

The Diaries
of
Ellen Claire Weaver
and
Margaret Jane Weaver

1949-1954

Transcribed and edited by
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March 2003

THE DIARIES

In preparing materials for the life story of my late sister, Jane Weaver Toronto, (1940-1987), I came across two small 5-year diaries from our youth, 1949-1954, not completed by either one of us, but substantial enough to get a glimpse of what life was like for our family during those years.

Diary entries were condensed and brief, but occasionally quite illuminating. The greatest good from my efforts to transcribe the diaries came as I was taken back in time, seeing our family from half a century later. Quite a perspective! I loved reliving the events and remembering people from a time long ago. As I write this, I find my eyes watering and a lump in my throat as I contemplate the people we used to be, and I find within myself now a sense of compassion for us/them. We didn't know then, of course, that Daddy had only a few short years left to live. He died in 1955. Mother died 10 years after that, on Mothers Day 1965.

I see many of their efforts as unnecessary expenditures of their precious energy, only to be negated by time and circumstances. There were two unwarranted moves, both of which made life difficult. A move to Mt. Prospect made commuting to the city a time-consuming daily ritual for Daddy, and a longer drive to school for Mother and Jane. I rode the bus to school in Arlington Heights. But a good deal of our social life still revolved around the church. Daddy was no longer the bishop, but he was a member of the Chicago Stake High Council, which meant many scattered church visits on Sundays. We were now members of the North Shore Ward, but we frequently went to Logan Square. It took over an hour to get there. We didn't stay long in Mt. Prospect. After I graduated from Arlington High we found a house closer to Franklin Park where Mother taught. Daddy died in that house after a brief battle with cancer.

From 1941 to 1951 we lived at 6612 W. Melrose St., Chicago, our favorite house, the one Daddy designed, the pride of our family. On the first of September, 1951, we moved to Mt. Prospect, a suburb of the city quite a few miles away. During the summer we had completed the unfinished shell-house after much hard work. That year, 1951, was one of two years when our brother, Gary, was away from home, serving as a full-time missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Texas. At his urging we considered the nuclear threat of the Korean War and the dangers of living in the city, (people were building bomb shelters during that era) as motivation for moving out to Mt. Prospect. We had already bought a retirement house and orchard in Orem, Utah, (rented at the time) - a retirement that never came.

However, political and logistical concerns were not Jane's nor my primary focus - our social life was. How important friends were then, and still are! My best friend growing up was Hannah Mae Williams. Our two families had a close and happy relationship. When Gary went away to college in Provo, Utah, we welcomed into our home a music student from Provo, Beryl Jensen. She became a big sister to Jane and me and was a delightful and worthy role-model. Our social and religious up-bringing was balanced with intellectual and artistic striving as evidenced by all the music and dance lessons. My favorite times were our Sunday night family conversations around the kitchen table enjoying toast and hot chocolate.

E. C. Shaeffer, March 2003

Note: () are in the original text

[] are my current explanations or clarifications



The Weaver Family about 1949