

# My Reflections of Growing Up in Montgomery Place

Carole Diane Sedgwick

Family Home: 1103 Lancaster Blvd.



Carole's 11<sup>th</sup> Birthday - 1960

It was the “best of times” that were very much taken for granted. I was born on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1949, three years to the day after my parents moved into their new home in Montgomery Place. Never having lived anywhere else in my life, I thought this was the kind of growing up experienced by every child--was I ever wrong! I realized much later in my life what a truly unique community it is, and how fortunate I was to be a part of it in my formative years. I have always thought of Montgomery Place as country living in the city; we had the advantage of spacious half-acre lots, and as children, we had oodles of space and time to play in our tree filled backyards and the surrounding fields.



Carl & Reta Sedgwick Family Home in 1947.  
1103 Lancaster Blvd. (Corner of Lancaster & Caen St.)

We always felt very safe in our small community--everyone knew their neighbours including the names of all their children. I don't think anyone worried about locking their doors when they were out in the garden or visiting a neighbour, and some neighbours even went together on buying and sharing gardening equipment such as rototillers and lawnmowers. There were very few fences, no sidewalks and in the early years, the roads were gravelled and there were deep roadside ditches that filled up and were perfect for wading in after a heavy spring rain.



My Mom & Dad poured their heart and soul into their home and garden.

We were very lucky to have a “stay at home” Mom and she was always there for us, looking after the house, making meals, baking, canning, sewing and working outside in her flower beds and in the garden. Dad went off to work all day during the week and then when he was home after dinner in the evening, he would work in the vegetable garden until dusk.

The large lots were provided to WWII Veterans so they could be self-sufficient and grow large vegetable gardens for their families. I remember walking down the alley with my younger brother and carrying a tin honey pail to fetch eggs from the Mooney’s (neighbours who raised chickens); another neighbour would supply honey from their bee stand. I also vaguely remember a neighbour who raised goats for goat milk!

I don’t know when we first had mail delivery but I remember taking letters to the old mailbox that was mounted on a post at the corner by our house. I remember the home deliveries of bread from the breadman and the milkman. My parents and older siblings would remember the ice and coal deliveries before we had fridges and electric stoves. I remember “Curly” our milkman – we knew he was coming close when we could hear the clip-clop of his horse pulling the milk wagon. “Curly” liked children and often he would let us jump on the wagon sideboards and go for a little ride down the street!

As a young child, I remember swinging in the hand-braided hammock that my grandfather made from baling twine, and also building huts with my brother out of scrap wood from my Dad’s workshop area. It seemed to me that everyday in the summer was filled with playing at home or at the

paddling pool and playground. It wasn't always playtime and my siblings, Vivian, Sheila, Mel and Ted and I all had different chores such as, housecleaning, grass cutting, shelling peas, husking corn, picking grapes and crab apples and shovelling snow.

We were a "close knit" family, all seven off us, in a house not even 800 square feet with only ONE bathroom! As if there weren't already enough of us, we had a menagerie of family pets over the years. We had everything from fish and turtles to hamsters, guinea pigs, rabbits, cats and dogs and one beautiful parakeet named 'Mickey'. It wasn't necessarily a Montgomery thing, but the love and caring for of all animals was something that my parents instilled in all their children.

Mom & Dad both came from large farm families so we had lots of relatives, including grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins who came to visit for various family "hoohaws". Dad & Mom also hosted many summer office parties in their beautiful garden. As a family, we spent many hours enjoying the garden, sitting near the waterfall and pond that my Dad built and playing with pets. We played many outdoor games together – croquet, badminton, Bochi ball, "catch", and 500, a baseball game we played in the backyard after the garden was done in the Fall. "Horsehoes" was another favourite game and Dad built a horseshoe pitch for us on the boulevard in front of our house. We also had many family BBQ's and wiener roasts and later in the evening we'd sit around the fire pit that Dad built and we'd have hot chocolate or "honey pail" coffee.

In the winter, our Montgomery dads would take turns opening up the skating rink shack and getting the rink ready for evening family skating. At home we always had different

table games to play indoors but Crokinole and cards were a favourite. If we wanted more action we could play ping-pong in the rumpus room. We didn't have TV in the very early years and we were better off for that. We did family things and our home seemed to always be filled with music and laughter. One of my fondest memories is listening to Mom playing her piano and singing, in her beautiful voice, all the popular tunes of the time.

Growing up in Montgomery Place in the Fifties and Sixties was a very special time. We had the advantage of living in a most beautiful, unique community--a "gem" known as Montgomery Place!



Carl & Reta Sedgwick Home in 2004.

The trees have grown up! Many renovations and a newer front addition (late 60's) were added over the years.