

Family Memories from Mar [Martha Phillips], October 6-15, 1991  
(at Bethesda Oak Hospital, Cincinnati)

### The Hatch Family

Mother was the youngest in her family. When someone would ask Grandfather Hatch if he were sorry he didn't have a daughter he'd say, "Oh, girls aren't worth raising." But then Mother came along and he was crazy about her.

Mother's real name was Jane, but her parents always called her Jennie. Someone once asked Grandfather, "You named her Jane, why don't you call her that?" and he said, "I just think of her as Jennie."

Grandfather Hatch grew up in the Episcopal Church, but then he moved to Middletown and there was no Episcopal church there. So he joined the Methodist church, and that's where he met Grandmother. The Phillipses were Universalists. Father changed to Methodism when he married Mother.

My only real memory of Grandmother Hatch was when she was dying. Friends of ours had offered to have me stay over at their place, and before I went I was brought in to say goodbye. [Mar would have been about five at the time.]

After Grandmother Hatch died, Grandfather came to live with us. He was very slender. He used to say, "It takes a lean dog for a long chase." He always wore suit and tie in public. He and Father were both immaculate.

Grandfather Hatch came to live with us but he was still president of the Savings and Home [?] in Middletown. He used to go back there every Monday for a board meeting, and he'd stay over. One day he was getting ready to leave and he had his bags packed. I was in the living room. He stepped in to say goodbye, then he stepped out in the hall as if he were about to be sick. Then he just fell over and he was gone. It was a massive stroke. Father said to Mother afterwards, "I know this is terribly hard on you, but I hope you understand that it's much better for him to go suddenly like this." Grandfather had a brother who'd lived seven or eight years after a stroke. His two daughters had had to take care of him all that time and they didn't have much money at all.

When Grandfather Hatch died it turned out he had been supporting two cousins. Mother told them she wouldn't be able to keep doing it.

Mother was married first, then Uncle Met, then Uncle Harry, from youngest to oldest. Uncle Met moved east and that's where he fell in love. When someone asked him what her name was he said,

"You're not going to believe this, but her last name is Phillips too." Lillian Phillips. When Uncle Harry came to Uncle Met's engagement party he said he'd never marry. But then by the time of the wedding Uncle Harry was head over heels in love.

Uncle Harry was so serious, and Uncle Met was just the opposite. Someone once said the reason Uncle Harry was so serious was that his parents were struggling when he was born. When Uncle Met heard that he said, "Well, they must have been having a jolly good time when I was born."

Aunt Lillian was fun too. I remember once when Aunt Lillian was visiting. She was talking and eating a piece of chicken. I can still see her waving the chicken around in the air as she talked.

Uncle Harry thought the world of Mother.

Uncle Harry was a bad driver. They got a chauffeur as soon as they could. He was a doctor. Once Uncle Harry ran over one of his own patients in a parking lot. The man said afterwards, "By George, I thought he was going to turn around and hit me again."

Aunt Helen was very attractive, though a little formal. Uncle Harry and Aunt Helen had a beautiful red-brick house a block from the Ohio River in Madison. We used to like to go there. Once we came back all the way by boat. It took about three hours, coming upriver. We'd go to Madison for Thanksgiving sometimes. The only trouble was that there was a two-hour time difference. They were in a different time zone, and they also didn't have daylight savings, which we did. So we'd be starved by the time they were ready to serve dinner.

Uncle Harry and Aunt Helen just had one child, a daughter. She got married and she and her husband adopted a daughter, but they had a lot of trouble with her.

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### The Phillips Family

Father was the third oldest in his family. The first Aunt Elizabeth was the oldest, then Uncle Jim. Aunt Allie was the youngest.

Once Grandfather Phillips was riding his buggy to church and he passed another farmer plowing his field. He yelled at him, "Do you realize it's the sabbath?" I don't know what the farmer said back.

The first Aunt Elizabeth, Father's sister, had a heart attack one night. Uncle Fred called the driver of a passing rig to help, but she died [the same night?].

Elsie was about twelve or thirteen when her mother died. She was the oldest of the five girls. There were Elsie, Myrtle, May, ---, and Grace. They were all older than me.

Uncle Fred was a farmer. He had a hard time finding a housekeeper to take care of the five children. It wasn't too long before he remarried. His new wife was named Elizabeth too. She was the Aunt Elizabeth I knew. She was a wonderful woman. We loved her just as much as if she were our own aunt.

