

Recollections:
Growing Up
in Southern California
in the 20s and 30s

Del Flint

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Foreword

The following are my recollections of growing up in Southern California in the twenties and thirties. My memories are exactly that “my memories” since I kept no diary. They are incomplete and some may not be factual since the world seen by an elementary school student is not always the real world. Also “hind sight” may color or even change one’s perception of fact, especially over a span of sixty to seventy years.

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Pasadena in the Twenties and Thirties

Before starting on my biography I think I should introduce the area in which I lived my early years.

Pasadena began as a haven to which the easterners (to us anybody from east of the California line) could flee to avoid eastern and Midwestern winters. As a resort, it had a core of fancy hotels and was serviced by two transcontinental railroads; the Santa Fe and the Union Pacific. The mainline of the Santa Fe passed through the center of town, where it maintained a station. The Union Pacific operated a branch line from Los Angeles that dead-ended north of town. It had a station on Colorado Boulevard and Pasadena Avenue. The passenger station was shut down early in the twenties with the cessation of passenger service on the line. The Santa Fe was still running their mainline through town when I left Pasadena in 1939. Celebrities (movie stars and politicians) often would detrain in Pasadena and take a car into Los Angeles, ostensibly to avoid the crush of the Los Angeles station and the members of the press. Nonetheless, celebrities often would alert the press as to their plans, probably so they could be met, interviewed and pictured against the background of an uncrowded station.

An electrified commuter line, the Pacific Electric Railroad, fanned out from Los Angeles to cover the Los Angeles Basin and the beaches. They ran the "Big Red Cars" with a two man crew (driver-engineer and conductor) on the interurban lines and the "dinkies," small, one-man cars on the local lines. The Pacific Electric also operated a funicular railroad that ran up the face of Mt. Lowe directly north of Pasadena. The funicular ran from Sierra Madre to a hotel on Mt. Lowe run by the PE. The facilities at Mt. Lowe and the funicular were shut down in the late twenties or early thirties.

Many of the visitors from the east bought properties and built elaborate homes in and around Pasadena. These mansions and estates were concentrated in western, southeastern and eastern Pasadena and its environs. To the west the Arroyo Orange Grove and Annandale districts bordered both sides of the Arroyo Seco. To the southeast and east the Oak Knoll and San Marino districts abutted the Huntington Library and the Lucky Baldwin estate.

The well-to-do to wealthy newcomers included many civic-minded individuals who formed a core of successful people interested in the arts, sciences, health and education. Major philanthropies included the Huntington Library, the Huntington Hospital and the California Institute of Technology. Less obviously the core demanded parks, schools, good roads, effective police, athletic facilities (Rose Bowl), golf courses and museums. They also brought a demand for service personnel.

The exclusive districts locally were sharply differentiated from lower-income areas; in many places in west Pasadena, the width of the street was all that lay between the two. The grounds of palatial homes on south Orange Grove backed downhill to areas that approximated ghettos. Vernon Avenue, a street of lower-middle-class homes, became Terrace Avenue, a street of mansions, after it crossed Orange Grove Avenue. In other places, the transitions were gradual. Overall, Pasadena was a middle-class town ringed with wealthy areas.

One of the creations of the civic-minded was the Tournament of Roses. It was started as a parade of rose-decorated carriages to advertise the winter climate of Pasadena. It grew and became the world-famous Tournament of Roses parade and associated football game. By the twenties, the New Year's Day parade and the weeks leading up to it were big events in the lives of most Pasadenans and many citizens of the surrounding areas.

Daily Life in Pasadena

There were no supermarkets in the twenties. Locally owned grocery stores, usually with an attached meat market, served areas within walking distance. Our local grocery store was Cable's, located two blocks to the east on Villa Street. Drugstores were located in the downtown area, as were restaurants, candy stores, soda fountains, and theaters. There were two locally owned department stores, but many Pasadenians went to the larger department stores in Los Angeles, usually via the "Big Red Cars." A free newspaper, the *Los Angeles Downtown Shopping News*, was circulated throughout Pasadena to encourage that trade.

Milk was delivered daily to the individual houses. Glass bottles were used, so it was necessary to rinse the empty bottles and set them out to be exchanged for full ones. All milk was whole milk, and most people used the cream which rose to the top of the bottle rather than the more expensive separated cream, which could be purchased. Pasteurized milk was available, but my parents insisted on certified raw milk. We had no problems with the raw milk, although public health officials were pressuring for pasteurization of all milk.

Fruit and vegetable sellers working from trucks brought fresh viands directly to the homes, but their goods were usually more expensive than those in the vegetable stands downtown. Once in the house our food was kept in iceboxes. as mechanical refrigerators were not yet available. The ice for cooling was delivered by the ice man, whose horse-drawn cart made a daily circuit through the neighborhood. Consumers put a card in their window to alert the ice man that ice was needed. The ice in the wagon was in large blocks which the ice man cut with an ice pick to fit in the customer's icebox. He then carried the block of ice into the house and placed it in the icebox. All of the iceboxes had drains which took the meltwater to a container in the base of the box. The container was emptied daily. Our icebox was placed on the screened porch on the back of the house, and my dad drilled a hole in the porch floor allowing the water to drain through the floor to the ground below; thus obviating the need to empty the melt water receptacle. We didn't worry about rot forming in the structure of the house and we never had a problem. When the iceman cut the blocks in his wagon, large chips were often formed which we kids eagerly scavenged to suck. We also tried to climb on the wagon and sneak a ride to the next stop. The iceman didn't appreciate our doing this, so our rides were short.

We had a local pickle and potato chip factory (Doherty's), which was located just off Pasadena Avenue and a block north of Colorado Street. I used to love to go directly to the factory to buy a large kraft paper bag of potato chips for family picnics. For twenty-five cents, I got the bag of potato chips, samples of chips fresh from the cooking oil, and usually a gift of a big dill pickle fished up from a large wooden barrel. Pickles cost five cents apiece, so I seldom bought one.

All of this changed in the thirties. First, the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company opened a large grocery/market in the heart of the old downtown. This was followed by other chains: Piggly Wiggly, Ralph's (a local Southern California chain), Safeway, etc., and the local grocery stores were on their way to oblivion.

Treats for Kids

Like the local grocery stores, there were small candy stores, generally around the fringes of and in the downtown area. The candy stores featured large glass cases filled with candies of all types and costs. There are few things in life today equal to the sweet anticipation of a kid with a penny trying to make up his mind as to which penny candy he should spend his money on. In my case, it was almost invariably a black licorice stick that claimed my coin.

In the summer, our streets rang with the tinkling bell of the ice cream man and the shouts of the paper man. The ice cream man came in a high-sided boxy white truck with cans of ice cream packed in salted ice in the back. He drove slowly through the area, ringing his bell to alert the kids in the neighborhood. When the kids came out, he stopped, clambered into the back of his truck, and dispensed his wares. From his elevated position he took the orders and coins, scooped the delicious ice cream into cones, and handed them down to the clutching hands of his small-fry clientele. For a nickel, one got one scoop; for a dime, one got a “double-decker,” two scoops. Vanilla, chocolate, and strawberry were the staples, but lime, raspberry, and pineapple sherbet could also be purchased. In the event one had a dime, one could mix the cone with scoops of two different flavors.

