

I once heard someone describe his memories of childhood and adolescence as a moving picture, one event blending into another over the years. He saw his past as an unfolding, ever changing, evolving scene. Perhaps I have a faulty memory, but the many recollections I have of my young years are more like still pictures, caught and suspended in time. Going back into my memory is like visiting a gallery of paintings, each evoking a different emotion in the observer, and each having a rich story behind it. In spite of the incidents which produced the pictures, however, the images themselves are the stronger force, and I can bring them to mind in vivid color.

One of the pictures I often see in my mind is a winter scene--I was riding on the bobsled with my father behind Dick and Dan. We were on the way to Canfields' mill. I have no idea what our purpose in making the trip was. I only see that sled, the bay Dan and the iron gray Dick, and my father holding the reins. It is a pleasant memory.

Another picture from the past is not so agreeable to remember. I was in kindergarten, and I recall my father coming to the end of the long lane to meet me when I got home on the noon school bus. He came after me because my stomach hurt so badly that I could barely walk up that lane. He drove the Ford tractor, and I rode up the lane on his lap. I did not like school at all, and kindergarten passed in a blur of stomach pain.

When the community was raising money to build the gymnasium at the school in Tustin, the building that now houses a meal site for senior citizens, the committee held street dances to generate funds. We went, of course, and my folks danced the familiar square dances. I can see my father twirling my mother around to the "Swing your partner!" of the caller. The picture is so vivid because of my mother's skirt. She had made it to wear to the square dances, and it was full and colorful. The background was white, and scattered over its circular skirt were bright red carnations. I can see that skirt yet.

When I was small, we had a very large, black cookstove with a white oven door. It was a Born stove, and it was massive, with a huge warming oven above the cooking surface. I have a picture in my mind of my mother bending over the open oven door, removing a cake--which

happened to be my birthday cake--from that oven. I don't recall what the flavor was, or what kind of frosting it boasted. But, I can see that pan coming out of the oven in early September, my mother's face flushed from the hot stove

I remember going after the cows in the summer, bringing them to the barn for evening milking. We had to go around a stone pile on the way home, and I can still see the roan and red cows, frozen in time, winding they way around that stone pile. One old cow refused to conform to the group plan, and she always walked alone, never in the cow path. My sister, knowing that the stone pile was also a haven for blue racers, also skirted that particular obstacle.

These scenes, and many, many more, are positioned in my mind as if in a long hall, and they are framed and sometimes even titled. I walk this gallery often, glancing at one thing or another, not trying to remember words or deeds, but merely looking at my past. My growing up years do not appear to me as incidents along a continuum, but as vignettes, unconnected, which make up a rich tapestry of color and emotion always waiting for me to return once more.