

Patricia Winter Oakes' Memoir

For my darling daughters. Christmas 2011

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Part 1-Earliest Memories



57 Campina Court, Coral Gables, FL

(Note the airplane by the mailbox near the front door and the solar panels above the porch)

Birth of Robert and Sandy

As I am writing this I am nearly 70 years old, which does not seem possible! However, that is the case. You can look at the above cover picture and see me as Daffy Down Dilly for a first grade school program in 1947.

My earliest memory is of when my brother Robert, your Uncle Bob, was born. Aunt Doris remembers it differently from what I remember, but this is my memory. There was a hurricane at the time. Aunt Doris had come to help Mom who had been on bed rest and without much help for several months. Both Nancy and I were born a month early and Mom started having trouble about 5 months into her 3rd pregnancy. She had to be very still—with two little children, ages 4 and 2! She spent her days on the couch or in bed and Nancy and I took care of ourselves while Mom looked on. Mom told me that I made us sandwiches for lunch, folks brought food by, I helped Nancy with the potty, etc. Dad helped when he got home from work. At that time we lived at 57 Campina Court in Coral Gables. Mom and Dad had moved there (from the house on

Orange Street in Coconut Grove which they rented) in 1942 when I was 1 1/2 and Mom and Dad were expecting Nancy. It was way ahead of its time as it had solar panels for heating water.

Forecasters knew that a hurricane was on its way, so women late in their pregnancies were urged to go to the hospital as a precaution (the dropping air pressure can trigger labor). As Mom was approaching her due date, she and Dad decided she should go. Aunt Doris had come down to help but I don't remember her being there. I know that she was and that Dad took her to the train early so that she could get out of town and away from the storm. I just remember my dad telling Nancy and me that we had a baby brother—we were crushed—we had wanted a sister! I remember the sound of the wind blowing—and the dark--and I think we were sleeping in bunk beds—I was on the top bunk. Aunt Doris came to visit in Miami a number of times for not only were we there, but Aunt Florence and her first husband spent the winters in Miami. I don't know where they stayed.

Not too long after that (13 months) Sandy was born—and I remember that well. Mom was horrified that she was pregnant again—had stopped going to church and changed grocery stores. She said—laughing many years later—“I just couldn't stand that people would think that that was all your father and I were doing!!” Anyway, Sandy arrived in a hurry while Aunt Peg, Uncle Bud, Elton, and Becky were visiting before heading out for the Philippines (Uncle Bud was a missionary there from 1946-1951—Martha was born while they were there). Mom was upset that Elton was clobbering the daylights out of Nancy and me and Aunt Peg and Uncle Bud did nothing to stop it. They had a car with them and Mom was riding with Uncle Bud when her water broke 2 months early. She was horrified (again!) that she had made a terrible bloody mess in their car.

Anyway, my vivid memory of Sandy's birth is of our standing on the sidewalk just outside Mom's hospital room. The hospital was not air-conditioned—it was on Douglas Road (I think) in Coral Gables—not too far from our house at 57 Campina Court. The screen windows were open. Uncle Bud—and maybe Aunt Peg (I don't remember Elton (Buster) and Becky being there, so she may have been home with them)—and Dad and Nancy were there. We talked to Mom and asked her about our new baby sister. As children we had no idea how worried Mom and Dad must have been. The picture at right shows the four of us with mom a year or so after Sandy's birth.

Sandy was due at Christmas time, was 8 weeks early, and weighed only 4 pounds and 13 ounces. She was in an incubator and being given extra oxygen. That was thought to be the right thing to do at the time, but many premature infants were blinded by the extra oxygen, retinopathy. By



1960, that practice was stopped, though it led to higher mortality among premature infants. Fortunately for Sandy, a tinier baby was born and Sandy was kicked out of the incubator. She stayed in the hospital for almost a month, I think, until she was big enough to come home. She was tiny for a long time. Mr. Spiroff, our neighbor next-door, had a nickname for her, “Puny.” She was also quite feisty. I remember her beating Bobby over the head with Lincoln logs and he would just sit there and cry! We have always said that Sandy was the most mellow of the 4 of us—and a great joy to all of us.

Life at Campina Court

Several months have gone by—I am now nearly 70 and a half as I write this.

At that point—1946-- Mom and Dad had been married just short of 6 years and had 4 children ages 5 and younger. They were pretty busy! Dad was not necessarily a hands-on dad. I mostly remember his sitting around with a rather stunned look on his face. He did help with us when he was at home. He had grown up an only child and was not used to all of the noise! We all rolled around together and fought like cats and dogs sometimes—but we loved each other and always had someone to play with. Mom was the disciplinarian and was very strict--that was how she had been raised. She didn’t hold with any nonsense. Much later, when your dad and I were in Italy with them in 1966, Mom and I were visiting in the green VW (which we bought on that trip) and Mom laughed and told me that at that point “we figured out what was causing all these babies and did something about it!” My guess is that Dad had a vasectomy, as birth control was very limited in the 1940s.

I remember the washing machine that was in the house on Campina Court—it had a big tub, an agitator, and a wringer mechanism that you put the wet clothes through. It was in the rather small kitchen and there certainly was a lot of laundry. Mom stayed very busy with all of us. I can still remember her later, when I was in my teens, glaring at me in frustration and saying, “Don’t just sit there—do something!” It was only later, when I was a mom, that I began to understand how annoying it must have been to have this day-dreamy girl, perfectly capable of helping, sitting blissfully in a chair curled up with a book.

Another vivid—and painful—memory is when Robert was about 4 or so, he saw the bright red burner on the stove, thought it was pretty and put his hand on it! That was dreadful—but fortunately, no permanent damage. Another time, when Sandy was a toddler, she fell and hit her head near the bridge of her nose on the edge of a tile ledge on the front porch and cut herself badly. I don’t know what Mom did with Nancy and Robert (after talking with them, they might have been in the back seat of the car), but I was drafted to hold screaming, bleeding Sandy (no seat belts or car seats at that time) on my lap while Mom raced to the doctor where Sandy got several stitches and a tetanus shot—she was not a happy camper and I was scared to death!

Another time Mom was picking up some dry cleaning. She had left us in the car and dashed into the cleaners. When she came out, she started the car and Bobby fell out the door--scared us all half to death--again. Fortunately, he was not hurt! Dad improvised seating for us at one point when we had an Austin (I love the fact that we had an Austin)--he built a bench in

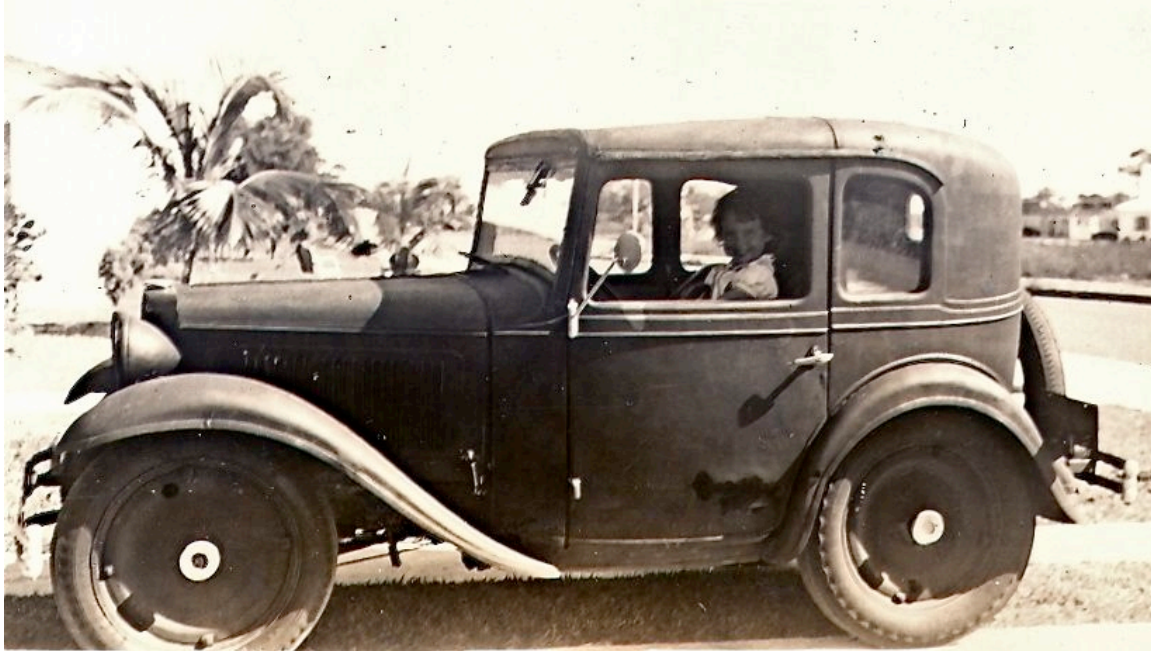
the back that the 3 of us bigger kids sat in and then Mom held Sandy in her lap! After that I think we graduated to station wagons.

