



Reminiscences

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Reminiscences — where to start? Why, “at the beginning, of course” (Alice in Wonderland). Actually, I have no real recollection of the house in which I was born, on (1631?) Harvard Blvd. near (just north of?) Jefferson in Los Angeles. We moved to the house at 1555 West 51st Street when I was about two years old. This was in 1914, shortly before Evelyn was born, I think.

The first thing I can remember is lying in bed in a tent, watching the grownups around a campfire. In the mountains, of course, but where? Certainly in Southern California, the San Gabriels, or the San Bernadino Mountains, perhaps Forest Home. It doesn't matter. What does matter is that my parents started me out right, and my love for the mountains has grown through the years.

One of the things I have loved about mountains is the experience of driving toward them at night, with the big, dark, mysterious bulk looming up in front of us. It filled me (and still does) with tremendous excitement.

I can also remember Mom waking us early in the morning (“Wake up, we're going to the mountains!”) getting dressed sleepily, trying not to make a lot of noise that would bother the neighbors, going out into the cold dark morning, and getting into the open car with a blanket around each of us children, and setting out under a starlit sky. Then the sunrises we have seen on the way!

I remember the 51st Street house very well, as I lived there for roughly the first twenty years of my life, and visited there until the folks moved to Redlands. It was a lovely house, not like any other.

When we moved there, it was in a newer part of town, quite a ways out. There were quite a few new houses on the block already when we came. I remember the oval glass in the front door of Mrs. Flick's house down at the end of the block.

Dad planned the house, probably drew the plans, and definitely wrote the specifications. I have read some of them and they had his mark. I remember the phrase “in a workmanlike manner.”

The neighbors naturally walked through the house as it went up, and they were puzzled about the room between the kitchen and the back bedroom. It was too small to be a bedroom, and there

were four posts sticking up through the floor. They became the supports for Dad's workbench. This room also had a sink and a small window with a light bulb shining through red glass for photographic work.

Then there were rectangular holes between most of the adjoining rooms, about one and a half by two feet in size. These were for the electric heaters, between the front bedroom and the living room, the middle bedroom and the dining room, and the back bedroom and the bathroom. Each heater had a metal or asbestos lining on the doors which opened into one or the other of the rooms when the tall electric heat lamps were in use. They heated up quickly!

Each of the main rooms had a small hole in the corner with a brass cover which screwed on, I think. The vacuum cleaner hose fastened onto the hole, a large electric motor in the workroom was started, and the dirt was sucked up by a vacuum cleaner wand and shot out from under the workroom into the back yard.

There were lots of built-ins, such as shoulder-high dressers in the large walk-in closets in the front and back bedrooms. I learned to type on top of one of these chests of drawers, signing my works "Shakespeare Junior" (plays about intrigue at court which continued for several pages and then gave up). A portfolio of fine Civil War photographs was kept in the bottom drawer.

The front bedroom had a bay window with a window seat with storage below it. I have always loved window seats. Perhaps this is because the Van Deusens had them in their living room, and that is where I sat and read bound volumes of St. Nicholas Magazine, with red covers, while the grownups visited.

Somehow this reminds me of the time I was sick and was given a pill. I didn't swallow it, but waited until Mom was out of the room, then got up, got on the window seat, opened the window and screen, and threw the pill out. I was not a good patient, to put it mildly. When Dr. Schuchow (sp?) came to see me one time, I turned my back to him in bed and kicked at him. I think one reason I was a bad patient (besides my being stubborn) was that the folks got all excited when a

person got sick, and I thought that was silly.

Back to the built-ins — between the kitchen and the dining room was a large and lovely china cupboard with glass doors on the dining-room side, and a pass-through. It saved a lot of steps. There were lower drawers for table linen, etc.

That reminds me of the time Evelyn was being helpful by carrying a pile of lovely Haviland china from the sideboard to the dining table, when she tripped on the rug and there was catastrophic breakage. I don't blame Mom for bursting into tears.

At first there was a wood- or coal-burning stove in the dining room, next to the swinging kitchen door. I remember the coal scuttle and the flat piece of metal under the stove. Later the stove was replaced by a floor furnace. I went with Dad to the home of a friend at school for him to see their floor furnace, before we got ours.

The fireplace in the living room had bookcases with glass doors on either side. Christmas trees were always set in front of one of these bookcases. We had a paper cutout of Santa Claus and his reindeer which we fastened to the mantel each year until it wore out.

