

On the Streets Where I Lived

By Marilyn Reeves

I grew up in Salida, where my dad owned a souvenir and sporting goods store. Every summer during the 40's and 50's the family would pile into the stuffy old black Kaiser and make the long drive to Denver so he could shop for new merchandise at the various wholesale outlets downtown.

My sister Janet and I were allowed to go out and walk up and down 16th Street. Oh my, what an enchanting place downtown Denver was back then! With the Daniels & Fisher tower at one end and the May Company on the other, so many things to see in the store windows, so many things to wish for.

At lunchtime we would go to this fancy restaurant at Colfax and Broadway called the Golden Lantern. Little did I know that years later I would be working right across the street.

In 1961, after a year of college at CU, I came to Denver to seek employment. My first job was working as file clerk for a mortgage broker on 16th Street. Then, after attending night classes at Parks Business School, I landed a secretarial position with Reed Roller Bit Company in the Petroleum Club Building off Colfax and Broadway. But the Golden Lantern was no longer there.

Back in the early 60's the Capital Hill area near downtown Denver was a relatively safe place for young, single, working women to live. I shared an apartment off 8th Avenue on Logan Street with a former classmate named Gail.

I would ride the bus to work, and would often take a sack lunch over to the Civic Center Park to enjoy the serene surroundings. I never encountered any drug addicts or derelicts loitering there. What a contrast to the way things are today!

Later, Gail and I moved to a 2-bedroom apartment off 11th on York Street, which we shared with two other girls. But a few months later they moved out, so she and I relocated to a drab little apartment near 6th on Downing Street.

In 1962 – possibly the worst year of my life – Gail left to get married and I was alone in that dismal apartment, whose only window faced the brick wall of the building next door. And every day on my way to work I wondered if I crawled under my desk whether it might give me some protection from the bomb. But somehow, JFK managed to turn those Russian ships around and the threat of nuclear war was no longer quite so imminent.

After Tom and I were married in 1963, we moved to a much nicer apartment at Sherman Street and Ellsworth, then eventually bought a little 2-bedroom house in Lakewood.

And in 1979, single again, I bought another small house in southeast Aurora, which was to be my home for the next twenty-five years.

Finally, in 2004, I moved into my condo at 675 S. Clinton Street, where I have been blessed with a beautiful view of Windsor Gardens. No more brick walls!

But I don't go to downtown Denver anymore.