



Coca-Cola Stories

An Affordable Luxury:

My first "Coca-Cola moment" was at an early age and I will never forget it. When I was young, my dad would pile my two brothers and me into the car on Saturday morning for an adventure at Jim's Barber Shop. The memory is very vivid. I can still remember the small brick building with the old-fashioned barber pole out front. But it was something on the inside of the shop that held my attention. If we didn't complain and behaved while we waited for our turn in the barber's chair -- two very difficult things for three boys -- we would be rewarded with an ice-cold bottle of Coca-Cola®. It was 5 cents a bottle and half the fun was putting in the nickel and "guiding" that small bottle through the maze in the cooler, until that point at which the cooler gave up possession of that wonderful drink. I really enjoyed the taste of the Coke® as well as the time spent with my father and brothers. Although I didn't understand it at the time, I look back fondly now and know that Coca-Cola does help make special memories. There are magical moments in all of our lives and Coca-Cola is a part of that for me.



When I was young, my parents and I lived in married student housing at the University of Alabama while my dad was finishing his MBA. There was a small convenience store on the bottom level that served Frozen Coke®. I remember a small serving was 11 cents (10 cents plus 1 cent tax). I looked forward to that treat more than anything. On my birthday, my aunt sent me a card with inserts for coins -- all filled with dimes and pennies! All I could imagine was how many Frozen Cokes I would be able to get with all that money! I still have a picture of me at that age with a Frozen Coke in my hand, and a big smile on my face!

When I was young my dad would make a big deal out of going to put gas in the car. He would always shout, "Who wants to go with me to put gas in the car?" We would all yell, "I do, I do." We knew he would buy us Coca-Cola in the bottle. But he would never buy one for himself. Every time we got home, we had to give him a sip of ours. But it was always more than just a sip. This was a big treat for us. Coke was special. It was a gift to get a Coke, and to have Coke once a month was a special treat.

One of the fondest memories I had as a child was sitting on the porch in the evening with my parents drinking a Coke. We didn't have much money in those days, so having that occasional bottle of Coke was a real treat. I can still remember the feel of the cold glass in my sweaty little hands as we tried to catch a cool evening breeze in the Midwest humidity. My dad always bought himself a bottle of Barq's® root beer while Mom and I always had Coca-Cola. It had to be in the glass bottles, though. Nothing else would serve as well. Til this day I still prefer the taste of Coke in the glass bottle. It's a taste of home.

In the late 1950s, my family lived on a little farm in northeast Maryland. The summers were oppressive -- hot and humid. As a high schooler, it was my duty to fill the sacks with grains (corn, oats and barley) which I took to the mill to have hog and cow feed



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ground. Shirtless and covered with sweat and grain dust, I went to the Coca-Cola vending machine to satisfy my parched throat and cool myself. There has never been more satisfaction to be had anywhere for 5 cents.

I remember drinking Coke on my way home from school in San Antonio, Texas. I got a quarter a day for bus fare and a Coke. The year was 1957. A Coke was 5 cents out of a machine. It sure tasted good on a hot day.



While it's probably not as exciting as other stories being told, some of my fondest memories of Coke took place at the grocery store when I was 7 or 8 years old. It was always a treat to be able to buy an ice-cold Coke from the machine in the front of the store. There was nothing like the first sip of that Coke. Of course, being only 7 or 8, it was also a great treat to be able to redeem the bottle for the 3 cents it was worth at the time. It brought back a lot of memories when I purchased a Coke from the machine [at The World of Coca-Cola]. Even though the price has changed since I was a small girl, the taste of that first sip hasn't changed. What a treat then and what a treat now. Thanks for helping me relive a great period in my life. It's those simple pleasures that keep us all going. Coke has always been one of my simple pleasures.

I can remember going to the movies on Saturday afternoon -- cartoon plus cowboy serial. We would first go to the drugstore down the street and buy a 5 cent Coke -- cherry or vanilla -- and a 5 cent bag of popcorn. Then we would sneak both into the movie theater. It was a special weekly summertime only treat.

