



Alene Wiederhold Cottrell

February 4, 1927 - April 8, 2015

Alene Annie Wiederhold Cottrell was born on February 4, 1927 in a tenant house on the Louis Wiederhold Place north of Deanville in Burleson County. She was the 8th of 12 born to Robert (1885-1972) and Alma (Klagmann) (1894-1979), between 1913-1933. A third generation Texas born Lutheran German, with linkage to an 1850 migration from northern Germany, Alene was the first to enter public school speaking English.

The house had only one double wall. Brother Albert (b.1913) described the house as the one across the Southern Pacific tracks that looked like school was out at recess. Her Papa was a hard scramble livestock trader, farmer, cowman, dip vat inspector, tenant farmer, share cropper, butcher; Mama a hoeing, picking, cooking, sewing, washing, canning, poultry tending house wife, raising 8 sons and 4 daughters to adulthood.

Siblings Joyce (1929) and Robert (1930) entered life at the Louis Wiederhold Place, while J.C (b.1932) and Laverne (b.1933) were born at the Piwetz Place. The family relocated four times during the Great Depression. Alene skipped the second grade, attending schools in Deanville (1933-37) and Dime Box (1938-43). Alene began writing letters in 1934, saving all the replies. Letters were her life.

The letters document graduation at sixteen (1943) from Dime Box H.S.,

moving to Hearne in the fall of 1943 to nanny Landlord Fox's children; then enrolling in Caldwell vocational nursing school, rooming with her Grandma Magdelina Klagmann (Doekel) in the Maud Reeves boarding house.

Images of Lee Roy (b.1915) riding a tank in the Chihuahuan Desert, Edgar (1917) in a fox hole on Anzio Beach, Italy, and MP Ervin (b.1924) in the Wyoming mountains emerged from the letters. The WWII brothers in service spoke resonantly in their letters home. Wilburn (b.1920) and Marlin (1922), laboring in the Panhandle's alfalfa fields forking hay. A never opened 1943 letter returned "Killed In Action" from brother-in-law J.E. Reeves (d.12/8/43) near Rapido River in Italy, sister Viola's first husband.

Much to the chagrin of her family, Alene dropped out of nursing school and moved to Austin to be the elevator operator at Seton Hospital (June 1944). After several months of "ups and downs", Alene was promoted to bookkeeping and working the front desk. She wore a uniform. Living at 2710 Rio Grande, a boarding house across from Seton Hospital, with the Kornegay sisters from Caldwell, she embraced city life, the war effort, and her job. The hospital administrator was Sister Virginia and the resident physician Doctor Terrence.

There were many letters to Bergstom and Camp Swift servicemen oversea, some returned MIA or KIA. An entry about dancing all night at Bergstom on V-E Day, May 8, 1945; while Alene was a teetotaler, she proudly noted the base's consumption of 400,000 bottles of beer and going to work from the celebration. Servicemen deaths and disabilities were only mentioned in passing. The letters were about normalcy, about using the war coupons to get ice for ice crème, going to the Triple X for a chocolate shake, possum hunting with her younger brothers, Robert and J.C., bicycling to Barton Springs, catching the bus home to go dancing with Ruby Lee Grundman (b.1921).

Alene's 1945 W-2 total gross earnings from Seton were \$1066. The siblings sent money home. No reference in the letters about the two biggest family calamities during this era, the war death of brother-in-law Reeves (1943) or the first grandchild Larry's (b.1941) polio (1944).

The ink shows a 1946 courtship with a local Czech American from the Blaha clan, James Cottrell (b.1924), who had been wounded in Brest, France (w.9/11/44), who upon returning to the mainland on a hospital ship, first touched land in Virginia, and was hospitalized for months at Brook Army Hospital in San Antonio; then a flurry of sibling nuptials (Viola b.1918, Edgar) and her own to James (m.11/11/46).

