which had hydraulic lines connected to each street crossing such as Oak Street seen in the distance. As the operator spotted a train coming he would flip the switches one at a time as he worked a pump handle which forced hydraulic fluid through to the crossing gates and the gates were lowered. As the end of the train passed each street crossing, the operator would reverse each switch and his pumping action would draw the fluid in a reverse flow which raised the gates again to let traffic flow across the tracks. Today, this may seem primitive but it worked very well but was labor intensive. Someone had to be on duty twenty four hours a day. A very efficient electric system is used today. The station pictured is a pen and ink drawing by my good friend, Tony Oswald, also a former Germantowner., and was located at the alley between Mary and Oak Sts. This station controlled the gates at Shelby Pkwy, Oak, Mary, St. Catherine and Kentucky Sts. Before the tracks were elevated in 1936-37, there was another station at Broadway St. In the other direction was the one at Goss Ave. which controlled those gates and around the bend at Shelby St. The operators had a pile of coal and an outhouse below, and, above, he had his hydraulic equipment a chair and a coal stove for heat. His air conditioning unit consisted of four windows each facing in separate directions.

I'm not sure what other religious parishes did in Germantown to advertise their socials and picnics. They probably used hand bills or words of mouth and church bulletins. At St. Vincent de Paul, when I was very young, I can remember the automobile parade. Everyone one who had a car would decorate it in any way they chose. They were all open touring cars (no windows in the summer). Signs were made up telling of the event and the place and time of the picnic. The cars were then filled up with little kids who could shout at everyone we passed as the parade of cars snaked through the whole of Germantown. It must have been effective because there was always a large crowd at Shelby and Oak Sts. for the picnic.

I was a *normal* young boy growing up in Germantown. Normal to the extent that I was always hungry mainly because I was an active boy. I hung around my mother while she was cooking, waiting for some scraps. I ate the leaves from the lettuce stalks, and the cores from the heads of lettuce and cabbage. When we went out to the creek to pick blackberries, I brought very few home after eating my fill. When we swam in Beargrass Creek, I stole baby ears of corn from Schurch's corn field on Eastern Pkwy and ate the cob and all. I mention all of this because it fits in with my sweet tooth. Besides Heitzman's Bakery at Shelby and Camp Sts. we had three others that I knew intimately. My favorite was Gander's Bakery on the corner of Reutlinger and Rufer. When I carried the morning paper and could afford it, I would stop there several mornings a week to pick up a half dozen Peanut Rolls. They were the best I have ever eaten. Closer to home was Ruf's Bakery on Kreiger St. Mr Ruf baked all night and his wife ran the business during the day. I would stop there late at night after a date and pick up a Kuchen. After I was married, our whole family would spend every Sunday night at my Moms on Ellison. She would furnish the milk and coffee while the rest of us would pitch up to buy "bakery goods" from Glasners on the corner of Goss and Boyle. A good bakery was a necessity in Germantown.

I was eighteen years of age when I married and left Germantown for good in 1939, except to visit. Those eighteen years were an intensive learning period. I have hardly forgotten one thing or event that I experienced during that time. I could have written three times as many pages as I have but I really meant to hit the highlights. You can fill in the blank spaces from your own memories of *our* Germantown. I have lived in many neighborhoods since 1939 but I found none that equaled the good times of that era. The others were good, naturally, but they could not match or exceed Gnadinger's Germantown.

Norbert E. Gnadinger, Sr.
Born---June 27, 1921 at
1008 Ellison Ave.
Family Home---1027 Ellison Ave.
Written---July 6, 2003

Germantown Gnadingers