

# Helen Lucking Diary 1944

Sunday January 9<sup>th</sup>

I drove Bill over to Treasure Island - Gosh I hated to leave him. I gritted my teeth to keep from breaking down. Back to the house and finished loading things into the car and left at 10 a.m. I drove all the way down for it was easier, we thought, that managing lively Lāna, considering my present lack of lap. We arrived in Fresno about 5 and spent the night. We had no trouble getting gas, though many S. F. stations and Pasadena stations were sold out. The rest of the way it was easy, though as a precautionary measure we did not let the tank get much below  $\frac{3}{4}$  full.

I called Helen Wallace from Pasadena. She was in the hospital, but I learned that she presented the world with a 9½ pound son on the 4<sup>th</sup>! John was there that day, though he did have to leave the following day for a new ship in Philadelphia. We left Fresno at 7:30 a.m. and arrived at the house - Mother's and Dad's - at 8 p.m. It had been a surprisingly easy trip and Lāna had been very good all the way, particularly considering her vitality and cramped quarters. Since then, I've been getting things settled in here in the little house - stained and shellacked the desk, which looks great. Bill phoned me last Friday from San Pedro! He'd flown over from San Clemente and was flying back in about six minutes when he phoned - it was certainly wonderful to talk with him. But says he's feeling 100% better now - which is a relief to me. Got a letter from him yesterday - so wonderful. I'm now busily knitting him a scarf. Have it 1/4 done and have just been working on it since Saturday. Gotta go get Lāna up from her nap and give her her lunch. She's adorable - weighs about 33 pounds!

January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1944 - Tuesday

Change of locale again. I'm down in the Valley, settled in the little house - 708 Palm Springs Highway - and Bill is on San Clemente Island, just off Catalina. Will be joining his ship, the *Pritchett*, in Seattle, about the 24th. That's the day I'm expecting small Willie or Wilhelmina, though the doctor's calculations make it the 27th. We had fun in San Francisco. As it turned out, Bill was kept there in charge of the *Pritchett* detail and didn't have to leave until Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>, which day Mother, (who'd arrived by train the 6<sup>th</sup>), Lāna and I left by car for here. Bill and I had had a couple of party nights since last wrote in this - one with the Laceys at the *New Tivoli* which was lots of fun - the password for that night, borrowed from Faye, was "such a light wine! "

February 27<sup>th</sup>, 1944 - Sunday.

From January 24<sup>th</sup> (at least that's when Bill phoned to tell me) until February 9<sup>th</sup> he was in the hospital on Treasure Island with his 5<sup>th</sup> bout of pneumonia! I guess that was a very mild case, but I don't like it at all. Naturally. At the same time - from January 27 to February 6<sup>th</sup>, I was in the hospital, too - little Billy III arrived January 27<sup>th</sup> at 5:15 p.m. to the tune of 8 pounds 6 ounces. Has a beautifully shaped head - was kind of thin at first but is filling out apace. Has gained about three pounds. I had a caudal anesthesia so was quite conscious during the whole thing - was most interesting. His eyelashes weren't very long at first but they're quite long now and getting longer all the time.

The day after I got home from the hospital I came down with a violent case of intestinal flu - Lord was I sick for about four days! Mother was with me until Thursday the 10<sup>th</sup> when Dorothy Ridlen, a trained nurse - Army wife - came. She's been with me ever since except for weekends and nights when her husband was in. Gram<sup>1</sup> got a cold the day after I got home from the hospital - she'd been here visiting Catherine's so we took Lāna back from Cath and two days later Lāna came down with the bug I had. She was a pretty sick little girl for a couple of days. We took sulfaquanadine and some powder and it finally fixed us up. Bill phoned Monday the 7<sup>th</sup> and I had a hard time sounding fit and healthy but guess I managed it OK. His ship is in San Diego for shake down now - will be there about another couple of weeks. Keep hoping he'll get a few hours off to see his little son - but it seems doubtful - very - for the near future. He phoned me yesterday. So wonderful.

We've been having a week of rain - and quantities of snow on the mountains. It's solid white halfway down and on the north range there's snow, too! Amazing!! Have never seen so much here. I hope we don't get a hot spell now to send it all down in a flood!