Aunt Elizabeth said everyone told her she was crazy to marry a widower with five children. But she was a wonderful stepmother. She put all five girls through college [but did Grace actually graduate before she disappeared?]. Elsie used to say that if she had a girl she would name her Elizabeth -- "not so much for my real mother as for my stepmother."

Elsie's one child was Bob. I remember once we went to visit Elsie and there was Bob in the back yard, tied to a tree. There was enough rope so he could move around, but not quite enough that he could get out of the yard.

Elsie's youngest sister was Grace. She was a beautiful girl. She was studying drama in Cincinnati. Mother had lunch with her once downtown and they had a very nice visit. It wasn't long afterward that Grace disappeared. We were sure she'd run off with a married man. We never heard from her. Elsie used to say she was sure Grace was dead because she'd surely have gotten in touch. She was about eighteen or twenty when she disappeared. My she was beautiful. She was a beautiful girl. I guess that was her undoing. It hurt Aunt Elizabeth a lot. I remember seeing her in the kitchen washing dishes or cooking and tears would be streaming down her face.

When we went to the country it was mostly to Uncle Fred's. He'd bought the old Phillips home in West Middletown. They didn't have a phone, and of course there was no indoor plumbing. The house had maybe seven or eight rooms. They had a summer kitchen that was separate so if it was hot they could cook without getting the house too hot.

They grew mostly corn. They had cows and chickens and horses. Once Mary decided she wanted to ride a horse, so she climbed on top of one. It was an old work horse and he wasn't used to the idea of anybody sitting on him, so she didn't stay there long.

Aunt Allie lived with us for about ten years before she was married, then Grandfather Hatch lived with us the last few years

before he died. Aunt Allie married Stanley Stall. They lived in Norwood.

Once when Father was home in bed the Stalls came by after going to church. They'd given out lilies at church -- I think it was Easter time -- and the three children each brought in a lily to Father. Each one would say, "Here, Uncle Lincoln, is a flower." Afterwards he laughed and said, "My, they certainly were cheerful, weren't they?"

Homer was less than ten, and Father asked him what the sermon was about at church. Homer was so serious. He answered, "Je-sus re-buk-eth the hi-poc-ri-sy of the phaaa-ri-sees."

Uncle Jim's family lived in the country, in West Middletown. Their farm was maybe about two miles from the Phillips family farm. Uncle Jim and Aunt "Bena" (her name was Verbena) had ten children and two more who died in infancy. Every time we'd get a letter from them saying they'd had another child Father would say, "Oh noo, they can't afford it."

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My parents had a horse and buggy when they lived in Hartwell. But then when they moved to McMillen Street they had to sell it because the horse was afraid of the streetcars. That's when they bought their first car.

Mother and Father both loved to drive. We would be out riding and one of them would say, "Wouldn't you like me to drive for a while?" and then a little while later the other one would say, "Wouldn't you like me to drive?" It's funny, Mary and I never learned to drive. Mother tried to teach me once, but after a little while she said, "This is making me very nervous" and that was the end of the lesson.

I have a lot of dreams where I'm driving. Then I get all worried because I don't have a driver's license.

Father always wore a suit and tie in public. He was immaculate. The house on McMillen Street had a set of stairs coming from the street level and then a landing and then some more stairs. Once Father slipped coming down the stairs and he didn't really fall but his head moved faster than his feet and he ended up in the middle of McMillen Street. He was hoping nobody had seen him, but then he saw some people in the bakery. Their backs were turned and their shoulders were shaking so much, he knew they were laughing about it. I guess he was a sight.

Grandfather Hatch died while we still lived on Macmillan Street. The house on Park Avenue was being built then, and a bedroom and a sitting room were being built for him.

I was about nine when we moved to Park Avenue. My bedroom was on the third floor and the maid's room was there, too. We shared a bathroom. My room had wallpaper with Mother Goose characters. Mother and Father's bedroom were on the second floor and so was Mary's. There were bathrooms on the second and third floors.

The Wests used to come over on Saturdays. We would play croquet in the afternoon, then we'd have supper on the screened porch, then we'd play 500 in the evening. There would be eight of us -- the Wests had a daughter about my age and Mrs. West had a sister who was about Mary's age.

