

# Life Stories & Letters of Barbara Brand-James

By Barbara Brand-James  
Compiled & Edited by Heidi White

©2016 by Barbara Brand-James

*In this personal history account, I have described events as best as I recall. Others may remember these events differently, but I hope all respect these to be my memories.*

# Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Family History .....	1
Chapter 2	Early Years .....	3
Chapter 3	Being a Child .....	7
Chapter 4	Everyday Life as a Child .....	11
Chapter 5	Life as a Teenager .....	15
Chapter 6	Romance, Love & Marriage .....	19
Chapter 7	Leaving Home .....	21
Chapter 8	Family Life .....	25
Chapter 9	Beginnings and Endings .....	31
Chapter 10	Turning Points .....	33
Chapter 11	Life's Bonuses .....	35
Chapter 12	Religion and Ethics.....	37
Chapter 13	The Later Years .....	39
Chapter 14	Pieces of Ancestry .....	47

## **-Being a Child- (Chapter Three)**

In the midst of a happy childhood, came an experience that could have proven traumatic. One day when I was about eight years old, I was at school when a stranger tried to kidnap me. A woman approached me after lunch on the school playground, more than likely, because I was friendly, cheerful, outgoing and unsuspecting. During a rather friendly conversation with her, she managed to find out my name, my teacher's name, my classroom number and my mother's name.

After lunch, when all the kids were back in their classrooms, a student brought a note to my teacher that was signed in my mother's name. The note asked that I be released early, stating that I needed to go somewhere with my mother. Fortunately, the teacher was suspicious and did not allow me to report to the office where the woman, who claimed to be my mother, was waiting. Imagine how relieved yet upset my parents were when they received news of what had happened. I never knew what became of that woman; however, I did learn to be more careful with strangers.

That same year the other children in our neighborhood and I thought it would be daring to light a match. We had all been told not to play with fire, but children don't always realize where the real dangers lie. We lit some matches, blew some out, and thought we'd gotten away with something, even though we knew we shouldn't have done it.

My parents raised my brother and me to believe that as long as we told the truth—even if it was about something we knew we shouldn't have done—we would not have to face the consequences. So, when I went home that day after playing with the other children on the street, my conscience bothered me about those matches. I told my parents what we had done. Just as they had promised, they said there would be no consequences for my actions, and there were none. Needless to say, I never played with matches again. And more importantly, I learned the importance of telling the truth.

We kids liked to play outdoors when we were young. The best experiences were when we would have other children to play with in our backyards, either friends or cousins. We liked to run and climb, ride on swings, play "hide and seek," "giant step," "red light, green light," card games and Monopoly or Sorry. Spending time alone and indoors, we listened to radio programs: "Let's Pretend" or "The Lone Ranger," or we listened to stories on our record players, like "Peter and the Wolf," "Tubby the Tuba," and the soundtrack of the movie "Snow White". I used to think I might like to be a teacher when I grew up, or play the violin in a symphony orchestra, or maybe even a singer in musical shows on stage.

Although both of my parents were very kind and good to me, taking me to the beach, throwing birthday parties for me, taking me to dancing lessons, and doing all sorts of wonderful things for me and my brother, there was another very special person in our lives (at this time) and he was my grandfather "Pop". Recounting stories about Pop, my father's father, could easily take another entire chapter to write and read!