Mary Beth died last Tuesday, the 22<sup>nd</sup> - in the Stanford Hospital, San Francisco. Had cancer all through her, I guess. Golly, it just doesn't seem right - she was such a wonderful person. She was only 45 or 46. Though she was lonely since Pete died and particularly since Scribby's marriage. She'd gone up to the hospital - where Scribby is interning - with pleurisy - and a touch of pneumonia - last Sunday he gave her her last shot of morphine and told her it'd take her over the hump of the pneumonia - she never knew that she had cancer. She was quite cheerful - we received a wonderful amusing letter from her just a week before she joined Pete. Scribbie phoned Cath Sunday that Mary Beth had no more than 48 hours to live. Gosh it's so too bad. Although she's happy joining Pete, I feel awfully sad.

Pa Willie and Nancy are coming down Thursday - managed to get a room at the *Indio* for them - Friday they're going down to San Diego for a week with Nancy's sister or cousin or something - and hope to see Bill. Gotta go feed little Billee whose yipping his head off.

Jerry was washed out of OCS at Fort Benning while I was in the hospital - not enough infantry experience - also his three weeks in the hospital with pneumonia probably had something to do with it. He's sunk about it and is biting his nails until he can reapply for OCS. He's now at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri and is a corporal. Just wrote him today - sweet kid.

May 19<sup>th</sup> 1944 - Friday

Golly, 'tis a long time since I've written in this - got a lot to catch up on in it. March 2nd, Pa Willie and Nancy drove down for that night and the next morning. It was fun seeing them. Talked about to Mother and Dad's for drinks, then back here to fix dinner and Mother and Dad brought them in an hour or so later. Had dinner and gabbed and about 10:30 they went back to the *Hotel Indio*. Next morning I had breakfast with them there. 'Twas a beautiful morning, the mountains were solid with snow - so lovely. Then they left about noon for San Diego.

---

<sup>1</sup> This was Catherine's mother, Charlotte Duhme Eustis Ives.

The next day was Mom's birthday and she and Cath were over for a while in the afternoon. The 4<sup>th</sup> was Mother's and Dad's 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary and they and Cath and Kenneth and Louise and Lamson came over for drinks here.

The next A.M. we learned from Cath, whom Uncle The had phoned, that Bill nearly got down here Friday night. Had leave until 6 a.m. Sunday - phoned Uncle The and Uncle The had just two hours before sent back the "C" book - oh Lord. What a disappointment. Got a letter from Bill that Monday though, to send back the "C" book and he might be able to get down here the following weekend. Did so - as soon as it arrived.

Tuesday Cath gave a bridge party for me which was lots of fun. Got the whole house all beautiful for the weekend - new bedroom curtains, the new furniture editions, etc., and steaks and goodies in the ice box for William. However, he didn't get down that weekend, but phoned from Seattle the 14<sup>th</sup> that he had four days leave the following week. He got plane reservations and phoned the 16<sup>th</sup> to say he arrived at Burbank 4:05 on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. (Oh yes, Jerry arrived the 14<sup>th</sup> for a weeks' leave and the next day Mother, Jerry, Louise and I went to Palm Springs, which was fun and I got a new birthday blouse from Lanz - Cath's present.) Jerry left today to go back in a sand storm but it was lots of fun anyway. And that evening Mother and Dad brought him in an hour before his bus left and we gabbed and had a beer. And about 10:30 that same evening I got a wire from Bill saying he'd arrive in Burbank at 7:30 p.m. the 21<sup>st</sup> - so I stayed up half the night doing the things I had planned to do the following day, like washing my hair, putting the last coat of nail polish on, pressing things and such. Dorothy, the nurse, had left a week or ten days earlier, so Cath came in to stay with the kids while I went up to get Bill - left at 1:30 the afternoon of the 21<sup>st</sup> (the last of our San Francisco "C" book came in handy!), saw Pat in Claremont, Grammy in Pasadena and from there over to the airport where I arrived at 7 p.m. And Bill arrived at 7:30 and golly it was wonderful to see him! Up until I actually saw him though, I was prepared to grab a train to meet him in S. F. in case priority hadn't been high enough for him to get to L.A. We went out to the Copper Room and had some old fashioned and I made an attempt at eating some dinner. Bill had had his on the plane. We called up the Monterey Auto Court and got a room for the night, called Bill's Dad in Ojai. Oh Golly it was heavenly being with that wonderful guy again!!!!

