

THE ARCHIVES AT BETHANY

1863 Bethany Road Womelsdorf, PA 19567 (610)589-4501 Email: archives@bethanyhome.org

Psalm 121:1...a little different than you remember it, as remembered by Betty Mull...

"I will lift up my knife onto the hills." As she said it from age 5-7 before she learned to read and realized she should have been saying, "I lift up my eyes to the hills."

Recently I had the honor of sitting down with Betty Mull as well as her brother, the oldest Bethany boy, Edward Mull to hear about her fond memories of Bethany Children's Home. For the full interview you can use the following link to see all of Betty's memories: <https://www.bethanyhome.org/2020/02/betty-mull-shares-fond-memories-of-life-at-bethany/>



Betty Mull Entrance & Exit Photos



Ruth Mull Entrance & Exit Photos



Arlene Mull Entrance & Adoption Exit

The Mull's came to Bethany on October 12, 1927 as a family unit which included: Edward, Ruth, Betty, and Arlene. As you may remember Edward won the coveted, "Oldest Bethany Boy" a few months back and his sister Betty is securely in 3rd place as the oldest Bethany child. We hope you enjoy and remember fondly with Betty, her memories of Bethany in years past.

"Before Ruth passed, we talked fondly of Bethany, we said when we heard the challenges Bethany was facing to change and meet the needs of today's child, that they should change the facility from an placement facility for troubled youth into a retirement facility for us old folks. Ruth and I would have moved back in a heartbeat. It holds some of our happiest memories."

"When I was five, I moved to Leinbach Cottage. Frick Cottage had been the baby cottage. The first job I remember is taking a dustpan and brush and cleaning the steps from top to bottom. I remember the matron told me, don't push the dirt all the way down the steps, dust each step and put the dirt from each step into the pan. That was my first job."

After that she always remembers that everyone had a certain job they had to do.

Each morning, the girls would line up two by two before going into the dining room and say a bible verse and a prayer. When she was 5 she learned from hearing the other girls and she would say, "I will lift up my

knife onto the hills.” When she was 7, she was amazed when she learned to read that the verse was actually, “I will lift up my eyes onto the hills.” From the ages of 5-7, she said the wrong verse. This was very comical to her as she related the memory.

In the dormitories, there were 10 girls in one and 11 in the other. Betty had the bed nearest the door as the youngest and each year she moved further from the door. As she got older, she would move to the other dormitory.

One night she remembered not being able to sleep; there were other girls – Louise Baker and Gloria Fulmer – who also couldn’t sleep. Betty went into the bathroom and got toilet paper, got it wet and rolled it up. The girls would throw it one to the other until they got tired and fell asleep. The next morning, the matron came in and she knew right away who it had done because the pile of droppings were scattered in front of the three girls’ beds. That night there were no movies for the girls; they had to stay back from the weekly Saturday night movie as their punishment. All the girls came home and had a toy, but the next day Mrs. Robbins gave the three girls toys even though they had missed out.

When she was five, they were not allowed to go upstairs during the day to go to the bathroom. They had to walk into the woods where there was a row of outhouses to be used during the day; one Halloween, the boys had upset the outhouses and rather than put them right, they installed one in the cellar of Leinbach. They called it the “throne.” If you wanted to go during the day, you had to go in the cellar. There were four steps up to it and no walls.

“I was on it one time and I heard the outer door go and the boys came down with coal to tend the furnace,” Betty said. “When a boy came around the corner, I flew off the toilet so fast, I don’t even remember touching the steps.”

Edward said he used to see the girls run and their feet didn’t seem to touch the floor on their escape.



“When we got older there were fireworks. One year, Rev. Gebhard was setting off the firecrackers when one went up and came back down at him and landed in the box. They ended up shooting in every direction. We thought it was wonderful but Rev. Gebhard didn’t know what in the world to do about it.

“On the Fourth of July, we always had races. I would usually win the running races. I tried the broad jump – I would jump but I would go forward and fall backwards. The year before we left, I tried everything even if I wasn’t good at it.

“The last year they put four watermelons in the pond, and we would fight to get them out. I remember this year Ruth didn’t participate, but she yelled to me, ‘Hey sis, look over there,’ and there were two girls struggling with the watermelon. I swam over to help them and we got it out and split up the watermelon between the four of us, because of course Ruth got a portion for pointing it out ... a finder’s fee. I always gave things to my sister Ruth. They also gave candy bars for prizes for the races.”

Betty was at Bethany a little over 15 years. She left not long after graduating to work for a family in Ephrata, she remained with them until the mid-1980’s when they passed away. Betty is an excellent baker and very talented quilt maker.

