

best
home

My parental home was located at 27th Ave.
~~927 Pine Street~~ in Kenosha, Wisconsin, ~~an~~
~~address which no longer exists~~ ~~the~~ ~~house~~
~~still stands, as standing as ever.~~ The City of
Kenosha changed the names of its streets in 1920.
My parents were the ^{original} ~~first~~ owner of the house,
a ~~part~~ of ~~the~~ ~~house~~ ~~constructed~~
purchasing it from the contractor for \$500. ~~as~~
~~two story house~~ Built on the S.W. outskirts
of town, I ~~and~~ ~~my~~ ~~family~~ had the joy of
seeing many improvements made to our
home: ^{in the 1st 4 years we had there} side walks added, the street paved,
indoor plumbing installed and a furnace.
The home was a two story home, usually
painted a dark brown or red, ~~on~~ ~~the~~
~~curtains~~ ~~in~~ ~~those~~ ~~days~~, a porch ran across
the front of the house, a place where as a
family we spent many ^{evening} hours, usually just
sitting and chatting as a family and with
our neighbors as they came to visit. It was not
a large house — five rooms on the first floor
and three upstairs. The upstairs rooms were
often rented, providing an income for
the family. The back yard was always
planted in the summer with both
flowers which Mother always loved to see
and vegetables ~~of~~ which supplied ^{most} ~~most~~
of our table needs.

Town

When I was four years of age our family (Mother, Dad & myself) moved to Kenosha, Wis., because there was work to be found in several industrial plants in that city. Kenosha was at that time (1811) a city of about 25,000 with three major industrial plants; Simons bed & furniture, American Brass and what was then the J.B. Jeffrey Co. makers of automobiles. The plant ~~which~~ ^{later} was to become Nash Motor Co. and later ^{still} The American Motor. My father secured work at the automobile factory. The firm for which he was to labor for the next 27 years, and here it was I spent my younger years.

Being an industrial city, Kenosha was never to be known as a strong cultural center. Being of Swedish extraction, my parents found their social life amongst other Swedish folk, almost all of whom had immigrated from Sweden. Two Swedish speaking churches ~~were~~ ^{had been} formed in Kenosha, my parents joining one of them, and in the churches the type social life of so many revolved. ~~There~~ many eastern Europeans settled in Kenosha ~~and do~~ to make up about 70% of the population, forming several large Catholic churches. Difference in language

origins and religious convictions did not make for a well integrated central life community life.

But tho we were somewhat circumscribed in our social relationships, on an individual basis we came to know so many from backgrounds not like our, and our social horizons were ~~immensely~~ widened. We work, at school, on the streets ~~and~~ met others than our own, and ~~many~~ ^{some} barriers were broken down in the process.

Home in my earliest years ~~was~~ always appeared to me as a unit, a rather closed ^{group} society. As it is difficult to think of Mother, for instance, and not think of Dad at the same time, they were never in competition — always complimentary. The home was Mother's domain. Dad worked in the factory. Dad earned the family living, Mother determined our needs and spent the money. Decisions were arrived at in unison. I have no remembrance of any serious quarrels, in my parental home.

It would be true to say that Mother was the disciplinarian in our home. Strong willed and confident, she seemed to see all of life's ~~smaller~~ decisions as reflecting her moral convictions. Things were right or they were wrong. Dad was as wholly committed to the same life-style, but of a more tender nature. ~~With~~ I can remember often climbing into Dad's lap to be loved & cuddled. The Mother never left me in doubt as to her love for me, I cannot even remember being ~~cuddled~~ held in her arms.

Industrious were both my Mother & Dad. Aiming and people of unquestioned integrity. I never saw either of them engage in anything not in harmony with their conscience.

Sister

I was favored in childhood by the birth of my only one and only sister. ~~She~~ I have often thought she should have been a twin because my life has been so enriched by having her. ^{Another like her would have been welcomed} We were only two children in our family.

