

Late Forties into the Fifties Growing Up in Edinboro



Parade in front of the Presbyterian Church. Edinboro Independent photo, 1950s.

A story written in 2012 by Michael Hall for the Edinboro Historical Society's annual publication "The Fountain."

The 1940's and 1950's

GROWING UP IN EDINBORO

by Michael Hall

CITY BOY, COUNTRY BOY

In 1947 I didn't want to move to a little Pennsylvania town called Edinboro. I was a seven year old city boy from western Illinois.

I lived in Rock Island, home of the sleek Rock Island Rocket, and one of the Tri-Cities with Moline and Davenport. My city was on the Mississippi River where the big river runs east to west. I was Man of the House for my divorced mother Dorothy Reese and Favored Grandchild of my widowed grandmother Lula Helmer. We lived with Grandma Helmer and Aunt Pearl in Grandma's two-story house near the railroad station.

Aunt June lived in Grandma's house, but she fell in love with the Army Air Force cadet Edward Culbertson who attended military school at Rock Island's Augustana College. When she married him, I was the ring bearer and wore a miniature Army Air Force uniform like my new Uncle Ed. Aunt June moved away after the wedding, far away to his home town of Edinboro, Pennsylvania, where he was a high school hero.

Edinboro sports hero Ed Culbertson marries June Helmer from Illinois. Ring-bearer Michael and his bridesmaid mother Dorothy are at far right.



Two years later, my mother and Grandma Helmer drove Grandma's car to Edinboro to see if Aunt June was okay. They left me with clever Aunt Pearl who took me on the train from Rock Island to Davenport, crossing into another state! But when my mother returned from Pennsylvania everything fell apart. She told me she met someone who was sort of like Uncle Ed's older brother, a man named Carl Hall who was raised with Uncle Ed and the Culbertson family of milk haulers.

"I'm going to marry him," she said, "and we're going to live in Edinboro, Pennsylvania."



I made a terrible face. No more sleep-overs at Aunt Freda's with my four Sproul cousins. No longer my mother's protector, no longer Man of the House. Dorothy married Carl Charles Hall in August 1947 and we moved to Edinboro.

At first I stayed with Tom and Edna Culbertson in their house on Waterford Street. From my second floor window I heard trucks honking and people screaming. I looked out the window to see Dorothy and Carl sitting in wooden chairs in the back of a pickup truck and stopped at the curve in the road. Headlights glared. People shouted. I thought they were hurting my mother.

Michael and his Grandma Helmer at his mother Dorothy's wedding to Carl Hall.

I cried out and Edna Culbertson ran upstairs. She told me it was all in fun, that it was a Shivarree, a Pennsylvania thing. “We take newlyweds for a ride through town in the back of a pickup truck,” she said. “To welcome them.” I didn’t believe it.

A few days later Carl bought a ramshackle, two-story house on Route 99 toward Erie for six thousand dollars. It was past Phil Walker’s barn on the right and Warnshuis’ barn and house on the left.

Yes, the property had six acres with maple trees in front and apple trees out back, a garage and a chicken coop, and mother told me I could have a cat and a dog, but what good was that? She said I could choose wallpaper for my second floor room. I could have a bicycle someday. But I was only seven years old, too young for a bike, and marooned more than a mile from the little teacher’s college. A city kid stuck in the middle of nowhere!

Carl and Dorothy renovated the rickety old house, making it (I will say) quite spiffy. They bought a big old upright piano and a radio that broadcast Lux Radio Theater and Cleveland Indians’ baseball games. On Christmas Eve we went to Aunt June’s after church. While there, Santa’s reindeer landed in front of our newly-improved front porch, leaving sleigh tracks in the snow. Santa entered the front door and ate one of my three carrot sticks. I saw his footprints! It didn’t occur to me that Uncle Ed wasn’t home when we went to his house that night.



The spruced up house on the Erie Road that Carl and Dorothy bought and renovated.

