

The Manchester Historical Society

“Thankful to Survive COVID-19”

By Crin Robert-Krouse, formerly of Manchester
now a resident of New York, where the pandemic hit early and hard.

It’s easy to view the COVID-19 experience in terms of growing up in Manchester. In four words: **We were so innocent.** We didn’t know that it takes twenty seconds of hand washing with water above 75 degrees to remove most germs. Who ever knew to avoid touching people or things? Who came down with a cold and wondered if it might lead to death?

I watch my grandchildren now, living in a rural area far from large contagion numbers, and their situation might be comparable to ours in the 1950s except that they know they are mortally vulnerable to a virus because of diabetes 1 for our younger granddaughter and asthma for our older granddaughter. Children eleven and thirteen living in Manchester in the 1950s might know of someone who had polio, but somehow, polio was not an illness that occupied a large part of our personal lives the way COVID-19 does now.

We see lots of children in strollers when we go for a walk in the afternoons. Children above the age of two are supposed to wear masks, and, at least in our neighborhood, they do. It’s amazing to see how relaxed and unaware of the masks they seem to be. I can’t remember a single physical restriction like that on our lives in Manchester in the 1950s. Maybe there was and I have just put it out of my mind.

One last comparison sums it up for me. In the 1950s I could go with my parents to visit their parents. We could hug them hello. We could sit indoors in winter. It never occurred to us to do otherwise. This Thanksgiving my husband, one of our daughters, and I are hoping it won’t rain or be very cold, because we will be driving to our son’s place two hours’ north of New York City to sit outside, put a turkey and foil-wrapped vegetables on the grill, and appreciate being together for only the second time in nine months. We will sit 12 feet apart. We will not hug “hello” or “goodbye.” And we will be thankful for our great good fortune to be alive, safe, and with one another.

After graduation from Manchester High School in 1955, I finished my education, worked, married, raised three children, and moved a lot until 2010 when my husband and I retired to New York City. In March 2020, a neighbor came to our apartment for dinner and left her COVID-19 behind. Nine days later, I fainted, fell, fractured a vertebra, but did not know I had the COVID virus until three months later when I tested positive for COVID antibodies. Thankfully, my husband never caught the virus – either from our guest or from me.

