

Life Story of Kathrine Ladine Cole

I was born in the small town of Owaneco, Illinois on July 15, 1904. Owaneco is located on the map 12 miles southeast of Taylorville, or 32 miles southeast of Springfield (the state capitol) on the B&O Railroad. I have a brother who had become 5 years of age on June 24th. We were the only children of John (Benton) and Emma (Alice) Cole. My brother was named James Hollis, the James for my father's brother whom we called Uncle Jim. He grew up called "Hollis". I was named Katie Ladine, for Uncle Jim's daughter Katie, but where my mother got "Ladine" I was never able to find out. In later years my cousin, as a teenager changed her name to "Kathrine" and I did the same. After she was grown she was known as "Kate". (Kate's spelling of her name on her tombstone today is "Kathryn". Editor. 1994)

My mother was a small woman, not 5 feet tall, and weighed 90 pounds; wore a size 2 1/2 size shoe, when she married. She had been dropped when a baby, by an older sister, and whether that affected her growth I do not know. She had coal black hair, long but very straight, which she always wore in a flat bun on the top of her head. Her eyes were blue, deep and dark. My brother inherited her coloring. I get my light complexion from our father. His hair was almost a sandy blonde. He was quite tall, over 6 feet, and slightly bald.

Mama's parents came from Ireland, crossed the Atlantic in a sail boat, ^{took} ~~took~~ them 30 days. They came up the St. Lawrence River, in 1812, and went ashore somewhere near Niagara Falls. They later migrated to Noble County, Ohio where they homesteaded 60 acres. Later several families moved to the central part of Illinois. They found a place they liked---open prairie, good soil, and settled within a radius of several miles. Since they had come from Ohio they called their settlement "Buckeye Prairie". My grandfather was one of the founders of Buckeye Church, by which name it is known to this day.

Mama came from one of those families, her father was Samuel Large. There were 13 children, but from two separate mothers, and not all of them lived to maturity. I think all the children were born in Ohio, but I never heard her say how old she was when they moved to Illinois. She used to speak often of the hills near the Ohio River. Maybe it wasn't all true but she used to tell how they planted their corn with a shotgun, and how the apples used to roll down hill and onto the back porch! And the chickens grew up with one leg longer than the other from walking on the side of the hill!

She had four sisters, all older than she. Jennie (Bonnell) who was Lois' mother, Ellen (Denton) whom I don't know too much about, Ann Eliza (McAfee) whom we called Aunt Annie was married to Rob McAfee Dan they in later years celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary, and Susan (Megaw) who was Claudine's grandmother. They had an older brother, George, who was in the Civil War. Mama was next to the youngest, a brother, Sherman, was the baby. And since the older girls helped with the housework her job (in the family) was to tend the baby. She always said she "raised Sherman". He had died before my time but left two children who live in Taylorville. Gilbert who own the Ford garage there and Ara who was married to a Dr. Herdman, but who now is a widow. They were both childless. Sherman's widow, my Aunt Maggie then married a Mr. Eaton who owned (or managed) the only Bank in Owaneco. They had two sons; Lealdis (who was my

age) and Stewart who was younger. After Mr. Eaton died she moved to Decatur. I don't know where the boys are now.

Mama's family clung together, and visited each other often. Mama was a great church worker and a devout Christian. She taught Sunday School class all of her life. No matter where we lived we went to church. She was brought up that way and never strayed. When I became a member of her family she was superintendent of the Primary department, and I have heard her say many times that I "went to Sunday School as soon as I could sit on a chair." She was a well educated woman also, and had attended Milliken University (in Decatur) long enough to teach school. She taught a couple of terms (or more) in Kansas. I don't know where or why, but she could tell us about sand storms, tumblin' tumbleweeds, buffaloes and Kansas jack rabbits! She knew music also, both piano and voice. She loved to read and instilled that love in us. She used to say "books are like friends". She would talk of Europe, Asia, Africa, South America until you thought she had been there, when she had really never left her arm chair! How she would have loved television! Her greatest desire, which was never fulfilled, was to see an ocean.