In the thirties, the old ice cream man and his wagon were supplanted by the Good Humor Man with his frozen ice cream on a stick and his popsicles. The Good Humor Man had a different bell to call the kids to his sleek brown panel truck, with doors along the side to give access to the refrigerated interior and his prepackaged goodies. Somehow, it wasn't the same. You never had the rapport with the Good Humor Man that you had with the ice cream man. Being handed a pre-made and packaged bar on a stick by a brown-uniform-attired man was cold and impersonal, compared to pestering an elderly gentleman in a once-white apron for a bigger scoop.

Another call was important in our youth, the call of the paper man. He shouted, “Rags, bottles, sacks!” which told all and sundry that the paper man was there to buy bundles of old newspapers. We seldom had rags or bottles to sell. We kids saved the newspapers and tied them into bundles for sale. It took two or three weeks to accumulate enough papers to sell. The paper man weighed the papers and paid for them by the pound. The nickels and dimes he paid usually went to the ice cream man, seldom into our penny banks, and then only until we had enough money to patronize the ice cream man. As I had two sisters and a brother to share in the paper money, my parents found it necessary to decree that the girls and boys alternate receiving the money. This cut down on the boy-girl squabbles but not necessarily on the same sex squabbles.

Our House

Through most of my school attending days, we lived on Pasadena Avenue, between Walnut and Villa Streets. Pasadena Avenue was a quiet street lined by trees growing in the parking between the road and sidewalk. The street had a high crown and curbs about ten to twelve inches high. Auto traffic was light, and the street served as a playground for the children of the neighborhood.

Our house fronted on Pasadena Avenue facing east. It was a typical California bungalow of the time, with a front porch, parlor, three bedrooms, dining room, kitchen, and bath. There was a screened-in back porch which stretched across the back of the house. My brother and I slept in one half of the porch. The other half had the ice box, a laundry sink, and a walled-in toilet and a walk-in closet. My two sisters shared the back bedroom, my folks shared the middle bedroom, and Grandma Flint had the front bedroom during the three months a year she lived with us.

Behind the house there was a small rental cottage, a garage for our house, and a garage for the cottage. There were fruit trees in the yard and a large black palm in the front lawn. Behind the cottage, between it and its garage, was a wild blackberry bramble, which furnished us kids with liberal amounts of both berries and scratches throughout the summer months.

Our yard backed on the Union Pacific railroad tracks which ran between Pasadena and Vernon Avenues, bisecting the blocks from Colorado northward. North of Orange Grove, the tracks separated the well-to-do homes along the Arroyo from decaying neighborhoods to the east. Passenger service to Pasadena ended in the station on Colorado Boulevard, so its demise made little difference to traffic on the line behind our house. For years after the passenger service was abandoned, the railroad ran a locomotive a day from Los Angeles to the end of the line in North Pasadena. Occasionally, the locomotive hauled a freight car, so there must have been some sort of industry there. There was no facility to turn the train, so it always returned in reverse. For some reason, we never walked the tracks past a trestle over one of the roads that went down to the Rose Bowl in the Arroyo Seco. To this day, the northern terminus of that spur track remains a nebulous, mythic place that logically had to exist, but was never visited.

My best friend, Raymond Shuster, lived on Vernon Avenue on the other side of the tracks, but a block farther north. Both of our houses had gates opening onto the railroad right of way, so it was our route of preference between the houses until we got bicycles, and wheels replaced feet for transport. Even then, we often walked the tracks.

In addition to being a route for travel, the track right of way allowed us boys access to fruit trees in the back yards of houses along the track. It also served as a getaway route when we were surprised by the owners as we partook of their fruit. I don't think they really cared about the figs, plums, apricots, and peaches we swiped, but we never hung around to find out.

Education in Pasadena

In the twenties and thirties, Pasadena operated its schools on the 6-4-4 plan. Kindergarten was followed by six years of elementary school, followed by four years of junior high school and four years of junior college. After junior college, you could enter college as a junior.

Several local elementary schools contributed students to a centrally located junior high school. The junior high schools then sent their graduates to Pasadena Junior College or to John Muir, a technical school. The first two years of junior college were the last years of the conventional high school,



Dorothy, Tommy, and Me

and a high school diploma was given upon completion of those years. Many students left for college after receiving their high school diploma. The whole system was excellent. Graduates had no problems in getting accepted by colleges and universities, either as freshmen or as juniors.

For instance, my two sisters attended junior high school, followed by four years of Pasadena Junior College. After junior college, they went to college as juniors. Frances, my older sister, chose UCLA, where she majored in history, earning a B.A. and M.A. Dorothy, my younger sister, chose California at Berkeley. Dorothy entered Berkeley with a chemistry major, but changed her major to social services, because in those days there were very few or no positions open to women in chemistry. After junior high school, I attended Pasadena Junior College

for two years, and then, having a high school diploma in hand, left the public system to enter Caltech as a freshman. Tom, my brother, went to John Muir High School, followed by two years at Pasadena Junior College. After serving in the Marine Corps in World War II, he chose not to go to college, opting instead to work as an engineering draughtsman.

Public school districts in Pasadena were laid out without consideration as to the racial or economic makeup of the district. As rich and poor neighborhoods were in juxtaposition, the districts were integrated on all levels. I make this statement generally, although it may have been true only in my area. It was, however, true for me, all the way through high school. There were several good private schools in Pasadena, but by and large, the children went to public or parochial schools.

Autobiography

I was born December 5, 1918 in the Huntington Hospital in Pasadena, California, the son of Moses Delos and Letha Lindemann Flint, who had recently returned to the United States from the Philippine Islands. Though they had two daughters, I was the first boy and was named Delos Edward for my father and a maternal uncle. My father hated his first name, so I was not to be a “junior.”

My Father

My parents’ story was unusual. My father was born on a farm in Iowa and moved to the state of Washington at age eleven. He lived on a homestead near Vancouver, Washington until he left the farm for normal school. At age nineteen he was jilted by his girlfriend, and left school to



My Father in the Philippines, circa. 1912.

enlist in the army as the Spanish-American War was in progress. Daddy’s unit, Company M of the First Washington Volunteers, was sent to the Philippine Islands, arriving after the war with Spain was settled. War continued in the Philippines, however, and Company M fought the insurgent forces of Aguinaldo.

When the fighting was over, Daddy decided to stay in the islands. After trying a number of occupations, he settled down to teaching, and worked up to be the Superintendent of Schools for Rosario Province. It was as superintendent that he took an exhibit of the Philippine schools to a teacher’s convention in San Francisco, which was held in conjunction with the Pan-Pacific at he met Letha Anne Lindemann,

My Mother

Mother was born in Faribault, Minnesota, but at an early age moved to Minneapolis, where she grew up. After training, she took a job teaching in a small town in Wyoming. While working in Wyoming, she and a co-worker, Anna Strong, attended the Pan-Pacific Exposition and the teachers' convention. The two visited the exhibit of the Philippine schools, where Mother met Daddy. She evidently impressed him. After the exposition, Mother and Anna went south to visit Anna's brother, who had an orange grove outside San Diego. Daddy followed her south. After a whirlwind courtship, Daddy returned to the Philippines, and Mother and Anna to their jobs in Wyoming.

The Marriage and Family

Mother and Daddy corresponded, and a year later, Mother took ship for the Philippines, arriving in Manila on her birthday. The day the boat landed, they were married in the Colegio de Santo Tomas. Oddly, the priest who performed the ceremony was from Faribault, Minnesota, my mother's birthplace. My wife and I met the priest when we passed through Faribault on our honeymoon some thirty-eight years later.

