

A new city, family, school and more.

I was an outsider here. I was protestant in a catholic family and I learned about religious prejudice in a small way. The state kids ate meals at a separate table, all save one teenage girl who was going to be adopted by the family. When I went on visits with my father, THEY had cookouts, went to the beach or had other adventures from which I could be excluded. The boys were especially good at letting me know that I wasn't good enough because I was not catholic. And yes, this is the same family that provided my first dress for use as a Halloween costume. I am still not sure that this incident was terribly important in the overall scheme of things but it is important to me in a small way. It was a first time for me wearing any girl clothing for any reason.

I had a number of firsts while with this family. I discovered my own body while at summer camp. I discovered at least one girl. She was a sister to one of the other boys at the same home where I was living and we started playing together. She would let me into the bathroom with her when no one else was around and we would rub together – dressed of course. Had it not been for something I learned from the Roy Rogers TV show I might have become sexually active at an early age. As it was that did not come to pass. I discovered that boys my age could not be trusted to be anything but cruel and mean. Until I learned not to respond to them, I was tricked on any number of occasions only to be teased and taunted later about the various incidents. With each incident I became more withdrawn and sullen, less open and much less trusting. I was quick to anger knowing that I was to be made the butt of some poor joke. It took me years to control that anger. In fact it wasn't until I was in high school, second or third year perhaps, that I learned. Incidents of teasing and such were greatly reduced after that but I was still alone. But I get ahead of myself here.

Life was ok here. Although we were to refer to the parents as Aunt and Uncle because they did not want us becoming too attached to them. Most of us would expect to move on or return to our families. We were temporarily in their charge and the atmosphere was one of a small boarding school more than a home. We had chores and responsibilities. We got along together mostly as friendly strangers. We were all separate but I more so because of my religion. There was no common tie between us other than we were 'state kids' sharing a foster home and family. It wasn't ours and we did not belong there but there we were and we had to make the best of it. I continued to learn lessons of keeping my own counsel to prevent others from hurting me. In doing so I built walls for protection. It kept people away from me but it also kept me ever further away from them as well. Since I would not let them close to me, I could not get close to them either. The last summer I was there I went back again to camp but at the end of camp I was moved once again to another home in another city.

One of the first places I actually felt part of the family was with this new family. My first real crush was on a girl named Cynthia. She was pretty and we sorta got along together but we didn't see much of each other outside of school. School however was a disaster for me. The boys were tougher than I had been involved with before and I was something of a major jerk which, predictably, left me even more at risk and more of an outsider than ever. It was the last foster home I was in ever. I went to a different camp the two years I was there and it was from that camp that, having trouble with some bullies that year, I ran away and ended up with my father. That incident decided the court system that I could stay with him and thus my life as a 'state kid' came to an end.

We shared a room which was ok since we didn't have all that much between us. I started playing with electrical and electronic things. I had speakers from various radios that had broken that I built into my own sound primitive system for my radio and tape recorder. I signed for my first telephone here and learned to modify it, first adding a switch to turn it off, and later adding a special filter circuit that allowed me to receive incoming long distance calls while aborting the billing for the caller since it made the phone look like it was not answered. Still, and even though my grandfather had worked for the phone company all his life, right out of technical school some years later, I could not get a job with them. I was over qualified to work as a line man and under qualified for anything else. So much for getting a good job by getting a good education. It was during my high school years that I got interested in girls generally, a couple of them particularly, cb radio and cross dressing.