

## MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

by MARY SILBERT

My grandsons have been bothering me to write my biography - so I will give it a try. I find that as I get older my memory has become very bad - an impediment that comes with age, no doubt.

To begin with, I will try to remember what I can recall the first. I think I will explain that my two older sisters, Edith and Betty, each showed her inclination towards either boys or girls. In our family there were babies born every few years which made up our large 13-member family eventually. Betty liked little girls best and Edith preferred little boys. When I was born, Betty decided that I belonged with her and she treated me like a little princess; she would dress me up in finery, putting whatever jewels (not real) on me and then having me come into the room dressed like that telling all in the room that they were to bow to the Princess Mary; of course, they did as she expected - giving me the homage she expected. I don't think I took this very seriously, but it was fun to be the Princess and perhaps I almost believed it then. At my age I could almost believe it, and I am sure I loved the adulation I received.

Next I remember starting school where my older brother Max was the teacher. Our school had two rooms, one to grade 9, and then high school. Going to school in our little town in Saskatchewan, Canada, was an adventure you had to brave. We walked down the railroad tracks to the school, which was bearable in summer, but in the cold Canadian winter was a problem we had to overcome. When the snow first fell it was soft and we would find our legs completely engulfed in snow, having to pull one out at a time and the other leg proceed. The poor teacher had to spend a good deal of time getting each student out of ~~their~~ winter clothes, boots, jackets, etc. before class could begin. The poor teacher had to ~~undress us first~~ undress us first of all our heavy winter clothes and dress us when we left to go home. What a day of school that must have been! Much later when our family moved to the city, Winnipeg, the capital of the province, Manitoba, school was not that much of an ordeal. When we consider that all exams had to come to our school in the little town we lived in from the provincial capital I do not know how my brother Max could get us through the exams we had to pass on to the next grade. ~~but he did!~~ His pay was \$100 a year - and we teachers here complain! *he did it!*

Our growing up was a time of family fun for the younger part of the family; we skated, snowboarded, played... getting up together to gather around the stove in the mornings to thaw out and get ready for the day.

I remember my father taking out necessary goods to the Indian ranches in the countryside, and if I would go along I would be frightened by the wolves we saw in the area, although I do not remember ever being attacked by one. My father seemed to move our family around so many times we did not seem to stay in one place very long - we seemed to be always on the move, but I cannot say that I was at all unhappy about it! I always wanted to sing - not that I have a great voice - very low, but I tried anyway.

*later*

There was no Jewish Temple so I could not be in a choir - but I went around that - without my parents knowing it - and would go to the rehearsals of the church choir - and join them - which was fun for me. I did not appear in church, but I did have the fun of singing.

There were many incidents of anti-semitism that I can remember and they were not pleasant. Besides seeing the German farmer knock down my little sick father when he asked him to settle his debt - we were always the "Jew Store" - and took abuse from kids all the time. I think I told you before, but if not, there were attempts to burn down our store - and when at one time when we lived above the store - the steps leading to the upstairs were burned down deliberately so that my Dad had to get a ladder so that we could come down. I did not need a Hitler to help me detest them!

I was growing up and have to admit I fell madly in love with a boy named George Benn - his family lived above our store - but we did not even go so far as to kiss! <sup>at about 16 or 17</sup> I ~~must admit that~~ when I finally joined the older members in Detroit I was writing to him every day, and he wrote to me. However, my dear sister Betty took care of that. She told me never to write to George again and she burned all his letters to me! I cried and cried, but it was no use resisting, so I had to tell him no more writing. My sister Bea had the same experience - her boyfriend was Garth - an unusual effect on both of us - My George was tall and thin - like Joe when I first knew him - and Garth was built exactly like her Harry! But I do not think that made me fall in Love with Joe and for Bea to fall in love with Harry!

Eventually Bea and I arrived in the United States and joined our sisters Edith, Sarah, and Betty. We went looking for jobs - and on our applications we wrote for religion - Jewish - and no one had a job for us. I forgot to explain that I had first gone to Minneapolis and was prepared to be a secretary, typing - shorthand etc. When we saw what was happening, we started putting English on our applications and within days Bea had a job in an insurance Company and I did too; mine was with Markel Service, a company that insured trucks - a whole fleet of trucks. I was in charge of all the typists in the Claims Department of my firm. I was very excited about being in that position. Mr. Markel was a Jewish man and I told him one time, after being there for quite a while, about our experience with anti-semitism - even with his own firm - he was quite disturbed!

