

Kathleen Roode
English War Bride
Lady Nelson
May of 1946



Editor's Note: This account originally appeared in Betty Jean Barnhill's Canadian Studies 4400 project entitled The Stories of Four English war Brides Who Adapted to Canada How the War Bride Society Helped Them to Adapt. It is reproduced with the permission of the subject and Ms. Barnhill.

MR. AND MRS. CARL S. ROODE:



The second interview, conducted with my cousin, Ellen, recalled the lives of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Stewart Roode, her parents. As first cousins, we go back to the 'crib' together, quite literally. While both of the Roodes have passed on, they will remain in our Heart forever. Whenever I read the inscription on their tombstone, located in

Belmont Cemetery, Belmont, Nova Scotia that says, "we'll meet again"; I always smile and am reminded that "Love Conquers All".

Needless to say, Vera Lynn's words rang loud and clear in the minds and hearts of this couple. For whenever one hears the words of the song, "We'll Meet Again", one is constantly reminded of how fragile life is and how important it is to care and love one another.

We'll Meet Again

We'll meet again, don't know where, and don't know when
But I know we'll meet again, some sunny day.
Keep smiling through, just like you always do
Til the blue skies drive the dark clouds far away.
So will you please say "hello" to the folks that I know
Tell them I won't be long,
They'll be happy to know, that as this swanee goes,

I'll be singing this song.
We'll meet again, don't know where, and don't know when.
But I know we'll meet again some sunny day.

During the taped interview with Ellen, the daughter of Carl Stewart and Kathleen (Nee Cator) Roode, one comes to understand the strength of their love each other. They endured through thick and thin, not only the war years, but all the events that Unfolded throughout there forty odd years together in Canada. Ellen shares her memories Of their life together and as well as her own years growing up in Canada away from he Grandparents. Not only does she mention how mother kept her grandparents and English family 'close'; but how this English War Bride fought homesickness and loneliness by keeping a smile and a stiff upper lip, and holding on to a sense of humor that would have you smiling immediately. She also turned to the War Brides Association. Meeting with her friends, such as Betty Vine and others, she was able to keep the faith and have a laugh or two about old times with her War Bride comrades.

Kathleen Roode's contributions to Canada are numerous. She played an active part in sports, such as curling, winning several championships for Canada and in Scotland, where curling originated. As well, she passed on her love of reading, (a book a day), oil paintings, which were distributed among her Canadian sisters and only brother-in-law, and her zest for life, admired by all of us who knew her. Known to resemble the Queen in her youth, she was the Queen of all out hearts.

Her children, Ellen (nee Roode) MacRae and David Roode, both residing in Belmont and Bible hill, Nova Scotia area, carry on with the business that she shared with her husband, Carl Stewart Roode, Hub Craft Building Supplies.

Her grandchildren, John Berfelo, who resides in British Columbia near his father, Johannes Berfelo, Merissa and Carl Matthew Roode, both residing in Truro with their Parents, David and Johanne Roode, as well as step-grandchildren, Elizabeth and David MacRae, fondly remember both grandparents, but were very close to their English Grandmother. As her daughter, Ellen reflected about her mother:

She was a wonderful mother, loved by all. She was a kind person who tried to Help people. She and my father stayed together 'until death us to part', I think They were meant to be. They stuck it out, helped each other, supported each other, Did sports and traveled a lot and loved their families. We were very fortunate to have such good parents. Personally, I feel exactly the same way.

MRS. CARL ROODE:
AN ENGLISH WARBRIDE'S STORY:

LONDON'S NEWS FLASH:
September 3, 1939: War Is Declared!

Kathleen Cator, who was trained as a legal secretary and working in a legal high rise Office in London, England was probably listening to the news on the radio, on that Fateful, Sunday afternoon, of September 3, 1939. However, on the Sunday evening of November 18, 2001, I interviewed this British War Bride's daughter, Mrs. Eleanor MacRae in her home in Belmont, Nova Scotia. In doing so, we went back in time, before the whole world was shocked and worried about what lay ahead.