The first time I ever remember having Coca-Cola was in 1972, in Pullman, Washington, where I grew up. My father was a police officer and didn't make very much money. My mother was working part time and taking care of three children. I can remember one time, my brother and I walked into town, which was about 2 1/2 miles away. We would always stop in and tell my dad that we had made it. And he always would give us money to go upstairs in the police station and get a cold Coca-Cola out of the machine. I have since gotten married and have children of my own. I have told them this story and I always have Coca-Cola for them when they get home from school, and on those hot summer days.



My grandchildren and I were watching an old Coke commercial about the 5 cent cost when I said I could remember when I got 25 cents allowance on Saturdays. With this I would walk to town, buy my favorite comic book (5 cents) at the soda fountain drug store, then go to the movie (5 cents), buy popcorn (5 cents) and a Coke (5 cents) and have a nickel left. They looked at me and said, "Gosh, you mean they had Coke when you were little?"

My family didn't have a lot of money when I was young. We used to buy a case of Coke every two weeks. I used to sneak a hot Coke into the closet, open it as I stood



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among the winter coats, and drink away. When finished, I would stuff the bottles into the pockets. Many years later my mom found several old coats in the closet with Coke bottles in them.

I grew up in the country where life was very simple and money was hard to come by. There used to be an old store located in West Cobb County, Georgia. When I was young, my Daddy used to take us to the store with him and climb up these long stairs to the front porch of the store (back then they seemed a least a mile high). You were usually greeted by an old dog and homegrown fruit and vegetables for sale. The highlight of the trip was being allowed to "fish" around in an open top cooler full of ice water for a 6 1/2 ounce ice-cold Coca-Cola. If you were lucky and had been on your best behavior, you might get a candy bar too. Being one of eight children, we didn't ever go without things that we needed, but we certainly didn't have everything we wanted. Back then, a Coke® and a candy bar was as good as it got! Today, the building that the store occupied still stands and has been restored as a bank. The old Coca-Cola sign still hangs proudly on the front, but the stairs don't seem nearly as high to me. Unfortunately, my Daddy passed away a couple of years ago, but whenever I pass the old store, I have an irresistible urge for a Coke!



When I was 7 or 8 (1952 or 3), I was sent to the store to buy milk. The change I got back was 5 cents -- one nickel! Right by the exit stood a Coke machine with a crank handle. I almost put the nickel in the slot. I can see my hand holding it there for a long moment. Then, honesty prevailed and I took the change home to mom as I'd been told to do. But when I told her of my struggle, she not only praised my honesty, she rewarded me with the nickel to spend as I chose! I ran all the way back to the corner market and bought my Coca-Cola after all and enjoyed it with a clean conscience! Honesty is always the best policy. What a lesson to learn for 5 cents!

I grew up in a very rural town on the outskirts of Henderson, NC. The town itself was and still is extremely small. Our main source of employment outside of the fields was a cotton gin. My family was sharecroppers, as pretty much all of the community was. However we treated our families, others, the community and out-of-towners with dignity, fairness and respect. Therefore, it did not matter what we did for a living as long as it was honest and we gave it our best. Sort of like the goal Coke has. Life was good back then and whenever I close my eyes, reflect and want to think of the "good OLE days," well it only takes a few things to take me back there: my great grandmother (better known as Big Ma), my grandparents, the fields, a mule named Daisy, fried chicken, fried okra, lemonade, a country store and the biggest to-do of all COCA-COLA. For us, Coca-Cola was a household brand. But because we lived on a limited income, and my grandparents were raising 18 children, well of course there was never, ever enough Coca-Cola to go around every day. So even though Coke was the beverage of choice, it was considered to be the good stuff and certainly reserved for those very special occasions. We were blessed enough to have it every weekend, but you did not go through it as if it was water! Saturdays we were sure to have company over and that meant Coca-Cola for all. And then there were the



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Sundays after church when some of our top town officials (Church Pastor, Deacons, etc.) would come by, and punch and lemonade would never, ever do to be served while in the company of a local church Pastor. Fried chicken, mashed potatoes, steamed yellow whole kernel corn, homemade biscuits, Big Ma's gravy and a good OLE ice cold glass of Coca-Cola. Close your eyes and imagine having that on a Sunday afternoon while sitting under a weeping willow tree harboring you from the hot summer sun. It's The Real Thing to me!!

