

FAMILY

BY LUCIEN AIGNER

Note from the author

This is a condensed presentation of a book intended to cover 128 to 160 pages, including material not touched upon here or presented only in skeletal form.

Conceived as a draft circa 1952 by Lucien Aigner.

Reconceived, edited and updated

2021 by John Aigner and Gilbert Long.

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PICTURES AND COMMENT

BY LUCIEN AIGNER

WITH TEN PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANNE AIGNER

> WITH A HOUSEPUL OF FAMILY, SEEN BY A MAN AND HIS CAMERA ...



What? Where? Why?

hen people hear we have four children, they breathe an envious sigh. "Lucky people!" Then, on second thought, they exclaim."You do have courage, don't you?"

I agree with them on both counts. But then I think of the wise and prudent ones who can explain logically why they can't afford children. I listen to them with sympathy, and remember: "We could never really afford them either. And yet we had them. Oh, you clever, cautious people. You are missing a lot. A lot? You are missing everything."

Four. That's quite a parcel of children. A noisy and troublesome parcel at times, too. But as they grew, the family grew, my enjoyment grew with them. Fatherhood seems to grow on you like appetite, while you are eating good food. When the first boy arrived, I knew nothing of those exuberant feelings we read about in magazine articles or hear in movies. I was full of apprehension. "How am I going to support the three of us?" Was all I wondered about. When the second boy came, I was less scared. I felt like a veteran, seasoned in battle. I found out that we never really starved, so I knew we were not going to from then on either. We finally had a third child, a girl, and with the fourth, another little girl, unplanned and unexpected, I simply could not understand that there were people who had less than four children. How could they get along?

Oh, we too have to pay grocer's bills and replace torn pants and worn shoes. The butcher and the milkman cut their chunk in the family income. The children have had their share of colds and measles, and more often then not we used to pay rent a few weeks behind schedule. But we always paid, even though we are not quite unacquainted with "dispossess" notices either. But somehow or other Heaven never really let us down, and we managed. And then there's the reward: in a glance, in a word, in a gesture, which appears like a message from Heaven, and you find all the trouble and effort suddenly worthwhile and more.

Well, I started putting these memories on paper in a quiet farmhouse on a hilltop, up in snowbound Massachusetts. The blizzard of the night beforehand subsided, and the hills were full of peace and magic in the glittering moonlight. Even the boys, the two lively dynamos were at peace, slumbering in their beds at my side, and the adventures and mischief of the day became memory, embellished by the mellowness of reminiscence.

The quiet, big guest room of the Gould Farm was a good spot from which to look back on twelve years of living, on little and big things that happened. Things that did not look so cheerful at the time of their happening. But from such an altitude the past gains new

meaning, as fluorescent stage costumes change magically with the changing light. Drab and common colors become alive with new beauty.

I write this book for two reasons. First I want to show my self and my family, how beautiful our life has been. (Of course we know, but like most families, keep forgetting.). Perhaps you will say that there is nothing unusual in all this. That your family is just as good as ours. If not better. I won't argue with you. If you do say that, it will show you have discovered your own family. And that is my second reason for writing the book.



e are a family of six: Mady, the two boys, two girls, and I. John is twelve; Steven, Nine; Anne-Marie, four; Kati, two and a half. With the exception of John they were all born in New York. Johnny was born in Paris. Of course to make the family complete, you have to count in Grampa and Gran mommy. Grampa is Mady's father and came from the other side about two years ago. So did Granmommy, my mother, six years before Grampa.

You want to meet us at the dinner table? When I come home in the evening, the house reminds one of sound effects taken at the Stock Exchange with every bull and bear on a rampage. Anne-Marie wants to know if I "brought her somp'n" and so does Kati. Johnny is anxious to show me his American History report. Steven just wants me. It takes some time before we settle down.

At dinner, everyone is still talking at once. Mommy distributes the meal. Then follows some tussle, a test of authority. The children state their preferences in food, as a matter of principle. Mady on the other hand states that they have to eat everything. I keep still, though I have never been able to understand why a child ever has to be forced to eat anything? The result usually is compromise. The boys gobble up a few strains of raw carrot, or some leaves of lettuce, in order not to delay their macaroni dish any longer. Or Mady stuffs a spoonful or two of spinach in Anne-Marie's or Kati's mouth before dessert is distributed. Tonight, as on many other nights, we forgot to put the milk on the table. So Johnny, who is the main customer for milk, leaps to his feet when we are half through with dinner. Johnny's move is so sudden and energetic that Grampa, who sits near the refrigerator, has to duck, and swears under his breath. As the milk all but lands in his lap. We comment on the day's events. Steven's adventures, Johnny's plans, Anne-Marie's bon mots and little Kati's boners. Then, while Mommy washes the dishes, and (after some argument) one or more of us dry them, we adjourn to the "boy's room" to play records, read books, tell stories and finally to bed.

This last is, always, the toughest. It's well past eight thirty before all requests for water, kisses, switching off lights, closing or opening doors, are complied with, all last minute toilet rites performed and blankets tucked in.

By the time I've listened to the radio adventure of some law enforcing or law breaking

hero with the boys, read and sung the Mother Goose series twice for the girls, and given ear to a discourse on the World Series by John, Steven still hopes (at five to nine) That he may play a game of Canasta with me. He's disappointed to learn that he's wasted too much time in the bathroom with acrobatics between the sink and bathtub. The disappointment grows into dejection when he learns that there'll be no excerpt from "Black Beauty," either. The lights go out just the same.

But while all this was going on, once or twice during the evening one of the children did or said something which made Mady and me exchange a silent, smiling glance. It was very brief and went unnoticed by anyone but us. But when it happened, then and there the two of us knew that we had caught a glimpse of something which very few people have seen: happiness.

YES : FOUR ! ...



Meet Anne-Marie, Steven, Kati and John, the four Aigner children. They aren't always so full of sunshine as Mady makes them appear at this moment. Don't ask me how she took this picture. Only she knows that.



THE AIGNERS:

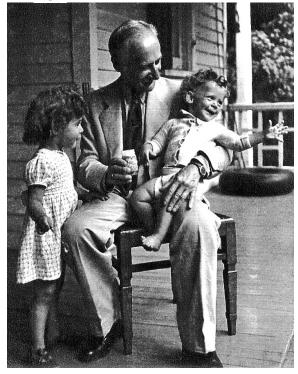
Granmommie with Kati.



The family: four and Mommy and Dad.



Grandpa and his Girls.

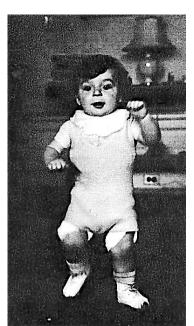


WESTERA

By way of introduction: Mr. and Mrs. Lucien Aigner. Or, picture of a young immigrant couple sailing as visitors toward the Land of Promise.



That odd looking sto carriage smacks of Europe. Mady's hat was American the rest very Old World. We were full of apprehension before the magnitude of our task.



Historic moment. Johnny takes (at one year) his first unaided steps on American soil.



AMERICA, HERE WE COME !..

eaving Europe full of foreboding on a rainy January afternoon in 1939, we arrived in the New World aboard the Westerland, a slow but comfortable boat. Our visitor status and some misunderstandings with the purser earned us the special attention of the immigration authorities, who sent us to Ellis Island to straighten things out." We left the Island with flying colors the next day, thanks to my credentials as foreign corespondent, richer with experiences of a sleepless night behind bars, good food and hordes of cockroaches.

Despite our somewhat depleted purse, our first quarters were in a swanky 5th avenue hotel. We wanted to start our American career right. Looking back, and remembering the horrified expression of the bellhop, we must have looked pretty incongruous entering that elite building with our battered conglomeration of luggage, including a variety of bundles in blankets and paper wrapped parcels. But, with some reputation in international journalism, success appeared a stone's throw away. It took us three hard years and a lot of disappointments to find out how far a stone can be tossed.





JOHNNY STEPS OUT ...

M hile European children were starved or persecuted, our son enjoyed the comfort of the park, aided by his mother and a nurse. We soon learned that such luxuries were not even for all wealthy Americans, much less for "visitors." When our five hundred dollars melted away, hard knocks began for John and his parents. At the moment, however, he appears absorbed with more immediate problems.

... UNDERTHE SKYSCRAPERS

etting out boldly on roads of the park,
John looks as if he knew better than his parents where he was going.
Unconcerned with their precarious situation, he was out to conquer the world.





... THROUGH THE NY TIMES



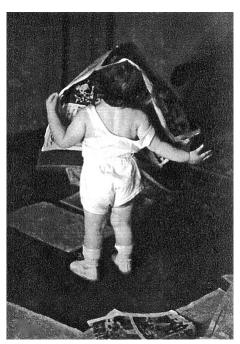
GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE WORLD...

As the days passed,
Johnny, of course,
was not aware of the meaning of events.
He made the acquaintance of a good source, however,
The New York Times.

He knew little of the British rulers whose Canadian and US exploits filled those pages of the Sunday edition. But he suspected that America must be a big and rich country, judging from the volume of its Sunday papers.

- 1. "Now, let's see."
- 2. "This just about covers the subject."
- 3. "Have to dig deeper."
- 4. "Overwhelming!"
- 5. "Stupendous!"
- 6. "Am I glad to be out of that!"











JOHNNYS FIRST ...



1. John found a great many things in our summer residence to capture his interest. One was the garden hose used by Mommy.



2. After Mommy was through with sprinkling the garden, John undertook to examine the strange object.



3. Help! The strength of the stream threw the tricky object out of his grasp, with the result.

... WITH DAD



Johnny, however., learned from Dad a more peaceful method of watering, than Operation Hose.

hile Hitler's Wehrmacht prepared to overrun Poland, John Peter Aigner, our Johnny, enjoyed the sunny side of life in these blessed States. In the midst of all this bliss and sunshine my own conflict only deepened. I knew we were highly privileged for having been spared all the suffering we began to hear about from Europe.

And yet I could not enjoy my son and his blabber.

Torn between the desire for a vacation and the necessities of making myself a place on American soil I permitted myself few moments like this. And the ones I had I failed to enjoy.

AMERICAN ADVENTURE

7 ohnny brought a sunny disposition with him to the world. Mady did her best to let him keep it. Sensing my fears and conflicts but using her unusual gifts for bringing up children relatively unafraid, she fairly well succeeded. She had not studied much of child psychology, but had an amazing instinct as to what was best for our little ones, sometimes in opposition to authorities on the subject. In our disputes over the children, whenever these occurred, I have learned to trust her instinct rather than my logic..She may have argued the wrong way but her action, no matter how illogical it appeared during the argument, usually came out all right in the end, producing the results we both wanted to achieve.

... WITH MOM



Gone another day packed full of new adventure. Johnny comes to rest on Mommy's shoulder. Sweet moment, why can't you stay with Johnny, with us, forever?



