



KNOW YOUR ROOTS

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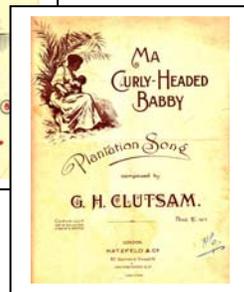
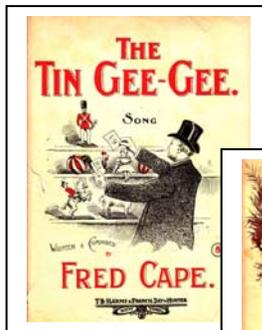
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Remembering my mother on Mother's Day

A FAMILY LEGEND

All my life I heard Nana, my mother Elvera, sing and play the piano. She must have started at an early age because when I inherited her music, I found the following pieces. These are huge outsize examples which are dated 1894 and 1897 and you know she was born in 1893. I'm sure her piano and her singing lessons began early and these examples are not only songs but simple piano pieces. Her singing lessons continued and she appeared in several recitals with her teacher Irwin Feldes. She became such an accomplished pianist that she was able to get a job at the prestigious store Lyon and Healy which sold all the current and classical music. She told me that during this time, she met many important people and attended many musical functions. The store even sent her

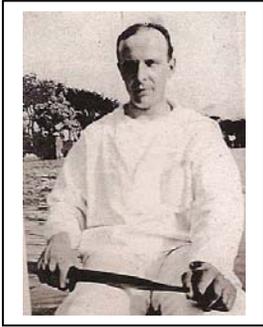


on trips representing it.

This was all taking place as my story was developing. Elvera undoubtedly belonged to a Lincoln Park organization where she would meet lots of young people because there are Kodak pictures of her in groups on special days and special occasions in her photograph album. This picture on the right is a portion of a group picture that I cut off to show you a special young man who obviously was attracted to our Nana. Note the arm around her. He appears with her in several other photos but he is not the focus of my story. Notice the young man in front of Elvera. That is Frank Hanson and therein lies a legend of a relationship that lasted many years and one Elvera mentioned often.



I don't know exactly when the relationship started but I do know that it was a serious one. Frank was older than Elvera, and I was told that Elvera's father said she was too young to be married. But in the meantime, according to some handwritten notes I have, the courtship lasted many years. All this while she was working at Lyon and Healy, playing the current music on the piano, selling the records of the prevailing artists (we still have some of them) and enjoying her life with Frank.



They did everything together and it is all recorded in her photo album. There are many pictures of the times they had together. These pictures of them canoeing are taken possibly in Lincoln Park. Elvera wrote in her notes that he was a most attentive suitor. One week she would receive a box of chocolates and in the next five dozen roses.

In the meantime, he would take her to the opera, the symphony, and she specifically mentions the Wagnerian Rings at the Auditorium. That didn't include the plays they attended. He was a graduate of the University of Chicago and he even enrolled her in a political science class but Elvera's mother wouldn't let her attend because her father didn't want her in politics. Elvera writes in her notes that between her music engagements with Erwin Feldes, working for Lyon and Healy, and "dating," she had a very exciting life.



The picture on the right is Frank and Elvera swimming in Lake Michigan. Now, I want to remind all of you that Elvera was working at Lyon & Healy before 1914 so when she writes that she was very independent, traveling alone, having a responsible position, and in her words "dating," Elvera was a most avant garde woman for her generation. A memento of Frank remains in the family. This is a beautiful mother of pearl pair of opera glasses inscribed:



inscribed:
"To Elvera from Frank 12-25-15"

The date is very significant because it is almost prophetic. Then the legend ended.

Elvera fell in love.

"My Dear Mother – *May 13-1917*
...Mother I have a little secret to tell you and I do not want you to feel bad and I know you will not. I am engaged to Elvera Schueneman and if nothing prevents we will be married next month. She is the finest in the world in my estimation and you are going to like her...Elvera has a very nice position and one that she does not want to give up for awhile, in fact, she has a verbal contract to remain there until next January and she likes her work...although I am taking unto myself a wife you can count on me doing all I can for you...when I see you will tell you all about my plans. Mrs. Heimer wants to be remembered to you...I will bring your new daughter-in-law down about the middle of next month. With lots and lots of love. Harry

Harry Elson Durland and Elvera Ann Schueneman were married June 2, 1917.

(Webmaster & Technical Advisor: Jerry Larkin)