

This was Raithby,

As I am sitting on the stoep under the oak trees listening to the singing of the birds I am thinking about an old lady Auntie Annie Samuels who had to sell her house to live with her daughter in Cape Town. "Raithby with all your faults, I will always love you."

One late evening the son of an undertaker came to fetch the corpse of uncle Dan Many. His father told him: "Just go to Raithby, and where you see the lights burning and the people standing, that's the house".

Yes, that's true. Born on Klein Welmoed but moved to Raithby with my family when I was four years old.

I still remember my childhood, playing on the fields and walking in the gravel road with no street lights burning. Only the stars and the moon to guide us. Not afraid because we knew everybody.

As kids we all attended Raithby Methodist Primary School with late Mr. H.J Carelse as our Principal. We called him 'Meester'. Thinking of all the concerts and bazaars. The best was the operetta "Humpy Dello" under the supervision of late Mr Leonard Russouw. Our mothers were keen needle workers and made the loveliest costumes.

Completing primary school our parents had to buy us a bicycle to travel to Firgrove station to attend Gordon High School in Somerset West. Because most parents were poor farm labourers most bicycles came from Uncle Gielie Delport with Uncle Manie Hendricks as the repairer. We had great fun. Weekends we rode up and down the road. Enjoying having picnics in the veld.

We all belonged the Raithby Methodist Church, Sunday School and Boy's and Girl's Brigade. Once a year we went with Uncle John Hendricks' lorry to the beach for our annual picnic. The Brigade outings were also memorable events.

For entertainment we had rugby on Saturdays and in the school hall we were watching movies. The old projector and films were called the bioscope. And of course, concerts by the Woman Association and musical evenings.

But time moved on and we had to adapt ourselves. Our Raithby children are lucky with grandparents and aunties at home while their parents are at work.

As we are getting older when we as friends meet we still recall the sayings of our grandparents and parents.

But as the songs says: "Those were the days my friend, I thought it will never end."

Cathy McLaren