1938: Summer Olympics:

In the 1938 Summer Olympics, Kathleen Cator was actively involved in several events, such as sprinting, javelin, discus and the hurdle events. According to her daughter, Mrs. Ellen MacRae, her mother was always active in sports throughout her life. Born in Barnett-Harts, London, England, Kathleen was the daughter of Eleanor (Clarke) and Robert Cator. She had one brother who also was named Robert Cator.

LONDON, 1939:

Shortly after the war broke out in 1939, Kathleen was bombed, while at work in Her high-rise legal office in London. Her daughter described the scene her Mother had Told her. She said:

"My mother had to crawl on her hands and knees to get to safety. While she had a few cuts and bruises from the glass and debris, some of her co-workers were badly injured from the blast."

1940: The Meeting Place:

Eleanor said that her father, Carl Stewart Roode, who was born and raised in Belmont, Nova Scotia, had trained as a Paramedic, Paratrooper, and an Engineer before going overseas to war. She said that they met at



a park in London, England in 1940 and that they went to a dance that night. Vera Lynn captures their mood when she sang:

A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square

That same night-the night we met,
There was magic abroad in the air,
There were angels dining at the Ritz,
And a nightingale sang in Berkeley Square.

I may be right, I may be wrong,
But I'm perfectly willing to swear,
That when you turned and smiled at me,
A nightingale sang in Berkeley Square.

The moon that lingered over London town,
Oh, puzzled moon, he wore a frown.
How could he know we two was so in love,
The whole darned world seemed upside down.

The streets of town were paved with stars,
It was such a romantic affair
And as we kissed and said good-night,
A nightingale sang in Berkeley Square.

When dawn came stealing up all golden blue,
To interrupt our rendez-vous.
I still remember how you smiled and said
Was that a dream or was it true?

Our hearts were set, 'twas just as much,
As the tap dancing feet of us there,
Then like an echo, far away,
A nightingale sang in Berkeley Square.

I know that I was there,
That night in Berkeley Square.

1941: Combat Duty and Courtship:

Eleanor said:

"Mom got letters from him but she had no idea where he was. However, it was thought that he stayed in Italy for about a year, before he was transferred to Dieppe and on to Germany, working in the front lines constantly."

Vera Lynn knew exactly what she meant, when she sang:

I'll Pray For You

I'll pray for you, while you're away,
Each night and day, I'll pray for you.

I'll pray for you, 'til troubles cease,
Then you and I will live in peace.

Though my tears are falling
A smile will still remain,

The smile that I'll be saving,
To bring you back again.

My love for you, wills brightly burn,
'Till you return, I'll pray for you.

1942: The Romance Blossomed and They Were Wed:

Through letters and perhaps the occasional leave, their romance blossomed. While Kathleen was keeping busy working and doing her effort for the war, Carl was busy in the front lines as a paramedic. His job was to pick up the wounded, administer first aid and carry the men on his back with a stretcher off the battlefields. I am sure the prayers were the only thing that saw him through during those years of combat. He clung to the smiling picture of his beloved Kathleen.



Again Vera Lynn sang it all, when she sang:

I'll Be Seeing You

Cathedral bells were tolling,
And our hearts sang on.
Was it the spell of Paris?
Or the April dawn?
Who knows if we shall meet again?

But when the morning chimes, ring sweet, again.

I'll be seeing you,
In all the old familiar places,
That my heart and mind embraces,
All day through.

In that small café,
The park across the way,
The children's carousel,
The chestnut trees,
The wishing well.

I'll be seeing you,
In every lovely summer's day,
In everything that's light and gay,
I always think of you that way.
I'll find you in the morning sun,
And when the night is new.

I'll be looking at the moon,
But, I'll be seeing you.
He got a leave to go to London in May 1942.

May 30, 1942: The Wedding and the Honeymoon:

They had an 'at home wedding', in Barnet-Hartz, England, on May 30, 1942.

According to Eleanor, the wedding party consisted of the immediate family, but they went on a honeymoon in Torquay, a beautiful beach resort in England.