My grandmother Susie Stratton's grand piano was in the west end of the living room, and we would have the sliding doors closed between the living room and dining room, and the electric heater going next to us in the winter while I had my piano lessons, which started when I was about five years old. I remember the large notes in my music books, and one of the pieces:

"Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a thief. Taffy came to my house and stole a piece of beef. I went to Taffy's house, Taffy wasn't home. Taffy came to my house and stole a marrow bone. I went to Taffy's house, Taffy was in bed. I took the marrow bone and hit him on the head." The tune was simple and only used four notes, but — imagine that text in a children's music book today!

There was a panel of light switches next to the front door. The living room was rather large, and there were many electric lights. Dad was in the wiring business with Dick Hensel at that time, and he went all out on the house. One time the electric meter reader made the mistake of telling

Mom that whoever wired the house had sold her a bill of goods, putting in many more circuits than necessary. She drew herself up to her full five feet one inch and told him frigidly, "My husband wired this house."

The kitchen had all sorts of modern conveniences, a built-in electric oven and a big, round dishwasher on casters, which was filled by a hose from the sink. Then we pumped a handle to spray the water over the dishes. I don't remember how the water was emptied at the end. We had a Clark Jewel gas stove, with a high oven on the right side. Stoves of those days stood on legs, so there was no stooping in using them. I remember copper wash boilers bubbling away on top of the stove. When the folks were through with the stove catalog, I cut pictures out of it to use with my paper dolls.

There was a kitchen cabinet, a pre-fab unit put into the place Dad had planned for it. It had a good work space, and an upper receptacle for flour, under which you turned a little handle and the flour came out the bottom. Spices and such were in the upper reaches. I remember Mom making frosting by putting egg whites in one of the good china platters, and beating them with a fork, holding the platter in one arm while she beat with the other.

The built-in ironing board was to the left of the cabinet. When we were ironing, the ironing board came down between the kitchen cabinet and the stove, so it was hard to do cooking at the same time.

There was space below the ironing board itself in its compartment. One time Dad got a hundred pound sack of sugar, which he kept in this compartment. I remember the commotion when we found that a queen ant had made her headquarters there.

The rest of that kitchen wall was solid cupboards. The gas water heater was in a metal-lined closet next to the swinging door to the dining room. It had to be lighted when anyone wanted to take a bath. I don't remember anything about whether we used it to heat dishwater or not.

To the right of the kitchen cabinet, there was a built-in cooler at least six feet high, where cooling

breezes could come up from below the house through the screens on each shelf. The refrigerator (or rather, ice box) was small by modern standards, probably 2-3 cubic feet for food, available from a low door in the kitchen, and an upper part about the same size on the big screened back porch to hold the ice.

We children always liked to have the ice wagon come. It probably was horse-drawn to start with, but I don't remember for sure. The ice man would take his ice pick and cut a big block down to the size we needed, and all the neighbor children would grab the slivers and chunks of ice which dropped off in the chopping. Then the iceman would pick up the chunk of ice with his big tongs, and hoist it up onto a piece of leather over his shoulder, and carry it into the back porch to put it into the ice chest.

The ice came from an icehouse on Jefferson Ave., just east of where the streetcar to downtown Los Angeles came on the right of way near Grand Ave. One time Mom took us there to see how the ice was made in long rectangular metal cans which were lowered into the floor, where the water was frozen.

It seems to me that there was a square card we put in the front window with the proper side (or corner?) up to tell the iceman whether we wanted 25 or 50 pounds.

The back porch was big and had two washtubs with hand wringer between them. The back door led to a stoop where you could stand to hang the clothes on the clothes line which turned on a vertical axis. The back porch was also where Dad and Mom made jelly, and we knew enough to stay out of the way while this was in progress. There was a regular factory production line with Dad in charge.

One of the nicest things about the house was the big front porch. It must have been about six feet wide, and went from the front door to the east corner of the house and around to where the bay window in the dining room started. Then there were steps down to a walk around to the back of the house. There was a glass windbreak on the west edge of the front porch, and the porch had a

brick wall several feet high covered with ficus repens (a creeping small leaved plant which fastened itself onto the brickwork). This was a lovely place to play jacks, dolls, etc.

