

We depended on it for heat. I asked Mama where a pan was I could use, and she said on top of the warmer.

I was a small girl for my age, and I reached up for it. My sister had just set it off the stove and it was full of grease. The bacon grease ran down my face and settled in the hollows around my eyes; they swelled shut. Right under my cheekbones, I had terrible blisters, and on my temples, everywhere it could sink in. The grease gathered around my chin, and two or three drops went down on my chest. It hurt. It hurt a lot. But I used that cream the Black woman gave Mama, and there wasn't any scar.

Helen's thoughts went back to J.C. Brown's General Store, and she said:

Later on, the area behind the store became known as Booger Town. Everybody in Huntsville knew where Booger Town was. It was named for seeing ghosts there. Everybody talked about seeing ghosts there.

Booger Town was run-down houses, the very poorest part of Huntsville. It was a put-down to say you were from Booger Town. Along in the late 30's or early 40's, the government and put little green row houses. Each one had two rooms, but a lot of people would live in the two rooms.

Helen commented that one woman had a store in her two-room house. The woman did well with the store and bought other houses. Her daughter worked for her in the store, and she bought houses, and became a wealthy woman.

Both of Helen's parents had worked in the mill. Helen said that all the cotton mill houses at Merrimac were duplexes with electricity and running water. Each duplex had a hydrant out in the yard. Her father dug a trench and brought a waterline to the porch, so they could carry water in the house from the porch instead of going to the hydrant.

They had a coal house. It had a little window. "On one side was a little cubicle your toilet set in. The toilet was self-cleaning and self-flushing. When you sat down on the seat, the water started running very, very fast, and as long as you sat on the seat, the water ran. Someone from the mill came around once a week and filled your toilet paper dispenser. It was a little box, about 8 inches tall, with little sheets, about 2 ½ by 3 inches wide inside it."

Helen said that when they lived in the mill village, her mother raised her own chickens and had her own garden. She bought milk from the neighbors. They had a pasture "beside the mill and beyond to Drake." At night they walked the cows home. Helen said the mill provided pasture and pens "if you wanted." It is probable there was a charge, but Helen didn't know.

The mill had a hospital, a visiting nurse, and a community bathhouse, which was kept spotlessly clean, and stocked with white towels. She said most of the time her parents