

NOV 23 1983

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Dear Uncle: -

This is just a short post-script to Sara's find job of our meeting together - I also remember ~~the~~ the staff giving Beeny a shower (Bridal) when she was getting ready to marry Uncle Sam. It was given in Uncle Harry apt on the second floor on the bay side of the courtyard - I remember handing her the gifts & recall it was lots of fun.

I spoke with Jo Hyde last evening & was wondering just when this has to be in - was thinking of calling Sara & see if she will enter me in Jo. as she did me. as I'm sure

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He has quite a few tales  
to tell.

I have also given Ann  
a book (pictures) of some of the  
kids in the home. She will  
see that it gets to you.  
Hope this letter by para  
will help the Alumni  
Project committee. I also  
hope that when it is  
completed I will be able to  
have a copy.

Wishing you all the best  
for the coming New Year -

Fondly  
Rose.

NOV 23 1983

(Mrs.) Sara Sweet  
2600 Filbert Street  
San Francisco, CA 94123

November 16, 1983

Dear Viola,

Last Monday, over lunch in the courtyard of the Bookplate restaurant in San Francisco, Rose Sohmer Siebenthal and I renewed our friendship and reviewed her recollections of the Jewish Children's Home in New Orleans:

At one-and-a-half years of age, in the year 1927, Rose entered the Home. As told to her by Veenie Kamin, she came to New Orleans and the Home from Houston by L&N train, accompanied by Mrs. Hart, a Social Worker. She lived in the Infirmary until she was about five or six, and then moved to the Nursery until she was about nine. Afterwards, she went to live in the Lower Dormitory; she moved on to the Upper Dormitory at the age of thirteen. Because she was so young when she arrived at the Home, she has no recollection of fear or homesickness. She left the Home in 1941 or 1942; she was fourteen or fifteen years old.

At the Home, Rose remembers rising at 6:00 or 6:30. Breakfast was at 7:00, lunch at 12:00 and dinner at 5:30, except on Sunday, when dinner was served in the middle of the day.

She vividly recalls the different chores the Homekids performed: making lunches for the kids, serving at the tables during mealtime (there were six kids and two counselors per table), clearing the tables after meals and setting them before. She also remembers sweeping the balconies, raking the courtyards, working in the office and sitting in the front lobby during dinner. Infirmary was another chore; it entailed helping the nurse and bringing food trays to the patients. Still other tasks included taking the younger kids to the eye doctor, the dentist, to Temple on Saturday mornings, and to Sunday School on Sunday mornings.

Rose remembers not having to go to school on the Jewish holidays. On the first night of Hanukah candles were lit at dinner and each child received a gift, something he/she had chosen himself/herself. On Passover members of the Board and Big Sisters joined the kids and staff for Seder. Uncle Harry read the Haggadah - all the way through. One of the children would ask the Four Questions. She recalls attending services on the High Holy Days at the various temples in New Orleans, and trying to fast on The Day of Atonement ("not all of us made it.")

As for the rules, "I probably broke them a lot," grinned Rose. Some punishments she recalls were no shows (movies) and having to go to bed early. She remembers Socks Inspection and Hair Inspection, once a week (the former had to be darned, the latter, washed). She also recalls receiving a monthly allowance.

Some of Rose's friends at the Home were Sarah Karp, Rose Sherman, Veenye, Jean Avegno, Weetsie Pierce, Mildred Schwartz, Carol Hart and Maxine Bihari.

In addition to Veenye and Jean, the Staff she remembers includes Dora Margolin, Mrs. Packard, Irma Simon, Rap Lawes, Sonia Berger, Wiggie, Mrs. Kaiser, Edith Lashman, Uncle Harry, Mrs. Simoni, Edna (who cared for her as a baby in the Nursery), Lottie, the cook, and Bill Parker. She "liked them all - they were very understanding and tolerant."

Fun activities included going to the movies, Dances on the holidays and attending concerts when they were available. Rose also took dancing lessons, specializing in ballet. She remembers being invited for dinner with a friend of her choosing to Uncle Harry's apartment as a special birthday celebration. Rose recalls Harry Loeb coming on Sundays with balloons for the kids. She remembers wearing a lavender dress with flowers and carrying a bouquet of sweet peas when she was flower girl in Evelyn Lebow's wedding which was held at the Home.

The Homekids celebrated Mardi Gras by riding around the city on rented trucks from which vantage point they people-watched and explored different neighborhoods of New Orleans. Food was brought on the trucks, for they stayed out most of the day. Rose remembers July Fourth bonfires and the watermelon served on that day.

Sunday was visiting day; families usually came to the Home on the average of once a week. They sometimes wrote letters.

Camp in Bay St. Louis was lots of fun. Girls played baseball in the morning; fellas in the afternoons. Chores were the same at camp as in New Orleans, but Temple attendance was not required. She remembers small groups gathered around campfires, automobile outings to Gulfport and crabbing in the morning; in the evening the catch was cooked and eaten right from the boiling water.

Rose's Big Sister, Mrs. Blum, took her to lunch, sometimes, with her daughter and granddaughter, and would occasionally buy her some clothes. The Drew Sisterhood in Mississippi also provided clothing and, occasionally, money (birthdays).

She did not finish Newman and attended Rabouin (sp?) briefly, but left for New York before graduating.

Rose says she looks back on her Home years as an excellent experience; she feels fortunate to have been at such an institution where she was given lots of freedom, love and devotion. Because of the experience, she feels she learned to be more tolerant of people, and more accomodating to others. She learned, there, to take care of herself. It's an experience she'll never forget, and she thanks the people who were in charge then for all they did for her. She is proud to have been associated with the JCH, and will always have fond memories of her time spent there.

I am sending this record of our interview to Rose for her appraisal and approval; she, in turn, will forward it to you to give to the Alumni Project committee.

Also, since I probably won't be in touch with you further in 1983, I'd like to take this trifle-early opportunity to send best wishes from Don and myself for a Healthy and Happy New Year.

Fondly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dw".