



## Coca-Cola Stories

### Reminders of Family:



As a small child -- from the late 1940s and early 50s until the late 80s -- I was privileged to help in my grandfather's neighborhood grocery store. I got to fill the old Coke® machine - - slide the bottles into the rows making sure they were in the cold water. At Christmas we decorated with the delightful Santas. Coca-Cola® signs of all kinds make me smile with such fond memories, and I have remained a Coke drinker always. I still expect to see the Coke Santa under my Christmas tree.

While I was growing up, my father owned a chain of auto parts stores in the metro Atlanta area. Being the youngest of four daughters, you could imagine that none of us girls was especially interested in accompanying my father on a late-night trip down to his auto parts store, which we referred to as "the store." Inevitably, I would often give in to my dad and go to "the store." As my father would do his work, he would enlist me to sit at the parts counter and count the money from the Coke machine and put the coins in coin wrappers. Of course, I thought this was an important duty and it sure beat doing any manual labor that he might have otherwise asked of me! However, the absolute highlight of my trip to the store was the simple fact that we would both get an 8-ounce Coke out of his vending machine. I would always have my Coke with a candy bar and he would enjoy his with a bag of peanuts. Sitting there sipping on my Coke, I felt, was THE ultimate reward in going to the store. Over the years, I cannot tell you how many bottles of Coke my father and I shared together, but it is a bond we had that I will never forget.

I remember as a child sitting in my grandma's kitchen talking and laughing with her. When I got bored (and I often did) she would give me some money and say I could go get a bottle of Coke and some chips. I would buy the cheapest chips so I could spend the rest of my money on Coke. I'd then go back to my grandma's and sit there drinking Coke. After every sip of Coke I would make the "ahhhhhh" sound and my grandma would laugh. My grandma passed away four years ago, and every time I have a Coke (which is every day) I remember the good old times as a child.



My dad owned a service station when I was little. When he sold it he kept the Coke machine. When we moved, he put the machine in our backyard and kept it stocked. He kept nickels in the change drawer and we would go out back and get a Coke. This is one of the fondest memories I have of my dad. I plan to eventually buy an old Coke machine.

When I was young, my mother -- who is long since deceased -- gave me the best gift that one could give at the time; she gave me a Coke. The year was 1924 and the rarest thing that you could get was a Coke. (I lived in a tiny town in Alabama.) Thanks to Coke I still remember my mother and the great time that we had.



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I can remember growing up, every Sunday after church we would stop by the convenience store and get the little 6-ounce bottles to drink on the way home with my grandparents. My granddaddy would go in to the store and bring out four sodas - one for each of us -- my sister, me, granny and himself. Every time I see the 6-ounce glass bottles it brings back such great memories of my granddaddy - and the taste of the Coke riding home in his 1940s coupe.



Ever since I can remember I've loved Coke. When I was little, my mom used to take me and my sister for a hot dog, potato chips and a Coke. It was a real treat. I loved these outings with my mom. It was our special time together. So today even though I am a grown up, every time I drink a Coke it reminds me of my mom who I love dearly. Here's to you Mom.



As a small child growing up in Southern Illinois, my grandparents had 8-ounce Coke in a bottle for the children every Christmas. It was not kept in a cooler but in a pile of snow on the back porch. I am now 44; my grandparents have passed on. I still buy Coke in this size and send six-packs to each of my four siblings. My own children get up on Christmas morning and open gifts and then, before breakfast, each drink an 8-ounce Coke and toast to family, friends, and -- most of all -- my grandparents. We celebrate family! To me Coke is love and family!

I remember when I was 14, my dad and I did a project together outside that I won't forget for the rest of my life. We built a tree house together out of beams of wood and plywood. It took us several days in the hot sun of June. I remember the refreshment of a 16-ounce glass bottle of Coca-Cola and how it just quenched my thirst like nothing else while we continued working to get that tree house done. I'm 35 now, but I'll never forget that time.



As a small boy I visited my grandfather in the Antelope Valley/Palmdale, CA, area. My grandfather with only a seventh-grade education was a skilled machinist -- the best in the civil service. When I visited him in the desert, he would take me to his shop and let me watch him create beautiful pieces of metal from just ugly scraps. In the un-air-conditioned shop, where temperatures I'm sure reached well over 100 degrees, was a bottle vending machine. I would beg all day for a Coke and, before we left at the end of the day, Grandpa would reach into his pocket and always have the exact change for my soda, which I would gratefully share with him. Grandpa passed away this last May, but I share a Coke with him every day.



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My grandfather had a rural store that his grandkids called "Pop's Store." In the late 70s, his two youngest daughters collected Coke caps to get all of his 12 grandkids a red Coca-Cola T-shirt. We all wore them for a picture and wound up in the local paper. The two aunts who worked there had saved all the caps from the cooler at the store to acquire Coke shirts for all the grandkids. Twenty years later I still have my T-shirt and the newspaper picture.



When I was a little girl, my Grandfather owned a little country store in New Hope, Mississippi. The side of the store had a painting of a big Coke bottle. He always had more than a bottle or two of Coke waiting for us kids when we came to visit from California. I don't ever remember my Grandfather being without a Coke in his hand, even at meals. He's been gone from us for many years now, but every time I see an elderly, mostly bald gentleman drinking a Coke, I think of my Grandfather and the wonderful summer vacations we spent at his little store drinking Coke.

As a child I can remember my father taking me to a Greek restaurant in Zanesville, Ohio. Located inside was an old-time fountain parlor where I had my first hand-mixed cherry Coca-Cola. The restaurant has long since been gone, but the moment in time of sharing that drink with my dad will last for the rest of my life.

When I was young, my parents' car broke down in a torrential rain storm. My father walked two miles to two service stations where he got a tow truck to come rescue me, my mom, my brother and sister and my grandma. They towed the car with all of us inside! And what did they bring to enjoy the ride? Coke! I remember how good, fruity it tasted. That was one of my only memories of my grandma. Sometimes when I'm drinking a Coke and savoring it (not guzzling), I think of that night and my grandma.



When I was younger, we lived in Phoenix City, AL. The most fun I can remember having was getting to walk to a store we lived near. We would save our allowance up for a few weeks. When we saved up enough money, we would each buy a six-pack of bottles. There were four of us -- my brothers and my cousin. We felt like we were on top of the world when we opened that first bottle. Since then we've all grown up but, man, when we all get around together and share a Coke, it brings back memories of walking that small path through the woods, and the games we played on the way to the store. So to my family Coke means being a kid forever.