

## Chapter Nineteen

### RUTH CARPENTER (Mrs. James C. Woodley)

#### 1918: Evanston, Illinois

There are really only two outstanding events in the past five years for me. First, a husband, James Chester Woodley, and a daughter, Mary Belle. This May we celebrate our fourth wedding anniversary, and in June, Mary Belle's second birthday. I'll admit this is a feeble record for the average 1908-er.

In between times we have managed to travel a bit, and I have seen a good many 1908 girls. We lived in the suburbs of New York City from the time we were married until this Christmas, when we returned to Evanston — permanently, we hope.

Of course, the past year has been full of only one thing for all of us, and I expect "war work" would cover most of our activities. Those of you who knew my brothers may be interested to know that Kenneth is a flying cadet and Farrington is just emerging from the third Officers' Training Camp.

The best of luck to all of you, and may Wellesley girls back up our men in this struggle, and take their place in alleviating some of the misery caused by this terrible war.

#### 1923: Evanston, Illinois

So far as I can see, I've been doing about the same things that I did

in the five years previous, — only more so. Two children instead of one, a ten room house instead of a five room apartment, and a little more responsibility in Church and Club and other outside things. Summers on a ranch, winters in the city, a little traveling in between, and an awfully good time all the time.

It becomes increasingly evident that the name of Wellesley will never shine more brightly from any brilliant exploits of mine, but it's equally true that my life is still colored by the four wonderful years I spent there, and I'm already coveting the same experience for our small daughter.

### 1928: Evanston, Illinois

Gaily, dashing over forty-eleven reasons why I haven't written sooner, I'll begin where I left off five years ago:

Well, the high light of this semi-decade with us was a short, but crammed-to-the-brim trip to France. Breaking our usual custom of vacationing in Colorado, we decided to educate the children in things historical and douse them in salt water. Ergo, as soon as school closed, three years ago this summer, the children and I motored to Boston via Wellesley. A few days of monuments and graveyards gave the children the proper historical background, and we drove on for a simple six weeks on Cape Cod. I spent the time exclusively in the company of the children. The idea was something healthful, wholesome, and sane for them. But I can assure you that six weeks, three meals a day, of childish games and conversation, without a break, put me on the border land of the insane. The last week found me on the ragged edge so I picked up and dashed to Nantucket. On to New York, where I dropped the children on our cousin's farm, and we sailed for France. A little Citrocin met us on the dock at Havre and for exactly thirty days we tore all over rural France. I won't even start to tell you any of our wonderful or thrilling adventures, but I can assure you we had them.

Other summers have found us on our ranch in Colorado. Why don't you come to visit? We always have room for one more.

Up to last year my odd moments were mainly spent on boards and

Parent and Teacher Committee meetings, but now I smile gaily at all committees and fall back comfortably on my "job." Courses at Northwestern School of Commerce have furnished me with some talking material, and now my business card reads "Bond Department, City National Bank and Trust Company of Evanston." If anyone is bewildered as to how to take care of her ill-gotten gains, just write your Investment Advisor, Ruth Carpenter Woodley.

### 1933: Evanston, Illinois

My summers, of course, have been spent for good many years on the ranch, and, for the past three summers, a Vassar friend, has joined me in running a regular Dude Ranch. It used to be fun when we were out there with my own family and a friend or two, but now that we have up to twenty our summers are paced full of excitement. It is a business that I like, however, and we enjoy the pack trips and all the other good times on a ranch in the Rocky Mountains. Last summer we tried an innovation that we shall repeat this year — a wild horse hunt in what we call the Sand Wash country, about fifty miles from anything, and where literally thousands of unbranded bands of wild horses roam. You all know the latch string is always out for Wellesley, 1908. Last summer we were delighted to have the two McIntoshes bring Edna Hubley over, as they did Evelyn Knowlton a couple of years ago, — in fact, we count a trip to Slater, where Mildred McIntosh holds forth, as one of our prize excursions from the LXBar Ranch, and Mildred as the main *pièce de résistance*.

Last year Margaret McIntosh Boice was foolish enough to invite us over for the Frontier Days at Cheyenne, and we took her up six strong and had the time of our lives. She and her husband are the prime movers in everything — good, bad, and indifferent — from the State House to Church, in Cheyenne.

Mary Belle finishes high school this spring and, if the Fates so decree, will enter Wellesley next fall. She is tall, good-looking — favoring neither her father or mother; and Bobby is 15, dirty, and noisy, — sleeps with his dog, rides like an Indian, and is in Junior High School.

Chester and I are tough, somewhat battered by the depression but still going strong.

Two winters with the Unemployed Relief Service in Chicago have taken me back into Social Service Work, which I did for several years before we were married, and I am RED enough to be barred from the United States mails.

I had a gorgeous time last fall going back to Wellesley to plan for the Summer Institute; the foliage was at its height and the campus glorious.

