

for several weeks. I didn't know what they could do for him at Pineland.

"It was a case of raising a hot house flower in one place - you have to have sturdier roots to survive in the other."

They taught him ballroom dancing. They taught him how to use his kitchen utensils-how to eat.

"The reason Pineland was considered was that Dr. Kagan had the three of us as patients, Suss, Pat and I. Of the three he always said his concern was for me. Suss and I never flew together, we never went on any long trips together. There was always that thought, 'Who will take care of Sidney John if we pass on?'and it got to the point where you had sleepless nights over it as every day passed and Dr. Kagan recognized that. Suss was adamant about making the change. He could

not see it. Dr. Kagan would speak of it. Suss would say, 'Don't bother me Doctor, I'm busy now.' We had been to Pineland a number of times and spoken to Dr. Hupalian who was in charge at that time. We had gone through the dormitories. One reason we knew about Pineland - we had a girl in the office who had a youngster down there - 'You come with me and see for yourself and you can make up your mind that way.' I went with her. At that time they had 1800 patients and we took Sidney John down. Well, there were many heartaches upon leaving him."

We brought him home for a week or two after he was entitled to a vacation. Then I told him we're going back to Pineland. He wasn't too bad then, but on the way down, he was sitting there in the car, and he was kind of pouting a little bit and then burst out, "I

don't want to go back to that Goddamn place!" The first time this hot house flower ever used language like that!

He was 22-23 years old; mentally he was about eight years old. He was about my wife's size (less than 5 feet tall) about 4'10" or 4'11".

When he exploded with that, I just burst out laughing. A moment later he was laughing too.

"The very next year came the World's Fair. Suss and I flew together for the first time. I can't explain the comfort it was to relax in that plane and Suss looked at me and said, 'Happy?' I just couldn't answer - I just held his hand. I was speechless. It was a load off his mind. In the event something happened Sidney John had some place."

He'd be taken care of for life.

"Whether we left them anything-whether we paid or didn't pay - he was at least taken care of. The released spring was something I shall never forget. It banished my sleepless nights and this was what Dr. Kagan recognized."

He remained there until he was 42. In the 20 years he was there we visited him on an average every week. If he were able we'd take him out for dinner or a boat ride. We went somewhere every time.

Rabbi Berend was the Chaplain for the Jewish kids. There were seven - eight - it varied from time to time.

"They were less than one percent of the 1800. There weren't even 18."

They weren't all Downs Syndrome.

Sidney John had two or three heart attacks when he was down there. I saw him two

he'd stay there. When he got to the low tone - he'd stay there. He could manipulate on those four tones - he did pretty well.

No rock - he had a record player - he played only the classics. Operas most of the time - particularly violin pieces - Daddy was a violin player. His daddy was a clown too but he didn't want to be a clown. He saw his daddy as a clown a couple of times, but he didn't want any part of it. On the way back we talked about stopping for ice cream. We always bought a gallon of ice cream for his own group at school, cookies and candy, bubble gum and pop corn. Whatever he wanted he had. I never stinted him on anything.

Then I said, "Ora's birthday is Thursday. (This was Monday.) Are we going to get a card?"

days before he died. Ora, that I taught to drive 30 years ago, who married for the first time at 68 years of age, and used to live in this apartment, drove my car. After my heart attacks I cut down on my driving. She drove us to Massachusetts for that matter. She went to Poughkeepsie with us one year and drove that time. She went down with me two days before he died. Sidney John said he was going to marry Ora - he loved Ora - she played games with him - she was quite a lady - we don't see her much now. She's married and living her own life. That week was her birthday. We picked up Sidney John at the school and went to eat at our favorite restaurant - Cole's Farms in Gray. He put a good meal into him that day. He wasn't very active that day. He was singing - but he couldn't sing anyway - he could sing four tones - when he got to the top

he'd stay there. When he got to the low tone - he'd stay there. He could manipulate on those four tones - he did pretty well.

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"Of course we're going to get a card," he said. I drove down to the card shop and invited him to pick out a card. "You go today Daddy," he really wasn't feeling well because that was something he'd have loved to do himself. He signed it and gave it back to Ora with a gift we had for her too.

He was singing on the way back to school but not with his usual enthusiasm. Ora said she didn't know how he climbed those stairs back to his building, but he did.

He had a little trouble with his legs. He had been in the hospital. Sometimes people pushed him over. He wasn't too much of a fighter. He loved people and the attendants all loved him. He was the best loved youngster down there.

"That particular day, I couldn't go with him - I was sick here at home. He spoke



to me on the phone. 'I hope you feel better Mummy. I missed you today.' They came home and that was the story."

On Wednesday afternoon, I had a call, "I hate to tell you but Sidney John passed away today." He had his lunch with his group and went to his bed rest, his usual custom, and he didn't awake.

It's a wonderful way to go. Pineland created a corner of the cemetery as a Jewish portion. Sidney John is buried there.

"These people were wonderful to us. Dr. Scarlata and his secretary, Mrs. Blachely, and the Mexican doctor and the Chinese doctor, no matter what he had. We kept in touch with them for any little ailment that might appear. That particular summer we couldn't understand what was happening to him. They explained it as best they could, but they didn't know

themselves. They didn't recognize it. He was a brave little soul. If he didn't feel well he wouldn't have supper - he'd go right to bed to rest. First of all he was the most popular guy there because they'd have a party the minute he came back. That's why he had all those friends too. One girl wanted bubble gum and the other one wanted something else. One was his particular favorite - he took good care of her. There was one Jewish girl he was fond of. He was good to everybody. Even though he had a canteen card (for which we paid monthly) he could draw on it weekly, in addition to what we brought. He would buy Marcia (a patient) an ice cream cone too.

"The same thing happened at Bancroft too. When we first went down there we were so full of hope and more courageous. We would take some companion, a boy or girl with him.

We did the same thing at Pineland when we started. It got to the point where I couldn't take it anymore. One was all I could take and that was my own. It was a selfish way I couldn't extend myself and I didn't like myself any better for it, truthfully. The minute we got back, everyone would crowd around the car."

Everyone would look for handouts.

Really we did all we could for all those kids.



Sidney John Sussman at age 5.

## The Second Heart Attack

In the meantime Lil had all kinds of sicknesses. I was supposed to have three years off. I had two and one-half years. Lil was working with three or four girls in the business. One of my friends came there one day and couldn't believe the mess in the office. I used to carry everything in my head. Lil was working every hour in the world. One year when we were both working, we figured out we were working for five cents an hour, for 90 hours a week before I was taken sick. After that she was running the whole show.

Lil took over forever.

"I was supposed to take over for three years, but I didn't know it at the time. I thought the heart attack would last six weeks and that he would come home, but he didn't,

so that summer was a hard summer. I had two minor accidents in my hurry to visit Suss at Togus. I would back into a car and tell them I'd be back and take care of the charges later. I was in a hurry to get there before the visiting hours were over."

After I returned from the hospital in September, I would do my work at home. When I was able I'd make up the Sunday board for all the newspapers; make up the magazine orders for the dealers.

"That was done by hand, you didn't have any calculators, or computers - not even an adding machine at home."

I could add those columns faster than the kids could make out the bills. Many a night I worked through so that Lil could have the distribution sheet when she went down in the morning at seven o'clock.