Original copy back

MOREHEAD MEMORIES

Boys, Bicycles, and Bread Wrappers

by

Jack D. Ellis

"MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE" (Matt. 4:4)

Hidden beneath a brown wooden weatherbeaten, windowless building located on Morehead's East Main Street is a long narrow brown brick and tile building. It once had steel screened casement windows that cranked open to receive the cool breeze blowing down Evans Branch (now College Lake). It was the air conditioning of that era. Also, there were two large display windows in the front. An alley came off of Main Street on the west side to a loading dock in the rear. The building was built by Morehead's E.E. Maggard and was a prime business location. (It now houses Pathways, Inc. but once contained Morehead's first bakery.)

In 1934 Olive Hill, Kentucky, a town 20 miles east of Morehead, suffered a flood that devastated their business district. One of the businesses ruined by the flood was a bakery owned by Mr. J.K. Powell. When the waters receded it left a one-foot deep covering of brown sticky mud throughout the bakery. After surveying the damage Mr. Powell elected not to rebuild in the flood plain of Olive Hill, but moved to Morehead where there was a better business climate, and a lesser chance of flooding.

In the depression year of 1934, Mr. J.K. Powell, with his

young son Jack, made the move to Morehead. They opened their bakery in a brown brick building on East Main Street (now part of Pathways Programs and next door to the Chevrolet Garage). The name of the new bakery was the Midland Baking Company. Many Moreheadians remember it as the place they bought their first delicious doughnuts, hot rolls and warm bread. Locally baked, (store bought) sliced bread had arrived in Morehead. It was known as "That famous delicious Mary Jane, and Jumbo Bread".

Both brands of bread were wrapped and sealed in wax paper. The Mary Jane Bread had a picture of a blond pigtailed six year old girl, hugging a loaf of bread. The cost of a loaf was 9 cents. Jumbo Bread was a larger, thinner loaf of "sandwich bread" with a prominent picture of an elephant on the outside. The cost of a loaf of Jumbo bread was 10 cents. They also baked delicious doughnuts, cakes, and cinnamon rolls. There is nothing as appealing as the fragrance of bread baking in the oven. This wonderful aroma wafted gently on the breezes over Morehead, and you hopped you were down wind. Psychologists say that the sense of smell is a strong memory stimulant. Every time I am near a bakery, I remember the Midland Bakery and that delightful aroma.

Although Jack and Mr. Powell worked long hours, it was soon apparent they had to have more help. That was true especially when they got the bread contract to supply the local CCC Camp that housed 400 hungry men. Also they provided bread for Morehead State College. Mr. Powell hired two local men, Mr. June Justice and Mr. Ed Davis. These men were taught the skills needed to operate the

Bakery. But as the business grew, they became route men, delivering bakery products to Rowan and all the surrounding counties. Also, there was a demand for the bakery to sell retail across the counter. Mr. Powell then employed a lovely local teenager, Miss Mary Woods. She waited on customers at the front of the building, while helping in the baking process. Therefore, when you came in the front door for service, you might have to wait until Mary came from the rear to wait on your.

Local resident, Lindsay Caudill, (who later became this writer's father-in-law) often stopped in to buy a loaf of that warm delicious 9 cent Mary Jane Bread. He wanted it right out of the oven. One day while waiting for Miss Mary to bring his hot loaf of bread, he looked down and saw a mouse running across the floor. Lindsay quickly grabbed the mouse by the tail thinking he would sling its head against the top of the glass counter, and toss it outside. He made his move quickly. But his plan didn't work. He ended up with nothing but the mouses tail in his hand. The mouse had disappeared. It was nowhere to be found in the retail area. But about 25 ft. behind the counter in the front part of the bakery was a huge, open, stainless steel mixer tank in the process of mixing dough. Therefore, since he never found the mouse, he always assumed someone opened up a loaf of bread and received quite a surprise.

The old Red Rose Dairy was directly behind the bakery. It was only natural that a barter system develop between the Dairy and the Bakery. While helping my Dad in his job at the Dairy, I was always

the "Gofer". They would send me to the bakery with 2 quarts of cold pasteurized milk (with the cream risen to the top) to exchange for a dozen hot doughnuts. This barter system always worked well and everybody "gained" by it.

