

1. What was the gully to you?

For me, the main part of the gully ran from the haunted houses to 17th south. There were times we ventured beyond 19th east near Harrison Ave and down to 15th East by Edgehill Ward. Most of the activities centered around the area east of our house on Kensington Ave. However there were many occasions when major activities were carried out from where Browning Ave would have entered the gully and then south to 17th south.

2. Where did you go in the gully?

My initial response would be everywhere. We had slingshot wars and rotten apple fights in the area east of the Colonial Hills Ward. We spent a lot of time stealing the apples from the trees between Kensington and Emerson avenues. We picked and ate a lot of cherries in the orchards of this same area. Wooten's swimming pool provided a number of adventures, some of which will only be seen in the movie in heaven which will be shown in the lower portions of heavenly activities. There were trails everywhere to be explored and many areas where we became the explorers and created the trails. There was the area of the springs and gathering watercress and rhubarb for pies as we quenched our thirst from this most wonderful water which sprang forth when we were hot and needed some renewal of our spirits. There was the area of a dam which was a never ending source of discovery. Golf balls, interestingly shaped pieces of wood and many other treasures were stopped at this spot and required many hours of contemplation to figure out how they had gotten to this point and what we should do with them. A makeshift baseball diamond was built and many happy hours were spent trying to hit balls onto 17th east before the balls went into the creek and maybe lost forever. Building dams for swimming in the clay cliffs and making films with the Hales were activities in this area before we hit 17th south. I was convinced when I was little that crossing 17th south would result in being lost forever and never being able to return home.

3. What was it like on the edge of the gully?

The edge of the gully was being on the edge of life. Our house was located at the top end of Kensington where it would have entered the west side of the gully and provided access to the many wonders of this enchanted area. My brothers and sisters convinced me that the haunted houses were really haunted and, until they burned down, I was sure I had seen shapes and figures that would be a part of my dreams for many years. I also remember being able to stand at the end of Kensington in front of our house and able to see the gathering

of the wagons at the This is the Place Monument in 1947. I also remember thinking then how old I would be in the year 2000 and being convinced that I would not live long enough to see the turn of the century. The gully gave a great place to ponder many of the mysteries of life as well as to solve them in your imagination. The edge of the gully also provided a barrier which kept out civilization. The gully was protected from encroachment by outsiders and development. It was a place where we could play army, explorers, baseball, learn to use flippers and slingshots and use the edge to throw rocks and golf balls at invaders. How dare anyone from lower regions invade our territory! We could wander the edge of the gully and be able to see what was happening below. Homes were built on the edge of the gully area all too soon and encroached upon our world of imagination. The edge of the gully was bushes and trees in some areas and open space in others. We could hide and watch others or we could charge down the hills like Mongols or troops in the World Wars.

4. Was the edge part of your gully experience?

The edge was where it would all begin. I would scope the gully from the edge to see what was happening and whether or not friend or foe was to be seen in the gully area. I could watch invaders from the other side of the gully go down and enter into this wonderful place. I learned to recognize those in the gully whose presence forbade me to enter and those who could be trusted. I was hit at least three times by rocks thrown from the edges of the gully and had my head split open by some of those rocks. I still have the scars to prove this and also the memories which came with each scar. If 15th east was a part of the edge of the gully then I remember when it was flooded and the creek in the gully was backed up for quite a distance. Were the clay cliffs part of the edge of the gully? They were high enough to be able to look around and therefore I felt as if I were on the edge. The eastern side of the gully was a place to only be explored when you had older friends with you. The kids on that side of the gully were not to be trusted and they could send you running for your life without your clothes on if they found you in their part of the gully. Later we found those on the eastern edge of the gully that wanted to improve their side of the gully and this was not to our liking as they put in paths, steps and areas for picnics and destroyed some of our sneaky paths and hiding areas. The edges of the gully also provided wonderful areas for making and using slides (on dirt or snow) that provided hours of entertainment and worn out clothing.

5. What did the gully look like?

The gully was full of all kinds of things. All kinds of trees: cherry, apple, pear, peach, and plum were some of the fruit trees. There was also grapevines, providing both green and purple grapes. Oak brush, willow, cottonwood, maple and poplar were some of the other kinds of trees. There were lots of different kinds of bushes. We had to learn to avoid those that had prickles and those that didn't. There was stinging nettle, poison ivy and other vegetation which was to be avoided but through which we could run and get rid of attackers or those who wanted to get us out of the gully. The clay cliffs area provided a wonderful place to run around, over and through all day long. We could dam up the creek and make a swimming hole. We could spy on people who would then come and use the swimming hole from the tops of the clay cliffs and we could get away before they could catch us because we were up and on our way before they could get dressed and chase us. Many a film was made in this area of the life of rugged cowboys and Indians. The gully housed skunks, mice, rats, porcupines, snakes, occasionally deer and some critters the likes of which I have no name. Gully cats were the meanest things I have encountered. They were fearless and really a lot of trouble when they were cornered. Occasionally I would come face to face with something I had never seen before as I was creeping around in some unexplored area that was dark and had to be crawled through rather than gone through standing up.