I will tell you about a few unusual experiences that I had with Markel Service. There was a war at one time and the men were all gone so we women had to take on some of their duties. I had to be on call from drivers to report an accident that occurred. These are two unusual ones - I got a call from a driver who told me that he had killed a man - on Christmas Eve - the driver was trying to get home to his family and did not want to stop - so he told me that the little Asian man was so small that he was able to stuff the body into a mail box by opening the lid. What could I do - I was shocked but realized that I would have to do something, so I called the police to talk to the driver. He told him what had happened and the police took him away. Another unusual report I got was when a driver told me he had knocked down a gas station and when I asked him why, he said, "The road turned, but I didn't." That was all!

I was often asked to go into court in a lawsuit if the case was

one in which our company had a very slim chance of being involved in a suit - they did not want to pay for a court reporter so they sent me in to take the testimony and transcribe it for my company. At that time I suddenly became very interested in "law" and I enrolled in a law school near where I worked. I stayed one semester but did not like it enough to continue, so I decided I did not want to be a lawyer!

Now to get to the heart of the story! I had come to Detroit - which was easy to come into the U.S. - illegally - by just crossing the border there as though I were going shopping - I had to re-enter eventually legally and become an American citizen, and I did! I joined my sisters, living with Betty who had opened a little dress shop, and I shared her apartment - Edith had married and was in the process of having a family. Betty immediately told me I would work in her shop for her. I did not think I was a salesperson, but Betty told me that I was so - I was. She even made me her alteration lady when I did not know how to sew - and I did it. She told me I was through with any thought of falling in love with anyone who was not Jewish. We went one summer to a sea port near Chicago and there on the beach I met two young men - one was <sup>Jewish</sup>, I later discovered - an FBI man - whose idea of a date with me was to sit in the car outside a house of some suspect he was checking on - I did not fall in love with him and really had no desire to sit in the car with him for hours watching the house! The other was a lawyer - but I did not love him either. I had to wait until - I forgot to say that when I came to Detroit Joe was working for my sister-in-law Esther Levin (not then - but she became that) - I should say for her husband Maurie who had a gas station and that was where Joe worked while I worked at Markel Service. Joe's idea of a date with me was to buy one coke and get two straws!!! I didn't care - I just fell in love; I tried to get him to go to law school which he had started - but had not finished - or even near finished, but he said that "no, wives did not pay for husbands to go to school" - so he did not become an attorney.

Now for some romance! The attorney I had met came to see me and Edith told me to invite him for dinner. I did and never wanted to see him again - after the very nice dinner Edith had prepared, he had the nerve on our way back to - to make fun of her English! That was enough for me and I wanted no more of him! I wanted neither of them! I knew I loved the skinny boy with no money - no car - no real prospects except that I loved him! He told me later that he fell for me but knew he had nothing to get married on. I told him I had a good job and we would manage - so he said he walked to his home telling himself that he should not even think of marriage - anyway I convinced him - no fancy weddings - but we did get married and I was very, very happy! Now how did I wind up in California - I guess because everyone seemed to move there so I followed. I studied to become a citizen - after re-entering legally - which Joe did later too. Joe had come in illegally in the back of someone's car - were't we terrible?

To get a little more up to date - my family was growing - Patty first, then Andy and last John. John should thank Bea and Harry for his being here. I had let Bea set the pattern and I followed. I thought we were stopping at two children - but Bea and Harry decided they wanted to have another - so I had to follow - and that was - thank God, John!

another

My daughter Patty married and divorced - but her husband, Peter, fathered three wonderful boys, Andrew, Boaz, and Elijah --who have given me great pleasure. Andy gave me the lovely granddaughter Beth Ann - and John the pleasure of Ben and Sarah, and I love them all very much. Another one of my wonderful blessings is that I love very much the daughters-in-law, Judy and Sue -and Patty has a loving husband Bill - so I have been very fortunate.