My two sisters were both born in the Philippines. Frances, four and a half years older than I, was born in the mountain town of Baguio. Dorothy, two years older than I, was born in Manila.

Daddy was forty-five years old when my parents returned to the U. S., and he experienced great difficulty in finding employment. He finally got a job as a conductor on the "Big Red Cars" of the Pacific Electric Railroad running from Pasadena to Los Angeles, but only after lying about his age. It was a dead-end job, but it was steady, and Daddy held it until he retired in 1938. His workday started very early in the morning. So, though we moved several times, all of our homes were within walking distance of the car barn where his workday began and ended. The job didn't pay a munificent wage, but it was steady, and offered continuous employment through the Great Depression.

It is hard to equate the pay scales of the twenties with those of today, but Daddy's pay, which topped at \$250 a month, was stretched to support a family of six. My parents also had the benefit of some savings from the years in the Philippines, probably on the order of a few thousand dollars. This they invested in real estate. With these limited resources, they not only fed, sheltered, and clothed the family; they saw three of us through college and graduate school. My brother Tom, two and a half years my junior, went into the Marine Corps after junior college, and didn't return to school after World

War II. We never lacked necessities, but we had very little money for frivolities. It is interesting that they thought it necessary that we all be given basic lessons in elocution and ballroom dancing.

Early Years

Our family was living in a small brown frame house on Cypress Avenue when I was born, but my first recollections are of a house on Mary Street. It was a two-story gray house with fieldstone pillars holding up a second-story porch in front. We lived on the ground floor, and the Mann family lived on the second. My first memories are of someone working over me as I lay on a table under a Tiffany glass lamp suspended from the ceiling. I later was told that when I was about two years old, I had the croup, and my parents were heating creosote under my crib to assuage the cough. I got out of the crib and got into the creosote. My parents came in and found me with creosote smeared on my face. They were afraid that I had ingested some, and called the doctor (they made house calls then). He put me on the dining room table and pumped my stomach, but found no creosote. This presaged a life in which I repeatedly got hurt through my own actions. I was, to state it bluntly, accident-prone.

My second recollection is of another accident. The Mann family had two boys, both much older than I, and they were always very nice to me. One day, they brought out a mechanical monkey that climbed a string when the string was pulled tight. I, standing on the ground, was enchanted with the mechanical marvel being demonstrated on the second-story porch. After teaching me how to operate the toy, they dropped it to me, and I caught it – with my face. I don't remember what happened after that, but it probably didn't require a trip to the emergency hospital.

School Days

Shortly after that incident, we moved to a house on Rosemont Avenue, directly across the street from the old Roosevelt School. The school was a solid red-brick building, set in an asphalt-covered playground. It was a square, non-nonsense building, typical of school architecture in the pre-World War I years. It consisted of two stories above a semi-basement that was half above ground. The basement was regularly used as headquarters for summer playground activities when school was not in session and the upper stories were being readied for the coming school year.

On one corner of the playground was an attractive cottage-type building with a small enclosed garden area. This was the kindergarten, which I attended while my sisters were attending classes in the main building. Attendance at kindergarten was restricted to children who had attained an

age of four years and nine months. I lacked a few weeks of the required age, but was accepted anyway. One result of this was that I was always young in my class. Our teacher was Mrs. Clark, an attractive blonde who probably was relatively young, but all adults are old to small children. She was a very empathetic, patient lady, an excellent teacher for small children. In kindergarten, we learned the alphabet and our numbers, played games, were read stories, napped, and tended our gardens. Each of us had a small section in the garden that was set off by boards from the other children's plots. We planted seeds, weeded our plots, and watched our very own vegetables grow. As I remember, we grew radishes, which we proudly took home to show our parents what good farmers we were.

From kindergarten, I graduated to the main school. The classrooms were all equipped with rows of built-in desks. Each desk had a small shelf under the desk top, and each desk top had a built-in inkwell and a horizontal groove to hold pencils, etc. Most of the desks had been ornamented with initials scratched in by prior students. The classroom's walls were covered with slate blackboards, which were written on with chalk, usually white but rarely colored. Periodically, we were called to the blackboards to do problems in arithmetic or English. If we were in the good graces of the teacher, we might be asked to clean the erasers after our sessions at the blackboard were completed. We then would take the chalk-filled erasers out of the classroom and clap them together enthusiastically, raising clouds of dust, which amused us.

When I first walked into the classroom for first grade, I entered a room that had been refurnished over the summer. The room smelled of varnish and the oil they used on the board floors. I don't remember much about the class work, but I do remember wetting my pants because I was afraid to ask my teacher to be excused to go to the toilet.

I attended Roosevelt School for two years before being chosen to attend special classes for "E.G." (extra-gifted) students. This was a time when intelligence tests were in vogue, and California was instituting a lot of programs for E.G. students. Looking back now, I think my teachers were glad when I was assigned to the E.G. class in a school across town. Things came easily to me, and so did boredom. I would finish the assigned work and look around for things to do. What I found to do usually distracted the other students, and that was not looked upon favorably by the teachers. As a result, my teachers probably heaved a sigh of relief when I left their classroom.

In order to attend the new school, I had to change from walking two short blocks to school to making a long trip across town to the Madison School where the elementary E.G. classes were held. We had moved from Rosemont Avenue to a house on Pasadena Avenue, two blocks to the east. Every

morning I would walk four blocks south on Pasadena Avenue to Colorado Boulevard where the buses started their runs. I'd catch a Los Robles bus to get off near the Madison School, and after the school day was finished, I'd reverse the course to go home. I had a pass on the bus, because my father worked for the railroad company, which also ran the buses. My pass removed the cost of riding to school, so the trip cost nothing.

At school, the E.G. students were pretty much segregated from the other pupils. We had classes, recesses, and playtimes by ourselves. In the school room, we were supposed to progress as rapidly as we could, and we were not held to strictly class-level instructions. It must have been a teacher's nightmare. There was a big room for all grades below seventh, and a student might be at second-grade level in math, third-grade level in writing, fourth-grade level in reading, etc.

At the same time, they were trying to slow down our academic progress by introducing supplementary activities to enrich our learning experience. One of these extracurricular activities that I remember was making bread. We were furnished the ingredients, and instructed in mixing the dough, kneading it, forming it into loaves, letting them rise, and finally baking them. Once baked, we sampled our product. Of course, it was always delicious, or so we thought. I especially liked making bread, because no matter how dirty my hands were going into the exercise, after mixing and kneading the dough, they were always clean.

We were a bunch of bright, highly individualistic kids, and we had exalted ideas of our own importance, so conflicts were many. I didn't know much about the games we played, but I felt that I had to put my two bits' worth into how they were played. Often, this resulted in fights, and I got my clock cleaned regularly. (I wasn't an effective fighter.)

The long trip to and from school, and the fact that I was regularly coming in second in the playground "debates," were beginning to get to me, and make me loathe to go to school. This in turn got to my parents, who had been proud that I was selected for the program. The whole thing came to a head one day when I came home from school in tears because I had been assigned a math problem that I couldn't even begin to understand. It was a fifth-grade problem that I had been assigned with no explanation. As a result of all of these factors, my parents came to the realization that things were not working out well. So, they took me out of the program, and I was returned to the Roosevelt School. When I returned to Roosevelt, I was skipped a grade, making me even younger in relation to my classmates.