In 1952, Dwight David Eisenhower was running for President, He was a Republican and quite the war hero. Mom and Dad took the four of us to see him pass by in a motorcade--not too far from our house. The street (LeJeune Road?) was lined with people clapping and cheering and waving. I remember his passing by in a convertible with his arms raised up and waving. That is something you would never see now since the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963. Mom and Dad were Republicans (as were their parents). In Florida, Republicans were the majority and if you wanted to vote in the primaries and make a difference, you needed to be a registered Republican. My parents were really quite surprised when they raised mostly Democrats!.

Oh my—I just remembered another adventure. This must have been before Bobby was born—Mom and Dad took Nancy and me out riding on their bicycles. Nancy was in the seat that Dad built for her on Mom's bike and I was in the seat that my dad had built attached to the front of his handlebars. We were sailing along and I got quite relaxed and let my legs dangle—catching my big toe in the spokes of the bicycle. The bike came to an abrupt halt and Dad went sailing over the handlebars. I was quite shaken up but relatively uninjured, but Dad raced to get me out of the seat and picked me up and started carrying me. I started screaming bloody murder thinking I was bleeding—and it was my dad who was bleeding all over me and who had gotten quite banged up. We were just a few blocks from home and finally got everyone all patched up. It must have really scared Mom!



Here I am in a slightly better form of transportation a few years later. The picture was taken in 1945, but we think the car is from the 1930s, perhaps the one that Dad inherited from Great-Grampa Winter which Dad drove to Miami in 1940.



Aunt Florence came to visit us often and loved to take pictures of us. She had quite a career as a professional photographer and taught photography in New York City under the professional name of Sherry. Here is a photo she took of me in 1946. Note the picture of Bobby on the dressing table. I was having a wonderful time with the lipstick playing dress-ups.

Our Pets

I haven't mentioned our cats. We wanted a pet so badly. We had a succession of tiny turtles—about the size of 2 fifty-cent pieces—they often had designs painted on their backs. We got them at the dime store—had plastic “pens” where they lived—not much larger than a dinner plate in area. I remember the plastic palm trees that were a feature of the turtle homes. The



turtles tended not to live very long and the 4 of us would have somber, mournful burial services for them in the back yard. We would use cardboard jewelry boxes lovingly lined with cotton as the coffins. I often wonder what the new people who bought the house thought about what had been going on when they did any yard renovations!

Anyway, back to the cats. Mom finally relented and we got our first kitty whom we named Junior. I have no idea how the name came about. At some point Junior went missing and came back several days later very badly beaten up—with a broken leg. Mom, who professed to being hard as nails, was really quite soft-hearted. She ended up taking Junior to the vet to have the leg set, using the shoe money (Mom and Dad had a very careful budget with cash set aside in envelopes each week for food, shoes and clothing for the growing tribe, church pledge, other expenses, etc.) to pay the vet. Junior's hind leg was set with a long metal pin festively topped with a cork right at his hip. My job was to remove the cork several times a day and rub the area around the pin with mineral oil. As far as I remember, Junior recovered without incident.

At some point Junior passed on to the great kitty heaven in the sky and we got another cat named, of course, Junior, Junior. One Sunday as we were going to church, Junior, Junior got out of the house and we were not able to find him. After much wailing and gnashing of teeth we headed on to church only to come home some hours later to a terrible tragedy. A neighbor's fierce boxer dog had chased Junior, Junior up a palm tree in our yard and had killed him. We were distraught, of course. That Sunday at church we had sung "Faith of Our Fathers, Holy Faith" as one of the hymns. It was years before I could sing that hymn again without getting teary. Even now, I think of our poor kitty who met such a violent end when we sing the song at church. (See Sandy above with one of the Juniors.)

After the turtles and the cats came our parakeet Sam. By that time we had moved to our house in South Miami at 5910 S.W 81st St., so it would have been in the early 1950s. We enjoyed Sam and taught him to say a few things ("pretty bird") and to wolf whistle. At some point Sam got sick and Mom took him to the vet who said that Sam had a cold. He asked Mom if she had any hard liquor in the house. Quite indignantly she said no, but then remembered that she did have a tiny souvenir bottle of rum from a trip to Cuba that she had taken with Gramma Brown and Aunt Sylvia in 1947. So, as the doctor had prescribed, she fed Sam droppers full of



rum. I can remember the 4 of us quietly laughing at Sam as he wobbled and teetered back and forth on his perch in his cage. I am pleased to report that that Sam recovered quite nicely!

While I am thinking about it, I should tell the story of Mom's trip to Cuba with Gramma Ruby Benson Brown and Gramma's sister Aunt Sylvia Benson Cole in early 1947. Sandy would have still been quite young (less than a year old), but Dad took care of the 4 of us while they went. I don't remember Mom being gone, but I wish I could have seen Dad with the 4 of us on his own! I don't know how long they stayed, but it couldn't have been more that 4-5 days. While they were there they were taking a tour which included stops at several rum factories. My teetotaler grandmother was always thirsty and it was quite warm that day, so everywhere they stopped she enjoyed several glasses of wonderful fruit punch. What Gramma didn't know was that the fruit punch was spiked with rum. Before too long, Gramma was quite "snockered," she fell asleep on the bus on the way back to the hotel, and Mom and Aunt Sylvia had to get some of the men on the bus to carry Gramma up to her room in the hotel!



Our Neighbors

We had great neighbors on Campina Court who lived right next door. They were the Spiroffs--Peter (from Greece) and Paulina (from Bulgaria) and their kids Sophia and Dickie. Sophia was in-between Nancy and me in age, and Dickie was about Bobby's age. Mrs. Spiroff made the most wonderful fried dough treats, a Bulgarian speciality, which were liberally sprinkled with powdered sugar. She knew we loved them and often included us in the distribution of them. Nancy and Sophia and I would play and play with our dolls—and occasionally have spats. One or the other of us would announce in very offended tones that we were never going to play with the others again and stomp off in a high dudgeon—and within the hour we would be back playing again. We had small plastic baby dolls and little bowls of water and we would sit out on the sidewalk and give our “babies” baths by the hour. We also loved to play hopscotch. We are still in touch with Sophia and it is such fun to share those memories. Below you see Nancy, Sandy, Sophia, Bobby, Pat, and Dickie dressed up for Halloween in 1950.



