

Lake of the Cedars

Story of a Family on Fire for Generations

Patricia Spencer

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Bio

Patricia was born in the med west, a city called Hammond Indiana. Patricia lived in the City of Cedar Lake, where she resided for thirty two years of her life. Patricia moved to Cheyenne, Wyoming, enjoying the mountains.

Patricia Went to school for six years at Holy Name Catholic School. The next three years were spent at Taft Junior high school .Patricia finished with graduation from Crown Point High School, in nineteen seventy. Through her life she had achieved several years as a four H leader, Methodist youth director, choir director, and had taught Catholic Christian doctrine .Patricia spent several months in Europe as a soloist with the Crown Point Choir and Band. Patricia soloed with the Madrigals, and was a featured soloist in the swing out “up with People”. Grope. Patricia sang at many weddings for friends and families. Patricia studied opera under the direction of Mrs. Farmer. Patricia had spent many years as a Nanny raising one hundred children. Patricia was a nurse’s aide in a nursing home for four years. Patricia spent several years as a helper in a book bindery, and in home construction. Patricia is a proud of the fact of being a cradle Catholic, and knowing God is her Savior.

Chapter 1

“Oh mother can you believe that we’re finely seeing New York City, and that’s the Statue of Liberty. “Now Abraham don’t get so excited, you have been sea sick for days.” “How wonderful to see it just like in the pictures” We could see the sun going down as we came to a halt. Papa said “we have made it to a new country, let us thank God for bringing us safely”. Papa picked up Ruth so she could see. Martha held onto my hand. People were every where, and long lines. I could hear the officer saying to watch your step and to go to the line were the first initial of your last name is posted. Papa carried Ruth down the gang plank, mama held Martha’s hand, and told me to be careful. I was scared and excited. I asked mama “what is this island”? Mama told me this is Ellis island, everyone who comes into the United States for the first time must register with the immigration department so they know who you are, and how long we will stay. I ask if we will ever go back to England, she told me that we would stay in this country for a long time. “Papa where are we going to live”? “We will live in New York for now son”. We took a fairy to New York. Papa found us an apartment on the lower east side in a place called Flushing. We moved into the apartment, there was two bed rooms. One for Papa and Mama and one for us kids. I remember looking out over the courtyard and seeing the lines of laundry, that started at our apartment and ran across to the apartment across the way. Mama washed clothes for some folks that lived by us . Papa worked for the

railroad. Sometimes Papa would be gone for days and mama didn't seem to mind the way that I missed him. It was Sunday morning and I was the first up. Ruth and Martha laid on the bed still sleeping. Soon the house would be bustling, but for now it was quiet. I thought back of the times that I woke up in my bed in England. We had a big house on the corner of the block. The yard was big and had a maple tree in the yard with a tire swing on it. We all had our own rooms. I think I miss that the most. Sharing a room with the girls was all right but it was not the same. Mama said we would be a little cramped for a while. Papa and mama told us that we would have everything we had back in England in time. Martha and Ruth started to wake up. I don't know how long I had been setting at the window, but I could smell the coffee, that would mean that mama was up. Today was church day and this would be the first day at our new parish. I helped mama get the girls dressed. We dressed in our Sunday best. Papa came into the kitchen with fresh bread from the bakery. This was a special part of our Sunday. We walked to church. This was the biggest church I had ever seen. Mama and papa liked to set in the front where us kids could hear and see what was going on. The priest was very old and very slow. I couldn't believe how long the mass took. After mass papa took us to meet the old priest. His name was Father Wilbur and he was very kind. He even shook my hand and that made me feel very special. Our apartment was several blocks from the church. While we walked home I told papa I really liked this new country, and that there were so many things to see and do. I wondered if I will ever see it all. When we got home I helped mama get the girls into there play clothes. I will always remember how red Martha's hair was, she had freckles every where. Martha loved to sing morning to night. Mama said that she had a special gift from God. Ruth was also very special, she had blond hair and skin like ivory. She was so different from Martha and I.

Ruth was quiet and took her time to get to know people she

was so shy. It was my job to take care of the girls when mama and papa weren't around. One day I asked mama if the girl and I could go to the park. Of course she said . It was a summer day and the park was so inviting. I was playing with Ruth and when I turned around Martha was no where in sight. "Oh no where is Martha" I asked Ruth? I was so afraid, what could have happened to her? "Come on Ruth lets go find the policeman that was by the front gate" I said. I called out her name as we were headed for the front gate. Do you hear that I said to Ruth"? "I hear her "Ruth said . There she was by the water fountain singing some song. And there was the policeman right by her. I ran to her and asker her why she took off from me like that. She looked at me and said her throat was dry and she could not sing, she needed a drink of water. When we got home I told mama what had happened. Oh boy did Martha get in trouble. Martha was sent to bed with out desert and for Martha that was a big deal. Mama told me to be mindful of Martha because she was so independent, unlike Ruth. On my first day of school, I was so excited. I could hardly wait to go to school. Mama made oatmeal and said I must eat to have energy to learn more at school. "All right mama I will finish it all" I said. Then it was off to a new adventure. I ran all the way to school. I saw Father Wilbur he was the school principle. Father told the kids my name and that I was from England. I truly loved school and meeting all the new people. When I went home there were my two sisters waiting for me. Ruth let out a scream. Martha was singing a song, no surprise there. "My brother is home from school". My brother is home". Mama gave me a kiss and hug, and asked me how my first day was? I was so excited to tell her all about it. We all sat down and had milk and mama's chocolate cake, and oh boy was it good. Martha wanted to know if we were going to have cake every day when brother came home from school? Mama just smiled and told her we will see. Papa came home early one day and we could tell something was not right. He

