

Alta Scogland
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The house north of our 745 Steele family home was the Manse for the Presbyterian Church at 8th and Sherman, Denver.

That Church is now shuttered, torn down for a parking lot, years ago.

The minister and family, neighbor, friend. We occasionally met parishioners.

One became an extension of our family. Baby sat our children during the day. She was Alta Skogland, widow, lived in an 834 Sherman St, apartment, across from that Church.

When the Church was shuttered and our neighbor moved away, Alta remained a family companion. She was maybe 30 years our Senior, the age to our older relatives, always a smile, gentle stories of her youth related to our children, who might tire of our narratives.

When Alta became eligible and applied for Denver Senior housing, she was admitted to Walsh Manor, a high rise building on W. Mosier Place, near the Denver Motor Vehicle Offices on W. Mississippi. Her unit, in one of the higher floors, commanded a fine view of southwest Denver.

We stayed in touch. Alta, our constant guest all Feast days of the year; Barbara and the children visiting Alter occasionally at her pleasant, neat home. There Barbara brought treats; Alta furnished lunch.

Alta was short, thin, spry, agile, wore glasses, had decent hearing. She joined in every conversation involving family and friend. We observed Alta had limited contacts in Denver; her only daughter living in the min-west, seldom was here. Our family, friends made at Walsh Manor, became her contacts. Recent circumstances had narrowed her world.

It was unexpected when authorities at Walsh Manor called to tell us Alta had fallen, broken some bones, had been taken to an East Denver Craig Hospital for recovery, attention. Seems she had climbed onto her bed to adjust a window curtain, misjudged a distance, fell.

We visited her more often now. This was not far from our home.

Alta reveled in the Attendant attention given her recovery. Form that staff it was always “Alta, be careful, don’t do that, we’ll do it for you. You’ve got to get well.”

Then came the day for discharge.

Alta was capable of caring for herself at Walsh Manor and when admitted to Craig. The attendants misread their duty, did everything for her. Alta was bluntly told she was judged incapable of living alone, would not be readmitted to Walsh Manor. Not kin, we were not contacted in their decision.

We learn of the change when Alta tells us she was in a southeast Denver Nursing Home.

This facility was well managed, reasonable clean. However the average patient deserved to be there, completely unable to care for themselves.

Still, differences to an extreme.

Our first entry to the building. one story with east and west wing, we are greeted with a constant cry from somewhere west, “Help, I’m being held prisoner”. Surprise, this cry is ignored by all. That took getting used to. When first we brought grandchildren, that cry sent them back to our auto, never again a visitor.

We see Alta there the two years before she died. She was never our Alta. She became mean, with everyone. never let it go, nor forgot or forgave a slight, real or imaginary.

Her life had become a hell. Alta made sure that she shared her misery with everyone at the Nursing Home.

