

2. Summer camp in Lake County

David: So I have a general question which is that you talked a bit about you father who I knew really nothing about. Can you say more about him as a person and what he was like as a father and what traits from him you think you acquired or inherited?

Henry: Very insightful question because I had that on the list of questions I wanted to add to what I said last time. Which I would call the nursery school years those were the years that my father was still around and you will learn from this segment he departed very shortly after I finished up last time and I didn't see him again for about 20 years but I do have definite memories and they definitely affected my later life and sometimes it ways I didn't ask for but couldn't help. For example he had a very characteristic of indicating displeasure, frustration and anger. He took a characteristic Norwegian method of clamming up and sulking and retreating rather than confronting whatever was the issue. I have followed that same pattern ever since. It's not very healthy but I have never learned the art of getting things off your chest.

On the other hand there were things that I inherited from him not in the biological sense because I don't believe in that, but simply from observation. He was very fond of word play. He was a punster. I certainly picked that up and have gone through life making bad puns all the time. Which sometime are appreciated and sometimes not even understood as such. And that was one of the problems I'm convinced between my father and mother. She didn't have that sense at all and didn't understand when he was trying to be funny by making a pun. She didn't appreciate it and he didn't appreciate that she didn't appreciate it. And it was one of those things that just added up.

In combination with other things as well. I got as we mentioned before a great fondness with sports. I have spent innumerable hours and I still do even though there are others thing that I should be doing with my life. I'm hooked on sports in television and radio and whatever form. I read the sport page every morning even though there are things going on that are infinitely more important. My father was also interested in art. He himself did some watercolors at one time when he went to Cornell and if I ever get my archives totally organized I think I can retrieve some of those and when it came time to try my hand at graphic expression I leaned toward watercolors. He was also interested in music. One of the mementos that he brought home from Europe when he was discharged in WWI was a bugle. I don't know if he was ever a bugler but I inherited it and I learned to play the bugle and eventually got a merit badge in the Boy Scouts as a bugler.

Well so I was influenced by my father no question about it. As we go along later on I will talk more about my mother of course. She was the big influence for most. I'll say a few other things about the nursery school itself. It wasn't entirely a cash operation. My mother was quite a believer in a barter economy. So if she needed a job in carpentry she would have preferred to find a carpenter to give her a bid and if he had a child and if everything else was appropriate she would have offered to swap. 10 days in the school for the value of his labor. So there came a time when she felt that my brother and I needed music lessons. And she decided that Oscar

should take violin and I should take piano lessons. She couldn't find a violin in Palo Alto of the child of the right ago to go to the nursery school for a time. She had to pay the violin teacher but she found a piano teacher with a boy who was my ago so they agreed to exchange a day at the nursery school for a piano lesson.

And I began taking so called piano lessons. As time went by it turned out that this guy's piano lesson was for him to practice an etude or sonata with me sitting by him on the piano bench and every once in a while he would stop playing and have me point at where he had stopped on the score. I was supposed to be able to read music in that way. I don't recall even going through the usual basics of playing scales or whatever. It was a scam he was getting away with it because he thought that I didn't know any better. But there came a time when I told my mother that I didn't think that was a proper piano lesson. She bought a piano to play in the nursery school. I never got beyond the point of playing chopsticks with Oscar. And so that led to a confirmation with Mr. Hackett and terminated their arrangement and I never did learn to play any instrument at all. Well later on I took a stab at learning the clarinet and trumpet but never became proficient at anything of that sort.

Well. The last time I did talk about the beginnings of the Anderson summer camp which began with the fact that my brother and I had tonsillectomies and my brother continued to get upper respiratory infections to the point where we finally found a doctor who said he should spend some time in a warmer climate that was available in Palo Alto. I'm not sure about the details and but they found a former Stanford graduate student who had a piece of property in lake country that he wasn't using at the time let my parents use for the summer at some very, very reasonable rate and so they got the idea of simply transferring the nursery school to the extent that the parents were interested in doing some into lake country for about 6 weeks in the summer of 1935.