Mr. West was very handsome. He worked for the Littleton (?) company, a steel company on Front Street. Mrs. West had a beautiful voice. She sang at Father's funeral. She came to Mother when Father died and said that Father had once said he'd like her to sing at his funeral. She had a wonderful voice.

I liked croquet, but Mary didn't. She didn't like most sports. Neither of us ever learned to swim. We'd go to a pool over in St. Bernard sometimes but we wouldn't really swim, we'd just splash around in the water.

Sundays were always dull. We wouldn't do much. Sometimes we'd go for rides.

The Robinsons used to come over on Saturdays for croquet and 500 after the Wests.

Mother always said she wanted twins, but then I came along and I was so much trouble as a baby. One of her friends asked her afterwards if she still wanted twins and she said she'd changed her mind. I was more rambunctious as a child than Mary was.

Mary used to sleepwalk, you know. Once she climbed into my crib in her sleep and said, "Move over." Once she asked Mother, "Did you find a newspaper in the bathroom this morning." Mother said yes and Mary said, "I walked down there in my sleep and put the paper there."

There was a farm in Sharonville that we used to drive to and buy corn. Golden Bantam corn, about this big [about 6 inches long]. We'd get two dozen ears for twenty-five cents. We'd bring dozens of ears for the neighbors.

We also went to Eustic Farms in Indian Hill. This woman started with one cow, and the neighbors kept saying they wanted to buy her cottage cheese, so she started a dairy. We'd get cream cheese and cottage cheese. There was a big dip in the road on the way out there and Martha Jane would say, "Here comes the roller coaster."

Father had a lot of health problems. He had lumbago, and he had serious heart trouble a couple of times. Once he stayed in bed for six months, another time for eight months."

When Father was resting in bed for his heart condition, he'd sometimes say maybe we should get a nurse. Mother would draw herself up and say, "When my services are no longer satisfactory, then we can hire a nurse." I used to take his meals up to him in his room.

Once in a while Mother would get a sick headache. Then she'd lie down in a darkened room for a day and it'd be gone. Mother had shingles once. I'd never realized how painful they are. She had it for about a year, off and on, and she had little twinges of it sometimes later. But mostly she had very good health. She never had a broken bone, never had an operation, and she was in the hospital only one time, to have me.

Mother used to say she was so healthy because she had two older brothers and she tried to do everything they did.

Once when we were eating at a seafood restaurant Father had to go to the bathroom. When he came back he just kept moving his food around on the plate -- I don't think he ate any of it. Mother asked him about it afterwards and he said, "I saw the kitchen and it was so dirty I couldn't eat any of the food." Mother said, "Well, you let us eat it" and Father said, "It was okay for you to eat it because you didn't see the kitchen."

My middle name Stella wasn't a family name. Our friends the Henkels had seven boys and no girls, and they'd always intended to use the name Stella if they had a girl, so my parents gave me that middle name as a gesture to them. I was named Martha after Grandmother Hatch, and Mary got her name from Granmother Phillips.

Father used to call Mary "Petty," short for "pet." She didn't mind that, but she didn't like it when he called us "the kiddies."

Father had several patients who were dentists, so he tried to spread the family business among them. He went to one dentist and Mother went to another and I went to a third. I asked my dentist once how father's teeth were and he said kind of stiffly, "I wouldn't know. I don't do your father's teeth."

We never had any pets. Father treated so many dog and cat bites in his patients that he didn't want any pets.

I had an operation when I was ten or twelve, on my left side. They had holes in me afterward for draining, then later they closed them up. I couldn't go to Mary's first wedding because I was just getting over the operation.

The minister at our church for a time was named Arba Martin. He performed both of Mary's wedding ceremonies. There was a funny story about him, during Prohibition. He used to stop by a store in the neighborhood to buy raisins and bran, and one day he said to the man, "I hope you realize that I'm not buying this to make mash." The clerk said, "Oh, don't worry, they all say that."

I wasn't at Mary's first wedding, but people said that Marion looked very pale, white as a sheet. He got sick from leaks in the lab where he worked at Proctor & Gamble. After that, they changed the ventilation system to make it safer. He got government benefits because he'd been in the army during the war.

Father got the idea of becoming a doctor when he was still a boy. Once his older brother was sick with scarlet fever or typhoid fever and Father took care of him. The doctor who came remarked about what a fine job Father was doing, and from that time on he wanted to be a doctor. He taught school for a year to make money to go to medical school.