Aunt June was especially nice to me. She knew what it was like to be plunked down in a little town after growing up in the Tri-Cities.

Mother enrolled me in Mrs. Ruth Chapin’s second grade. It was strange because I didn’t know anybody. Needing attention, I wrote a play for Mrs. Chapin’s candy hearts exchange on Valentine’s Day. I rehearsed the play in my newly wall-papered bedroom. But on February 14, when I ran downstairs for breakfast, my mother said I had spots on my face. “You can’t go to school,” she said. “I think you have something contagious. Like measles.”

I said if I couldn’t go to school, I’d run away from home. Mother knew I’d do it, too, like Huckleberry Finn. “I’ll make a deal,” she said.. “You can go to school if you promise to see Miss Behler first.”

Great! I could outwit Miss Behler, school nurse. She may have combed through our hair with tongue depressors to see if we had ringworm, but she’d never see my spots. I jumped off the school bus and rushed straight to her office, the one with the big E eye chart. When she saw me, she took me by the ear, dragged me to her car, and drove me home. Ann Behler delayed my theatrical career. I never performed my Valentine’s play and I never forgave her.

My dog Nipper, however, helped me adjust. Part German shepherd, part toy collie, Nipper got his name because he nipped your feet. And he loved to romp with me in the woods after I conquered the fourteen-day red spots. Sometime later, he allowed one of my cats to have her kittens in his doghouse. He cared for the kittens more than she did.

Nipper with “his” kittens.



As time went by, my new dad Carl helped me buy a little brown pig for \$18. My pig joined his pigs but mine escaped the pen, ran out onto the Erie Road and got run over by a truck. Carl bought me another pig, but it grew big and fat, and encouraged me to make money by picking potatoes for Phil Walker rather than selling a sloppy hog.

On the positive side, there was Lake Edinboro where you froze to death jumping into the water in front of the old cemetery, but at ages nine through twelve it didn't matter. And our maple trees turned brilliant colors in fall. Carl hammered spigots called “spiles” into the trees and hung buckets to collect sap. In winter, he made ice cream outside the house using a churn and lots of snow. And he bought me an old sled when backyard drifts were as high as the snow fence. Sometimes Bambi-like deer walked into our backyard. Maybe Edinboro wasn't so bad.

After third grade my family went for picnics on the Erie Peninsula. Another time my Illinois cousin George visited Edinboro and we ventured further out on the Peninsula, or “Presque Isle” as my teachers called it. The water was frigid there, too, but you could get wet and splash, unlike the Mississippi where it was too wide and dirty. In Illinois I got leeches from a lake in Alpha where Aunt Pearl had a cottage, making her run for a box of salt to get them off. I never got leeches from the lakes in Edinboro and Erie!

Carl Hall with his Illinois nephew George Sproul and Michael visiting the Erie Peninsula



But one winter I got spots again, only a different kind. One of the two Doc Goehrings, Harold or Boyd, drove their car to the house three times in ten days. First I was feverish and splotchy, next I had spots but felt okay, third I had scaly skin but felt fine. “Strange,” Doc Goehring said. “He’s got symptoms of scarlet fever, but he’s not sick. I’m gonna call it scarlatina. Keep him out of school until his whole body peels. But it’s okay to let him play outside,” he told mother. In a month I peeled like a snake and went back to school.

Along the way, mother asked if I would let Carl adopt me, making me Michael Hall not Michael Reese, like the time her first husband Leo Reese adopted me at birth. Before long I was standing in front of a very high judge’s bench in the Erie Courthouse. I looked way, way up at the judge as he asked me if I wanted to change my name. I wasn’t sure, but he looked so serious I said yes.

The next day Mrs. Chapin told everyone I had a new name. I was embarrassed, but no one laughed or said I had Cooties. Only my new friend Regina Szczesny understood my horror.

