

# GETTING VOLUME III STARTED

by  
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In December, 1960, Uncle Stew, who is the oldest, called a meeting of the cousins at his house in Montclair. (Actually, it wasn't so much a meeting as it was a beautiful dinner party prepared by Aunt Mickey.) I can remember the date, because Aunt Peggy made the announcement that she was pregnant with her fourth child. This was a surprise to everyone, especially to me, because I was also pregnant with my fourth child, and Dad and I had not told anyone, yet. Uncle Blackie and Aunt Joan were not able to make the dinner. As it turned out, Aunt Joan was also pregnant, and the following spring, Lynn Sanborn, Andy Parlin and Stephen Smith were all born within two weeks of each other.

Uncle Stew was carrying out the instructions left to our generation by Grandfather Charles who had said that the oldest grandchild should organize the cousins to write "Volume III" of *The Parlins*. As I recall it, all three Sanborns and their wives were present, but both Uncle Blackie and Uncle Charlie and the two Aunt Joans were unable to attend. So of the fourteen cousins eligible to enter into the discussion, ten were present. At that meeting only Uncle Howie, Aunt Mickey, and I showed any interest in the "Volume III" project. We had a marvelous party, but the project was dropped. I can remember very clearly driving home from Uncle Stew's party saying to Dad that even though I thought "Volume III" was a great idea, I really could not see how my life as a child differed so much from what our children were experiencing. It has only been in the past ten years that technology has come to dominate American culture so completely, and that I now recognize how vastly but subtly the childhood of you children differs from my own childhood.

I credit the revival of interest in "Volume III" to two factors. In the summer of 1970, one afternoon on the dock at Silver Bay, Uncle Charlie said that he had been having lots of fun re-reading Volumes I and II of *The Parlins*. He was deeply interested in the socio-historical perspective of American history that the volumes presented. I said that at Uncle Stew's party few of us had shown any enthusiasm for the project. He

replied that had he been present, *he* would have shown interest. Uncle Blackie, too, expressed an interest in the project during the dock-side discussion. Uncle Charlie said he had been thinking about the project, and had concluded that because the family was becoming so large, the project ought to be limited to just the direct Parlin descendents. This would eliminate all the girls.

Unknown to Uncle Charlie, Hyla had been on the dock, had overheard the conversation, and had come back to the house fuming. Uncle Charlie could cut her out if he wanted to, but *she* was going to write her chapters whether he wanted them or not. In fact she had already started!

We returned to Delhi this fall, and both Heather and Nathan became involved in social studies projects at school which included telling classmates about their ancestors. Both children took the two red volumes of *The Parlins* to school, Heather to seventh grade and Nathan to fifth grade, where teachers and pupils were extremely impressed. The school librarian asked permission to study the books for a few days.

With this incentive I really began to see the point in getting "Volume III" started.

Grandma Parlin (Miriam) was confined pretty much to her bed by fall, 1970. I suggested to Grandpa, Uncle Charlie, and Uncle Blackie that as part of our Christmas festivities in Englewood, we each write a chapter for "Volume III" and read them to Grandma. Our Christmas readings were a great success. We told the grandchildren that only those *really* interested were to come into the library and listen to the readings. Every one of them chose to come and hear the chapters read. They were a most enthusiastic audience and encouraged us to write more. Grandpa had written a "transition" chapter, bringing the family up to date. Uncle Charlie wrote of his recollections of Grandfather Charles and Grandmother Daisy Parlin. Uncle Blackie wrote about seeing his first television show. And I wrote about riding to Silver Bay.

The problem of editing Volume III still remains. It is my feeling that the volume should contain chapters by any of the fourteen eligible cousins and spouses who *want* to contribute. In the long run it isn't the Parlin name itself that becomes important. (e.g. Nathan and I figured

out that by the time he counted back to John Parlin who had lived in Massachusetts in 1760s, he was back great-grand-parents<sup>13</sup>, and had 4,096 great-grand-parents<sup>13</sup>. If you know you are related to *one* of these you only know  $\frac{1}{4,096}$  about yourself.) The volumes become an important documentation of successive generations growing up in America. It is the continuity of the record that counts. I think it makes little difference whether succeeding volumes are written by Parlins, Sanborns, Smiths, or any other names we girls add to the family.

As I have written my chapters I have had two principles in mind. 1) I wanted to show my own children how my childhood had differed from theirs. This has led me to address my chapters to my own children and all the people referred to are addressed in the names my children use for them. 2) I wanted to use these chapters to tell people still living how much I loved them, and how much they had meant to me.

I can conceive a great super-picnic-party this summer at Silver Bay to commemorate the completion of "Volume III," written, edited and bound. I think this could really be great fun for all of us.

When the time comes, I hope you second cousins will enjoy working together on "Volume IV." As Hyla said, she has already begun her chapters!