

Many childhood pleasures were related to "things" we owned and found pleasure in using. Christmas gifts were amongst them and the memory of a drum, a set of "Fisher-Toys" or a set of ice skates bring back to mind many of the happy hours of childhood & <sup>adolescent</sup> years.

My first childhood awakening to the real adult world came one Christmas Eve when I discovered several boxes of Christmas gifts under my parents bed just prior to Christmas day. My folks allowed us the fantasy of the Santa Claus delusion in those early years. On Christmas Eve Father would arrange it so that he and I would be out of the house for a few minutes after we had had our delicious Christmas Eve meal. It was not too difficult to arrange since we lived in a house which at that time had no indoor toilet facilities. Upon coming ~~back~~ back into the house again, we found the Santa Claus had come. We missed seeing him which was a tragedy.

a disappointment, but he had left gifts for the whole family and we had a jolly time opening them. Gifts were always opened on Christmas eve. Christmas morning found us in church for the traditionally Swedish Julotta service, usually at six o'clock. And in our church, the children's Christmas program would always be on Christmas night when we children would "say our pieces" before our parents and friends, and always receive a coin for having said them "real well". The Sunday School always distributed a box of Christmas treats to the children, usually a box of hard Christmas candy.

I do not remember ever having friends, family friends or relatives with us in our home at Christmas time. Our closest relatives were the Bunters who lived in Chicago. Tho we saw them sometimes during the year, it was not a Christmas time. Mother's relatives were all in Sweden.

Two outdoor playthings which we found ourselves deeply attached to at winter time were our sled and our ice skates. Every child seemed to have to have a sled and tho we did not live in hilly country we used our sleds day after day. We would build snowdrifts of snow and make a small incline for ourselves. I remember Father ~~to~~ bundling up my sister and taking her to S. S. on a sled - a walk of a mile or two. We had no automobile in our home until 1925 when Father bought a Chevy touring car - no glass - only catcloid curtains to keep the snow out. The sled was a popular winter toy for years. ~~Our~~ ~~own~~ We have an interesting transparency of Tom and his sled from Bereford days.

Ice-skating was our favorite winter sport. Our skates were the clamp on kind which did not give us much ankle support, but it was

sheer joy for us to get out on the frozen pond for several hours of skating as the weather permitted. "Anderson pond" was ~~not~~ a couple blocks from our home. So many young people used the pond and playing a game of hockey or just skating about was pleasant. Later, Lincoln Park lagoon was kept flooded for the winter season and we skated there. The city built a warming house where we ~~was~~ could warm & rest ourselves if we needed to.

Roller skates were wonderful, too. I was out several pairs of "ball-bearing" skates as they were as much a part of our summer days as were the ice skates in the winter. We skated on side walks until the rollers wore out. They could be replaced for a few cents apiece. Skating gave us a certain dexterity of foot which we were to find useful in future years. Even now at age 80 I find my limbs in good condition and have <sup>no</sup> difficulty in walking.

The great American game of baseball was the one sport we most enjoyed with our neighborhood young people. A large empty lot lay back of our home and we assembled there - the boys of the neighborhood for our evening game. It was always "soft ball" and we all became quite adept at playing.

The bicycle was our ~~chief~~ ever present companion - Yarn Junior Hi + Hi School. My father has purchased a single bar bike which was ordered from a manufacturer in Elgin. The day it arrived was a happy day and was the beginning of an intimate relationship. I loved to ride - the speed - the wind blowing past my head - sometimes in a race with friends.

Social contacts were few in the adolescent years. Dances and movies we did not attend. Parties were non-existent. The church was the center of life for our family with very little social life apart from it. Did we miss it? One does not miss what one does not have. But in retrospect it

seem the our family life was not as fulfilling  
as it should have been. Yet we were not  
without friends — many of them, and our  
family was highly respected in the church  
and the community.

~~In 1875 my father purchased a~~

To record the occurrence of one's birth is to record an incident of one's life — really, a most important one, of which one has no remembrance. One must rely on hearsay evidence about a fact which bears its own evidence. I remember later in life, feeling some need for evidence of my birth, writing to the authorities in charge of records and such, for a birth certificate. ~~The second world war was~~ The war clouds of World War II were gathering and it seemed expedient for me to have some evidence as to who I was and as to when and where I had been born. No record of my birth could be found in the records of Cook County, Illinois, where the event was to have taken place on the 28th day of January, 1909. I was asked to secure a witness to my birth, and thus to my existence and ~~and~~ <sup>secure</sup> some affirmations to the fact. It was not difficult to do since the strongest witness I could find was my own mother, still living, and of very sound mind. Papers were signed



and I even recently secured a birth certificate which I still have in my possession.