Michael, Dorothy and Carl in front of the kitchen cabinets Carl built.

When Mrs. Peck was our third and fourth grade teacher, Regina had her name changed from Szczesny to Erickson. From then on we knew we had something in common that never happened to anyone else.

My new adopted dad Carl couldn't sing, but he could call square dances at Joyland on 6N with Methel Reagles pounding piano and a fiddler. Dorothy let me do-si-do with the ladies, then packed me in the back seat of the old Chevy while Carl called the night away. She never locked the doors. Who would steal a little country boy sleeping in the back seat?



MILK HAULING

My Illinois cousins arrived in summer to discover I liked to ride with Uncle Ed on his milk route. Uncle Ed and his dad Tom Culbertson had big trucks with sliding doors on the driver's side. You'd stop at a barn, grab the cans from water in the smelly, cool milk house, toss the cans inside the truck, and drive off to the next farm. You always knew which cans belonged where because farmers painted their numbers on them.

Tom Culbertson with his milk truck.



At the dairy, the milk was dumped into vats and pasteurized.. Waiting for workers to sterilize the cans, Uncle Ed bought ice cream for his helper – me.

June and Ed Culbertson and his new wife June with family milk trucks.

I could only go with Uncle Ed in summer because Mrs. Peck said I had to be in school, but I always wanted to go during a snowstorm. When blizzards hit Edinboro and blocked driveways, Ed's brother Norman Culbertson jumped into a pickup truck, drove into the worst snow-filled driveways and loaded the cans in the open-back truck. He met Tom and Ed on plowed roads toward Erie where they wrestled the cans into their big trucks and slowly forged north. That sounded like fun.



WHITEWASHING BARNs



My Illinois cousins replaced me with Uncle Ed, but when Carl bought Gaylord Skelton's whitewash rig they begged to replace me on the whitewash route! Imagine! My city cousins were jealous of me, their country cousin.

Carl Hall with Illinois nephews Jack and Kenny Sproul and the whitewash rig, 1953.

Farmers kept their barns clean. Once a year they paid my dad somewhere between six and nine dollars to whitewash ceilings and walls inside their barns and paint the stones around the outside. Carl told me he needed someone to pull the hose through the manure troughs and untangle it when it got caught.

"I'll pay you fifty dollars a week to load bags of lime onto the truck and help me drag the hose," he said. "You'll wear a hat and rubber gloves to keep the spray off, and your mother will pack our lunch."

Fifty dollars a week! A city boy tossing around fifty pound lime sacks, however, and pulling a hose through manure, attracting spiders from ceilings, and getting covered with whitewash wasn't exactly my style. But fifty dollars a week! I took the job. For two long, hot summers. I learned to drive the whitewash truck with its cranky gears on the floor. And I made enough money to buy a tenor saxophone. At the same time I hatched a plan.

I sent away for folders of Wallace Brown Christmas Cards. I told my dad I could make as much money selling Christmas cards as I made pulling the hose through manure. "If you think you can," he said, "then do it." Carl replaced me with his always-jobless younger brother Harvey, which wasn't fun for him, but Carl was a caring man.

For three summers I knocked on every door in Edinboro and sold boxes of cards, some imprinted with names, some not. I made money – well, not quite fifty dollars a week, but I did okay thanks to people like Elsie McWilliams whose husband was on Town Council.

As I approached my teens, Dorothy and Carl sold their first house to Mary Kay and Bob Huber from Pittsburgh (parents of future TNT sports announcer Jim Huber) and bought a compact little house up the road at the corner of Crane Road and Route 99. The little house had a full attic which, when floored, became "My Room." And Dorothy became the editor of the Edinboro Independent.

THE EDINBORO INDEPENDENT

Grammar-perfect and an expert speller, Dorothy was exactly what the dapper, bow-tied gentleman named Will Rose needed as editor of one of his five Erie County weeklies. Dorothy took to it right away, typing every tidbit of news that happened in Edinboro, taking personal and employment ads, writing obituaries and clicking a Brownie camera. Mr. Rose was so impressed that he asked her to write a weekly column. She called it “In the Hall-Way.”