And as they succeeding years went by the ideas and the group became a little larger each time. And by 1938 it was quite successful. My mother felt that we had enough people there that we should have a nurse on duty and she was able to find nurses that were in financial trouble and were willing to serve for basically room and board.

At this same time I believe I'm right in my father got a call from Davenport that he was needed back there to help settle the estate of my grandfather Anderson who had died. There was some problem in the probate. Maybe it was an excuse for my father to get away because he and my mother at the time were having real problems. He had basically moved to the attic and was having his meals sent up there by one of us boys and so forth as so on. It was a very unhealthy situation. So that meant my mother was by herself in running the camp. But she was very good at managing things without any help and she hadn't been getting any help from my father for some time before that. And it was quite a successful camp. Financially and in other ways and I strongly suspect that she had had the idea fairly early in the game that there wouldn't be any real point of going back to Palo Alto to this emotionally unhealthy situation there.

As far as she knew the owner of this property in Lake Country still had no use for it. And why not stay there for at least a while. And so toward the end of the summer as the camp was breaking up she had what she called a family council as if her boys had an equal voice in the matter. While in fact for all practical purposes the decision had been made and of course we jumped at the idea and therefore it set in motion a variety of things which she must have been thinking about beforehand otherwise it wouldn't have been possible to get it all in motion as smoothly as it did. For one thing she had the idea of getting a cow. And she in fact had in fact lined up a Holstein for \$50 and another one of her plans was the chickens and she had already figured out the variety was going to be New Hampshire Reds which are a breed of chicken that is an ideal combination of eating and laying chicken. On the property we had at our disposal we had an old barn. It was roughly divide between a portion that was used for stock by the owner and the other portion was a chicken shed. It needed some work but she had a handyman there for help around the nursery school chopping wood and things like that. And so she put him to work fixing up this place.

And she had it figured out that my brother would be responsible for maintaining the wood supply which of course was a big deal. This cabin was without almost any what were considered essential amenities in this day and age and even in that age by city slickers. But it had no electricity, no telephone, no source of heat (butane or propane) the only source of heat was wood for heating the space and for cooking. Hot water had to be heating on top of the stove if one wanted to take a bath or what have you. It was quite an adjustment. It did have running water in the cabin both in form of a flush toilet and running water in the kitchen. The source of water was a creek with ran maybe 30 feet away from the house. And there was a pump arrangement whereby an old Chrysler had a pulley it was on a platform on the top of the creek bank and the pump was down in the bottom of the creek itself and this endless belt hooked up with one of the rims of the car and turn on the engine it started pumping water to a tank of several 100 gallons. Which by gravity provide the house. It wasn't totally primitive but was rather basic.

And I was given the job of maintaining the animals, including milking the cow morning and evening without fail. And I can't remember exactly the number but we began fairly small time on the chickens maybe 25 of them or something like that. And so I had to learn how to feed them and water them and make sure they had nests to lay in. And protect them from varmints and so forth and so forth as so on. And then there was the question of education. I had just finished the 6th grade at south Palo Alto school and there was within the town. Close to the center of Cobb, a 1 room schoolhouse. Classical literally a 1 room schoolhouse for all 8 of the elementary school grades with 1 teacher. And that was where I was going to go. I was rather apprehensive about it because at the south Palo Alto school I had begun in the 1st grade with all my classmates. As it turns out I skipped grades but in any case I knew everybody and everybody knew me. Here that wouldn't be the case at all. All of my classmates would know each other and I would be the outsider. And I was afraid as being a city slicker to use that phrase again. Because I didn't know the lingo to the history of the area or anything of that sort.

However I was surprised and delighted to find that I was accepted. As long as I kept my mouth shut until I learned the ropes.

