

CHAPTER TWO
I FEEL LIKE A TURTLE

Now what were they going to do? My father always had plans. He thought, "Well, my wife knows how to make wine and California is supposed to be a wonderful place to make wine, they're making very good wine there, so we'll go to California, we'll buy some land and we'll start a winery, a vineyard." That's what they were going to do. But there was no railroad from Vancouver down to California in those days. In order to go to California from Vancouver, you had to go to Union Station in St. Paul, Minnesota and then switch trains, because that was how the railroad had been laid. We're talking about 1909, or '10, something like that, maybe as late as 1911, because Ralph was born in 1908 and the first Sammy was born in 1911, but Jim was not born, Jim was born in 1913.

They arrived in St. Paul. My father, you know, he was top man. He left my mother and the three children in the station to go for a walk, to see what's going on in this town.

Union Station in St. Paul is right on the Mississippi River. Right outside is the Robert Street Bridge, crossing the river. My father decided to walk across. On the other side of the road he saw a knife grinder. My father decided this man looked Italian, so he crossed over to speak to him in Italian. He was right, he was Italian. That was Mr. Widi. All my life, I knew Mr. Widi. He was a compadre because he became the godparent to Jim, who was the next child born, and he was a very good friend. They moved into a home not very far from the house that my parents lived in and their son and the one daughter who is still living are still friends.

He said to my father, "Well, where's your family?"