Father charged something like two dollars for an office call, three dollars for a house call. That was when doctors made house calls. He often got calls at home in the middle of the night.

Father may have been at his office about half the time and at the hospital about half the time. He was on the staff here at Bethesda.

Patients sometimes came at dinnertime because they knew Father would be home then.

Father was a devoted baseball fan. He always rooted for the Reds. But he almost never could get away for a game because he had office hours in the afternoon.

Once we were up in the country and Father stayed in Cincinnati. He had a call to go see a patient downtown. He couldn't get the car started so he wound up the crank, and it spun out of control and broke his arm. He typed a letter to us at the farm and we came home right away. There was no phone at the farm.

Father wore himself out during the flu epidemic. He was always on the go. He'd run up two and three flights of stairs to see patients. He didn't lose any patients, but I think it was his overwork that caused his heart trouble later.

Father grew up on a farm, but he never liked tomatoes. Maybe that was because he had to pick so many of them. But Mother used to make fried tomatoes, and those he loved. It was the same thing with corn -- he'd never liked it, but he loved Mother's corn fritters.

I don't think I ever heard Mother say she was hungry, but if you put a plate of food in front of her, she'd polish it off.

Mother and Mary both loved German potato salad with lots of vinegar. When Mary would come for a visit, the first night they'd make a big batch of it. I didn't like it. I'd have creamed potatoes instead.

Mary never liked rice till she went to Thailand.

Nora worked for us for about twenty-five years. She told us once she was leaving to get married, but we knew it wouldn't work out. The man was a glib talker. She did come back. She finally left when her family needed her.

Nora was Catholic, and so we used to have fish on Friday. But once Father was out and decided to pick up some lunch for Nora. It was a Friday. He got beans and minced pie. Mother said, "Oh, you know Nora can't eat meat today." But Nora said, "That's okay. I can pick the meat out from the beans and I'm sure there's no meat in that pie."

Mother used to snore. When Mary would visit I'd set up a cot in Mother's room. Sometimes when she'd snore I'd pull on her sheet, but she'd just wake up long enough to stop snoring for a minute, then she'd start up again.

The first time Mother wrote home after she was married] she signed the letter "Jennie H. Phillips." Grandmother Hatch was very hurt because Mother's middle name was Lucretia and that was a family name. So from then on she signed it Jennie L. H. Phillips.

Father always said it was a mistake not to give a child a middle name. He didn't have one. He didn't like the name Lincoln but he didn't have any other name for people to call him by.

The wife of one of the ministers at our church always used to call me "Marcia." I can't remember which one it was.

You all used to love to go to the zoo. I always enjoyed it too. When I was in school there was a Zoo Day every year, and that was a treat because it meant I could take a box lunch. We lived so close to the school that I always had to come home for lunch. It was the Winslow School, at Winslow and Kamper Lane. For the lunch on zoo day I'd have minced ham as part of it, and a banana.

I remember Susie. She was a trained chimpanzee at the zoo. She would do things like eat with a knife and fork.



I don't know how old the conservatory is in Eden Park. It's been there as long as I've been around. You children used to love the waterfall, and I did too when I was little.

We went to plays in the outdoor theater in Eden Park.

Father smoked cigars, but then he switched over to cigarettes because he said they were milder. But he loved cigars. He kept on smoking cigarettes till the end. Mother didn't smoke.

I used to like riding horses.

I started wearing glasses early. Maybe I was seven or eight when I first got them. [Another time, she said it was when she was in sixth or seventh grade.]

Mary was always a marvel at the piano. She could play tunes that she'd only just heard. I had lessons but I was never very good at it.

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When Mary and Henry were in Thailand we never talked to them on the phone. Letters would take about six weeks. That is, we'd write and it'd be six weeks before we got an answer. We got a cablegram when Martha Jane was born, and we sent a cablegram of congratulations. Then we were told that we'd gotten a second cablegram and we got worried that maybe something had gone wrong. But it was only the company saying that we'd paid too much for our cablegram.

Mary wanted to name a baby girl for Henry's mother, but she hated the name Lizzie. His mother's full name was Lizzie, not Elizabeth.

Martha Jane was a year old when Mother and I first saw her. We had a maid named Rose at that time and before they came she said to Mother, "Mrs. Phillips, I want you to understand that I'm not to have any care of that child." But then the first night, Rose came into the room and Martha Jane saw her. Martha Jane hadn't been saying anything but then she looked up and smiled and said "Ro-ee?" From then on, Rose was her slave. She would do anything for Martha Jane.

