

## My First Recollection

Betty Lou Leach

My first recollection is indelibly photographed on my brain. In this picture, my earliest memory, I see myself seated in a low sewing chair, my feet thrust straight before me. I am nearly three years of age but rather small. In my arms I am holding my baby brother, who is only a few months old. I am industriously rocking back and forth, and singing in a thin, childish voice. I am very proud that I have been allowed to rock the new baby to sleep, and occasionally I glance down at his face to see whether my singing has had the desired effect. From behind me comes the sound of an electric sweeper as mother sweeps the bedroom floor. I call very softly, and she comes and takes the baby from my arms. He is sound asleep.

## Forces That Have Shaped Me

Clemmie Poole

My earliest remembrances are centered around the joys that come from being a member of a family of six children and the sacrifices that result from such a condition. The only sacrifice that I was capable of making at the time was that of attending school very seldom. Choosing this alternative rather than working has brought upon me many woes.

We went to school only so long as strawberries or cotton or black-eyed peas were not in season. They seemed in season most of the time

to me, I suppose, because we had to earn our living by them. On mornings of these duties the family looked like stairsteps, I being fourth among the children, trudging down the dusty dirt road. My mother carried the tin pail containing the biscuits and sandwiches which tasted like the best of food at noon.

The things I liked best about strawberry picking were eating the berries themselves, if they weren't covered with white insect powder, and watching men crack off the heads of snakes. They did this by rapidly twirling snakes around by their tails and giving a quick jerk. With the end of the day came the climax. The empty pail was filled with the fruit and we strayed wearily home to shortcake or sugared berries.

I don't know which I hated worse, cotton picking or the pea business. Dragging a sack behind you and adding an ounce in an hour seemed cruelty to me. One day my brother and I showed our rebellion by bursting over fifty of the owner's melons. Of course we were such well-thought of children that we escaped the blame.

Picking peas was not so bad but shelling them! The dried peas which we had received as pay, were spread out on sheets and reached almost to the ceiling, which wasn't so low. There we sat around them and shelled our fingers sore. Mother locked the door and guarded it so that escape was impossible. She let us loose for lunch but excuses at any other time were given singly. I have grown to hate the customary New Year's dinner among some families: peas and hog head for good luck. I ate them for months at breakfast, dinner and supper.

During this time I longed for education. I remember plainly going to school after strict forbiddance without a hat in the snow. I had thrown an old black coat over my head and, on arriving at the mod-



ern school with its modern children, tucked it under my cloak until I reached my desk. To add to my embarrassment the teacher asked me if I came hatless, while I was tucking it in my desk.

So it was a great boon, when my cousin from the north made a visit to Tennessee, in 1936, when I was nine years old, and brought me back with her.

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## "Jerks" at Camp

Martha Finney

Perhaps it would be well to explain the significance of the word "jerks" before proceeding further. "Jerks" is a Girl Scout colloquialism for the daily early-morning calisthenics. Of all the institutions in a Girl Scout camp or under the sun, this one is to me the most distasteful.

There is one main reason for this dislike. Consider for a moment a typical morning at camp. The bugle sounds, and it is necessary to report for jerks immediately. At six-thirty of a summer's morning the grass is very dewy, and consequently after a few minutes of running and jumping about in it, not only the slippers are wet, but also the bottoms of one's pajama trousers. Having cold, slimy slippers is sufficiently uncomfortable, but to have clammy pajamas clinging to one's ankles is unbearable. In addition to the physical discomfort, this condition also makes it impossible to slip back into a warm, inviting cot for a stolen few moments of laziness before the bugle calls for the Colors ceremony.

How much more satisfying it is to substitute in place of this ordeal a swift plunge into Lake Erie, which succeeds in awakening one so completely that there is no temptation to climb back into bed.

## Through The Years

Marie Therese Schubert

My reading library enlarged when grade school work had begun with the well-known additions of *Robinson Crusoe*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and *Black Beauty*, a book that caused many tears to flow, and instilled in me, as I remember, a passionate love for horses.

As the years progressed, school became more closely an intrinsic part of my life. My parents were helping and encouraging, and sets of books were bought for reference work. They lent whole-hearted support in any worthy affair that had connection with the school; their willingness to help made me love them more than ever before.

Experiences rather than people influenced my early years: certain trips away from home; occasional rides into the country, accompanied by lovely hikes in the fall on cushioned rugs of scarlet leaves; cold but happy hunting excursions in snowy winters, when I carried a gun more for ostentation than for meat for the pantry. The physical exertion made me feel fully alive and exuberantly in secret communion with Nature.

My dog, on whom I tagged the suitable name of Mutt, was a big joy; and although his size did not equal that of the St. Bernard whose picture decorated one wall of my room, I cared for him much more than for the big brown-eyed, inert canine. I remember especially one occasion when he played the role of "Mary's Little Lamb," and followed me to school. He did look very gentle and subdued sitting on the seat with the teacher; but too much commotion was aroused, and Mutt reluctantly had to depart.