The next morning, Wednesday, we drove back to the Valley, stopping to see Gram and Pat on the way. Arrived about 2 or 2:30 that afternoon. So wonderful to have Bill home with his little family! And the families came over for some drinkies in the afternoon and within about an hour of the six of us tossed off seven quarts of beer! And Mother and Cath had only a glass apiece! After they left we read the Sunday funnies which I'd saved, played with the younguns, had a steak and salad dinner with 3 desserts to choose from! Boiled custard, chocolate cake 'n' applesauce! Thursday morning we foodled around and went out to the families for a while and had 12 snaps taken of all four of us together (which turned out well too), had luncheon with Catherine. Then back home and got ready to leave for Pasadena.

Mother came in to stay with the youngsters and we left about 3:30. Had dinner at Padua Hills - Oh Gosh we had fun! Then a drink at *Sportsman's Tavern* - then on to *Eaton's* at Santa Anita where we had several drinks in the bar and held hands and talked and had

such fun. I'm sure anyone that noticed us must've of been sure we were newlyweds. Our life together is a constant honeymoon. Then we spent the night at the *Monterey* again, and the next morning had breakfast in Burbank and then to the airport where Bill's plane left at 10. Golly, those 2 ½ days certainly flew by! But Golly they were heavenly! Stopped for a minute at American Airlines office and said "hi" to Dottie Thomas. Then drove to L.A. and picked up Helen Wallace and son Andy and we came down to the Valley.

It was good to have her with me for I was turrible blue - that night we had lots of drinks and gabbed until about 12:30, then Helen turned in, I wrote Bill and turned in myself. Helen stayed a week with me and we rode horseback a couple of times and that's about all extra curricular, for Cath was out of the Valley and we couldn't get a baby tender most of the time either. Had a dinner at Mother's that Thursday night and took the kids with us. Helen left on the 7:10 train Friday morning. It was fun while she was here. April 1st I planted a whole bunch of seeds - flowers - around the house. The 5<sup>th</sup> was Dad's birthday and they came over for a couple of drinks with me. The 10th he left for Nebraska for the planting season. May 5<sup>th</sup> Pat gave a birthday party for Bax<sup>2</sup> who's in England now. The 9th Mrs. Webb gave a bridge party and the baby tender didn't show up so Mom insisted on staying with the kidlets and I took Cath down. Oh yes, the 29<sup>th</sup> of March Mother, Cath, Pat and I went to Palm Springs - I bought 2 yummy pairs of wedgies - one high heeled and one low heeled - the first shoes I'd gotten since last summer in Miami! Not a great deal goes on these days - Flea Russell Pat for a couple of weeks. El Curtis, Mary Beth's sister, was down for a week and Dinks \_\_\_\_\_, a friend of Pat's, was down for a week and left yesterday. Last night got a baby tender and Mother and I had dinner at Cath's. The Webbs were there and the Gridleys dropped in just as we sat down to dinner and we prevailed on them to stay for dinner but they left shortly afterward - played bridge until 10:30 - then home and the adhesive on Billy's tummy had come partly off so I took the rest of it off and it was blistered underneath. Taking off the adhesive broke the blister - a big one - 1½ inch square at least. Poor Billy. Phoned Doc Morris to find out what to do - and did it and then rocked Billy in my arms for nearly two hours. He finally went to sleep and I got to bed at one o'clock a.m.! Poor little kidlet. It hurt him so and pulling off the top of the unbroken part of the blistering just about finished me! It seemed to be lots better today though. Going to take him in tomorrow to see Doc Morris just to be sure everything is OK.

