

Rosalie 1932,1933,1993

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We shall begin by reading selections from Rosalie's diaries for 1932 and 1933. Rosalie was 21 years old; lived in Baltimore with her parents and her three sisters, Irene, Mary and Zeida, and her brother Sonny. Rosalie worked for the federal government—for the Bureau of Prohibition.

Rosalie takes a vacation...

September 10, 1932 I left Baltimore on the train for a visit to Harrisburg with Cousin Julia and her husband Henry. Julia is looking good. Henry is very devoted to her and considers her wishes in everything. I only hope if I ever get married, I will have such a thoughtful hubby.

September 12 ...I wrote home and told them to send me news of Mom. I hope she is better. It worries me awfully...

September 14 ...Morris Morrison phoned up for a date and last night he took me out for a ride. We went to Hershey Park. After we got home, he wanted me to kiss him and we played Joan Crawford and John Gilbert in a love scene. However, when Joan was supposed to kiss John, I balked. Not that I wasn't anxious—I'm sorry now I didn't. He begged me awfully hard and I almost wilted. I guess if he had known how close I was to giving him a kiss, he surely would have begged a little harder

September 17 ...Downtown we stopped to see Maurice. He sure is good looking. John says Maurice admires innocence in a girl but why do the sophisticated ones get all the dates?

September 18 I left Harrisburg for Baltimore at 7 p.m. In all I did not have such an exciting time as I expected. The more you expect, the less you get... Mother is just about the same.

September 25 Hectic today. Zeida and I went over to see Mom. To me she looked no better but the doctor said she is better...Went with the Club to Bess's wedding reception...! brought home a rose to put under my pillow tonight; they say you'll dream about your future husband.

September 26 Gee—I slept on the rose and I didn't dream of anything—maybe I'll be an old maid...

September 27 Oh God—I will never forget this day. Mother passed away at 10 p.m. I worked as usual. Came home and after supper we got a call from the Doctor as Mother was very bad. We arrived at the hospital and in a little while she was gone— just like a candle—she flickered out. I think she recognized us, but her breathing was so labored she

could not say anything. She looked so peaceful afterwards—just as though she was asleep—and she is—she is resting from all that pain she had for the past five months. I still can't believe it is true—that I will never see her anymore but I will never forget her. She was such a good woman. Always put herself last. I don't believe I ever saw her in a temper. She just lived for her children. No sleep tonight.

September 28 Funeral today. I felt terrible, and yet somehow I had a detached feeling as though I was looking on and it was just a bad dream. God knows it is only too true. As the rabbi said—Mother's love is the most wonderful, the most beautiful, the purest thing on this earth and we can conserve it by carrying on Mother's good deeds and works. Poor Sonny—motherless at 9 years. I don't think he realizes it. He is too young. I wish I were little—I would not realize it. Dear Mother to die so young—only 48 years old—just in the prime of life... September 29 Home today. Relatives and people coming and going... We talked about Mother and cried nearly all day. I have always believed in reincarnation. I wonder if I am right—if Mother's soul has passed to a newborn baby or if it has gone to meet her God. If the former is correct, I am not satisfied that her soul should become a part of someone new. I prefer to think it belongs to me and those who loved her.

A few weeks after her Mother's death.

October 10 ...I went for a walk with Sonny at night and met a lawyer friend. We had a very interesting conversation relative to the hereafter and he almost convinced me that there was none—but not quite. It seems as though I sway back and forth—any good speaker can draw me to his side...I don't know what to believe.

October 11 ...I registered to vote in the Presidential election in November. I feel so important. Irene and Mary did not register but I am a citizen, of age, and why shouldn't I?

October 16 [Anne Grossman](#), [Min](#) and [Lil](#) came over at night. [Anne](#) wants me to join some literary club of which she is a member.

October 31 ...tonight is [Halloween](#) Eve. I am not at all excited. I remember when I was a kid—the fun we had—but now I am staid and grown up and it does not fit for me to act childish... (at 21!!!)

November 5 Saturday. To work half day. Today is my birthday—22 years old am I and I don't feel more than 16...

November 7 ...I wonder who will be the next President. Tomorrow is voting day. I wonder if I'll have my position this day next year. Well, time will tell but a great deal hinges on this election.

