

There was a little girl with a little curl
right in the middle of her forehead.

When she was good, she was very very good,
but when she was bad she was horrid!

My daddy thought this fitted me closely, as I had long black curls,
one on my forehead, brown eyes and liked to show off a dance routine
long before Shirley Temple came on the scene. Daddy was a great one
to quote witty verses.

Attending my birth, besides Dr. ^{Burnett} ~~Fley~~ on October 16, 1922, was two
women Grandma (Foretich) Fountain and Mrs Amelia Balins, mid-wife.
The little wooden house on Caillavet Street ~~has recently been torn~~ ^{is still there - someone}
~~down.~~ ^{house.} My mother, having a hard birth and I being only about five
pounds, was too weak to suck my mother's breast. Grandma and Mrs
Amelia rigged up a sugar tit to keep me alive. Deep down my daddy
was hoping for a boy to teach the Machinist trade. So instead of
Leon Vincent Foretich, I was given the name Lurline Veronica Foretich.
The same initials was some compensation.

The memories of my early childhood was with Grandma Duggan. My mother
Lottie and ten brothers and sisters were left fatherless when Grandpa
Duggan and a son Arthur, was lost at sea in the hurricane of 1916.
Grandma Duggan was a gentle sweet women whom everyone loved. Her house
on Fayard Street was a wooden, two front doors with a porch all the
way across and a wooden swing on the south end that was shaded by a
westeria vine. I would ride my tricycle on the white sandy clean
sweep front yard. In the spring when the blossoms from the Pear tree
fell, it looked like snow on the ground. Pecans fell in the Fall and
a Pomegranate tree hung heavy with Pomegranates. There was a little
side porch that went out to a wash shed, where clothes were washed in
tubs on a washboard. Every morning I woke up ^{to} the sound of coffee

being ground in the coffee grinder on the kitchen wall, and the aroma was like nectar of the Gods. Probably that is why until this day I awake to one thought in mind before I can start the day, and that is a cup of coffee.

My greatest adventure was going to the corner to Mr. and Mrs. Allen's grocery store to get penny candy. Mrs Allen resembled the wicked witch and when you walked in she didn't let you tarry long. She would say, "Well what you want hurry up", in a mean tone of voice that scared you into deciding in a hurry! She had an ice crushing machine and made snowballs in a paper tray. Also she would slap lard, pickles, meat and what have you in paper trays. My vice, at six years old, was conning a nickel out of parents or relatives and running to Mrs Allen's for a nipple! Then I was content to take my afternoon nap.

The country was enjoying the "Roaring Twenties", and daddy went to Plaquemine, La. to work. We stayed in a boarding house and I can remember admiring the beautiful china figurines that the landlady had on her livingroom mantle. Mama kept me impeccably dressed and as daddy would say "She washes every crack", I have a picture of me in a yellow voile dress with row upon row of lace, Roman sandals, and holding a ball. Daddy making good money, bought a new Model T. During this time I had a sister born that only lived a few hours.

Mr. and Mrs. Lamsen, friends of mama and daddy, being childless, wanted to adopt me. Mrs Lamsen called me "Lennie" I still have a letter they wrote me, after I left, as to how much they missed me. One day they drove up and I ran out to meet them. When I reached the car I fell striking my mouth on the running board of the car, knocking out my two front baby teeth. When my permanent ones came out they protruded badly and the Depression hit and keeping food on

the table had priority over teeth being straightened.

Then daddy worked for awhile in Sheveport, La. and I was school age, but mama was afraid for me to ride the streetcar to school. When we came back to Biloxi I was seven, so I had a late start.

