

## THE WAY WE WERE

Three children use their dogs to help pull a toboggan on Mountain Street in Glen Williams in this undated photograph.

John A. Wheeler/photo



## OPINION

# 'THIS IS US' A SERIES I CAN CERTAINLY RELATE TO

LIKE IN THE SHOW, I RELIVE MOMENTS WITH DAD, WRITES BROWN



TED BROWN  
Column

birthday in 1980, while their brother, the third baby, was stillborn.

Jack and Rebecca, who are white, believe they were meant to have three children, and decide to adopt Randall, an African American child born the exact same day and brought to the same hospital after he was abandoned at a fire station.

Jack tragically dies of a heart attack after smoke inhalation of their house fire, when the children are only 17.

The show features numerous flashbacks, which helps viewers understand how the kids arrived to where they are today. They learn about their father's tour of duty in Vietnam - and secrets he carried to his grave.

At first, I found the series difficult to follow. It takes place in the present but often flashes back to the family during various events in the past. And through those flashbacks, Jack is remembered by his widow and kids, usually triggered by them looking at an item, taking them back to when Jack was alive - and in doing so, they face their issues.

Now I told you about that program to tell another story.

You see, "This is Us" is a show I can really relate to.

While I didn't lose my dad when I was a teenager, I do have numerous 'triggers' that take me back in time, and in doing so, reliving moments with my own father.

Throughout our lives,

we spent countless hours working together.

I often look at a project we created in the barn or the shed - and it all comes back.

I cut the lawn with a tractor we purchased new in 1972. It's still in the shed in great running order, and I use it all summer.

Did my dad ever imagine it would outlast him? Not likely.

And I'm guessing it will probably outlast me as well.

Items that dad hung on a wall in the shed or the barn, a repaired water pipe, or a shovel still hanging on the same nail in the barn - all things reminding me of my father.

And through my memories that he's still here.

I have an advantage over many others; they

can't enjoy a recall of their past like me, as many haven't lived in the same home for their entire life, which is filled with reminders.

But memories aren't always based on material items. A song, a smell of something cooking on the stove, family traditions - these all encourage us to recall people and things from the past.

In a recent episode of "This is Us," one of the characters had a wonderful relationship with her dad, but he sadly died early in his life from lung cancer.

Later in her life, when the daughter walked past the old chair where he sat to watch TV and have conversations with her, she felt a sense of great comfort.

In spite of the fact my dad has been gone for 16 years, I still have 'conversations' with him.

Most times, those 'conversations' are prompted by me noticing something he built, or a project we worked on together.

And I find these 'conversations' generally occur when I'm making a significant decision regarding the farm.

I always come away from my 'discussions' with a renewed perspective, and a certain confidence that tells me what I'm proposing is right.

But the best part - I'm keeping my dad's memory alive.

Just like the Pearson kids are keeping Jack's memory alive.

*Ted Brown is a freelance journalist for the IFP. He can be contacted at tedbit@hotmail.com.*

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