And so I made every effort to learn the lingo and the history. And learn the costume. For example there was a way of dressing that the boys all followed. Including jeans of course and including certain types of all purpose boots which I guess were about 8 inches which I of course did have but soon got by means of mail order. We got that kind of things from Montgomery wards (Monkey Wards as we called it), which had very good service at the local post office. So I began accepting their attitudes. Now I was in the 7th grade. There were 2 other fellows in my same class 2 years older than I was. There were named Don Springsteen and Bob Prager. We had a 4th member of the class named Gladys Elliot.

But one of the attitudes of the boys was that they didn't associate with girls. They thought that girls were sissies; they thought girls were not very bright. So we were trimpherenet? unto ourselves. Sort of the 3 musketeers. We were all equal and alike in that we looked down on poor Gladice. I want long with this not that I necessarily agreed with it in my heart, but I desperately wanted to belong to the guys and I learned that there is a very, very powerful motive, not in peculiar to myself but perhaps in general to mankind. The need to belong to something. So I belonged to that group and it meant a great deal to me. That it ushered in kind of what I consider a golden age in my whole life. I was very happy as school to feel that I was accepted and very happy to feel that I was being useful at home. And it wasn't easy I had to get up early. The mornings began to get cold before long but I had to milk that cow. It just had to be done and I did it. And I got very good at it.

Still it took close to 30 minutes because Holsteins are famous for being very productive at milk more so than Gurneys and other breeds. And it was equally necessary that I feed and water the chickens. And when they began laying eggs, part of my duties was to collect eggs at the end of the day. It was a full day a full life. And I just loved it. I forget to mention that my mother would drive to school in the morning. The school was about 3 miles from where we lived. She would drive and drop me off because she always got the mail at the Cobb post office and there were frequently things she needed to buy at the nearest store which was incidentally part of the pine grove resort. Cobb at that time was the center of quite a number of resorts which had to make their money in the summers. People came up from SF and so forth to get away from the city and breathe the fresh air of Lake County. But in the winter the resorts closed down but Pinegrove continued to operate this little store.

And for incidence the owners of the resort were the Eigens and the teacher at the Pine Valley school was Mrs. Eigen. Everybody knew everybody else. But as I started to say at the end of the school day I would walk home every day and I had these boots and I tried to keep up a lively pace. And so in the course of time I built up strength. In my walking apparatus and running apparatus as it turned out. And so at the same time that I would building up strength in my hands and forearms from milking. In the fall during recess in school the games nobody thought of football. There were games called red rover and beefsteak. Don't have any counterparts as

far as I know, but they involved tag teams and rather elaborate rules. But they did involve a lot of running. And as I built up strength that came in handy.

And during the spring they did play softball. And I discovered that even though I was younger and smaller than anybody else. In the 7th grade there was this one guy in the 8th grade who was really older and bigger and yet I discovered that I could hit a softball father than anyone else because of the fact that the secret is in the strength of your hands and wrists and forearms and I think that is true of big league baseball players today. And I always regretted that people like Barry Bonds thought it was necessary to take artificial means when he didn't need to. Because he had remarkably swift forearm the way Hank Aaron did. But anyways that's another story. Oscar did not go to that school because he almost always went to private schools. Now I haven't mentioned the Binkleys have I?

Fran Binkley was the owner of the place we were living at. He was one of 10 Binkley children. The main Binkley ranch was over the hill from where were. They had 160 acres. Fran had 20-40. The main ranch had a lot of thing going for it. At one time they were a major goat ranch with 300 goats that they used for milk and cheese. And they used the hair to sell for wigs or something. The ranch was a fabulous place. And it had a private school. It was a 1 man school and run by John Binkley a specialist in science and math. And he was Oscars tutor. I think Oscar might have been the only student.

Did I mention that Oscar was responsible for keeping up the wood supply. The main wood that we used was a very hard wood and it was quick to ignite it was manzanita. And there were lots of manzanita on portions of the Binkley property, to which we were given free access, which had been killed by fires at some time in the past. So Oscar would drive then he was really young ~10 so he must have been 12 when I began. And he became 13 in January. Anyway he got ahold of a model A. My mother must have bought it and we kept it off of public roads. He would drive the Model A and hoop up chains to the dead bushes and haul them to the main house where he would chop them up. Didn't have any power saws. And he was darn fortunate that the axe never slipped. Because in the course of talking to the guys at school and men at the store I heard tales about experienced woodsmen whose axes had slipped. Did terrible things to their legs. But Oscar was lucky and never suffered any injuries from his portion.

