

FOUR GENERATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS

by
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Mother loved to dance but her strict adherence to Methodism made her feel that when she joined the church, she should give up dancing. She took her church membership very seriously, and I recall hearing her say, "I made up my mind when I joined the church that I should never refuse to do whatever my church asked me to do."

Needless to say, she was an avid church worker—sewing, knitting, crocheting (for the endless bazaars), running a Sunday School Pageant and lecturing on her second favorite topic—Christian Temperance Instruction.

Because of her love of dancing (and also, no doubt, because of a secret longing which lasted a lifetime), she decided not to deny her children the pleasure of "tripping the light fantastic." In spite of the fact that we were not allowed to have a deck of playing cards in the house, we were encouraged to bring our friends home, roll up the rugs, and dance to victrola records. Since the folks were excellent sleepers, they would go to bed and sleep soundly while we danced on.

I distinctly remember one night when George and I went to an Epworth League party at our church, First Methodist of Germantown. Something happened, and the planned entertainment did not materialize and while everybody was milling around, George had an idea. Why not come back to our house and dance? This idea was greeted with wild enthusiasm.

The following morning, the folks asked us how we had enjoyed the Epworth League party. The expressions on their faces were so innocent that we realized quickly that they had never heard the hilarity going on in our living room.

Father was away from home on business so much of the time that he did not have a great deal of opportunity for community service. However, he was an active, enthusiastic member of the Music Committee of First Church for many years. He also added much to the life of the Church and of the community by giving his popular movie shows after each trip.

The genes, spirit, training, or whatever it is that makes people want to volunteer to help others, were passed down to all of us.

Charles and George received their earliest experiences as Scout Leaders and later as counselors at the University Settlement House and Green Lane Camp for underprivileged boys run by the Christian Association of the University of Pennsylvania.

No matter how busy Charles later became with his Law Practice, he always made time to give to the church. It would take whole books even to suggest his contributions.

George was an active volunteer in the community of Glen Ridge. He, more than any other single person, was responsible for getting a Survey of the Glen Ridge School System which was bitterly opposed by the old-timers. The handsome new High School, completed just after we left Glen Ridge, represents one of those far-off goals envisioned by George and the others who worked so hard for the Survey in the thirties.

George, as a boy, was an ardent Boy Scout and as Stew and Ed came along, he developed an interest in Cub Scouts. Under his enthusiastic leadership, the number of Cub Scouts in Glen Ridge doubled. He still keeps his interest in Scouting and each year presents a handsome trophy, known as the "Edward Parlin Memorial Trophy" to the Patrol which wins in the Annual Patrol Contest.

As Howie, Johnnie and Don came along, Howard did a stint with the Cub Scouts, too, as Glen Ridge Chairman and later as Educational Director of the Eagle Rock Council.

Both George and Howard served the Congregational Church: George as a Deacon, and Howard as a Trustee.

I, too, served the church having been in charge of the Beginners' Department when I was 15 years old. Later, after I married and moved to Glen Ridge. I was soprano soloist of the Glen Ridge Congregational Church for twenty years. In addition to music, I became an enthusiastic volunteer for women's clubs and UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund).

Those "volunteer genes" carried on to the third generation. Howie, in addition to a full dental practice, makes time to serve on the

Board of the Summit Y.M.C.A., teach Sunday School, serve as Elder of the Central Presbyterian Church of Summit etc. Johnnie, while handling a full roster of dental patients, serves as Superintendent of the Sunday School of the Madison Methodist Church, as a Friend of Drew University etc. Don still commutes to New York so his days are considerably shorter than those of his brothers but he has still made the time necessary to serve as Deacon of the Central Presbyterian Church of Summit.

And the "volunteer genes" are still going strong in the fourth generation! Deby, at 13, chose to spend her summer vacation as a counselor at a Day Camp for underprivileged children in Summit. She loved it.

Perhaps it is not strange at all that those "volunteer genes" show such staying power from generation to generation. The Parlin-Sanborn line has had strong infusions from the Hansons, the Lehmans and the Turners.

The Sanborn girls must write their own stories but just one example from each will help to prove my point: Peggy spends every Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. driving the ambulance and helping with the Summit Rescue Squad; Lee teaches handicrafts to underprivileged children at the Community House in Madison; and Anne runs the Book Sale for the College Club which raises thousands of dollars for scholarships.

In this period of American History when every organization which is dependent upon volunteers, is crying for help, I'm proud to belong to the Parlin-Sanborn Clan.