



7-15-1986

## My Town

Betty Jo Jenkins Denton

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview>

---

### Recommended Citation

Denton, Betty Jo Jenkins (1986) "My Town," *Westview*: Vol. 5 : Iss. 4 , Article 12.  
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol5/iss4/12>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Westview by an authorized administrator of SWOSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu](mailto:phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu).



*Hometown--a place for hanging your memories*

## *My Town*

By Betty Jo Jenkins Denton

When making a telephone call meant going to the phone office  
 Visiting with operators Jewell, Vinita, or Nadine.  
 Then giving them the name as no number was needed.  
 And, after being plugged in at the switchboard, you used  
 the counter phone because the booth had no door anyway.  
 And the eighty-foot grain elevator was the skyscraper at  
 the west end of town.  
 When the water tower stood there in the dark, daring you to  
 climb it and paint SENIORS on its side--  
 That was my town--1949.

When Madge and Fat had the corner drugstore,  
 And wrapped boxes of sanitary napkins in plain white paper,  
 And Laila kept an eye on purchases and lectured the boys if they  
 went to the back counter,  
 When jewelry could be ordered there for a sweetheart or a limeade  
 shared at the soda fountain--  
 And Toots R. fried tasty onion hamburgers and Paul barbered  
 nearby---  
 And Chandler's on the highway served the best cherry pie a la mode  
 And teenagers could congregate, buy a Coke, and spend the  
 afternoon.  
 When we could play the pinball machine or get six songs for a quarter.  
 That was my town--1949.

When Clyde L. Johnson was our teacher and school superintendent  
 too.  
 Aided by Mrs. Keith, Cecil Folks, Lockett Back, and Mr. Hatchett,  
 And Mrs. Affholder-McKenzie had taught us social graces and how to give a style  
 show,  
 A determined Mrs. Washington "pounded" English literature  
 into our reluctant ears.  
 When a young Johnnie Goodwin was Senior sponsor--his goals  
 were to produce a class play and survive a Senior trip--  
 That was my town--1949.

When Allie Jenkins, Hubert Breeze, Mr. Biscoe, and the old man  
 Embry sat on the corner bench, whittled, and swapped stories  
 about the caring Dr. Denby  
 And recalled again how Press Rogers and Lum Ridley had enforced  
 the law.  
 As they soaked up the sunshine, argued the next election,  
 swapped knives, and kept an eye on us,  
 When four generations grew up in the same area--  
 That was my town--1949.

*continued*

When Foster Johnson worked at the Post Office seven days a week,  
And Bryon Clancy and O. T. Keith delivered mail at the end of  
our dusty lanes,  
And Landy Copp bought cream and eggs and Saturday was a real  
Big day,  
When Slug Cooper, the law, wore a gun on his hip--  
And Estell Embry, Don Powell, and Brandy McAlpin worked with  
Walter Higgenbothum to repair the rails.  
And the Katy depot was buzzin as Bertie Denton sent messages  
over the telegraph wires,  
And Ray Clark and Comer Taylor owned one lumber yard and Emory  
Simpkins managed the other.  
While two gins were kept humming with cotton AND dominoes,  
When Simpson's and Chandler's grocery stores were both  
needed.  
That was my town--1949.

When McKenzie was in the bank and Tabor worked for him,  
And Boone's laundry was the battlefield to see who could get the "whitest,"  
Where bluing was sold for pennies and starch for overalls was mixed hot.  
When women concealed their "undies" as through the wringer  
they went,  
When cars parked in the shade of the drugstore on Saturday  
afternoon  
Afforded a vantage point for Cloeta, Lorraine, Velda, Teola, Vergel, and others,  
As they watched us, the teenagers, as we came to town in  
blue jeans and saddle-oxfords,  
To pair off for Saturday night and hopefully a movie in a nearby town.  
And we were admonished never to walk in front of the pool  
hall  
Or go into the cafe where they sold beer.  
Yes, that was my town--1949.

When social activities included Masons, Eastern Star, Odd  
Fellows, Rebeccahs, Rainbow, and pioneer Study Club,  
And Jettie, Lois, Pinkie, Mable, Bluie, Alice, and Janie turned  
square corners at Eastern Star.  
And Steve Howard gave lectures inducting young men into the  
manhood of Free Masonry.  
When Herman Ward could be counted on for his water trick,  
And Mrs. Keith "mothered" her Rainbow girls.  
And Doc Reed could be called on for music or medical advice.  
When the Baptist, Holiness, Methodist, and Church of Christ  
All had large attendance and could share Luthey's Baptizing  
pond.  
That was my town--1949.

When the movie house opened on the weekends and the Saturday Western  
was a fun place to go.

And Gennie Carter and Preacher French, with their comments, made  
"Shoot-em-ups" believable,

And, during the fall, when some cotton-pulling money was available,

The Stanley Players, with their tent show, would "play" our town.

When a purchase at Deller's Variety Store meant having it wrapped neatly  
with paper and twine--

As ladies' curls were processed by Eva or Madge

And Loleta covered buckles, buttons, made belts, and sold feed.

And dry cleaners were at either end of our two-block town,

Cars were sold by Chandler and Maxey--

And a croquet yard by Doc's furnished recreation for Paul East, Preacher Reel, Fred Broderick, and more,

Watches and clocks were repaired by Judge Taylor, while Bruister Taylor

and Roy Tapp had the sporting goods store

When Carl Denton and Virgel Smith provided a gathering spot as they cut  
and shaved.

That was my town--1949

When the original good ole boys--Ben, Sam, Harold, Less, Trump, Jawbone,

Willis, Lowell, and others--gathered at George's and Bryan's

Where they played pitch or perpetrated tricks on one another--

And five-cent Cokes were enjoyed by Elmer, Green, Nolen, John, and  
others at Charley's across the street

As they planned how they could help someone in need, whether it was  
a field of an ailing neighbor that needed plowing, harrowing the baseball field, or  
launching a polio drive.

When people could be counted on when the "going got tough,"

That was my town, 1949

When a school bus could pick up half a busload in just one mile.

And you started to school with one group of friends and graduated  
with them twelve years later

And Sunday meant reading the funnies, putting on your Sunday best, and going to church

And fried chicken at dinnertime far surpassed the Colonel's.

When people knew and cared for one another.

That was my town----CARTER---1949

When time has passed and the expansion of our world has been accomplished,

And goals are established and mountains have been climbed.

When fame and fortune, as well as trials and tribulations, have been our lot.

As memory travels along well-remembered and easily recalled paths.

Then, it is fun to revisit, if only in our mind AND with our heart--

OUR TOWN, 1949