On another "gofer" trip to the bakery (when I was 9 years old) I was fascinated to see two shiny new red bicycles with balloon white wall tires and a kick stand on display in the window. There was one boy's and one girl's bicycle. The sign announced "each bicycle would be given to the boy and girl who collected the most Mary Jane and/or Jumbo Bread wrappers in the next 8 weeks". At age 9, I had only dreamed but never owned a bicycle. In fact during those depression days, none of my friends owned bicycles. But now, I began to think maybe, it might be just possible that I could win that contest. My mother was always a positive person and she encouraged me to "go for it".

My mother, Dorothy Ellis, was a school teacher of the "old school". She was unemployed at the time and could not afford me a bicycle. But she always taught me to believe in myself and that a positive self-image was as important as knowledge. He motto was "can't is not in our vocabulary". As an only child, I had this precept strongly imbedded in my mind, so with dreams in my heart, stars in my eyes, and believing in myself, I became the youngest one to enter the contest. The race was on! It was a marathon race that ended two months later.

Believing the race goes to the swiftest, I got busy that very day, and knocked on doors all over Morehead, explaining that I was

in a contest to try and win a bicycle. I asked that they save their Mary Jane and Jumbo Bread wrappers for me. Many, many, Morehead citizens saved their bread wrappers for me. That was the first time I remembered meeting eight year old Miss Janis Caudill, whom later became my lifetime companion (She saved bread wrappers for me.) I had a regular rout that I worked once a week, picking up their wrappers. As my collection began to grown, I would walk by the Bakery every afternoon after school (Summer School at Breckinridge) and look longingly at that beautiful bicycle. I dreamed of flying swiftly down College Blvd, out Second Street, and down the Saints Church Hill on that shiny red bicycle. In my mind's eye I would be able to play bicycle tag with the older boys.

My dreams of winning the bicycle, grew in proportion to the growing number of bread wrappers in my house. I worked even harder. I kept a pretty close check on the local competition, however, the contest covered several counties, and no one knew exactly who the leaders were in the other counties. As the end of the contest neared, the "rumor" was that probably Teddy Hamm of nearby Clearfield, or Jackie Ellis of Morehead, had the most bread wrappers in Rowan County. But the contestants from other counties were a mystery. Rumors were rampant. One rumor was that a boy in Bath County had 1,000 bread wrappers. My heart went cold as I heard that rumor. A plan was devised. With our mothers acting as our agents, Teddy and I agreed to met on July 2, the day before the contest ended. It would be a fight to the finish. A "shoot out" and the one that brought the most bread wrappers to the battle

would win. Therefore the one with the most bread wrappers would get the other's collection. It was a fight to the finish, a no holds barred bread wrapper battle. The winner would walk away with the other's collection. We were determined that whomever won the bicycle it would remain in Rowan County.

We agreed to meet at home plate at the old Clearfield baseball field at 12:00 noon on July 2, 1936. That day is remembered as the day of the great Rowan County Bread wrapper battle to this day. At the appointed hour we me on the baseball battlefield. Teddy and I approached each other from opposite ends of the field, each eyeing the other suspiciously. We were both heavily armed with "coffee" sacks loaded with bread wrappers. Out mothers walked beside us as our agents, and several friends surrounded us as our seconds. Each one making sure there was no shenanigan pulled. Teddy carried his bag to first base and dumped the contents on the ground. I carried mine down to third base and emptied the contents of my "Coffey" sack. The tension was so thick you could cut it with a dull knife. As our agents (our mothers) counted both bread wrapper collections, my heart was pounding and my palms sweating. However, I had over 800, and Teddy had only 600, I had won the bread wrapper battle, and my friends cheered at the final count. My total count was now over 1,400 bread wrappers. But the contest was not over yet. There were four other counties to be heard from. Who knows, maybe some boy had pulled the same trick in the next county. Therefore, as July 3 arrived, I had to endure another heart pounding, palm sweating session before knowing the final outcome of the contest.

But joy of joys, I won the bicycle. Also, my cousin, Alameda McKinney, won the girls bike. It was a clean bicycle sweep for Rowan County.

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When Mr. J.K. Powell moved to Morehead from Olive Hill after being flooded out, he almost settled in a building on First Street. Of course First Street was devastated in the 1939 Morehead flood. But the bakery was not damaged on Main Street. It would have been ironic had he been ruined by another flood.

