

HOORAY!!! IT'S VACATION TIME

IT'S FINALLY HERE!--we've been waiting a whole year for it and now we are going to spend two whole weeks at Huntington Lake in the High Sierra Mountains. We're going to go camping, boating, swimming, water skiing, hiking, fishing and having fun with our grandparents, aunts and Uncles and our cousins. Even some of our other friends will be there and we can roast hot dogs and marshmallows over the bon-fire at night and on Sundays we will go down the steep, windy road to church at Big Creek. Mother has been baking cookies and other goodies and packing them in big cans for weeks and daddy has been busy fixing our boat and camper so everything would be just right. Only one more night and then we'll be on our way, so we had better go to bed early so we will be ready tomorrow!

The next morning Daddy and Sandy had to go to work but daddy will be home as soon as he can. Denise and Patty helped mother clean the house, water the lawns and get everything ready so they can leave as soon as daddy comes home. We are so excited and watch the clock all the time and at 3:00 o'clock in drove the car and out jumped daddy. He ran up the stairs and changed his clothes and then went quickly to the garage to make sure everything we would need was loaded into the boat. Mother checked the camper, which was on the back of the pick-up, and she put the table and benches down into a bed so Denise and Patty could lay down if they wanted because it would take a long time to get to the lake.

At last everything was ready and it was time to go. Patty and Denise climbed into the back in the camper. Patty got up on the bed over the cab of the truck so she could see out the front window and Denise got on the bed down below. Mother and daddy got into the front seat and we were at last on our way but we still had to pick up Sandy when she got off work. Patti was looking out the window and yelled "here she comes" so daddy started the engine and Sandy climbed into the front seat next to mother because she still had her good clothes on. She was going to get in the back with her sisters and change into her play clothes when we got to Los Banos where we always stopped to get Taquitos whenever we went that way.

We all settled down because we had to go through San Jose, then Morgan Hill and finally the town of Gilroy. After that we had a big mountain to go up and over before we got to Los Banos and then we would go up another mountain to get to Huntington Lake. We had a telephone in the truck and one in the back of the camper so we could talk with each other when we traveled and everyone was singing our special song –

“Oh we're on our way, oh we're on our way,
We're on our way to Huntington Lake”

“Oh we'll have fun, Oh we'll have fun
We'll have fun at Huntington Lake”

When we got to the first mountain called Pacheco Pass there was a great big truck filled with furniture just ahead of us and it was going very slow because the road was very steep and very narrow and we couldn't pass him. Daddy put the car in low gear and we just stayed behind him all the way to the top. Cars were lined up behind us clear to the bottom of the mountain. Finally we reached the top and the truck signaled us to go ahead and pass him because there were no cars coming the other way. Daddy stepped on the gas and pulled out around the truck and we passed them but just as we started to pull back into our lane something happened!

Daddy said "Something's wrong, I can't keep the car going straight and my brakes won't work." The truck was going back and forth across the road and on the other side was a big, steep cliff that went clear to the bottom on the mountain. The men in the truck knew we were in trouble because they had seen the back wheel come off our truck and roll down the road so they got out of their truck and stopped all the other cars that were trying to pass them. After what seemed like a really long time but was really only a few minutes, we felt the truck tipping over. Mother said, "Here we go," and she blacked out.

As the truck tipped over and began to slide to the other side of the road, the trailer hitch broke but the safety chain kept the boat trailer from coming loose from the truck. When the big long tongue of the trailer dropped it began to dig into the pavement and it helped keep the truck from going over the big cliff. It laid on its side against the broken guardrails.

As soon as we stopped the men from the furniture truck came to help. They sent another car ahead to call the police and an ambulance and then they jumped up on top of the truck and opened the door to help daddy get out. When daddy lifted his arms up his pants fell down so he reached down and pulled them up and then put his arms up again. The same thing happened so he just crawled up on top of the truck and pulled up his pants because he wanted to see if Patty and Denise were all right in the camper.. Sandy was helped out the same way daddy was but everyone forgot about mother in the cab of the truck.