Once the first shock was over, he found a "way out" of the wet situation.



A quick rubdown can do wonders for your frame of mind.

From then on he stuck to his own way of sprinkling, learned from his dad.





JOHNNY'S OTHER DISCOVERIES

Unaware of the storm gathering over our globe, Johnny continued to explore his immediate world.



With his friend, the one year old son of our house mates, John was thrilled by the mysteries of a gin rummy deck.





The instinct for imitation, most reliable guide of all children, impelled Johnny to various gestures with the "Jack," if not useful, at least exciting. Faithful old "Sexy" (Mady named the car) didn't mind either...





The Big Moment. Sitting behind the wheel holds magic for adults and children alike.



"Don't you know an ace of hearts when you see it, Silly?"





FIRST
HAIRCUT

Operation Haircut began in a serene and peaceful atmosphere.



Then all of a sudden the sound of the scissors or the gloomy severity of the young barber or his pinching, or something

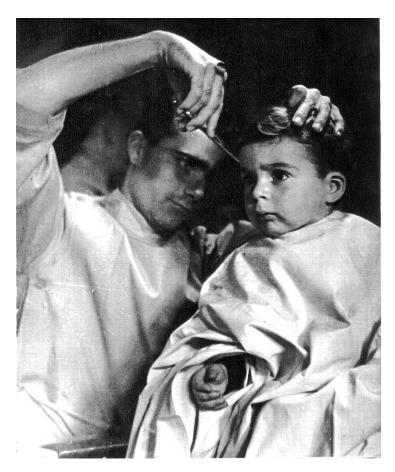


Produced that thing against which a two year old knows only one refuge: "Mommy, Mommeeece!



Fortunately an experienced old barber was on hand who knew how to restore the lost faith.





ack in the city, John, with his silky auburn locks, began to look, "Too much like a girl." We were surprised to see Johnny scared when we first took him to the barber. We did not know that children are afraid when they first sit in that chair. It isn't the pain. It's the fear of the unknown, of something being separated from them, which so far has been theirs.





And bring the enterprise to a flourishing finish.





Before



and

After



A FIRST AMERICAN CHRISTMAS

ettled in a two room kitchenette studio apartment on snobbish West 86th Street, we buckled down in earnest to "conquering America." I began to make at least some money with my photographs and articles, and Mady began her long and arduous playground career. With the park nearby. Mady spent most of her first five or six American years on playgrounds. By winter frozen on park benches, by summer scorched. She became one of the most conscientious playground fiends in the big city.

The apartment was comfortable. Even though the kitchenette was separated from the studio only by a Venetian blind (and fumes and odors sometimes lingered way after meals). The furniture was new. The rooms spacious, and John had one for himself. So, all in all, for a refugee family still on a precarious "temporary status" it wasn't bad.





s soon as he discovered the difference between "Happy Birthday" and "Merry Christmas," Johnny also discovered that he was being cheated. Born on December 23rd he found out that combining the two celebrations was not such a good idea as it seemed to sentimental grown-ups. Not so far as presents were concerned, anyway. So he decided he was going to celebrate in June. With most of the children born in winter, plus Mommy's and Dad's birthdays in the same season, the strain on the family treasury impelled us to agree that it was an excellent idea. On this first Christmas Eve of his American career. however, Johnny enjoyed completely the celebration. The tree, the toys.





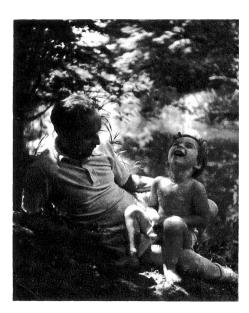
SUMMER AGAIN, THIS TIME IN THE POCONOS

nencumbered and free. With a furnished apartment, paid by the week, no steady job to worry about, when the city became its muggy summer self again, we packed our belongings into old, reliable "Sexy" and took to the Poconos. In a farmhouse we found refuge to suit our purse.



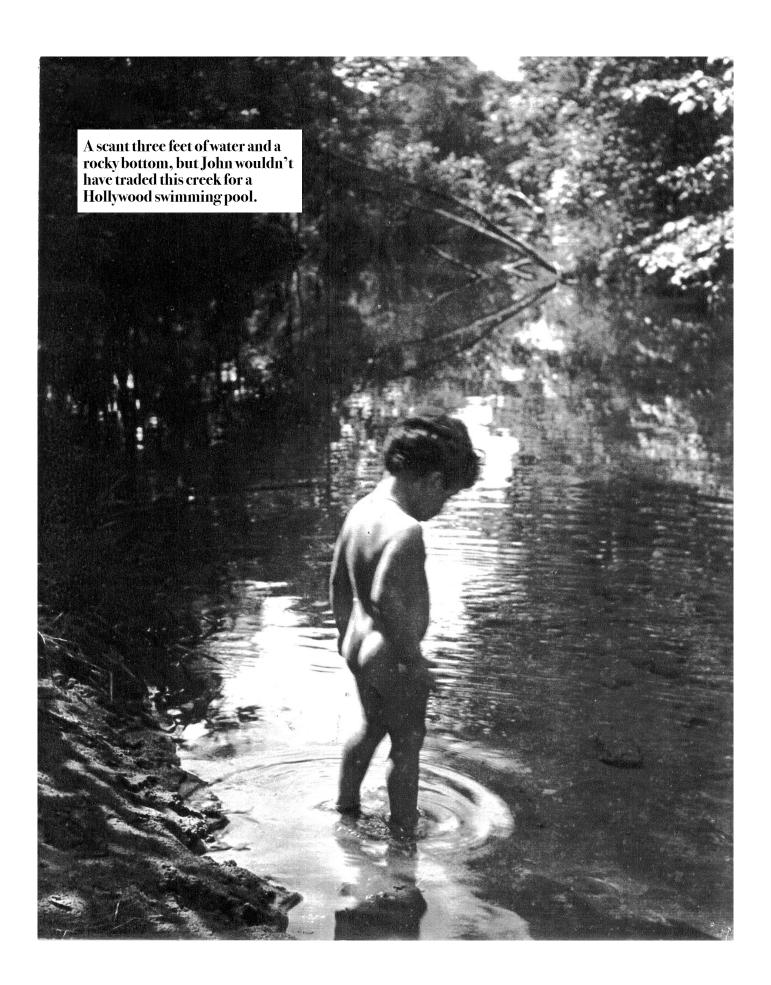
We had good food and plenty of sunshine, nice people around us (always of great importance to Mady) and a little creek. In short, all we needed to make us happy.

Jouncing gleefully on Dad's shoulders or walking the country lane hand in hand with Mom, was Johnny's share. The chickens in the farmyard furnished the extra thrill which made that summer memorable.











PARADE

rom a neighbor's balcony on Central Park West, Johnny saw his first Thanksgiving Day Parade (courtesy of Macy's). The ceremony so faithfully followed by New York children year by year made of John an American boy as surely as did his later zeal for baseball, the Lone Ranger, firecrackers or comics.





Johnny was over three when one damp February night Steven made his appearance.

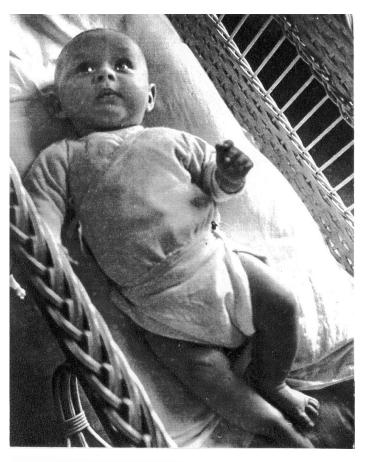
To avoid deep seated causes of jealousy, we accepted an invitation for John, from the Pauls, our friends and companions during the first American vacation on Long Island. He caught chicken pox a few days after Steven's arrival. My time had to be divided between his sick bed and the bed of Mady at the hospital. I couldn't tell the truth to Mady, of course, so I had to endure to be considered an unloving father and husband, arriving at all hours and not even giving Mady a kiss. Returning from his exile, a week after Steven had come home, Johnny, forgetting about his own misery, commented, when the taxi approached our

block: "I am so

worried about Mommy."

When Johnny saw Steven, his face fell. "Is that the baby?", he asked us somewhat contemptuously. It was clear he felt there had been a little too much fuss made for such a small package.

Attending the feeding ceremony, he queried: "Why does Steven bite Mommy?" As for the "baby," between breast and bottle he was off to a good start.

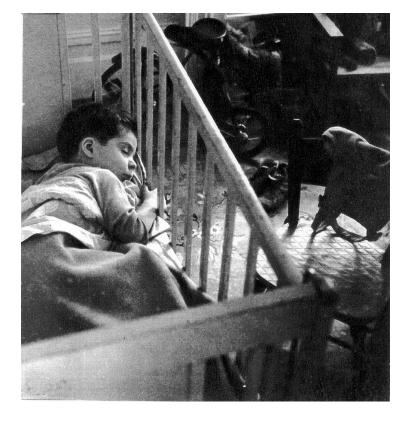


UGLY DUCKLING
SHARES THE NURSERY...

... WITH THE BIG BOY

Feeling that sharing room and life with each other would outweigh any dangers of contagion, we decided, contrary to our pediatricians advice, to put Steven in Johnny's room. Could we possibly have ousted Johnny from his niche for the new arrival? Look at those toys and the things which made his corner so cosy. And to move the baby bassinet to our room would have caused jealousy. Even later, it was Mady's policy not to separate the children when one became sick. She felt that either the others already had it or would get it anyway. Sometimes they did, sometimes they didn't. We haven't protected them by separation and strict adherence to rules. But we kept them free from a great many fears.

So the new little Ugly Duckling and John became roommates from the very earliest stages of their lives. Perhaps this was the reason why they later became quite inseparable.







House Guests at Hyde Park with Sarah Delano Roosevelt.

Inder the watchful eye of the reluctant and invisible representative of Edgar Hoover's organization, John played in the garden with the Roosevelt Dupont scion, giving him, too, the time of a somewhat lonesome life.



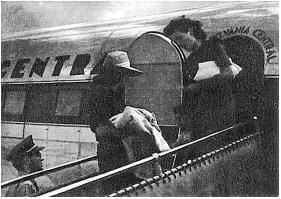
uring the summer when Johnny was three and a half, we were invited by President Roosevelt's mother to Hyde Park. We had lunch with the dear old lady, I was given the keys to the domaine and allowed to take all the pictures I needed for the New York Times, and John shared the historic Roosevelt nursery with Franklin the III, for his nap. In the afternoon we had tea on the porch and when we left in our reconditioned Ford, (decorated with new slip covers for the occasion), we took with us a basketful of goodies, in keeping with the custom for house guests of the Roosevelts.

Mady, who at first, had wanted to stay home because she "had nothing to wear," forgot clothes under the spell of the Roosevelt charm, and smiled when I said, "See, the three fifty hat did the trick!"





