

Caught in a Sandstorm

By Liz Gibbons

“Hurry, we have to break camp!” my Father yelled to my brother and me as he and I were running back to our campsite. It was near evening, and we had just set up camp. There were four other families who were camping with us on the shore of Lake Michigan near Holland, Michigan, in the early 1940s, and we kids had been playing in the sand on the lake’s shore. This group of my parents’ friends called themselves The Camping Group, and I have many wonderful memories of spending long spring and summer holiday weekends camping together, usually in various Indiana State Parks.

This storm seemed to have come up suddenly with high winds and blowing sand. The Park Ranger came by and told everyone that they should move their cars away from the lake or by morning they would find that the sand had removed all the paint from their cars. The wind was howling, the sand was whirling with fury and my face felt the sting of the sand as I fought to keep my balance as I helped gather our belongings. I felt fearful as I viewed the angry sky and felt helpless to escape the wind’s wrath. My father hurriedly took down our tent and stowed it in the luggage carrier on top of our car and our cots and other camping equipment in the car’s trunk. It was a relief to get into the car and be protected from the sandstorm.

We drove into Holland where we found refuge in a tourist home. The next day the sky was clear and bright, and we set up camp again. In addition to some hiking among the dunes the whole group spent time exploring Holland with its quaint windmills, cobblestone sidewalks, and beautiful flowers. My father bought a pair of wooden shoes at the wooden shoe factory and occasionally wore them for years. A memorable vacation, and, thankfully, I have never again experienced the fury of a sandstorm.