Nancy, Sandy, Sophia, Bobby, Pat & Dickie, Halloween 1950

Another friend from that time was Evelyn Melli. She was the only child of the Italian cobbler and his wife who had their shop two blocks away with their home upstairs. Evelyn started attending Merrick Elementary School in the 5th grade when they opened up sections for 5th and 6th graders because of overcrowding at Coral Gables Elementary. She got into real trouble with me when I was about 11 and she tried to tell me there was no Santa Claus. I am quite certain that I hauled off and clobbered her for such blasphemy! Mom used to send us to the grocery store (which was just before Melli's shoe shop) to get bread every now and then—it was about 20 cents a loaf. Evelyn now lives across the street from 57 Campina Court and I have visited with her when in Miami and stay in touch still. She is now Evelyn Melli Terraferma and has a very nice husband and four kids—all grown now.

The area where her home is now has a number of homes on it. When we were little, we called it “the island” because instead of being a regular square block it was sort of kidney shaped. There were only a few homes on the block. One of them was where the Malones lived—their daughter Doedy was our babysitter and is the woman who came with her husband for lunch at the reunion this summer (2011). The block had sidewalks that curved all the way around it. We used to roller skate by the hour around and around that block. My knees were scarred for years from all of the tumbles I took. Scabby knees were sign of honor for us. There were also sidewalks on our side of the street but it was nowhere near as much fun as it was to skate around and around “the island.” Our skates fit onto our shoes and we had a key of some sort to tighten them to our shoes. They also had an expansion feature, so one could wear a pair of skates for quite some time even with rapidly growing feet. We also had a great time building huts with the palmetto branches that we could wrest from the shrubs that grew in the vacant lot.

We thought it was our own great jungle and now it is so strange to see it all filled with houses—and looking relatively small.

One Thanksgiving all of us, except for Mom, had the mumps—even Dad who was really sick! Nancy remembers that she was the one who gave them to Dad (she wasn't worried about the rest of us!) We gave thanks with chicken noodle soup. I had the chicken pox when I was about four. I fell off of my tricycle and landed on my eyebrow (Bobby called them "owbryes"). I still have a scar where I knocked off the scab. We also had the measles—miserable since one had to be in a dark room with no light and no reading for about two weeks while it ran its course. There were no vaccines for measles and mumps at that time.

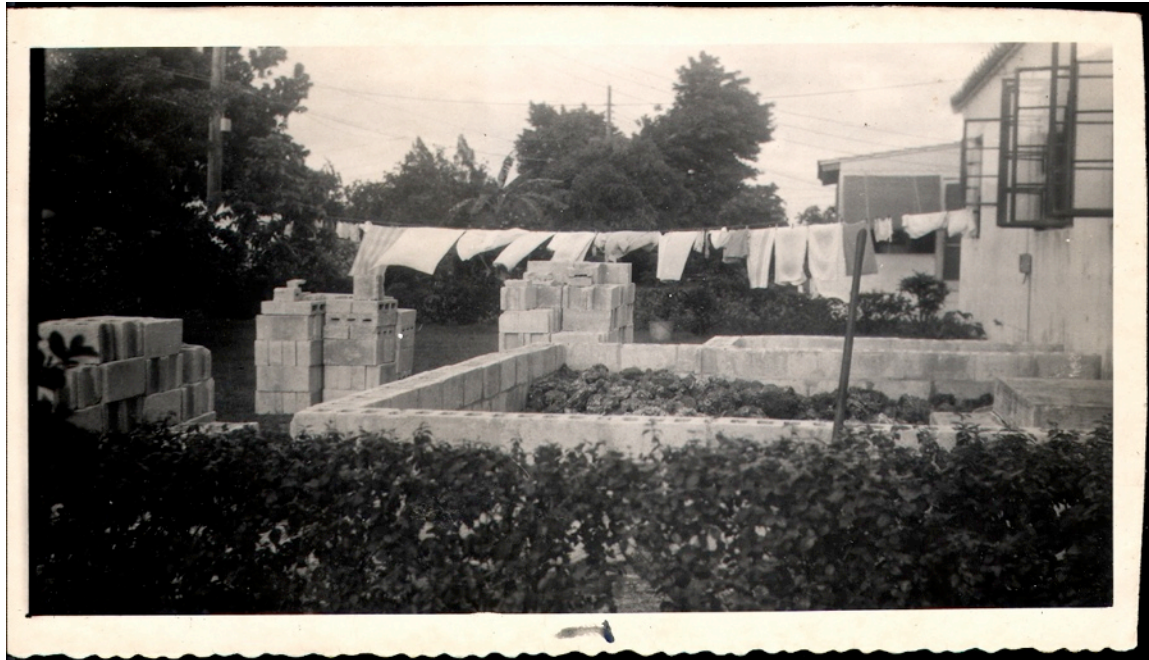
There was a big Florida holly tree in our back yard that I loved to climb (I was quite the tomboy and heartbroken when I turned 12 and was told that it was not ladylike to climb trees). It had a wonderful crooked set of branches up at the top that made a great "chair" and I would climb up there and survey the neighborhood for what seemed like hours. There was a beautiful coral rock wall that ran all along the back of our block that I loved to climb and walk along. Also in our back yard were several orange and grapefruit trees and an avocado tree (we had never heard of guacamole and we did not like plain avocado—what a shame). During WWII we had a Victory Garden in the backyard where I remember we grew lots of tomatoes.

I don't know where Mom heard about it, but the four of us took baton lessons with Bill Allen. He was very well-known (you can find him on Google) and there were lots and lots of kids involved. One of my less graceful baton moves happened when I was in the 6th grade. I threw the baton up high in the air and watched it come down right on the bridge of my nose. I still have a bump where it landed! Baton twirling was quite the craze in Miami at the time. Robert remembers that he took lessons for only a short time and then was allowed to quit. He and Dad got to stay home and have "man" time.

We lived at Campina Court until I graduated from Merrick—1953. When we were trying to sell the house on Campina Court Mom insisted on keeping the house completely tidy—no mean feat with all of us kids. That was the summer I spent reading the encyclopedia—I don't remember the brand of encyclopedia, but I remember making it to the Es before the house sold! The house on Campina Court was originally 2 bedrooms and 1 bath. Dad had built



on a Florida room, a master bedroom and added another bath—and then built an ingenious bedroom (he designed it) suspended from the garage ceiling that still allowed the car to be put inside but gave Robert a tiny pine-paneled room which looked like a ship's captain's room. When Dad started working on all of the additions, Mom asked Dad if he really thought he could do all of the work himself. His answer to her was, "I can read, can't I?"—and so he did all of the building himself. We always loved it when the cement trucks came with a load of concrete to pour. (Picture below shows concrete block foundation) Note that we did not have a clothes dryer.



Addition to Campina Court Home built by Bob Winter

Once the Florida room was complete, that became our family room. We would gather around the radio and listen to the popular radio shows--"The Lone Ranger," "Our Miss Brooks," "The Jack Benny Show" and others. We did not have a TV at our house until after I left for college in 1959--and that was a used one that Mom had passed on to her by her Uncle Norman Benson.

The Coral Gables bus line ran right by our house, so when we were a bit older we rode the bus to school. The usual driver was a very nice guy named Joe who knew all of us kids. I always sat right behind Joe as I was rather timid about riding the bus. One time several black children got onto the bus and I remember watching them walk all the way to the back of the bus where they had to sit. I watched with a mixture of admiration (they were walking all the way to the back of the bus and I would not be brave enough to do that), but also with a dim understanding that they would have liked to sit behind the driver, too—but that they knew it was not allowed. I think there must have been signs on the bus telling who had to sit where.

There was a younger boy named Tommy Bevis who lived about 4 or 5 houses up from us. He was not a good student, so I was hired at a very nominal fee to tutor him. That was fun for me. I also rode by bike to school when I was in the 6th grade. I needed to be there early and

stay late for safety patrol. I think about it now and wonder if I would have let you guys ride that route—several major streets and several miles away, but I loved it. I felt quite independent. However, as I mentioned, I was quite the tomboy and would arrive at school all sweaty and my hair a mess. I remember my wonderful teacher Miss Drew taking me aside and giving me some instructions on hygiene!

