

This summary started with some of Aunt Jean's actual written memories. The story here was enhanced with AI.

Aunt Jean Remembers the Price Hill Incline

Some of my happiest childhood memories are tied to the old Price Hill Incline.

When our family moved to **765 Mount Hope Road**, just one house from the corner of West Eighth Street, it felt as though we had moved next door to the gateway between Price Hill and downtown Cincinnati. The house sat only a short walk from the upper station of the Incline. Today the Sovereign Restaurant overlooks that same hillside, but in those days the great tracks of the Incline climbed straight up the hill.

The Incline wasn't a tourist attraction to us—it was simply part of everyday life.

For a nickel an adult could ride, and children paid only three cents. In about three minutes the car carried us down the steep hillside to Eighth and State Streets, where streetcars waited to take people into downtown Cincinnati. Without the Incline we would have had to walk all the way to Grand and Warsaw before catching a trolley. The Incline saved time, steps, and tired legs.

I can still remember standing at the station waiting for the wooden cars to arrive, hearing the cables hum beneath the tracks, and feeling the gentle jolt as the car began its climb or descent. Looking through the windows, the rooftops seemed to fall away beneath us until the whole Ohio River valley spread out below. Even as a child, it felt like flying.

The memory that has stayed with me the longest came during the terrible flood of 1937.

After heavy snow turned into days of rain, the Ohio River rose higher than anyone had ever seen. We had no drinking water or electricity. Water trucks came into the neighborhoods, and people searched for springs and wells. I remember seeing the giant gasoline storage tanks along the river burning—a fire so enormous that I've never forgotten it. Imagine a river full of floodwater with flames towering above it.

One afternoon, with so much of the city shut down, Dad, Bernie, Dink, and I decided to see the flood for ourselves. We rode the Price Hill Incline down to Eighth and State. When we reached the bottom, the floodwaters had swallowed the end of the Eighth Street Viaduct. We climbed the steps to the railroad pedestrian bridge instead and crossed the Ohio River on foot into Kentucky. We spent the afternoon riding streetcars through the flooded cities of Northern Kentucky before walking back home the same way. It was an adventure then, but we also knew we were witnessing something extraordinary—something we hoped never to see again.

Years later, when television showed the great Mississippi floods of 1993, those memories came rushing back. The scenes looked hauntingly familiar.

The Price Hill Incline closed only a few years after we moved there, in 1943. I was still young, and at the time none of us imagined that this everyday ride to town would someday become a cherished piece of Cincinnati history. We never thought people would one day wish they could ride it again.

But whenever I think about growing up on Mount Hope Road, I still hear the rumble of the cars climbing the hill, feel the cool breeze through the open windows, and remember how the old Incline connected not just two parts of the city, but a neighborhood, a family, and a lifetime of memories.



Price Hill Incline (May 13, 1874 through May 1943)

AUNT JEAN REMEMBERS WHEN THE FAMILY MOVED TO 765 MOUNT HOPE RD WHICH WAS NEAR THE PRICE HILL INCLINE. CENSUS RECORDS SHOW THAT MY MOM (DOROTHY GRAY) LIVED HERE IN 1940

Another time we bought wall paper and Mother and Dad papered the whole flat themselves. When Dad showed it to her, she said it looks so good, I'm going to raise the rent, and meant it. We looked for another flat, and when we found it we moved to 765 Mount Hope Road, one house from the corner of West Eighth Street, which today is a block away from the Sovereign Restaurant overlooking downtown Cincinnati.

The Sovereign Restaurant was built on the site of the old Price Hill Incline, which in those days we rode down the side of the hill in about three minutes to get to Eighth and State, and then could board a street car for downtown. It would save so much time, because if we just wanted to take the trolley, we would have to walk all the way over to Grand and Warsaw. It only cost a nickel for an adult to ride the Incline, and three cents for children.

In 1937 one Sunday in January we had a great snow storm, which left many inches of snow on the ground, but the weather warmed up quickly, and it started to rain and it rained for days causing the Ohio River to start rising, and we ended up having the worse flood ever in the Southwestern Ohio, and Northern Kentucky area. It crested at 79.9 feet on Tuesday, January 26. Our major airport at the time, the Lunken, was unusable for seventeen days, before the waters receded. It has never reached that high again in our area, because of the flood walls, which we built after that.

The flood was so bad that for days we had no water to drink, or electricity. We had to find water to drink at the many springs and wells around the area. Where there were no springs or wells near, water trucks brought water around to the people. The huge gas tanks that were situated on the Ohio River Bank caught on fire, and I saw the biggest fire of my life. What a site - all that water and a fire right on it.

Since most things were closed down during the flood, Dad, Bernie, Dink, and I decided to go sightseeing to see the extent of the flood. We took the Price Hill Incline down to Eighth and State and walked to the end of the Eighth Street viaduct, which was blocked by the flood water. We then climbed the steps to the railroad/pedestrian bridge, which spanned the Ohio River to

Kentucky, and walked across it to Kentucky. We spent the afternoon touring the cities of Northern Kentucky on some street cars. Then we walked back to Cincinnati over the railroad/pedestrian bridge, and then on to home. We saw sites that we have never forgotten, and hoped to never see again, and haven't until we saw the news stories in 1993 of the Missouri; Mississippi flood, which lasted for more than two months.