My relatives made good subjects for her articles and columns. “We can’t have a quiet little birthday party without being ‘written up,’” they howled. But most people liked to see their names in print. Me included.

Dorothy Hall, editor of the Edinboro Independent in the 1950's. Her first office, now gone, was near the Grange Hall.

Mother covered town council meetings and social events, telling who won the Thanksgiving turkey raffle and who got ribbons at the County Fair. She took pictures of snowstorms and wrote about teachers and politicians. She honored Edinboro’s first-born child every year, and, in 1958, printed a picture of my one year old cousin Gail Culbertson. She wrote about author Virginia Sorensen who lived in Edinboro during the Fifties when her new books were published, including “Kingdom Come,” “Many Heavens” and “Plain Girl,” and when she won a Guggenheim Fellowship and also the important 1957 Newbery Medal for “Miracles on Maple Hill.”

Edinboro Independent, January 1958.

Mother compiled lists of “important happenings” each year, including some funny ones. Among 1957 items, for example, she wrote “Carolyn Zortman lost her kitten and placed an ad in the paper concerning same. No direct result in return of same, but her father was forced to investigate in several unlikely places.”

In a 1957 paragraph titled “New Year’s Quiet” she wrote, “Edinboro’s Police Chief, Dick Jones, said this week that there were no accidents, no arrests for drunkenness or other disturbances in the borough during New Year’s Eve. He expressed his appreciation and complimented the residents of Edinboro for their actions.”



Later, when I was in high school and Dorothy ran out of creative ideas for “In the Hall-Way,” I begged to write it myself, and several times I did. But, wait, I’m getting ahead of myself.

Edinboro gets natural gas in September 1955.



*Recognizable Edinboro folks:
(sport jacket)
Curly Halmi*

*James Coffman
(bow tie)
Dr.
Herman
Offner
(hat)*

*Dorothy Hall
Charles Frank
Zortman Scheidemantel
(to the left of Dorothy Hall)*

Cut lines from the Edinboro Independent: Among the 150 persons present at the ceremony marking the advent of natural gas service in Edinboro on September 30, 1955, were representatives of the Boro and United Natural Gas Company shown in this picture. Left to right Stephen Halmi, Blair Maher (UNG), James Boland (UNG), Dr. Herman Offner, James Coffman, Charles Zortman, Frank Scheidemantel, Mrs. Carl Hall, J. G. Montgomery Jr. (UNG) and G. E. Scott (UNG). Photo credit: Edinboro Independent

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mrs. Peck taught both third and fourth grades. The next year I joined a combined fifth and sixth grade in the Vocational Building, sharing the same room and same teacher. The valiant Mrs. Morgan challenged us to excel. Together we
Vocational Building on High Street.



had spelling bees, competed for painting store windows at Halloween, and learned that belonging to a diverse group was a good thing. Our classroom in the Vocational Building was down the hall from Mr. Ondrey and Mr. Sherry who taught Vocational Drawing and Shop. The school cafeteria was upstairs. From this combined fifth and sixth grade, Mary Sue Snyder became Valedictorian of the Class of 1957 and Bill Koenig Valedictorian of the Class of 1958.

Back in the main building for sixth grade we inherited Miss Edna Shenk. While teaching geography, she pointed to Brazil on a large map of South America and said, “This is Brassiere.” Pandemonium! Typical pre-teens, we ridiculed Miss Shenk, terrorized nervous student teachers and worshiped those who were good looking.