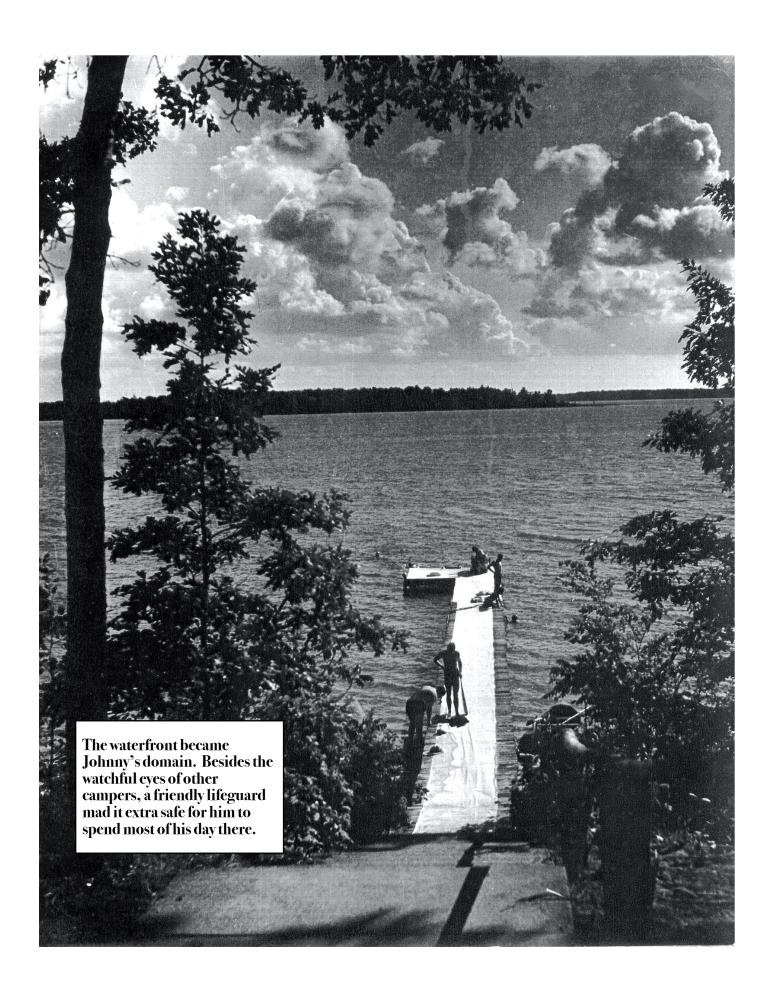


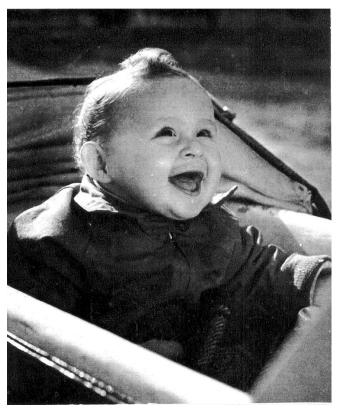


The same summer I was invited to the National Music Camp to help with publicity. We had half a dainty cottage to ourselves and five hundred acres at the disposal of John who could roam to his heart's content. Mady showed off her no longer so ugly duckling to the world. John forgot the queasy experiences of the short but bumpy airstrip, and became the mascot of the Camp. Music, the strange instruments, the Lake, all fascinated him, and there was always some kindly soul to bring him back when he got lost. In this way he became confident that it was a friendly world.

After New York, we discovered a new America, one we couldn't help loving. It looked as though all the friendly people from 48 states had gathered at the N.M.C. No wonder John's expressions to his brother reflected growing tenderness.







YES, THAT'S JOHNNY'S BABY

From an Ugly Duckling, Steven, nearing his first anniversary had developed into a roly-poly of good cheer. Johnny began to be proud of him and began doing things for him, discovering that it could be fun having a baby brother.

A relationship blossomed between them which later became characteristically that of feudal baron and his peon.

The baron demanded obedience and recognition of his authority, but offered protection and would not suffer anyone else to harm his subject.



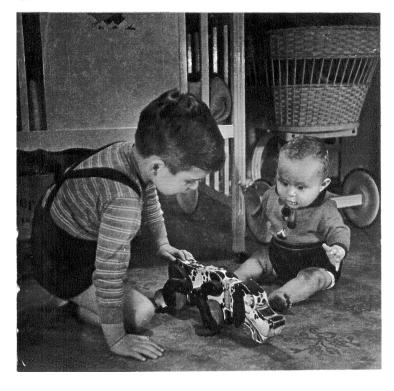
Roly-Poly, age one.

Steven had become his baby alright, more than Dad's or Mommy's. And if Steven had had to choose between Johnny and the rest of the world, that would have been no decision at all.



Johnny introduces his brother to the mysteries of playing. Getting acquainted with Pluto was only the beginning.









WE ACQUIRE A GRANMOMMIE

Things grew more and more bleak in Europe, and part of the family followed us to America. My mother came to live with us and the children had something they had missed before: a granmommie. It took time for them to become adjusted to each other. Grannie did not speak English and the children spoke no other language she could understand. So it demanded more than the usual amount of good will on both parts before they could accept and love each other's ways. Years later Johnny paid her the greatest compliment by confiding to me: You know, Dad, I love Granmommie as much as I do Mommy or you.

- 1. Picture of peace: Granmommie's initiation by the boys. Things were not always as serene later but they managed.
- 2. Acceptance by John meant, to Steven, acceptance by John's crowd at his birthday party.
- 3. John in turn had become an accepted member of his Kindergarten Group at Columbia Grammar.





STEVEN AND GRANMOMMIE

The trouble with granmommies in general is, I believe, that even less than parents, will they give children a chance to grow. They either want to keep them eternal babies or have them behave like full grown men of the world. They will not let them dirty their clothes in the park or smear their faces with food, all of which is so important to Johnnies and Maries of all description.

Take for instance this unhappy sequence. Steven had grown enough to become used to the adult's toilet. He had become quite self-sufficient and after having a good time with the comics, decided to experiment with the toilet paper. Of course that's a tricky thing, but Steven might have managed if Granmommie had given him a chance. But no, she is too impatient for that and insists on winding up the story her own way...







Making like a train down the slide is fun for both, and mutual advantage is alway the best guarantee for success in any enterprise.

Galloping through CPW is another way to have fun. Instinctively John adopts a protective attitude toward his " little monkey."



ADVENTURE IN THE PLAYGROUND

o be a second child has both assets and liabilities. The example of the big brother is stimulating, keeping the little one constantly on his toes and under pressure. To be oriented in the complications of the playground by a big brother is fun, but when the desire develops to copy everything, it can be dangerous. Steven, out of desperate need to be worthy of his idol, soon became a daredevil. For Johnny, although he did enjoy his baby brother, the pressing sometimes became somewhat of a strain. We tried to ease matters by not hammering at him constantly to do things for Steven because "he's only a baby," realizing that the more parents insist on such things the more unbearable it becomes for the older one and the meaner he will grow towards the younger. All this happened while World War II was entering its third year and we were still only visitors. I enrolled in the Wardens, and Johnny proudly wore the Child Warden's insignia instead of the Lone Ranger's. And on black-out exercises he was mighty proud, he confessed later, for his Dad "ordering people around."

Instead of forbidding dangerous experiments. Mommy just keeps a watchful eye out in case something should happen. And enjoys the adventure



ANOTHER BIRTHDAY

ike the medieval landowner night with his serf's bride, Johnny makes himself at home with Steven's first birthday cake. Mommy is just quietly amused.

> Since Steven is apparently enjoying it, too, why should she stipulate: "That's Steven's cake, not yours!"



GROWING UP TOGETHER

In general, we let them work things out for themselves, and soon found that Steven was not quite as defenseless as one would think. His cries and shouts proved an effective weapon against John, sensitive to noise. By avoiding overprotection of the little one, we avoided unnecessary aggressions in the elder, and allowed them to work out a balance of power themselves.



Children don't like wearing clothes, and we let ours enjoy their freedom without any suggestion of shame, though respecting the restrictions of society.



The bathing rites performed together has been a source of joy for our children.

This lovely shot of brotherly love was Mady's We used it for Christmas cards.



WE SHOW
THE FARM
TO GRANMOMMY...

Pocono Farm assumed the role of "Granmommie's place in the country" for us. It seemed logical, therefore, to show it to Granmommie. Just before Easter, we made a weekend trip to enjoy the country, the food and the rest.

We also took with us Tommy, my sister's two and a half year old, who had arrived with his parents together with Granmommie.

... AND TO TOM

Mady had a way of introducing unexpected excitement into the children's lives.

They enjoyed feeding the chickens as they enjoyed each other.

From that time our boys and Tom became inseparable.

We pooled our resources and sometimes "traded" children. They grew up having two homes, one to live in and another to go to when they needed change from their own.

The hayride picture however was taken the following summer. One spec on top of the haystack is Johnny.







had titled these pictures, "Steven the Builder," but when he saw them he corrected me and captioned them "Destructive Steven." Of course, he was right, since in those days his constructive ambition to do things and change the world in the process displayed itself in a fury of sawing and hammering. We got him a box of tools and wood. He preferred to use the box itself rather than the wood inside it.

Even sawing the toy box was small damage compared to the trouble we had with our downstairs neighbors because of the racket.

When Mady and I returned home in the evening, (she, to, worked in those months), there was no end to Granmommie's woes as she recited the day's events.



JOHNNY AT THE MUSEUM

Johnny learned at an early age how to help out as a photographer's model, and that he could have fun doing it. Sometimes, any way. At times he got pretty tired of it. Children usually do tire of helping their parents when the novelty wears off.

But the story I covered at the Metropolitan Museum was quite a thrill for John. The children had treasure hunts and conducted tours, were shown things the way they could actually enjoy them. They were encouraged to copy the statues to prepare themselves for the treasure hunt.

Johnny enjoyed this all the more in that I didn't really need him here as a model. He could do what he pleased without having to interrupt his pleasures for work.



Looking at him with awe, the story of how medieval heroes fought in that armor.

Or sipping milk and getting acquainted with paintings.

Or watching one of the big boys work at his easel, copying the famous greek "Disk-thrower."



The imp you see on the above picture, is our Steven. Friends warned us that we had better keep an eye on the golden-haired "heart-breaker" who got away with murder at Johnny's expense, But age does have its advantages over beauty, and Johnny (2) a budding philosopher, eventually regained his supremacy.



