

Tracy Jr.

After Sherlene and I settled in the apartment, I started to search for an obstetrician to deliver Jr. II. (We always called our unborn babies Jr. I, I, III, etc.) I found that there was a qualified obstetrician at the army base at Clearfield, Utah, approximately 20 miles from Ogden, and I also found that there was no charge for medical services for wives of service men or for the required stay at the army hospital when the baby was delivered. The only charge was for my meals while I was at the hospital. I made appointments to see a doctor for my checkups and the delivery. Since my mother did not drive, I assume it was probably my sister-in-law and long-time friend Joyce, who took me to Clearfield for these visits.

In October, Tracy wrote from Cambridge that his orders were to report to Hawaii, where he would be assigned to a ship. He would arrive in Ogden, early morning, on October 19, for a furlough. That meant that he would be home October 20, which was his birthday, and hopefully the baby would be born while he was here on leave and we could welcome our new baby into the world together.

On the day Tracy was scheduled to arrive home, I got up early and started to prepare for his arrival. I wanted everything clean and shipshape, and I wanted to prepare some of his favorite foods. I scrubbed, waxed, and polished. In the early evening I decided to make some banana and date-nut breads, two of his favorite desserts. I was in the middle of this activity when I had my first twinge of cramping—perhaps warning signs of the beginning of the arrival of our second child. I kept trying to tell myself that it was just my imagination—the pains would probably go away. The baby was not expected for five or six more days. I finished my date-nut bread and put it in the pan. Then I went in and took a bath. The pains persisted!

I called the authority—my mother—and asked her if there wasn't something I could do to stop these pains, just until Tracy got home, please? He was due early the next morning at 5:00 a.m. Mother just laughed and said to let her know how the pains proceeded. I decided I'd better get prepared to go to the hospital.

I called Joyce and told her that we had better leave for Clearfield. Then I called Tracy's mother and asked her if she would come and stay with Sherlene until Tracy came home and also finish baking my bread, which I had not yet put in the oven. This was at about 10:30 at night. Joyce came and took me and my mother out to the base hospital in Clearfield.

Our second child, Tracy Jr., was born at 4:13 a.m. the next morning, October 19, 1945. He weighed 6 lb., 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ ounces, and was 20" long. He did not need to be spanked! He came out crying and kicking, ready for the world! He didn't have much hair, and what he did have was blond and circled the back of his head like a little old man. Of course, *I* thought he was beautiful.

Mother and Joyce stayed with me until I was settled back in my room after the delivery. They would both need to go home and get some rest. When I asked Mother what she thought of her new grandson, she said, laughing, "Just so they don't say he looks like me!" He was one of the smallest of our babies, in both weight and length, but now (2001), he is the tallest of our seven children. (David, Jr. III, would say, "Just barely!")

When Tracy arrived home at 7 a.m. on the 19th, the apartment was empty. I suppose Sherlene had gone home with Tracy's mother, or my mother when she got back after Tracy Jr.'s delivery. At any rate, when Tracy arrived at the hospital, he found a new son and an

ether-y kiss awaiting him. Since the next day was his birthday, I thought that was a pretty good birthday present for him.

This hospitalization was entirely different than when I was in the hospital with Sherlene. The army doctor who had attended me had adopted the new theory that the sooner the new mother got on her feet after a delivery, the less chance there was of having complications.

On the second day I was allowed (required) to walk to the bathroom. That would have been all right, except the bathroom was at the end of a hall, and quite a distance from my room. I made it all right down the hall, but on the way back to my room that hall seemed a mile long, and I barely made it back to my bed without fainting. When I got to the bed I fell across it, dizzily. If the bed had been two feet farther, they would have had to pick me from the floor. My roommate said I was as white as a sheet. However, I found that my strength returned much faster with this new treatment. In fact, we talked the doctor into releasing me after the fifth day, providing I would take it easy at home. Tracy was our least expensive baby. The bill was \$25—for my food while I was in the hospital.

At the apartment, Tracy played nursemaid, housekeeper, and cook. I was having some trouble with stitches and was not much help the first few days, but soon became quite self-sufficient.

About the 1st of November, Tracy left to go to San Francisco, where he would pick up a ship to take him to Hawaii to get his final assignment. He arrived in 'Frisco on the third of November, and sailed aboard the *USS Saratoga* to Pearl Harbor (where the war had begun), arriving November 14. In one of his letters from Hawaii, he wrote, "I'll never complain again, Sweetheart. I don't see how you accomplish as much as you do!"

Tracy was in Hawaii from November 14 until December 14, 1945. He tried to pick up a suntan, but the sun would not cooperate. His letters were filled with the beauty of the island. In one letter he wrote of taking a guided tour with a busload of other officers, and when the bus came into sight of the magnificent Mormon Temple in Hawaii, its beauty amazed all the men. Most of them thought it was a plush hotel, until the bus driver announced that it was the LDS Temple. Tracy was able to attend LDS services on Sundays while he was in Hawaii.

On Dec. 13, 1945, Tracy received assignment to the *USS Teton*, AGC #14. The AGCs were command ships and were loaded to the gills, so to speak, with radar and communication equipment. The AGCs were supposed to be accompanied by destroyers. The job of the destroyers was to protect the AGCs because the AGCs did not have large enough guns to protect themselves. They had a few small guns, but the principal function of the AGC was communications.

Tracy was to pick up his ship, of all places, San Francisco, California! On Dec. 14, he left Pearl Harbor aboard the *USS Colorado* to go back to San Francisco. He had a month's vacation in Hawaii at the expense of the U.S. Navy! He reported for duty aboard the *USS Teton*, Pier 60, San Francisco, on Dec. 22, 1945. The ship was assigned to the Oakland Naval Base to undergo repairs in preparation for sea duty.