I have been doing a great deal of moving - since Joe died about a year and half ago - not always making the right decisions. Life is not the same for me without my loving Joe -and it never will be so I thank God that I have the children and grandchildren - all of them. They are my life and I like it very much.

When I left Leisure World after Joe died and went away from all it had to offer I wanted to be back in the L.A. area to be with family again and with old friends - which is good. However, I did not question enough what - in what seemed like an ideal place to me and to Andy, who went with me in our search for a place for me to be in, if I should need help when I became unable to take care of myself I went into the place I now live in - in some ways it is good - the people are very nice and friendly - food good - service good - but I did not know that it is a Lutheran Christian home and I am sometimes a little uncomfortable with the prayers, etc. I have lost all the entertainment that was available in Leisure World - rich in plays and concerts, speakers etc. I realize that maybe I will need the extra help supplied here in probably a short time so it may have been the right move. I am sorry to be so far away from Andy's family and Patty - even John and family are quite far for me now that I do not drive - and I hate to have to ask them all the time to travel so far for my convenience. I am thankful that Harry Friedman, my brother-in-law, has been so good about taking me places and Walter Popkin and Elvira have been very nice about taking me places. I think I will stop at this point -and if I have any more to add later I will do so and continue. Right now I am a little late for my dinner and will be getting a call soon. I am still quite able to take care of myself, except for a sore back, that is taking forever to heal. Will continue later perhaps.

I am sorry to be so disorganized, but I must go back and tell more of my experiences to clear things up. I have left out an exciting time in my life. When I gave up the idea of law school I decided I wanted another career - that of a school teacher. I proceeded to attend Los Angeles, East L.A. College, and began studying for my B.A., and went on for an M.A. My major was cultural anthropology. I will tell you why I chose that major. At the time my son-in-law Peter Nash, who loved to go to far places, was living on the island of Yap in the South Pacific as a doctor serving the islands around that part of the world. Patty and Peter and little Andrew went there with him - Andrew learned to speak some Yapese but I did not. It was interesting because I could tell the students in my class about their customs that I learned from Patty and Peter, and there were some very interesting customs there. We corresponded by letter and also by recording on tapes - I wish I had kept some of them.

I was afraid that I would be very uncomfortable in college with young students who would feel like their mothers were in class. However, on the contrary, I was accepted so well, and they say, "Come on, Mary, let's go out for coffee - or whatever they wanted to see."

I had been a leader of cub scouts and boy scouts, as well as girl scouts - and I found myself sitting behind a boy from my boy scout group - he was getting C's, and I was getting A's - before long they had me tutoring students in different subjects - I loved it! I stayed with it and graduated - but I did not go "cap and gown"; I should have but I did attend a special honor presentation I was part of. Those boys and girls were very important to me, and I enjoyed doing it very much.

When I graduated, I started teaching at East Los Angeles College. However, when my friend, Walter Popkin, who was active in the Education Department asked me to come to the Adult Highschool as a full-time teacher I decided that I would like that better. The college classes were in odd and different time periods which I did not like. That is how I became a full-time teacher in the Adult Highschool and stayed with it for years until my retirement. My husband Joe and I decided to give scholarships every year to help students to go on to college, and I am still continuing to do that alone. I would have young men and women come in and they would tell me that they were professionals and I felt so happy to hear it. The star t we gave them helped and they went on to complete their courses - at least many of them did. I had one very and unusual student, an 80-year old man who was Mexican, retired from his line of work. He had never had a highschool diploma in English, so when he graduated and received one, the L.A. Times sent a reporter out to interview him and me. We were on TV, and later he received a free trip to Spain with his wife. I was so pleased that it was recognized in that way - and I know he was very happy. I helped him get his American citizenship, which he had not done - he was so proud and I loved greeting him in cap and gown on graduation night.

To bring us closer to the present, My Joe and I were married for 60 years, a wonderful happy and loving marriage - I know that I should be very grateful, and I am, but I miss him so much and wish I still had him with me. We had arranged for a hall and orchestra for our 60th anniversary which would have been on February 24, ~~1980~~, 2002 but we never made it - he died on December 31 of 1999. I hated going on without him, but I am fortunate to have wonderful children and grandchildren who have been a great comfort to me.

