

Wednesday, June 3, 1992.

Dear family,

We (Dad and I) are making the computer work these days. Now that Dad has been properly stimulated, (he heard from you that you really are eager to get his story) he is giving a lot of time to it. I was gone all morning so he could have written then and maybe did.

Tom has a new address and telephone number that he would like us to send you:

10 Bedford Village, Apt. C
Bedford, Ma. 01730
Phone: 617- 275-4943

Today I thought I had better give you a potpourri of things I missed about the early days before I tell you about nursing school. A lot of this may sound like fiction, but believe me, it is all true.

Picture a little girl 5 or 6 who the world would take for a rag-a-muffin; already a tomboy, who was bent more on play than the assigned work load of cleaning table, getting potatoes, etc. She wore a very simple dark dress that had to be worn all week. Mom washed once each week and we did not have a lot of extra clothes. With this dress, I wore long black cotton stockings which covered the knees and were held there by black elastic garters. Often the elastic was tied together as it made a stronger bind than sewing. On my feet were buttoned over the ankle shoes which took a lot of time to put on and to take off. If I could get away with it, I used to go to bed with my shoes on. The gadget we used was hock-like and you needed some dexterity to use it. I was not very adapt at it so I would leave the shoes on my feet. When I got caught, this meant a trip to the kitchen and get over the chair for a spanking with Dad's strop! I thought it very unfair for my parents not to see the wisdom of keeping the shoes on my feet to save time in the morning! If I went to bed with my dress on too, that was a double spanking. My naive mind told me that since I wore the same clothes, what wrong was there in keeping them on? I was a mess! My hair was clipped to the middle of the ears so the cut would last longer. I felt unattractive! Why should I bother?! I would wash my face and hands---never the neck or arms until Saturday bath. Mom was so busy, I don't believe she even noticed. The teacher at school did and told me to wash my neck. How embarrassing! I did after that.

After one of these spankings, I always felt sorry for myself. My mind would be active with revenge! I would run away from home and never come back! They would miss me!! Who would do all the work then when I was not there? I told you about our first porch---the long narrow one. There was crawl space beneath and little else but after a spanking, I sometimes would hide there waiting for my family to miss me! They never did; so I would crawl out. No one was any wiser---not even I. I tried again and again to no avail. Poor me!

It seems that we were seldom spanked by Dad. Mom was home with us and with that strop! She never said, "Wait 'til Dad gets home!" although I do remember once when I got spanked by both parents and I don't remember why---perhaps something at school? If the teacher punished you at school, you got it at home too. I remember getting lots of spankings but for the life of me, I don't remember being that bad that I deserved it. How conveniently we forget.

Some things I remember from my youth are pleasant. We did things together. Games like hide and seek, baseball, dock-on-the-rock (similar Spud), and football required a gang. There were things we did as a family too. Mom had one she loved for us to participate in that required us to keep water in the mouth. The one who held the water the longest got a penny! It took a long time for me to catch on to the fact that when there was water in the mouth, she had it quiet! She was a great one in having us play "find the penny". One was hidden in the kitchen and we hunted a long time for it while she had peace in the rest of the house. For an uneducated person, my Mom turned out pretty smart! Cold Sunday afternoons we used to play going to Mass. Mom had an old sewing machine that had 6 take out drawers that we used for kneelers. Chairs became our pews. Ernie or Don put a dish towel over the shoulders and was the priest. We would go through the mock ritual and had squares of bread as hosts.

May and October the family said rosary together. In the early years it was done in Polish and Dad led us; later English took over the house and spoke "American" to fortify the language in our home. I have some really beautiful memories of my Dad praying. Everyday he would get on his knees and pray aloud. He did it devoutly and with love for Our Lord. It seemed like a real conversation with Jesus. To this day I covet that ability of his to be on such wonderful terms with his God. We had Mary and we crowned her as we tried when you kids were little. One other thing about Church; when we went to confession, we had to go to our

parents and tell them we were sorry for our bad behavior and would try to be better. I hated this ritual but now that I am an adult in an enlightened Catholic church, I realize what a beautiful concept that was! It is hard for me to admit that I have wronged someone and even harder to seek forgiveness but that is a beautiful way to look at it.

