

OUR BROTHER, BOB, ACCORDING TO SHIRLEY

At two years, six months, and fifteen days I really don't remember much about Bob's birth. Like the sun and the rain he just was always there. I don't remember resenting him or feeling pushed off Mother's lap. After Janis was born Mother commented to him on how big he was getting as she took him on her lap. He answered "I'll try to stay on".

We didn't have a lot of toys but he didn't need much - just a piece of string. He always had string tied on a couple of chairs lined up like a team of horses. One time he used Dad's work shoes with their strings as his team. Do you remember the little blue cast car he had that he called it Ford Chevy? Always the diplomat! One of the older kids had given it to him for Christmas where most of the toys we had came from.

We tried to run away from Bob sometimes but that darn Tag Tripp would wait for him. He was a little slow climbing over the railroad fence. He spent a lot of time with the Kirchener kids. One day when Blanche was pulling him in his wagon Mother asked him if he shouldn't give her a ride. His answer was "Blanche likes to be the horse". One day Junior (Doc or Ross) came looking for him and he wasn't home. I think he was down at Elva's spending time with Jack. Junior was so discouraged and said "I ain't sawn Bob in most a week".

One Christmas someone gave him a pair of suspenders and he apparently had never seen them separate from the pants. He held them up and said "somebody played a secret (his word for joke) on me - they forgot the pants". Besides trading Janis to Tag for a cowboy suit, he sold her several times for a nickel to Sam Tripp. Ever the businessman!

How frightening it was when he had those calcium deficient seizures. All I remember about his trip to Chicago with Mother when Alice took him to the American College of Surgeons where she worked was when we picked them up at the depot in Bangor. Nina held him on her lap and he told us about his trip with Alice and Gabe to Lincoln Park Zoo. Later re-occurrences of that problem were so scary and I was aware of Mother and Dad's deep fear. Temper tantrums went along with this condition. How he shuddered when he had to take those big spoonfuls of Cod Liver Oil.

It was a little frightening when he accidentally hit Jack Wheeler in the head with an old rusty axe. It wasn't done on purpose. Jack spent a lot of time on the farm with us - more like a brother than a nephew.

Being half way between Eleanore and Bob I seemed to spend more time fighting with her than Bob. He really couldn't fight his way out of a paper bag anyway.

When I was a senior in high school Mr. Personality was still in Junior High so I didn't have to put up with him. I didn't want a repeat of his behavior when he was a first grader at Kibbie and my embarrassment at that time. He will know what I am talking about.

In 1941 the National Guard Unit (Troop A) from South Haven was called up for active duty. A special train was brought in from Hartford line and they were to board between the two factories, Everetts and Overtons. Lois was just a little girl and went with the rest of us to see him off. He had either a "good conduct" (shaky) or "marksmanship" medal. He was holding her and as she fingered the medal she asked "Uncle Bob, are you going to be a general". When I think back I think how apprehensive Mother and Dad must have been that day.

This was just supposed to be a few words on my recollections and relationship with my brother. As brothers go I wouldn't trade him but there have been times. I may even forgive him for when I was visiting him at Fort Bragg he asked "Where did you learn to dance so well?"

When he left home with the troop to go to Fort Leonard Wood Dad teased him about bringing home a wife with one leg shorter than the other from walking on the side of a mountain. Little did we know that he would instead bring home an attractive wife from California. I often think how much courage it must have taken for June to have to face his six sisters.