

## MY SISTER

FERN ANITA WILLIS TICE    born December 5, 1932 and died November 1, 2009

written by her brother, Jim, 3.23.10

This will be my story about her. She was my sister and she was born December 5, 1932. I was only three years old, but it seems like I remember that day or a few days after. My dad took me to where my mother was and I remember my mother being in bed, but I don't remember seeing Fern. I was only three years old so maybe I really didn't remember that but for some reason it is in my mind.

Some of the things that I can remember about Fern were when she was very young. We lived on a farm in Paonia. Dad had gone out to milk the cow, came inside and set a bucket of milk inside the door. Fern, when she was only maybe two or three went to the door when she heard my dad coming and dad opened the door, and it caught Fern and pushed her backwards into the milk bucket. I remember that so well. Another event that happened at a different farmhouse in the same town was when we were looking over the valley, and she saw an animal on the road below, Daddy, "come see the horsey, come see the horsey". Well what it turned out to be was a very big elk walking down a road below where we lived. That is an event that I definitely remember her seeing the elk and thinking it was a horse.

We moved when I was in first grade or second grade school. She probably was not in school yet, but we started this school in the small town. We had a small dog, and I don't know if she ever remembered it, but our little dog, Jigs, was hit by a car in front of the house and killed. That really devastated me and my sister. Muriel and Fern shared the same room.

We went to church at the Methodist Church in town, and it was only a short distance. So we could walk. I don't even remember our parents having a car until about 1938. Dad bought a 1934 Chevrolet four-door, sedan and we took our first trip. I believe to Yellowstone Park.

Fern was always able to sit on dad's lap, because she was still a very young girl. I can remember that. I don't remember too much more about that type of event. We lived just across the street from the schoolhouse, so it was easy to get in our house, and one time, we had gone camping to Curicanti creek and came home and a day or two later Fern woke up yelling, "There's a bird in the house". It turned out to be a bat and when we realized that, it became hard to get rid of the bat. It would come out at night time and would scare Fern, and Muriel too, and finally, finally, one afternoon, it came out from its hiding place in the closet, and I got it with a tennis racket. I was swinging it. So we got rid of that bat in the house. Then we decided that the bat probably had gotten into blankets when we were picnicking. It got rolled up in a blanket when the car came home and then was in our house.

In another event that happened when I was in probably about the sixth grade was a BB gun fight. Fern was a fourth grader and some of her friends were across street. I did not have a BB gun, but for some reason some friend was at our house and had one. We started shooting at each other with these BBs. Now, a BB if it hit you on the body probably will not do too much damage, but if it hit you in the eye, it can do a lot of damage, so that was a very dumb and childish thing that we did.

Fern started to play the clarinet in the high school band, when she was in grade school. But she was not successful at it, did not like it, and gave it up. Muriel and I both played, Muriel, the piano and violin, and me, the coronet, but she did become a twirler and a leader in the band, and especially the marching band. She and Paula Mohlar became the twirlers" for the high school band, and she continued that clear

through high school. She later, I remember, taught her daughter Jana how to twirl.

She started to have health problems in early high school. I can remember times when she had to stay home for a considerable amount of time. But she was able to continue with her school lessons, and so was able to graduate from high school on time, but the last couple years of high school were not easy for her. I do remember when I was in college, either freshman year or sophomore year that she was in the hospital at their Colorado General in Denver. I would go down to visit. Our mother lived with a family in Denver and worked as a housekeeper, cook, to help her pay for a place to stay while she was in Denver and Fern was in the hospital after I had moved to California.

I had quit school and moved to California, late 1949- 1950. When I returned and went back to college, her health problems were very much improved. She seemed to be able to get along quite well. And I remember she and her girlfriend, Dorothy, took me dancing to a dance hall just out of Denver. Now, I thought this would be a very nice quiet affair, but fun too; however, that one evening at the dance somebody didn't like another man, dancing, with his girlfriend, and started a big fight.

One time Fern and Dorothy came up to Fort Collins to Colorado State, where I was going to school for college days celebration. We had a little bit of beer to drink and Fern did have a bit but not a lot. However, it caused a reaction with her health problem in the esophagus and caused internal bleeding to start again. And I think after that Fern decided for sure, she was not going to participate in any kind of alcoholic beverages. The doctor had told her not to, and she did not. Then later on, about that time. I graduated from college, moved to San Francisco and went into the Navy. After I got out of the Navy and went to UC Berkeley for a year, Fern and her friend Dorothy were living in San Francisco at a boarding house close to where I had lived when I was in San Francisco in 1952. In June 1957, she got married. She got married to Don Tice and they lived in Denver and had many, many, happy years. Since then, I think Don and Jana probably know much of the story of her life from there on better than I do. We, of course, used to visit and I used to have a lot of fun with Fern. But this is the one negative thing that did happen, when my dad was still alive, but not well, in the early 70s and later 1970s. I think she became upset with me because I used to tease her a lot. And she flat out told me she didn't like me to tease her. So I stopped, but it kind of broke a close relationship we had. We still saw each other as often as possible. Always enjoyed being with Fern, all her family, and even the last years was fun to go visit Denver, and she was always happy. At least to me every time we were there, she seemed to feel good, even though I think sometimes she probably didn't feel well. But she always was feeling good when we were there. We appreciate that. Think about her a lot, and miss her.

This story is being written with my new dictating device in my computer. It is called Dragon Speaking. It is not perfect yet. I have to work hard to train my dictating so that it gets typed like what I say, but it is interesting, to be able to just sit here, talk and watch the words come into my computer. I will pass this on to Muriel to review and see if it makes sense to her before I finish it and send it on to the family.