Under the eaves at the end of the porch near the dining room was where I was found one rainy day, when I didn't come home from school on time. I loved rain, and was standing in my rain coat under the waterfall that came off the roof at that point.

We have several pictures of all the female members of our family with our brother Walter when he was a baby, there on the front porch. Something went wrong when he was born and there was a birth injury which interfered with his development. On top of that he got polio (it must have been) and had to wear braces for a while.

We used to take him down to the Orthopedic Hospital when it was quite new. It was on the grounds of a fine mansion on West Adams Street, in the coach house. Dr. Lowman, the head doctor for countless years, who was responsible for the outstanding work that was done at that hospital, took care of Walter, and I remember him as a wonderfully kind person.

Walter also had a brain operation at one time, at the Children's Hospital in Los Angeles. Evelyn and I were too young to know all about what was happening, but I do remember these things. Walter had a beautiful face, as I remember, with curly hair, and we children enjoyed him.

As I said, we didn't understand all the situation. Evidently things came to the point that the folks decided that they could not care for Walter adequately without skimping on their care of us other children and going to pieces themselves, that there was no hope he could develop normally, and that he should be put into an institution. So arrangements were made for him to go to the State Hospital in Sonoma, in Northern California. The reports from the hospital indicated that he was reasonably happy there and liked music. When he was six, he got pneumonia and died.

We had a nice group of friends in the neighborhood. We met the Clarksons soon after moving to 51st Street. Jean and I, Coral and Evelyn, and Hortense (the mother) and Mom all became best friends. Down the street were the Mohlers, with Dorothy and Edwin (the only boy on the block).

They had a windup phonograph with records of Caruso(?). I thought at first that they had a man in the attic who was singing.

Across the street were Mrs. Davis, the matriarch of the family, who had grown up in Amador County in Northern California, and her daughter Neva (?) who worked sewing in a custom drapery shop. Another daughter had broken away and married (against her mother's wishes, I believe). Mrs. Davis cared for Eleanor Horeth, who was about our age and whose mother had died. She kept a pretty tight rein on Eleanor.

Mrs. Davis did beautiful crochet work, and presented each of the neighborhood girls with a set of lace for a sheet and two pillowcases when she got married.

Our back yard was large, about 50-60 feet wide and 200-300 feet long. Dad planted all sorts of fruit trees, plums, figs, peaches, and a large walnut tree that I used to climb and pretend I was a sailor. There were loquats and guavas and rhubarb, and blackberries, and a vegetable garden. There was a small summer house with seats built around the sides, and a square table in the center.

When we went away on vacations, there was usually fruit ripening on our trees in the backyard. We would tell the Davises to help themselves. They not only did this, but presented us with canned fruit, jams, and jellies from this fruit when we returned.

When Mrs. Davis became old and ill and could not do much, Mom would visit her every day, and often would take us with her. I think this taught me a lot, and is responsible for any such visiting I have done in my life.

Mom at one time went each week on the bus to Hollywood to take Mrs. Loucks(?), the mother of Dad's secretary, shopping. Mrs. Loucks was blind, and her husband wasn't able to get out. That was quite typical of Mom.

The "Home Club" was a neighborhood affair. Mom and Nana belonged to the Harmonia Study Club, which was formed of women who made music in some form, instrumental or vocal, and who wanted to keep learning. Twice a month, except during the summer, one group of the women

would present a program which included musical current events, back-ground about the composers, period, or whatnot that was to be featured that day, and musical numbers. This was followed by nice refreshments.

On occasion they would take us to a program. We would dress up in our best dresses and it was a special occasion. One time we had been promised to do this, but it rained, and it was decided that Nana and we children should stay at home.

So Nana suggested that we have our own club meeting with a musical program. She was teaching me piano, and Mom was starting Evelyn on violin. This was a big success, and we decided to have the "Home Club" with the neighbor children included. Most of them were also studying music.

We all learned how to play before an audience without fear, sit and listen while others played, and applaud at the right time. We even had a secretary who took minutes and read them at the next meeting. We all took names of grownups, either a member of Harmonia Club, or music teacher, or grownup friend, or imaginary person.

I think I was in fourth grade when Nana, my grandmother, had a sudden stroke at the breakfast table and died about a week later. The folks got a nurse and she was cared for at home during that time. Afterwards they burned sulfur candles in the tightly shut room, with the crack at the bottom of the door stuffed with something. I think it was a means of disinfecting, but seems very strange now that it was felt to be necessary.