I have not said much about the grandchildren so I want to go into that now. My oldest son, Andy, lives in New Jersey with his lovely wife, Sue, and I had the pleasure of attending her wedding to Her John on August 11 this year. I loved being at ~~their~~ <sup>BETH's</sup> wedding and seeing their happiness and love. Beth Ann is a lovely, talented girl and her parents have a right to be very proud of her. She is a fine pianist, in addition to her studies, is beautiful and talented. My daughter Patty, who prefers the name Azalia, but to me she will always be Patty. She and her husband, Bill Coit, live in Iowa and seem to be happy with their way of life which includes and enriches their lives through transcendental meditation TM - Unfortunately, we cannot see each other very much but keep in touch by telephone regularly.

Patty's children, 3 boys, Andrew, Boaz, and Elijah have been a joy and blessing for me. Joe always said that one of his grandchildren would be a businessman, and when Andrew was in his teens and made some profit going door to door trading tapes of some kind - Joe would say, "There's the businessman." He was right - Andrew graduated from college and his major was forestry which he developed into a business of treating forestry and home gardening and decorating - in addition to the preserving the environment. I am very proud of him and in the way he handles his business and his relationship with his clients. He is now taking further courses to broaden his field of study. Boaz, the second son, is an unusual student of physics and sciences. He is on full scholarship at Stamford University, and will either become a professor or do some research related to his studies. Elijah, the youngest, is having a little trouble finding just what he wants to do, but seems happy in the college he is attending, Sonoma State, so he will find what interests him the most. I am proud of all three and their close relationship with each other, their mother, Patty, and father, Peter, as well as with me.

Sorry I was so disorganized in the last paragraph - please forgive me and understand that is not the way I was quite a few years ago - the most efficient secretary in charge of all the girls in the claims department of Markel Service - or in my school teaching years. It happens to all of us I am told, although I thought it was just to me!

To get back to the present, I decided I wanted to be back in the area that we had lived in for so many years, Montebello and Monterey Park, and near family, Bea and Harry closeby - so I also thought of being in a retirement place in case I might need care eventually, so I moved here to Alhambra - back to my old Temple, Temple B'Nai ~~Emet~~ <sup>EMET</sup>, which held so many memories for me. I am still able to do much for myself, but when I need help I will get it here.

Well, Andrew, you wanted me to write this, so I am doing it - very badly, I am afraid, but I hope it will answer some questions.

At the very end, instead of the beginning, I realize that I should have told you about my earlier background and what I knew about it - so here goes! My parents, Molly and Lazer (Lewis) - sorry, they were Joe's parents - so I started out wrong again. My parents were Attel or Ethel and Abraham Finegood. They came from Russia - all of them at a time when Jews were being killed and made very unwelcome - and they headed for the new land, America, in the under deck of a ship - barely having enough food or sleeping space - I do not remember too much about their passage to the new world. I learned that Joe's parents and mine had known each other in Russia. My father played an instrument like an Oboe and was in the Tsar's orchestra so he had evaded going into the Russian Army and came out alive. I do not know too much about that time in their lives. I do remember my mother telling me that she loved to swim and that her family, the Finegoods, had known the Silberts in Russia. Somehow a Finegood woman married a Silbert and Joe Silbert became my husband - I had been a Finegood. If you are mixed up reading this it is O.K. because I am too!

