



It's Lucy — among second-grade classmates at the old Jamestown Eighth Street School in 1919. The students are identified as — first row, left to right: Harold Winzell, unknown, Audrey Matson, unknown, Helen Knapp, Milford Anderson, Clinton Glad, Florence Farm, Elizabeth Trask, Arlene Randall, unknown, unknown, Robert Lawrence, left to right: unknown, unknown, Robert Lawrence,

unknown, unknown, Beatrice Catlin, unknown, Neil Keifer, Lucille Ball, Theodore Matson, Nelson Vail, Howard Parker, Durwood Fairbanks. Top row, left to right: Martha Austin, unknown, Herbert Nelson, unknown, unknown, Dr. Albertus Rappole, Violet Friek, Robert Peterson and Isadore Pott.

Lucille Recalls Her Childhood, Climb To Fame

(Editor's note: The following are excerpts from a 1978 interview with Merrill Clute, now a copy editor for *The Post Journal*. It was her last in-depth local interview.)

Has Jamestown seen the last of Lucille Ball?

I would think so. I don't have anyone left up there, to speak of — a few friends, and we correspond, we talk on the phone. But to make a jaunt back to Jamestown, I hadn't planned it. If things were a little bit the same, it would be different, but I just have lost so many wonderful friends that don't live there or have passed away. I lost another one just recently that I absolutely just adored, and that was Andrew Sealise.

What do you think about Jamestown? What are your memories? Pretty good?

Well, I wasn't really from Jamestown. I was from Celoron. My memories of Celoron are pretty good. I don't know that much about Jamestown. I wasn't there very much. I lived there a short time when I was ill, after I got out of school. I really was brought up in Celoron.

Was there someone in Celoron who had a genuine influence on your life?

My teacher, Lillian Appleby. Oh, yeah.

How much of your sense of humor was formed in Celoron?

My sense of humor has never been that — that — been able to trace it, because I don't have a real sense of humor the way (laughs) everybody thinks I do. I'm quite a serious person. I'm able to interpret what my writers write, but — now like my daughter has a sense of humor, what I call a sense of humor, and a lot of people I know have, but I don't feel I have. I have a flair for doing comedy, but not necessarily think it — in my life.

Lucy, if someone was going to compile a collection of your best TV

scenes, could you give me a couple of your favorite sequences you'd choose?

To answer your question quickly, I will say the chocolate factory scene and the grape crushing —

How 'bout the nose?

— and — yes, the one with — a —

Bill Holden?

Bill Holden at the Brown Derby. And I loved the show I did with Dean Martin. There are more, but that's all you want.

Well, not much of your career was accidental, was it? I mean, you always aimed at everything you got, didn't you?

I just — no, I didn't aim at anything except staying in the business, from the very beginning. That's quite obvious.

With you, it was more hard work than luck, wasn't it?

Ha!

Now wait a minute. That's right, Merrill. I couldn't sing, I couldn't dance. I had never acted. I had never been in front of an audience, except, what do you call it — uh, a small theater. What do you call it? At home?

Uh — Little Theater.

Little Theater, and high school things. I had never done a thing. I was absolutely untalented, untrained, and I got paid for a wonderful apprenticeship. Now, you've got call that what? That's not hard work and guts and planning. That's good luck. And also, the only thing, the only credit I can take for that is that I appreciated it at the time. I didn't think that I deserved more than I was getting. I didn't think that I should be some other place. I was so happy to be a part of the business. And I think it was a saving grace because I stuck with what ever they gave me and everything sort of leads quietly to something better.