Other times Born in 1912, March 13th, my sister ~~was~~ had a very difficult infancy — not being able to eat regularly and with comfort. It was at this difficult time — the months following her birth — that mother discovered a product produced in our neighboring city — Racine. It was a powdered food called ~~Herlicks~~ ~~Malted~~ Milt. It seemed to agree with my sister and so it was that we both were able to grow up with good health and robust bodies.

I think it was in school days and later that we were closest together. My sister was born when I was five — a girl while I was a boy — so my earliest memories of her were those summer days when baby sister was to be walked around the block in her go-cart, ~~sometimes~~ there were other things boys should be doing on summer days. But she was my sister who was to ~~become~~ ^{be} one of the great joys of my life. She was chubby as a child ~~and~~ and seemed to make our family complete by her coming — one boy & one girl.

Mother's Parents

I never saw Mother's parents, but Mother often spoke of her home in Sweden which she left to come to America at the age of 12 yrs. Mother's family in Sweden was ~~was~~ poor at the time of her sojourn to the U.S. Five daughters were born into the ~~family~~ Anderson family by ~~my~~ Mother's father had been a stone mason and supported the family quite well, ~~until~~ but his premature death left the Mother and her five daughters bereft and without financial support. ^{To make matters worse} The economic situation in the Scandinavian countries was much depressed ^{as the welfare state had not yet arrived} following her husband's

The time came when the family situation ~~became~~ came to the point where the family could no longer be kept together. Some relatives to the family had migrated to Illinois and it was to them that my Mother and an older sister were sent - alone and at the ages of 12 & 14 yrs respectively. The year: 1893

My Mother often spoke of the sadness of those early years - the sorrow of leaving home and the plight of those left still in Sweden. ~~Strong faith and the like it was in 1893 she had~~ ~~only~~ But Mother never spoke in bitterness of those experiences - only with much appreciation for her Mother & her sisters.

Father's Parents

My father's ~~parents~~ ^{family} immigrated from Sweden in at least two different sequences. I am not clear as to who came when, but in the early years of ~~the~~ the first decade of the century they had all arrived, and the south side of Chicago they were all to be found. There were four girls in the family and one son, the oldest, my father.

I can ~~not~~ remember my grandmother, only slightly. She lived in our home in Kenosha for a short time before her death which occurred when I was six. At my birth she had written a letter to me expressing her hope that when I grew up I would be a true Christian gentleman. Written in Swedish, I still possess that letter, thankful for both the sentiments it expressed and for the strong Christian heritage it reveals.

Of my ^{paternal} grandfather I have no remembrance. He preceded my grandmother in death. I do know he lived in our home a short while when I was still an infant - but I remember nothing. If his son, my father, was like him, he must have been a gentle soul - the kind of man one can both respect & love.

Other birds - animals - insects - etc.

Our house was located on the outskirts of town which gave us children lots of ~~empty~~ space in empty lots close by. These lots teemed with life - garden snakes and mice & rabbits were plentiful and we often sought them out. But insects were the most fascinating. Dragon flies always aroused an intense interest - and then there were caterpillars, which we often watched thru their cocoon phase to see them emerge as butterflies - monarchs mostly. Oh luminous fireflies were lovely as they flew about on warm summer evenings in July - But one insect we found no pleasure in - the all too present mosquito

~~And now~~ Domestic food.

My father's sister & her husband live in Door County Wis where he managed a large orchard, mostly cherries and apples. Our family always received a barrel of apples from Uncle Ernest each fall and thru the winter we always had our apple pie day. Apples for me were at their best when baked. Our heating stove had a projection on the back ~~where~~ for a coffee pot to rest, but I still remember using that space to bake my apples - bright red Jonathan's - slowly baked to a beautiful brown, a baked apple, eaten as is, or still better, in a dish with cream over it - nothing could be finer on a cold winter nite at bedtime

What were my favorite nursery rhymes - bedtime stories?

