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Subject: **Glenoaks Barracks Memory Piece**
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To: ghowardmuseum@sbcglobal.net
Reply-To: Jack Duggan <jduggan@earthlink.net>
1 Attachment, 64.7 KB

Betty,

This is the piece I wrote on the Barracks. It's also at my blogsite <http://jduggan.blogspot.com/2012/02/we-called-them-barracks.html>

There's no copyright. You're welcome to use it as you wish. With it available three different ways, let me know if that didn't work and we'll try something else.

By the way, I don't have permission from Middle Tennessee State University or the Missouri History Museum to use their photos. I'd like to use something from the BHS if you have it, but for the limited publication I'm doing I think I'm OK with internet pictures.

Best regards,
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The Barracks

We called them The Barracks. I was born in 1946 and I don't remember living anywhere else before them. It was 1948. The Barracks were Army barracks built during World War II to house the anti-aircraft units protecting Lockheed. After the war they were used to fill the housing shortage in LA for returning GIs and their families.

The Barracks were in Glenoaks Park across the railroad tracks from Lockheed Aircraft in Burbank. The Barracks were on the outer edge of the park starting in the middle of the Park between San Fernando and Glenoaks on Amherst where 3rd Street comes in. In military order they ran from 3rd Street up to Glenoaks and across Glenoaks to Andover on the outer edge of the Park. The Barracks took up about a 1/3 of the Park. Our apartment was on a walkway between facing one story buildings, each one converted into three apartments.

My parents, my two sisters and I were crammed into two bedrooms, a living room and there must have been a kitchen. A large bed took up most of the space in my parents' bedroom and my sisters had the other bedroom. I think I slept on the couch in the living room. The front door let out onto a small covered porch with a couple of steps down to our yard bordered by a low white picket fence. All of our neighbors had kids. And it seemed like all the kids were my age. There must have been a few like my sisters born before the war, but the rest of us were the post-war Baby Boom.

I don't remember spending much time indoors. From the time we got up until dusk I ran in the park with a gang of kids my own age. Our apartment was only a few steps down the walkway between barracks to the play area. The oleander bushes between our house and the playground were big enough to crawl into and hide. No one could find me. I'd come out all sticky from the oleander.

The best thing in the park were the swings, wide rubberized straps with chains connecting to a crossbar high overhead. With each pump we tried to get higher and higher until we nearly flew out of the swing. There was a slide we threw sand on and rubbed into the metal to clean it and make it faster. We climbed a long ladder up and then went down as fast as we could to catapult ourselves out into the sand. There were a jungle gym, a huge sandbox and monkey bars. We spent most of our day swinging and climbing on the iron play equipment. Facing the playground was a rec center where a small room on the side had a Dutch door half opened where an adult inside loaned us balls in exchange for a personal item, usually a belt. When we were bored we would explore the rest of the park.

There were green lawns and stone retaining walls to balance walk on top of. We could go anywhere in the park, lawns, horseshoe pits, picnic tables, ping pong tables and ball fields. Down on the south side by San Fernando Road was a log and river stone cabin, headquarters for the Girl Scouts. I don't remember anyone using it but we climbed all over the cabin and it's stone walls. There was a radio tower nearby, red and white that had a blinking red light at it's very high top. We didn't climb on the radio tower. There must have been a good fence around it. We climbed on and over everything else.

I saw a television for the first time in one of the Barracks up Amherst from ours. Above us the buildings were two stories with a stairway outside to the apartments on the second floor. We were all crammed into someone's apartment to watch the TV. It was a wild party of kids climbing over the couch and watching the box. I don't think there were any adults around, which was probably why we were let in. One kid, I think who lived there, ran out naked from the waist down and from the back of the couch he pee'd over the crowd. I don't remember what was on the TV but I remember the unrestrained and screaming exuberance. It was the beginning of a new age.

Someone owned a Flexie and we rode it down the sidewalk on Amherst Street taking turns until the owner tired of sharing took it back. We flew down the hill without braking if we could and then walked it back up for the next kid.

The southwest corner of the park was a baseball diamond and the major league teams played spring ball there. I remember climbing the fence to watch a Yankee's game one time. The game went into the night and I snuggled under a blanket with a couple I didn't know.

I found a baseball glove wedged in some junk in someone's yard. I retrieved it and made my father play catch with me. I remember the fathers in the Barracks were roughly divided between those that were around all the time and those that had jobs. I thought of myself as one of the unlucky kids whose fathers worked. Sometimes he worked at night and we had to be quiet during the day when he slept.

We lived in the Barracks from 1948 to 1950. By 1950 they were tearing down the Barracks in stages. We played in the demolished sites and across Glenoaks Boulevard where they were building new housing. We collected slugs on the ground from the terminal boxes. The slugs were like the steel pennies still in circulation. We had pockets full of slugs and pennies. A penny bought a square of bubble gum. Slugs didn't buy anything and didn't fit in any soda machines.

We moved from the Barracks in 1950 and our apartment must have been demolished pretty soon after that. The Park returned to being just a park. On the north side they built a new recreation center with a gym and swimming pool. Where our apartment had been was turned into tennis courts.

[The Barracks...cx \(64.7 KB\)](#)