

I like to tell people that I was conceived in Portland Oregon - usually, it really shakes people up. I was the youngest of five children born in six and a half years, and that's a lot of children. My two older sisters were born in Astoria, Oregon where my parents had gone after they were married at my Mother's home in Greensburg Indiana.

My father was an electrical engineer who was born in Dushores, Pennsylvania, had had little formal education but a driving ambition earned him engineering degrees in correspondence courses. My mother had graduated with top honors from Bucknell University in 1904, which was rather unusual at the time. She was teaching in Red Oak, Iowa where she met my father who was then working for an engineering company installing electricity which was at that time the newest development.

After several years they moved from Astoria to Portland and by this time a sister, named Betty who died in her fourth year, and a brother John were born. At the end of 1914, just before Christmas and four months before I was born, my Father was transferred to New York City and my mother, with four little children, and five months pregnant, travelled across the country by train, arriving in Mount Vernon, New York in time to buy a Christmas Tree.

I have often thought how very agonizing that first year in Mount Vernon must have been for my Mother. I was born in April, and I think my father had to travel quite a bit. I do know he was away when I was four months old and our sister Betty suddenly died. I suppose it was some sort of encephalitis or something of the sort and surely a situation that could be treated with today's know-how. But she evidently ran up a terribly high fever, and couldn't be saved.

At around the same time, other children in the family developed whooping cough and I, the baby got it too, which evidently set off a very long period of my being what was called a sickly baby. No doubt it was an allergic reaction which also could be handled today, but I have been told that periodically a Dr. Crump, who was what was then called a baby specialist, would come to pump out my stomach, which surely sounds pretty drastic.

But my poor Mother in a new home, far from any of her family had to cope with the tragic death of one child, a sickly baby, and to make matters even more trying, my father had injured his shoulder in a fall, and the Doctor treating him could find nothing wrong even though he had taken what must have been pioneer X Ray pictures. To ease the pain, the Doctor had given him morphine which my mother would flush down the toilet. After a while an osteopath recognized that my father had dislocated his shoulder and after some treatments the pain subsided.

I think it is very difficult to sort out early childhood memories from the

stories you have been told about things that happened when you were little. I have a distinct impression of sitting in a wicker carriage, with a carriage hood overhead, and I do remember a visit from a cousin Vincent, a nephew of my father's, who, I think, was back from World War I. He smoked cigars, which made quite an impression on my brother and me. And we were enthralled with the enormous smoke rings he could blow. He let us use an empty cigar box with a hinged top to try to trap the rings. We were always disappointed to find that they had escaped.

Another early memory involving smoking happened a year or so later when we were spending the summer in the Lambda Chi House in Lewisburg, PA. Uncle Ephraim was a smoker and John, then five years old, one day sneaked a puff. Soon after we were on the main street, and there in the store window was a terrifying (to us) poster showing what happens to people who smoked. It seemed to us turning into a skeleton was the inevitable, and probably sudden, result. Poor John suffered agonies.

Other memories of Lewisburg involved John's falling out of the upper part of a double decker bed, my learning to swim on the Susquehanna River with the help of water rings, and with Uncle Joe holding me up by the seat of my bathing suit. At around the same time, we visited an Aunt and Uncle in Eaglesmere, New York, and three things stand out clearly in my mind. One was the outhouse which was reached by walking through a cow pasture and that made quite an impression. The next was a pancake breakfast where my feelings were hurt because my Aunt, thinking to please me, made me little tiny pancakes because I was the youngest one there. And the third lasting memory was the narrow escape with a rattlesnake who was sunning on the top stone step when my brother and I were about to descend to the stream below. I remember being vastly impressed by the frantic activity on the part of my Father and Uncle. I really can't remember the end of the snake, but it must have happened.

To go back to Mount Vernon, our first home was on Langdon Avenue and directly across from us lived a friend of my Mother's called Mrs. Imboden. All of my Mother's friends were always called Mrs.. Given names were never really used. As a little girl I was very fond of "Sis" Imboden, as I called her, and a favorite thing to do was to visit her house where she would show me some special books. However, this was always preceded by a hand-washing routine which was accompanied by a little story. "Once upon a time" she would say, putting some warm, soapy water in a bowl, "There were ten black ducks. But then they all went in for a swim" and with this my hands were thrust into the bowl, "and when they came out, there were ten white ducks." And then when the hands were dried off she would take out the books, and I loved looking at them.

My room in the the Langdon Avenue house must have been at the front of the house because I am told that in the evenings when I had been out to

bed, the older children with the neighboring children would play games, most often Hide and Seek. I am told I would stand at the window, calling out "Home-Ticker! Home-Ticker Home Ticker" although I probably didn't know why. I do have a recollection of calling "Hi Sis Imboden" out of that window, and I have a distinct impression of the taste of dusty curtains which I would suck on while I watched the street games, and when I wasn't calling out "Home Ticker"

For a year or so before we came to Pocono Lake Preserve, we spent perhaps a month, perhaps the whole summer at the Lambda Chi House at Bucknell U. north of Lewisburg, PA. My mother had graduated from there with highest honors in 1904 and her older sister married to an economics professor made her home in Lewisburg.

I have already referred to some early recollections from our time there, but i don't believe I mentioned the thrill of being invited to take a ride in an electric car!! The main impression is one of sitting up quite high, and riding sedately about the town, probably feeling rather superior to those who were merely walking along.

Some years later I became friendly with a dear lady who lived in Lewisburg at the time we were there, and she told me an amusing tale of her experience with a lady in an electric car. Mrs. Steinhilper, my friend, was on her porch when the car came by with the driver waving and calling out what she assumed was a greeting. Mrs. S. responded and settled back on the porch swing. A few minutes later the car came around the corner again, the driver still gesturing. Mrs. S. returned the greeting.

When she saw it approach the third time she ran down to the curb, and then heard the driver call out "Get help. I can't stop this thing!"