One of the major developments from this period of my life. And I don't know whose idea it was to start with and there was no stopping it. I began to be called Hank. And I embraced it heartedly because I never liked the name Henry and I said before. That was the name of my maternal grandfather just as Oscar's was his paternal grandfather. However there never was a logical nickname for Oscar. But for many years everybody called me hank. It wasn't until fairly recently as time goes that I slipped away from that and began allowing other to use it. And now few people call me Hank but when they do it given me a warm feeling. Another development at the ranch was that I learned how to ride a bicycle.

And he tried to teach me how to ride a bicycle. And I didn't really learn for Oscar. I only learned by doing the hard way. And if I fell off a few times which I did there was the dirt to land on on

either side of the road and there came a time it was dusk one evening I'll never forget. I succeeded in staying upright for some extended period of time and I had learned how to find. And I suppose I could still ride a bicycle now if I tried. As they say. As I was growing up I learned how to do a number of different things. I learned how to hit a baseball by hitting fungoes on a field near the house. And there again swung and missed dozens of times before I learned to hit a fungo and I was soon able to do fairly regularly.

And then I would walk as far as I had hit it and turn around and hit it back. And I kept doing that until I became pretty proficient. The main thing I think is a feeling of making myself useful. There came a time when I was rather than taking on chicks in those of 25. Taking on at least 100 at a time. And that of course was more than we could use in the form of either eggs or fried chicken by ourselves. And so I began selling them to the resorts during the resort season. Selling the eggs at either 25 cents a dozen and selling chickens frying chickens for whatever the going rate was then I don't remember. Eventually I got a merit badge from the Boys Scouts of America in poultry husbandry because of my background in that even though I had to give it up when we moved back to Palo Alto.

What did we do for entertainment? At the summer came we had a campfire every night and every camper was invited to contribute something. Something in the way of a song, a poem, a joke, something. And during the winter my mother always read something to us and she was a member of the book of the month club and sometimes they sent out that thing every month weather we wanted it or not. There were ways to tell them we didn't want that sort of thing, but that involved telling them we didn't want it and we never quite got around to that. And so we got every book of the month even though sometimes they were not of any interest to us at all. But when they were she would read those.

And then there came one time when she thought it would be good for our spiritual development if she began reading the holy Christian bible. And (laughs) and I laugh because I think she never got through the book of Genesis. And I can't remember exactly where the story of Noah and the flood comes in. And that includes not just the story about the great flood but there is something there about Noah getting drunk and being seen by one of his daughters in a state of nakedness. Now my mother had very strong feelings about drink she also had very strong feelings about nakedness. That ended our bible lessons. I never heard how the book of Genesis ended up. But that was one of our family institutions.

We sometimes played records with an old wind up phonograph and some old victor ritz seal records of Enrico Caruso and groups of four singing the quartet from Rigoletto. With a sextet from Luchio and so forth and so on. That was part of our education.

Have I mentioned our dog Skippy? A wire haired fox terrier. We got him I guess about 1938 and so he was with all through the lake country years. That is most of the lake country years. And we loved that little dog and he loved us. In my last reminiscences I believe I said something to the effect of "If I ran the world every young boy would have a little sister" and in my ideal world every young boy would also have a dog. There is an example of giving and receiving

unconditional love. Skippy was also useful in helping us hunt ground squirrels. Ground squirrels were one of the banes of my existence particularly because they had a great appetite for chicken feed.