Dad had come to Miami to work at Pan American Airways. At first he worked at Dinner Key, but then a new airport was built and it was not too far from our house. Sunday afternoons Dad would load the 4 of us kids up, drive out to the airport, and park us at the end of the (yes--the) runway. We would watch planes land and take off—lots of fun for all of us--and Mom had a few minutes of peace and quiet. I do remember one day going to Dinner Key when they had an open house of sorts--probably during the war or just after.. We were allowed to go on to one of the Flying Clippers, a seaplane. I don't remember the plane itself, but I do remember walking from the dock across the gangway which wobbled up and down as we walked on it.

During the war we had a Victory Garden in our backyard where we grew tomatoes and green peppers. I also have a very vague memory of black-out curtains which we used at night. German submarines were sighted up and down the East coast and the black-out curtains were to keep lights low so that Miami would not be a target. During and after the war there was a shortage of butter--the new rage was margarine. The dairy industry was not happy about the competition, so they lobbied to make it the law that it was sold white and one had to mix in the yellow coloring by hand. That was often my job when I was little.

We also had grapefruit, orange, and avocado trees. Sadly, I did not like plain avocado and we had never heard of guacamole--what a shame. Dad built us a great swing which we had in the backyard. It had room for 6 kids on it. One time the 4 of us and Dickie and Sophia were swinging with great abandon when suddenly the supporting beam broke and we all spilled all over the yard. Fortunately no one was hurt--but we certainly were surprised.



Mom used to take the four of us with her to pick tomatoes in huge fields in Homestead (it is now all filled with houses). After the migrant farm workers (I did not know much about their horrible conditions when I was a kid) had gone through and picked the tomatoes, folks were allowed in to glean for free. We would pick bushels of tomatoes and then Mom would can them at home. She also made guava jelly which we loved. If I get really homesick, I get myself to Central Market and buy a jar of guava jelly and I am transported back home. Friends who an abundance of mangos would bring lots to us, but we didn't care for them much. Now I do!

Every now and again, Grampa Brown would come to visit—usually around Easter. He would arrive out of the blue—not giving Mom any advance notice—just call from the airport to tell her that he had arrived. The way we kids found out that he had come was we would feel the house shaking when we woke up in the morning. He snored so loudly! I guess he must have slept on the couch in the Florida room.

We kids enjoyed his visits—he loved to take us to fly kites—and we loved that, too. If it was Easter, he bought all of us girls corsages—made us feel very grown up. Several times we went out for Easter dinner to a real restaurant in Coconut Grove. Bobby was so funny—he was asked by the waitress if he wanted apple pie a la mode and he very clearly told the waitress that he wanted the pie in one dish and the ice cream in another.

Mom later told us how hard those visits were for her. Her dad had not paid child support as he was supposed to and her growing up years were hard. Gramma Brown had to work so hard to keep the family all together (at one point Aunt Sylvia wanted to adopt Mom, but Gramma said no way—the family was going to stay together).



Pat, Lois, Grandpa Brown, Nancy, in front are Sandy & Bobby.

Christmas

Christmas was always special at our house. Mom loved Christmas, I think in part because she was so poor when growing up and it gave her such joy to decorate and bake and give presents as an adult. One story she told us was the Christmas she and Aunt Florence were living with Great-Gramma and Great-Grampa Brown in Hanson. I think she was 6 that year--in first grade. For Christmas she got a cloth doll that was covered in brown glass beads--very small beads. Mom thought they looked like pimples and spent Christmas Day hiding behind the big old stove in the kitchen, crying and picking off the beads! Every time she told us that story we would laugh and laugh--and Mom would laugh with us.

Santa Claus always came and brought wonderful things. My baby doll, Patricia Alice Winter, Jr, (I had not figured out that girls did not get to pass on their names) disappeared a few weeks before Christmas when I was about 10 or 11. I searched high and low for her, but with no luck. Miraculously, on Christmas morning my doll appeared with Santa's gifts with a wonderful new head of curly brown hair. We all had our stockings--and Dad very carefully passed out the gifts one at a time (does that sound familiar?). It was always impossible to sleep on Christmas Eve, but we knew better than to go out searching too soon. Mom would get very cross! When it finally got light, the 4 of us in our different rooms would start sing-songing--"Mother, can we get up?" And eventually we would be allowed to go out and see our treasures. It was a very long while before I figured out why Mom and Dad were so tired on Christmas morning!

A part of our Christmases for many years was the fruitcake baking. Mom had gotten the recipe from a neighbor on Campina Court, Mrs. Colvin, who lived about 2 or 3 houses up in the direction of the Spiroffs. The recipe was 100 years old when Mom got it, so it is now about 160 years old. Mom liked the dark fruitcake and shared it with friends, some of whom suggested that she bake it and sell it. For many years that is how Mom earned money for Christmas. She saved coffee cans all year long (half pound cans), some were baked in loaf pans, or ring pans and all of us helped with the stirring, measuring, weighing, and decorating. For a number of years I think she made several hundred pounds of fruitcake to sell. I still make a small batch every Christmas and send a piece to my siblings--a bit of home from Christmases past. I usually do the baking just after Thanksgiving and I love the way it makes the house smell--like home.

One Christmas when I was about 10, I got a wonderful Mickey Mouse watch. I was so excited. Unfortunately, it was also the Christmas that Bobby got a magnet set. We all had such a good time attaching the magnets to everything--including my watch--which never worked after that. Now I think watches are made to be anti-magnetic somehow.

Our Winter grandparents made us wonderful gifts for Christmas. One year it was a doll house (that is up in our attic), another year it was a puppet show (Aunt Nancy has that), another year the green wheelbarrow that we redid for Ethan, another year it was doll chests to hold our doll clothes (mine is up in the attic) which Gramma made. Grampa was the carpenter and Gramma was the seamstress.



Pat, Bob, Bobby, Lois & Nancy, Christmas 1945, Baby Bobby, Coral Gables. I always loved the clipper ship on the fireplace. I visited the house about 10 years ago and it was still there.



Nancy & Pat, Christmas, 1944. Grampa Winter made the doll bed and high chair. Gramma Winter made quilt, the doll bedding, the big doll, the tiny dolls and the teddy bear. I still have the tiny dolls, the quilt, the high chair and the teddy bear. Note our Miami climate Christmas clothes.



Winter family Christmas card in 1952.

This was taken in front of the doors (which came from an old Spanish mission) which were installed at Plymouth Congregational Church, Coconut Grove, FL

Church

The picture above was taken at Plymouth Congregational Church in Coconut Grove where Mom and Dad were married (1940) and where all four of us were christened. Nancy, Sandy, and I were all married there, too. We were there every Sunday. The 4 of us sang in the children's choir. Mom sang in the choir and Dad was the Sunday School superintendent for many years. I remember the first time I lit the candles for our Sunday School class--feeling somewhat awed and a bit scared. I was probably about 8 or 9. Dad was standing by me, but as I lit the match I burned my fingers. Dad immediately rescued me and took care of me. The church was also the major center of our social life--both for Mom and Dad and the 4 of us kids.

Lake Byrd Lodge

Mom and Dad belonged to a group from church. The group was called Yomarco (Young Married Couples). Every spring the Yomarco couples and their kids went to Lake Byrd Lodge in Avon Park in central Florida for a weekend. We must have left early on a Saturday morning and arrived mid-afternoon at Lake Byrd Lodge. We took Route 27—the 6 of us in our station wagon. One time when we were driving to Avon Park, Bobby got into all kinds of trouble. He had the window down with his head out the window and was mimicking the sound of a siren. Dad very hastily pulled over--thinking it was the real thing. His sisters thought it was pretty funny--and at some point Mom and Dad laughed about it, too.