Mama was a stickler for good English and was very emphatic that we use correct grammar at all times. She had taken elocution lessons at one time or another, and trained me to a certain extent. I was always able to recite at either church or school. It seemed to come easy for me. She loved poetry, used to love to recite it. Edgar A Guest was one of her favorites. She was somewhat of an artist also and did painting on cloth; such as hair ribbons, neckties, belts, and things of that nature. She was a whiz at decorating our Easter eggs! I never saw any pictures that she did, but we used to have an old wooden butter paddle with a picture she had put on it of a moon coming out from under a dark cloud and shining onto a sailboat below. I don't know what ever became of it.

She could do all kinds of fancy needlework; embroidery, beading, crochet, cut work, appliqué; but I never saw her knit. But I had many a crocheted mitten, cap and scarf. She was an excellent seamstress and made nearly all of our clothes, hers and mine. She even made hats and when I graduated from High School she made a beautiful picture hat of pink organdy to match my dress. She could make and line a coat till you couldn't tell it from a ready made. My pretty dresses were the envy of all the girls.

I remember a wedding we attended, along with all of the relatives, and I do mean all! I was about 5 or 6 years old I guess, and Mama sewed for weeks (it seemed) on her and my dresses. I don't recall what hers was like but I can see mine in my mind; it was pink lawn trimmed with yards and yards of white lace. The bride was her niece, Stella McAfee, and they lived at Rosemond which was about 5 or 6 miles from Owaneco. It was held in the evening and oh so many people were there. The bride's brother lived next door and all of the wedding gifts were displayed in his home. I can see in my mind the long table covered with silver pieces, glassware and china. Stella was a large woman and had beautiful dark hair piled high on her head. She had ordered her veil from Decatur but it didn't arrive until the next day! So you could hardly tell the bride as she mingled with her guests, only by her radiant smile and her beautiful hair!

My mother was an excellent cook, and she knew it, and loved to be praised for it. Nobody (so everyone said) could bake cakes like she could. And I remember, way back when we lived in Illinois, how on Saturdays sometimes she would bake "Boston Baked Beans" and what a heavenly aroma filled the kitchen! We could hardly wait for supper!

Then on top of the stove she steamed "Boston Brown Bread" in coffee cans. That was our Saturday night supper many a time. Why, you ask; I don't know. She wasn't from Boston!

Her mother, whose name was Maria, I barely remember. She passed away when I was about four years old. And her father died before I was born.

One of her sister, Aunt Sue Megaw, lived about 5 1/2 miles out in the country and Hollis and I used to spend our summer vacations there. He was old enough to help with the chores, and at that time of year there was hay to put in the barn and threshing to be done. But I guess I wasn't much help except for gathering eggs, running errands and helping in the house a little bit. Every Saturday morning my cousin Aleda and I had the job of scrubbing the front porch. It was a big one, ran along the side and front of the house. She was a year older than I and bossed the job. I got to carry the water! We girls had to go along the fences and hedge rows and search for guinea and turkey eggs. They never like to nest close to buildings. Sometimes we would find them a half mile or more from the house. We carried a long-handled spoon to scoop the eggs out of the nest, for if we touched it with our hands they would never come back to it. My cousin also raised a number of ducks, and we enjoyed them in the evening when they came into the yard to be fed, they made such an uproar! There was an attic in their house over the kitchen where we liked to play on rainy days. Aleda would sneak down the back stairs to get cookies, and we would have a tea party with our dolls. Her older sister Bertha and her family still live on that farm, but they have remodeled the house until it doesn't seem the same. The hedgerows are gone, replaced by modern fences. My uncle used to raise sheep, but now they raise hogs instead.

My father owned an interest in a tile and brick yard and when they "burned" the tile he wouldn't trust it to anyone else, but would stay at the yard for several days and nights, or as long as it required. It had to be watched very closely, to be kept at an even temperature, and the fire extinguished when it reached a certain degree. Then the door was opened and the kiln and its contents were allowed to cool, which took a day or more. This "burning" eventually led to his death when I was 13 years old. For during this "burning" operation he breathed in smoke, tiny particles of steel, bits of cinder, etc, which caused his illness to be diagnosed as "tuberculosis of the stomach and bowels". He was in poor health for a couple of years, and was confined to his bed from August until he passed away on January 12, 1918 and was buried in the Hicksville cemetery (Forest Home Cem.) Incidentally Mama was later buried beside him. His brother (whom we called Uncle Jim worked for a real estate company which was selling farms in Ohio, so he and Mama decided to buy one. We moved in March 1913. But I have never been able to console myself to the fact that if they knew (or even vaguely suspected) that Papa wouldn't live too many more years, why they didn't locate somewhere in Illinois instead of moving so far away from all of their people.