The day I won that shiny red bicycle with balloon whitewall tires and a kickstand was the happiest day of my 9 year life. Riding proudly down the streets of Morehead made me feel like a celebrity. But the shiny red bicycle came to a quick and violent end the following October.

My cousin Adrian McKinney who was four years older than me had an old dilapidated bike in very poor condition. The gears in the "new department" rear hub constantly slipped. Sometimes you could pedal vigorously and not move. Both our mechanical skills were limited, so one soberty afternoon we decided to take his old bicycle to Clearfield to a skilled bicycle mechanic. I accompanied

him on my bicycle, and he succeeded in getting his bike repaired, and we started back home.

Since I wanted to see if his bike was really repaired, we exchanged bicycles on the return trip home. I rode about 100 feet in front of him along the left side of the limestone gravel road. About half way home I heard a car coming behind us. (There was never very much traffic on that road). Glancing over my shoulder I saw the car on the wrong side of the road hit Adrian on my shiny red bicycle. He went flying through the air over the handle bars with the car actually missing running over him. But it did run over my bike. The car barely missed me and never stopped. But I memorized the license number.

Quickly neighbors and cars came to help. Adrian was unconscious. Someone loaded him in their car and took him to a local doctor. Someone with a truck loaded me, the good bike and my crushed bike in a truck and delivered us home. There I told my parents the sad news, and they rushed to the doctor's office to find out my cousin's condition. (We had no telephone). After regaining consciousness, Adrian was sent home (no hospital here then).

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After waking the two miles to school for several days, I was contacted by the drunken driver's attorney. He told me his client would pay for any new bicycle I wanted. (He also agreed to pay all of my cousin's medical expenses.) After looking at what was available, I learned that an older boy (Harry Caudill) had a souped up super deluxe, slightly used bike he wanted to sell. After looking it over and taking a trail ride, I decided that was the one I wanted. It was the Cadillac of bicycles. It had everything on In addition to what my other bike had, this one was equipped with a basket in front, and a luggage carrier in the rear. Also, it was equipped with a horn, light, siren, wide steerhorn handle bars with special rubber hand grips and colorful streamers that blew in the breeze. It also had mud flaps on the front and rear fenders with reflectors that glowed in the dark. I now had the fanciest wheels in town.

It was then, at age 9 that I learned a valuable lesson. some good can come out of bad, and every cloud has a silver lining. Because just when I though everything was los, and that shiny red bicycle I had work so hard to win was crushed beneath that car, and my transportation life was ended, a new era opened up. A more promising and brighter era than I had even imagined. That bicycle

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It provided not only delicious bakery products for Morehead's citizens, but a delightful aroma which was equally delicious. In the early 1950s, the bakery was sold to the Kern Bakery in London, Kentucky. But it remains a Morehead Memory in the minds of those who were here during that time.



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Jack POWELL OF OWNER MANAGER OF NORTHEADS MIDLAND BAKERY

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Prom The Collection Of: Dr. Jack D. Ellis 552 W. Sun St. Morehead, KY 40351 606-784-7473



Midland Baking Company Was Locatedon E. Mein St IN · MOREHELAD. It now houses Pathways.

Morehead Memories (People and Places)

Midland Baking Company (Boys, Bicycles, and Bread Wrappers)

"Man Shall Not Live By Bread Alone" (Matthew 4:4) By Jack D. Ellis (Editor's Note: This is one in

a series of articles about local history entitled Morehead Memories: People and Places. The articles deal with those business and professional people that helped Morehead grow and pros-

Hidden beneath a brown wooden weatherbeaten, windowless building located on Morehead's East Main Street is a long narrow brown brick and tile building. It once had steel screened casement windows that cranked open to receive the cool breeze blowing down Evans Branch (now College Lake).

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to Morehead In 1934 Olive Hill, a town 20 miles east of Morehead, suffered a flood that devastated:their business district. One of the businesses ruined by the flood was a bakery owned by Mr. J.K. Powell. When the waters receded it left a one-foot deep covering of brown sticky mud throughout the bakery. After surveying the damage Mr. Powell elected not to rebuild in the flood plain of Olive Hill, but moved to Morehead where there was a better business climate, and a lesser chance of flooding.

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Mouse lost in bakery

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out of the oven.