This was long before Disney World developed that area so much. There were miles and miles of orange groves and long straight stretches of road with canals on both sides. The area was originally mostly a swamp and the roads were built by dredging the canals and using the fill to build the roads. Straight roads were more easily built, but they were very monotonous. We drove part of the way around Lake Okeechobee on the way there, I think.

“The Lake Byrd Lodge was built in 1919 by the Pittsburgh Real Estate Company. The Lodge was a replica of the eight-story log cabin at Yellow Stone National Park. This three-story version was used to house people visiting the real estate company. During the Second World War, the US Military used the Lodge to house pilots in training. At the end of the war, the Florida Congregational Christian Conference bought the lodge with the intention to create a retreat for its parishioners. The church ran it as a camp/retreat for nearly fifty years until 2000. The Lodge had been in declining condition with little chance to save the old buildings. Today the buildings may no longer be there, but the history and traditions of Lake Byrd Lodge will always live on.” I still dream about the place every now and again.



Lake Byrd Lodge was a great place—mostly a log structure nestled in orange groves and fronting on a small lake—Lake Byrd—with red clay roads and lots of orange trees around it. The lobby was huge with a massive fireplace. We would find our rooms and then head out to swim. Several folks had water skiing boats and we all gave that a try. Mom was very good at it. I wish you could have seen her—we do have some home movies of her water skiing. We also have movies of us water skiing on the lake there. The camp was so much fun because there was the water and lots of kids.

I told Aunt Sandy about this project of writing memories and she offered hers of Lake Byrd Lodge. “My earliest memory of Avon Park was sitting by the lake one morning doing the morning devotions and I accidentally dropped my Bible in the lake. I remembered being terrified that I would be struck by lightning! I did rescue the Bible.”

Our favorite place to stop for our picnic lunch on the way was Fisheating Creek near Palmdale—west of Lake Okeechobee. We could see garfish in the creek and glimpse an occasional feral hog. There were no real improvements there at the time. Now it is a state park. We would set up a picnic on the tailgate of the station wagon. One time Mom was wearing a bright red strapless dress. I remember this because we thought that was what attracted a large number of feral hogs. They were very interested in us and our picnic. We very hastily packed up lunch, retreated into the car and took off! No feral hogs in the picture at the right, but this is the dress Mom was wearing--1950!



Early Schooling

I went to Mrs. Brown's private kindergarten when I was 5. There was no public kindergarten at that time in Miami. I think some of my friends from there also went to Merrick. All four of us Winter kids had the same teachers from kindergarten to 6th grade. I remember that at some point when I was in kindergarten that I asked Mom who the President of the United States was. She responded in a scathing tone of voice, “HARRY TRUMAN.” She did not like him at all!!

I am not sure how Mom and Dad found out about Merrick Demonstration School—but the 4 of us were registered to go there before we were born. There was quite a waiting list, I understand. It was named for George Merrick, an early settler in Coral Gables, and had close ties to the University of Miami. We went to school Tuesday through Friday and half a day on Saturday—and we had Mondays off. That meant we could go swimming at Venetian Pool in Coral Gables and have the fantastic place to ourselves. Our classes were small—less than 25—and we had students of all levels and abilities. Until I was in the 5th grade there was only one

class per grade. On Saturdays, U. of M. students who wanted to teach would come and observe classes. We must have had lots of student teachers also, but I don't remember any in particular.

Our teachers were outstanding and I loved most of them. Mrs. Maders was the very kind school secretary and the principal was Mr. McCarthy—he later committed suicide—very sad.

Ada Shufflin was our first grade teacher—she was short and just wonderful. She had a glass wind-chime that she would tickle with her fingers when she wanted us to be quiet. The year I started first grade there was a big flood after a hurricane in Miami (1947?). School started late that year and I remember a water line about 10-12 inches above the floor line that scribed the entire classroom. Now I wonder how much of her teaching materials Miss Shufflin lost. That was the year that we had to drive out to the airport, past lots of flooded areas (I remember houses with water up to the windowsills), to get shots since folks were worried about the spread of disease (typhoid and diphtheria) with the flood.

Our second grade teacher was Mrs. Adams. I remember that she cried a lot—she had lost her only child, her son, in WWII and was still profoundly sad. She was a good teacher, though. I also remember sitting at my desk and writing for the first time from 1 to 100.

Our third grade teacher was Miss Lucy Allen. She was an excellent teacher, but she was also very strict. I had a big crush on Jay Pearson when I was in 3rd grade—your dad later met him at Huntsville where they were both working. A year or so later he committed suicide—very sad. His dad was a faculty member at the U. of M. and served as the president of the university at some point. The “I Love Lucy” show was very popular that year (we did not have a TV but I heard about it) and we all thought it was funny that they were both named Lucy—and Miss Allen was not funny at all!! Also when I was in the third grade Nicky Hodson (I have called him Icky Nicky Hodson ever since) grabbed my pretty yellow sweater and threw it into a mud puddle making me really mad. In retrospect, I think that he liked me and could not figure out a better way to show that.

Our 4th grade teacher was Orpha Ruttenbur (Oprah's name is a corruption of that name which appears in the Bible). She was wonderful—so kind and sweet—an older teacher. She was the one who later told my mother that she (Mom) would have to treat the 3 of us girls differently from Bobby (now Robert) since he was so much more sensitive than the 3 of us. That was hard for Mom to swallow, but Mrs. Ruttenbur was right. By that time I was reading and reading. Mom would take us to the library and I would check out 5 or 6 books at a time which I would



devour. I also read and read the orange covered biographies in our school library which was not huge. We took field trips to the Coral Gables Public Library to augment the school library.

Our 5th grade teacher was Mrs. Cox. She was one that I did not like as much. I was always getting into trouble with her since I would be reading a library book, and she would accuse me of not doing my class work—which I had already completed! One time she got quite adamant about that and I ran out of the classroom into the girls' bathroom and cried and cried. I also misspelled the word “squirrel” in the spelling bee that year—have never forgotten that! I started taking piano lessons about that time at the Coral Gables Youth Center—we did not have a piano at home so I practiced on a cardboard keyboard (clearly—no sound—keyboards had not been invented then). I was finally allowed to go to the school auditorium when I had finished my lessons and could practice in there. That was really wonderful. I vividly remember coming home from school one afternoon to find an old upright piano in what was our dining room—I was over the moon with excitement!!

The teacher I loved the most was Miss Nina Drew, our 6th grade teacher. She was severely hunchbacked and quite short—not much taller than we were at that point. Her parents (from north Florida—a small town, I think) had not hidden her away as many parents might have, had seen that she got an education, and sent her off into the world. She had the most wonderful smile, couldn't spell worth a darn—gave stars to kids who found spelling errors when she was writing on the board. She was a wonderful teacher—a role model for me when I taught 6th grade years later. She caught me cheating on a test once—I wanted to do well for her and I had forgotten to study—she took my paper and later took me outside on the playground and talked to me about it. I was sobbing and sobbing—so embarrassed and sorry. I remember pleading with her saying that she could tell my mother (who would have spanked me, I know), but please, please, not to tell my father—I could not bear to disappoint him. Of course, I did not understand that Mom would have told Dad anyway. I don't remember what the consequences were at home, but I do remember how much I disappointed Miss Drew.

I stayed in touch with Miss Drew for many years. I wrote to her and we took you girls to see her sometime in the early 1970s when we went to Florida to meet Dick and Sue Berkley in Tallahassee and then somewhere in N. Florida to see Miss Drew. She was planning to come to a family reunion (she had moved to NC by then) when Gramma and Grampa lived in Hendersonville, but she died either during or just after surgery for gall bladder, I think, a few months before the reunion.