I have no remembrance of ever having been read to as a child. Yet somehow or other familiarity with the many childhood stories was absorbed from some source - We had few books at home and what we did have were not in the English language. But my parents did receive periodicals regularly and I remember my visits to the city library where we found which many books were taken home for reading. I remember books filled with wholsome humor, usually of plain men on the frontiers and outdoor life.

~~What pets did I have as a small child?~~

As a sales promotion scheme one of the stores in our neighborhood gave to each customer a clear glass fish bowl and a gold fish. It was the first living pet that I remember being welcomed into our home. A bit later we purchased another gold fish - two much treasured living creatures - It ~~was~~ became my responsibility to see that the fish were cared for. There was the daily portion of food to drop into the bowl - & how the fish flew at the morsels, the way in which they hit the water. The bowl need cleaning each week - but for many ^{months} weeks these gold-fish were very much a part of our home interest.

What is the 1st Thing I can Remember

It was a cold winter day Sunday in Minnesota as Mother & father were coming home from church in our family sleigh that we ~~came across~~ ^{found} a lovely robe white as snow in the road. Stopping to pick it up and take it with us, we were just about to enter our own driveway when a neighbor drove up in his sleigh to ask if by chance we had found a robe ^{on our way from church} ~~in the road~~. Father & Mother ~~were~~ ^{immediately} surrendered the robe most willingly, and I have the memory of my first lesson in honesty.

What were my favorite toys

I must say that all my toys were favorites. Each held my solitary interest at particular times and were set aside for a bit only to be taken up a little later. Tin toys were a staple toy in our home. Each Christmas brought a new set and neighbors were apt "making things". One Christmas I received a sort of folding writing desk ^{with a black board attached} which I ~~spent many hours~~ ^{was really my favorite toy}. Later on there were kites, all of which I made myself, and marbles and tops - especially tops. We boys became most adept at spinning them.

Mother

Mother's love - Mother in earliest years was most difficult in that she seemed never to know in her own experiences quite the tenderness so needed in a growing child. Perhaps it was for that reason that severity ~~and~~ was more evident in her her personality than tender love. But of her love there was no doubt. How proud she was of the little things we would bring home from school. How careful she was to see that we were both ^{warmly} ~~well~~ dressed and well fed. And her desire that her children should grow up to be moral and upright was more important than anything else. Family discipline was in Mother's hands since father's work kept him from home long hours each day. Spanking were few indeed - I don't remember any. The moral force of Mother's authority was all that seemed used.

My happiest memories are not of so much of being held by Mother or being often told that I was loved. I do remember the special dinner Mother cooked - her pea soup, her so high apple pie - her full coursed dinners on special days when company came.

Father

I was most impressed in my earlier years with father's studiousness. He worked so hard in the auto factory each day so when he came home at night he was most weary. Yet to us children he was never cross or irritable — always in his own way letting us know he loved. We never felt uncomfortable in his presence.

I do not remember his disciplining us in the usual meaning of that term. We have no recollection of spanking or rough treatment. He seemed as though we ~~could not~~ did not want to hurt him — his control over us was that of loving concern.

One of my happiest memories is that of going "up town" with father on Saturday afternoons. We'd walk — three or four miles each way & no car in our family then. But the conversations we had were a great strength to me.

My Bedroom

Our home consisted of five rooms — the kitchen, the dining room, and the living room and two bedrooms. Not being a large house, our rooms were small. It was necessary to share and different arrangements were made as needed. I slept in the north bedroom, the window facing the south side of our neighbor's home some 20 feet away. Before a furnace was installed the room was "shut off" during the days, so about my only remembrance of the room was its coldness. But it was so warm & comfortable at bedtime — it made going to bed a not so difficult a duty.

The Family Room

The kitchen was the primary room in our home while I was quite young. The floor was my playground. Then the long winter months when father came home from his work in the factory he found mother had prepared the nourishing evening meal and ~~was~~ it was always eaten in the kitchen. Then we sat and talked thru the little while before bedtime. Summers found us out doors mostly. But the kitchen — it was the place where so many hours were spent — so many memories formed — so many of life's basic lessons learned.

