

Memories: An Interview with Joyce Goebert VanHaneghem By Dawn Russell

Joyce Goebert VanHaneghem was born March 1, 1931. Her parents were Lawrence and Eva Goebert. She has a brother Donald, a sister Carol, and a sister Virginia Rose who passed many years ago. Joyce moved with her family to Walworth when she was three years old and has lived in this town ever since.

The family first moved to Boynton Road across from Anna Hermanet's house. Joyce remembers sitting outside listening to Anna play the piano. She says the music was very lovely and relaxing. Eventually Joyce and her family moved to what she refers to as the little house across the road from Frank Lawrence's farm on Walworth-Ontario Road, also known to many as the Carlyle Darron farm in later years. Joyce's father worked the farm for a living. After a while her family moved to the big farm house.

When she was about eight years old and living in the little house next to Harold and Mildred Reynolds' home, Joyce's mom had stoked the wood fire. Joyce saw the chimney was red; not knowing otherwise, she believed the house was on fire so she called the Walworth Fire Department. To the rescue they came, but to Joyce's unfortunate surprise the trucks drove over the flowers in Mildred's yard. There wasn't a fire, but Joyce never got in any trouble because the firemen told her better to be safe than sorry.



While living on the farm, she remembers making a lot of food for the thrashers who would come to their house. Joyce decided to make her first attempt at homemade bread. Her father wouldn't or couldn't eat it. He told her if he threw this bread at the pigs it would kill them. Evidently the bread was very, very well done.

Joyce remembers walking from their home to Walworth High School which she attended with her brother Donald. When it was very cold their mother would drive them to school in the big old Buick. She remembers her mom hardly being able to see above the steering wheel, but she always got them to school. Joyce was very active while in school and participated in cheerleading, band (played the trombone), and chorus. She was selected to go to the all-state competition for instrumentalists and chorus groups. Joyce graduated in 1949 (**left photo**), the last class to graduate from there.

While growing up her close friends were Katie Luke (Youngman) and Ruthie VanHaneghem (Reybrouck). Joyce and her family moved to Walworth-Marion Road next to the garage and house owned by Ruthie's parents, Peter and Gladys VanHaneghem. Joyce remembers when she and Ruthie weren't allowed to play together because they had gotten into a fight. Instead, they would each stand in their own yard tossing a ball back and forth to one another. Joyce also remembers picking berries in the summer with Ruthie at the Stanley Allaart farm on Boynton Road.



Claire VanHaneghem was Ruthie's brother. Joyce and Claire began courting when she was 16 years old. Claire would ride his horse to the Lawrence farm and help Joyce with the hay. She remembers Claire shooting woodchucks at the farm. When Joyce was 17 years old, she and her mom joined the Walworth Firemen's Auxiliary. She remembers marching in every parade. Joyce has been a member of the Auxiliary for 66 years and is the only active member left from the original ones.

After Claire returned home from the Navy, they continued to court and went to every carnival. They planted a big cabbage field between his house and hers and used the profits to pay for their wedding. They married at the Second Baptist Church in Walworth on January 14, 1950. Their honeymoon was in New York City and Long Island. Joyce stood in the ocean only long enough for one picture, because she doesn't like the water.

Joyce and Claire at Walworth Hardware Store with Katie Youngman 1984



The newlyweds lived in an apartment above VanHaneghem's house on the northeast corner of Main Street and Walworth-Ontario Road until they built their own house to the north. Joyce and Claire built most of the house themselves with some help from family and friends. She remembers the blizzard of 1966; she and Claire tied a rope from his parent's house to their new home and used the rope to guide them because the visibility was so bad. The house was finished in 1967. Joyce and Claire have two children, Debbie and Donald. They also have two grandchildren, Stephen and Becky, and several great-grandchildren.

While raising their family, Claire worked with Harold Ginewaw at Matthews Trucking and also worked for Charlie Pembroke. Later after schooling, Claire, with the help of Joe Finley, became a Wayne County Sheriff. He worked for the Sheriff's Office for 33 years, retiring in 1988 as Undersheriff. Joyce worked at Ray Cring's pancake bar which was located across from the old firemen's building on Walworth-Penfield Road. She later worked at the bank in Macedon for 27 years.

Joyce and Claire have had many beautiful years in Walworth. Sadly, Claire passed on December 21, 2014. Joyce continues to stay very active at the Second Baptist Church and enjoys knitting and being with her family and friends. She still lives in the house that she and Claire built those many years past, and loves living in the town of Walworth.

Joyce and Claire VanHaneghem