I remember in 6th grade feeling very insecure about myself—inferiority complex was a word bandied about a lot—feeling quite homely and clumsy. Now—looking back, I can see that I was just fine—active in the safety patrol, practicing on the piano in the school auditorium when I had finished my lessons, and I was chosen to be the mistress of ceremonies at the big program at the end of the year. Mostly though, I remember Miss Drew—she made us all aware of so many possibilities—what more can one ask from a teacher.

6th Grade Safety Patrol Stalwarts--Patty Boone, Tita Owre, and Pat Winter--1953--Merrick Demonstration School. I am still in touch with Tita.

As sixth graders, our reward for going a week on the safety patrol without any demerits was a free pass to the movies (after school) in Coral Gables—especially the Miracle Theater and the Coral Gables Theater. At that time there was only one movie playing per theater and sometimes they were held over for many weeks. I saw “Call Me Madam” with Ethel Merman, Vera-Ellen, and Donald O’Connor

6 or 7 times. I also saw “Robin Hood”—the Disney version of about 1952 with Richard Todd as Robin Hood—loved that one and saw it a number of times. I would take the bus home. One time I missed the bus and was crying and a car pulled up and a man (with his wife and children in the car) asked me if he could help and take me home. I agreed—and then caught a lot of trouble from my mom for riding in a car with strangers!



Our P.E. teacher for most of our time at Merrick was Gordon Blaum. In addition to teaching P.E. at Merrick, he was a nationally known square dance caller and got Gramma and Grampa into square dancing which they enjoyed for years—even appearing on the Ted Mack Amateur Hour. He was tall and slender—his wife was shorter—can’t remember her name right now. Coincidentally, he and his wife retired to Hendersonville, so we saw them several times in the 1980s. They did not have any children—she later developed Alzheimer’s, so it was very hard for Gordon. We did a lot of square dancing at school—a lot of fun.

A defining moment in my elementary school days was the time Sarah Cullen (Mardie, you met her in Boston) and I were playing in the playground after school. Way across the field, some bleachers were being set up for some extra-mural activity. Suddenly we were called to run to the office and call for an ambulance as someone had had a heart attack while working. We raced to the office, Mrs. Maders called the ambulance, it came—and then could not/would not help the man as he was black. By the time a black ambulance was called, he had died. He might have died anyway, but I have never forgotten our disbelief that skin color made a difference when a life was on the line. Oddly enough, it was Sarah Cullen who chastised me in the third or fourth

grade when I was telling her one Monday that we had taken the ironing to the colored lady who did ironing for Mom (we dropped off the things to be ironed and picked up the ironed things on our way home from church). She told me in no uncertain terms that she wasn't a lady--she was a woman. We kids loved to make that detour every Sunday as the ironing lady lived across the street from an African-American church--windows wide open and amazing music pouring out of it. Sarah Cullen went on to serve in the Peace Corps and had a great career in Boston working as a social worker. Times change. I am still in touch with her.

Our elementary school experience was a wonderful one. Mom served as PTA president with Frances and Bill Robbins as co-chairs (Eva Riley's aunt and uncle--their daughter Mary Ann was in between me and Nancy in grades). We had wonderful teachers and got a wonderful education. As I mentioned, students were of all intelligence levels--but everyone was white. It was a very different time.

Family Fun

Money was tight so we did not do a lot of extravagant things, but I remember one time we went to the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus. We were all so excited, especially to see Gargantua, the giant gorilla. I think just about the time we got to Gargantua (before or after the show), Bobby got sick and threw up all over the place. We had to go home early, a great disappointment to us all.

Mom and Dad took us to the movies, especially the Disney ones. We went to see "High Noon," a great Western in 1952, but Nancy and I were so scared we hid under the theater seats for most of it. Your father and his brothers saw it and thought it was a musical.

We also went to Greynolds Park for picnics and to an amusement park (whose name I can't remember at the moment) where one time Nancy and Bobby got stuck in the Ferris wheel at the top for some period of time. We loved to go to the beach--Matheson Hammock or Crandon Park. The water was quite warm which is what we became used to, so swimming at Lake Archer, or--much later-- in Barton Springs, just never was much fun. Sometimes we would drive to Hollywood, some miles north of Coral Gables, and visit with Mom's cousin Cody Dolan, her husband Phil and their son Bobby--especially when Mom's Aunt Marian and Uncle "Tick" Brown came south to visit in the winter.

Summers (and one Christmas) in Massachusetts

It is hard for me to tell you how much our annual trips to Massachusetts meant--they were just heaven for us kids. To give you an idea how we treasured those times, one summer as we were leaving Gramma and Grampa's in our loaded station wagon, Bobby started to wail that he needed to take some "New England earth" home with him. Gramma immediately went in to the house, found an empty mayonnaise jar, got a small spade, and dug him up some to take home with him. Mom later grouched that she wished we could have gone someplace interesting, but, since Dad was an only child, it was necessary that we go back to Massachusetts each summer so that we could be doted upon by our grandparents. We actually loved that--and really enjoyed seeing our cousins. Our grandmother Brown (Ruby Benson Brown) had moved to California in

1946 (to raise rabbits and sell Avon products instead of dealing with chickens and gladiolus bulbs—she was a go-getter!). and Aunt Doris had moved to California the next year, so we mainly saw Gramma and Grampa Winter and Aunt Bertha (Bertha was Gramma's sister) who lived at 170 Winter Street in Wrentham. Grampa worked part-time at the hardware store, Aunt Bertha worked at the bank, and Gramma was the homemaker--a wonderful cook and baker. Gramma invented a dessert that we all loved--Bobby called it "ink and white"--a strawberry Jello and vanilla pudding concoction. Grampa had suffered what people thought was a nervous breakdown brought on by overwork in Detroit and other cities in Michigan during the Great Depression, but now we know that he had the early onset of Parkinson's disease.



L-R: Bertha White, Robert & Velma Winter, Nancy, Pat, Lois & Bob Winter , Jr., 1945

We kids knew that we were going every summer—and were delighted!. The first trip I took to Massachusetts was during WWII—1942. I was just a little over a year old. Mom and Dad took the bus—soldiers got priority, of course. Mom and Dad told me several times it got so close to their not being able to get on that they pinched me to make me cry and Dad would shout “Lady with a baby!” and the 3 of us would get on. The other problem was that they had so-called disposable diapers that Mom said were no better than paper napkins. It was a pretty messy trip as Mom told it. Imagine trying to do that nowadays. On the way home, Dad’s cousin Ida came with us to help out. I know we went again when Nancy was a little over 2 as I have pictures to prove it. I don’t remember how we got there.

After the war was over it was easier to get to Massachusetts. The trips I remember the most are when I was 8-15 or so. We usually had a station wagon loaded to the gills. For weeks before we left, Nancy and I would lie awake for hours at night and plan what clothes we would pack for our dolls (my doll was Patricia Alice Winter, Jr.—I did not quite get the naming situation at that point). Mom would sew like crazy and make us pretty sun suits (not for Robert!), forgetting that it was still cold in Massachusetts in June, so we would have to borrow outgrown clothes from everyone. Dad did most of the driving and Mom sat up front with him. I sat behind Dad and Nancy behind Mom. I am not sure if Bobby and Sandy had set seats, but they were in the back seat. They used to get into terrible arguments. Mom would grab the yardstick kept for the purpose and brandish it while Nancy and I ducked!! One or two summers Dad arranged the suitcases so that there was a bed along the right side from the back of the front seat to the back of the back seat. It seems so bizarre now—no seat belts and a random bed on which to snooze--but we loved it!

