

Gene Burt Johnson Davis Remembers:

**** The front porch ...***

Daddy would bring a watermelon from the field and cut it on the cement banister post at the end of the front porch. We would spit the seeds off the porch into the yard. I don't ever remember watermelon growing there. Swinging in the porch swing and hearing Lucille, our maid, singing "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" as we were swinging. She would clap her hands in front of her and in back of her as she kept the beat. I always tried to do that too.

**** Games...***

Playing "Rock School" and making mud pies on the front steps and "Hopscotch" on the front walk. Playing "Mother May I?" and "Ain't No Boogers Out Tonight" in the front yard.

**** The road...and the view down the road...***

It was a long walk to my Papa John's (Burt) service station. It was even longer if you tried to ride your bike, because of the sandy road. One time Melanie and I rode the bikes to the station. On the way back my bike got caught in the sand and I fell down. I had to walk the bike all the way back up the hill and I cried the whole way!

I remember my Daddy's story about having to walk to the Atlanta Highway down that road to catch the bus. One story he told was about having a Science project about Trees. He had glued leaves and identified the trees on a board. By the time he got to the bus all the leaves had blown off. I did not ride the bus but one year in high school and only in the afternoon. I don't remember having to walk up the road though.

At the foot of the hill, below Carol Villa, the road forked to the left and led to Alex, Jimmy and Linda's house and the Quarters. Mama and Aunt Louise took turns in taking us to and picking us up from Dalraida Elementary School. If Aunt Louise was the driver, she let Charlie and me off at the foot of the hill. If Mama was the driver, she let Alex, Jimmy and Linda off at the foot of the hill. One time Alex had gotten in trouble and had to stay after school. When Mama let them off, they all started running home, so Mama sped up to our house to call Aunt Louise before they got home!

**** The yard...***

The cedar tree in the back yard had a hole in the trunk at the base of the tree. Papa Johnson picked up nails from all around and put them in the hole. Daddy, Mama and I also would put nails in it too. Uncle Wylie told me that they would turn to gold. Daddy told me that if we saved a tire from going flat, we were saving money.

**** Playing in the cotton wagons full of cotton...***

*** My bedroom...**

I had the front bedroom above Mama and Daddy's room. Mama made blue gingham curtains and it was painted blue. In the summer the breeze would blow the curtains – imagine a room nowadays with four windows. If the wind wasn't blowing it was really hot, I remember the sheets sticking to me in the sweltering summer heat. Now let's talk cold... there was a space heater for winter but we used it only if I was having spend-the-night company. Otherwise, I would run upstairs and hop under the covers and turn on the electric blanket! I really don't remember having many colds though – fresh air must be good for you.

From my bedroom, you could hear someone coming upstairs to see if you really had gotten up. Usually Mama and Daddy would call (yell) from downstairs and tell us to get up – Charlie and I would call back and say we were up. If we went back to sleep, they would call again. If this went on too long, they would come up stairs to make us get up. Most of the time we could hear them coming up the stairs and really be up by the time they got upstairs!

*** The living room...**

I remember sitting in the big white wing back chair and reading in the summers. One particular book was about pioneers in wagon trains going west although I don't remember the name of the book. The piano was in the living room when I first started taking piano. I remember trying to practice but not being able to remember what the teacher had explained from the last lesson. The living room wasn't always heated in the winter so the piano was later moved to the room behind Mama and Daddy's bedroom.

*** The dining room...**

Dinners in the dining room were special. There were always flower arrangements from the yard. Camellias were my favorite. The freezers that were in the dining room weren't pretty but they always had great bounty from the farm – beef from Daddy's cows, quail and dove from Daddy's hunts, and all the vegetables that Mama froze from the garden.

I remember my 16th Birthday Party at Carol Villa. I had a Dinner Party/ Spend the Night Party. Mama said that the Dinner Party was very elegant...fine china and silver, 16 roses as a centerpiece and girls in curlers eating the dinner! We 'spent the night' in the upstairs landing – it was big enough for all the girls and quilts and pillows! Mama said that we didn't 'sleep' but played on the stairwell all night long. Of course we slept in the morning though! ☺