

DETOURS BLURB

Detours, is the autobiography of Henry Southwick Maxfield 1923 - ? is a collection of true stories, told chronologically, written not only for my heirs but primarily as a personal discovery.

Engaging in the ongoing, intriguing question as to what extent genealogy, environment and experience have shaped me. It is a process of value to everyone to better understand not only me but those would be autobiographers. It continues to be an interesting process and I recommend it.

My self-imposed rules are *to tell the truth* based on vivid memories and *adjusting the narrations to the different ages i.e at the age of ten to remember as a ten year old, without reference to the known future. I have tried not to get ahead of myself – not easy to do.*

My chief assets are my almost total, detailed recall and as a writer and author of 7 published books, principally known as a storyteller and satirist.

Legacy of a Spy, A Dangerous Man, (filmed as The Double Man starring Yul Brynner) Another Spring, The Weltschmerz Plan, Justice Justice, by Henry S Maxfield (the proper way to identify it), The Morland Syndrome, To The Survivors and Detours Book I

Born in 1923 I have witnessed the Stock Market Crash, Depression, Prohibition, the Gatsby years, the Bombing of Germany as a Navigator, shot down by flak over the Ruhr, one of 4 survivors in a crew of ten, POW in Germany WW II, CIA (Korean Conflict), Business (Maxfield Real Estate - my own), 89 years old as of June 4 2012 and a continuing happy marriage of 68 years, two children, four grandchildren, two great grandchildren. I love them all. Bowdoin Class '45 University Of Zurich Comp Lit German.

Laughter is good. Laughing at yourself is even better.

I continue to have a lust for life. I almost always did everything the hard way. My course has never been easy or smooth. It seems inevitable for Henry Southwick Maxfield.

Detours Book 1 are the formative years, essential to understand who you have become, for that is the person who faces his/her future *whatever* it may be: war, illness, accident, crisis, marriage.

Detours Book 2 begins with WW II and the rest of my life. I have begun, and there is much to tell, but starting at 89, its completion is unlikely. It's *those formative years* that are vital to everyone.

Detours – Book 1
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CHAPTER 1

I was conceived in Iqueque, Chile the result of a union, more hopeful than purposeful, certainly not mutually pleasurable, between a then probably sexually clumsy middle-class Englishman and a definitely sexually inexperienced American virgin who would rather have been a man.

My Mother fled to Boston because, she said, she did not want her son to become a Chileno.

Her pregnancy was miserable. She was very thin, but she lost weight. The delivery was long and painful. She was too small "down there". I was a "breech presentation". I "ripped her from stem to stern".

I was a mistake.

In 1926, at the age of 3, I vividly recall being requested by my Mother to recite, "Aristotle and his followers were known as the peripatetic philosophers".

I not only recited same, but I did so distinctly.

My command performances were usually in front of total strangers - sometimes even to her. I cannot remember how she introduced the subject of Aristotle during general conversation on the spur of the moment, as it were. I do know, from a snapshot, I had a blond haircut page boy style, and that I was wearing a 2-button Peter Pan collar, short sleeved shirt, short pants over long stockings and round fronted shoes with a cross strap.

My little recital inevitably produced rave reviews, and I have to admit I must have been pretty damn cute. I wasn't pudgy, but I wasn't rail thin either. My features were regular and my head well shaped. One could say, as quite a few did within my hearing, that I was going to be a very handsome young man who would break many a young ladies' heart. Even then the idea appealed to me although I hadn't the faintest idea what they were talking about.

I also remember, vividly, my Mother asking me in, front of total strangers, if I had moved my bowels that morning and if I had washed myself thoroughly - everywhere.

My Mother, who was never long on praise, did say of and to me that I never went through an awkward physical stage. She also said if she had met a man like me, her life would have been much different.

I don't recall anything else about the "threes". I know I lived in a house. I know it had two floors, my room was upstairs, and my door had a lock. I remember that because I was locked in there on more than one occasion - as punishment for some anti-social act. Later, when I asked my Mother about it, she said I would throw tantrums, and that seemed the best way to cure me - just lock me in there and let me scream my little head off.