Now, as an adult, I am not in favor of skipping grades, as it puts the student with classmates older chronologically, physically, and socially. The competition with more physically and socially developed classmates can

destroy one's self-confidence and hinder development. In my case, I feel that I didn't catch up to my classmates physically and socially until my second year in college. In all the years up to then, I lived with an inferiority complex, athletically and socially, that I found very difficult to break.

My Stage Career

As students in elementary school, we had compulsory singing lessons. I never was able to carry a tune, so music was not my favorite subject. I would join in the choral singing with gusto, but with no respect for key or notes. Miss Pierce, the music teacher, would come over and quietly suggest to me that I should desist from singing and just enjoy the singing of the rest of the class, because when I joined in, I pulled the kids around me off key.

Though I couldn't sing, I got a speaking part in the operetta "The Music Box." I had a part that called for a short speech, but only on the condition that I lip-synch and not join in the singing. We had several very good voices in the cast, and the operetta was reputed to be the best in years for the schools in town. Gilbert Grado, a boy soprano with the voice of an angel, played the lead. Because we had the reputation, we were asked to put on an abbreviated version of the operetta at a party for the playwright Sherwood Anderson, held at a mansion in the Oak Knoll district. It was a garden party, and after our presentation, we were invited to partake of the refreshments. Gilbert was a poor Mexican boy (later, he quit school as soon as possible, to sell newspapers on a downtown corner). When he tried the food, he found it irresistible, and stuffed himself, to the embarrassment of the rest of us in the cast. I think that perhaps we were jealous of how much food he got, while we, constrained by middle-class ethos, restricted ourselves.

Upper Elementary School

I attended Lincoln School for fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. My sister Dorothy was two years ahead of me at Lincoln, and was a good student. As a result, I had a reputation which probably helped me, though I did a lot to destroy the good repute. One day, I had a disagreement in history class with the teacher, Miss Siprell. I don't know what the problem was, but I think that I corrected her on some point. I was sent out of the room, and it would have blown over, but I had to mouth off to her about it in the cafeteria. I, of course, was requested to visit the principal. After a session with him, I carried a note home. My folks didn't appreciate my sassing a teacher (they both had been teachers), and I got a spanking.

As kids, we knew there were limits, which we transgressed at our own peril. Transgressions were rewarded with physical punishment. Minor transgressions merited scolding. More serious sins called for a spanking by

mother. Serious derelictions called for a spanking by Dad. Mother used the back of a hairbrush. Daddy used his bare hands. We didn't fear the hairbrush, but Daddy's hand merited respect, big-time.

I attended the Lincoln Elementary School with children of widely different racial and economic backgrounds. My classmates were white Americans, Afro-Americans, and Americans of Japanese, Mexican, Armenian, Scandinavian, and Jewish descent. Although the schools were integrated within the school districts, there was a definite segregation of housing by wealth and generally by race. As kids, we crossed all the boundaries. Ray, my best friend, lived in a racially integrated neighborhood on Vernon Avenue to the south of Orange Grove. North of Orange Grove, the street became Terrace Avenue, the street of mansions. Olof Ohlsson, a good friend of both Ray and me, lived on Terrace Avenue, where his parents worked as cook and butler for a wealthy family. I also played with and in the homes of Jack Talbot and Hank Best, whose parents owned homes on Terrace Avenue. In addition to segregation by economic station, there was racial segregation in housing, though it was not public policy. There were few (if any) black, Japanese, or Mexican families in the area immediately to the east of Pasadena Avenue, while the area to the west between Vernon and Orange Grove was highly integrated. All the areas contributed students to the public schools. Some of my classmates from elementary school were in classes with me through high school, and one, Yuji Tajima, graduated with me from college.

More Accidents

During these years, I showed my ability to get myself hurt in many ways. In addition to blows on my head, I picked up scars and memories of physical damage in many situations.

Playing with my sister, I fell, and in falling, brought my knee violently up against my chin. I must have had my tongue out, as I bit my tongue almost in two. The emergency hospital doctor stitched my tongue together, but the stitches soon pulled out. My tongue healed with no problems, but carries the scar to this day.

Playing football in the street, I fell and straight-armed the pavement with my left arm and separated the epiphysis (the growth point near the ends of a growing immature bone). For six weeks, my arm was taped into a sixty-degree bends and supported in a sling. The healing bone didn't hurt, but itched like fury, so I was happy when told I could straighten the arm again. My joy was short-lived. I found out that regaining movement in the elbow would require weeks of painful therapy. When the doctor first removed the tape and flexed the arm, I passed out. After that, when she flexed my arm,

she first put me under with nitrous oxide. I also had to hang from a horizontal bar, and carry pails filled with sand while relaxing my arm muscles, for what seemed like ages. Eventually, the arm straightened, and has never troubled me since.

One afternoon, I was jumping up and down on my bed (an activity that was strictly forbidden) and fell, hitting my head against the bed frame. The resulting cut through my right eyebrow required several stitches, another trip to the emergency hospital, another scar.

While attending Lincoln, the Catholic students were excused early to allow them to attend catechism classes. One such afternoon, we walked the five or six blocks to St. Andrew's School, and arrived early, before their school was out. With time on our hands, we amused ourselves in the ruins of an earlier, partly demolished school building. Soon, we were amusing ourselves with a rock fight, and I was on my way to the emergency hospital again.

I also put my bicycle under cars on two different occasions, with no hurt to me, but demolishing the bicycles. These were some of the more serious cases that I got myself into. There were many others, most of which were just the everyday misadventures of a boy growing up. I did, however, manage to keep myself banged up for a good part of my preteen years.

Junior High

In the spring of 1929, I graduated from Lincoln Elementary School. We processed into the auditorium to the strains of Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance," played by the school orchestra. I think "Pomp and Circumstance" must have been compulsory at graduations in the twenties and thirties, as it seems to me that I heard the familiar strains at every graduation I attended.

From Lincoln, I went to McKinley Junior High, where I spent the next four years. Junior high stressed the "three R's," but also exposed the pupils to shop classes for boys and home economics classes for girls. The girls were expected to become homemakers and mothers, and the boys supposed to be handy with tools. In addition, we were given the option of studying a foreign language. French, Spanish, and Latin were the options. I chose Latin.

My Latin teacher was Miss Riley. She was a small, demure, white-haired lady who never raised her voice, and never had to, to maintain discipline. One day the pupils didn't quiet down when the bell rang to indicate the beginning of class. Miss Riley stood there a minute, and turned and left the classroom without a word. When she returned a few moments later, the class was quiet as a mouse. Such behavior was unusual. Our class was

bright and mischievous, and that approach would not have worked with other teachers. Miss Riley was different. She controlled the class with no difficulty. She could also tell when your attention left Latin and turned to daydreaming instead of following the translation. Invariably, wandering attention was met with a request for you to continue with the translation of the next line. Since you hadn't followed, you had no idea of which line was next. It was a most embarrassing situation, rewarded with an "F" for the day's work.

I said our class was mischievous. We were, or could be, downright cruel, especially to substitute teachers. We took advantage of one elderly lady on several occasions, and finally, one day, reduced the poor woman to tears. We never had her again, and I think most of us harbor a bit of shame for our actions.

When we entered junior high, we were introduced to Physical Education as a subject, not a recess activity. We were assigned lockers in the gym, where we kept gym clothing and hung our clothing when we dressed for Phys. Ed. Following our exercises, we got clean towels, took a shower, and went back to classroom studies. It was in gym period that I met two boys named Delos. One was a big, tall but soft, musically gifted mulatto boy, Delos West. The other was a small, slender white boy, De Los Wilson. I can remember meeting only two other "Deloses" in the years since then. I have read of others, but never met them.

