



# KNOW YOUR ROOTS

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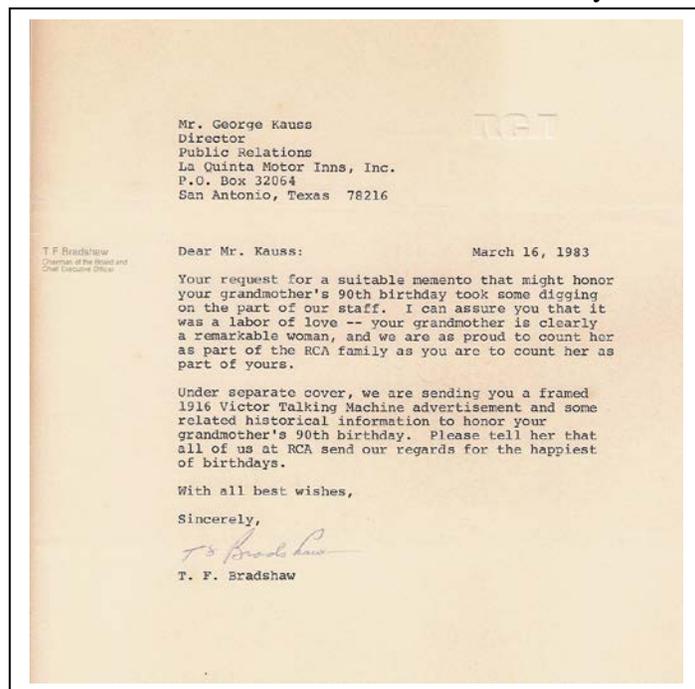
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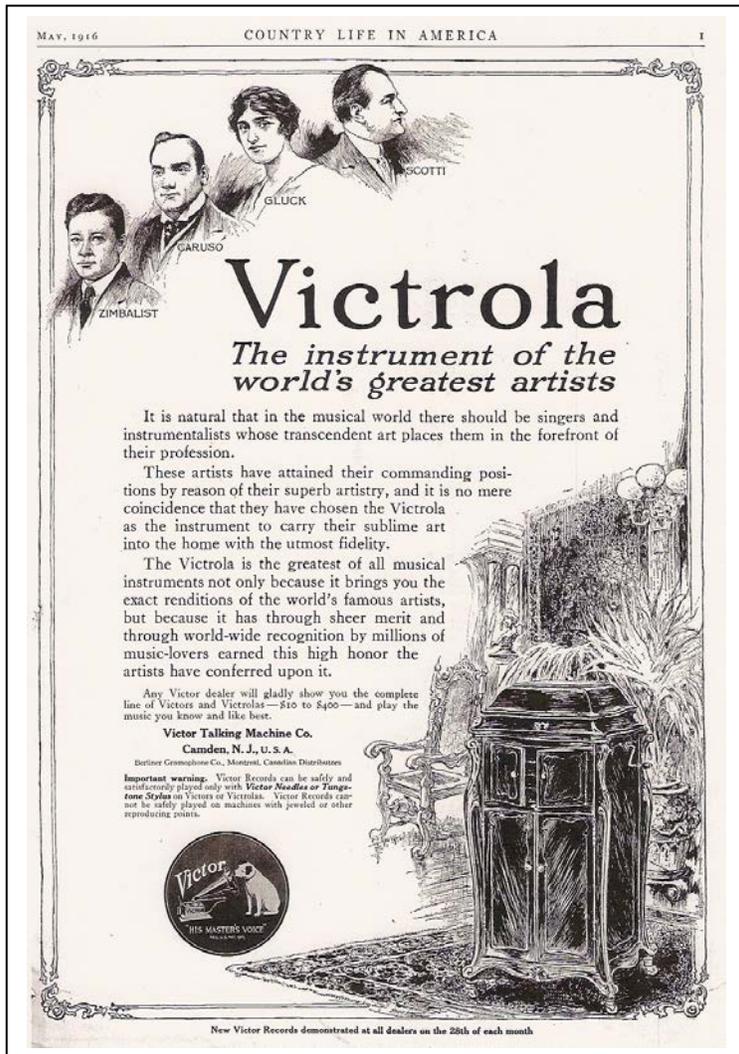
## A LOOK BACK TO 1983

This year in 2013 we are celebrating Nana's 120<sup>th</sup> birthday and her family is arriving from lands afar, not only from many other states but also from other countries. There will be those who were only a whisper and a hope in the past, and those who were not even yet a part of her family of the future, but who will be reminded of a truly great woman, born in 1893, whose strength influenced all those who knew her. She was a people person who loved to go places and do things. She played games with her grandchildren and upbraided them sometimes not too gently, in order to teach them the good from the bad. She was a woman before her time with little education but that didn't deter her from achieving and creating when she saw a need. Because she was so proud of her family and because her memory lives on in Nana Days, I dedicate this issue to those who never knew her. May they take a moment to realize her influence and impact on their lives.

In 1983 everyone wanted to make Elvera Ann Schueneman Durland's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday a very special day. A precedent had been established on her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and it was called Nana Day. So all was in order for her 90<sup>th</sup>. Nana before she was married was a gifted musician and singer and had a prestigious position in the famous music store, Lyon and Healy on State Street in Chicago. During the latter half of the 1900s she would meet all the famous music celebrities of the time. George Kauss knew that this was very important to her, so he wrote them a letter about his grandmother and received this reply from the CEO of RCA.

This letter was on display at the celebration along with the advertisement of the 1916 Victor Talking Machine.





Nana had often talked about meeting the artists who came into the store. She would not only play the music for them but I would imagine she would sing along with them because she was a contralto soprano and knew all the operas and fine music of the day. She accumulated a large collection of vinyl records including those of the stars in the ad. Some of her collection exists today and they have been stored away for safe keeping. There are many of Caruso, the most famous tenor of the time. Besides Caruso there are many others in her collection not mentioned in the 1916 Lyon and Healy ad, which describes the very machine that Nana would play the records on.

Her collection includes the popular duo Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy. There are some of the Boston Symphony and a few of John McCormack, the famous Irish tenor, whom I have never heard of, plus others lost in oblivion.



Nana often spoke of those days before she married. The only remnants the family has of this special time of her life are her collection, the letter, the ad, and this blurry photo which shows her at the very Victrola depicted in the advertisement. Her collection remains reminiscent of this special time when Nana hobnobbed with the famous artists of the day.

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