I remember breakfasts, when my Father, for what then seemed a special treat, would expertly tap and remove the top of his soft boiled egg and put the tiny tidbit on my plate. I don't recall whether I had a whole egg of my own. I still like soft boiled eggs and I eat them English style, but rarely bother eating the contents in the severed tops.

My Dad was from Lancashire, England. He had a fine tenor voice and knew many of the county and music hall songs some of which he sang to me such as **Glorious Devon** and We'm Coom Oop from Somerset. He could recite **Albert and the Lion** better than the professionals. One of the songs I remember best was a little gem.

Daddy wouldn't but buy me a bow wow.

Daddy wouldn't buy me a bow wow
I have a pussy cat and I'm very fond of
that but I'd rather have a bow wow wow.

My Dad was 6 feet, a good looking man, with a particularly good sense of humor. He seemed to be without personal conceit, I never heard him brag about anything. I found out he was an excellent horseman. He never even told me he could ride. He also told me how badly he had been beaten in his last boxing match.

He signed his name as W Reginald Maxfield and everyone called him Reg or Reggie until he became an American citizen, at which time he insisted everyone at his office call him Bill, but everyone still called him Reg.

My Father was shipped to France the day hostilities began in World War 1. He was a private in the Territorial's. He was in the trenches when his acceptance for Officers Training came through, and he was returned to England.

Just after he was commissioned, he and two newly commissioned officers were thrown from horses that bolted while pulling a gun carriage. One man was killed outright. My Father had one arch broken and was sent to the hospital. The third man, who suffered a broken collar bone, was sent with their regiment to France.

The entire regiment was wiped out.

Neither my Mother nor my Father ever told me that. I did not know that until my stepmother, Leona Harbach told me. My Mother did tell me about the wartime accident. She said it had caused him to have flat feet, that for years he had to wear special arch supports, but either barefoot or with shoes on he had no limp, and presumably that was why he was sent 2 white feathers - anonymously. He was branded a coward by some self-righteous soul who couldn't stand the sight of such an apparently healthy young man walking around in civilian clothes in wartime. My Father never told me who had sent him the feathers. I have always thought it was a woman.

Shortly thereafter, probably on the advice of his older brother Tom, my Father left England to take a job as a management trainee with a British bank in Chile. He was 24.

It was my Father's lack of any apparent personal conceit I have found most puzzling and occasionally annoying. Possibly it was his middle class English upbringing. One's performance should speak for itself. It is unseemly to put oneself forward. Praise and promotions must be earned. As far as I know, my Father lived that way. Possibly, had he been able to remain with that English bank, he would have climbed, in an orderly fashion, to a position of authority, but the Anglo South American Trust Company invested heavily in natural nitrate. The Germans invented synthetic nitrate and the bank went under, and that was in the beginning of a world depression. He had already transferred to their New York Office and had been a resident in the US for several years, but he wasn't an American citizen; so there he was, a foreigner, with neither a college degree nor any real business experience, and without any capital.

My Mother got a job teaching dramatics at the Lawrence School, a private day school on Long Island. Two of her students were Roosevelts. My Grandfather Henry Lawrence Southwick, for whom I was named, had registered me at birth at Groton. There were Roosevelts there too.

We lived in a boarding house, next door to a police station. It had been a rather large home, but its conversion did little for the neighborhood. Though I was only six, I can still remember vividly certain things which were neither typical nor consistent with my school life or the lives of my school mates.

We had two rooms, that is to say, my Mother had a large living-bedroom, and my Father and I shared a smaller twin bedroom. We shared the living room with Mrs. Schram, the owner of the house, and her sister, Mrs. Bickelhaupt and Mr. Bickelhaupt, and 3 smelly, shrill, snappish Pekingese dogs. Mrs. Schram was not married. She was either widowed or divorced. The only creatures she seemed to love were those smelly little dogs. Mrs. Bickelhaupt was attractive. I liked her and I remember being told that my Father proposed to her in front of the police station on New Year's Eve, and that he was on his knees at the time.

