

My History

1. My Birth



Vocabulary:

Weighed /peso'

staring/mirando

ceiling/techo interior

Crib/cuna

wondering /pensando

Holding /agarrando

wooden/de madera

slats/palas

cage/jaula

I was born in Melrose, Massachusetts in 1944, January 11th.

I weighed 9 pounds 5 ounces. My mother's name was Ruth Olive, Ruth for her aunt and Olive for her great-aunt. Her maiden name was Simonson.

My father's name was George William.

He was named after his father, who was named after his father, who was also named after his father. I think we are related to Thomas Rogers

who came over on the Mayflower in 1620.

At the time of my birth, I automatically had two brothers, David who was 3 and 1/2, and George Jr., or Bill, who was 6.

My sister, Jean, was born about 6 years later.

My first memories consist of staring at the ceiling in my crib. I think I was wondering what I was doing there. I also remember standing in my crib holding onto the wooden slats while my two brothers looked at me as if I were a monkey in a cage. They would laugh at me.

2. MY HOUSE



My house was on 15 Tappan St., which was a two family white house. There were three floors plus the cellar. Let me describe my house a little.

THE CELLAR

The cellar was always very dark. It consisted of my father's workbench, storage for all kinds of stuff, the coal bin, plus the furnace. It was dusty and there were a lot of spiders. My father kept all his tools there, and we kept our bikes there. There was a door that opened up to the backyard. And in the backyard was a pine tree.

The cellar was also the place where my mother hid our Christmas presents. So, we were not allowed to go down to the cellar just before Christmas.

Perhaps you are wondering about the coal bin and the furnace in the cellar. We had to shovel coal into the furnace during the winter for heat. The heat would last from dinner time to about 4AM. And then I would get cold, and start to shiver. It was a task to keep the blankets covering my whole body without exposing a small area.

The heat from the furnace would go through the radiator on the first floor, and it was a good place to stand when you came in from the cold. If you shook off the snow from your boots, the steam would rise up making a hissing sound. And my mother would place a pan with bread on top of the furnace so that the bread would rise before she baked it.

Vocabulary:

3.

My father's workbench in the cellar was a mystery to me. It was totally filled up with all kinds of tools and nails and screws. It was a mess. And my father never actually made anything or used his workbench for anything that I can remember.

But he did make Root Beer in bottles. This was a big event in my life when I was a kid. It was good Root Beer, too. By the way, Root Beer is not actually beer. It is a flavor of a soda.

And my mother would put pickles in jars to keep in the cellar.

The cellar was also the place where we put the trash and it was my job to empty the trash every day. On trash pick-up day, I would help my father bring the barrels out to the street. This included a barrel of ash, which was very heavy.

Vocabulary:

4.**THE FIRST FLOOR****THE KITCHEN**

Our kitchen was not too big, and the floor was slanted, which caused my mother's cakes and pies to be lop-sided. My mother always said that the oven did not work properly, which is why she had so much trouble cooking.

We had a washing machine with a wringer, which I would watch very carefully. The table was brown and made of Formica, and could be made longer by sliding it out and putting a piece in the middle. We ate breakfast and lunch at the kitchen table.

We had a very old gas hot water heater which always worried my mother.

My mother did not like to cook.

But my father liked to make spaghetti and meatballs.

Every three months or so he would buy all the ingredients and spend a few hours in the kitchen making the tomato sauce. He said he got the recipe from several Italian cooks.

For years he would not tell us the recipe, but finally I convinced him to tell me. It follows this lesson and is in capital letters so that you can print it out and read it while you cook my father's famous spaghetti and meatballs.

Vocabulary:

5.

