

## My Birth Family and River Trips

*By Chris Hirschhorn*

The time frame I write about is when Sunday was considered a day of rest and all shops, theaters and restaurants were closed. Not even a hamburger place was open. On our hikes, we knew to pack sandwiches because there was not a place to stop for food. We had to bring beverage too.

My dad was a walker, so on Sundays we hiked. "We" were: dad, my two brothers, and me. We left our baby sisters at home with mother. Daddy would pack sandwiches and beverage and we'd hike from our two-story brick home in the Bronx, on the east side of the Harlem River usually to New Jersey.

First we hiked up Undercliff Avenue and then over the 176th Street Bridge which ran over the Harlem River that flowed between the Bronx and Manhattan. Then, we hiked over the Henry Hudson River Bridge that connected Manhattan with New Jersey.

In New Jersey, Daddy would point the way to a rocky path that led down, down, down to the west shore of the Hudson River. We'd hike a while by the river, find nice rocks to sit on and devour our luncheon. Next, we'd hike north, past docked boats, then take the 207th Street ferry boat across the Hudson River to the Bronx and walk up the streets to Undercliff Avenue and home.

Years later, I discovered that a friend of mine at the Women Engineers Club actually lived in one of these houseboats. Her name was Elsie Eaves, a woman engineer, from Colorado. Elsie was the first woman admitted to the Colorado School of Mines. Her father made her reject the scholarship. So, my friend Elsie left Colorado for New York, lived in a houseboat on the Harlem River and became a woman engineer in her own right.

My brothers and I looked forward to our trips with our dad who was an attorney and was always busy with clients. We were happy that he saved time to be with us.