The main problem for us was that it took forever to get out of Florida—almost the whole first day. We drove up U.S.1—no freeways—no car air-conditioning--mostly 2 lane traffic--and hit every stop light between Miami and Wrentham. We would stay at tourist courts (no chain motels)—with 2 double beds for the 6 of us. I confess that many times I kicked Nancy out of bed to sleep on the floor—I did not like sharing. Bobby and Sandy were sleeping in/on sleeping bags.

It usually took us about 2 1/2-3 days to get there . We would start our sing-song about the end of the 2nd day, “Daddy, how many more miles to Gramma’s house? How many more miles to Gramma’s house?” Dad was very patient—and because he was such a whiz with maps, he usually knew within just a little bit just how much longer it was.



Dad with Patnancybobbysandy and our faithful “Beaver” station wagon--1949

We stayed mostly at Gramma and Grampa's on Winter Street (our 2nd cousin Rick Rose lives there now so we have gotten to go back and see it modernized). We loved the old house with its stairs (our house at home was on a single level), the itchy antique horsehair sofa in the little library room upstairs, (lots and lots of books--Aunt Bertha was an avid reader) the huge bathroom upstairs with the old clawfoot bathtub, the amazingly soft Yankee grass—not like our St. Augustine, and the large side yard with a huge old apple tree with the swing that Grampa made, the large boulder by the tree that made a great step up to the swing, their two gardens—one for vegetables and one for flowers (that is where Gramma had her gazing globe and why I wanted one in our yard here), the nifty toaster which had two sides to toast the bread and you had to monitor it so that it would not burn, the very old phone complete with an operator, the basement with its instantly recognizable musty smell, the lovely climbing pink roses that bloomed each June, the raspberry bushes that grew along the stone wall on the side yard (we would go out and pick them in the morning and put them on our cereal), the small pump organ of Aunt Bertha's in the room where we slept, the amazing cabinet-sized Stella music box with the large perforated metal "records" that played wonderful music as we cranked the handle. The year after Nancy fell down the stairs after getting up in the night to go to the bathroom they installed a small ½ bath downstairs near where we slept. The steps to the upstairs part of the house were even except for the last one at the top—and that is the one Nancy missed. Ouch!

We loved going with Grampa into town to pick up Aunt Bertha who worked at the bank. Aunt Bertha was way ahead of her times as she usually walked into town in the morning to "her" bank. When it was time to pick her up, the four of us would pile into the car with Grampa and head up Winter Street and then turn left at the blinking stop light. There was a dip in the overpass on the way to town that made our tummies sink--we loved that. Sometimes we would stop at the general store and see the big old pickle barrel that folks helped themselves from. Aunt Bertha would bring home from the bank all sorts of stamps (I remember a Blue Cross stamp) and ink pads that she used on documents and we loved playing with them. Most afternoons we walked up Winter Street with Grampa to the railroad bridge just in time for the train to go roaring under us—very exciting! We listened to the Boston Red Sox ball games on the radio in the parlor. Everyone was a Red Sox fan--what traffic there was stopped while a game was on.



170 Winter Street in Wrentham, MA, with Nancy and Robert in 1984

Dad didn't get more than two weeks' vacation for a long time, so a number of years the 4 of us flew up with Mom on ferry flights to NYC. The purpose of the ferry flights was to take planes to Pan Am headquarters in NY (it must have been LaGuardia—no JFK airport at that point) so that they could have their routine maintenance done. We left very late at night and usually arrived in the middle of the night (after flying with freight, etc—one time I remember there were refrigerators and canaries—the passenger seats were just bolted down). We flew “subject to payload” or standby—paid only the tax. I was 21 and married before I knew how expensive it was to fly. There were no flights to Boston or Providence in the early years, so we would take a cab from the airport to Grand Central Station. I remember being in an extended cab—they had jump seats in them—looking up at all of the huge tall buildings in the night—and then arriving at the train station. One time, as we were struggling with all of our stuff, Mom put Sandy in the stroller she was carrying and it collapsed on Sandy. There Sandy was, howling in the middle of the station with the three of us dazed and sleepy older children trying to help. I remember that a very nice Red Cap came over and rescued us.

When we were in that mode, Mom and the four of us would fly up several weeks before Dad and then he would drive up by himself, stay as long as his vacation would allow before loading all of us into the car and we would drive home. When we were in Wrentham we would play with the Rose kids across the street (Jim and his family live in the house where he grew up and Rick, as I mentioned, lives in 170 Winter St.—they are our 2nd cousins). Usually Uncle Bud and Aunt Peg would coordinate their visit to Wrentham (after 1951 when they got home from the

Philippines) to coincide with our visit (remember Mom's brother married Dad's cousin). The 4 of them (Fred came along much later) and the 4 of us would have a wonderful time—especially at Lake Archer where we dashed back and forth between the Winter and George camps (remember that the generation that included Grampa Winter included Elsie Winter who married Walter George—and Charlie Winter who married Walter's sister Fannie—siblings married siblings). Often Aunt Florence would come with her kids—and the Wilsons (Uncle Ralph and Aunt Elsie, Lois, Gordon, Margie, and Ellie) would join us for a great time.



Swimming fun at Lake Archer in Wrentham--Aunt Elsie and Uncle Ralph standing at the back, seated on the pier--Bobby, Judy, (cousin) Lois, Margie, Aunt Peg; in the water, Martha, Pat, Ellie, Becky, Sandy, and Nancy

We also took trips in to Jamaica Plain and Erie Place where Aunt Elsie and Uncle Ralph and the kids lived and to Cottage Avenue to see Aunt Florence and Uncle Nick and Judy and then Stephanie—Nicky didn't come along until Beth was born. We loved going to see the cousins in

Jamaica Plain—we were entranced with their accents and their big rambling house with the elevated running right behind it. We loved walking down to the “cawnah stoah to get a bottle of tawnic and some pawp.” Red-headed Ellie was really into dancing lessons and always had marvelous costumes to show us (made by Aunt Elsie). We would go to nearby Franklin Park to play. Tragically Gordon was killed in a sledding accident at the park in 1950. He was hit by a police car, which was checking to be sure everything was OK in the park. We were so young that we had no ideas of the enormity of the tragedy that they lived through.

Aunt Florence’s house was fun to go to also. At one point she had a huge Doberman pinscher, which was a bit intimidating. She loved Burl Ives (a singer you might Google) and so did I, so we enjoyed playing those records. She was a good cook and we always had great spaghetti. There were lots of kids on the block (the matriarch of the family next door was Ma Donattli—we loved her). Aunt Florence had been a professional photographer and loved taking pictures of all of us and she made that fun. Uncle Nick, who became quite crabby as an older man, was fun to be around and enjoyed all of us. She was quite sophisticated in our eyes—loved modern furniture (we were early American), etc.

We always went at least once to see our great-aunts, the Auntie Twins and Aunt Chris who lived in Cambridge in an apartment building (it was built in 1909 and now has an historical marker on it) at 10 Dana Street. Aunt Chris kept house and the Auntie Twins (Mary and



Isabella--we could not tell them apart) worked for many years as secretaries at nearby MIT.

Sometimes Gramma Brown would be back in Massachusetts when we were there (she had moved to California in 1946), so it would be fun to see her, too. When she was there we would go and see some of Mom's Benson relatives. We would also go to Hanson to see our great-grandparents Brown and our Grandfather Brown (although Gramma and Grampa Brown never visited together—they had separated bitterly after the death of Harold, Jr. in 1922 and divorced some years later—Grampa held a deep grudge). He was often working at Ocean Spray Cranberry Co. where he was the electrician. Grampa was quite the character—he did a lot of odd jobs for folks around town (Hanson) and never would collect the bills. He was so funny. He would come to visit us at Gramma and Grampa's in Wrentham and at some point he would say that he had to leave. An hour later he would still be standing by the door getting ready to leave!



