

hear the school children singing "America" ("My Country 'tis of Thee") on mornings when windows were open. That was nice.

Halloween in Fanwood and at School #4 was great too. We traditionally placed all our desks in the classroom in one huge circle. That was the greatest fun of all, the break from the ordinary. We'd come to school decked out in some hideous or beauteous costume, ready to consume black and orange food and drink, and get an early start on what lay ahead that evening!

You never would even dream of going out "trick-or-treating" in those days, before dark. By the way, I cannot recall ever calling it "trick-or-treating".....We would merely say at everyone's door, "Anything for Halloween?" The amazing thing was that almost every single person answering the door would invite you in! They would then go through a charade of guessing, "Now let me see, who could this be?" They almost always knew exactly who you were, because, as I said, we all knew each other in town; also, there just weren't as many kids in those days. But it was wonderful then in Fanwood, going around for Halloween.

Mrs. Heitman, a Swedish lady, on the corner of Herbert and Martine Aves., would always serve hot cocoa at the door and have elaborate foods awaiting each and every Halloweener. We would go mostly just to houses on the blocks close to our homes, but no one ever thought for one moment about any "danger", or about the fact that it was dark. Going around after dark was nine-tenths of the fun of it!

On Valentine's Day, the teachers always covered a large square box with white crepe paper, trimmed with red hearts. We kids would buy an inexpensive box of assorted little Valentines, write the names of our favorite classmates on the envelopes, and drop them into the box, for the teacher to distribute them on that special day. More magic time!

I vividly recall that in the first grade, Miss Smith did a special thing for any child whose birthday it was. WITH COLORED CHALK, on the side blackboard (which wasn't normally used, so it was "special"), she would draw for you, the birthday person, a cake, on a dish, with the appropriate number of candles, each thing in WHATEVER COLOR CHALK you wanted. Interesting how such a seemingly small thing could be so extraordinary and meaningful to a child, for the memory to have lingered all these years.

I wish I could someday tell that to "Miss Smith"! I bet she'd be pleased. In fact, how nice it would be to be able to tell any teachers who were