I do not know what I have covered, so please forgive me if I seem to ramble, but I will try to go on. I will tell about some of the things I loved to do, what I enjoyed. In the small town we lived in in Canada, in fact several small towns because, unfortunately, there was so much antisemitism there - as there is somehow almost everywhere - that we had to keep moving so my Dad could make a living for the large family we had - and with Sam's help, and mine when I was around to help. I was fascinated with books and one of the things I would get - and be the librarian for - would be to ask for a complete 10-shelf bookcase with, of course, my choice of books from the list they would send me. I was reading fiction most of the time but I did take an interest in history so I made sure I would have those kinds of books. The farmers in the area, I am sure were very happy to have access to books in their lonely lives, and were very pleased to have my library - filled, of course, with books that I wanted to read. I loved to write, and started doing quite a bit of writing. One of the farmers who came in all the time had been an English professor in a city and he helped me select books too. Each province sent the libraries out from the capitals. This was a wonderful gift that we had; Canada had many benefits that are not as common in other countries, and I personally felt that this was an important gift for us in the wilderness. Another thing that we Canadians had was medical coverage free, not only in Canada, but in any country we were in. I don't know if that is still the case now, but it was then and after I left Canada we took advantage of this coverage and appreciated it. I did not have much need for the coverage then but as I traveled later it was good to have that security. I hope that Canada still has that kind of coverage. I know that Dad had a brother in Ontario who was very sick for a long time and was in a very good care place at no expense to us or to him.

I think I have told you about my following the older members of the family into the United States - first illegally, but later we did re-enter legally. I studied and became an American citizen - most of the family did, I think. However I am not sure that any of the older ones bothered to study and become citizens. To me the ability and right to vote is very important, and I do try to learn and decide how I want to use the right of the voting privilege that I have.

Well, you know that Grandma loved reading and writing and had an interest in politics, my rights as an American. I am happy that my grandsons are interested in politics and especially in the environment. I admire them for their interest and doing what they can to prevent this very important part of the nation and of our lives.

I mentioned that I loved writing, so I will tell you about something I did and delighted in. I wrote plays that the people in our area - and later as a fund raiser for the Temple I belonged to - I had help in the direction because the plays were about 2 hours long and needed a lot of direction. Some had very original ideas, but others I tended to pattern on a play such as "The King and I" for one, which I re-named "The Kids and I" so that many children could be in it and then we were financially assured of a good crowd - what parent or grandparent would not go to see theirs on the stage? I did one based on the Mikado, but I changed the story and dialogue. However, I loved doing this sort of

thing, and I was thrilled and flattered when they called for the author to come on stage and take a bow. I got all the family involved - I wish I could do things like that now - but I don't know where my ambition has gone but I guess it is to be expected when we grow old. I do not like old age! Now I do not have the ambition to tutor or take part in many activities that I once loved. You have to accept me the way I am now - I can't help it!

Now for some important "firsts" - the first time I really saw your Grandpa, my Joe, I had seen him briefly many times before because ~~my~~ HIS father who traveled and sold harness and saddles to farmers always made sure he would be near a Jewish home on the Sabbath - he was a Jew who wanted to keep those rites in his daily life. As a result he would often be in our area - and see to it that he was - and Joe was with him in his travels all the time - helping his father. What I especially remember is that I had hardly spoken to the skinny boy with his Dad - I spoke to his Dad, but not to Joe then. One time they came into town and Joe sat down at the piano - an old beat up one but the only one in our town - and in a room that served for poker, cards of any kind, and dances - all to the only music for dancing being the accordian - and a caller for the square dances - I loved them! The women brought their babies and laid them down on the benches on all sides of the room - actually a pool hall or a dance hall - whatever for! I saw Joe at the piano and his enthusiastic playing just delighted me as well as others - and I just marveled at the sight and decided I would like to get to know him. He showed an interest in me - I could tell - and it was returned by me in him. I can't say that I fell in love that fast but I did find him interesting and loved his piano playing. At that time Joe was working in the gas station owned by his brother-in-law Maurie. I am jumping ahead of myself again - this was some time before his working at the gas station, but was part of his travels from Canada with his Dad. I must tell you this little thing I remember - when Patty was a baby - Joe's father had stopped in to visit with us - and at that time my doctor had told me to give her bacon with her meal - well, I think you know that as Jews we were not to eat ham, pork or bacon. He had such a look of horror on his face, but he did not say anything. I felt terrible because I realized that he would be offended but I did not think enough to not have this happen. I do not know how he accepted me as well as he did - because there was another incident that happened - there was a dance in this little town and they were serving drinks - I do not know why but I reacted very badly to the liquor for some reason and I passed out completely - Joe's Dad was there and he saw me like that - I can imagine what he was thinking of this awful daughter-in-law he had - a drunk! He was a very nice gentleman - he had had cancer of the vocal chords and he never recovered his speech fully so he spoke in a sort of whispering harsh sound - I felt so sorry for him. So together with seeing his daughter-in-law feeding her baby bacon, she was also a drunk passed out at a party. He was a gentleman - I wish you could have known him. You know that I never knew my grandparents at all, neither on my mother's side or on my father's-side.

