

GHM-Oral History Project- Interview Answers

DonnaBelle Diddle (*nee Bray*)

ID:8/21-4/22

DOB: 12/13/1948

Gardner, 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? *1948*
4. What was your family's trade/business? *Farming/Banking*
5. Tell us about this experience...

"Walter and MaryBelle Bray lived in the country in two different locations. Dad told of two house fires that brought them to live in town. Belle died in 1946. Pancreatic cancer. I would be born two years later. My memories of Florence, Ralph, Bob Bray were centered around holidays. I didn't meet Vernon Bray until Walter Bray's funeral."

6. If you are not a native, when did you first move to Gardner? *The early 1950's*
7. What is your earliest memory of Gardner?

"We lived with Walter Bray when he lived on Washington Street. One day mother had attired me in a red dotted Swiss dress and told me to go out on the front porch and watch the Gardner Marching Band practice up and down Washington Street. R.W. Bray was in that band and played trumpet. On nice days Grandpa Bray and I walked to the Post Office, and I had to hold his hand. Watching on t.v. the boxing matches sitting next to him on the couch."

8. What is your favorite memory of Gardner?

"The annual Gardner Fair. Sleeping in the tiny pantry and seeing the lights from the Midway. Smelling hamburgers being fried by the high school kids. It smelled so good."

“Several of my closest friends lived in Gardner; Marcia Cunningham, Myrnice Mistele, Glenda Duncan, Annalee Schultz

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?

“We never lived in our own house until about 1960 because Dad was in the military, and we frequently moved.” “When dad was discharged from the Air Force, he and mother bought our first home. I so much wanted to live in Gardner.” “I always thought some boys in Gardner were so handsome and nice. David King, Dennis Shrere, Mike Hutton to name a few.”

10. Anything else you would like to share?

“Grandpa Bray was such a dear sweet man. I was devastated when he died. I remember being in the 7th grade at Olathe Junior High, John Hodges my math teacher and I burst out crying when I told him my grandpa had died. Several weeks later after my grandpa’s funeral, after church one Sunday at Gardner First Baptist, we drove by to check on Grandpa’s house, but it wasn’t there. It had been destroyed by the city, but my parents did not tell us. It was absolutely a moment that broke my heart. Why did they not warn me and my younger brothers? I was so angry.”