Bill's now a shellback - wrote the most hilarious letter describing the initiation! Which I received a day before yesterday. I'll stop now and write my daily letter to him. I keep plenty busy these days at gardening, taking care of the kids, the house and yard. Finished the cross word puzzle dictionary the other day. I keep a notebook of Pacific naval events, and seemed to have generally more to do than time to do it. Lana has outgrown her playpen - has learned to climb out of it. So now have a harness for her with a long clothesline attached. She talks a blue streak but not very intelligible. Says a few words - understands lots of things though. And she eats by herself now, rather messy, but she'll learn. She's been drinking water for cup by herself for a couple of months or so, though. She's a jitterbug, too. To any peppy radio

---

<sup>2</sup> This was Pat's first husband, Baxter Starbuck.

tune. Billy is a big youngster. Is over 2 pounds heavier than 1½ inches taller and Andy's over three weeks older than Billy and weighed 1 pounds 2 ounces more at birth!! Helen writes that John's now Lieut. Comm. Good for him. I hope the war doesn't last long enough for Bill to make Lieut. Comm!!

January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1945 - Thursday

Whoosh - 8 months since I've written in this - will be able to hit nothing but the high spots, for sure! Had quite nice weather until about a week before we (the youngsters and I) went up to the Lake [Lake Arrowhead] July 6th. Perc helped out by taking the cribs, high chair, etc. in the ranch pickup. We met Helen Wallace in San Bernardino and loaded everything from her family's car into the pickup and she and Andy got in with us and we buzzed up the mountain. Arrived a little after noon and tried to get into the wrong house first, but then found the right one, and started the process of getting organized with a long, tall brandy and water, once we got the cribs set up and the youngsters fed and down for their naps. Isabelle Scupham arrived on the 11th - swell person. The house is perfectly perfect. I took Bill's old room, both because I wanted it and because as the hostess I'd have felt a little funny taking over the best room in the house. I loved having Bill's room, to picture him in it, writing at the desk, and the items around the rooms that are relics of the summers he's spent there - and the two great tall pines outside the window.

Shortly after Isabelle arrived, I received the first letter from Bill that I'd had in six weeks, and from then on throughout the summer Helen and I heard more or less regularly from our respective hubbies. The children thrived on the mountain air, and we took Lana down to the Lake for a "swim" a number of times, starting with July 23<sup>rd</sup>, her second birthday. That afternoon we had a birthday party and Mrs. Hamilton and daughter Ethel and her daughter Dawn (age 2½) came over for it and it was lots of fun - Lana adores "swimming" - showed absolutely no fear of the water. And every morning while Isabelle was there she took Lana for a long walk and Lana adored Belle Belle, as she called her. Isabelle stayed only a month - left to return to San Francisco about the 10<sup>th</sup> of August. Helen's parents, the Yosts, came up two or three times during the summer, for weekends and brought brother Kirk once - and Catherine and Kenneth, Cath and Gram came about three times, and Sharley Starbuck<sup>3</sup> once and Sally Ann once. 'Twas always lots of fun having guests. But we didn't get much - movies a few times, and horseback rides when we got Ann Krause, the librarian's daughter, to take care of the children. Mother came up a couple of times for about a week and Jerry was there for weekend, down from San Luis Obispo. We went to the Hamilton's once for dinner and to the Eastman's once and as I remember, that was about the limit of our gadding. Oh, yes, we had a cocktail party one Sunday afternoon which was lots of fun. And there was that time I went sailing with a strange man in a Flattie and capsized temporarily, Helen Wallace looking on from the dock. We righted the Flattie without shipping much water, so continued sailing for about a half hour. Sailed twice when Kenneth

---

<sup>3</sup> This was probably Charlotte Starbuck, Baxter's sister, who married Ward French.

