

Bunny's Store in Byrnesville I

Byrnesville, Barnesboro, Northern Cambria, Cambria County, Pennsylvania

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Margie In Bunny's Store in Byrnesville.

Inside Bunny's Store

The picture of Margaretta Zeon Byrnes (1922-2006) shows Margie running the store when she was in her twenties. Being born in 1922, the picture was probably taken in the 1940's.

Although small, it seemed the store had everything. From the picture alone we see the store carried Kellogg's Rice Krispies, Gold Medal Flour, Ritz Crackers, Quaker Oats, canned vegetables, applesauce, Jelly, jams, lunchmeat, bread, milk, eggs, ice cream, soda, candy, packaged noodles, and snacks of all kinds.

As kids of course we only noticed the candy, soda, and chips.

Paul Byrnes (1922 - 2006) told me there were other small stores in Byrnesville. He said DeFazio's had a store on Almond Street across from the home of Bobby Brown near Walnut Run, and Mr. Sampson, a blind man had a store in Byrnesville before Bunny's Store. Sampson's store may have run the store in the hall before Bunny Byrnes bought it. There was even a small store in the Byrnes Hotel in the tavern area of the first floor. Marcellus Byrnes and his family ran a store in the 1930's from the hotel tavern. Edna Byrnes Lantzy told me that her family would sometimes just give kids candy or the difference on a loaf of bread if they were short of money. The store in the hotel probably didn't survive the depression.



Little Gayle



Little Diane



Little 'JT' Jimmy

As young children in Byrnesville walking down to Bunny's Store was just about one of the best things you could do. This was especially true if an uncle had given you a dime or a quarter. If you had a quarter, you were loaded. A quarter would buy Birch Beer soda and chips for you and two or three friends. I asked my brother to close his eyes and try to remember and give his impression of going into Bunny's store in Byrnesville. Jim replied as if in a trance, a faraway look in his eyes, he mouthed the words the way he said them at the time, "cawn-dy, cawn-dy, cawn-dy".

"The wooden screen door", Gayle says, taking a guided imagery trip into her Byrnesville past, "and the glass cases with candy". Where was the bread? "To the left" she said. How about the milk? "I don't know, where was the milk?" Gayle remembers too, someone telling her that Bunny had a shower set up in another part of the store for use of the miners.

Diane took an imaginary walk from Grandma Byrnes's porch to Bunny's store. Diane walks down the steps, Grandma Byrnes had given her a dime and so Diane was one happy girl. She stepped from the steps onto the narrow cement walk and through the opening in the hedges to James Street which she thinks was paved with asphalt with rocks on the side. I remember the roads in Byrnesville when they were all dirt and gravel.

Diane sees Grandad's garden on the right past Paul Byrnes's house. On her left she passes the hotel and some people are sitting in metal lawn chairs on the ground level porch. I told her those were the Yinglings, that Olean Byrnes (1913 - 1992), a daughter of Bert Byrnes (1876 - 1935) married Raymond Yingling and they lived there then. Diane checks to make sure she still has her dime and walks into Bunny's store, through the same screen door Gayle and Jimmy went through earlier. She said there is another door but it is always open when the store is open in the summer.

Diane says she can see the clean cement floor which looks like it had been waxed. She then sees the glass cases and counter where all the candy is, she sees Archway cookies which she says is the brand Grandma always bought for us. Diane also sees loaves of Bunny Bread but pays no mind, as she too, is after the candy. When Gayle heard about the Archway cookies she remembered that Grandma Byrnes would always get the fruit-filled Archway cookies and the soft ginger Archway cookies which Gayle hasn't been able to find since. Gayle also remembers Bunny giving us little tiny beanie brown paper bags in which to carry the candy.



During the time of the last Byrnes Family and Friends Reunion, Marsha Dietrich Byrnes, lovely wife of James Thomas Byrnes took the picture (above right) of the building that used to be the 'hall', the shower, the garage, the poolroom, and Bunny's Store. Marsha always takes great pictures and I am glad she took this one. When I went back to Byrnesville in October of 2008, the building was gone having been replaced with a large 'double' aluminum or steel storage shed.

In the picture on the left I tried to renovate the old building, repairing and adding things I remembered. The small dark spot in the front left corner represents the small spring that used to be there when I was a child. It was the greatest thing to have clear, cold water just coming out of the ground there. The spring was about as large as a bushel basket, had a sandy bottom with grass and weeds growing all around it. At least one frog called that spring home. From this point the spring water went under the road in a pipe and then on down and around to Walnut Run after travelling through a sluice at the back of grandad's garden.



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