A bride at nineteen. A mother at twenty (Virginia). A second child (Terry) and the purchase of "The Place" for \$60 an acre - the 150 acre Marburger tenant farm on the GI Bill. They moved in 1953 to 1043 Stayton to live at the west end of the H.S. ball diamond next to her mother-in-law Mary Cottrell (1882-1959). In 1957 Alene enrolled at Mary Hardin Baylor in Belton to become a home economics teacher. She took a full load and worked nights as a waitress. There are letters canvassing Lyndon Johnson and Ralph Yarbrough for the position of Dime Box Postmaster in 1958.

Postmaster Alene's self described job description included helping the citizens complete all related governmental forms from food stamps to income tax. She would read the Houston Post daily and kept up with world events. She knew everyone in 77853. During her 34 years she never took a day of sick leave. Her most coveted possession (revered) was her Eisenhower Post Master Appointment Notice. She loved Ike. The U.S. flag went up in the morning and down in the evening; she loved the rules, the authority and the letters.

Sisters Lavern and Joyce married the Zwernman brothers and became city

girls, leaving Alene and Viola establishing inseparable bonds. Until Viola death's in 1987 the Cottrells and Kissmans celebrated all the holidays together for 30 years. The sisters were in tandem in all matters of church, school, and state. Republican in a town dominated by the democrats, always relishing the minority position.

Alene was a member of St. John Lutheran Church since 1938. She chaperoned numerous FHA school bus trips to the State Fair of Texas and to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo as her husband drove the bus. She reported the rain to the National Weather Bureau for 25 years, a duty that had passed from Albert Harzke to Gerhard Kissman to Alene. She served the food and cleaned the pots for the Meals on Wheels program and sold tickets at the SPJST dances.

The 1970s were a time of transition as her children graduated from college and started their own careers. During this time, Alene came down with severe arthritis and her solution was to buy a Brown Swiss dairy cow from Brenham and start milking. She passionately raised chickens and bred Cairn and West Highlander terriers. Frugality was always the order of the day. You patched things. She was gamy, once grabbing a pitchfork to bust up a pair of fighting bulls; hoisting sacks of feed and carrying it on one shoulder well into her 70s.

Brother Ervin and husband James died suddenly of heart issues, sister Viola with cancer. The 80's. She focused on her five grandchildren (Darden 1976, Lamar 1977, Aaron 1979, CC 1983, Jamie 1985), actively nurturing and rearing. Great grandchildren Kellyn Gail Hervey (2002), Lawton James Hervey (2003), Stewart Darden Hervey IV (2004), Elizabeth Nichole Hervey (2014) and Henry James Fitzsimmons (2015). She never denied the children. In the early 90s she began feeling the onset on dementia, first slowly, as in forgetting where to throw a particular piece of mail. She fought it to the end. While it took her, she did not yield to it.

The letters are fading away, memories scrambling for place to stay. In 2007, full time attendants were required. No nursing home for Alene; she chose to die at her home of 62 years. She was plain spoken and dogmatic about all matters; from birth to death there was no hubris. Daughter Virginia did not hesitate to see her final wishes fulfilled. Eight years of 24/7 care management was afforded.

P.S. RIP, P.O. Box 118, Dime Box, Texas 77853

Alene is preceded in death by her husband, James Lamar Cottrell; her parents, Robert and Alma (Klagmann) Wiederhold; brothers, Albert (wife Milady), Lee Roy (wife Evelyn), Marlin, and Ervin Wiederhold; sisters, Viola (husband Gerhard) Kissman and Joyce Zwerneman; brother-in-law, Leroy Zwerneman; sister-in-law, Ruby Wiederhold; and son-in-law, John Wayne Shows, Jr.