Mr. Bickelhaupt was short and husky and coughed constantly. He also smoked constantly. His fingers were almost as yellow as the cigarette package - Old Golds. I remember their slogan: "Not a cough in a carload".

Mr. Bickelhaupt was out of a job. I had heard he had fallen off a roof while shingling, and therefore couldn't continue in that profession. What he did do was raise a garden. I can still remember the taste of his radishes and scallions.

Mrs. Schram did the cooking. She burned things a lot, but I don't recall that anybody said much about it to her. I know I didn't. She fell down the cellar stairs and broke her hip and that did not improve her disposition. I was told she drank a good deal, though I never saw her drink anything except something she referred to as tonic.

I remember the evenings we spent in the living room. There was a big 'Atwater Kent radio and we listened to Lowell Thomas and Amos n' Andy. It was a ritual. I don't remember that my Mother participated. She had her own table model, curved top Philco radio in her room.

Although only two miles away, my school and the neighborhood around it were a different world. The roads were graveled and tree lined. The houses were spacious, set well back behind sweeping lawns and wide shrub and flower-bordered driveways. The school building was long with a tiled roof. Its walls were brick and covered with ivy. The grounds were spacious and there were several playing fields including one for polo. We used to run for miles in a game called hare and hounds through wooded headlands that jutted out into the Atlantic Ocean.

I remember my first day there. It was my first day at school.

I fell in love with a pudgy blond beauty named Suzanne Whidden. I know I loved her because I wanted to tease and touch her and I couldn't stop looking at her. I also remember her brother who was bigger and one year older who cried on what turned out to be his first day of school.

I did have my troubles. I talked too much, especially when the teacher was talking. I remember my Mother was on her side. My Mother was particularly pleased when I was assigned to Mrs. Bodman in the third grade. At last, my Mother informed me, I would have met my match. Mrs. Bodman would have me well in hand immediately.

The Bodman Solution, which she applied halfway through our first class, was to put adhesive tape over my mouth, making certain it was closed tightly first. It was rather effective as she did have the element of surprise, until I discovered the comic possibilities - a few antic grimaces, some eye rolling, and a repetitive demonstration of the effects of sticky lips once the tape had been removed - it didn't take much to produce hysterics in 6 year olds. Mrs. Bodman changed her tactics almost immediately. She never acknowledged defeat. I really became quite fond of her and I like to think she remembered me too.

I began to be known as a performer. Possibly it was because my Mother was the dramatics teacher, and I was cast in all of the plays, and after the first one, I usually had one of the leads. The one I remember best is the one in which I played a king who wore his crown backward.

I loved that school, and I made some good friends. Though I have seen only one of them since, I still remember their names and something about each of them.

Trumball Cooper, he was also known as Buzzy, was tall and thin. His Father had his own plane, an auto-gyro, a plane with a wing that turned up at the ends and had an overhead propeller. It was the forerunner of the helicopter. I never got to go up, but I was given a Lindy hat complete with goggles. Lindbergh was every young boy's idol. I also had an Indian and a cowboy suits.

I liked John Finley because I could make him laugh, especially in the classroom. It got so all I had to do was look at him and he would be helpless. He was a special pal.

I liked Donald Bankhart. I remember one time when we were trying to see how close we could come to each other while riding our bicycles at full speed, that we both waited too long and we met, not quite head on, and we were both knocked to the ground. He was a great pal.

I also liked Peter Schultz. He was a quiet boy whom everybody considered unusually bright. He was studious. I can still see him. He had black, very curly hair, and very white skin and long eyelashes. I would visit him frequently and we would play in his room. I had discovered books, and we used to read a lot. I had been given Robin Hood and The Three Musketeers, the illustrated Pyle editions, and I read them more than once. When my Father left my Mother, and she had agreed to take a college teaching job in Maryland, the Schultzes agreed to take me for the school year. I'm sure they offered to do so for nothing. They had a lovely home near the school.

The Headmaster's son, Happy Johnson, was also a friend, and his parents offered to take me. I am sure those four years were the happiest part of my childhood. I had no idea I didn't really belong to that truly elegant, affluent, gracious, beautiful society; even though a sharp contrast was right across the street from our boarding house.