Papa's home had been north of us, toward Decatur; Mama used to say Monticello but the name of the little town was Bement. I don't know if it is still on the map or not. Some of our relatives might still be living there. He had, to my knowledge, two brothers; Uncle Jim who had moved to Ohio and Uncle Ben who lived on a farm somewhere near Decatur. Uncle Ben's family seldom came to see us, nor did we visit them that I remember, but I do have pictures of their children. He was married twice, and two daughters and a son were from the first marriage. I am not sure of their names but it seems like one of

the girls was named Mary, the other one Naomi, and when they grew up they became Nurses at Mayo Brothers Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. And there were three or four children by his second wife. But I never saw any of them that I can remember. It seems like a dream that Uncle Ben was a large fat man, so I must have seen him, but it is very vague. My father was a quiet man. I never heard him raise his voice to my mother or to us kids. I must have inherited that trait, for by nature I am a shy, quiet person.

I loved his father, my grandpa Cole who spent his time among the three sons families. Social Security was unheard of then. At any rate he would spend 3 or 4 months at a time with us, then would be gone for that long a time or longer. He couldn't do hard work on the farm, but was able to chop wood and carry it in, help with the chickens and do a little hoeing in the garden. He was a jolly person and so pleasant to have around. He loved hot biscuits, and Mama would say "Grandpa I need some biscuit wood"; off he would go and return with an armful, for the wood that would make a hot fire was always piled off to one side. She didn't disappoint him for she could make biscuits that would melt in your mouth!

I have often wondered why he never told us of his family that lived in Illinois; at least it never reached my ears. One time when I was 9 or 10 years old my grandfather, my father and I were sitting alone at a table. Grandpa looked across at Papa and said, "You don't remember your mother" and my Papa shook his head "no". Grandpa pointed to me and said there she is. So I guess I am a "chip off the old block". Mama told me one time that Papa was English; or to be specific, his ancestors came from Wales. Grandpa didn't read much as his eyes were failing. The big black headlines were about all he could master. In fact he had cataracts removed and I couldn't say whether from one or both eyes. He loved to discuss politics with Mama. One day I heard her say "Grandpa for years you were a staunch Democrat, now you are just as staunch a Republican. What made you change?" To which he replied, "Emma it's like this. When you're in bad company, and find it out, the best thing for you to do is to get out." Which I did.

He grew feeble in later years and his mind wandered. We were afraid to let him go for the long walks he loved at our house, so Aunt Clara and Uncle Jim took him into their home in Hicksville. He could still walk, around the block mostly, but if he should fall, or forget his way home, someone would help him as everybody knew him by sight. That was where he finally passed away and was sent to Illinois for burial. I think his first name was Samuel and the middle initial was E. I never heard anyone say what he did for a living in his younger days.

Our Uncle Jim and Aunt Clara lived on a farm not far from Hicksville, which was a few miles from where we lived. Then in later years they built a beautiful new home in town right across the street from the High School. She was an excellent cook, and told me once that she had baked a pie (of some kind) every morning since the day she married. She loved to entertain and was quite a "club woman". There was no love lost between her and Mama. They didn't disagree, they just didn't see "eye to eye". We children loved to go there and whenever we were in town on an errand or a shopping trip we always managed to find time to stop by their house and say "Hello". They had a cherry tree in their yard, the big black sweet ones, and Hollis used to always go in there to pick cherries on his birthday which is June 24th. I went there for lunch part of the time, the year I went to school in Hicksville.

They had two daughters, Katie and Mary, the latter one died in her teens so Katie was the only one I knew. She married a Hicksville man and they lived next door to her parents. Her married name was Ferris and they had two daughters also. I can only remember the oldest ones name; Clara Josephine, for both her grandmothers. They called her Josephine, but her name for herself was "Jo". They married and moved away and I lost track of them. Uncle Jim passed away a good many years ago, but Aunt Clara lived to a ripe old age, somewhere in her 80's (Ed. 94 yrs.) She fell on icy steps one time and broke her ankle so they didn't feel she was able to live alone any longer. So she spent her last years in a nursing home.