The furniture truck men had seen Denise flying through the air and over the side of the cliff when the truck tipped over. They got some men in the stopped cars and they held hands to form a human chain to go over the side of the cliff and bring Denise up. About this time the policeman arrived with his siren blasting and wanted to know where the little girl was that went over the cliff. When Denise told him she was the girl he wouldn't believe her and said "No, I mean the one that was thrown over the cliff." When she convinced him it was her he asked her what happened and she said, "I was sleeping and woke up when I felt the car weaving back and forth across the road so I put the pillow over my head and started to pray. The next thing I knew, I was sitting on a little ledge on the side of the cliff in a patch of fox-tails (weeds)."

In the meantime some men climbed up on the truck and took some poles to pry the crashed camper off so they could get Patty out. Then mother began to yell for someone to help her out of the truck because she couldn't get out herself.. She didn't know anything about what had happened to Denise or Patty until they told her. When the policeman saw we were all okay he

radioed the ambulance to turn around because we didn't need them and he told mother and the three girls to go sit in his police car and wait. At this time Patti spoke up and said, "Do you know why we got into an accident, it was because we did not have Family Prayer before we left." We were planning to have it after we picked up Sandy and then we said we would have it when we stopped for dinner in Los Banos.

About this time the garage tow-truck drove up. They jumped out and took big chains and put them around the truck and camper so they couldn't fall on down the cliff. The policeman then told daddy to get in the police car that he was taking us all into Los Banos to the hospital so they could check us and make sure we were not hurt.

After about two hours at the hospital we were told everything was all right and we could leave. We had no car and no place to go so we called a taxi and went to a motel. As soon as we got to the motel daddy called us to kneel down at the bed and we all offered a prayer to our Father in Heaven for protecting us and saving our lives. We really knew what it meant at that time to be a family because not one of us was hurt even though our camper was destroyed. We never left again for any trips unless we had our Family Prayer.

Since we had no dinner, we decided to walk outside and find a place so we could eat and while we were standing on the corner the tow-truck with our crushed in camper came by on the way to the garage. The policeman told us where they were taking it and that he had called the Forest Ranger at Huntington Lake to try to reach our relatives who were waiting for us there. The Ranger started asking all the campers and finally found the right ones. He told them we had an accident and were in the Los Banos Hospital. They didn't know how bad we were hurt so Atah and Uncle Hye left immediately. It was a long trip and was already after midnight so they knew it would be at least the next morning before they could find us.

After we ate our Taquitos we returned to the motel and daddy told us he thought the best thing we could do would be to go to bed and have a good night's sleep and decide in the morning what to do so after having another Family Prayer we all turned in for the night but nobody slept very well.

Morning came very early and so we were up and dressed and started to look for the garage where they had taken our car. We were lucky and found it right away and to our surprise there waiting for us was Atah and Uncle Hye. We threw our arms around them and mother started to cry and couldn't stop. Daddy was talking with the garage man and they told us to get in touch with our insurance people right away but it was Saturday and we were told we would have to go back to San Francisco to see anyone. Uncle Hye and Atah said, "Let us take the three girls and if they can fix the boat trailer so we can pull it, we'll take the boat and go back up to the Lake and you go and take care of everything." This made the girls very happy and daddy talked with the garage men and they fixed the bent fenders and tied the camper so it would stay on the truck. We couldn't use the passenger side of the car because it was caved in. We agreed this was best so the girls headed for Huntington Lake and daddy and mother got in the wrecked truck and drove back about 200 miles to San Francisco.

The insurance man sent daddy straight to the junk yard where they pulled the camper off the truck and we returned to our home in San Jose in the wrecked truck to decide what we would do. Daddy did not want to ruin our two week vacation so he went out into the garage and gathered all the big canvas tarps he could find and got all of our old camping equipment and mother got pots and pans and clothes and towels and things we would need and we parked the wrecked truck in the garage and got into our station wagon and once again headed for the Huntington Lake.

It was late when we arrived but everyone helped daddy and he made a big tent out of the tarps and we made beds on the floor and set up our camp. The next day they turned the boat upside down and patched the hole that the accident had caused and when it was dry they put it in the lake and we all went boat riding. THE NEXT TWO WEEKS WERE WONDERFUL!!! WE WILL NEVER FORGET THEM!!!

WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER FOR PROTECTING US DURING OUR ACCIDENT AND WE ALWAYS REMEMBER TO HAVE "FAMILY PRAYER" BEFORE WE LEAVE FOR A TRIP OR VACATION.

Note: A few weeks after our return, Grandpa Pete was called to serve as Bishop of the San Jose Fourth Ward)