Edna Shenk's Sixth Grade, Winter 1952

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

In seventh grade we walked upstairs to the second floor, moving up in the world! Our Junior High gym teacher, Mr. Edgar Gumbert, told us boys we had to have athletic supporters, meaning we had to ask our mothers to take us to Halmi's Department Store to find the scary things. Worse, the clerk asked us, “What size?” *What size???*

As The Crew Cuts sang “Sh-Boom” and Patti Page wondered “How Much Is That Doggie In the Window,” I invited buddies Merrill Smith, Bill Koenig, Joe Ondrey, Pete Stanford and Jimmy Stewart to “come on-a my house” to record teen-age ad-libs on my fifty pound reel-to-reel tape recorder. I invited our girlfriends Wallis Ann McCommons, Darlene Hayes, Barbara Ann Bailey, Lulu May Lane and Carol Frantz to dance with us in the basement. We played the songs of The Hilltoppers and Joni James. To



Dance party in the basement. Standing, Joe Ondrey, Merrill Smith, Pete Stanford. Kneeling, Wallis Ann McCommons, Margie Behrens, Lulu Mae Lane, Barbara Ann Bailey, Darlene Hayes, Bill Koenig and Carol Frantz, 1955

entertain, I pantomimed “Three Coins in the Fountain” by the Four Aces, pretending to be all four Aces.

We went to the movies at the Best Theatre on weekends when it was open. It cost fifty cents. Grandma Helmer, visiting Edinboro, told my parents I should see the return engagement of the Forties’ Oscar-winning “How Green Was My Valley” with little Roddy McDowall. “It’s for adults,” she said, “but he should see it.” And off we went for an unforgettable Saturday night at the Best.

We were permitted to see religious epics like “Samson and Delilah” on Sunday nights if beforehand we went to church fellowship. Change-your-life pictures at the Best were “From Here to Eternity” and “On the Waterfront.” My dad, opting to take us to a movie in Erie, told me that he, not I, would select the film. We arrived at the opulent Warner Theatre to see his favorite actor Ray Bolger in “Where’s Charley?” This adopted father was way cool.

I discovered James Dean during a State Band weekend in central Pennsylvania. The first night I went with my band buddies to see the switchblade movie “Blackboard Jungle,” but the second night I went by myself to “East of Eden.” James Dean, the Fifties’ rebel without a cause, became my hero.

SOCIAL LIFE IN THE FIFTIES

Meanwhile, Dorothy and Carl attended the Masons and Eastern Star, joined the Volunteer Firemen’s and American Legion groups and auxiliaries, and helped Rev. Leonard Hogenboom start a Couples Club. Dorothy joined Shadbush and danced in their annual Follies, a community fund-raiser. Carl bowled with Walker Brothers Buick. On Sundays after church we went to the Edinboro Dinor (yes, “dinor”) where Blue Plate Specials were a dollar, but lemon meringue pie cost an extra twenty-five cents.

Shadbush Club “Follies” 1950s.



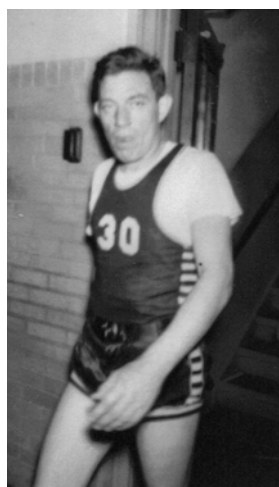
Bowling Team from Walker Brothers Buick.

Classmates moved away (Margery Behrens, Wallis Ann McCommons) or school districts changed (Anne Campbell, Carol Troyer) but we still considered them “one of us.”

Junior High Gang at back door of the Gym. Standing, Johnny Hartley. Seated, Margie Behrens, Lulu Mae Lane, Wallis Ann McCommons and Betty Shields. Miss Shenk is looking out onto the ball field. Mid-1950s.