was up there which was loads of fun - and then there was the time I got picked up by seven soldiers in the middle of the lake! I in a put-put and they in 2 of 'em. Helen and Andy left about the 18<sup>th</sup> of September - Ruth Emerick, the wife of the doctor on the *Pritchett*, and a nurse herself, had come out that Friday, Helen's family arrived Saturday and she and they left to go back to Los Angeles Sunday and Ruth left Monday! Certainly was grand having Helen spend the summer with me there. I'd not have attempted it without her. She's a peach. Ruth E. a peach, too. Cath, Kenneth, Pat, Gram and Sharley came for the following weekend and that Wednesday or Thursday following, Mother came up and we got things cleaned up and organized and left Saturday afternoon, arriving back in the Valley that night about 8 o'clock. It was a wonderful summer and could have been better only if Bill and I could have been together - twice I went down to Pasadena for a day or so - the last time to get a grey suit and hat, etc. for Bill's anniversary present to me. It was so sweet of him to want me to do it, and it's a stunning outfit. Haven't worn it yet except on September 12<sup>th</sup>, our anniversary. Gosh I miss that guy! The people up at the Lake, Mr. Kirkpatrick (hardware store), Saltmarsh (drugstore) and Stafford (grocery) were all swell and gave us cigarettes (let us buy 'em, that is) and liquor and bananas and baby food and anything else scarce, if they had them. And Marc Cantrell at the stables let me ride his own horse, Lucky, and Mr. Dexter (Greg or John - don't know which brother it was) brought us a whole cord of wood, which lasted us the summer, even in that huge wonderful fireplace! Every time we went riding we'd come by the house just before going back to the stables and give Lana a 15 minute ride on the saddle in front of me. She loves it! And the garage men were awfully good to us, too, when something did go wrong with the car. They were always very busy but fit us in. Everyone up there was swell. That house is a dream and the fireplace - some 10' x 6' x 4' - is the prize of all prizes - hope we can work a like one into our own home when we build it! Sent a couple of Christmas packages to Bill from there and sent the other four after we got down here.

Spent the first two weeks - October 1st to 14th - at the ranch with Mother - and October 1<sup>st</sup> Lana ate some snail bait (5 percent arsenic) and got rushed to the hospital to have her tummy pumped out! Dad left San Bernardino the end of July for New York, and left there about the end of August for Teheran - was in Tehran until about December, then in Cairo about a month and now is on his way back to the States, but don't know when he'll arrive in New York - plane priorities, etc. Jerry was at Aachen for a while after being in more southern France and England for a month or so. Then got trench foot and was in a series of hospitals, in Paris, Cherbourg Peninsula and finally England - but expected to be OK again by the middle of this month. We haven't heard from him since about Christmas time, though, and are plenty anxious for a letter from him. Spent Christmas out of the ranch and it was quite gay - a bountiful Christmas, for sure! And the children got slews of beautiful toys - Lana is still too young to realize much about Christmas and Santa Claus but realized that it was certainly a wonderful day - Billy, too. Though he spent most of the time in his playpen, playing with his toys, walking around watching the goings on and trying to eat the bright colored paper and tinsel icecycles (lead foil, no less).

Lana has grown so much! Nothing that she could wear last summer fits her now - and has grown up so much, too. Talks a lot and learns new words constantly and makes sentences out of them, too. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of this month Billy, following a cold, got an ear

abscess (right ear) and had it lanced. The next day Lana ditto and the next day Lana ditto with the other ear. Two days later - Friday night, she had a bad night and a temperature of 103° the next day, subsiding about 4:30. Mother went home about six and Lana went to sleep about 7 to wake up about 7:30 with temperature 104°. Dr. Morris came over, couldn't find anything wrong. We'd stopped the sulpha pills Friday afternoon because I'd run out of them, and continued not giving them to her in case the temperature was a reaction against them. Sunday she had a temperature but not as high and felt good off and on. No temperature after about 4 p.m. and had a good night but temperature of 104½° in the morning.

Took both youngsters to see Dr. Morris Monday afternoon and he said if she had even 100° the next a.m. to bring her in, so did and she's been in the hospital ever since - undergoing treatment with penicillin and an another type of sulpha. Her temp was normal for nearly 24 hours but rose at 7 last night so she's in for another day - Thought we could bring her home this morning. Maybe tomorrow, I hope. The house is so empty and quiet without her - and clean as a whistle - most unnatural!! She's being good as gold in there, though. Took her "koopee dow" (Kewpie Doll) and some magazines yesterday and from all reports she's quite content and happy and talks daily to all the nurses - sure wish I could see her. It upsets children when parents leave, though, so the nurses would rather they didn't visit them at all. Awful hard not to! Am getting a lot done, however. Ruth Emerick is coming down day after tomorrow for a week, and I'm giving the house a spanking spring cleaning - really looks nice. Waxed the car yesterday. Bill is, or is about to become, exec of his ship - hope that doesn't mean he's now less releasable. And I've been hoping he might be ordered to some shore station in the states so the youngsters and I could be with him.

No more written since January 1945