ANOTHER SUMMER. THE MOHAWK VALLEY and THE GROUP

ne summer of 1943 was spent at Sharon Springs, a resort some 70 miles west from Albany. This was an unusual venture, for we became part of a group living experiment, an experiment in community planning, a peace laboratory so to speak. We lived in an Idyllic little clubhouse on top of a hill. (1) From our porch we could overlook the majestic panorama of the Mohawk Valley. (3) Our group consisted of about fifteen grown ups and six children. The grownups worked or busied themselves with the community. The children enjoyed the sunshine and fresh air at al, but found sometimes that there was not enough provision made for them in the "community." Thus while we tried to help other people we found out how much help we and our own children needed.





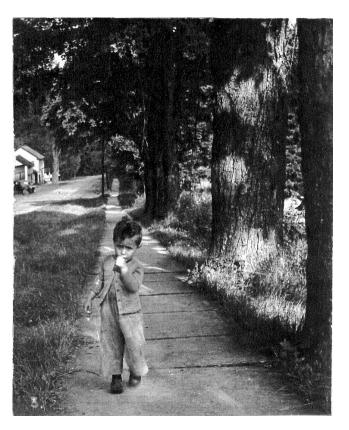


GOLF HOUSE GET-TOGETHER

The morning meetings at the Golf House were more often than not closed to the children but they wormed their way in and became, sometimes, a source of great joy to all of us. Of course we soon discovered that showing them off did not solve our or their problems. So we organized ourselves to take turns in caring for them. The children responded usually with enthusiasm to their Pied Piper of the day.

The picture below (2) shows our Quaker friend Rachel caring for them at breakfast. Though she had no children of her own, Rachel became quite proficient in this job.

The confusion in the whole situation also showed in the children. Look at Steven (3) the lone little pilgrim trudging beneath the giant poplars that lined our avenue.





TELL US A STORY, MOM

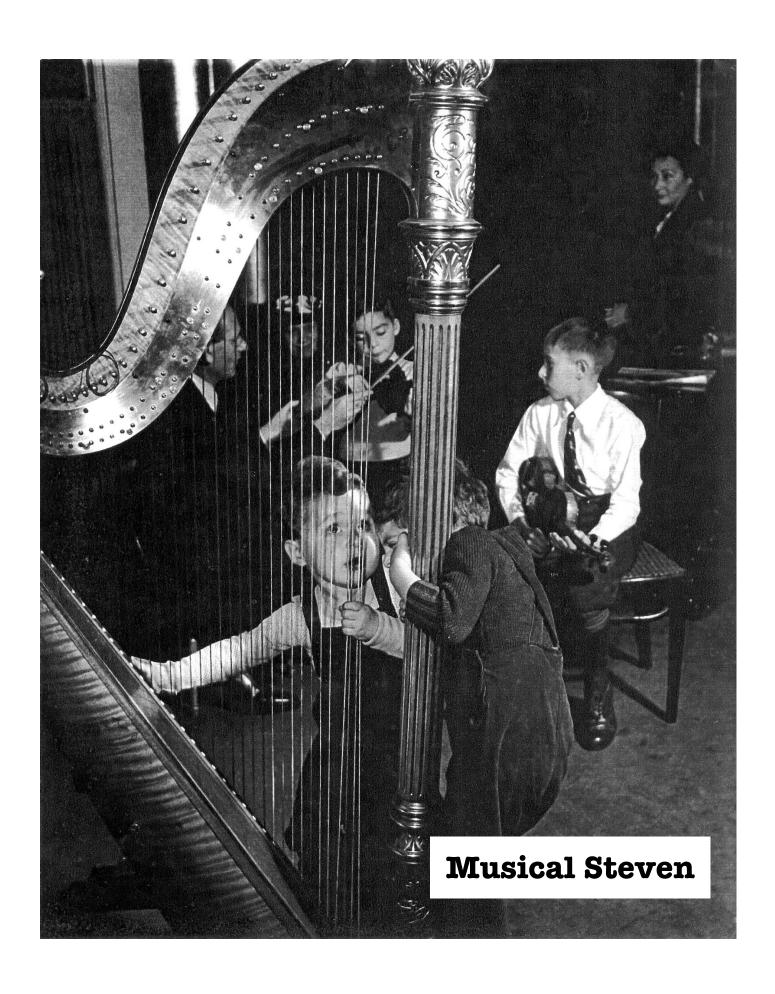
The city once more, and the children growing up. Johnny going to kindergarten and Steven preparing for it. Daddy pursuing the elusive dollar and getting home late, so that more often than not Mommy had to tell the bedtime story.

Pajama-clad, the boys clustered around Mady, interested in varying degrees. The choice of the story wasn't too easy. The time of "the three little mice sat down to spin" was over for John, and the age of Indian stories or the mocks hadn't yet begun for Steven. Sometimes their interest could not be captured simultaneously.

The reward, for kitchen slavery, for pushing the carpet sweeper, for hundreds of glasses of orange juice, for wash-day drudgery, for patient waiting in the playground, for heavy bundles lugged from the A&P, for answers to thousands of questions, for hugs and kisses willingly given....

Those who do not know such a kiss do not know the whole meaning of life. The poor cautious ones who "can't afford children." We couldn't really afford them, either. But we did.







STEVENS

CHALLENGE ...

JOHNNY GETS HIS TWO WHEELER ...

Dabies are the mother's realm, but when boys grow up they need a man companion and father steps into the picture. This happened in our family, too. By this time we used to go to the Park, to ball games, ice skating, on trips, the "men" only, leaving mother behind.

When Johnny was five, we got him the first two wheeler for Christmas. He took to it like a duck to water. With just a few words of explanation about turning the handle bar, I pushed him for about ten minutes and he wanted to be off on his own. At first, jubilant over his achievement, he soon made an important discovery, Stopping was hardest. He had a few falls, which discouraged neither him nor me. I guess that's how farm boys learn to ride horses or wild cows. Johnny had to do with a bike as a substitute. Steven, too small for the bike, managed somehow to prove that he was Johnny's brother and match. From an early age, he terrified his adult escort, whoever it might be, by insisting on jumping down stairs or basement windows from heights taller than himself. He managed without too many bruises. At four, he was climbing poles ten feet high with ease. Outdoing in this respect John, Three vears his elder.

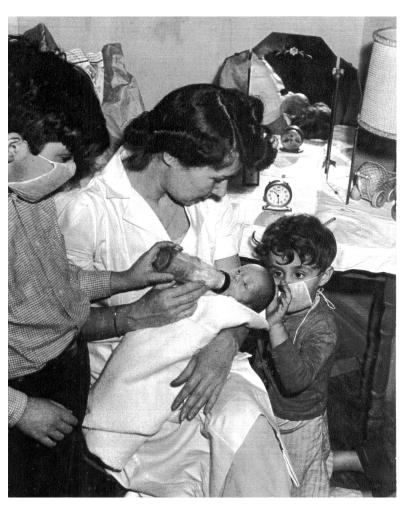
WE HAVE ANOTHER BABY

In December, 1945, Mady went to the hospital one month too soon. Our third child was coming prematurely. We had hoped and prayed for a girl even before Steven. Especially Mady. In her family, the one boy, one girl pattern predominated. Mine was two boy, one girl. We hoped it would follow through this time. The specialist called in consultation by our own physician made a thorough examination. His verdict, very definite: a boy.

It was a pretty strong disappointment. But as I wandered from the midtown hospital through Central Park on my way back to the West Side, my rebellion settled for peace. I accepted this decision of Heaven.

I had hardly gotten through the door when the telephone rang. The baby was earlier than even the doctors expected. And it was a GIRL!

Anne-Marie was born. Tiny, dainty, she was kept in an incubator like contraption for ten days, but she soon shot up and became an unusually well shaped little thing. The boys, hoping for a baby sister, were jumping with joy and Anne-Marie's worldly existence was launched in great happiness. For the first time I realized the full meaning of becoming a father.









GIVING MOMMY - A VACATION

A nne-Marie was born just before Christmas. By Christmas Eve she was home and we celebrated in an unusually happy mood.

Then the boys and I left for a few days of vacation in the mountains.

This was by way of giving Mady her vacation, too.

We went to the Gould Farm, in the Berkshires, an unusual place, a sort of Heaven where I often returned, whenever in need of replenishing mind or body with new inspiration and strength.

The people on the Farm had long given their lives to practicing the Golden Rule in the quaker spirit. Although most of the guests were aged people, no one ever said "don't" to the boys. They were free to roam around in the big house, to play games all day long even in the tiny smoking room, without a grown-up trying to ease them out. Gould Farm succeeded the farm in the Poconos as a substitute for the "grand parent's place in the country where one could go for a life when the city became too oppressing and one felt in need of rest or vacation.





The greatest joy was the snow covered slope behind the house and we had more than our share of skiing. Fastening some broken dawn old skis to their rubbers, Steven and John soon became quite proficient, shaming their old man who, after some twenty five years of skiing, hasn't even learned to do a Kristiania.



EXPLORING THE

Here Steven and John indulge in their favorite pastime, tree climbing. Later it was football and baseball, but in those in between days, bikes and punchballs somewhat out grown, the trees were the thing. The third boy is Billy, son of the "super" next door and Johnny's bosom friend.

he nearness of Central Park to our various apartments (by this time we had moved to a six room flat on west 96th Street) proved a great blessing to the children. They formed an early habit of wandering around to their heart's content, unhampered by parental advice or vestmental considerations. Mady held that pants and shirts were made to be worn and, if necessary, torn. Except for social occasions, the boys were allowed to dress as they would and shun the barber as long as their hair didn't become so long as to draw undue attention from school authorities.

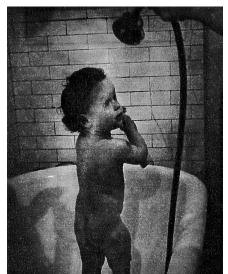


OUR BABY GIRL BECOMES ANNE-MARIE

Proud of their baby sister, the boys took to showing her off and viewing for her honors. Although Anne-Marie loved them both, John was more successful in dealing with her than the less diplomatic Steven. John knew how to kid her along in later years and how to bend her very definite will, where as Steven lost patience at the first sign of resistance and became submerged in the conflict.

The time hadn't arrived when they would take her to dances, as they had already planned. Nor had the time yet come for what was later John's not always welcome duty, escorting her to the Park. When foot ball awaited, or the gang was engaged in some hazardous adventure, a baby in tow was a ball and chain. But at this time the boy's role in Anne-Marie's life was limited to taking snapshots of her, or bringing her home a balloon from the parade.

The time came when Anne-Marie took her first steps in the world. Assisted by Aunt Betty while Mommy was away on an important assignment, Anne-Marie was herself preparing to become the older sister.



Anne-Marie became a dainty little thing who found a big thrill in showers even cold ones.



Rare were the moments when Steven was allowed to display his baby sister. He had to wait a few years until he, too would have a "baby of his own."