BILL McDONALD



Softball replaced piano lessons with Sue Walker, but I took my tenor saxophone seriously. Despite inclement weather, Dorothy carted me to Erie once a week for lessons at the Erie Conservatory with a brilliant African-American teacher who accompanied my noise making on his piano and taught me how to play properly by asking permission to take my sax and make it sound the way it should. Soon I was in the school marching and concert band, unafraid of red-faced music teacher Mr. Bill McDonald who yelled and screamed at every misstep.

Music teacher Bill McDonald took his fury to a Faculty vs. Student basketball game in the EHS Gym.

Mr. McDonald’s passion for music wasn’t lost on me or my alto and baritone sax buddies Eugene Kline and Jerry Knickerbocker. The bass-voiced McDonald frightened band and chorus members, but the raging genius taught us to respect and appreciate the arts. Frustrated, he’d launch into diatribes about perfection, but he also made a mark on us. A good mark.



Jerry Knickerbocker, Michael Hall and Eugene Kline with saxophones.



District Chorus 1957. Left to right, Betsy Brogdon, Bunny Jones, Jerry Knickerbocker, Shirley

Lang, Bonnie Holt and Jimmy Stewart.

KATHERINE ROUSE

And then there was enchanting Mrs. Rouse.

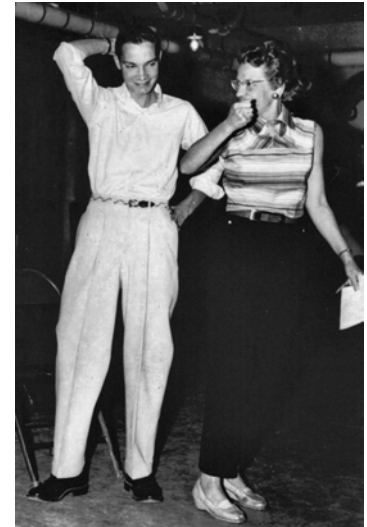
Katherine Rouse taught ninth through twelfth grade English, making us write compositions and asking us to read Shakespeare’s “Julius Caesar” out loud. Most important, she directed the Junior and Senior Class plays. I had a crush on Mrs. Rouse. She wore lots of make-up, added

blonde highlights to her hair and spoke with a superior vocabulary. She directed 1953 senior class members Pauline Holowach and David Hogenboom to walk through the audience in the gym after Emily and George got married in the play “Our Town.” From that moment, I knew I would go into theater.

Mrs. Rouse let me select the play for our Senior Class in 1958. I chose “The Man Who Came to Dinner.” Difficult to produce, yes, but she said, “Let’s do it!” It had parts for at least twenty-five classmates and perfect leading roles for Nancy Perry, Joe Ondrey, Darlene Hayes, Jerry Knickerbocker, Barbara Ann Bailey, Tony Burgett, Jimmy Stewart – and me. I played the title role of an outrageous bearded showman who pretends to break his hip on the front walk of middle-America folks from Ohio.

Katherine Rouse directs Michael in the 1957 Junior Class Play, “Snafu,” situation normal all fouled up.

Mrs. Rouse sent me to Teacher’s College drama professor Mr. Larry Vincent to make my fake beard and moustache. On her own time she coached me with lines and delivery. I think our production lived up to her enchanting Junior Class Play, “Our Hearts Were Young and Gay,” a comedy she directed with Bonnie Holt and Shirley Lang as young flappers en route to Paris.



VIRGINIA SORENSEN

Besides Mr. McDonald and Mrs. Rouse, the other important person in my life was Mrs. Virginia Sorensen. Mother received an invitation to Beth Sorensen’s wedding to Eugene Christian Anderson and invited me to tag along. It was a fairy tale wedding with an award-winning Mother of the Bride and a perfect-looking bride and groom.

Virginia Sorensen.

I always said hello to Mrs. Sorensen when she came into Cooper’s Book Store where I worked with Jimmy Stewart and Edith Doucette after school and Saturdays. The famous author met Dorothy Cooper often for what they called their “kaffee klatsch.”

