



Delhi Pony Club, in front of Humayun's Tomb. Stephanie, Buttercup, Mouse and Firefly, with Alan, Marian, Sarah (me) and Juli aboard, and mom, Betty holding (1965).

My first memory of horseback riding was terrifying. My dad was in the diplomatic service, and my mom, a lifelong horse lover, wanted to make sure that all of us grew up riding horses, even if we lived in cities all over the world. When I was 8, and living in Moscow, mom took me to the Hippodrome (indoor ring) to have a small sit on one of the most quiet, reliable horses in the stables. She was talking, and adjusting, and not really paying attention to the reins, which she was supposed to hold onto, just in case. I kept trying to get her attention, but she was very busy. Suddenly the very enormous horse jumped forward and I screamed. He probably only moved a foot, but I was distraught, and refused to get on another horse for a couple of years.

We moved on to New Delhi, India, and my mom and sisters started riding at the Delhi Pony Club. I watched for a while, and finally got the courage to ride a small pony, Stephanie. She is the one on the far left in the photo, with my brother aboard. We rode in a dirt ring a short walk through a grove of trees and bushes from the Pony Club stables, a shed row of about 15 stalls. In that time, each pony had a sayees, a young Indian man who took total care of the pony, from feeding, brushing, and tacking up, to running along side the pony when we were learning to ride. I felt safe with Stephanie, and her sayees, but soon got bored with behaving all of the time. I kept thinking of Firefly, the pony on the far right. Take a look and see the mischief in his eye. I finally decided it was time to try Firefly. I climbed on, and Firefly took off bucking down toward the trees. The sayees was left far behind. I landed with a thump, and jumped up, hopping mad. That tiny pony was not going to get me. The sayees ran after Firefly and brought him back. Up again, and once more on my bum. Next I got a crop, and tried again. For a good week I climbed up on that pony countless times. Each and every time that Firefly bucked me off. After much experimenting, and advice, I figured out how to dig my heels down, and pull hard on one side to get his head up. I was so proud of that first time and Firefly actually smiled at me. That lesson has stayed with me all my life. The fear I had was totally washed away by the fight to see who was more stubborn Firefly or me. I am still more stubborn!