



"There are a thousand thoughts lying within a man that he does not know till he takes up a pen to write."

-William Makepeace Thackeray, novelist 1811-63



Al Love, WPD, 1964

On the Way to ...

The Wildwood Memories of Al Love



Newberry's at 3304 Pacific Ave.

In 1934, my grandparents bought our shore house in Wildwood. This was during the Great Depression, so it was quite amazing. I don't know what they paid for it. My grandfather died soon after and my father inherited the house. At this time my father was driving a nifty Ford Roadster and a year later married my mother. My sister Ann was born a year later, then me, brother Bill, and later brother Jim. My father's Roadster soon became a big old Packard.

The trip to the shore started the first Friday after school let out in June. It was a long trip from Philadelphia to the shore back then, lasting about four hours through the back roads, since there was no expressway or parkway then. We returned home on Labor Day like everyone else to start school again. My father came down on weekends and also spent his vacation weeks with us.

Arriving at our house on Glenwood Ave. was a thrill and relief and we would arrive about eleven at night with four sleeping kids in the back seat. Being closed all winter long, the house smelled musty and had the scent of moth balls which were placed in every clothes drawer to prevent moths from eating our clothes during the winter. To mow the lawn and driveway it took almost all day. By hand we used a sickle to cut the tall weeds and a push lawn mower. Who had a gas mower, weed wacker, or hedge trimmer in those days? The screens were put in place and the wicker chairs were put back on the porch.

Now was the time to have fun. We all enjoyed the beach during the day and the boardwalk at night. But going uptown to Pacific Avenue on the weekends ranked right up there with those two. This is what I remember of Pacific Avenue during the 40's, 50's and 60's. My Aunt Cassie and Mom would let us kids tag along for our day on Pacific Avenue. It involved shopping for all of us: summer clothes, bathing

suits, household items for the women, toys, magazines and comic books, beach shovels and buckets, kites, and ended with lunch. My father would always be found fishing on weekends.

Our home was three blocks from Pacific Avenue. The first block we walked by the old Glenwood Avenue Elementary School. This was a three story wooden building with a wooden fire escape outside enclosed in wire mesh which led to the ground.

Next we passed a park at NJ Avenue that was well groomed, lots of flowers, and had a large statue in the center of a fountain. Then there was St. Ann's Catholic nuns convent home. There were always at least seven nuns in their habits sitting in rocking chairs on the porch quietly conversing. Today the house is empty with two chairs on the porch chained to the railing. My sister and I would say good morning sisters, out of respect, even though we were not Catholics.

As we turned onto Pacific Avenue there it was, looking like a busy main street with families parading by with shopping bags, people greeting old friends again, customers coming and going from the assortment of stores lined up beside each other. The traffic was backed up along the streets. In those days people actually drove into the city to go shopping. There were no stores off shore. It had a warm friendly feeling and excitement was in the air for us kids.

Pacific Avenue had a store for all of your needs. Many of the establishments were

owned by Jewish families. If you wanted clothes, there was Allen's and Ollie Fox's men's stores, Halpern's, Giddings, Tot Town for kids, Silen's, and Corson's to name a few.

Then there was Felman's dry cleaning, Fulginiti's and Taylor's Photo and Camera stores, and Stallers' Hardware. Need shoes? There was Dunn's and Meyer's Shoe Stores. Lunch or dinner, there was the Crystal Restaurant, Bellman's had fine food and a liquor license, Jackson's Coffee Shop was attached to Jackson's Drug Store. I worked at the coffee shop for three summers for Jack Bickel. The "Love For Linda" charities was named after his daughter who died from cancer. They have raised over a million dollars so far for cancer patients. Besides Joe Hess's Family Diner there was a small diner on the side street called Ralph's which had about 6 stools at the counter, and six booths, and the cook prepared the food on a grill in back of the counter. If you wanted to pay your utilities you could stop into the offices of the telephone, gas, or electric companies after you left the Union Trust Bank. Of course we still see the boarded up Murphy's and Woolworth's 5 & 10¢ stores, but there was another called Newberry's 5 & 10¢ store. For 50 cents I could buy a kite, water pistol, yo-yo, and a wooden plane with a rubber propeller. We finished up shopping there with hotdogs, hamburgers, pretzels, and a soda fountain drink at one of the stores counters.

On Oak near Pacific Ave there was a Western Union Office. In those days most

of the boarding or rental properties had no phones. My friend Eddie Millard delivered telegrams on his bicycle from there. There was an old Italian man who had a shoe repair store on Pacific. He would replace your soles or heels, and shine them for a few bucks.

At Maple and Pacific Avenue there was the St. Simeon's Episcopal Church. It was a beautiful church and one that my family and I went to each Sunday in the summer while I was growing up. My father said God never takes a vacation. I attended Sunday school with the kids downstairs until I was old enough to attend the main church service with the adults. Church helped and inspired me to be a good person throughout my life. Little did I know at that time that I would help save the church years later.

In 1965, I was working as a police officer in Wildwood. I was patrolling on a cold winter night on the midnight shift. That particular night I was the only officer on patrol as we had one officer on vacation, one out on sick leave, and another injured. I was it. I was driving down Pacific Avenue and could smell smoke. As I got closer to the source I could see fire coming out the wall of the side of St. Simeon's Church. I called in the fire and soon Fireman Floyd Spiegel arrived in a pumper truck. He attached the hose to a hydrant and we both held the hose to the fire until help arrived with the volunteer firemen. The fire caused damage but was soon repaired and services were able to be resumed in a short time. The church is now located at 26th and Central Avenue.

I felt that I had a part in saving the church but there was nothing I could do to help Pacific Ave. Slowly it started to fade away with more and more stores closing down and being boarded up. Today I wish I could take my grandchildren on a stroll down the same Pacific Avenue as their Poppy did many years ago. I would buy them a kite, a water pistol, yo-yo, and a wooden plane with a rubber propeller.



Al Love and Floyd Spiegel, reminisced about the good old days at the Firehouse Tavern



"Every man's memory is his private literature." ~Aldous Huxley

...Pacific Avenue

Photos from the 1950s & 60s along Pacific Avenue in downtown Wildwood, NJ
COURTESY OF WILDWOOD HISTORIC SOCIETY



3307 Pacific Ave



3312 Pacific Ave



3309 Pacific Ave



3315 Pacific Ave



SE Corner of Pacific & Oak



3310 Pacific Ave



3317 Pacific Ave



3204 Pacific Ave



3311 Pacific Ave



3405-3407 Pacific Ave



3300 Pacific Ave