Lois Winter, Florence Caldarone, Elton (Bud) Brown, Doris Brown, and Elsie Wilson with their father, Harold Brown, in the summer of 1951 after Uncle Bud came back from the Philippines.



Gramma Brown with Sandy and Bobby in Providence, RI, about 1949

The Christmas of 1953 (I think I was in the 7th grade), we went to Massachusetts for the holidays. You have to remember that we grew up in Miami and that we had never experienced really cold weather or seen snow. Every 6th grade class had a marvelous field trip to the Royal Palm Ice House. I think it was located at the intersection of LeJeune Road and the Dixie Highway. We were advised to bring our warmest clothes so that we could go into the ice plant and experience cold. I had done that, but my siblings had not. We drove to and from Massachusetts. The further north we went, the colder it got. We arrived in Washington, D.C., when it was dark. Dad maneuvered us into the Mall and we drove around the Washington Monument. We were so excited because there were puddles and the glittering puddles were frozen!! We finally arrived at Aunt Peg and Uncle Bud's in Westfield, MA, after 3 days on the road—and no snow. We told Uncle Bud that we were all praying for snow—and imagine our delight when we got up the next morning to find a foot of snow on the ground! We all thought that Uncle Bud had a direct line to God. We had an amazing 10 days or so visiting with relatives

and playing in the snow. Aunt Peg knitted us all mittens—I still have mine in my junior high colors (Ponce De Leon Junior High—blue and gray). Aunt Peg also borrowed clothes from the whole of Uncle Bud's congregation in order to outfit our large family with warm clothes. Our grandparents Winter were so happy to have us there to share Christmas with them.



Here we are at Great-Gramma Brown's in Hanson the Christmas we went north. Mom and Dad are standing with Sandy, Great-Gramma is just behind Bobby, Aunt Peg is in back, Judy Caldarone and Nancy and I are on the right.

I remember a most embarrassing incident on our way home. We had gotten to North Carolina somewhere on a Sunday and stopped at a Howard Johnson's for lunch—not thinking that it was THE place for folks in this small town to go after church for Sunday dinner. We were attired in flannel shirts and jeans—looked like the Beverly Hillbillies—and here were all the townsfolk dressed in suits for the men and mink coats for the women. I nearly passed out from the mortification—and I remember that Mom was quite unnerved.

Mom and Dad would plan special educational stops for us—sometimes we would be bored stiff and not very appreciative. One that I remember vividly is the stop we made at Kitty Hawk, NC. It was raining as we got there and Mom did not want to get out of the car, but the 4 of us kids went with Dad to make the pilgrimage to where the first airplane flight had taken place. Flying meant so much to Dad that we were all properly reverent when we were there.

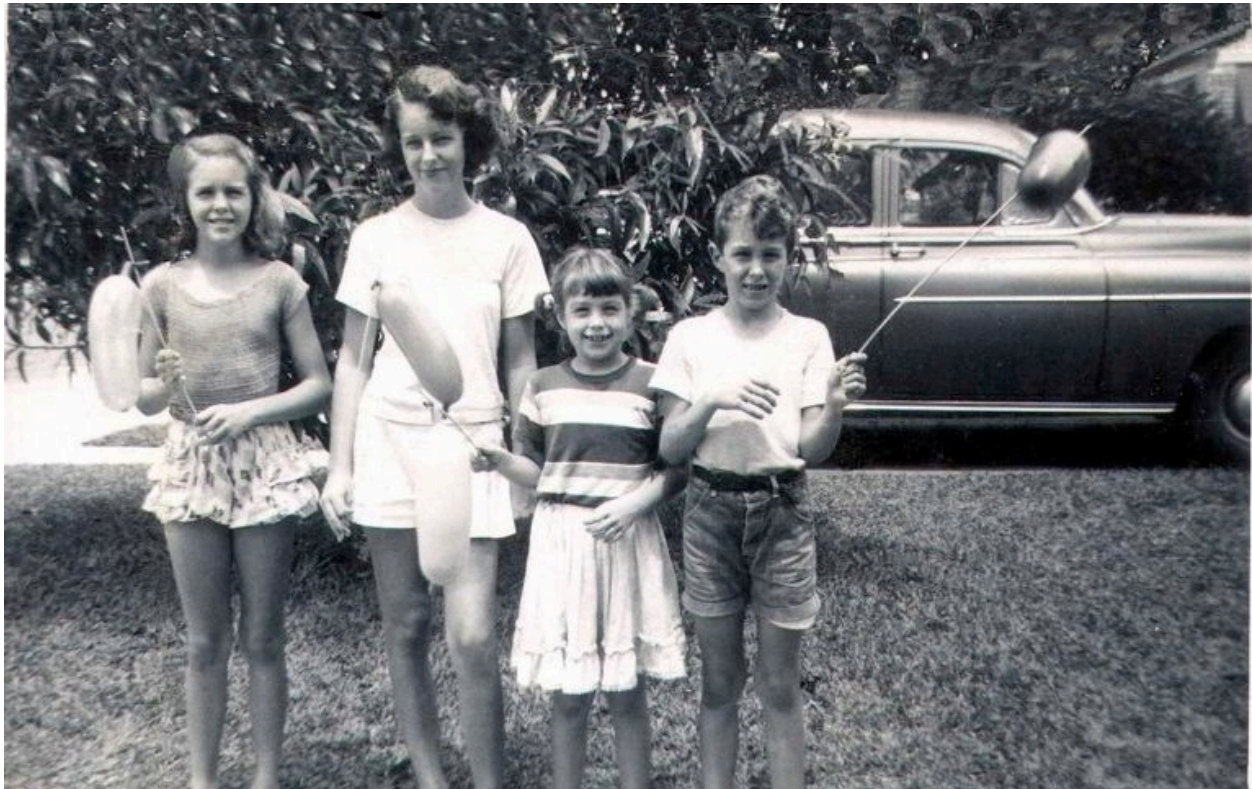


Summer trip north about 1949--Nancy, Bobby, Pat, Mom, and Sandy

All in all, our trips to Massachusetts were a wonderful bonding time for our family. We played games (Alphabet, Beaver—spotting a station wagon first and shouting loudly that it was ours, hangman with paper and pencil, looking for Burma Shave signs to read, reading comic books, asking how many more miles it was to Gramma's house, etc.). Sometimes we would sing. Bobby and Sandy used to get into terrible rows when one of them would sing one song and then the other would sing another song! I can't remember if we had a radio in our car, but if we did, stations were few and far between. Because of our trips to Massachusetts we grew up with a strong sense of place and family. While we have not been able to give you the sense of place that we had in Wrentham, I do think we have also given you a strong sense of extended family

through our reunions--prompted in some way by our early reunions with cousins, grandparents, and aunts and uncles in New England.

So far I have taken you up through my first 12 or 13 years. There will be 2 or 3 more installments as time goes on. It has been fun putting it together. Your dad has been wonderful in getting the technical stuff taken care of. I will leave you with one last picture--a favorite of mine--of the four of us Winter kids.



Nancy, Pat, Sandy, and Bobby on Campina Court about 1952

Acknowledgement

After reading this, your dad suggested that it would be a good idea to acknowledge our wonderful parents--and that is so true. Mom and Dad were so different from each other--opposite personalities--and this caused trouble at times, but they were committed to their marriage and to their children. I remember hearing arguments when we lived on Campina Court--mostly about money, I think, but I am quite sure that they never contemplated breaking up. They raised us with great values--family, friends, faith, a belief in education and hard work.

They were consistent with us and loved us dearly and we felt that. We four still have a wonderful bond which is a great joy to all of us.

One last photo--Aunt Florence took this portrait of me in 1946. My guess is that she also curled my hair.



To be continued.....