Neighborhood

Our neighborhood was on the S.W. side of town and beyond us lay the country side with its fields & farms. Quite a number of new houses were built ~~so we~~ ^{so} we children often played in the unfinished houses in the early evening after the workmen had left. We ~~do~~ did have neighbors on each side of us but toward the west were several empty lots which served us as a play field, particularly as a baseball field in the summer time. Our area was a rapidly changing area — new houses ^{houses} being constantly built, the street paved, ^{planted} sidewalks laid, and people moving. It was not a homogeneous neighborhood — but we children learned to know the other children and all of us were friendly with each other, + school mates, + fellow playmates. We were a mile or two from places where we would go — Church — School — Stores — factory — So we walk — always walked.

Neighbors

Our neighbors to the north of us were much appreciated by our family, we had so much in common. The parents had immigrated from Sweden, as had ours. ~~The~~ two families attended the same church and both fathers worked in the same factory. They were more fortunate in having a bit larger family than we did, five children against our two. Their two girls didn't interest me very much in those early days, but the boys became special friends of ours. Our two fathers became close friends. They would so often spend long sessions in conversation, particularly over the subject of the politics of our city. They somehow knew how & were to find a cup of coffee for ~~each~~ ^{on such occasions} of themselves - happy hours of communication in what was in some ways a difficult time of life. Carl, our neighbor's oldest son & I became fast friends - a friendship which has lasted up to the present. The two have lived for a part for each other ever since we both left home and town following our high school years.

First play mates

Our first play mates were neighborhood boys and girls, friends of ours before we could choose, a source of delight because the joys of companionships come so naturally to us. Memories of playing marbles on our kitchen floor on some chilly & wet spring days with one or two neighborhood children are still vivid to me. Another kitchen game was to take the kitchen chairs and line them up behind each other and play train as we crawled under them. I remember receiving a wagon - wood construction, as a gift at Christmas. When summer came it was the special play object for myself and the boys next door. ~~But~~ I was giving my special friend, Carl a fast ride in the wagon when I turned a corner too sharply and ~~spilled~~ turned the wagon over. Carl's head hit the side walk and he ended up in the doctor's office for some stitches to close the wound. ~~It was~~

Play Place

My favourite play place? - the big lot to the west of our house - how many ways it awakened our curiosity, and then satisfied it. The wild life there - mice, garter snakes, dragon flies and bees, they were all there. And there were flowers: violets, buttercups, and dandelions, of course. Later in the summer there were brown eyed susans and many varieties of clover and golden rod. In the mid summer the grass & weeds were tall enough for us to play hide & seek. Later it was baseball.

Things to do.

Ice Skating - the words carry a very special charm for me. Winters seemed longer to us than perhaps they really were, but ice-skating made them bearable & often beloved. We learned to skate early with our skating pond just a block from home, and everyone doing it. There was no more charming sight than to see our pond, frozen over, filled with children and young people, with their varied colored dresses, skating a bank - sometimes hand in hand. Boys would attempt a hockey game with rough branches for sticks and

BIRTH

1907

I was born January 29th in La Grange, Ill. arriving, as my mother has so often said, in a typical January snowstorm. Hospitals were not as frequently patronized in those days, so like so many others of my generation, my birth took place in our home. My parents both had emigrated from the "old country" so the first words of endearment I heard spoken were ^{Swedish} Scandinavian, a language which was to be the sole vehicle of communication in our home for the first four years of my life. The year I was born was the year of the 1907 financial panic and many expenses to what we called "hard times". But I was both a wanted child, of course, an expected child. Dad had saved enough so when the doctor was to be paid upon my ^{arrival} ~~and delivery~~ he was ~~paid~~ reimbursed for his ^{services} ~~services~~ with a 20 gold piece.