November 11. Armistice Day. Worked today as usual. Got a book of plays from the library. I must mark the name down—"The Yearbook of Short Plays (1931)"...

November 17 Mary sent home a rowing machine for reducing. We all worked it. It is very strenuous. I can only work for 3 minutes at a time so far. I intend using it for morning and evening exercising.

November 18 ...You know Little Diary I don't know what I would do without my work—I think I would die. My interest is so keen and intense.

November 26 **Min** and **Lil** came over. They had a double date and it was a blind one for Lil. He was handsome and she really fell for him, but, can you imagine Little Diary, before the evening was over, he proposed the impossible! Naturally, Lil almost threw him out! That's what the world is coming to. I am almost afraid to go out with someone I don't know very well; one hears such queer things...

December 7 Today it rained a little, but is rather warm. It really is amazing—the balmy weather we have been having—we never have snow any more. I can remember when we used to go sleigh riding but not any more.

December 10 It snowed the whole day—the first real snow of the season. Took Sonny uptown to see the toys. He threatened to tear the beard off of Santa, but he lost his nerve.

December 19 ...guess what—my old friend Rube called and wanted a New Year's date—but I refused. Gosh, and am I dumb—I haven't any New Year's date yet, but I told him I had one to soften the blow. I don't know why—he's a nice kid but I can't go for him. He surely is persevering... If only the ones I liked could fall for me like he did...

December 20 ...**Zeida** and I went to the Century today. Heard **Bing Crosby** in person and saw "**Madame** Butterfly" with Silvia Sidney...

December 29 ...I almost had a chance to go to Chicago to work for twenty-one months, but we're too busy at the office for me to go...

1933 January 5 I started a Christmas Savings Account—\$2 a week.

January 6 ...Cousin Belle is engaged and got a \$1,500 engagement ring! Can you imagine—doesn't that sound wonderful!

January 7 Wore my wine dress today. I sure do enjoy good clothes. I would rather have one good dress than five cheap ones. There is a rumor that we may get a 10% pay cut in addition to our 8 % cut now. I hope it is untrue. **Zeida** just got a 25% cut. It sure is tough...

January 8 ...Gee I feel kind of low—had an argument with Dad—he is so unreasonable. I hate these family arguments—I like peace and quiet...

January 11 To work as usual. The big boss told me that Chicago matter was writing up the **Al Capone** case. Would I have been thrilled—well I don't mean maybe!

January 23 ...Sonny is sending away for a Tom-Tom and a ring for which he saved **Wrigley's** wrappers. He is a member of the Lone Tribe. I am almost as thrilled as he is.

January 27 ...I guess I will have to make out my income tax report soon...

February 11...Hung around the house all day. To bed at 10:30 p.m. **P.S.** Wish something exciting would happen—life is beginning to be so deadly it is really **boresome**. I must do something to break the monotony.

February 12 ...we went to see "Silver Dollar" with Edward **G.** Robinson. What a character that man is!...

February 13 ...The papers say **Lindbergh's** second baby is in danger of being kidnapped. What a terrible thing—poor mother...! went to see "Strange Interlude" with dark Gable. I think he has a wonderful speaking voice but I am not as enthused over his looks...

February 16 ...Guess what—last night a crazy man tried to kill President Elect Roosevelt and fired six shots at him, but missed him and injured **five** others, two very seriously...

February 25 ...The Governor has declared a three day bank holiday...The reason is because there have been so many runs on the banks lately and they are afraid of the results. Times are precarious indeed.

March 2 ...Banks are still closed—in the beginning it was only for three days, but it is way over that now. No one knows how it will all end. History is in the making...

March 4 Inauguration Day. Irene and I left Baltimore for Washington on the 9:30 a.m. train and what a mob was there! The streets were jammed...Saw President Roosevelt, his wife and all the parade...We heard Roosevelt take the oath of office and give his inaugural speech. Banks in **N.Y.** closed today. The country is in terrible condition. I only hope the new President can do something...

March 9... Banks are still closed. The downtown is practically deserted...

March 10...The President wants to cut our salaries 15%. What a calamity that would be...

March 13...Today, one of the men in my office won \$1,000 on a \$2 ticket on the Cuban sweepstakes. Imagine! I think I was more thrilled than he...