*Editor's note:* Of Ruth's children, Mildred McIntosh says: — "Bobby is in the betwixt and between age, and Mary Belle is a tall, willowy girl, lovely and attractive. I saw her, rather shy, in her first formal party dress, and I see her every summer, brown as a berry, in overalls, ready for any adventure that comes along." Ruth herself is described by other class mates as "racey and uproarious as ever, — not tamed by anything"; "full of inexhaustible energy"; "a busy person — with a new fad every time I see her."

### 1940: Evanston, Illinois

For the past ten years I've been in a round of activities which have become more or less stereotyped except for the interests of growing children. Both Mary Belle and Bob emerged from Junior High after quite a struggle and I was no longer required to spend about half my time in the principal's office. From there on their interests have widened and Mary Belle is through school and Bob in college. Both children have seemed to know from the start what they wanted to do.

Since my father's death my mother and sister Marian have combined households with us and, with my mother to take charge of the home, it has been possible for me to keep out of mischief with a job. For several years I barged into a new field for me, of case working in an Illinois relief agency and it was lots of fun being "in" on new and untried fields of social experiments. For the past three years I have returned to my own profession of recreation and again am experimenting

with the so-called democratic processes in public recreation sponsored by the Work Projects administration. As time goes on my work becomes more interesting and at present I have the responsibility of trying to train people to become recreation workers who have been assigned to the W.P.A. because of unemployment. I am still not willing to say that any course of action must be better if it is different, but you all know me well enough to be sure that I am willing to look upon any change as a challenge, and I find the federal government willing to accept the idea that just because it has been done, it may not be the best way. At present there are about five thousand recreation workers in Illinois and we now have three schools located in different parts of the state where they are assigned for short periods of training. We are making use of the principles of progressive education adapting them to adults and are finding that our schools are developing into a kind of workers' college, or folk schools. It keeps me running about the state, but is probably the most interesting thing I have ever done.

The LX BAR RANCH is still a major interest even though the past couple of years have forced me to throw more responsibility on to Elizabeth Stanwood, my partner, and the Woodley children. For the past two years foreign travel has been a competitor of dude ranches, but it is an ill wind that blows nobody good and we are hoping that voyaging across the Atlantic has been sufficiently discouraged so that we will have plenty of dudes this year. As a matter of fact we have been enlarging our equipment gradually through the past ten years and we now have a fine corps of workers associated with us and if any of you are interested, or have friends who think they would enjoy an exhilarating and interesting vacation in Colorado, just a whisper will expose them to our battery of advertising material and letters.

Looking forward to the time when we will be wearing wooden legs and wigs, I have bought twenty-five acres just outside of Tryon, North Carolina in the Blue Ridge Mountains. We really haven't the dimmest idea what we will do with the place but raise azaleas, have a loom and do weaving, and we will probably have a guest house for friends who want to spend vacations in that beautiful part of the country.

Here's hoping to see you lively nineteen eighters at the LX BAR RANCH, and you portly ladies in Tryon to say nothing of a stopover

in Chicago whenever any of you go a-gadding.

### 1950: Tryon, North Carolina

We sold our home in Evanston and live in an old farmhouse, a short distance from Tryon, North Carolina. After Chester's death about a year ago my old friend and former dude ranch partner, Elizabeth Stanwood, and I now live here together. What really keeps us out of mischief is our mail-order business which we call "Tryon Home Products." Like the dude ranch business it is a lot of fun and there is hardly a cove or real Old Timer in this section of the Blue Ridge Mountains that we do not know. We specialize in handmade baskets filled with products from our farm, wild berry jams, peanuts, water-ground cornmeal and honey.

In between times I try to do a little weaving, especially with native material. Right now I am using split bamboo cut on the banks of the Pacolet River near our house, to make shades for our south windows.

I haven't taken up with smoking corn-cob pipes but we are fast becoming typical mountaineers.

Our latch string is always out for 1908 travelers and you couldn't find a lovelier spot to visit, especially in the early spring and late fall months.

### 1958: Tryon, North Carolina

Sitting in the same room in the same place, looking out at the same range of the Blue Ridge Mountains would indicate that there had been no change in my life since our last Record. Externally that would seem to be true, but I'm sure we all feel a tension and a feel of urgency in our lives. The issues are so challenging and consequences so full of great good or great evil, sometimes it is difficult to put our lives into the right perspective.

However, Sputniks, or Mutniks, or what have you, we each go our way, probably following the emphases and influences of our college

years. I find that I continue to be most interested in social, economic, and civic activities, so it is still Girl Scouts, the poor underdog Republican Party in North Carolina, with the League of Women Voters and the NAACP thrown in for good measure.

About twenty-five years ago, Elizabeth Stanwood and I built a small three room log cabin, The Chaparral, on the LX Bar Ranch for dudes, and last summer I moved it to Farrington's ranch. I expect to spend three or four months each year there, near my son and his family, and where my daughter and her four children can spend at least a part of the summer. Don't fail to watch out for me when you motor west of the Rockies on Route 40. My mother is 97 years and still travels to Colorado in the summer and to Tryon for the winters.

*Ruth Carpenter (Mrs. James C. Woodley) Died in 1967*