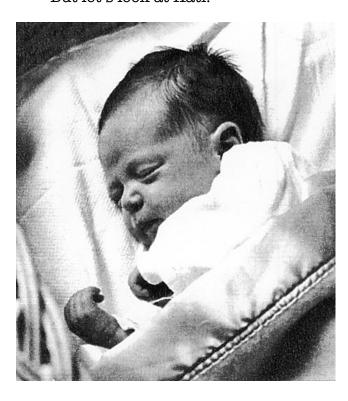


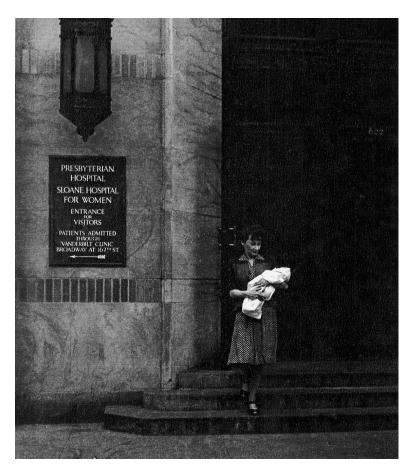
....AND THEN CAME KATI

H er arrival showed how wrong parents can be in deciding what they need in the way of children. We never knew how badly we needed Kati until she came. In our foolishness, we thought after Anne-Marie, we had all we wanted, and thought the Lord was playing tricks on us when we learned one more child was on the way. Of course, we weren't aware that it was the sweetest, handsomest little creature imaginable, that it was Kati.

When we understood she was coming, like it or not, we accepted her. How right we were. For what would have happened to us without Kati? Where would Anne-Marie have found a little companion, and one she could mother to her heart's content? How would Steven have solved his dilemma of being neither oldest nor youngest? Where would he have found someone to "big brother?" And how would Grandpa have learned about grand-children?

But let's look at Kati.





She came on a Friday, June 13, in 1947. Born at the Sloan division of the fancy Medical Center, the remarkable thing about her coming was that for the first time Mady had a painless delivery. This helped reconcile her to the hardships of having a fourth child and she left the hospital after ten days, slim and chipper as ever, with the tiny bundle on her arms, looking more like a high school girl than the mother of four.

IK ati was quite a novelty in my life, too. She was the first of our children whose night feeding for two months I under took. Grateful little Kati, she knew how to behave. After two months, she stopped getting up at night, and slept through until the morning feeding. I almost regretted it. During those silent night hours, as she dozed peacefully in my arms drinking her bottle, I came to know her as perhaps I had not known any of the other children. But that was a brief period, because soon Grandpa appeared on the scene and that meant complete expropriation of Kati.



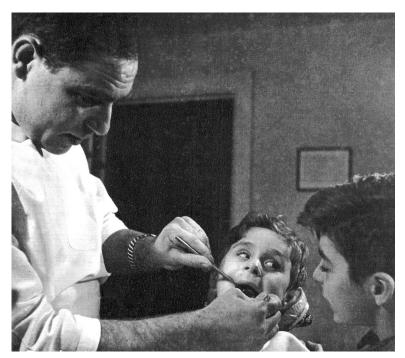
n the Park this Sunday afternoon, Granmommie tried to take it easy for a moment and glance over the Sunday paper. Anne-Marie, on the other hand, wanted attention and a good time. Neither of them seem to have succeeded very well. I was around and that might have helped a bit, but then I wanted to play tennis and that only made for complications. But children can take a lot of punishment and still come out all right, so when Mommy returned from the hospital with the new bundle, and Anne-Marie once again took her rightful place at Mommy's side and in her heart, things were okay once more. Of course, it was now her turn to learn how to be not the youngest.

ANNE-MARIE IS LEFT TO GRANMOMMIE

hile Kati occupied the limelight, Anne-Marie alone with Granmommie who had been living in sister's house and returned especially for this occasion. Although Grannie and Annie loved each other dearly, these ten days were not exactly cloudless. Try to imagine how wearying Anne-Marie could be with her millions of questions, her whims, her demands and her resistances, then multiply by ten and you may have some idea of what Granmommie had to contend with. With Anne-Marie, the boys, myself and Happy, the dachshund, in her care, she was very tired as she walked toe street with her heavy coat over her arm, and shopping bag empty at the moment but later filled to overflowing with supplies. Dividing her time between playground (from which Anne-Marie never wanted to return), the stores (with low shelves filled with colorful goods an irresistible temptation for tiny hands), the home with all its cooking and cleaning, to say nothing of the care of three children, it's no wonder that Granmommie's mood was a little gray at times.







Steven derived a good deal of comfort from the presence of his big brother while the Doctor gave him a first checkup. John was a veteran, having observed me in the chair having a tooth filled.

WHO'S SCARED OF THE DENTIST'S CHAIR?

lthough John protested when he had his first haircut, he and Steven went to the dentist without fear. It's amazing how much real pain children can take if they're not lied to by grownups. Our dentist was a wizard with children. He let them experiment with his tools, told them frankly when he would hurt and when not, and that's more, let them go home and return the next day if they felt they weren't ready for the experiment. His waiting room was full of games and comics. wonder they trusted him, so they cam back to his office as they would to a club. No need for scared mothers begging them to hold still.

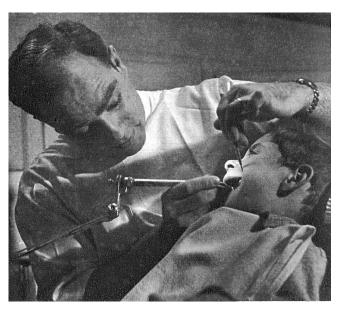


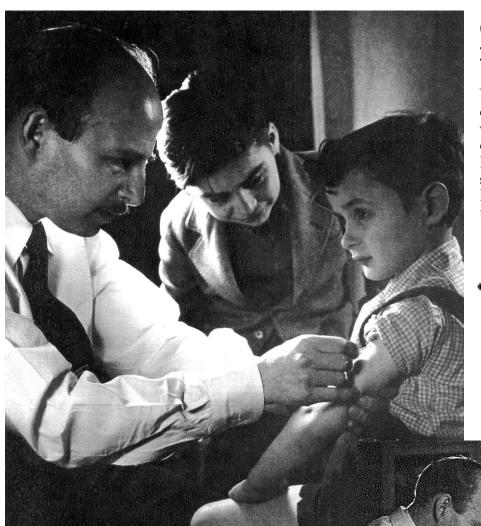
In turn, Steven was granted the privilege of examining the dentist's teeth.





So when it came to the drill, he hung on without fear, even when it hurt.





OR THE DOCTOR'S NEEDLE?

Who'll go first? It's a big question with children. Steven was always anxious to prove his courage so as to measure up to his big brother, though his face shows some apprehension as he hangs on while Johnny observes the procedure with interest.



Of course, when his turn came he couldn't let himself be outdone by a younger brother, so he, too, accepted the "prickle" with out a wink.



ince the days that our oldest child started going to school, I took an active interest in our children's lives and problems at school.

I have tried from then on to combine my professional interests with my personal ones and did a lot of reporting on schools and education.

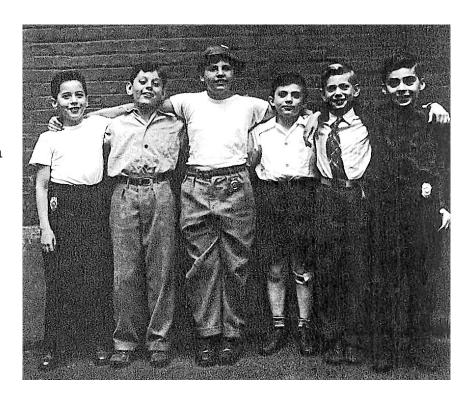
This brought me into contact with many good schools and I learned a lot about children.

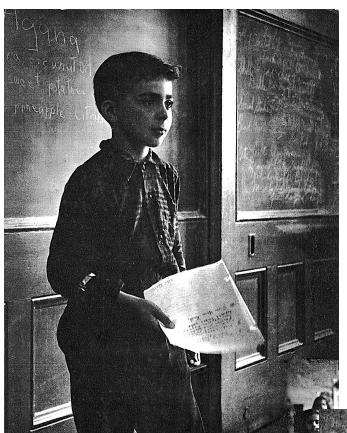
My experience helped me then to understand problems our own children and their teachers appreciated my interest. Thus we could iron out difficulties, which at times threatened their relations.

We all profited in the process and I enjoyed more and more being a father.

JOHN: A SCHOLAR

7 ohnny progressed too fast at Alexander Robertson, where he went from Columbia. At seven he had finished third grade. So when he entered P. S. 93, a good public school our neighborhood was fortunate in having, and was set back to second grade where he belonged chronologically, he was bored stiff. Not until he Was tested and qualified for a special I. G. Class did he find himself. A marvelous teacher, Miss Murphy (the efforts of accommodating me and arranging the group for the photograph rendered her somewhat tense and she looks less attractive here than she really is) brought out all his good qualities. He was among the top ten in a class of unusually bright children. Never before or since has he had such a wonderful time as he did in 4th I. G. At P. S. 93 with Miss Murphy.



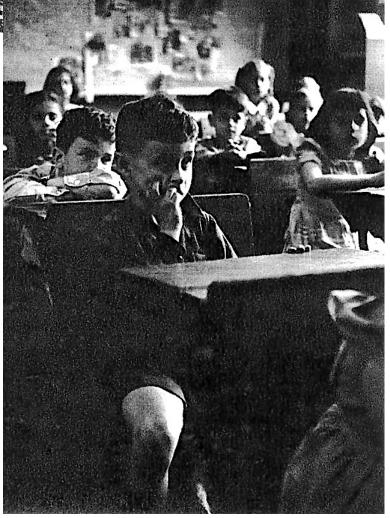


...and A GENTLEMAN

At P. S. 93, his creative energies released, John became a little poet, a scholar and a gentleman, too. He began to think and write his thoughts and became a source of great pleasure at home. Life of the party and the playground, he soon became the leader of the park crew. His popularity was so strong it extended itself to Steven, who usually trailed him. When I asked him at that time how he was making friends, he said: "Well, I talk to them and they're my friends." Simple as that.

and STEVEN A GENIUS?

teven followed Johnny from 🗘 Alexander Robertson to P. S. 93 a year later. His debut was none too brilliant: the relatively strict discipline of the public school created conflicts. He was somewhat slower in learning than Johnny, and a lot less adaptable. For John problems were there to be solved, situations to be adjusted too, difficulties to be overcome. Steven was baffled by them. Johnny, quick on the trigger and a little volatile, smiled and muddled himself through difficult situations. Steven felt things more deeply but didn't always grasp their meaning. School puzzled him. He comforted when he had to, but transgressed as much as he could get away with. Fortunately, in the third grade he drew a teacher who discovered his secret, he responded to love and warmth rather than to discipline, and we were told not to worry about him, for Steven "was a genius.