April 4 ...Went to the Met with **Lou**. Afterwards we came home and he didn't leave til real late. I think he is a little too fast for me. He began giving me a line—that I was very naive and all that bunk. He may call me next week, but he can call all he wants—I am not in as far as he's concerned.

April 5 ...Dad gave me the devil for staying up so late last night and I **sassed** him...

April 17 ...Irene, **Zeida**, Sonny and I went to see the movie "King Kong". I was so disappointed. I expected so much more...

May 1 ...Saw the May Day Parade of some 150 stragglers—Communists—a pitiful exhibition...

May 15 ...I smoked some—am learning to smoke through my nose. If Dad only knew!

May 31 ...Hannah asked me over tomorrow night—she is having boys over. I wonder how it will turn out—probably someone I won't like; it usually happens that way, doesn't it?

June 1 ...At night over to Hannah's apartment. Two boys came over, Phil and Dave. Did I fall for Phil and how!...We had the grandest time—talked, danced...! felt as if I had known him for ages. He walked me home—(2a.m.) and kissed me good night—a quick little kiss. I am so thrilled—I think he liked me—I know I liked him.

June 2 To work as usual... Phil called me at night re a date for Sunday night. He is one peach, all right, all right...

June 6 ...Phil and I went to Druid Hill Park and talked and talked. Diary I think I am in love at last—I can't get him out of my mind. He is so nice and has such wonderful ways. I wish that time would stand still. One minute after 12 I kissed Phil and wished him many happy returns on his birthday—He is 24 years old.

June 12 ...Phil came over at night with several of his boyfriends but it fell quite flat—something was wrong...

June 13 ...Well, it looks like the Bureau of Prohibition is just about done for and I wonder what I'll be doing in a month or so—whether I'll have a job or not...

July 1 ...In the evening Phil called me to get Zeida and could we go double dating...I refused and he was some angry—has he a temper, whew!...

July 3 ...Phil called for me with his friends—and I hate them—I will never go out with them anymore. I hate all men anyway (for the time being).

July 10 ...At night began fixing my wardrobe to go to Atlantic City next week for my vacation...

July 16 Left Marcia's home at 6:30 a.m.; arrived Atlantic City 12:15 p.m. via B&O excursion...

July 18 Up at 11 a.m.. To beach—weather was gorgeous...At night we had dates...We went to the Ambassador and heard Isham Jones and his orchestra—they were wonderful. Sam R. propositioned me after 5 minutes of conversation—what kind of town is this anyway? The boys all proposition you right away. He had a roadster, is staying at the Breakers and is a Harvard student. Well, I refused and he worried me the whole evening. To bed at 2:30 a.m.

July 19 ...To the beach. Met Sam R. and does he have a gorgeous car—boy-oh-boy-oh-boy!...

Three weeks later, Rosalie's vacation has ended and...

August 9 ...My last day at the Bureau of Prohibition for it is abolished at midnight and the new Division of Investigation is established. Everyone at the office is so upset—we wonder if we will be retained in the new Division or not but only time will tell...

August 10 ...At 5:45 p.m. Mr. M. called me at home and told me he had just received a long distance call from Philadelphia and he had good news for me—I was **reappointed**—was I glad and am I happy!...

August 12 ...I am to work in Washington at the main office next week and am I thrilled—I don't mean maybe.

August 28 ...Reported to Washington via **B&O** train this morning. Had to get up at 6:10 a.m. Whew! I know I won't like this commuting business much, but what can I do—I have a job and guess I have plenty to be thankful for...

September 1 ...At night with Irene, Mary and Sonny to see Jean **Harlow** in "Hold Your Man"...

October 13 ...At night **Lil** called me and we went roller skating in Druid Hill Park... We were a crowd of about 10 girls. Gee, we sure did have such fun and I didn't even fall once; can you feature that!...

November 12 Home today. Over to **Lil's**. **Stan** was there with two fellows and, after looking us over, they left—and did we boil over—I should say so and what we didn't say—whew!

November 23 ...Went to the Fox to see "Blond Bombshell" and, on stage, the "Student Prince". Goodness, do they soak a person, 66 cents a ticket!

December 30, 1933 ...When I listen to sweet music, I just feel like crying—I guess I am getting sentimental in my old age—

Thus, ends Rosalie's diary for 1933.