Another first that thrilled me - Joe had taught me to love the classics and almost 40 years ago Poveratti sang in a church in Pasadena and all it cost then was \$5.00 to hear him - not today! Everyone just loved his singing as did Joe and I.

A specialty of mine was lemon-meringue pie, and I always made that for parties



I was so fortunate that Grandpa and I traveled all over the world about 4 or 5 years before his death when he was still pretty fit - oh it was probably much longer ago than 4 or 5 years. We traveled all over Europe - Italy, Spain, Scandinavia, Switzerland, then to Asia to China, Taiwan, and Japan - Tokyo and other parts - England twice and there we went on to Wales, Ireland and Scotland - I never did find out whether the Scotch wore anything under the kilts - never had the nerve to raise up a kilt to find out!

I have some very lovely memories of that trip - and the trip to Alaska - I think we took you grandsons with us on some of the trips. I remember that at one time we asked you individually where you wanted to go. Earlier on your births we delighted in each of you so much loving all of you very much - I was always there immediately with your Mom because I loved doing it - you boys gave me and Dad such pleasure. Later traveling with you and doing things together were just wonderful I still feel the same way - you were and are very important to me and earlier to your Grandpa. I will get back to this another time. I have run out of ideas now and there is a program downstairs I want to go to. Forgive me - I will add more if I think of what I left out. Do you remember the time we let you decide where you wanted to go and we took you individually instead of all together. Elijah wanted Jamaica and he learned to play tennis there and had fun getting on the stage to sing some songs with the performers. He sang along with the people on the stage and really seemed to enjoy himself.

Bosz wanted Hawaii and he had more fun showing Grandpa all the shops that had hats = something Grandpa seemed to like buying. He enjoyed going to the beach and singing along with the people. Andrew wanted - Andrew I cannot remember your choice so you will have to fill that in. We took all three of you to Alaska on a cruise that stopped at all the cities and important places. Do you remember that there were no girls - and this was September - what a disappointment! However, there were a few from Brazil and you could not speak Portuguese but somehow you communicated and got along just great. If I remember correctly Elijah was getting letters from a girl in Brazil after the trip. Elijah, do you remember?

Now I have the pleasure of having John with his wife Judy and their Ben and Sarah to enjoy. Also, Granddaughter Beth Ann is married to her John, very much in love. I wish I could see all of them more often but it is not possible, and I do not want to travel - any more and I am grateful when children and grandchildren come to see me and they do the traveling. Of course, you know that I have moved back to my old home place not far from Montebello - Bea and Harry and old friends and the Temple was like coming home again. We will gather at Peggy's for the holidays as we have done for many years, and I am looking forward to seeing many in the family again very soon. I will see if I can enter any more later or maybe this will be the end. Unfortunately, my memory is not what it used to be so it may have to be the end.

To get back to this in a haphazard way, I will try to include some other things that were important to me - I don't think I have written much about what Joe and I were doing after I quit working, so here are some of the things - that actually both of us became involved in - tutoring - Grandpa Joe and I began tutoring at Schurr Highschool for about 3 days a week, and sometimes more - Joe in math in me in English, government or anything else they needed help in. I have continued to do this in all the places I have lived in since moving away from my old territory - in Irvine Grandpa and I would go to the school there, and I had the pleasure of teaching government, preparing students for citizenship - and I was so proud when they became citizens.

I want to tell you something that was rather unusual - and it proves that you can do it even if you think you can't! At one time I was so afraid of having to speak to people - more such as making a speech with all the attention on me that when I first started running a class for cub scouts and having to speak to the 6 boys - I was actually scared of doing it and now for years I have had to stand in front of so many people and have overcome my fear of speaking in front of a crowd, for which I am very happy. I had at one time 66 in my class in the adult highschool - 11 tables with 6 seats at each and until I decided that was too much I was teaching that many and taking home hours of correcting papers from the class.