told us that he had been laid off from his job. He told us that this job was not going to get better. He said there was work in the west. Mama asked Papa how far west was there work. I'm not sure yet we will have to move out that way for me to find a better job he said. We will have to sell everything that we can and take a train out to west and travel and pray that God will guide us to a new home. The very next morning it started everything was up for sale. "Papa do we have to leave New York, and my school and friends" I asked him.? "Yes Abraham, you will make new friends no matter where you go" he said . "You think of this as a grate adventure and where this ends we don't know" he said. We have to move when we have the money to go . "Do you remember when we first came to this country and you said you wanted to see more of it"? "Yes papa I do". "This is the opportunity that you wanted Abraham". We packed everything that was of importance and sold the rest. We moved from New York City in August of 1910. It was so exciting to board the big train. I guess I was the one holding onto New York city. The farther west we went the more I missed what I had left behind . We had arrived in Indiana and Papa read a newspaper. In the paper he said there was work in Hammond . "What kind of work " mama asked? "There is a training program at the northern public service company" he said. "You know Bonnie I could have a good career and income from what this paper said". "This sounds like a very good opportunity" she said. This was where mama and papa decided to make our new home Hammond Indiana. Everything was happening so fast we checked into a hotel. In no time we were moving into our new home. I had my own room, that made it all worth it. Ruth and Martha shared one room and mama and papa had the third bedroom. I was eight and Martha was six. Martha could not wait to go to school. On the first day of school I was in Sister Mary's room. There were more girls then boys. I met a boy named David. Martha was in Sister Dorothy's room. When school was over we walked home

and there was Ruth waiting on the steeps of our house. This was Ruth's first day without big sister Martha and she was so excited to see us coming down the sidewalk. We all knew that mama had milk and chocolate cake for us. It was dark by the time papa got home from work. We knew that papa had to work long hours to make a home for us. On Sunday we all walked to Saint Joseph's Catholic church, there we met Father Murphy, the young priest. After church we all went to the park, that was where I saw my friend David and his family. I introduced them to my parents, we will all be friends for a long time papa said. The winter set in very fast it was very cold, and a lot of snow. Papa had to dress very warm to walk to work. Martha had a special singing part in the up coming Christmas play. Every night Martha prayed that papa would be able to be at the play. Martha would ask papa if he would be there he would say we will see . The night of the play it was snowing. Mama found a seat for her and Ruth. Martha looked out in the audience to see if her papa was there, no papa. I told her not to worry papa would get there. When the curtain went up there was papa with Ruth on his lap. Martha sang like an angel! We were all so proud of her. This was a night I would never forget. After the play there was cake, cookies and pie for all. The entire school was there.

We had a big Christmas tree. There were twinkle lights on it we put strings of popcorn, cranberries on it. There were only a few gifts under the tree, however that was all we needed to be happy. We dressed warm to walk to midnight mass. It was snowing ever so lightly and the snow was catching on our eyelashes and tongs. It was so nice at mass that night Father asked Martha to sing her song and she sounded so sweet. Ruth fell asleep and papa carried her home. The next morning when we woke up it was clear that Santa had come to the Parker home. We could not wait to open our gifts. I got a cowboy hat with a gun and holster. Martha got a play piano, she started to sing every key she played. Ruth got a doll that blond hair just like

her. Papa made mama so happy with her very own brand new coat Papa got a sweater in plaid he had to put in on right away. All in all it was a grate Christmas at the Parker house. Both Martha and I brought home very good report cards straight A's. Mama and papa were so proud of us. It was summer and we were out of school. Papa had saved enough money for a car. It was not a new one but it was our first car and we loved it just the same. It did look a little strange at first to have a car in our driveway . Mama was afraid of it first and she felt it would go to fast and it was dangers. After several short drives mama was getting better. Papa thought it would be a great idea to go for a picnic on Saturday. "Where should we go" mama asked? "I want to take you to Lake George it's a nice to have a picnic" he said. "Just so you drive slow" mama said. We all piled into the car we called Old Bessie. It did not take long and Ruth and mama were smiling and having a good time. Make the car go faster mama asked papa. Ruth started to cry. I think she was scared because she knew mama was kind a scared. Mama told Ruth that it was alright and before long we were all having a good time riding in the car. When the car came to a stop mama and Ruth were glad to get out Martha and I were jumping for joy to be in the car. We had our picnic and then our parents let us put our feet in the water. We all walked around the lake it was such a nice day for us all. we were so tired by the time came to get back into the car and head back home. I think by the time our heads hit our pillows we were fast asleep that night. That summer we spent a lot of time at the lake, as much as papa could be away from work. It was such a hot summer that mama had big wash tubs that she filled with water and let is play in, it cooled us off. It seamed like summer was over way to quick and school was to start. This year Ruth would be starting school. This was a first, my mama had to walk Ruth to school just to get her there. Ruth cried all the way there. Mama kept telling her that it would be all right and she just kept crying. Mama told her she would get cake if she

went. That helped and meeting her new teacher Sister Clair. Sister Clair was so good with first graders who were scared like Ruth. After school the girls and I walked home. There was mama setting on the front stairs waiting for us. Ruth started to tell mama everything that happened . She did not stop talking until the first bit of cake went into her mouth . Martha and I were happy for that because then we could tell what our day was like. One thing for sure Ruth found out school was so much fun. Six months later Ruth was in her first spelling bee. Mama and papa were there to cheer her on. She spelled every word correct, our parents were so proud of her. The time moved so fast with school and home work .I started a paper route, so I could buy a baseball and a glove. I had to get up real early in the morning to deliver my papers. Martha and Ruth would help me to roll my papers before I would take them out. That made it so much easier. Sometimes they did not do such a good job but there hearts were in it. That was what mattered.