Naturally I missed my piano lessons with her, and I especially remembered her reading to us as we ate, when we were younger and had our supper earlier than the grownups.

The loss of her mother must have been very hard for Mom, as they had been tremendously close all of her life. One further problem was that now she had no one to accompany her on the piano. So it wasn't long before Mom picked out a simple song with an easy accompaniment for me to learn. I think it was a "Cradle Song" by Heller (?). She had me play for her at Harmonia Club. From that time on we played together with the greatest enjoyment all the rest of her life. ®

Family and Church

Sometime, I don't know whether or not it was at the time my parents were married, that Dad was working in the Los Angeles shops of the Edison Company. One night something went wrong and he received a huge jolt of electricity, which knocked him unconscious. His fellow workers got him conscious again somehow, gave him a drink of whiskey, and sent him home on the streetcar. I have been told that was why he decided to go in business for himself.

At one time he did photographic developing and printing from his workroom. He also made small transformers. I think he was in the wiring business when we moved to the 51st Street house, with his partner Dick Hensel, who lived on 51st Place.

They did house wiring in new developments. In the back of their car they had a large wicker basket full of automobile parts. Whenever the car broke down, one of the men would take the tools for wiring the house and start walking to the new house, while the other one repaired the car and came on later. That is why women didn't drive much in those days.

Later Dad was offered a job in San Francisco with a Mr. Berkeley in some utility company. I don't know the details. He would stay there for possibly several weeks, then come home on the train to be with the family.

Some time after that he went to Beaumont and Banning to get the Twin Cities Gas Company going. He set up the whole gas system, I think. One time he took us with him when he drove back there, and I was worried because I couldn't figure how we would get home. Then he told us that we would ride home on the train, which was tremendously exciting news. We left in late afternoon, had dinner in the diner, and I remember the lights we saw as we watched out the window after dark.

Then when he got in the Valuation Dept./ of the Edison Company in Los Angeles, he was home for good. His good friend, Arthur Kelley, was the Valuation Engineer, and Dad was the Assistant Valuation Engineer. They made a good team. Dad expected a lot from his secretaries, he chose them carefully, and they were good.

The company was in the Grauman's Million Dollar Theatre Building at 3rd and Broadway in Los Angeles. When their department needed more space, they were told that there was nothing available. So Dad went scavenging around, and found good space in the Fay Building, next door on 3rd Street. There was a restaurant across the street, sort of a health food place, which had delicious salads and sandwiches.

Later, when the Edison Company built their own building at 5th and Grand (I believe), it was kitty-corner from the Biltmore Hotel Building. They had a health club in that building, and at noon Dad would go over and swim.

Mention of swimming makes it necessary to go back a ways. Dad had always been a mountaineer ever since they came to Redlands in the 1890's. Their crowd in the Congregational Church also took mountain trips, to Mount Wilson, Greyback, Forest Home, etc. I'm surprised that Mom made such climbs, but she got to the top of Greyback.

They took us to Forest Home when Evelyn had just learned to walk, and when she toddled into the dining room, all heads turned to watch how cute she was. We loved playing in the stream, making roads in the dirt, etc.

When we were older we went to Big Bear Lake several summers. We stayed at Fawnskin resort in a tent cottage, near the lake. That was where I learned to row a boat, and watch Dad fish. A few years later lots were for sale there; and Dad, who had always wanted a cabin in the mountains, decided to buy. But someone else got in just a few hours before they did, and the opportunity was lost. However, dry years came, the lake went down, and Fawnskin was eventually a long ways from the water, so it was all right as far as we were concerned.

It was later, when we girls were in our teens, that we started going to Huntington Lake for our vacations. It was 7000 feet high and the water was cold, but wonderful. Dad would have liked to swim, but he was somewhat round shouldered, and he couldn't keep his head out of the water while he swam. So we taught him how to keep his head under the water, just coming up every four strokes

to breathe, and he learned to swim. Mom also learned to swim while she was there. I was so proud of them.

Mom and Dad met in the First Congregational Church at 8th and Hope (I believe) in Los Angeles. They had an orchestra, and an Orchestra Class, formed of the members of the orchestra. Since Mom was in it, Dad began to learn to play bass viol, I believe. But certainly not all of their group of friends there played musical instruments. They had many close friends there with whom they kept in contact for years.