Without my wonderful Maria Darie as my assistant, I could not have done it. She was a pharmacist in her native Czechoslovakia - I had tried to get her to go to school and get her license to practice her skill in her field to earn more money, but she never wanted to. She had a daughter who was in medical school and that was all that mattered. She wanted to see her graduate and although she and her husband had been professionals in their country - he was a veterinarian there, but she stayed on being an aide in my class for all the years I was there, and probably is still there.

I will go back a little to something in my notes that I am referring to - my mother, that lovely lady who never told anyone what to do and I learned to really respect her. I found that she was reading slowly and painfully - the English newspapers, and when I asked her how she could, she simply said that she had seen books around and she studied them to learn. She also read Hebrew and got a Jewish paper written in Hebrew. She said she had wanted to learn and she did from books that were there for the brothers - on her own!

I guess I am something like her because when we lived in this small town in Canada my Father hired someone to come from the city to teach my brothers so they could have Bar Mitzvahs but nothing was said about the girls learning. I did not like that so when I was in school I went to Pasadena City College and took two semesters of Hebrew and learned to read so that I could follow the services in the Temple. My professor who taught the course was an Israeli and he told us that he had learned English by studying Shakespeare - I am sure that was not true, but it made a good story. He said that when he first got on a bus and wanted to ask in English where the bus was taking him, he asked the driver, "Wither goest thou" and we all laughed. Please excuse the spelling - I know better but that is how I have written - forgive me.

I don't think I wrote about the time Bea and I were dating and some of the things I remember about it. We would compete because the first one to come home could stay in the car with the boyfriend, but the second had to come into the living room where my mother sat ready to see us come in and stay up until we headed for bed. I think she felt that she should stay to keep us and our boyfriends company.

Bea was going with Harry and I was going with Joe and we tried to be first home so we could stay in the car and not go in to be entertained by Mamma. Bea pulled a fast one on me - she decided to go to Mexico with her Harry and was married there ahead of my marrying Joe, but she did not tell us about that for a long time. Anyway, we both married the ones we loved - sooner or later.. I was married in a borrowed wedding gown, in my mother's house by a Rabbi who manged to charge us twice - he was really entitled because he did not charge very much. When I see all the planning and preparation that goes into a wedding now, I can't believe we did it that way. Apparently, it had no effect on the marriage since Joe and I made it almost to our 60th anniversary and Bea and Harry are still happily married as we were too. I must tell you something about my marriage that I think you will find amusing. I had a boyfriend Phil, I called him Philsy-Willsy - I couldn't stand him - he was very fussy and wanted to take me places and do things for me all the time; he was a dance teacher and the only thing I liked about him was that he was a good dancer and would take me to lunch at the Biltmore Hotel which was close to my office and they had an orchestra we could dance to every day - they used to do that years ago in the nice hotels. I know I was mean to take advantage of him like that but I did not really like him and all his fussing over me all the time. When I married Joe I did not invite him to the wedding in my mother's home because I did not particularly want him there, but he came anyway and afterwards when we got in the borrowed car - Harry's I think - and started out for Palm Springs where we were going to go - he followed us and I thought he would never leave us. I have a picture of our leaving from my mother's house and he is there - uninvited - I know I was mean, but I did not care for him and all his fussing all the time. He acted like I could not pull out a chair or open a door or do anything like that. I guess if I had loved him I would have put up with that - but I loved only his dancing!

Well, I am up to today - here in The Alhambra with the good Lutheran Christians - doing nothing except going to the dining room three times a day - and I wondr why I came here so early when I can still take care of myself and I won't let them make my bed or do much cleaning or washing clothes for me because I want to do it for myself. I know it is foolish in a way because I am paying a pretty steep price here - I do not have the one room that many of the people here have, but have a real apartment and am quite comfortable. I am still able to take care of myself and go to the fitness room to exercize on the machines, walk miles down the halls here, but I did not know that I would be fit for so long and tried to plan for the future.

My loved ones, I have done my best to let you know Grandma and hope this will be a momento you will have of me. May you always think of me - your mother - your grandmother - as one who has enjoyed you always and love you very much.