And I needed a lot of chickenfeed for 100 chickens. I would buy it in 100 pound sacks and ground squirrels found a way of getting into our storeroom and helping themselves so I declared war on them. Trapped them every way I could. We had a small 22 caliber rifle. In fact it dated back to my mother's early years when she had it in Texas. She kept it during the years and took it with us to the ranch and we started taking pot shots and ground squirrels with that. I guess we got 1 or 2 occasionally. But our dog Skippy would help by trying to dig them up with their burrows and he was ??? about that. I don't think he ever got that far down because they dug their burrows pretty deep. But he tired and one way or the other we made inroads. Never defeated the ground squirrels, but we made them pay. And whenever we did kill one we would BBQ it in one our campfires and feed it to Skippy.

In my senior year that is my final year of Cobb valley school which was the 8th grade. In those years the division was between grammar school and high school. There was no such thing as middle school or junior high school. So I was in my final year and Cobb valley school in the year 1938-39 and I think I got this right. In any event we were now the top grade in that school. To the best of my recollection the total enrollment of this 8 room school was probably about 20. There were 4 of us in the top grade alone. There must have been many classes in which there were no pupils at all. But one of the more interesting things about it is that it was quite diversified within those limitations.

I mentioned the fact that it was a resort district. By far the largest and most famous most prosperous of all those resorts was called Hobergs. Hobergs Among The Pines as they called it. They had literally 100s of cabins during the resort season they had a full size orchestra playing for dancers every night. On one occasion they had a guest orchestra you've probably heard of called Tommy Dorsey. And the 3 brothers that owned that enterprise were I'm sure millionaires. It was the largest family owned resort they claimed in the state of California. And 2 of the Hoberg children were attending Cobb valley school at the time. But you wouldn't know it. They didn't dress any better or act any better than any different from the other children. And there were 2 other siblings in that school at the same time the Brookings brothers who were borderline mentally shortcoming I'm sure. But there again no big deal was made out of it they were accepted along with everyone else.

They were very cheerful and I remember that the one teacher Mrs. Eigen wasn't really able to keep track of the progress of every child every day. And there came times when the elder children were asked to help with the reading lessons of a younger child. Their tutelage consisted of only listening to someone read and explain how to pronounce or define a word. In that way Mrs. Eigen was able to keep everyone up to a reasonable level. In the case of the Brookings boys I think their special education took the form of one of the older kids reading to them rather than them trying to read to us. In any event it was all as I say diversified without anyone looking down on anyone else. In my senior in my 8th grade there was a Christmas play.

Every year Mrs. Eigen wrote an original play on a Christmas theme. I was called upon to do the sets. The setting was going to be a cowboy Christmas. So I had to visualize the set consisting of butcher paper on the back or front of the schoolroom. With my drawing of a rural setting with a campfire in the foreground and pine trees in the background. And by this time I was increasingly interested in art as a hobby.

On my 11th birthday in December of 1939 I believe I got a watercolor set and began doing watercolors, which I believe I mentioned that my father also did in his day. I didn't do watercolors on this set. I used colored chalk on the set and I think it turned out pretty good if I remember correctly.

My brother was very good at technology of various kinds including car maintenance. I think he kept my mother's car in trim. He was also very interested in radio. He began with a crystal set that didn't require any electricity. It couldn't bring in very many stations. But by the time of our second year in lake country he was able to bring in a wide range of radio stations without the access of electricity. I don't know how he did it but we were able to get programs from SF and all the major networks at that time. There were certain programs that we set aside for every week. We weren't addicted to radio in general; we rarely listened to more than 30 minutes at a time. We liked the Bob Hope program. We liked the program called "Information Please", which was a sophisticated quiz program. We liked the program run by Robert Ripley called "Believe it or Not". He began with a cartoon or a newspaper feature involving illustrated oddities that he collected from around the world. And he moved into radio and made this whole thing become quite entertaining by the mere sound rather than being able to visualize it. The source of illumination was something called an Aladdin lamp. The fuel was kerosene and it had a wick. It began glowing when the fire heated the wick. It gave out effective reading light.