Probably all of us children were baptized there, and once in a while they would take us there to a service. It was a big church with a good organ and organist, Dr. Skeele, I believe, who taught at USC. I'm not sure of the details. My grandmother, Susie Stratton, was a fine organist, and she was organist for special services etc. I remember how the organ would just send shivers down my spine, and I loved it. There was a balcony which sort of curved around, and when I went there the first time, I wondered how the people I saw in the balcony got there (the stairs were not visible from where I sat). Then later we sat in the balcony, and I remember looking down. I liked to go to that church.

It must have been hard for them to change churches, but after we moved to 51st Street, which was quite a ways out, and had us children, it made more sense to go to a nearby church. First we went to a United Presbyterian (?) church at the southeast corner of 53rd and Western. It was a fairly small church. I remember the story, at least, of being in some sort of a program, and Evelyn, who was quite small, yelling out, "That's my sister."

Then, somehow or other, we got into the Pilgrim Congregational Church at 46th and Normandie, also a fairly small church. We would walk there every Sunday.

Nana played the small pump organ for the kindergarten class, and I remember the song we sang as we marched around to give our offering, " 'Give,' said the little stream." I guess it was there that I sang my only public solo, "The lilies are going to sleep." I recently found the words in my

Sweet

grandmother's handwriting, pasted into an old hymnal.

Mr. Donat was the minister, and his daughter Ruth was about my age. My teacher was Dorothy Kirkwood. We called her "Miss Dorothy" and I liked her. Our class met in some of the pews in the sanctuary. What I liked was looking up verses in the Bible, as I was fairly fast at finding them. I would read my Sunday School papers during church, which bothered my parents.

Mom sang in the choir. Once in a while we went to a rehearsal with her, and I would watch the grownups to see how they reacted with each other in this small group. I remember some of the anthems they sang, and sometimes our choir sings some of them. Once they started a children's choir, which sang a fairly long anthem. I enjoyed that, but I don't think it continued for very long.

When I was about nine years old, my parents asked if I would like to join the church. I said, "Yes", and was very serious about being in church every Sunday. The church was quite liberal, I can see now, and it had a strong influence on me.

When I was in my teens, I was asked to play the piano for the Junior Dept. and I enjoyed that a lot. One day I started playing a hymn without noticing the key signature, got to the middle where I couldn't figure how to get out of the mess, so I simply jumped to the right key and continued, while the rest sort of gasped, ran after me, and grabbed on. Then gradually I got into teaching one of the junior classes.

In our neighborhood we played with Jean and Coral Clarkson, our best friends, Dorothy and Edwin Mohler, and Eleanor Horeth. We played dolls and school and jacks and card games and parchesi. Jean was always the teacher, and I think she would have made an excellent teacher if she had had the opportunity to go to college. She did teach piano for many years, however.

The Greenstreet dolls were something special. Mom bought them from someone coming door to door, and I have never run onto them anywhere else. They were paper dolls, made of cardboard, about a foot tall. There were dresses for them, of course, but that wasn't all. There were dress patterns, made of cardboard, for dresses which had a slit so you could slip them over the dolls head

and have them dressed front and back.

We made all sorts of clothes for them, and then started using cloth scraps as well as paper. It was an extremely creative affair.

We also played with shells. Mom's Uncle Tom (Thomas Jefferson McClain) had been US Consul to the Bahamas, and he had sent Mom a big box of small pearly bivalve shells. We would spread them out on the rug and play games with them.

Evelyn, do you remember how we would fool around after we were put to bed in the front bedroom? One of us would play the piano with our feet on the other person. And the Lincoln logs – Edgarito and I still play with the ones that remain (there is only one side to the roof, but that stimulates our creativity).

Do you remember playing the story of the friends opening the roof and letting the sick man down in front of Jesus? We used the oblong train blocks to build the house. It took a little experimenting to make the roof stay on and still be removable. We let a cardboard bed down with string. Those train blocks still are in use.

Later when we were upper elementary school, probably, ^{Evelyn} you made dioramas which stood on the window seat in the front bedroom, which was ^{hers} yours after Nana died. One celluloid doll had no arms or legs, just head and torso. So you dressed it like a judge. Perhaps you remember other scenes.

Dad built us a swing, trapeze, and acting bar. I wasn't as daring as Coral was. She could do fine handstands, and tricks on the trapeze.