It was also in gym period that I met the first person – actually, I think the only person – I learned to hate. His name was Roy Littlejohn, and he had a very nice older brother who was widely respected and admired. Roy, however, took a dislike to me. He was several years older than I. Though not big, he was bigger and stronger than I, and he liked to bully younger, less developed kids. At first the bullying was oral, but it became physical on the athletic field. He deliberately missed the soccer ball and tried to kick shins. He tried to kick the ball into smaller kids' faces. He threw elbows in soccer and basketball, and generally roughed up his victims. This caused me to dislike him. Dislike turned to hatred the day he deliberately kneed me in the groin on the basketball court. It was a vicious blow, and caught me hard in the testicles. I dropped to the ground, and couldn't move for the pain. After a few minutes, I struggled to my feet and staggered into the gym, where I lay on the bench for the rest of the period, too sick to stand. After the gym period, I was able to go to class, but I hurt for the rest of the day. That day, I developed (I guess I still have) an abiding hatred for that young man. For years, I said if I saw him drowning, I'd throw him an anchor. The years have softened me, and I guess now that I'd throw him a life preserver, but I wouldn't help him out of the water.

The curriculum at McKinley called for wood shop and mechanical drawing

for seventh graders, and optional print shop, electrical shop, and a machine shop for eighth graders. Additional wood shop and machine shop classes were available for students that didn't plan on college. Wood shop was designed to teach us a little about tools. We made mahogany bookends weighted with lead, recipe boxes, and bookshelves. Mechanical drawing was elementary drawing using T-squares, triangles, and drawing pens to do simple projections. Electric and machine shops shared one term. Electric shop gave us a basic understanding of electric circuits and the Underwriter's Code. We learned to use underwriters' knots when repairing electric cords, and made small electric furnaces to heat soldering irons. Machine shop introduced us to tin smithing, metalworking machinery, and aluminum casting.

Print shop was my favorite. We printed the school newspaper on an old press that used movable type. The individual letters were cast separately, each reversed so as to print correctly. The printer then composed the article to be printed, arranging them upside down and backward. After being used, the type was cleaned and put back into the trays to be used again. I specialized in putting the used type back in the proper compartments in the trays.

The press was hand-fed; that is, the paper was put into the press and removed by hand. The operator removed the printed sheet with his left hand, and inserted the sheet to be printed with his right hand, as the press opened and closed. The speed of the cycle could be varied with the ability of the operator. It was a game to see how fast you could run the press. If the press was operated too fast for the operator, he didn't have to lose some fingers; he just let the backup sheet be printed. The press was stopped, and the backup sheet cleaned with solvent, and the press started again more slowly. I never heard of a student losing a finger, but it could have happened. Today, the whole operation would never be allowed.

Amusements in the Twenties and Thirties.

When we were young, there was little in the way of planned recreation for children. We didn't have Little League, Pop Warner, soccer, etc. to keep us amused. To tell the truth, our parents didn't have the time or ability to ferry us around to the endless practice sessions and league games that today's children enjoy. Basically, we were expected to provide our own amusement. In addition to library programs to encourage reading, we had five- and six-week summer programs on the school grounds, and church schools. The church schools initiated daily Vacation Bible Schools about the time that the public schools shut down their summer programs.

When we first moved to the Pasadena Avenue house, the railroad and its

right of way furnished much of our entertainment. As small children everywhere, we lined up and waved to the passing train crews, and they waved back. We'd place pennies on the track in front of the train, recovering flattened coins after the trains had passed. We didn't put many pennies out to be crushed, because the flattened coins could not be used to purchase candy, and a licorice stick held much more allure than a worthless coin.

The right of way was overgrown with weeds, and we played there as though it were a playground. The street also served as a playground, as did our yard and the sidewalks. In addition to touch football and softball played in the street during the day, we played hide-and-seek and kick-the-can at night. On the sidewalk, we played "Simon Says," "Red Light-Green Light," and "May I." Also at night, if it were just our family, with perhaps one or two neighbor kids, we might play "Running from Cars," a game we made up. To play the game, we chose a trigger point, that is, an arbitrary point somewhere up the street. When the lights of an approaching car passed the trigger point, we'd run back up our driveway to try to pass a set point on the driveway before the car passed the mouth. We could change the trigger point to make the game more or less difficult. The game was simple, but we had a lot of fun, and got a lot of exercise playing it.

In elementary school we played softball, volleyball, and dodge ball during recess. We had no school teams and played no organized sports. This changed in junior high school, where we had physical education classes and school teams in track, football, and baseball. I took part in none of them.

Summer was an eagerly awaited time. School was out, but many of the schools were opened with summer recreational programs. Even after the Roosevelt School was closed to classes, the playground and basement were open for the summer with a teacher in charge. Mrs. Kidd, a single parent with two boys, a wonderful sixth grade teacher and a friend of our parents, was in charge of the Roosevelt program. Children were taught to use a coping saw to cut sheets of wood into animal shapes, which were nailed to wooden wedges to form doorstops. The doorstops were then painted appropriately. Kids also wove reed and raffia baskets, did beadwork, played softball, and put on a circus each summer.

The same circus props were stored each fall and brought out each summer. Any child that wanted to could find something to do in the circus. They could be an animal, a strongman, a dancer, or an acrobat, and one could be the ringmaster. The animals were formed with a wooden frame covered with burlap and painted. Two students were required for large animals (elephants, camels and giraffes); one each for most of the others. I was a horse and rider. I had a horse frame which was suspended by tape from my shoulders so my head and upper body formed the rider. Pant legs stuffed with rags and sporting shoes where the feet should be were hung on each

side to complete the “rider,” and a hanging burlap drape hid the feet. At least one of the horses was painted to be “Spark Pug,” Barney Google’s horse (of course, “Horsefeathers” was used during the presentation.) The various acts and the animals were introduced by the ringmaster whose spiel was larded with wildly funny puns and wisecracks. That is, “wildly funny” to a ten-year-old. One act that I remembered featured a sick ostrich. The ringmaster proceeded to diagnose and treat the bird. He simulated cutting into its crop and extracted a can while announcing to the multitude (perhaps thirty or forty people), “Oh, a can, sir!” After allowing for the laugh, he reached in and pulled out two more cans while announcing “Aha! Two more.”

After the summer, our house had a plethora of reed baskets (some with wooden bottoms), woven raffia baskets (some with raffia tops), crudely painted animal-shaped doorstops, and other priceless craft articles.

At the summer playground I again demonstrated my penchant for getting hurt. The stupidest thing I ever did was to run behind the hitter and in front of the catcher during a softball game. As I chose to do this as the batter was swinging at a pitch, I got KO’d by his follow-through. That was the most egregiously stupid thing I did, but I suffered other clouts to the head and bumps as the result of falls, resulting in almost permanent swellings on the corners of my forehead. As a result, I took a lot of razzing about “growing horns,” especially from my sisters. They referred to me as “Dame Misfortune’s favorite son.”

The public schools’ summer recreation programs were stopped in the late twenties, and were succeeded by daily vacation Bible schools, offered by many of the Protestant churches. In these sessions, we did many of the things which we did previously, but now we were in church buildings and were exposed to Bible studies. The first year of the Bible Schools, I attended the Baptist church’s school, but quit it after one session, as it was overtly anti-Catholic, and I was a Catholic. During later summers I went to the Methodist Episcopal school, and found it more to my liking. Our principal exercise was skating in the church gym, which was really great fun. I don’t think Father Ryan of St. Andrew’s Parish, where my family went to church, would have approved, but my second summer at the Methodist summer school I was elected student body president.

