

A Train Trip at Age Two

By Liz Gibbons

One of my earliest memories harks back to age two. We were traveling by train. The “we” included my mother, my younger brother and me. My mother carried my brother in a large bulky baby basket that had padding in the bottom for comfort. This was before the advent of baby strollers. A baby buggy, which was used in the 1930’s, was too big for train travel. My brother is twenty months younger than I. He had kept my parents awake many a night with colic, so we would not have been traveling until he was over that. So I assume he was a little older than six months, which would have put me approaching 2½ years. I cannot imagine how my mother managed to carry the basket, her purse, diaper bag, and keep me in tow. Our luggage was carried in the baggage car so she did not have to wrestle with that.

We sat in the first seats in the front of the coach. Sometime after we were underway the conductor brought a table that attached to the front wall of the coach. As I recall my Mother had a porter order a meal for her and me from the dining coach which was delivered to our seat. I am not aware how long our trip was as we traveled from Indiana to Huntington, West Virginia, where my grandparents lived. I assume we arrived after dark as I do not remember details of our arrival. I do remember my grandfather carrying the basket with my brother when he escorted us to board the train for the trip home.

I enjoyed that first train trip. I remember standing up in the seat to view the passing scenery and being frightened when a passing train whizzed by going in the opposite direction. I took many train trips after that but none sticks in my memory as strongly as that first trip.