We also had THE CANAL! Dad let us dig a streambed which we filled from one of the faucets in the long back yard. We dug a winding course, with islands. We built towns, put the toy train out next to it, watched how the water filled the ditch, learned how it behaved where it curved, and just how far you could control it.

We also just played in the mud for the fun of it. We had at least one mud party which is immortalized by a photo. Dad built us a playhouse of wood frame covered with gunny sacks and

topped with palm fronds (there were palm trees in the parking in front of the house, which are now at least 50-70 feet tall).

All of us would go on the streetcar to Exposition Park in the summertime, to the outdoor plunge. It had two pools, one on the east for the girls, and one on the west for the boys. We would play around in the water, but didn't really swim. We also went to Exposition Park to the museum, and saw the skeletons of the mammoths and saber toothed tigers.

When we got a little bigger, Mom had us take swimming lessons at Bimini Baths, at the end of the V carline on North Vermont, just about where Los Angeles City College and the Braille Institute are located. It had natural hot springs for its source.

We didn't own our own swim suits, but would rent the gray suits both there and at Exposition Park. I think it was some time before personal swim suits were common for children. I kept a diary one year, in which it said, "Mama says if we are good, she will buy us a bathing suit."

We took our lessons in a small pool inside the building, and learned the resting back stroke, which I still use on alternate laps. Just after I mastered that, I went to the big outdoor pool, and hitched myself around the edge down toward the deep end. My teacher came out and saw me, and said, "Swim across." I was scared, but I did it, and I think it did a lot for my confidence. We also learned the side stroke. I haven't the faintest idea where I learned free style. I have always been thankful that I learned to swim, as it is such an enjoyable thing to do and age doesn't interfere. One regular swimmer at the South Gate Pool is 89 years old.

Sometimes we would go to the beach. I used to pretend that the hills as we drove west were large waves on the ocean that we were sailing over. Then when we came to the final hill, we would all yell, "I see the ocean." There are photos of us wading at the edge of the ocean in regular clothes. We would always get soaked, and then freeze on the way home in the open car.

(

School)

We went to Western Avenue School, at the southeast corner of 54th Street and Western Avenue. Western Avenue was paved as far as Florence Avenue, after that it was just dust, or mud. I have a vague recollection of our getting into the car one Sunday afternoon (?) and taking a drive out that way.

The school was a two story and basement building made of brick, I think. We went in from the south side, where the playground was. I remember a sandbox, slide, and teeter-totter.

The auditorium ran east and west from the east side of the main building. I know that there was an exit door on the south side with steps going down to the playground. The reason I remember this is that when I was in 5th or 6th grade, we had some sort of a program of dances, etc. on the playground. I was one of the two children who played the piano duet for at least one of the dances. It was "The Ace of Diamonds." The piano was moved out to the top of the exit steps and we had to play as loud as we could so that the dancers could hear the music.

My first acquaintance with the school must have been when I was about four years old. The kindergarten was having some sort of open house or something, and Mom took Evelyn and me. They had displays of small sweet peas, and sunbonnet type hats, both made of circles of paper folded in half. The hats stood up on little stands. I wasn't too impressed. I remember nothing about attending kindergarten.

In first grade my teacher was Miss Kalembach. I remember sitting in almost the last seat in the first row of seats, next to the blackboard (I presume there was a backboard, anyhow the last row to the right as you faced the teacher). I had a small rack, sort of like for Mah Jongg, with pieces of cardboard, each with a word out of which we made sentences. The "Little Red Hen" was connected with first grade, I'm pretty sure.

Usually we walked home for lunch. We walked in front of the school to 53rd Street, then

diagonally on a path through the weeds of a vacant lot to 52nd Street. A little further east, a sidewalk (but no street) took us across 51st Place to the dead end of Harvard Blvd., which was the west end of our block. Be sure to remember this vacant lot, it reappears in 6th grade

The first time I took my lunch to school, Mom packed too much in a cardboard box. There was an apple, I am sure. I was so entranced watching the children from my perch on the edge of the sandbox, that most of the lunch was uneaten when the bell rang.

There was no cafeteria. To the east of the school grounds, past an alley, there was a small shop where they served mashed potatoes and gravy in cardboard schooners with wooden spoons. There was undoubtedly other merchandise to tempt spending, but I think this was the only food.