St. Stan always had a May procession in which the whole school would participate. A statue of Mary was hoisted and carried by the 8th grade boys and streamers were attached from her feet. For 25 cents you could carry one of the ribbons. You had to wear white and be very good. The rest of the school wore their Sunday best and sang songs of Mary in the procession. I coveted carrying a ribbon but never got to do it. The statue was carried into the church and a service was held. Most parish members would line the street to view this and we all seemed happy in the event. I do have a lot of very good memories of my Church but they are personal and I do not intend to force them onto you.

You may not be aware but Bay City and its environs was a popular beach area. Located on the Saginaw Bay as it is, it used to sport some pretty terrific beaches and people from miles around would frequent the place. When my older brothers were in their teens, beauty parades were a summer event and Miss Michigan was sometimes chosen in our area. There were floats and bands and a lot of hoopla! Pink and Al would have a hot dog concession and made extra money that way. From this we younger kids got the idea of having our own parade. We made banners, (Dad's meat market paper and shoe polish lettering) donned our bathing suits, ---if we had one---and sat on wagons and paraded on the sidewalks making our own noise and music! I aimed big! Miss Detroit, no less. It was a fun thing to do. We spent hours preparing for the short blast of a block of parading. People looked and thought us crazy, of course! When our beaches got over run with algae and sea weed, the popularity faded. Dad and I went to check the beach so I could tell you more accurately about it, and found it hard to get there. They want \$3.75 to enter (we got in free in my early days) and it is still a good camp ground and picnic area. Swimming is only so-so!

When I was in my teens, the beach was the place to go! I loved swimming and even though I had to walk over 4 miles each way (we checked the mileage when we visited so I could be accurate in my estimation in telling you) it seemed a good way to spend the day. Either Dick or a school friend Dolores would go with me. We would pack a lunch, take the bus as far as it would go and walk the rest of the way. We were told not to hitch hike so we did not dare. Later years after Es and Charlie were married, they used to drive us after supper for an evening swim. When I was in junior high, there was a galvanized pool in the downtown Wenona Park. Tents (male and female) served as changing rooms and again Dick or Dolores would go with me just about everyday. This meant that I had to scrub the kitchen floor (wooden) on my knees with a brush and Felsnaphta before I could go for that swim. I had my towel and suit outside and left the pail on the porch to keep from tracking the newly washed floor. It was worth it for the swim.

Some of my other summer amusements came with making doll clothes. The celluloid dolls (now worth a fortune if you are lucky enough to own one) were a dime then and though they had no moveable parts, we made dresses for them anyway. Some of the girls had dolls that had moveable arms and legs and that was desirable. Seeing how far you could walk the railroad track without falling off was a challenge we gave each other and I got pretty good at it. We had a couple of large trees in our outlawn area near the street that Don had fashioned a seating area which made an excellent reading place when you wanted peace and quiet. My tomboyishness paid off and I was able to climb right up and take over the seat when Don or Ernie were not using it.

Most neighbors had basements and boy! what a cool place that would be in the heat of summer to play house or even school. Trouble was that most of them did not want extra kids in the house and to be allowed in was a real privilege and we made the most of it. One neighbor had a summer kitchen and they ate all their meals there. Boy! did I envy them. On some of the hottest days, we had ice cream cones. Luckily the drug store on the corner had ice cream and we could get them home before they melted.

My back is tired; must have been at this longer than I thought. Dad is out taking some old folks shopping so it has been peaceful and I have been able to correct most of my mistakes without him. I do make loads of them. My large fingers hit 2 keys and that is not good! Looking forward to any news of your pending visits. It will work out so that all who can come will have a bed and plenty of food. Can't wait to see you. "Ye all come! We have a new sofa bed in the family room to make extra space and comfortable beds for all.

Much love, *Mom*

*House off the market? - or did your luck change? ~~When Jim +~~
Teri's plan a visit around house will be love to have 'em all too.*