6. What do you remember being allowed to do in the gully?

Initially, Mother was the party governing what we could do in the gully. She set some kind of rules in place that were immediately disregarded as soon as the first foot went over the edge of the gully. Therefore, there were no rules and we would go and do whatever and wherever we wanted. Later, when the Wootens attempted to develop the area at the end of Kensington, they put in trails, retaining walls and a swimming pool. Our total free rein had ended. We found however that these were just some new barriers to be overcome and we still roamed throughout the gully. We just had to watch for any of the Wootens who might be patrolling the area and hide when it was required. We found the night to be our friend as we hid from all kinds of people in our sanctuary. Those unfamiliar with the gully were afraid to go there in the dark and thus it provided a great place for us to shed those who were trying to catch us for one reason or another.

7. Who did you go with in the confines of the gully?

Mostly family and friends in the neighborhood. The friends were ultimately expanded to persons who lived on the edge of the gully on both sides and from Harrison Ave to 15th east near 18nd south. As I got

older I found that some of the former enemies were really good guys and we spent many hours on George Souvalls basketball court made of dirt. We would take turns using a bat to hit golf balls across the gully which we had obtained from sleeping out above the Oak Hills golf driving range and bringing home in our backpacks. We played baseball with people from both sides of the gully. We rode bikes down the sides of the gully and throughout many of the trails when we could. We harassed many a scout troop sleeping out in the area near the Colonial Hills ward chapel. We didn't usually get caught but once in a while we met our match when the person in the camp knew the gully as well as we did. We usually talked them into being on our side and we didn't get in trouble.

8. Who else did you meet in the gully?

I saw some people that I never knew. I don't know where they came from and they were never seen again. They were probably just wandering around and anyone could have access to the gully from many different points. Most of the ones I met in the gully were the ones mentioned in number 7 above. Some of the persons met were older but most were near the same age. The really older ones often came and brought vices which Mom told us to avoid. The gully was very educational in many ways. We sometimes met the prisoners from the sugarhouse prison who were cleaning areas. We ran from police who were trying to get us to explain something we had done and wouldn't want to have to mention to our parents. Never got to know any police on a first name basis.

9. How often were you in the gully?

That's an easy one to answer. Everyday. Sometimes all day long. We would come and go all day long. It was a wonderful place to do all kinds of things as explained earlier. I'm not sure I can remember all of the things we did in the gully. It was a great place to tap our imagination and test our survival skills. We learned to get along with others and how to depend on each other as we played throughout the whole of it. Friendships were formed here that will never change. When we get together, we reminisce about the adventures we had, the times we spent and the friendships forged as we spent time in this protected haven.

10. Did you go into the gully year round?

Absolutely. It was as much fun in the winter as it was in the summer. We didn't spend as much time in the winter as the summer but we still spent a great deal of time in all seasons. Watching all of the seasons

come and go gave us first hand knowledge of how nature works. We witnessed the power of mother nature. We saw God's creations in their natural state and how the changing of the seasons affects each of us. The renewal of life in the spring, the settling and preparation for winter in the fall and the pristine beauty of snow cover in winter. Summer was the best but all seasons had their value. It is true that to each there is a season and a time for all. I know that has many meanings but it was true for us as we witnessed the beauty of nature in this wonderful habitat.

11. Was there anything special about the gully to you?

Everything. It was a place of learning. It was a place of exploring. It was a place of questioning and then getting people around us to explain and answer all our questions. It was a place of friendship. It was a place of conquest and success as we overcame many of life's little activities. It was a place of preparation for what the world would hold in the future. It was a place of refuge from the good and bad of everyday life around us. It was a place of learning how to get along with others. It was a place to learn how to cope with the unexpected. The gully occupies a very special place in my life. I have always wished that my children could find such a place. It brought us close together as a family as we shared experiences in the gully. It was a place that our family had in common with one another as there is a great span of years from top to bottom.

12. Anything else?

Yes. Thanks for the memories. They are what gets us through life and all we have to give others.