VISITS TO LAKESIDE

*Ruth, let me ask you about Lakeside, Ohio, which is where the Wickenden family went from Toledo to vacation each summer. Each of the memoirs mentions how much they enjoyed spending time in Lakeside each year. Thomas Rogers even designed the rail line that connected the two locations, and he had a cottage built there. Were you there ever? If so, what were your impressions and memories?*

Yes, I remember going there. I think my first memory was when I was about three years old. The cottage was pretty basic. What you saw on the outside with what you saw on the inside. In other words, it wasn't insulated or anything. But there was lots of room for people, so a lot of cousins would come while we were there. I think Thomas Rogers had it built, but I don't know when. It was old when I was young.

*You know, Ruth, he also designed the rail line from Toledo to Lakeside.* Yes. They had to get there somehow, (*laughs*) and the train was quite convenient. Anyway, I remember that some of the Winans came up. I remember Dorothy Jean was there and Charlotte was there, and Tom was still too little. But I was there with Ann, and we would all eat together. They had a main dining room because it was a church related colony, a Baptist colony. So, we would walk down the street and go to the dining room, and I remember people saying, “Oh, hello, you're cute, who's are you?” “I’m Homer’s.” So finally, I think we ended up with name tags because everybody would ask who we were. My sister would take me by the hand. She was eight and I was three.

I do remember that trip. I remember getting there. That was always interesting, because we had a big old car with the baggage on the running board. Mother and Daddy would sit in the front seat and my sister and me and I think my grandmother - one year anyway - would be in the backseat with who knows what. We would drive to the Poconos and stay overnight in one of those little wooden cabins, 'cause it took two days at least to get there. And 'cause the roads were...well, the cars didn't go very fast, and the roads were rough. There were no highways then. When they finally put the Pennsylvania Turnpike in – I think that was Route 40 – I could get to Denison in 12 hours. But we couldn't get to Lakeside in less than two days. So anyway, we would take that trip, and I always got car sick and that was a real thrill (*laughs*).

*Would they have to stop the car and let you throw up over the side*? Probably, I don't remember for sure, but I imagine they did because I know I got carsick. Mother always referred to the trip to Lakeside as going out with the Indians. She, from being from Boston. *In other words she thought it was pretty far away*? Well, she was teasing Daddy, you know. Being from Boston, she would go out to the Indians.

Anyway, so we would go, and there were other cousins there. I do remember Dorothy Jean and Charlotte being there for Charlotte was my sister's age, and I'm trying to think who else might have been there at that point. Probably Fred Klag was there, and then we would go swimming in the lake. I think I didn't really learn to swim, but my father would take us down to the lake*. How far was the cottage from the lake*? Two or three blocks, maybe. The cottage was on this street, (*gestures*) and we went to the left around the corner to the dining room. And then over here in front of the cottage, perpendicular to it, was Aunt Jenny and Aunt Jessie's house, or houses. I don't remember – one or two. As I say, I never understood who they were. I just knew they were relatives. I don't even remember them, but I remember the names. *Do you remember Frank Console being there?* I may have met him, but he didn't register at all.

We would walk about three blocks down to the to the beach, such as it was, and swim. *Was it stony?* I think it was. There was some sand, but I don't recall it being a real big beach. And we swam there. *This was in the summer. was the water cold?* Yes, this would have been in, probably July. Yes, it was cold.

I remember taking the boat to Put-in-Bay. *Was this a sailboat?* No, no, this was a commercial boat, like a ferry boat. And I think they had a lighthouse at Put-in-Bay. I don't remember why we went. I guess just to see it. *It was an adventure?* Yes, it was an adventure and other than that, I don't remember much. We didn't use the car since there wasn’t any reason to. You could walk to the beach and to the dining room.

They had programs. I didn't take part in them being that little, but they always had plenty of programs for the adults. *The kids were entertained?* Yes, the children had programs too. I don't think I took part in much because I was too young.

*Was my grandfather, Tom, there?* He wasn’t there when I was there, to my recollection. He might have been, but I don’t remember that. I think that first year was 1934. I do have pictures of the children sitting on the front steps, so if I could find those pictures we would know who was there. I think the first year was 1934, and then the next year I think in 1935 or 36 – one of the two – we took Karen, our maid. And we decided to go by way of Niagara Falls, and I don't think my grandmother came that year – that was mother's mother. So Karen came with us and we went to Niagara Falls and without thinking we went to Canada. And then we couldn't get her back out because she was a Norwegian citizen, and we didn't have her passport – a bit of a problem! So my father called our next door neighbor and said go break in the house. She told him where her passport was and so they went and got her passport so they could read the number to us and then they would let her come back to the United States. We were thinking we can't leave Karen. So that delayed our trip a bit, but I do remember going to Niagara Falls and having that happen, and so she came with us. Now I don't know whether she was really on vacation with us or whether she worked while we're there.

*Was she an Au Pair?* No, she was our maid. She came. My parents sponsored her in about 1927. Our neighbors had a Norwegian maid. She said she had a friend who wanted to come to the United States, and mother said OK, send her over, we’ll take her on, and she came. She stayed with us till 1945, and she was wonderful. Mother taught her how to drive and do everything. So she came to lakeside with us and to the cottage in the Poconos. Again, that was part of the deal. I don't remember which trip was which in terms of what I did. But by that time I was a year older and I do have pictures of us sitting on the front steps, but the some of the cousins. So if I can find those pictures we know who was there.

*So Rut,h one more question about Lakeside. By that time, you were living in the East*? Yes, we were in Bronxville, well no, we were in Eastchester. *You were living in New York, but your father felt such a strong tie to the family, and the family had always spent some time in the summers at Lakeside, that he said “We're gonna go back to Lakeside, even though it's a two-day trip.” So, you went several times?* Oh yes, I think we went several times. I remember two times very distinctly. I think there probably was a third, maybe even a fourth, but they all kind of fade into one. And then in 1937 my parents went to Europe, and I went to the Schmonsees’ camp, Cotuit, and Ann went there too. That was one miserable summer! ... But that’s a separate story.

POSSIBLE ADDITIONS:

1. Any pictures you could find would be terrific!

2. Names of participants identified from the pictures would be a good addition.