The house where I was born, in Owaneco, is a 2 story frame structure with an open porch across the front. It had the usual number of rooms downstairs, and Hollis and I each had a bedroom upstairs. Mama's bedroom was off the dining room and sometimes when I didn't feel well she would let me lie on her bed. Sometimes I "faked" it just to get some attention. I suppose she loved me, in her own way, but she never showed it. She adored little boys, my brother most of all, nothing was too good for him. Our yard was always filled with little boys while I usually had to go somewhere else to play. Or so it seemed to me!

Across the street from us lived a family named Large (but no relation) and they had two children. Aleda was my age and Kenneth was younger. Then down the street on the next block lived the Stilts family and their Pauline was my age also. Across the corner Hazel Jones lived with her mother and an older sister. So Aleda, Pauline, Hazel and I were playmates until we moved to Ohio when I was 8 years old. Behind our house there was a pasture, with some apple trees in it which sloped down to a small stream, and we used to gather on this nice grassy slope to play house. Kenneth was always the baby along with Pauline's little brother Sidney. We would beg goodies from my Mom and have picnics and tea parties. She would give us old curtains, and out of style clothing to "dress up" in. Those were the days!!

We had a cow and some chickens. I remember two big mulberry trees in the barnyard, and the chickens used to roost in their low branches. One tree had purple berries, the other had white one, and when the white ones fell they looked like "woolly worms" and we kids would pretend we were afraid of them, and scream, and run like crazy!!

I went to a party once, I suppose it was someone's birthday, when I was about 6 or 7 years old, and as I said before I am a shy person. There was a girl there who was just the opposite, and all the children clustered around her, having a good time. I suppose I was jealous of the attention she was getting. I don't know. Anyway we were all gathered around a small fish pond in the yard looking at the goldfish. I, very casually stepped behind her and gave her a push! She made quite a splash! The pond was shallow, and I knew there was no danger of her getting hurt. Fortunately I don't remember anything that followed such an outburst. I suppose I was punished, but that is one of the things I don't remember!!

Mama had the knack (or gift) of telling stories. On summer evenings children from neighboring homes would gather after supper on our front porch, the steps, even sit on the ground, while she took us to imaginary places with tales of adventure. We would sit spell-bound hanging onto every word. And while she talked she would shell peas, or string beans, sometimes we would help.

I recall one story we all loved and would always beg her to tell it again!! It was about a little boy and his sister who lived in town but spent their summer vacations with relatives who lived on a farm. She would vary it each time so as to make it more exciting ; sometimes it was long, sometimes short, but no matter how she told it we still would sit still as a mouse until the end. So she would tell of their escapades, of things this little boy and girl (of course she had names for them) found to do on the farm. But the story always ended the same way. One day the children were sent to try to find the nest of a hen which loved to hide her eggs. They looked high and low, (so the story went) under bushes, in fence rows, even climbed a small tree, but no where could they find her. So finally they were ready to give up, and walked into the barn, and there under a ladder which led up to the hay loft--the hen was on the nest! The children scared her, she scared them, and with a "kit-kit-kadakit" the hen ran (or flew)! Mama would throw her arms into the air, jump up, peas and beans would go everywhere, and we kids would just go wild! Then it was time for them to go home and we would go into the house. But the next evening they would all be back for more stories.

I always had pretty clothes to wear, all the toys any child needed, and oodles of dolls. My father was quite a handy man with tools and one winter he made a sled for me. I also had a child size wheelbarrow with removable side boards, both of which I prized highly.

My hair was in long golden curls, until I started to school, then it became thick braids. I guess I was well behaved, I can't remember of ever being punished except talked to. Brought up in a home like I had been you just sort of know what is expected of you, and you just don't ever think of being "bad" I remember one time when I tried it though! Mama and I had been Sunday dinner guests in at Aunt Clara's in Hicksville. This was after we moved to Ohio so I must have been about 9 or 10 years old. Another lady and her daughter (about my age) were also guests. So we girls spent the afternoon getting acquainted. She was sassy to her mother, a real brat, and I guess some of it rubbed off on me. Anyway after we got home Mama asked me to "go feed the chickens" which was my usual daily chore, but I guess I tho't I would try something so I said to her, "I don't want to and I don't have to." Well--I got a swift slap across the mouth and Mama said "don't you ever say that again"! Which I didn't.