Summertime was the wonderful time we could run barefoot. As soon as school was out, I started imploring my mother to let me go barefoot. Finally, after a week or so of entreaties, permission was given, and I parked my shoes using them only for church on Sundays or other special occasions. The first few weeks without shoes were periods of intermittent torture. As long as I walked on grass or dirt, or in the shade, my feet were fine.

However, when I ventured out on sun-heated cement or asphalt, especially the black asphalt, the footing became highly unpleasant.

I remember going to the Roosevelt School for the summer program out the back gate to the railroad track, where I would walk on the ties, as the rails were uncomfortably hot. Up to Villa Street where the cement walk was not too hot, then the perilous section. Steeling myself to suffer the pain without showing how much it hurt, I'd step out to cross the street (black asphalt), cross the cement sidewalk, which though hot gave a slight surcease from pain, and step onto the asphalt playground. Telling myself to disregard the pain, I'd start to walk across the expanse of burning heat. Soon I'd be lifting my feet high, hoping to cool them a little before putting them back down. Then, I'd start walking on tiptoe to expose as little skin area as possible. That would give no surcease of pain, and I would begin a crazy sort of dance, doing my best to lift both feet off the burning black heat-radiating asphalt at the same time. Finally, I'd break and run to reach shade and get off that torture surface, and ease the pain in my feet.

By the end of summer, my feet would have hardened so I could walk indefinitely on all but the hottest surfaces, worrying only about the possibility of stepping on a nail. The only drawback to running barefoot was having to wash one's feet before coming into the house. Mother, for some reason, didn't like the idea of us putting dirty feet in between clean sheets when we went to bed.

Although we had marbles and treasured the agate "shooters," we seldom played marbles. Marbles cost money. We played the same game with bottle caps, which cost nothing, so it didn't hurt much to lose them. To get the bottle caps, we visited the gas stations where ice cold bottles of soft drinks were sold. Depending on how long it had been since the last child had cleaned out the receptacle which caught the opened caps, you could make up for losses with a minimum effort. Some caps were rarer than others and were more highly valued; for instance, a "Nehi" was worth two Cokes, and Delaware Punch caps were even more highly valued.

We played the game on smooth cement surfaces, usually the sidewalk, putting our risked caps in the center of a drawn circle. Using loaded bottle cap "shooters," we tried to knock the risked caps out of the ring. We propelled the shooter with a flick of a finger, usually the thumb. Our "shooters" were bottle caps from which we had pried the corks and had then loaded the empty shells with any suitable substance – usually black tar scraped from the bubbles of melted tar that oozed out of the asphalt streets in the summer heat.

In the early summer, the railroad sent crews in to prune or cut down the eucalyptus trees growing along the right of way. Logs of a size to serve as

firewood were given to property owners, and the fragrant oily leaves and new growth were piled in hills to be picked up later. The piles were perhaps six to eight feet high and were wonderful to play in. Of course, the fact that we had been specifically instructed to keep off the piles of leaves did not detract from their allure. We climbed on the resilient masses of green, excavated tunnels in the piles to give us hidden lairs, and generally had fun over, on, and in them, knowing that Mother couldn't see us and would never know. Somehow, Mother always knew what we'd been up to, when we, redolent of eucalyptus, presented our oily selves for dinner.



Ray Shuster, me, and Mrs. Shuster.

We made rubber guns and played cops and robbers or cowboys and Indians – same game, different nomenclature. A rubber gun was made by nailing two pieces of wood together at right angles to form the

general shape of a pistol. A spring-operated clothespin was fastened onto the back of the handle. The missiles were rounds of rubber cut from inner tubes from a pneumatic tire. We got most of ours from Ray's big brother Harold. He often cut them for us, in addition to furnishing the inner tube. They were rings about a half inch wide, cut directly across the inner tube. To shoot, they were stretched from the front of the gun, bent over the back, and held by the clothespin. Pressure on the clothespin released the rubber band, which flew toward the target. Sometimes there were heated disagreements as to whether the flying rubber had hit or missed. Overall, we were pretty good sports, and called the shots honestly.

During the summer, Ray Shuster and I roamed the Arroyo Seco, both up and downstream from Brookside Park. On many occasions, we were accompanied by Olof Ohlsson, another friend. We found many places of interest to which we returned on subsequent expeditions. There was the concrete arch bridge which crossed the Arroyo a little north of, and much lower than, the famous Colorado Street bridge. We found that by edging carefully around the base of the abutment, we had access to, and could

climb up on the arch under the bridge, some thirty or forty feet about the dry stream bed and road. Both Ray and Olof had no fear of heights. I, however, have acrophobia, and am rendered a pusillanimous pulp when confronted with even a small sheer drop. Therefore, I crawled up the middle of the arch, which is six or eight feet wide, and even in the middle, I was most uneasy, and never approached the edge, Ray and Olof looked around for additional challenges, and found one in the one-foot wide concrete beams which connected the two parallel arches that supported the bridge. They ventured out, walking calmly across the abyss, while I hugged the middle of the arch, imploring them not to do it.

One day, we found a movie crew working on a third bridge over the Arroyo, in the shade of the Colorado Street bridge. It was a small, low, one-lane bridge in a state of minor disrepair. In the movie being produced, a Roman chariot swung down across the bridge, scattering the stuntman extras who were on the bridge, causing them to leap over the edge. We were enraptured by it all, and made a point of going to see the movie when it came out. We were a little disappointed, however, as the scene took only a few seconds, and we couldn't even identify the bridge.

Southern California is known for dry stream valleys, with few if any permanent streams. Recollections of pristine streams and skinny-dipping swims, therefore, are few and far between for those of us who grew up in Southern California. Ray and I, however, found a swimming hole in the heart of Pasadena. We roamed around the Arroyo Seco, from Brookside Park north and south of the Rose Bowl. In one of our explorations of the area between the park and the Colorado Street bridge, we found a stream of water adjacent to a little-used lane that ran along the arroyo. The water was deep blue in color and seemed to have a little greater density than we expected. When we traced the stream back to its headwaters, we found that it issued from a large pipe, which evidently was the drain from the public swimming pools in the park. It probably was the backwash of the filters that processed the pools' water.

To us, it was romance – our own private swimming hole, known only to us. We knew that the nearby street was little used, and anyway, it was screened from the pool by bushes. Such a treasure had to be enjoyed. We stripped to the buff, put our clothes on the bank, and frolicked in the water. It was a hot day, and the water, though a trifle thick, was cool.

Our pleasure was short-lived. A lady (I use the term loosely) stumbled upon our private pool. Our attention was called to her presence when we heard her shout, "You nasty boys, running around with no clothes on! You should be ashamed! Well, I'm going to teach you a lesson. I'm going to just stay here and keep you in the water until other people, perhaps the police, come along."

At her first words, we cowered in the water, crouching to cover our nudity. However, as she continued her threat, we looked at each other, shrugged our shoulders, and climbed out of the pool, put on our clothes, and left the area. We often played in the pool area, even extending our range southward beyond the Busch Gardens, but we never again took the opportunity to cool off in our private swimming pool.

