

Dear Pat,

Since I received your letter last year, it has been on the computer desk waiting for me, and I have been putting off writing. It has given me many restless nights and some bad days, too. However, I will try to give you some of the story and maybe that will calm me down.

Our mother was born in Wrightstown, Wis. the youngest of 8 children. Her father died when she was 6 years old. I don't think she ever lived on their farm, but they lived in the city after he died. She was an excellent pianist, played for everything while she was in High School, probably for church, too. She went to what they called "Normal School" after that and became a teacher. She taught in a one-room schoolhouse in North Dakota, but not for long because she couldn't stand the wind and cold and bleakness there.

After that she worked in an insurance company in Fort Wayne, Indiana, don't really know how that came about, but that's where she met our Dad.

I am still trying to find out about his mother. I don't even know her maiden name. His father was in show business, song and dance and acting, and married again, a fellow show person named Bobbie, and they had a daughter. Our father lived with his uncle on a farm in Indiana and was raised by him. He also had a brother, Joe, who lived on the farm. They both went into the army during World War I. Joe died during the war, whether he was killed or died later as a result of gas, I'm not sure. Our Dad was gassed and suffered lung problems all his life because of that.

Anyway, they met in Fort Wayne, got married there and I was born there. They moved to Racine when I was just 9 months old because mother's sister Jo and her family lived there, and probably because he could get work there. He worked for J.I. Case Co. as a machinist until he was let go during the depression. My mother's mother lived with us when we lived in Racine, don't know exactly when she came but I was very young, maybe not even a year. She probably came to help my mother and because she was alone. She lived with us until she died, when I was in High School.

We lived in a lower flat on Franklin Street in Racine for quite a few years, and that was probably the best time of our lives, even though we must

have been poor even then. But we had a nice yard, toys and clothes and went to parks, the beach and the zoo. My mother tried to teach Grace and me how to play the piano, and we got the basics, but we never really got good at it, although Grace did better than I did.

Our Dad did many things over the years, built a small boat, a rowboat, in which we went out on Lake Michigan. We also went out in a motorboat, which was small, maybe even the same one. He was an excellent swimmer, would swim out to the breakwater when we went to the beach, and back, encouraged us to swim, but never really pushed it. He also was interested in race cars, even drove them at times, not in a race, but tested them. He was a ham radio operator, first with Morse Code, later with microphone, and repaired radios for people.

We moved a lot, as the family grew, moved to Milwaukee when I was 10 years old, lived on the south side for a short time, then moved to the North side, to a huge house where we lived for about five years, kitchen, dining room, living room and 1 bedroom downstairs, 4 bedrooms upstairs, one of them big enough for 2 double beds, several dressers, with room in between the beds to play. Also a full attic where we played in bad weather. We loved it there, but it wasn't a very good neighborhood. Hobos used to come up from the trains a block away asking for food, and Mom would always give them something, but they ate it outside, not in the house. The lady next door had 3 kids, no husband, but a lot of boy friends. I used to baby sit for the kids sometimes. The brother of the family of kids we used to play with was in juvenile jail, whatever it was called, things like that made our parents very nervous about living there.

I was in 7th grade when we moved there, went to St. Rose school, then to Mercy High. We used to play games like Red Rover-Red Rover, Kick the Can, Hide and Seek and baseball in a street which was only a block long near our house. We also went swimming a lot in summer at Jackson Park which was quite a hike, but we walked there and back. In the winter we went Ice skating at a park on 35th and Clybourn, which was next to the library we used.

One of the bad things that happened while we lived there was that Mickey was badly injured when she sledged down a hill next door to us into the street and right into a moving car. It hit her in the head and upper chest, almost tore her ear off, fractured her skull, gave her a concussion, also

broke several ribs and her collar bone. She almost died in the hospital, but Dad was there and called for help in time to save her. Our father was not always dependable, thanks to his drinking problem, but he was good in emergencies and knew his way around hospitals.

We moved to the South side, on 23rd St. near National Ave. when I was a Junior, graduated while I lived there. It was smaller than the last house, but was near Mitchell park and Clark Square was just a half a block away, so I spent a lot of time taking the little kids to the parks. Don't know if you remember "Billie the Brownie", but he used to be a big thing at Christmas-time, and there was always a "parade" where he rode atop a streetcar and came down National Ave, so we would go to see him.