JOHNNY GOES INTO BUSINESS

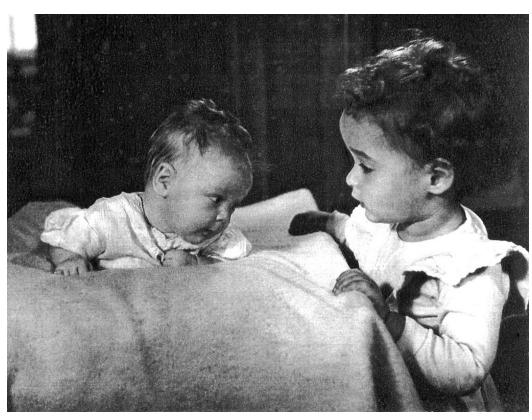
ohnny probably heard once too often during this particular summer that we had not too much money, so he decided to do something about it. After an abortive crack at the shoeshine game (an investment of \$1.66 paid out of his 35¢ a week allowance) he opened up a second hand magazine outlet. A gang of five helped him to carry the heavy bundles donated by me from piled-up stock. Worn out by the long waits be tween rare customers, the grim faced gang looked like real gangsters in a Grade B movie, killing time with card games at the Boss's hangout. Johnny faithfully shared the \$2.15 profit with them and abandoned the field.

Anne-Marie discovers her sister

nne-Marie takes a good look, if a somewhat bewildered and reproachful one, at her baby sister. The occasion is the first "official" picture taking session of Kati when she could be seen without being spirited away by some hasty grownup.

At this time the two were not yet the pals they later became.

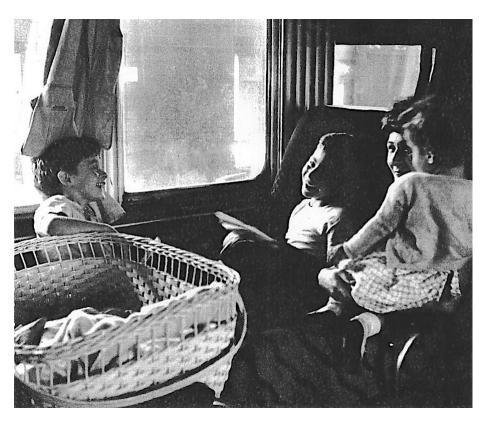
Right now, their relations were somewhat undefined.





FIRST SUMMER WITH KATI...

The boys were taken care of to the best of our meager resources (after doctor's bills and hospital for Kati). They went to day camp. Toward the end of the summer, I persuaded Mady to take a trip to Gould Farm. We were given the use of a cottage, a little dream castle. But the weather was rainv and the children, with the exception of Kati, caught colds. Mady did, too, and was miserable. It was almost a relief to return home. The picture below shows the family in this happy mood of return. This was the first picture taken of the four children; Kati is hidden in her basket. The summer following Kati's arrival was a tough one. With only a "Model A" Ford in the family, Kati having only a bassinet and no carriage as yet, we had no place to go comfortably away from the steaming city. Our good friends, the Erdos, lived only about thirty blocks from our house, but even that proved a long trek when we tried to organize an outing in the Park with them. Taxi to the Erdos's home; the two men carried Kati's basket to the Park: Anne-Marie on Mady's arm by the time we reached to Park we were worn out. So Mady decided she would never do it again. She also refused to move out of town, stating, that with a one month old baby, one was most comfortable in one's own apartment.



GRANPA STEPS INTO THE PICTURE

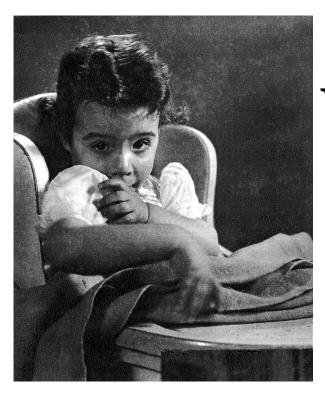
▲ nd then, on a sunny September afternoon in 1947, Grandpa, Mady's father arrived in New York. After many years of separation through wars and a great many hardships, after the loss of his wife during the siege of Budapest, he came direct from Hungary. Bearing the memory of terror and persecution with him, he came with the strong resolve to find happiness once more, but he carried heavy burdens on his shoulders and in his heart. His arrival was an unexpected fulfillment of a dream for Mady, who had not seen her father for nine years. His arrival brought many changes for her. She was no longer alone, as she felt she was with only my family around.



.. AND PROMPTLY EXPROPRIATES KATI

ne thing became clear immediately. Kati had a grandfather. Playing the role of Grandpa did not come so readily with the other children, but Kati became his OWN.

This had some unhappy consequences for Anne-Marie, at least temporarily. Grandpa began protecting Kati, and it made Anne-Marie jealous. It also resulted in deeds on her part to which Grandpa pointed triumphantly as justifying his action. But after awhile she, too, conquered Grandpa. As the old Lord couldn't resist little Fauntleroy's charm, Grandpa couldn't resist Anne-Marie's. From then on, both Kati and Anne-Marie were safe and real sisters.

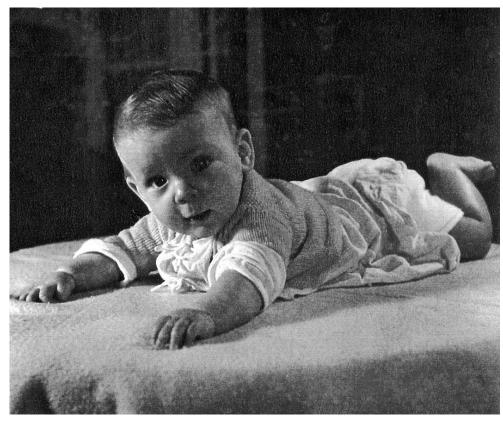


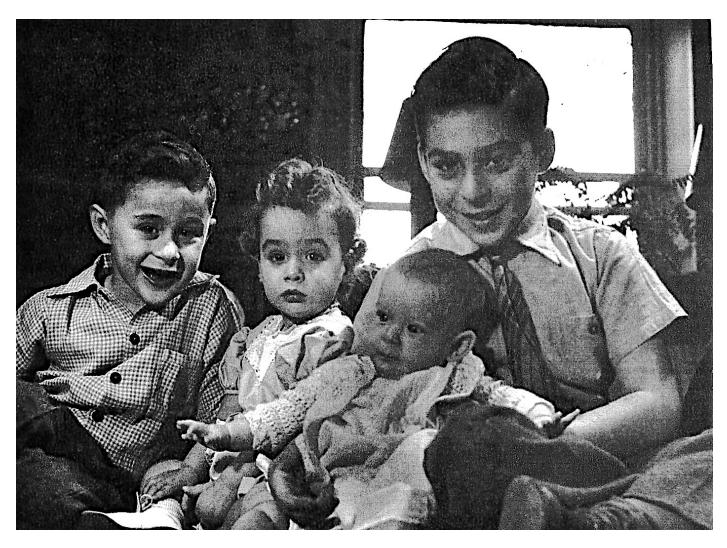
OF CLOUDS and SUNSHINE and 'STINKY PAHPIES'

hile Kati flourished under Grandpa's protective care and grew in to a baby full of sunshine, totally unaware of the complications she was causing in Anne-Marie's life, our "big daughter" adopted certain habits which were to us warning signals. In addition to increased thumb sucking, she began to carry around lovingly a dirty old blanket. When we tried to discourage this gently, by declaring it a "stinky old blanket", instead of discarding it she adopted the name. From then on "stinky pahpy" became a by-word with her. Even when she was four she wanted the "stinky pahpy" in her bed before going to sleep. When the blanket gradually fell to pieces, the parts substituted for the whole. A refinement of this fetish, her symbol of security, was wanting the blanket wet and smooth with soap.

KATI TAKES HER TIME

K ati was a normal baby, somewhat slower than the premature and precocious Anne-Marie, especially in her physical development. It took her long to learn to walk, and especially to speak than did Anne-Marie. But by then we knew that each child must be judged only by its own standards. One takes longer than the other to achieve certain things, but in God's own time and theirs they all get to the same place somehow. And if they too don't, that's all right, too. If parents only knew how little there is to worry about. actually.





TWO BROTHERS, TWO SISTERS

Having four children can't be expressed in quotients of having one. In many ways it is more trouble, in other ways less. They do help one another, but they mean wear and tear not only on the parents but on each other as well. To be one of four, means having company which an only child never knows, but it also means sharing everything and especially sharing the time of the parents. This is often the hardest. Still, having four brings fun which families with fewer children don't even suspect.

These pictures were used for Christmas cards. They were the work of Mady, who took them to announce proudly to the world: Now we have FOUR!

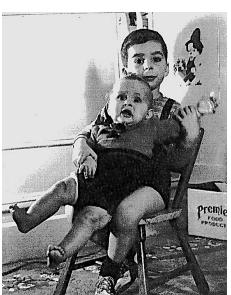


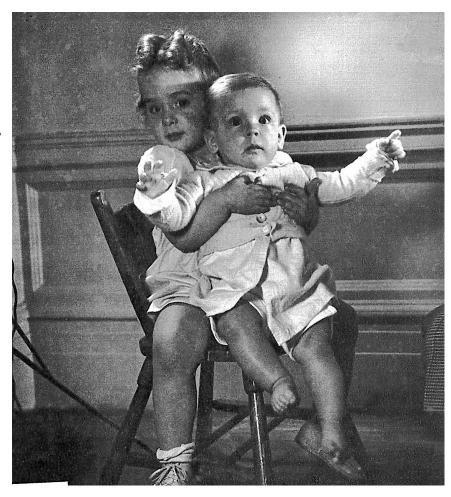
THREE VICTORIES

 ↑ t demanded my full paternal authority, supported by Mady, to convince Grandpa that nothing would happen to Kati while Anne-Marie held her for a picture. We had found that whenever a new arrival disturbed the established order in the nursery, the best way to take the edge off jealousies was to make the "old ones feel that the intruder was theirs as well as ours and, that far from taking things away from them, it's arrival meant having one thing more and it might be an interesting thing besides.

Mady was particularly successful in these negotiations, and once again her instinct helped us over many bumps, where the wisdom of child psychologists would have failed.

As you can see from Anne-Marie's face, how ever, she couldn't fully trust the situation. She looks as if Grandpa would appear from behind the door at any moment, and snatch Kati from her, as he often did in those days.

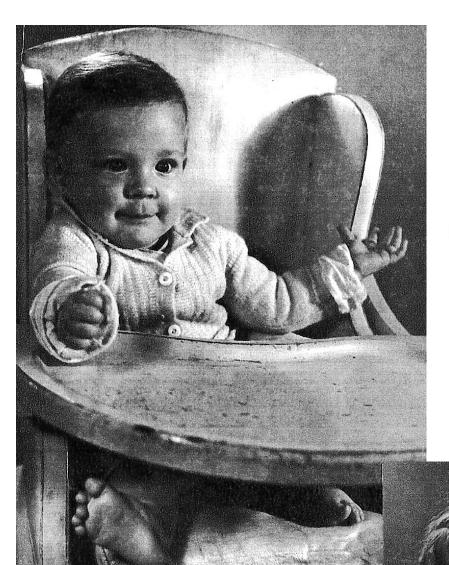




"THIS IS MY BABY !..."