The end of the twenties and early thirties were marked by the Great Depression. Theaters were hard put to survive, so they instituted all sorts of “come-ons” to stimulate attendance. The free dishes and other premiums which attracted parents were not our dish of tea. We had Saturday afternoon matinees. We lined up to get into the Raymond Theater, next to the car barn, a half hour before opening time, in order to get a good seat. The wait was not really pleasant, as the pavement was hot and we were barefoot, but the production was worth the discomfort. Once in the theater, we enjoyed a newsreel, two serials, a comedy, a Fanchon and Marco stage show, and the feature film. All for the princely sum of ten cents. Needless to say, these Saturday matinees were very popular, as most of us could scare up a dime, and the theater was packed. There were no vendors inside the theater – if you wanted candy, gum, or popcorn you had to bring it with you.

Employment

When I was eleven, Ray got a job delivering the Los Angeles Downtown Shopping News, an advertising paper that was delivered free to most of the homes in Pasadena and elsewhere in the Los Angeles Basin. Although Ray was capable of covering his route by himself, he generously allowed me to work with him and share the very modest sum he was paid. For the first few months or so, we carefully folded the papers in three parts, fitting the cut edge of the paper into the folded end, and ironing the creases in with some old cast irons that were made to be heated on the stove and used on the laundry. We had to tuck the ends in so the paper could be thrown. We had over 200 papers to deliver, and the ironing took a lot of time before we could go out and deliver the papers. We were slow learners, I guess, because it took several months for us to see that we could put the papers unfolded in the bags, and fold them as we walked, creasing them by hand.

We shared the route for several months before we had a minor difference of opinion and Ray fired me. I was heartbroken. It worked out well, however, because I soon got a route of my own. My route was the next route south of the one we had shared. It stretched from Colorado Boulevard to California

Street, and from Fair Oaks Avenue to the Arroyo Seco, that is, from the mean houses near Fair Oaks Avenue to the mansions of Orange Grove and the Arroyo.

In the beginning, I got my papers at home, and put them on my bike and carried them south about a half mile to my route. After the first week, I asked a very nice old lady who lived in a large old home with a spacious porch if I could bring my papers to her house, leave them on her porch, and work from there. She let me do it as long as I left the porch clean. The arrangement worked well, and I soon asked her if I could have the papers dumped off at her house, and if it rained, have them put on the porch to keep them dry. This she also agreed to, and I was able to use the arrangement for several years. I sincerely doubt that anyone today would allow a strange kid such accommodation.

As I have said, the route bridged the extremes of rich and poor. I remember one house near Fair Oaks that housed a black family of fourteen in a two-bedroom building. On the other end, I delivered to the Pasadena home of the Heinz family and other mansions along South Orange Grove and the Arroyo. The Wrigley mansion fell in the area, but they did not want the paper, so I never delivered there. While my contacts were seldom with the owners, it was surprising how many I did have contact with. I heard stories at the Heinz home of early automobiling in California, of a trip from Los Angeles to San Francisco, over dirt roads and cowpaths, through unbridged streams and gullies. It took over a week for the trip.

There was a retired doctor who raised carnations as a hobby. His carefully tended beds were laid out along Orange Grove in a corner of his estate. The rich spicy aroma of the carnations filled the air and made walking past the beds of rare flowers a sheer pleasure. The old gentleman was often working with his flowers, and I would stop to talk with him over the low fence that bordered the area of his flower beds. He knew how much I enjoyed the flowers, and would often break off a particularly aromatic bloom and give it to me, which I enjoyed very much.

I also got to know Tim Butler. Tim held a position, butler I think, in the Merrill mansion. He was a ruddy-faced old Irish man with white hair who had a room in an outbuilding of the estate. Although he worked full-time at the Merrill mansion nine months of the year, Tim spent his summers working at the Tahoe Tavern, running the recreational activities. For decades, he had been recruiting kids from southern California to work summers at the Tahoe Tavern. The kids lived in a dormitory over the theater, and ate in the employees' mess at the hotel.

Tim asked me if I would like a summer job at Lake Tahoe. I jumped at the chance. I was lucky in that I could get a pass on the railroad which saved

me transportation expenses. The Southern Pacific had a spur line from Truckee on the main line along the Truckee River to Tahoe City where it ended at the pier.

There were about fifteen of us, high school and college kids, who worked for Tim. Several of the fellows were second generation; their fathers had worked for Tim some years previously.

The dormitory was the top floor of the recreation building, over the main floor theater and night club, which in turn were over the bowling alleys. The upper story was largely unfinished. The whole was floored and a room had been built in one corner. It was Tim's room. Exposed rafters and structural beams were the only ceiling over the rest of the area. The woodwork served as home to a number of bats who shared the quarters with us. As some of the boys were afraid of bats, we had some wild times when they rolled up newspapers and flailed away at the tiny chirping fliers. These "bat bats" moved a lot of air and may have terrorized the little creatures – but never hit one.

With the exception of Greg, a crippled, sickly twenty-one-year-old who ran the projector in the theater, all the rest of us worked as caddies, pin setters, and ushers. I was small, and I found carrying two golf bags all I could handle, but more than I could handle easily. However, it was the best way to make money, so I did it.

I probably set pins a few times also, but don't remember for sure. In the days before pin setting machines, the pinsetter was in the pit behind the pins. It got a bit dicey when a strong fast bowler hit the pins, sending them flying, and the setter had to dodge the flying pins. It evidently had an effect on the psyche of the pin setters, as evidenced one night in the dormitory. In the middle of the night, we were awakened by cries of, "Here it comes! Dodge! That one almost got me!" We turned on the lights and found one of the pin setters throwing himself around, walking and talking in his sleep. He was dreaming that he was in the alley and the fast bowler was bowling. We calmed him down and put him back in bed. In the morning he remembered nothing,

After a couple of weeks as a caddy, I was shifted to being janitor and doorman for the night club. I swept out the club, cleaned the bar area, emptied the coins from the slot machines, and generally stood around at night. Collecting the quarters from the machines, and noting how much they made for the house, cured me of ever wanting to play the one-armed bandits. One night, I did find out how one could beat the slots. One of the younger ladies who frequented the club got drunk and lost a lot on one of the machines. She mumbled something, and dropped the machine off its stand. The jar dislodged the coins, and they cascaded to the floor. So the

lady screamed, "I won! I won! I got the jackpot!" She was a regular patron, and they let her keep the money. It wouldn't happen like that today. Of course, slot machines were illegal in California at the time. Nonetheless, they were all over the area, including some in a small hotel in Tahoe City owned and operated by the sheriff.

One of the boys working for Tim had ridden his bicycle up from Southern California and was planning to ride back at the end of the summer. I thought that was a great idea and had my parents ship my bike to me so the two of us could ride home together. We left Tahoe in the morning, planning to ride to Sacramento where we would catch the evening boat, the Delta Queen, to San Francisco. We got to Donner Summit by dint of a lot of hard work and a short tow by a couple of the rich girls we had met that summer. They were driving a beautiful blue DeSoto convertible and stopped when they saw us pushing our bikes up a steep grade. They offered to give us a tow to the crest; an offer which we eagerly accepted. It was an intermediate crest and the tow was short, but it gave us a real lift, both physically and emotionally.