When I enrolled as a playwriting major in a Pittsburgh drama school, Mrs. Sorensen gave me permission to attempt to make “Plain Girl” a stage play. Inviting me to her house on Meadville Street, she asked why I chose a minor character to narrate. We talked about ideas and concepts for a full hour. On that afternoon I experienced my first adult discussion about Literature. And it took place in Edinboro.



THE EDIN-HI

Mr. James Hill, our history teacher, was the staff advisor for the Edin-Hi, the school newspaper. In my Junior and Senior years I became co-editor with Bunny Jones. Using greasy, green stencils, I typed copy and learned how to use a stylus to cut pictures and titles into the fragile waxed sheets. Bunny and I attached the stencils to the mimeograph machine in Miss Margery Lloyd's classroom, cranked out a hundred copies, and went round and round typewriter tables to assemble them. We sold them the next day for the outrageous price of seven cents a copy.

To raise money for Edin-Hi, I dreamed up a "Miss Edin-Hi" contest. Each class nominated one or two contestants. I put jars on a table in the upstairs hall with names and photos of the nominees. One penny, one vote. We sponsored a dance in the gym to announce the top three vote-getters. Surprise! A delightful little seventh grader, Michelina Papsun, won, with Ramona Lewis (Class of '58) and Bonnie Holt (Class of '59) runners-up. The Edin-Hi earned a hefty twenty-five dollars!



"Miss Edin-Hi" Michelina Papsun with runners-up Ramona Lewis and Bonnie Holt.

I won an award for an article I wrote about tuberculosis, and had my picture taken with a man who held a lit cigarette while posing. (Everyone smoked in the Fifties, including those of us who sneaked Kents behind buildings.) My favorite Edin-Hi project, however, was my editorial advocating the need for a Student Council. Principals and teachers took note and created one.



Edin-Hi wins an award from Erie County Health and Tuberculosis Association, 1957.

GROWING UP AND CHANGING

As times changed, so did music and fashion. For Pat Boone we bought white bucks. For Elvis Presley, we bought blue suede shoes. From flat tops and crew cuts, we let our hair grow and combed it into ducktails. Girls traded poodle skirts for pencil skirts; boys changed peg-leg pants for tight dungarees.

Back in seventh grade, Tom and Edna Culbertson were the only people I knew who had a TV set. After Saturday basketball practice, I went to their house to watch "The Big Top," a circus show. Later, Dorothy and Carl bought one of the black-and-white miracles. Everybody watched "I Love Lucy," but I also watched "Playhouse 90," "The United States Steel Hour," "Studio One" and all the original dramas written by young playwrights like Paddy Chayefsky. Sometimes television technicians walked right in front of the camera, but who cared? It was "live" and exciting.

Mrs. Rouse helped me prepare my acting audition for Carnegie Institute of Technology. Dorothy fretted about my career choice, but Carl, the whitewasher who never finished high school, said he'd help as much as he could.

In May 1958, Mr. Parker called us into his office individually to reveal class standings. "Of course Bill Koenig is Valedictorian," he said, "but you're second, Salutatorian." Wow. We chose "In This Our Time" as our theme. Bill and I, and Barbara Ann Bailey and Tony Burgett, Faculty and Class Choices, took our poetic theme seriously and rehearsed our optimistic speeches with Mrs. Rouse. I mentioned aging philosopher Albert Schweitzer and the current Hollywood film "A Face in the Crowd" in the same breath. A stretch, but I was sincere.

Edinboro Independent May 22, 1958.

Koenig went to Yale, Merrill Smith to Duke, and I went to Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie Mellon.) Mrs. Rouse and her daughter Terry drove to Pittsburgh to see *Viv*, a musical I co-wrote for Carnegie's Scotch 'n Soda Club. After graduating, I followed my parents to Ocala, Florida, and met folks who offered me theater and radio jobs. I directed plays in Central Florida, started my own summer stock company in the mountains of western Carolina, and, in 1975, accepted a challenge to create a professional regional theater in Boca Raton.