Once Martha Jane had climbed up the stairs and Rose was worried that she might fall down so she went up and took her in her arms. But then Rose slipped and she slid down the stairs, hitting every step but with Martha Jane cradled in her arms. When they got to the bottom Martha Jane looked up, all excited, and said "More?"

Mother was very fond of her. She would play Pollyanna with Martha Jane for two or three hours at a time. That's like Parcheesi.

Martha Jane was a corker. Once she was doing something at the table she shouldn't have, and Mary said, "If you do that once more you're leaving the table. Well, she did, and Mary took her up and put her here in the sitting room. Oh boy she made a mess. I don't think anything was broken except some glass frames for pictures that were on the mantle, but things were lying all around.

Another time Martha Jane got out of her crib. Mary forgot to put up the slat. She made a mess that time too. She spilled mercurochrome on the bed. She'd found some postage stamps and licked them and stuck them to the wall. Mary had bought a new box of face powder and Martha Jane got into it and spilled it all over. We didn't know she was out till we saw her face pressed against the screen [what screen?].

Once Martha Jane locked Mother and Mary and me in a bedroom. Your mother used the sweetest voice to tell her to put the key in the lock and turn it. She put a handkerchief in and she said, "Push the key till it knocks the handkerchief out of the hole." After a while Martha Jane said, "Darn it, I'm tired of this." Mary was so patient and sweet with her. Once we were finally out, though, then she wasn't so sweet. Oh boy." [Note: According to Sue, I was the one who locked them in the closet, not Martha Jane. But this is how Mar told the story.]

Martha Jane loved to swim at the Y. Once Mother looked up and there was Martha Jane, she was so little, going off the high dive.

Martha Jane and Susan used to love the whisper fountains at the Union Terminal. People would look and see one of them standing at the fountain talking and they wouldn't see anyone else but they'd hear another voice.

When Martha Jane got wrapped up in a book, that was it. Once we went out and asked Martha Jane to babysit for you. But she got lost in a book. When we came back you had thrown everything around. It was a mess. I remember Susan saying, "Martha Jane, did you let him do that?"

Once we were going out and you and Susan were staying home. We asked Susan to start making lunch before we got home. But you locked her in the closet. Luckily the closet was connected to an air vent so she had plenty of air.

Martha Jane used to go to the library and do research. I remember once Elsie was excited because Martha Jane found out that her husband was in Who's Who. He was superintendent of schools in West Carrollton.

When Martha Jane was quiet you knew that she was up to something, but when Susan was quiet she'd just be playing with dolls. We'd feel guilty that we'd suspected her. Susan was a bit of a whiner, though -- "Martha Jane hit me!"

Mother loved to sit on the porch at the Verona, to talk to people going by. She'd sit out there just about till November.

The first time I saw Jean [Busch], she and her aunt had come over to look at the apartment across the hall when they were thinking of moving there. Mother and I were sitting out on a bench -- they had benches then in the courtyard -- and Jean saw us and gave a big smile. She won my heart right then.

When Grandmother Hatch would visit on McMillan Street she would water the lawn with a hose and sometimes she would spray people going by on the street. She would say, "I know I shouldn't do it, but I like it." [I may have gotten this one confused. I need to ask about it.]

Martha Jane had a loud voice. We could hear her coming from up on McMillan Street.

Once Mary said she was going shopping and Martha Jane said, "Oh, can I come along?" Mary said, "You wouldn't enjoy it, I'm just going to be going into stores. When they came back Mary looked exhausted. When I asked what they did she said, "We stopped at every drinking fountain."

The Stixes next door, when they finally moved, had their house demolished and turned over the land to the city for a little park. They didn't want the house to be a cheap rooming house.

After Father died, Mother and I went to a Dr. Eha at first, then Dr. Goldberg.

Father drove into the garage door once, and then into a clothes pole in the yard.

[Bill Busch's memory: He used to swim from Coney Island to Broadway.]

Nora was German. She used to say things like "Wine Street" and "winegar."

Father had a funny story about a man who was having a tribute paid to him at a meeting and someone asked, "Is he dead." And somebody called out from the back, "Oh no, he's in Pennsylvania." Father was a good after-dinner speaker.