GEORGE'S FAMOUS SPAGHETTI AND MEATBALLS

INGREDIENTS:

1/4 CUP OLIVE OIL
1/2 C. MINCED ONIONS
2 CLOVES OF GARLIC, MINCED
1/4 C. SNIPPED PARSLEY
1 6 OZ. TOMATO SAUCE
2 1/2 C. CANNED TOMATOES
2 1/2 TSP. SALT
1/2 TSP PEPPER
1/4 TSP SUGAR
A TINY BIT OF DRIED BASIL
1 C. BURGUNDY WINE
1 LB. SPAGHETTI
1 C. PARMESAN CHEESE

DIRECTIONS FOR COOKING:

IN HOT OIL IN KETTLE SIMMER THE ONIONS AND GARLIC 5 MINUTES. ADD PARSLEY, TOMATOE SAUCE, TOMATOES, SALT, PEPPER, SUGAR, AND BASIL. SIMMER 1 HOUR, COVERED. ADD WINE, PARMESAN CHEESE, SIMMER, COVERED 1 HOUR

MEATBALLS:

1 LB. CHUCK, GROUND
1/2 C. DRIED BRREAD CRUMBS
1 CLOVE GARLIC, MINCED
2 TABLESPOONS SNIPPED PARSLEY
1/4 C PARMESAN CHEESE
1 EGG
1/2 TSP SALT

1/4 TSP PEPPER

COMBINE ALL THE INGREDIENTS. SHAPE INTO SMALL BALLS.

BROWN MEATBALLS ON ALL SIDES. ABOUT 20 MINUTES

ADD TO SAUCE.

COOK SPAGHETTI AS LABEL DIRECTS

ADD HOT SAUCE AND MEATBALLS.

TOP WITH PARMESAN CHEESE.

6.

THE DINING ROOM

In the middle of our dining room was an oaken table where we always ate dinner on Sunday. And there were China closets against the wall where my mother put crystal bowls made by her father when he was a glass blower.

In Massachusetts the word “dinner” can refer to a big meal at noon time.

The word “supper” refers to the meal eaten around 6 PM.

We ate Sunday “dinner” in the dining room after church. It was a big meal. Usually we had meat loaf, pot roast, roast beef or roasted chicken for meat. My mother made mashed potatoes, boiled green beans, peas and corn for vegetables. And we always had a dessert, usually chocolate cake.

Thanksgiving was a very big meal in my house. Sometimes my father’s relatives came over. My uncle, Warren, would crack walnuts in his hand because he was so strong. I thought Thanksgiving was terrific because I could eat and eat all I wanted.

Vocabulary:

7.

THE LIVING ROOM

Between the dining room and the living room there was a radiator on the floor that heated the whole house in the winter. In the living room, there was a couch and my father's easy chair. A very old desk or "secretary" stood in the corner. The windows faced the street. The television was in the corner.

Our First Television

Before my father bought our first Television, our neighbors across the street had one. All the kids on my block would stand on the porch every night around 6 to watch the TV through the window. My neighbors let us do this for a while until one by one everyone else bought their own televisions.

Our first television was a small, black and white television. My dad had to attach the antenna onto the roof. So he would climb up on the roof and move the antenna until the TV got good reception. He would shout down: OK? And we would say: NO, no, no ... until the picture was clear. Then we would shout OK don't move it! Sometimes my dad would continue to move the antenna so that the picture would be fuzzy again. Then we would have to repeat the whole process all over again.

I remember watching Howdy Doody on TV. Howdy Doody was a puppet. He and Buffalo Bob were the hosts. There were kids in the audience which Buffalo Bob called the Peanut Gallery.

There was Clarabelle the clown, and some other puppets.

Buffalo Bob would show cartoons also.

There were only three channels for many years.

Can you imagine... Only three channels?

Vocabulary:

8.

THE SECOND FLOOR

There was a stairway with thirteen steps that led from the front door to the second floor.

THE BATHROOM

In the bathroom there was a very old and bathtub with gargoyles or dragons at the feet of the four legs. I needed to stand on top of the toilet to look in the mirror.

MY ROOM

If you went left at the top of the stairs, you would enter my room. Before my sister was born, it was all mine. It had my bed, a chest of drawers, my toy box, and a closet which may have been the home for a friendly creature who I almost could see at night. At least while I was still very young.

MY PARENTS' ROOM

If you turned left before you got to my room, you would enter my parent's bedroom, which consisted of a large bed and a very old and well made chest of drawers. On top of it were my grandfather's pipes in a pipe rack, which my father always kept even though he never smoked a pipe. There was also a maple wood storage chest which my mother put linens in. The window faced the street and the streetlamp.