We managed to be quite self-sufficient, but never managed to be able to grow crops. I believe in the very early years of the Anderson summer camp there was an attempt to grow radishes or something in the way of vegetables. It never worked because there were a lot of deer in lake country. Despite the fact that we were besieged by hunters during the fall and that they were supposed to limit themselves to bucks but I suspect that many of them were bagging does as well. So there were plenty of deer and we tried, if memory serves me, tried keeping them out briefly with a fence. But found that they were able to jump the 8 foot fence easily. And we were not going to try to build a higher fence than that it was just too much work. So we gave it up and never were there long enough to grow tree crops.

Well fixed for eggs chicken to eat year round when they began getting too old to eat as fryers there is something better than fricaseed chicken cooked with dumplings as I found. As for the milk we used that in many ways. After skimming off the cream we made butter and the skim milk we fed to chickens who loved it. And we used the cream to make ice cream the ice cream was made in a freezer that was operated by a crank that required us to go to the store to get ice cubes. We probably did have an ice box at the lake country ranch, but for the most part we got along by keeping things cool down by the creek. We had a box that we submerged and the water would keep the contents cool. Even the hottest summer days.

So all in all I look upon it as kind of an Eden in retrospect. I there again feel that everyone should have the experience of spending at least a portion of their life outside the city. In a city I believe that it's possible for a person to have any inkling of the spectacle of the starry sky. In a remote rural setting. There must be 100s if not 1000s of time more stars... you have the milky way for starters. You don't see the milky way in the city. I haven't seen it in Berkeley for years. But there we had it every night. I would lie in bed, I slept outdoors whenever possible on a cot. And I was able to look up at the starry sky. I didn't fully appreciate it at the time. But ever since I have. I there again feel everyone should have the experience of knowing that there were other possibilities in life than whatever they were able to get from a town or city.

Furthermore I think it's valuable for a person growing up to have the opportunity that I did of being able to produce something palpable and useful and appreciate and needed. The way my brother did with his woodworking and my working on livestock and chickens. So there came a time when Fran Binkley said that he wanted the use of his property back. For a brief period of time we tried staying at another place in Lake County operated by another old timer in the area named John Lee but it wasn't the same. So in 1940 we moved back to Palo Alto. And it has now been about the time where Virginia said she'd like to start dinner...

David: So your father went to Davenport and never came back?

Henry: He was only there the first 2 or 3 years. After the war broke out he had a good excuse for staying back there. He was a machinist and was needed in the Rock Island arsenal right across the river from Davenport. Major arsenite and he spent the war years there. Later on I'll be talking about the time when we finally did get together.

David: Did your mother operate another preschool in Lake Country?

Henry: No, just the summer camp. Once the war started it was impossible due to transportation restrictions. She continued to operate the nursery school until the mid 1940s back in Palo Alto. She rented it out (the house?) when we were in lake country.

Gene: Describe the Lake County house.

Henry: My brother had a bedroom as did my mother. I had a sleeping porch which was open to the elements or elephants as I put it. it got cold there in the winter but it was good for me. I just put on another blanket or comforter and I had what I called a bearskin that I wrapped around my feet. I found that if I kept my feet warm the whole rest of me would tend to stay warm. It wasn't really a bearskin in was lambskin but it was a gift from my father and that's what he called it. There was a very small kitchen. The living room had a fine stone fireplace floor to ceiling and let's just say that I was in lake country about 8 years ago and visited that place and the fireplace is still there and unchanged.

David: How cold is it in the winter?

Henry: It does snow. It gets down into the 20s and we dressed for the occasion.

In fact looking way ahead one of my best paintings is based on a photograph my brother took of a snowy scene. I used that as the basis for an oil painting. Which I gave to Oscar and his wife at the time Jedde in honor of the photograph he originally took back in 1939. That painting still exists as far as I know in the home of his daughter Claire. It came be seen on demand I think.

Incidentally my brother had the job of starting the fire in the mornings. So we all had our roles to play.

Gene: Whatever happened to that rifle?

Henry: I don't know. By the same token I don't know where the bugle is today. I used to blow taps every night during the summer camp. At the end of the day. Another one of our great traditions.