The comparison of Anne-Marie's presenting her baby sister with the picture of Johnny presenting Steven or Steven presenting Anne-Marie to the world, reveals a distinct difference in attitude. Anne-Marie is self conscious. None of them has the proud big brother attitude toward a helpless creature which Steven was in Johnny's eyes for quite some time.





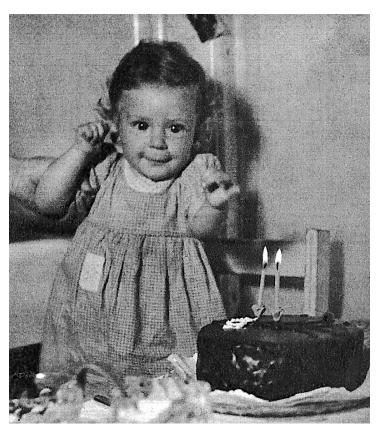
SO ROUND, SO FIRM, SO FULLY PACKED...

Rotund, smiling, handsome, this was Kati perched on her high chair at the age of seven months.



And as time went by, Anne-Marie came into her own, too. Her sunny nature, very similar to Johnny's, broke through the clouds, and she developed a glorious smile which no camera could ever capture completely. This comes as close to it as I have ever been able to get.





ANNE-MARIE TAKES OVER

As Kati grew and became more like an intelligent being to Anne-Marie, the big sister took to her more. Kati was no longer the silly little bundle, nice and soft but, oh so stupid that one couldn't help pinching her sooner or later to get some sort of response. There was no more need for that. She could appreciate a joke when Anne-Marie made one, and gradually

welcomed Anne-Marie's real companionship, especially when Grandpa finally understood that Kati's best protection was not to protect her at all (well, not too much,

anyway).

KATI'S FIRST BIRTHDAY

As they say, time marches on. Kati was one year old. We had to keep up with the family tradition. Mady has been very conscientious respecting dates and customs. She thought we should give the children these celebrations from the very first year, even though they couldn't fully understand the meaning. They would remember something and, more important, it would establish their standing with the others. So on June 13 we chorused "Happy Birth-dayyy, dear Ka-aa-ti," and applauded while Mommy lit the candles and Kati tried to capture their light.





Perhaps even more than for the other children, the playground became important for Anne-Marie. At this time the beginning of her playground career, she had no friends and faced the big empty space before her with fear and mistrust.

UP AND DOWN

In three months she become a past master of playground tools. Her curiosity, desire for adventure and exploration, combined with her flexible body to make a champion of seesaw and swing. Climbing, pulling, pumping became necessities to be practiced with triumphant tenacity. Her ideas for using the swing in uncommon wavs were inexhaustible. Standing up was just one.

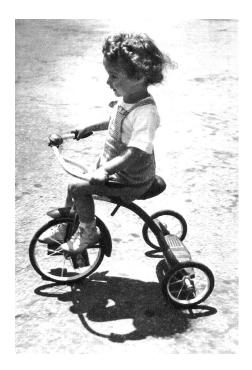


Later, when -'

Then came the great victory: the bike. Until we bought her a little three-wheeler, she had become one of the most dreaded bike snatchers in the playground.



familiar with the excitement of this new world, tools rather than people fascinated her and helped her to trust herself. Soon climbing to the top of the slide the usual way became boring and she climbed the way of guerrillas, the hard way headlong up the chute. I wonder if she is heading to ward becoming a suffragette or a Madame Curie or iust another houseware and busybody with too much energy?





GRANMOMMIE DISCOVERS KATI

parents rarely realize how much damage they can do by declaring one or the other to be partial to one of their children. I believe parents, as well as grandparents, may legitimately give more attention to a particular child, at one time or another without becoming partial, since it is the need of the children that should decide which one should get the biggest share of their attention at a given time.

Thus, at one time I was accused of spoiling Johnny at Steven's expense, Later, Anne-Marie was called Daddy's pet. Personally, I could not say which was closest to my heart, and I am sure that Steven, with much depth beneath that clown surface, has no smaller niche in my heart than John with his volatile and loquacious nature. The same for Kati and Anne-Marie. There are no favorites as far as I am

concerned.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS

randmother too, was accused at times, of being partial to Anne-Marie. Of course, since she had been away, living at my sister's, we had seen less of her. And Kati had become grandpa's own grand child.

But it took only the opportunity of a summer, 1948 on Lake Hopatkong, for granmommy to discover Kati, too.

Victor Hugo was right: the art of being grand parents requires practicing. That's exactly what Granmommy was doing that summer.





DADDIE IN CHARGE

s Kati developed from a silly little bundle into a human being, and, as she was gradually released from Granpa's protective custody, my relations with her deepened. Realizing her needs I was trying to give her equal share of my attention, and she in turn, claimed as much time on see-saw and swing on Sunday mornings (when I was in charge of them,) as I was giving Anne-Marie.

Judging from her angelic face, serene and satisfied, Dad was doing not so badly in dividing his paternal affection on these Sunday mornings...

SUNDAY MORNING IN THE PARK

Anne-Marie accepted this state of affairs without too much jealousy. It had come to the point where she called everyone's attention to Kati, and when someone gave her a present it was she who requested the same for Kati. She may have snatched the two from the giving hands in order to choose the one she preferred, but the second was for Kati, and Anne-Marie saw to it that her sister got it.





... AND "MITOU"

The "private times" grew out of the realization that in a family of six, children tire of sharing their parents with each other. Therefore, giving time, no matter how brief, to each of them individually, was important. It wasn't easy to keep Johnny from chiseling in on Steven's or Anne-Marie or Kati's. The reverse rarely happened, as the "big ones" usually had requests over the heads of the little ones.

Mitou would sometimes just look sad and distant on her "potty" while I was giving Anne-Marie her own private time.

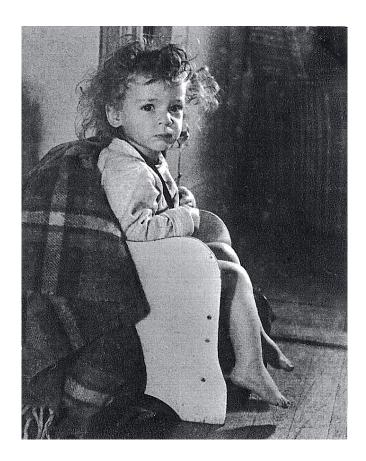
Later, when she understood stories, my story-telling become something on which she too wanted to be in, wether the story was meant for her or her big sister.

Leaning out of her crib, holding my one hand, while Anne-Marie was holding the other, or bundled up on my lap quietly sucking her thumb, she expressed feelings which one could not misunderstand.

MUSIC FOR ANNE-MARIE

n hat phonograph become very important to Anne-Marie at that time. I salvaged it from the garbage collector's heap, so the boys may wreck it and see what was inside. But with an investment of \$2.80 we fixed it and it worked. Anne-Marie become quite proficient in handling it. First it was her own records she wanted to play at the most unusual and improbable hours. Later she wanted the boy's records and all the records she could lay hands on. She had her favorites, though, and those she would play over and over again. It was record-playing that become the foremost request on the programs for our "private times."

Sometimes she would sit down in the morning, even before dressing, running around in her pajamas or panties before or after breakfast, and listen to Mother Goose, singing, humming, beating time.

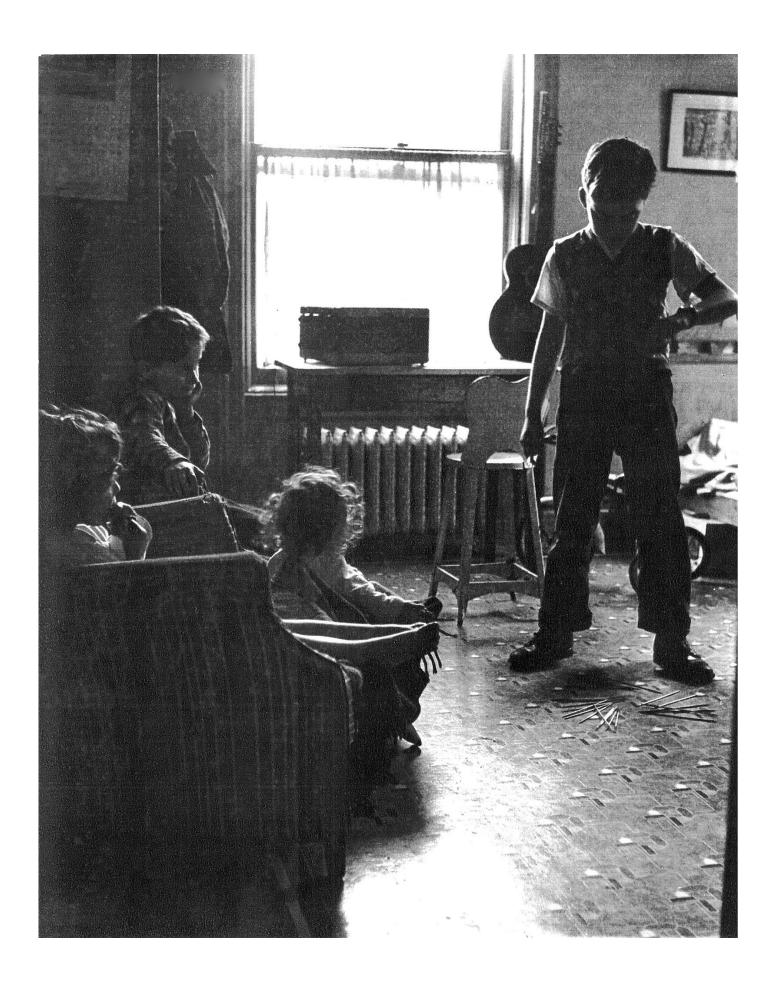




LIFE IN THE BOYS' ROOM

aken in the boy's room on a Saturday morning, these two pictures show Steven and John playing pick-up-sticks with Anne-Marie and Kati peacefully looking on. Such quiet moments are quite rare in this room, ordinarily the setting for a lot of the conflict bound to happen in where four children, different in age, temperament and ambitions, live, fight, love and compete within the same four walls. It's still in a state of disorder. The beds are unmade, the floor unswept, toys lying around and tools scattered helter-skelter. I've often wondered what the children loved about this spacious but bare and not-too-well equipped room. (The girls loved it, naturally, because it wasn't theirs. But even the boys seemed to find in it freedom). They found its scant furniture more attractive than a plush chamber in which they would have had to carefully avoid abuse and mistreatment. Children have different ideas from grownups of what they need.