Second grade is a total blank in my mind. Third grade was in one of the two bungalows on the southeast part of the grounds. There is a faint recollection in my mind that I was supposed to skip a grade, but got into the wrong bungalow, and so didn't. Who knows?

For third grade I remember the teacher but not her name. She had the multiplication tables on a strip poster going all the way around the room above the blackboards, and every morning, after the Pledge of Allegiance, we would repeat the multiplication tables in unison. She would be happy to know that I learned them quite well. I liked her.

Fourth grade was a milestone. My teacher was Miss Alcorn, and we studied about California history. She taught us some Spanish words, and I loved them. It opened up a new world. One Saturday she took us to San Gabriel to see "The Mission Play." I suppose we went on the streetcar. Her twelve year old brother, who was a Boy Scout, went with us, wearing his uniform, and I was much impressed.

We took a picnic lunch which we ate under the pepper trees. I was highly entertained when Jimmy Rees used the bananas from his lunch for guns, and I giggled like mad. The play made a big impression on me, though I realized in later years that it was a little over-emotional. But it was good for us to see it that year.

That was probably the year that I was nominated for the group that later became the 1000 Terman Children for the study at Stanford University. During one of the tests I took at the beginning of the study, I learned a code used in the Civil War.

That was a treasure to be kept and used! Immediately I began writing (all in this code) a romantic adventure story set on one of the old Spanish ranchos. As time went on, I switched more and more into regular writing, and I don't think I ever finished the story.

Mrs. Hall was my fifth grade teacher. I was deep into story writing by this time. She had the class write stories from time to time. Most were short, but not mine. Whenever I finished my other work early, I was allowed to write, and I filled sheets and sheets of legal-size lined paper. "Very interesting" was one comment I remember. I think she really enjoyed reading them. This was my first classroom on the second floor of the building.

My mother kept some of these stories, I am thankful to say. (Here comes a pause as I go to read them. Happily the code story is among them.)

At the moment I don't remember the name of my sixth grade teacher, but I remember her very well. Older children would say, "When you get to her you get credits." We certainly did. She had it set up that way.

Everything we did earned credits. Each person had a small notebook in which we wrote them down. 10 credits for a perfect spelling test, 2 credits for something else. No credits for talking at the wrong time, etc. We totalled them up at the end of the day.

Friday afternoon we totalled the credits for the week. Those with the highest total had to copy them onto the black board at the back of the room to make sure there were no mistakes.

Monday morning there was a chart on the blackboard. The person with the highest total for the previous week sat in the front row on the window side. The others followed, down the first row, then the other rows in turn. I sometimes felt sorry for the boys and girls who never made it out of the last row. It must have been discouraging.

When Miss Downing, the principal, needed someone to do an errand, a buzzer sounded in our classroom. Then the person in the first seat on the window side left the room, went to the office, and did whatever Miss Downing asked. I don't remember what any of the errands were, but they probably included carrying notes to teachers, as this was before the days of electronics.

Miss Downing deserves more mention than this. She was tall, this, and notably cross-eyed. She wore high lace collars with boning to keep them up high, and to us small ones, she was a formidable character. She and Mom were good friends, and one day Mom came home with a story that made our hair stand up on end.

Miss Downing had a parrot. When the daylight savings change came, Miss Downing started to put the cover over its cage and told the parrot that it was time to go to bed. The parrot said, "I won't!" When Mom recounted this terrible happening, we gasped in horror — we couldn't imagine ANYONE saying "I won't" to Miss Downing.

One day when we were in line going downstairs from the second floor, I happened to be talking to a friend as we got to the landing half way down. Miss Downing was on the landing, and pulled me out of line because talking was not allowed. I don't remember what Miss Downing said to me, but when she released me to go to the playground, everyone crowded around me, asking, "What did she do? What did she do?"

I imagine she was a very good principal. I met her later when I was taking Child Psychology in college. Each of us had to choose a real child to observe at home and at school. I chose a little boy who lived across the street from the folks, and who attended Normandie Ave. School near their house. I contacted the school for permission to visit and observe him, and it turned out that Miss Downing was then the principal at Normandie.

When I arrived at the school, and walked into the office, Miss Downing greeted me with, "I'm glad to see you, Gertrude; and how is your sister Evelyn and her friend Margot?" Just imagine that, after all those years!