Again, when the leave was up, Vera Lynn said it all when she sang:

Rose Of England

Rose of England, thou shalt fade not here,
Proud and bright
From holding, year to year.

Rich shall thy petals be,
As red, white and gold.
Shared by thy warrior
To serve thee of old.

Rose of England,
We'll be England there,
Flower of chivalry,
Beyond compare.

While hand and heart is yours,
To cherish thy prime,
Thou shalt blossom
Till the end of time.

Rose of England,
Thou shalt fade not here.
Proud and bright from blooming
Year to year.

Rich shall thy petals be,
As red, white and gold.
Shared by thy warrior, who served thee of old.

Rose of England,
We'll be England there.
Flower of liberty, beyond compare.
While hand and heart is yours,
To share in thy prime.
Thou shalt blossom till the end of time.

1942 - 1945: The Worry, The Letters, and The Waiting:

After their return, Carl had to leave for duty on the frontlines somewhere in Italy and on to France. Eleanor said, "Mom never knew where he was, but she had this gnawing fear that she would never see him again."

May 6, 1945; The War Ended:

But she was wrong and he did return after the war ended. However, he departed for Canada on the Queen Mary in 1945.

May 1946: The Departure for Canada and a New Start Together:

Kathleen didn't see him again until she left for Canada on the Lady Nelson in May, 1946. After leaving South Hampton, Eleanor said:

"My Mother sailed through rough seas for seven to nine days, was homesick and seasick before they docked at Pier 21, the end of May, 1946."

One can just imagine her feelings, knowing nothing about what she was coming to except that they would be together in time for their fourth anniversary. How ironic the fourth anniversary's traditional gift to each other is flowers. Was it just coincidence?

May 1946: The Homecoming and Meeting His Family:

After the H.M.S. Lady Nelson disembarked, Carl met her at Pier 21. He had traveled to Halifax, N.S. with a couple of his buddies and was waiting for his War Bride.

Her daughter said that she was probably wearing a tailored suit and a pair of high heels. After traveling to Carl's home place in Belmont, N.S., her daughter said that she wondered, "Where am I going? And why did I come?" Although overwhelmed by Carl's large family of eight sisters and one brother, she was well received by the family.

One of the things that she was really impressed about was the friendliness of the people.

1946: The Reality: A New world and A New Job to Do:

When asked what she might have missed, her daughter said, "The subway, street Cars, Mommy and Daddy, London and the shops and the corner stores. She wrote her Mother everyday for a long while after she came to Canada."

Eleanor said that her grandmother, Mrs. Eleanor (Clarke) Cator was a mid-wife in London, England. Her grandfather, Mr. Robert Cator was a Fire Chief, who fought in the Foreign Legion during the First World War. In this manner, she kept very close to her parents and tried to convey and depict her life in Canada to them. They in turn sent her letters and the London daily newspapers, faithfully every month. Carl was just beginning his business as a carpenter and a contractor, while Kathleen, known to us all as 'Kay' did the bookkeeping and the home making.

June 1947: Their First Child is born and their New House is built:

Eleanor was born on June 3, 1947 and she felt that she took after her maternal side. Because she was a nurse, like her grandmother and as well as a secretary, like her Mom.

June, 1949: Their Second Child is born and they have a New Truck:



However, she said that her brother, David Roode, born June, 1949, inherited her parents' love of sports, as well as the task of carrying on the family business, Hub Craft Shop, that changed to Hub Craft Building Supplies, when he grew up.

1950 - 1970: Their Life Together In Truro, Nova Scotia, Canada: Special Events, Awards, and Contributions:

They were very involved in sports, clubs and curling events throughout their married lives. However, Eleanor remembers her mother reading a book a day,

that she got from the library, as well as being involved with activities in her community and churches. She was originally Church of England; but joined St. David's United Church, along with her husband and family.

She said:

"They joined the Curling Club in Truro, they won the championships in Prince George, B.C. and Scotland, where curling originated. Also, Dad was the President of the Lion's Club and the Curling Club."