When we moved to Ohio there were adjustments to make. Since we were to live on a farm instead of in town our style of living had to change. We had neighbors of course, but most of the houses were half a mile or so apart. We lived 2 miles from a small town called Mark Center, 5 miles east of Hicksville (a larger town) and 12 miles west of Defiance which was the county seat. We moved in March, 1913, when I was in the third grade of school. The rest of that year I stayed at home, but the next fall when school opened I went on into the fourth grade. That made some of our neighbors made for their children had been put back a grade when they moved. They tho't I should take the third grade over, but I got along fine. I had bad tonsils when I was growing up, and doctors didn't remove them like they do now. Mama used home remedies but every winter I would miss some days of school.

I'll never forget one time--I had missed a week or so during which time the rest of the class took their mid-year exams. I went back to school the last day (like a Friday) before the Christmas vacation. This was when I was in about the 6th. or 7th. grade. The

teacher said my grades were high enough that I wouldn't have to take the exams. Boy, was I shunned by the rest of the class! I never had to study hard, I could get it without. The only subject I ever did homework on was math--we called it arithmetic. I loved geography, was excellent in spelling (still am) and was good in English. History was hard, remembering dates anyway.

I was always able to memorize easily and as I grew older I was always in school plays. No, I was never the heroine, usually the cook or a maid. After we moved to Ohio Mama started me on piano lessons and I took them every summer until I was about 16 years of age. I took part in many a recital, played duets with Laura Stevenson often, and played sometimes for church and Sunday School. Mama played also and Hollis took coronet lessons, and since she and I both sang we spent many a happy evening around the piano at home. When I got into my teens I began to lead the singing for younger folks. I worked mostly in the Primary or in the Intermediate departments at church, and usually taught a class in Sunday School.

Mama taught me to cook and to sew. I started baking angel food cakes (that was her specialty) when I was 11 years old, and we didn't have cake mixes either. When Mama ironed it required a hot fire and of course that made the oven hot also, so it was my job to bake cookies. That way we didn't waste fuel! I made my first dress all by myself when I was 14. I learned to can fruits and vegetables, make pickles and preserves, and I helped in the garden to raise them. I was in 4-H too and one year I won an award for canning fruits. I also took Home Ec my last year in High School. I could do the demonstrations fine but hated the notebook work.

Hollis was a very smart boy. Mama said he never took a book home. When he was about 14 years old he won a contest as the best speller in the county and his prize was a beautiful dictionary. Mark Township High School was only a 3 year High School at that time; and he could have done 4 years work in 3 years time if the teachers would have had time to hear him recite. As it was he graduated with 14 1/2 credits when all he needed at that school was 12. That was in 1917 and he enrolled that September at Defiance College in the S.A.T.C. (Students Army Training Corps) similar to our O.C.S. of today. He had pneumonia when he was small and it left him with one weak lung. He was not able to do strenuous exercises, but they insisted he go out for football practice. A big husky guy tackled him across the left shoulder and bore him to the ground. That night he hemorrhaged and they sent for Mama. He was in the hospital from then on.

On November 11th., the day the Armistice was signed he was able to walk a few blocks to downtown, his first time out of the hospital. Naturally he was sent home with a medical discharge. He was so thin and pale. He was under a doctors care but got no better. Finally Dr. Hull advised that he go out west, maybe that climate would help him. So the following summer he went to Denver, Colorado. He got a job driving a laundry truck in order to be out of doors all he could. But it didn't seem to help him, the pictures he sent to us showed him to still be thin. He came home for a visit in 1922 expecting to spend a month with us. He stayed just one week, coughed day and nit. After several years in Denver the American Legion heard of him, started balls rolling and soon he was in an Army Base Hospital in Ft. Bayard, New Mexico. There he was put to bed and began a slow, but uphill climb. He was there 2 or 3 years I think and when they discharged him he went to Boulder, Colorado, to the University where he got his degree in electrical

engineering and mechanical drafting. Some time before that he had gone back to Ft. Bayard and married one of the nurses. After his graduation he went to work in Denver. Some years later he and his wife visited California on vacation. They fell in love with it and soon moved to San Francisco (Oakland). He went to work for the Standard Oil Co. and he was there until he retired. They had no children. They drove east and visited with us in 1929, in the summer time. That was the only time we ever saw his wife. (Mary lived from 1897-1981 and Hollis lived from 1899-1984).