Now, We'll fast forward to 1993 skipping over the cruise Rosalie took in 1937 where she met a fellow passenger from Cincinnati. Maybe a future Literary Club paper could detail their shipboard romance, whirlwind long distance courtship, their elopement and marriage. Tonight we'll also not discuss Rosalie's moves, first from Baltimore to Cincinnati, then to Indianapolis where her two sons were born, then back to Cincinnati where, many years later, she became a widow.

No, now we'll focus on 1993 when Rosalie is confined to a bed with **Parkinson's** disease? Or **Alzheimer's**? Or both? (Depends upon which other doctors you asked). But certainly she was suffering dementia.

Her sons happened to find Rosalie's diaries from 1932 and 1933 and sometimes they would read the diaries to Rosalie while she lay in bed.

When her sons read aloud to her from the diaries, Rosalie could not comprehend that it was

she, Rosalie, who had written the words many years ago. When they would read an entry from young Rosalie's life, old, 82-year-old, Rosalie would ask, "Why did she do that?" or inquire as to who someone mentioned in the diaries was. Her sons would say, "The Rosalie in the diaries is you, you Mom, you wrote these words".

But, because of the dementia she was unable to understand. She thought the diaries were a story describing the life of someone else, not her.

Her sons thought of many things while reading Rosalie's diaries. They thought how different the conservative, somewhat staid woman who had raised them was from the young woman in the diaries who was interested in boys, clothes and talked in the slang of the times.

But some things were the same. They recognized the handwriting in the diaries as identical to that of their Mother. They discerned that young Rosalie had a serious side, an intellectual bent, and loved to read, just like the more mature Rosalie they knew, and loved, the Rosalie who raised them.

The sons thought of the many relatives and friends who were alive and vibrant in these diaries from sixty years ago. Of course they knew Rosalie's sisters and brother—Irene, Mary, Zeida and Sonny (actually Richard) who were their aunts and uncle. They knew Rosalie's father, their grandfather, but the sons were raised in Indianapolis and Cincinnati and not in Baltimore, so they did not know Rosalie's cousins, her aunts and uncles, her Baltimore friends. Maybe they met some of these people when their Mother took them on the train for yearly visits to Baltimore. But they were just children at the time and didn't pay much attention to such old fogies. Of course in 1993 Rosalie was too confused to be asked who "X" was or what ever happened to cousin "Y".

Rosalie's sons thought of grandmothers. They never knew their grandmothers. Rosalie's mother died long before Rosalie's sons were born. Their father's mother, Rosalie's mother-in-law, died when Rosalie's eldest son was just eight months old. No grandmothers. No "Over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house we go" for them.

They also reflected on the fact that Rosalie's mother, their grandmother, died when she was only 48. Rosalie's younger son was already 48! And her elder son was 53.

As they read the diaries, Rosalie's sons thought that maybe turmoil is the normal human condition and that periods of relative calm are merely transitory. 1932 and 1933, the depths of the depression—bank closings, pay cuts, lost jobs, communists marching, desperation.

Rosalie's sons noted that while there were some references in the diaries to national affairs—Roosevelt, Lindbergh, there was absolutely nothing said about international events and 1933 was the year Hitler came to power!

Also, there was no mention of crime or personal safety in the diaries. Rosalie and her sisters were young women living in a big city, Baltimore. This was during Prohibition, the Depression. Rosalie went out at night all the time but expressed no fear or trepidation. Nothing was said about mugging, robbery or worse crimes.

Rosalie's sons considered how people interacted in the 1932 and 1933 pre-television age. They visited back and forth, attended lectures, were in clubs; but did not lead solitary lives. This aspect of human existence in the U.S. certainly changed in sixty years—most people are glued to the TV, night after night, alone.

As they read the diaries Rosalie's sons noted that the division, tension, war (what is the right word?) between the sexes had not changed during the past six decades. The early 1930's men made advances, propositioned women, sometimes didn't communicate well with females, sometimes gave lines, sometimes "asked the impossible". The women wondered how men really felt, were exasperated that the men they didn't like liked them and the men they cared for often didn't ask them out. The pitfalls of dating—wrong first impressions, mix-ups, chance, getting to know the real person, seem timeless.

Rosalie's mental and physical condition continued to deteriorate. On June 23, 1993 Rosalie, my mother, passed away.