The circumstances of my birth were not extraordinary. There were no heavenly visitants — at least I have not been informed of any. Mother and Dad lived in La Grange, Illinois, a young couple filled with hope and dreams for the future, both of them immigrants from Sweden, both without family roots in American society. In La Grange they worshipped with a Mission Covenant congregation which, like so many churches founded by immigrants, worshipped in the mother tongue of the "Old Country", which for them was Swedish. I was baptized by the H. C. pastor.

The weather, I am told, was stormy on the day of my arrival — a snow storm blowing thru the area. Deliveries were invariably experienced in the homes — no antiseptic hospitals. I have been told that my father paid the doctor with a



a twenty dollar gold piece, so I came  
C.O.D. - Cash on delivery. Tho I cannot  
boast of being a high priced baby with  
a high priced delivery tag, I know the-  
was a gold-standard baby, desired  
and awaited and expected, as is not  
the case always in this strange world  
where what "ought" to be is not always so.

Dad had three or four sisters living  
in the Chicago (Roseland) area at the time.  
One of them, Esther by name, presented  
me with a shaving mirror, the frame of  
which we still possess tho the mirror  
itself was broken long ago, I know not  
how. The frame was held a photo of  
"Nanny", my mother. "Nanny" is the name  
our children have given her. At the  
time of my birth my grandparents on Dad's  
side were still living. My grandmother  
wrote of some of her feelings upon my  
birth and ~~of~~ a few admissions.  
I still have the letter, a very precious  
possession.

There is probably no greater gift to be passed on as an inheritance from parent to child than that of the example of a Christian life. None could be more blessed than I have been in this matter. The parents of both my mother and my father were committed Christians, I was never to inherit either worldly position or wealth from my parents, but I have been the recipient of a far more valuable heritage, a Christian ancestry. I have never lived without a consciousness of God's existence and of my responsibility to Him as my creator, sustainer, and the ultimate judge of my life. A life without God has always seemed intolerable to me. I have not felt the need to revolt against the doctrines or the restraints of the Christian life style. I knew there was reality in all that the Christian faith <sup>affirmed</sup> offered, and have felt that I wanted to be the best Christian a human being can be. Looking backward, I am conscious of getting so far ahead of what I have

I had seen it in the lives of my parents and other Christians, so my commitment to the Christian life came early in my life.

A conversion experience such as many Christians are able to witness to, never came to me tho I often prayed for some divine display of God's forgiveness and His saving grace in my life. It is an assurance of the Christian verities which have sustained me thru life came to me quietly and without any strong emotional display. It was like the coming of dawn and a new day. Faith was born and nourished in the crucible of every day life, and gradually my conscience awakened to assure me that a new day had dawned for me.

There was one decisive experience which did become meaningful to me. A quiet Gospel meeting was held one evening in January, 1976, in the basement area of our church - The 1st Swedish

Baptist church of Kenosha, Wisconsin. It was a snowy night with only about twenty out-pensons in attendance. The speaker had come up from Chicago for the service, Mr. Norman Camp, ~~of~~ ~~the~~ He was engaged by the Moody Bible Institute in the Correspondence School if I remember correctly. of his message I remember nothing, except he closed with an invitation to consecration of life to Christ. I do not remember being particularly moved inwardly, but then on form of us responded to the invitation of which I was one. From that night on I have not back off from that response of my heart to God's call. I look back upon that night as a decisive one in my life.

It has never occurred to me thru the subsequent years to think of myself as one who "decided for Christ", tho I did publicly respond to the Camp invitation. Rather there has been the underlying feeling that God was calling.

me and my part was to respond with  
an affirmative action. So the over-  
riding & dominant theme in both my  
faith & my ministry has been that — so  
positively stated in Ro 8:28 — God is  
working out His plan and purpose in  
the lives of those He has called and who  
believe Him. Of necessity I must bear  
heavily toward the Colossian's emphasis  
on God's sovereignty and on His  
initiative in the unfolding of man's  
(and a woman's) salvation.

To show the goodness of the Land  
in the land of the living ¶

Is it presumptuous for a person to ~~try~~  
attempt a history of their own life?

Perhaps. But I begin this account of the  
years of my life with no illusions as to their  
grandeur. From the most humble economic  
and social beginnings we (Rachel & I) have  
by God's grace lived fruitfully and been  
a help to many.