After Hollis went out west Mama and I stayed on the farm alone. We had a cow, a horse and some chickens. She rented the fields out to neighbors on shares. We stayed there until I finished High School at Mark Center. I wanted to study to be a nurse but Mama wouldn't listen to it. I would have had to go to Ft. Wayne and that would have left her all alone. Probably she couldn't afford it but she never told me so. Anyway she sent me one more year to High School in Hicksville. That left her alone during the week but I came home on Friday evening and went back on Monday morning for awhile.

Later in the fall we moved off the farm so the renter could have the house for his family, and we moved to a place 6 miles north of Hicksville to a locality they called Milford Center. It wasn't a town, just a rural community where everybody knew everybody else. This meant making a whole new set of friends. We attended a country church while we lived there and there was quite a number of young people near my age. Some of them already knew from attending the same school. I sang in a girls quartet and helped out with other neighborhood activities.

During that winter my mother remarried, to a man from up near Toledo with whom she had been corresponding. She had been writing to him for months but never said one word of it to me. You see I was never at home when the mail came! But one day when I was cleaning I came across a stack of his letters under the mattress. I didn't say anything to her just suffered in silence. Several days later he (Sidney Smith) arrived and they were married. He was good to her I guess, in his way, but I never cared much for him. He cursed and swore a lot and I wasn't used to such talk. He had been a railroad man and had a rather rough life.

I never stayed at home much after that. Anyway the next summer we moved into a house that Mama owned in Hicksville. I got a job in a music store, also joined the Band. There were 22 of us, plus our leader O.V. Hart. We played occasional concerts and Fairs, and did some marching. The following summer we went on a 46 week tour of Fairs. We traveled by train, stayed in hotels and were in Illinois, Iowa, Tennessee, 2 places in Mississippi, 2 places in Alabama, and our last stop was in Savannah, Georgia. But after we came back home everyone seemed to lose interest and we just drifted apart. O.V. had another stroke and there was no more Harts Ohio Girl Band. Incidentally I played Tuba.

I stayed on in the music store that winter but in the spring Mama and Sidney moved out to the farm. I stayed with friends for awhile but it wasn't satisfactory so I went home about May. I was at home for awhile but in August I went to Toledo to work. I got a job, doing housework, through a niece of my stepfather who visited us occasionally. I had complete charge of a nice home (a doctors family) with two small children. I did all the cooking, cleaning, washing and ironing for \$8.00 a week, (later I got a raise), all the lady of the house did was order the groceries over the phone. They were nice to me and I stayed there 1 1/2 years. On my days off, when I went in to Toledo to shop, or to see a

show, I would catch a bus near where I worked, and it connected with the street car at the end of the line, which I would take to go on into town.

That was where I met John. He was one of the city bus drivers. The lady where I worked got pregnant again and it made her mad, so she became so cross I couldn't do anything to please her. So I quit and went home. John followed me and we were married on June 10, 1928. We stayed on the farm with Mama and Sidney until the threshing was done, then went back to Toledo to live and he went back OT driving a bus.

We were living near Maumee, Ohio, when Jimmie was born (Sept. 5, 1929). Later we built a small house on some acreage near Swanton, Ohio and raised truck crops and sold them at market in Toledo. We were living there when Darla was born (November 24, 1930). Mama came and stayed a week with us and said "she's such a darling baby you ought to call her Darla". John had a sister living in Melbourne, Florida and about a year later he decided to come south. We lived in an apartment in the same building where his sister and her husband lived. John did odd jobs, anything he could find to do. The next April 5th. (1932) Harold joined our family.