When I was only 7 years old, I remember my grandfather used to pick up my brother and sister and me and take us up to his farm once a month. He always used to stop at the little country store on the way to his house to buy us a Coke and candy bar. This was a real treat because we were very poor. This was the highlight of our childhood. I am 51 today and still remember this.



I was the second youngest of seven siblings within a 10-year range. I was raised on an old farm in rural Wisconsin by parents who were short on money but never short on love. The family was a tight unit, sharing every meal and celebrating even the smallest moments to escape some of the everyday hardships. The special moment was every Friday. The ritual began with Mom pulling out four tall, 16-ounce bottles of Coca-Cola from the 8-pack in the pump house while we all gathered around the kitchen table to watch. She would meticulously line out nine glasses all of equal size on the sturdy wooden table my father built in his shop, custom-made to accommodate our large crowd. Mom carefully poured each glass, rationing the four bottles across those nine glasses so that not one received any more than the other. Starting with the youngest, we each selected a filled glass until they were gone. We all raised our Coca-Cola high up in the air and simultaneously cheered our toast, "TGIF! Thank goodness it's Friday!" Then with feverish thirst we drank those glasses down without taking breath.

When my (now) husband and I were in college -- in 1940-42 at Colorado State University -- our main date (that we could afford) was a stop on the way home from Sunday evening youth group for a 5-cent Coke!



Growing up, we were not poor but did not have a great deal of money. (This was in the 70s.) My mom and dad both loved Coke. Fridays were always considered family night. We would all stay home to watch TV. Mom would pop popcorn and as a treat my brother and I would get one glass of Coke. We looked forward to that glass of Coke every week and would nurse that drink, savoring every swallow. I think it's how we knew we had been really good throughout the week, because we got our treat of Coke on Friday night. As we got older, we could afford to drink Coke everyday, but Coke and popcorn seem to be special to me, even today.



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My father would always tell me fond stories of his childhood, although he was very poor growing up in Tulsa, OK. So last year we took a trip back there, now that I am a grown man and I wanted to see where he grew up. He took me around the town and we stopped at a park when he began to tear up. I asked what was wrong. He explained that as a boy, although he was dirt poor, his mom would bring him to this park with bologna sandwiches and buy him a Coke, and he would feel like the luckiest boy in the world.

Money was scarce in our family in the late 30s and early 40s in Gadsden, Ala. When my only pair of shoes needed a new sole, I'd walk with my identical twin sister to a local shoe repair shop in West Gadsden. We'd leave our shoes for repair and walk barefoot next door to the drug store and share a Coke with two straws until my shoes were fixed.



As a youngster, my family could not afford many luxuries. Around Christmastime, we would buy each family member one gift. As a 10-year-old boy, I did not have the money to get much. My grandmother, who was born in 1882, loved Coca-Cola. Unfortunately, she rarely drank one because of our situation. I pooled my money (pennies) with my brother to buy her four Cokes. On Christmas morning, she cried when she opened her gift! She said it was her best Christmas ever.

I grew up in a small town named Hemet in California. My family was poor, but our mom kept us together and gave us a great sense of family. That's what Coca-Cola has always represented to me and my family. It's always stood for everything that makes me happy. Even though we didn't have much money -- it was a special treat and a special family time when we all shared a Coke together. We all survived a hard childhood and we faithfully drink Coke only. I even decorated our family room with Coca-Cola memorabilia. It still warms my heart and reminds me of family, happiness and making it when the odds are against you. Coke will always be part of my life and bring a smile to my face when I see that red and white symbol.