MY BROTHERS' ROOM IN THE ATTIC

If you turned left again as you went through my parents' bedroom, you would go up another flight of eleven stairs to the attic which had been converted into a room for both my brothers. It got very cold in the winter. My brother, David, had a radio, which was very important before we got television.

Vocabulary:

9.

THE PORCH

The porch was fairly large, and screened off during the summer to prevent the mosquitoes from bothering us.

There was a hedge around the house, along the alley.

On the side facing the alley was a large rose bush which grew up the side of the house.

My father was very proud of the rose bush. He cultivated it with cow manure. Once he ordered a truck load of cow manure and dumped it at the base of the rose bush. For a week or so the neighbors complained. But, the roses that year were very big and smelled very strong.

THE BACKYARD

In the back of our house was a small yard with a pine tree. When I was very small, my father dumped some sand around the pine tree so that I could play.

My father parked his car in the backyard. In those days, he never bought a new car. But he would buy a “new” used car.

THE HEDGE

There was a hedge around the house which had to be cut several times during the summer. My brother, Dave, usually cut the hedge. I would help him, but I was not as good at it as he was.

A VISIT TO MY HOUSE FORTY YEARS LATER

My family moved from 15 Tappan St. in 1958. And in 1998 I went back to Massachusetts to visit some friends. While I was there, I drove by my boyhood house. It looked exactly the same!! And the hedge still needed to be cut!!

Vocabulary:

10.

MY FIRST JOBS

Let me tell you about my first jobs that I got paid for. Well, I would go to the store for my mother and spend a few pennies on “penny candy”.

I think the first time I got paid was when I was about 6. I would go to the store for my neighbor, Mrs. Wade. She was very old, and I would go and get her groceries. I also mailed her letters.

Once I mailed a letter, and I accidentally dropped some of her change in the snow. I couldn't find it. I felt very bad. I told her I lost her change, but I thought she did not believe me.

Anyway, when the snow melted, I found the change! I think it was a quarter. I gave her the change. She let me keep it.

The next job I had was delivering newspapers with my brother Dave. Sometimes on Sunday he would let me go with him on his paper route. I pulled the cart that had about 100 Sunday newspapers. I think he gave me about 50 cents. I enjoyed delivering papers with my brother.

Then I used to cut people's grass. Actually, the first time I ever got fired was from one of these jobs. In other words, I got something like \$5 to cut Mr. Jones grass. Well, I took a break to read a comic book, and he saw me. He yelled at me and fired me!

Vocabulary:

11.

My First Computer

I bought my first computer at a yard sale for \$250. My sister-in-law was a computer programmer, so I asked her to look it over to make sure it was in good condition. She also set it up, plugging in all the cords. Well, at first, I was a little intimidated. Getting connected to the internet was not difficult, though. I subscribed to a free email service, and “surfed” the internet, looking up articles on topics of interest. But, every now and then the computer would “crash” or shut down for no reason. I actually thought that a computer had little tubes that would burn out when it “crashed.” But someone told me that I could not break a computer. Well, one day when I was checking all the cords, I found out that the plug was not plugged in firmly. In other words, it was loose. And, because it was right near my foot when I was at the computer, I must have been kicking it so that it would disconnect.

It is not difficult to use the internet.

Studying English

When you have finished the beginner's and intermediate lessons on pumarosa, you will be ready to move on to "advanced" lessons.

But you will need to begin to read more. And you will have to buy a bilingual dictionary. There are some available for \$1 at the \$1 stores.

Reading is important because you cannot learn new words unless you read. If someone is speaking to you, and you hear a new word, usually you cannot ask the person what the word means. But if you read you can look the word up in the dictionary.

Also, often, when you read something, you can guess at what a word means because of the whole sentence or paragraph.

It is also very important to read to learn how to write. English is difficult to pronounce, as we all know. It is also a little difficult to write because of the order of words. Plus it is difficult to spell!!!

Reading can help you to write better.

So we will continue to create more lessons. If you have any questions or if you would like a special type of lesson, contact us.