Miss Alma Rich, Principle of Gorenflo School, had to pass our house on her way to school, so she would come on the run, grab my hand and up Lameuse Street we would fly! Making three steps to her one was no small feat. That is how I inherited my fast walking. Miss Alma had taught my mother when she was a girl. Miss Pricella, her sister, taught there also and many a day I froze when she would call me to the board to add a column of figures. She knew I was a hopeless case in that department. Everytime a visitor came to the school, Miss Alma would come get me and sit me on her desk as an example of the clean, sweet, adorable child representing Gorenflo School. The ones that did not come to school clean, run the risk of being grabbed by Miss Alma and getting a good neck, ears and face scrubbing before they went to class. Woe to any pupil that dared to walk on the front lawn of the school. That was kept planted with poppies, tulips etc., along the walk and winter grass on the lawn in winter. Girls and boys were separated at recess. Girls played on the South side where a low branch ran under lots of big pines. We would take the pine straw and build furniture with it and play house. When a school play was put on, I was never left out. I remember I was a French Doll in one and mama had made me a cardboard hat that tied under the chin. I had to bow at the end and my hat fell off, giving my audience a big laugh. Think my stage career came to an end that night.

My sister was born January 19, 1929, on ^{Bayard} Lambuse Street ^{at Krawilma} in the house where ~~I started school~~. She was the only full term baby my mother carried. First thing I wanted them to do was place her in my lap so I could rock her to sleep.

Beverly came along two years later on August 21, 1931. She was born in the house next door to where I was born. Daddy called her "The Depression Baby", but I like to think of her more as a "Miracle Baby". Being premature and only about three pounds, she was put in a home-made incubator. Daddy said she nicely in the palm of his hand and he had a small hand for a man.

I can remember during the time we lived in that house, we had a very hard freeze and long icicles hung from the trees. Mama said she could remember one winter when she was a girl, the Back Bay froze over.

Of course I can remember hearing the talk of grown-ups about how tough things were, but I was too young to really understand and let it worry me. I was one of very few kids that had a nickel to spend at school everyday. Daddy was working for Mr. Leo Ohr, at which he remained for twenty-six years, getting paid some weeks in half salary and half syrup. Mr Leo made the syrup on his farm in Cedar Lake and it was some of the best I have ever eaten.

One night Daddy came home, after a night of drinking and woke the whole house rummaging in the kitchen looking for something to eat. Failing to find something cooked that time of the night, he made the remark that he was hungry and would go out in the yard and kill that damn chicken.

He was talking about my pet chicken Peepsie that I had raised and made a pet of. Mama vowed that she would have no fowl around, because we made pets of them and to kill one to eat was unthinkable. Well I lost no time in jumping out of bed and Daddy with a hatchet and me in my nightgown holding Peepsie went around and around outside the house just before daylight. Peepsie was saved from an untimely death and probably died of whatever chickens die of, due to old age.

One of the pleasures I remember was Daddy taking me soft-shelling. He would fuss and cuss because I walked ahead of him and stirred up the mud that made it hard to see a soft-shell crab or flounder lying in the sand. Daddy made the torch, which was a long tank with a strap on it that went over the shoulder. On the end of a long rod was a large ball soaked in kerosene that made the light. When I came home, after walking behind that smoking ball of fire, all you could see was my two eyes shining from behind the smut!

One summer we lived in the house on Lamuse Street, next door to the Public Library and I spent the whole summer reading just about every book in the child's section.

Then we moved back to Caillvet Street in a little house north of the house where Beverly was born. It was a little house and Daddy would come in during the night in cold weather and build a fire in a little pot-bellied stove in the room where we slept. The fat pine knots would make the stove and stove pipe turn red hot and drive us all out of the room.

Then we moved to Delauney Street in 1937 and I attended Howard No. 1 School finishing Seventh and Eighth Grades. The school was a two story wooden building with basement, located where the Post Office now stands on Main Street. I can remember having to change desks when it rained, as the roof leaked like a basket. Miss Arguellas was principle and not as strict as Miss Alma. Boys and girls were allowed a little more freedom on the playground. Miss Llado taught Eighth Grade music and she played Bach, Chopin etc., on this high standing wooden record player.

With only a half block from the beach, most of my summers were spent in the water at the Community Pier. One day as I was swimming to the steps of the pier I noticed this Roberts girl struggling to reach the steps against a current. I reached out my hand and she grabbed it pulling me under and standing on my shoulders. Lucky someone had seen this and reported it to the lifeguard, in which he came and reached down and grabbed her by the seat of the pants and pulled her on the pier. I came up none the worse for wear and a little smarter to never approach a desperate drowning person in that manner.