On Feb. 15, 1945, Tracy was detached from his ship by a kind commanding officer. The *USS Teton* was due to sail to the Orient, but his commanding officer knew Tracy had a wife and two children, and since Tracy was so close to being discharged from the service, the officer felt it best to give him shore duty until his discharge date. If Tracy had not been detached, his tour of duty would have lasted long past his discharge date.

He was reassigned to Oakland Naval Base, where he supervised the storage of electronic equipment. Tracy called me and asked me to bring the children and come down to San Francisco to join him. I countered that since he would be discharged in April, wouldn't it be better for me to stay put in Ogden until he came home? Sentimentality wins over practicality, however, and that, plus my father's stern advice that my place was with my husband, won out. I sub-let the apartment to our good friends Lane and June Compton, for a couple of months, and boarded the train for Alameda, California, where Sherlene, Tracy Jr., and I arrived on March 1, 1946.

Tracy had obtained quarters for us at the Woodstock Housing Project in Alameda, which housed service people only. One thing was certain: there would never be another transfer while he was in the navy. His next transfer would be "out of the service and home to Utah."

Even though California is relatively close to Utah, I had never been there in my life, so again, we had a new place to get used to, and new places to visit. Even though Alameda is in northern California, it was warmer in March than Utah was. The housing was completely furnished, and groceries and other necessities could be obtained at the naval commissary and at a nearby Safeway store.

We found that there was good public transportation, even though it was a little harder to use it with two children. We knew that Frank and Hattie Davis and their children lived quite close to the base, so we took the bus and went over to visit them. Frank had left the Bureau of Mines before Tracy had joined the navy in 1944. It was great to see them again. Frank and Hattie had a family of two or three cute little girls. Frank kindly showed us around the area, including the University of California campus in Berkeley. When Frank left the Bureau of Mines, he joined IteL-McCullough, a company that made large power tubes for radar.

One thing I didn't like about the housing at Alameda--the fleas! There were a lot of them around the housing project. I encountered them on the first night I spent there. I was fairly eaten up! Tracy, who slept in the same bed, wasn't touched. I accused him of having tougher skin. The same thing is true of mosquitoes. They will buzz Tracy, but I am the one they have for supper. It was our first encounter with fleas. At first I thought it was bedbugs that were causing our problem, so I called the housing exterminators. Whatever they did, it was effective, and fleas did not bother me again while we were there.

Tracy Jr. was about six months old at this time. He had grown into a fat, little roly-poly baby with a ready smile. He had a firm skin, broad shoulders and slim hips. He had short little legs, and when we held him in a standing position, his diapers practically touched the floor. He would go into spasms of ecstasy if I came within his hearing. Tracy said soon after we arrived in California, "How does it feel to have someone be so delighted when you come within hearing distance?"

He was a good baby, with a built-in alarm clock. My only objection was he had it set for too early an hour in the morning. Every morning about 4:30 he woke up and started demanding, vociferously, his bottle. The din would increase until he got what he wanted. His bald top filled in with quite a growth of blond, almost white, hair, which grew straight up, like pins in a pincushion. I thought he was going to have unmanageable hair like my Grandfather Chlarson, who kept his hair close-cropped all his life, or my brother Heber, who as a young child had hair that refused to lie down. My brother finally managed to control it.

This, however, did not turn out to be the case with Tracy Jr.—his hair is very thick and manageable, with no cowlicks at all. We usually kept it short in a crew cut when he was young, and there was one little round patch of hair that was darker than the rest. We always said we could identify him by that if anything happened to him.

Tracy was a more sensitive child than his sister, Sherlene. Loud noises never disturbed her, but when a door was suddenly closed or there was a sudden movement, Tracy would startle and wake up. When I turned him over to sleep on his stomach (which the child specialists tell the mothers not to do now) this reaction was eased somewhat, because he had the bottom sheet to grab onto with his fingers.

He was strong from the beginning and could raise his head from one position while on his stomach and turn his face over to the other side, almost from birth. By the time he was six months old, he could roll from stomach to back, and back again at will. At seven months he could move forward on the floor by pushing his knees under him and then diving forward onto his stomach. At eight and a half months he could pull himself up into a standing position to the rail on his playpen, where he would immediately scream for someone to let him down safely, whereupon he would repeat the process. After a week or two of this, I taught him to lower himself slowly, by sliding his hands down the playpen uprights until he could ease into a sitting position. He accomplished this learning in about a week.

At nine months he was weaned from the bottle and could say "da-da" and "ma-ma," and could crawl on all fours.

Tracy was an avid thumb sucker, and we tried to break him of this because Sherlene was still sucking the two middle fingers of her right hand. But she only did this at night when she was going to sleep. Tracy, however, sucked his thumb almost constantly. Because of the warnings of dentists that this would ruin the alignment of the jaw or cause the teeth to protrude, we decided to try to break him of the habit.

We finally succeeded by using "Thum," a fingernail polish type of solution that you painted on the thumb. It contained red hot pepper. We found that if we painted his thumb with this liquid while he was asleep it was more effective. He seemed to think it was his friend, his *thumb*, which was suddenly tasting so bad, not that it was something *on* his thumb that was doing the damage. Whatever—it worked, but we felt guilty as we watched him look longingly at that thumb, wondering why it was treating him like that.

His personality improved almost immediately. He became much more active physically, and developed a happy, sunny disposition. He was a very cute little boy. The outcome eased our guilty feelings about the method of obtaining the result.