

Sonja is Born

We don't have any newborn pictures of my sister Sonja. For a while, she imagined that she was adopted. She wasn't, but many events contributed to her being picture-less.

She was born on May 4, 1957 at Mt. Caramel Hospital in Detroit. My mother was given anesthesia and was asleep at the time of Sonja's birth, as was the custom at the time. When my mother woke up, she asked to see her baby. The nurses told her that her daughter was a little "blue" and that she was receiving oxygen. No other explanation was given and my mother did not see her daughter until more than 24 hours after her birth. The hospital photographer wasn't allowed to take pictures in the "incubator section" of the nursery, so her picture wasn't taken the day she was born. When she did move into the "normal" nursery, the photographer was absent.

No one remembered to get out a camera the hectic day Mom and Sonja came home from the hospital. Sonja was barely settled in her crib before I arrived home, having spent a few days with Aunt Katie and Uncle John. My Grandma Cubalo came in the door soon after; she had traveled from Lincoln to take care of the household until my mom regained her strength. Our small house was bursting with people, and not one of them brought a camera!

Just about the time everyone was settled at home, the news came that my Uncle Harold's father, O.P. Somers, had drowned in Brownlee Lake. My dad and Grandma departed for Lincoln the day of the funeral. My mom was left to fend for herself with baby and me, and taking pictures was the last thing on her mind.

Dad and Grandma came home very late that same night and were worn out. They both caught miserable colds which they passed on to Mom, me, and baby Sonja. No one felt well for many days. Sonja was so congested that she couldn't breathe lying down, so Grandma spent her nights sleeping in a rocking chair, holding Sonja upright. We were too sick to take pictures.

It took about a month for everyone to recover, and that's when someone remembered to take a picture of the new baby. We have a black and white photograph of my Uncle Harold holding Sonja on the front porch of our house. So Sonja wasn't adopted; we just forgot to get out the camera!

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