

GHM-Oral History Project- Interview Answers

Don Herman

ID: 10/25/2021

DOB: 10/18/1954

Olathe, Kansas

1. Are you a **Gardner native** (born here or in the metro area)? Yes
2. What brought you and/or your family to Gardner? N/A
3. When did you move here? N/A
4. What was your family's trade/business? Farming
5. Tell us about this experience...

"Living on the farm was something I look back on with fond memories. We were taught hard work, discipline, and grew close as a family. I was glad that I had that experience though I wouldn't necessarily want to go through it again."

6. If you are not a native, when did you first move to Gardner? N/A
7. What is your earliest memory of Gardner?

"I remember when my grandparents built their house at 409 E. Washington. That was the east end of town. I also remember my other grandfather building 2 duplexes behind the standard station on Shawnee. I went to school at Gardner Elementary and had many classmates from kindergarten through graduation from high school." "19 cent gas at Knabe/ Marley Skelly station" "25 cent rides at the Jo.Co, fair." "Olathe Naval Air Station." "75 cents per hour putting up hay all day- good money." "10 burgers for \$1 at Chet and Rosie's Café." "Ice cream at the Dairy Freeze." "Remember Dr. A. S. Reece building the new hospital on the west side of town." "Before Center Street Bridge over I-35- going down the embankments and up the other side to go to town out 191st street."

8. What is your favorite memory of Gardner?

“It was a great place for me and my family to live in and grow up in. I’m glad I have remained here for my married life as well as my kids and now my grandkids going to school here. Not many (a few) of my classmates stayed.”

9. What have you noticed that has changed the most about Gardner during your residency?

Do you perceive this as a good/bad? And why?

“Bigger isn’t better. The loss of the small-town feel. If people think Gardner is small today, they don’t know what a small town is. We were a community of family farms, family run businesses & restaurants. Everyone knew everyone else and where they lived. The school was the focal point of the community. The gym was packed, and cars circled the football field. We all looked out for each other. I miss the days when everyone knew everyone else.”

10. Anything else you would like to share?

“If we would have more than 1 high school, I think it would be good. More kids could participate and maybe the schools would be come the focal point they used to be.”