She is survived by her son, Terry Cottrell and his wife, Mary; daughter, Virginia Shows; brothers, Edgar, Wilburn, Robert (wife Alice), and J.C. (wife Dorothy) Wiederhold; sister, Lavern Zwerneman; brother-in-law, Fred Zwerneman; sisters-in-law, Mildred Wiederhold and Ruth Wiederhold; grandchildren, Darden and Shannon Hervey, Lamar and Kimberly Hervey, Aaron and Michelle Hervey, CC and Brian Fitzsimmons, Jamie and Clint Smithson, Jeff and Kimberly Shows, Danny Shows, Kathleen and Allen Hoover, and Jaime Norris; great-grandchildren, Kellyn, Stewart, and Elizabeth Hervey, Lawton Hervey, Henry Fitzsimmons, Kacey and Derrick Smith, Kelly Shows, Allison, Peyton, and Layne Hoover, Caitlyn, Savannah, Kolbie, Kolton, and Kaden Norris; one great-great-grandchild, Jaxon Smith; and numerous other nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Funeral services for Alene Cottrell will be at 3:00 P.M., Saturday, April 11,

2015 at St. John Lutheran Church, Dime Box, Texas, with burial in Hranice Cemetery following. Visitation will be at St. John Lutheran Church from 2:00 until 3:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 11, 2015.

Pallbearers are Darden Hervey, Lamar Hervey, Aaron Hervey, Clint Smithson, Brian Fitzsimmons, Lawton Hervey, Stewart Hervey.

Family and friends are invited to St. John Lutheran Church Fellowship Annex for refreshments immediately following the graveside service.

The family would like to extend their deepest gratitude to all of her caregivers who stayed with her at her home for the past 8 years and to Encompass Hospice.

Memorials may be made to Hranice Cemetery Fund, 1009 PR 8007, Dime Box, Texas 77853, or to a charity of your choice.

Cemetery Details

Hranice Cemetery

CR 426
Dime Box, TX 77853

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 11. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

St. John Lutheran Church
8235 FM 141
Dime Box, TX 77853-5019

Church Service

APR 11. 3:00 PM (CT)

St. John Lutheran Church
8235 FM 141
Dime Box, TX 77853-5019

Tribute Wall



“ *Phillips & Luckey Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Alene Wiederhold Cottrell*



Phillips & Luckey Funeral Home - April 09, 2015 at 08:59 PM

CW

Beautifully done! Aunt Alene was so pretty.

Carol Wiederhold Wilson - April 10, 2015 at 02:45 AM

AK

What a loving and heart-touching tribute to a beautiful lady!

Annette Kissman - April 10, 2015 at 10:41 AM

LJ

The video is beautiful! The family is in my thoughts and prayers.

Lee and Diana Johnson - April 10, 2015 at 07:40 PM

OW

I can't possibly count all the many times I spent the night at the Cottrell home growing up. It seems either I was there or Terry was in our home every weekend in our younger years. I have so many memories of Aunt Alene from those years. She was caring and loving like no other. A person that was always doing something. She was not happy unless she was busy.

A community service commitment keeps me from coming today to say goodbye, but please know that all of you in her family are in my thoughts and prayers this day. She is in the arms of her Lord and Savior and free of the pain and burdens of this world.

Otto Wiederhold

Otto Wiederhold - April 11, 2015 at 06:20 AM

HM

We are sorry for your loss. You now have a special angel in heaven watching over you. Prayers for all of the family and God Bless! Howard & Janice Meyer

Howard & Janice Meyer - April 11, 2015 at 06:47 AM

RF

Our thoughts and prayers are with ya'll and know that we will keep ya'll In our hearts during this time of sorrow. Ricky and Doris ford

Rick and Doris Ford - April 11, 2015 at 01:14 PM



“ 74 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Phillips & Luckey Funeral Home - April 09, 2015 at 08:44 PM

BW

“ have many fond memories of Aunt Alene. She was always good to me. I remember spending nights with Virginia and having the most wonderful pancakes for breakfast the next morning. When I got married, she wanted all the girls in my wedding and me to get dressed at her home. I really appreciated the favor and always remembered it. My prayers are with the family.

Barbara wiederhold Wenzel - April 09, 2015 at 08:34 PM



“ Dreams From the Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Alene Wiederhold Cottrell.



April 09, 2015 at 04:25 PM



“ Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Alene Wiederhold Cottrell.



April 09, 2015 at 02:33 PM