In May my mother passed away very suddenly. Her death was diagnosed as a stroke of apoplexy, but my theory is that it was a heart attack. She had written me that she had the flu a couple of months before and couldn't seem to get her strength back. So I guess that her poor old heart just gave up. When the men came in for dinner they found her dead on the back porch. She was 72 years old. My stepfather and the neighbors laid her away. Neither Hollis nor I (Harold was just one month old) could go at that time, but we kept in touch, and did meet at our old home one month later. We had about 3 hours together, then we drove him to Ft. Wayne where he caught the train for home. That is the last time, up until now (February, 1964) that I ever saw him. I don't think he and I are much alike in personality and we don't look alike. He had Mama's blue eyes and black hair, while I am a blonde like our father. My eldest son, Jimmie, whom we named for Hollis, reminds me so much of him in ways and he resembles him in looks to a certain extent.

So I shall close the book on some of my "growing up" years and the influence my Mother had on them. All of her family had great love and respect for "Aunt Emma". She lived a good life and I know she has gone to a just reward.

Kathrine Ladine Bellune

Dear Darla-

You have often said I never told you about my boy friends, and I have often tho't that some day I would tell you of the one. Maybe now is the time.

I met him when I was your age, he was just a few months younger, and we knew on our first date we were meant for each other. No other man has ever made my heart skip a beat. We went together just as you and Ken did. We joked and laughed a lot, just as you do. We quarreled too, but always kissed and made up. I spent many Sundays at his Mothers, and he at mine. My heart has ached so to see you and Ken because it took me back twenty five years. Ken reminds me so much of him--not in looks but in actions. It was he who gave me my ivory dresser set, it was he who gave me my set of silverware, and it was also he who gave me the ring you are wearing. We expected to be married on May 30th, in celebration of the day we met, so on April 4th., which was Easter Sunday that year I gave up my job and went home. My hope chest was filled; I had been given presents of dishes, kitchen ware, linen, etc., our honeymoon cottage had been selected, our attendants were ready (incidentally it was to be a double wedding) so there was nothing left to do but make my wedding dress and plan the last minute details. Well I went home with my hopes high and -----I have never seen him since! I have never been able to find out why he ditched me, as it were. I was so hurt I wouldn't try to contact him or let anyone else do it for me. You see he didn't live close to me. I did hear some years ago, I don't know how true it is, that he was married and had two or three little girls. I suppose it's true as he was very good looking and all the girls were jealous of me! I just hope someone is making him happy. And by the way he gave me my kodak too. You will find a few pictures of him in my album, (I had to keep some) most of them I returned and he sent me mine. I burned all of his letters just before I married your father. So all I have left are memories, sweet ones though! For even tho' years have passed, if he were to walk in the door I would go into his arms.

You see, Dear, he was brought up to be a Catholic. His mother was. He never went to his church, hadn't for years, and when we were going together he always went with me to my church, and he even said (without my asking him) that he would go with me after we were married. He went to, and took part in all of our parties at the school, our young peoples meetings, for I was in everything just as you are, and he was as much a part of the gang as I was. We were always in church Sunday evening, and tho' I sang in the choir he would sit alone. He was so sweet and loved me so. I don't know what happened to come between us, but I have always suspected his mother was to blame. I have always felt that when she saw we really intended to get married, she wouldn't let him do it. She was always nice to me, but I could sense a coldness in her attitude. His father loved me, always called me "his girl". But she "wore the pants" in the family----she was the Catholic, not his dad.

What I am getting at is this----maybe Ken's mother has come between him and you. I say maybe. You know in your heart she would want him to marry a Mennonite. She said so in her letter to him. I could be wrong, I hope I am, for I know you love him dearly, more than he loves you I am afraid. And I think you let him see it too much, I

think you were too serious. I don't want your heart to be broken like mine, no man is worth it! My advice to you is to study hard, both at school and at church, and please don't grieve too much for him! Pray for strength and guidance, and remember that Time heals all wounds. These may sound like harsh words to you but I hope you will understand I am telling you this because I love you and want to spare you any unhappiness that I can. Now maybe you know why I turned into such a "sober sides", when at your age I was as big a cut up as you are. Sometimes I forget myself and laugh, but I feel like singing "I'll never smile again". I don't feel sorry for myself anymore, I did for a long time, it was just one of those things that happened.

So "chin up", Sweet, the sun will rise tomorrow!

With all my heart-----

Mother

November 1948