

GROWING UP. I MEAN... REALLY. GROWING UP.

By Peggy Ann Weyel

I still recall my grandmother taking me downtown to her regular stops with me (as a 6-7 year old: Joske's, the library, and Majestic theatre.

On my first bus trip to downtown San Antonio with grandmother, I hopped in happiness down the aisle because the whole back seat was EMPTY! On my school bus in the North East ISD in 1952-53, my friends and I ran to get the rear seats because we could bounce up and down as the school bus bounced over rough roads and we could sing at the top of our little voices. I taught them a couple of Hank Williams tunes that were good to bounce by: "My hair's still curly...why don't you love me like you used to do"...etc ad nauseum.



Photo: Express News Archives



Photo: US Army

Once I tried to drink out of a water fountain from which she told me I was not to drink. She ushered me to the one around the corner and showed me the signs. I asked why the other fountain was "colored" because it as white just like this one. She said it was for 'colored people." I remember saying that I was pinkish, did that count?

On another trip we were walking down the back side of the Majestic Theatre and there was the famous "colored entrance" sign. OK...we got around to the theatre's Houston Street entrance and headed to be seated. I remember noticing the balcony. I asked if we could go up stairs and see everything from the balcony. That seemed like fun. No, That's where the colored people go. I was almost in a snit because these "colored" folk got to ride in the back of the bus, get their own fountains, and get To. Sit. In. The. Balcony. They had all the 6 year old's fun.



Photo: Google Maps



Photo: Express News Archives

One of my chances to begin learning that life on the "north side" and "east side" was different was my 28 years teaching at T. Roosevelt High School.driving while black, walking while black...etc. and being called a racist for telling one girl to redo her researched paper because she could do better than that...then having a discussion on that comment (she was part of a 3 year interdisciplinary program we had and that comment was in the first 2 weeks. I discovered that her brothers were in a notorious gang and she wanted to transfer to another high school to be with them...didn't happen. She went on to be in TR's Honor Society and to graduate from TAMU. THANK YOU JESUS!.

As a historian of sorts, I so appreciate the wealth and wisdom from each of our communities. **So much wisdom, so little time. We have to work faster and better.**

Growing up on the "North Side," I discovered over many years, can be different from growing up on the "East Side." My experiences teaching in a high school on the northeast side of San Antonio were eye opening, enriching, and a Blessing.

I am a graduate of Robert E. Lee High School of North East ISD, earned an AA from San Antonio College, a BA in Social Sciences and Secondary Educational Certification from Incarnate Word, an MA in history and education with Administrative Certification from University of Texas at San Antonio, and an EdD from Texas A&M University.

Currently retired from public school teaching, I am President of the Somerset Historical Society. I write a free monthly historical newsletter, "Crossings," on Somerset (Texas) history and have begun a blog (www.SOMERSETTXSTORIES.com) on things of interest from this same Somerset region "South of the Medina" lying in southwest Bexar County-Northern Atascosa County, Texas.