We were living there when World War II began, which I will always remember because I was in the hospital with scarlet fever when it happened. I heard President Roosevelt on the radio, but couldn't hear what he was saying, all the nurses were very quiet, but wouldn't tell us what was going on, so I didn't know until the next day when I saw the newspaper. People were very patriotic then which you probably know from history, they put up with rationing of gas, sugar, butter and other things, shortages of nylons, etc. without complaining too much. I was working at Catholic Family Insurance during the war, and one of my jobs was to take the deposit to the bank every day. If we got word, or if I saw people lined up at a hosiery store on the way to the bank, I would go buy as many pairs as they would allow and take them back to work for whoever needed them the most. My friends and I would go to USO dances and occasionally have a party for servicemen ourselves.

Things got bad for our family about this time. Big houses were made into apartments, so rents for big families were impossible to find. We moved into a house with a drinking buddy of my father's with the understanding that my folks would take care of him in return. This worked out pretty well until he got really drunk, had the d.t.'s and fell down the stairs, wasn't really hurt bad, but it scared my mother so that we had to think of something else. They found a house that they thought we could buy, but they had barely moved in, were sleeping when the ceiling fell on them, literally, and figured the house was in too bad a shape to live in. The children from Jimmy on down went to the children's home, Mickey went to live with a family who had a daughter her age, and the rest of us, Mom, Dad, Grace, Bill and I went to live in a basement 4 room apartment, giving

most of our furniture to St. Vincent de Paul with the understanding that we would be given them or items similar if we found a place. We were all supposed to work and save for a down payment on a house. Well, we worked and we tried to save, but our father kept drinking, eventually had to go to the hospital for yet another operation on a duodenal ulcer and while he was in the hospital, my mother got pneumonia and died very suddenly. Oh, yes, that was when you, Pat, were 9 months old. Our mother was very upset when she found out she was pregnant again, and she and Dad had many arguments. She felt enormous guilt bringing another child into the world when the other children were still at children's home or in foster homes. You were a difficult baby, didn't want to be held, had to be rocked in your rocking crib or sitting in your stroller. You were taken to children's home. We visited you there and were appalled at the way the little children are treated there. I think I blotted the whole thing out of my mind because I don't remember just when the Emery's took you into their home.

Tony and I were married October 4, 1947, moved to Neenah, Menasha where he was working. I became pregnant a month later, and about that time our landlady told us we had to move. She had rented her daughter's bedroom to us, together with the living room and we shared the kitchen with her and two other couples. We couldn't find a place (it was December and people didn't move once winter set in.) Anyway we moved back to St. Francis, lived upstairs from his folks for 10 years, had 3 kids there, then moved to our present home.

Bob was born in July, 1948, was always very bright and a good kid, top in his class, valedictorian in grade and high school, took honors classes at Marquette and graduated summa cum laude, went to medical school at Wisconsin in Madison, graduated with high honors there, is now a doctor of internal medicine in Sheboygan, has 4 children, the three boys graduated from Marquette, his daughter graduated from Dayton.

Sharon was a beautiful baby girl, but a difficult one. She cried a lot, didn't want to eat, didn't like to be held closely, at least not by me. She was great when we went out in public, smiled at everyone, was very friendly. She was very smart also, studied hard, paid attention, got along with other kids. Had and has a great imagination, liked to read about the stars, planets, Greek and Roman gods, the weather, Ancient history. She graduated with honors in grade and high school. Went to UWM, got

a teaching degree and taught English and Math to 5th & 6th graders at Wayne, Wis, near West Bend for 4 or 5 years, before and after she got married. They have 3 children, Joyce, who graduated from Northern Michigan with a music degree, plays piano and harp, and is now living in California, Craig, who is now at Northern Michigan, and Emma, who is a Sophomore in high school, a talented ballerina.

Linda was a happy, cuddly baby, loved to be outdoors, even in the coldest days of winter. She was also very smart but didn't care about grades or honors. She was active in girl scouts from brownies through seniors, along with 3 of her friends. She graduated from St. Mary's, went to UWM for 3 years, wanted to be a Pharmacist, had a major problem with her chemistry teacher and quit. Married, worked at the Electric Company for years, had 1 child, Kate, who is going to Marquette, majoring in Theater and English, is getting married this year, September 4.

About this time, I'm thinking this is more than you really wanted to know, but there it is. If you have any questions or if you want any additional information, please ask.

Love, Ruth