Over the years, I was hired by Hollywood movie producers to stand next to Elvis Presley and cue his entrance into an Ocala bank in the film "Follow That Dream." My master's thesis was a biography of Pulitzer Prize playwright John Patrick who wrote "Teahouse of the August Moon" and the screenplay for "Three Coins in the Fountain," the film that prompted the famous song. At separate Spotlight Award celebrations I met and honored Roddy McDowall, once the little boy from "How Green Was My Valley," and Julie Harris, James Dean's co-star in "East of Eden." I treated my parents to a theater patron's house in Boca Raton where she hosted a cocktail party for her friend Ray Bolger, my dad's favorite actor. Shades of my Edinboro background!



Dorothy, Michael and Carl Hall with Broadway and Hollywood star Ray Bolger, 1980s.

Dorothy and Carl came to work for me in 1975, Dorothy as bookkeeper, Carl as stage carpenter. When people asked Carl about his work, he said, "I drilled concrete and drove semis in Erie, hauled milk, whitewashed barns and repaired Buicks in Edinboro." Then, with an ear-to-ear grin he said, "And then I went into Show Business."

Lucky me, I grew up in Edinboro in the Eisenhower Fifties. Yes, I had the first paperback copy of "Peyton Place" in high school, and at age sixteen I was determined to write a similar shocking novel about life in small town Pennsylvania, but aside



from whispered secrets, life in Edinboro wasn't shocking. It was actually, as we said in the Fifties, "pretty cool, a blast, like crazy."

As a theater director, I didn't need to research small town life to direct "Our Town" or "Picnic" or "Morning's At Seven" or "Bus Stop." I grew up a country boy. And it's no wonder my first professionally produced script was a play for children based on the fable of the town mouse and the country mouse. Guess who outsmarts the cat? The country mouse, of course.

Note: Michael Hall is a retired professional theater director living in Delray Beach, Florida. In June 2013 he will present a program for the Edinboro Area Historical Society about author Virginia Sorensen, presenting scenes from her books about western Pennsylvania, and reading a letter she air-mailed from Scotland to Dorothy Hall at the Independent comparing Edinburgh to its namesake Edinboro.

OTHER PHOTO CHOICES

If you want to highlight members of the Culbertson family...



Culbertson Family. Brothers Ed and Norm Culbertson (standing) with their grandfather Ed Doolittle, their mother Edna Culbertson, Ed's daughter Judy and Norm's son Greg. 1947

Or another faculty member...

History teacher James Hill at Faculty vs. Students game.



High school principal James Parker presents the D.A.R. Award to Barbara Ann Bailey, mid-1950s.



Edinboro Eastern Star, 1950s.

Note: Some of these folks are still living, but if printed big, people will recognize them if still with us or not.



Civic meeting in Edinboro. typical 1950s picture with prominent folks John Rouse, Reba Hayes, Letia Hopkins and Independent editor Dorothy Hall.

or ..

Civic meeting in Edinboro with leaders John Rouse, Reba Hayes, Letia Hopkins and Independent editor Dorothy Hall.



Note: I don't know the name of the other man but I could search the Independents if you want to use it.

Grange Hall Officers, 1950s photo, Edinboroo Independent.

Note: I don't know who's the "M."

Marilyn Hollenbeck (Free) is Secretary. She can identify the man and event at the Grange.

Trudie and Heinz Schulz are "L" and "O."
The Schulzs were very active in Edinboro volunteer work. Their children Fred, John and Cathy went to EHS.



Ruth Burgett's Cub Scout pack, early 1950's.

Back row: Dickie Hashagen, the Burgett twins Matt and Mike surrounding Ruth Burgett, Steve Brown.

Front row: Tony Burgett, Jerry Covert, Pete Stanford, Merrill Smith, Billy Koenig.