HERE ARE THE "BIG ONES" JOHNNY AND ANNE-MARIE

 η ohnny, the senior of four. and Anne-Marie, the "big girl." John, the little boy of years ago, appears a bit settled and matured, seasoned by life and experiences not always pleasant for the oldest of four. Like Mady at her best, Johnny knows that it is no use meeting resistance headlong. He knows how to make a joke and get fun out of an otherwise unpleasant experience or duty. Both he and Anne-Marie have galvanic qualities, little busybodies, always active and full of initiative. Anne-Marie's aggressive and overwhelming little personality demanded a big brother like John to cope with. Although she looks much more mature, she was really only three and half on this picture.

John and Anne-Marie both enjoy life and suffer from it's whims alternately.

THE FOUR AIGHER CHILDREN

(THEY COME IN PAIRS)

n these two pages are so-called portraits of my four children, the kind of pictures which are few and far between in this book. But since you have met our boys and girls at their birth, have seen them growing up, playing, eating, sleeping, climbing trees, I thought you might as well see them for once clean, their ears washed, and appropriately dressed. So here they are, Johnny at eleven and half, Steven past eight, Anne-Marie a little over three, and Kati shortly before her second birthday, as best I could get them to pose for posterity.





THE STEVEN-KATI TEAM

THE SECOND PAIR:

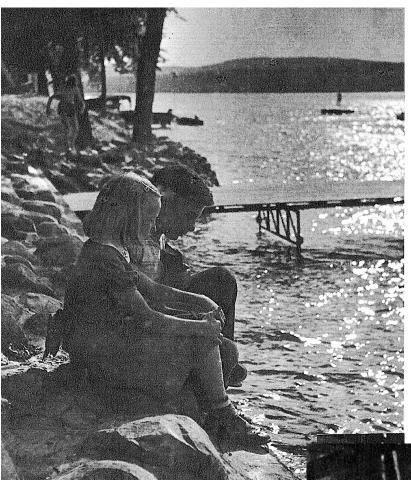
wouldn't want to separate any of the children from each other, or make any one feel closer to another. And yet from an early age there has been a pairing-up among them, broken, to be sure, by changing combinations, but distinctly noticeable.

There was the two-boy, two-girl combination first, Steven being first and foremost Johnny's arms-bearer and Kati Anne-Marie's little baby. Then there was the Johnny-Anne-Marie team and the pair Steven-Kati.

A s long as Steven only had brother Johnny and sister Anne-Marie, he suffered from the situation as much as he enjoyed its privileges. It was nice to be accepted by the older boys as mascot, but one never had any real friends of his own that way. The real meaning in Steven's life came through Kati. A dare devil on the surface and a poet at heart, He acted tough but always prayed for others first. With helpless little Kati he found someone whom he could protect and with whom he could establish his own standing as a big brother.

As you see, each child had his own problems and none were alike. Perhaps you know that no two children are ever born into the same family. Neither were ours. With the arrival of each of them, the family changed. So did its problems.





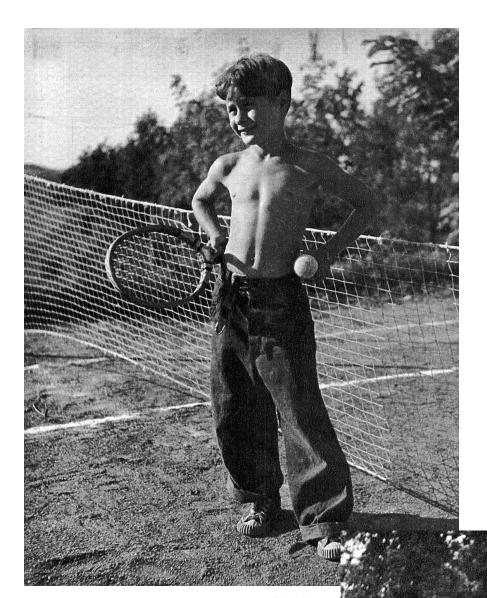
THE BOYS AT CAMP

The summer of 1949 was a meaningful experience for both boys. At a camp founded by Le Tourney, the famous inventor and evangelist, our boys had their first real religious experience. Add to this the fact that John had his first romance and Steven found some friends of his own for the first time. Both grew up in the process.

JOHNNY'S FIRST ROMANCE

Johnny's good fortune was Beverly, a sweet nine-year-old Blondie who, flattered by the attentions of the handsome twelve-year-old, became his shadow. As they sat through service singing hymns or by the lake gazing into sunshine and water, or reading the Bible together and then playing pingpong, both Bev and John found happiness. Johnny discovered many other things at camp, but I don't believe it would have been quite the same without Beverly.





AT CAMP: STEVEN THE ATHLETE

s for Steven, he finally gravitated away from John's orbit. He became quite an athlete and after base ball and football, tennis was now his game. With their experience in ball-games, they gave me, who have never been much of a sportsman anyway, quite a run.

THE TRIO STUDIES THE BIBLE

mo. 2) was with us and shared this camp life with Steve, making the bunks, grabbing chow, playing ping-pong, swimming. And they shared their friends. Steven really had a good time, the proof being his assertion that next year he was going back to the same camp, wether Johnny went or not.

Johnny's counsellor. Warren, a young man of great moral strength and character preparing for the ministry, gave the boys a good grounding in the Bible.



AND NOW ANNE-MARIE GOES TO SCHOOL

hen Anne-Marie was four, we sent her to Alexander Robertson, too. School has become the greatest single experience in her life. (That again shows how little parents ought to worry about things. The previous year Anne-Marie simply refused to stay at school). She accepted the other children readily and was accepted by them in turn. Of course the two teachers Miss Halloran (picture below) and Mrs. Baker, became important factors in this adaptation. We had much to be thankful for in them. After the sandbox hammering, playing, music and rhythmic exercises, Anne-Marie's great experience was building. She became a passionate architect of the big wooden blocks and her inventiveness was matched only by her patience in producing structures of beauty and imagination. As with John, concentration was difficult for her, and block-building proved to be exactly what she needed, a road to settling down and finding her balance.





DINNER FOR SEVEN ...

ow, having met us separately and in little groups, meet us all at the dinner table. The kitchen used to be roomy enough for a family of four, but proved a bit crowded when the family reached its present proportions.

We are listening to Steven, who by this time has become a little "character." His sense of humor have earned him quite a place in the family. He is no more a mere appendage to John, the "little brother" who could be pushed around and kept in bondage. He earned his place and keeps it. The sense of humor he inherited from, well, who do you think? The lady on his left has the same glance, the same twinkle in her eye, the same sparkle in her smile; the lady responsible for many good things in our children's life, the best mother I can imagine: Mady, their "Mom."



And now let's say goodbye. You have followed our footsteps to this point, and perhaps wonder, as I do: Where do we go from here?

The children of course will go out into the world. Who knows what Providence has in store for them? Looking over the past as I attempted in this book, could give some idea, I think. It helps to see the source from which the future flows, to see the family as it has been so that we may see it as it ought to be and, if we are true to our best selves, as it WILL BE.



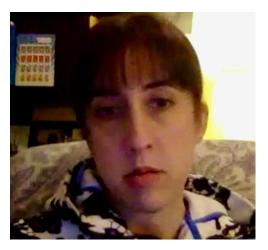
...70 years later...

What has become of this family of immigrants?

John's family











John's daughters, left to right, top to bottom: Lisa Aigner Camilliere; Sheila Aigner Resino, (John's first wife), Robin Aigner, Alycen Aigner;. Second row: Robin, John, Alycen, Stacia Robbins (John's second wife) Lisa; John and his three daughters. Bottom row: Jack and Lisa; Kyle & Caterina Ribiero; Michelle & Scott Tanski; Jacob & Steph Amengual; . Robin & Michael Bronwell; Stacia, Alycen & Dan Sullivan.













Steven's Family







From Top left: Steven, wife Martha son,Kristofer, granddaughter Katia, son Erik, and his wife Sonja, and their son Sasha: Steve's daughter Karine bottom middle.

Bottom left: Erik, his daughter Katia, Son Sasha and wife Sonja Bottom right: Erik's children Katia & Sasha.

Anne-Marie's Family +





Left to right, top to bottom: ??, K. C., Anne-Marie, Veronica, Samantha; Adam Aigner Treworgy and his family, Sue, Mac, Lucienne row: Anne-Marie's crew; Anne-Marie, Adam Arpad & Mady, Samantha & Alycen Aigner, John's daughter; Adam Aigner Treworgy and his family, Sue, Mac, Lucienne













Kathy's Family

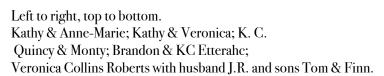














Family Reunions

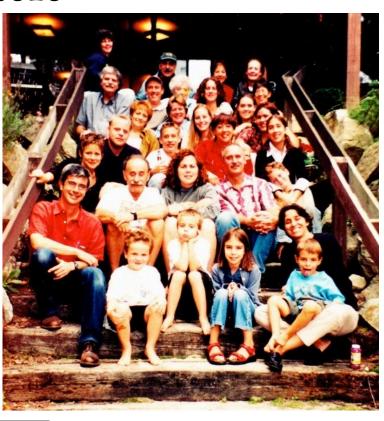
Great Barrington then and again



Great Barrington circa 1975 and same location circa 2018



Family reunion, Lake House Holmes, NY, circa 2010





Strong
women, Bob
Zentall
funeral
California,
circa 2008

Family reunion, Saint Augustine, Florida, circa 2017





Fun page, with Easter eggs, acorns, bread crumbs and other challenges. **WIN \$50**, see below.

- 1. Who are the five youngest members of the extended family?
- 2. Who is Robert Zweigenthal?
- 3. Who is Patricia Bonnet?
- 4. Who is Carola Aigner?
- 5. Who is Gustav Lenard?
- 6. Who is Mildred Allen?
- 7. Who is Arpad Erdos?
- 8. Who is Suzanne Aigner?
- 9. Who is Mac Treworgy?
- 10. Who is Stacia Robbins?
- 11. Who is Magda Freid?
- 12. How many of the people in the St. Augustine picture can you identify and what are the home cities of participants in the photo?

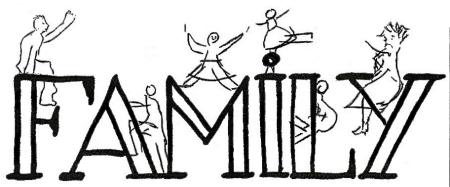
Play our fun game and win.

Three winners of \$50 each for the three best sets of answers.

Who is eligible? Any one in the extended family under age 21 or any significant other or partner who has been involved five years or less. For kids, parents can help. Deadline for entries THANKSGIVING WEEKEND 2021

Send entries to

John Aigner, Email: livelihood@aol.com



By Lucien Aigner, 1952. Re-imagined by John Aigner 2021,