1960's: The Family outings and Vacations:

Besides going to dances, they went on trips together and with the family. Eleanor remembers going to the Yankee Stadium in New York City with her parents and her brother David. While visiting some relatives, who took them to a fair, Eleanor said that David got sick from eating too many hot dogs and being on a rough ride. She also remembers going camping over to Prince Edward Island and getting rained out. However, Eleanor remembers getting parcels and letters from England faithfully every week. The Christmas parcel was the most eagerly awaited parcel though. She recalled one Christmas, when they received the parcel from England; she couldn't wait to see what was in it.

So, she said, "After Mom and Dad went to bed on Christmas Eve, I woke my brother and told him to come see what we got from Nanny. Protesting that it wasn't Christmas morning, he went with her and they opened every present under the tree. When Mom and Dad got next morning, she said that, "My Mother didn't know who gave what to whom; but the presents have arrived." We laughed over that.

1952: Their Cottage on the Bay of Fundy:

In 1952-53, her father built a cottage for the family on the Bay of Fundy. They went there every weekend and had many wonderful times over the years. Eleanor said that her mother thought the area looked like Devonshire, England and she felt as though she had a touch of home in Canada. We all enjoyed going down for summer holidays to visit and enjoy picking marsh green, digging clams, corn boils and bar-be-ques.

1964: The First Wedding:

Eleanor grew up and married John Berfelo, in Onslow United Church, on December 28, 1964. They moved to Toronto, where they worked until she gave birth to their only son and Carl and Kay's first grandson, John Jr. in November, 1971. While she worked in the office in Sears, Canada, her husband worked at Ford Motors as a mechanic until they were transferred to British Columbia in 1973, where John worked as a street Metalworker. Like her Mother had done, Eleanor kept in touch by writing or phoning every week.

1981-82: The Second Marriage and Wedding Took Place:

Meanwhile, Eleanor and her husband parted and divorced. She remarried Peter MacRac in 1981, and had two stepchildren, Elizabeth and David, to add to the family. Her brother, David grew up and married Joanne in January 1982. They had two children, one daughter, Merissa, born in 1982 and the youngest, a son, Matthew, born in 1985.

March 30, 1985: Carl Stewart Roode Passes Away and Kathleen is a Widowed War Bride:

Unfortunately, Carl passed away with cancer; just before their youngest grandson, Matthew was born. As a widow, Aunt Kay became more involved with the War Brides Association. Her daughter said that she really enjoyed getting together with her War Bride friends and would meet twice each year for their special events. She continued to go to the cottage and the War Brides Association up until her death in October 1992.

Sadly missed; but with fond memories, her daughter said:

She was a wonderful Mother, and friend to all, loved by all and a kind and helpful person to everyone who knew her. I think her and Dad were meant to be, they stuck it out through thick and thin and stayed together, 'til death us do part.' We were very fortunate to have such good parents.

I agreed and thanked Eleanor for sharing the legacy they left with all of us.

To commemorate their memory, I chose Vera Lynn's song, 'We'll Meet Again' because on their tombstone is written, 'Til We Meet Again'.

We'll Meet Again

We'll meet again, don't know where; don't know when,
But I know we'll meet again some sunny day.
Keep smiling through, just like you always do,
'Til the blue skies drives the dark clouds, far away.
So will you please say hello to the folks that I know?
Tell them I won't be long.
They'll be happy to know that as this swanee goes I'll be singing this
song.
We'll meet again, don't know where; don't know when,
But I know we'll meet again, some sunny day.

1990's - 2002: Mrs. Ellen MacRae's Wishes For The Future:

When asked what Mrs. Ellen MacRae wishes for the future, she replied:

I hope to pass on the kindness and family spirit that my parents gave us, and our children, marry and have children. I hope to be a grandmother someday.

While her son, John, resides in British Columbia, her step-daughter, Elizabeth was married last year, 2001 and her step-son, David called to announce a baby-to-be in August 2002.