

Where Two Roads Meet

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The intersection of North Walnut Street and Granville Avenue engulfs me with pride. The "*Appeal to the Great Spirit*" statue on the point accounts for part of that emotion. The land on the west side causes the remainder of it.

During my early childhood, bountiful fruit trees flourished on that land, and my maternal grandfather, Clarence Lash, was the head groundskeeper there. Our family referred to Grandpa's workplace simply as "the orchard." (*Minnetrista* Orchard was too hard for us children to say.) Most of the trees were apple, alongside a few cherry, peach and pear. Grapes, too, were raised there. For a few seasons, the orchard soil even nourished small family garden plots, much like those being promoted today.

Regularly during the summer and fall, my father would drive the family to the orchard, and we would squeeze through a gap in the black iron fence that surrounded it, to meet up with Grandpa. He would be on a ladder picking apples, and we would help. We children were delegated to pick up the apples on the ground. All together we must have filled dozens of those wooden-slatted bushel baskets.

When apple-picking season was over, we would meet up with Grandpa in the cider barn. For these visits, we did not squeeze through the fence; instead, we parked in the gravel lot right beside the barn. We did not help with the cider-making, but I vividly remember the sweet, yet sourish odor of fermenting apples going through the cider press.. Apples and cider were sold in this barn, and dad would purchase both. My personal favorite apple was the golden delicious.

Grandpa's immediate supervisor was Rowland Webb, a horticulturist who specialized in roses. To my regret, I was then too young to appreciate the beauty of his flowers. I do recall his working frequently at a rose trellis not far from the barn.

Thus, the intersection of Walnut and Granville is very special to me. Not only is the "*Appeal to the Great Spirit*" monument majestic, it is adjacent to what used to be "the orchard."

If Grandpa were alive today, he would lament that the orchard no longer exists. However, he would love the fact that workers still make cider onsite at the Orchard Shop, and he would like the Farmer's Market that is held there. He would approve of the black-and-white photo of the Rowland Webb family that hangs behind the cash register in the Orchard Shop. And Mr. Webb would likely love Oakhurst Gardens.

Though I have plenty of nostalgia about Muncie's foregone Minnetrista Orchard, I am proud that if the orchard had to go, the land is still beautifully maintained, and a cultural center is there to enlighten us. And I am proud that members of my family played a small part in the history of the Minnetrista grounds.

The Granville-Walnut intersection reminds me not only of my childhood, but also of how far Muncie has come.

Works Cited

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