It was a beautiful sunny day, the scenery was fantastic, there was a breeze, we were at the crest, the road ahead was downhill and we were young. What could be better? We headed downhill into a breeze that had turned into a strong headwind. It was a joyous ride. We would put our feet up on the handlebar and hunch down over our knees which gave us a more aerodynamic shape. With less wind resistance we'd pick up speed. When the speed became too great, we would put our feet on the pedals and sit up straight to increase our wind resistance and we would slow down to a safe speed. It was a lark. We covered a lot of ground at exhilarating speeds with the expenditure of very little energy. Once we were out of the foothills of the Sierra, our friend the, wind, turned into our enemy, that damned headwind. Now we had to fight a twenty to thirty mile an hour wind that was blowing straight into our faces. All the way across the valley to Sacramento we struggled against that wind. Our progress was slow and we watched the time tick away as we slowly approached Sacramento. By the time we got to Sacramento, the Delta Queen had departed. We decided to take the train into "The City" rather than spend the night in Sacramento.

We arrived in San Francisco well after dark and found lodging in a real fleabag hotel on the Embarcadero. Our bikes were left at the office downstairs and we slept on cots in a dormitory upstairs. The next day we explored the city on our bikes. Both the Golden Gate and the Bay Bridges were being erected and we were interested in both. The approaches to the western end of the Bay Bridge were close to our lodgings so we turned our attention to them. There was a maze of forms for concrete between the road and the bay that looked inviting, so we hid our bikes among the forms, locked them and climbed up in the forms. No workers were in sight and no

one chased us off, so we continued and soon found ourselves on an iron walkway that ran along the south side of the lower roadway of the bridge. The road, itself, was not yet in; we were on a three foot wide walk with a several hundred foot drop on one side and the steelwork of the bridge on the other. The steelwork of the bridge included a continuous railing which gave me emotional support and negated my acrophobia so I was able to continue, even with the horrendous drop on the one side. My resolve was severely tested, however, when we encountered a stack of large timbers which cut the width of the walkway to about twelve inches. Even worse for me, the timbers made it impossible for me to run my hands along the steel railing; it destroyed my security blanket. Faced with the narrow walkway and the tremendous drop, I was ready to call off the proceedings and go back to our bikes on terra firma, When my companion passed the timbers without hesitating, my pride wouldn't allow me to "chicken out" and I passed the obstruction without allowing my fear to show. Soon we were leaving the cantilever portion of the bridge, almost to the island and tunnel between the two bridges that make up the Bay Bridge, and thus far had seen nobody.

This changed after we went through the tunnel and climbed up to the upper level. We still had met nobody up close and we tried to look as though we belonged when we saw workers at a distance. We now were on part of the suspension portion of the bridge which already had a concrete road way. Now we began to meet people. We walked ahead, trying to look like we had a job to do, and didn't seem to attract attention. The first time we were noticed came with a hail from above. One of the painters that were painting the suspension cables shouted down to us and flicked paint at us when we didn't answer. That was our only encounter with adverse attention until we were out in the middle of the Plaza on the Oakland end of the bridge. The wide expanse of concrete shimmered in the midday heat and workers and equipment were active all around us. We had had no water since we had started out that morning and there didn't appear to be any chance of a drink as long as we were on the construction site, We were also getting a little tired and were looking forward to getting off the torrid concrete expanse. Now our luck changed. A young engineer, who was talking to some workers, noticed us and called us over. We couldn't disregard him, as we had the painter, so we went over to him.

"What are you doing out here" he asked in a decidedly unfriendly tone, "Where did you come from and how did you get here?."

"We came from over there," we lied, pointing to Oakland, "and we are just looking around."

"How did you get out here?" he repeated.

"We just walked out and nobody said anything to us, so we just kept

walking” we said, which was strictly speaking, the truth.

He didn’t seem to believe us, but he chose not to pursue the questioning further. He sort of grunted and said “Just turn around and get the hell out of here.”

“And don’t come back,” he added.

We did both.

A few days later I had lunch with my sister Dorothy, who was a student at Cal, and regaled her with our story. She told me that I was lucky; two girls from Cal were caught trying to walk across the unfinished bridge the day after our foray and were arrested and fined for trespassing.

The next summer, my brother Tom, accompanied me to the Tavern, where he worked all summer, though I shifted to a different workplace. I was offered a better-paying job at the Tahoe Mercantile Company, and I took it. The Tahoe Mercantile Company, known as the Merc, was to my knowledge the oldest store, probably the only store, in Tahoe City at the time. The store was located at the end of the railroad, at the pier. Another consideration, besides the pay, entered into my decision to leave the Tavern. I was an idealistic kid who had been brought up to be nice to people without expecting a reward, beyond “Thanks.” I felt that little attentions to a guest did not merit a tip and that taking a tip somehow demeaned me. The hotel employees counted on tips as part of their pay, so I couldn’t start turning down tips and stay at the hotel. When I left the hotel, I could say, “Thank you but no thanks,” when I was offered a tip for some minor thing. It was juvenile and quixotic, but that was how I had been raised, and that was how I felt.

There were three of us student summer employees and an older man, the butcher, working at the Merc that summer. All of us lived on the second floor of the store and ate our meals at a nearby restaurant. The restaurant looked like a “greasy spoon” and I guess it was one, but the food was simple, tasty, and plentiful. The food was plentiful because our butcher was taking care of the sexual needs of the owner/operator of the restaurant and we all got special privileges. All that summer I ate two full meals at lunch and dinner while paying for only one. I was an active, growing, teenage male with a high metabolism and didn’t even put on weight.

One of my duties was delivering ice, milk, and groceries to houses along the west side of the lake from Tahoe City to Emerald Bay. I never went north of Tahoe City, probably because the road was very poor and few people lived there. My day started with my taking a truck to the icehouse, to load the day’s requirement of ice. Ice was cut in the winter from open ponds in the

area and stored in the icehouse for sale the next summer. The blocks of ice, weighing about 50 pounds each, were stacked in layers separated by sawdust, to fill the icehouse almost to the ceiling, leaving little headroom for me to work. Every day I would crawl into the icehouse on my hands and knees, separate the ice blocks needed that day and muscle them out to where I could stand up and load them on the truck. I then loaded the milk and cream for the day's deliveries into the metal boxes they were carried in, iced them down, picked up the groceries and started on my route. The roads were not very smooth and the jiggling and shaking of the load often turned over a bottle or two; spilling all or part of the contents. Of course, the partially full bottles could not be delivered, so extra bottles were carried to make up for any spillage. I couldn't see wasting the remaining liquid in the partially full bottles so I would drink it. On some of the warmer days in summer I might have helped the bumps in the road spill a cold bottle.

Every Fourth of July was celebrated with a gala marine festival at the Tavern, with races a boat parade and events in the hotel that I was not invited to. Boat owners from all around the lake came in their Gar Woods and Criscrafts, speed boats and cabin cruisers, to take part in the festivities. One of the participants that year was Henry J, Kaiser, owner of one of the "Six Companies" that built Hoover Dam, who had a luxurious home nearby. Kaiser's boat was a big cabin cruiser, powered by twin, gasoline engines. The gasoline engines were thirsty and required large fuel tanks, which had been filled preparatory to the trip to the Tavern. Kaiser's boat pulled in to the Tavern dock, tied up and he went up to the hotel for the festivities being held there, A short time later, a fire broke out on the boat. The crew, mindful of the full gas tanks, jumped up onto the dock and took off for distant locations. My brother and another of Tim's boys grabbed fire extinguishers, jumped down into the boat and put out the fire; saving the boat and averting what could have been a disastrous explosion. Mr. Kaiser didn't even thank them for saving his very expensive boat.

That was the last summer that I worked at the lake.