One day while waiting for Miss Mary to bring his hot loaf of bread, he looked down and saw a mouse running across the floor. Lindsay quickly grabbed the mouse by the tail thinking he would sling its head against the top of the glass counter, and toss it outside. He made his move quickly. But his plan did-n't work. He ended up with nothing but the mouse's tail in his hand. The mouse had disappeared. It was nowhere to be found in the retail area. But about 25 feet behind the counter in the front part of the bakery was a huge, open, stainless steel mixer tank in the process of mixing dough. Therefore, since he never found the mouse, he always assumed someone opened up a loaf of bread and

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Winning new bicycle

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Hit and run driver arrested



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The Midland Baking Company was in business for 20 years. which was equally delicious. In the early 1950s, the bakery was sold to the Kern Bakery in London. But it remains a Morehead Memory in the minds of those who were here during that time.



About the author

Dr. Jack D. Ellis is a retired Morehead State University Library director and a retired minister.

Jane, and Jumbo Bread. Baking bread brings delightful aroma

Both brands of bread were wrapped and sealed in wax paper. The Mary Jane Bread had a picture of a blond pigtailed six-year-old girl, hugging a loaf of bread. The cost of a loaf was 9 cents. Jumbo Bread was a larger, thinner loaf of "sandwich bread" with a prominent picture of an elephant on the outside. The cost of a loaf of Jumbo bread was 10 cents.

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Dreams of a new bicycle

Believing the race goes to the swiftest, I got busy that very day, and knocked on doors all over Morehead, explaining that I was in a contest to try and win a bicycle. I asked that they save their Mary Jane and Jumbo Bread wrappers for me. Many, many, Morehead citizens saved their bread wrappers for me. That was the first time I remember meeting eight year old Miss Janis Caudill, whom later became my lifetime companion (She saved bread wrappers for me.) I had a regular route that I worked once a week, picking up their wrappers.

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Bread wrapper collection

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Jack Ellis examine a reproduction of a 1930s style bicycle similar to the one given away in a "bread wrapper" con-

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Crushed bicycle replaced with deluxe model

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Resources Conservation Service office, 784-5375. Rowan County Conservation District, third Tuesday of each mon

conference room, 784-8505. Code Enforcement Board of the City of Morehead, first Tuesday Take Pounds Off Sensibly, Thursday nights, 6:30 p.m., Morehes

Scout office, Brenda Cooper, service unit manager, 784-8701 or m Rowan County Girl Scouts Unit meeting, third Tuesday of each

month, 5:30 p.m., Rowan County Extension Office, 2nd floor of R. Smathers-Barnes, 4-H agent, 784-5457. Rowan County 4-H Council, advisory board to the county 4-H

Sheltowee Trail Country Club Board of Directors, second Wetowee Trail Country Club lounge, 1200 Clear Fork Road, Porter

Veterans Administration Mobile Medical Clinic, last Wed a.m., American Legion Post 126, 784-3909 or 783-1812.

Morehead Woman's Club, first Tuesday of each month, 5 p.

Multiple Sclerosis Support Group, fourth Tuesday of each Outreach Building, Judy Buelterman, 784-8044.

Morehead Lions Club, first and third Thursday of each n Patti Arnold, president, 784-7474.

banquet room, Darlene Brooks, president. Morehead Business & Professional Women's Club, third l

Rowan County Airport Board, last Friday of each month,

Morehead-Rowan E-911 Board, second Tuesday of each m

Morehead-Rowan County EMS, second Monday of each 1 Don Adams, director, 784-4333.

Rotary Club, every Wednesday, noon, Ponderosa, Jonath

president, 784-6238.

Morehead Art Guild, first Saturday of each month, 10

Morehead Kiwanis Club, every Tuesday, 6 p.m., Holida; Rowan County Humane Society, each month, 784-7002.

County Courthouse, Louise Walker.

Disabled American Veterans, state officer, second V

Morehead Optimist Club, each Tuesday, 11:45 a.m.,

Library, Gary Lewis, president, 784-6341. Rowan County Historical Society, first Thursday o

Morehead-Rowan County Chamber of Commerce, fir

Morehead Utility Plant Board, last Thursday of e. Board building, Dr. Ewell Scott, chairman, 784-5538.

Rowan County School Board, third Tuesday of each Administration building, Larry Coldiron, chairman, 78

County Courthouse, Clyde Thomas, judge-executive, Rowan County Fiscal Court, third Tuesday of ea

Morehead City Council, second Monday of each mc Collins, mayor, 784-8505.

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