

From Bonnie May ~~now~~ - "growing up in Sausalito"  
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We would hurry so we could have a turn ringing the big bell. This was done by pulling on the long, heavy rope which was connected to the bell in the steeple. I was so light that I would be carried up off the floor. That really was fun! After the vigorous clanging of the old bell, the teacher would play a loud, wheezing rendition of "Onward Christian Soldiers" on the old organ and we'd march about singing as our shoes made an irreverent clatter on the bare wooden floor. Then came the Bible lessons which I enjoyed, for I liked to learn about the people in those faraway times and places. I took it all quite to heart.

A few years later we began to attend the Presbyterian Church in Sausalito. When I was in high school, I often went to the Christian Science Church in Belvedere with my close girl friend, Frances Zimmerman, who was reared in that persuasion. This was such a charming little place - the rustic log cabin up on the island among the lovely big landscaped gardens and homes. It was a small, friendly place with a marvelous view of the bay and Angel Island. There was a large stone fireplace on one side, and on chilly days glowing logs gave off a pleasant warmth. I met a number of fine people there who were most kind to me. I especially admired the Harry Allen family. They seemed to be such a remarkable family. The Preussers also attended. I recall that Mr. Yates usually was there, but he always came in about fifteen or twenty minutes after the service had begun, and he went right on up to the front row. (Strange how one remembers inconsequential things like that.)

One of my frequent pleasures was hiking around Belvedere Island to enjoy the beautiful hillside homes. Their lush, terraced gardens with an abundance of trees, shrubs and beautiful flowers were a delight, and the lovely views of the bay area were breathtaking. I used to imagine myself living in some of the more palatial homes, with a chauffeur, a cook, a housekeeper, and a gardener or two to keep everything quite perfect and to do my bidding. What a dream!

#### THE SPAULDING FAMILY

William Holmes Spaulding and his wife Viola B. lived in a spacious three-story home on Bay View<sup>ELLH</sup> Avenue on Belvedere Island. They had three fine children - Carol, Lorna and William, Jr. (Billy). During my teen years, I met this very delightful family through my piano teacher, Mrs. Reeves. All three of the Spaulding children also took piano lessons from her. I was paid to supervise their practice. Carol and Lorna did very well and practiced willingly, but it usually took a bit of coaxing to get Billy to the piano. He had talent and perfect pitch, but was a reluctant pupil. Later Billy took violin lessons, and I supervised those practice sessions, too. I became sort of a part-time "nanny"

and often stayed overnight. The Spauldings were fine people and a real inspiration. The children were courteous and so thoughtful. Mr. and Mrs. Spaulding showed sincere interest in my studies and encouraged me to reach high, to perfect my skills and achieve my goals. I am ever grateful to them.

I generally walked the three miles from our house to theirs and back, although sometimes their gardener brought me home. More and more I stayed overnight. The family generously invited me to a number of cultural functions which they attended, including special performances at the private Katherine Branson School in Ross which the girls attended. I was so impressed when the Branson thespians presented the Greek drama "Iphigenia in Taurus" outdoors on the lovely grounds. It was done with great spirit and skill. I attended my first symphony concert in San Francisco with the Spauldings. That opened a whole new avenue of enjoyment which continues today.

The Spauldings had a big Packard with jump seats. If I stayed over on a school night, Mrs. Spaulding would drop me off at Tam High School the next morning on their way to Ross. Billy attended a private boys' school in the area. Achievement at school was stressed. Mrs. Spaulding ran the household with energy, dispatch and efficiency. She was devoted to her family, and was probably one of the best organized people I have ever known. She expected promptness and had a marvelous system of bells throughout the house to summon each member. There was a lot of bell-buzzing to remind everyone to tidy up for meals, and more ringing when it was the exact time to gather around the ample dining room table to enjoy a well-balanced, nourishing meal. Good manners were expected, and the conversation was pleasant and on a positive level. Mr. Spaulding, a corporate lawyer, was a tall, benign, distinguished-looking gentleman who was very cordial and genteel, soft-spoken, calm, collected and quite dignified. He was highly respected in the community. He spent much of his leisure time reading worthy things, but he always took time for his family.

The girls were fine students, and Carol later became a physician. Billy was more deliberate about studying, so I sometimes supervised his homework. He had excellent mechanical ability and preferred making things. I recall that when he was a teenager, his parents provided space in the garage for him to take apart and revamp an old car which he did quite well. The children all later married. Billy established a very successful tree care business.

Mrs. Spaulding further befriended me by arranging that I be treated by a prominent endocrinologist in San Francisco for a glandular disorder and severe acne. Improvement was excellent. When our dad died, Mrs. Spaulding insisted that George drive us in their Packard to the funeral in Oakland since we didn't own a car. Such kindness I'll never forget.