

Hedberg Memories

Grandmother Elizabeth Anderson

I remember my Mother's mother, Elizabeth Anderson, whom we called Mummy. She came to live with us on our house on Norwood Street, from Sault Saute Marie, Michigan, where she lived with her husband, Frederick (Fritz) Anderson, both immigrants from Sweden. Fritz died in a work accident in 1921, when my Mother was a 21 year old student at Northwestern University. I think he was injured in a steam shovel or railroad train accident. Elizabeth stayed in Michigan for around ten more years before moving to Chicago to live with her only child, my Mother, and her family.

I think my Mother was a little intimidated by her but she was also a little harsh on her. My Father, however, seemed to welcome her into the family and got along with her very well. Mummy was an asset to our family, as she loved to cook and was our babysitter whenever our parents went out. She was pretty strict about bedtimes, too.

She spoke good English, but her Swedish accent stayed with her. I remember that she mostly wore house dresses and wore her hair in a bun on the back of her head.

She was a tremendous cook, and one of her specialties was caramel roles, which I loved. One time, I was running through the kitchen to go outside to play and slammed the door after me. Mummy was baking a cake in the oven and thanks to my noisy exit, the cake "fell." I felt badly all day for ruining her cake, but after dinner, out came a gorgeous, new cake which she had baked that afternoon. I was forgiven, but never forgot!

Our house had five small bedrooms on the second floor and only one bathroom. She slept in the smaller front bedroom. I slept in the back near the screen porch. In summer the four of us slept on that screen porch before we had air conditioning, as it was the only way to stay cool. Mummy slept in her room which had windows on two adjacent sides to let in the night air.

She had a few friends and once in a while would go out with them, but I don't remember them.

Andy Hedberg, July 2018