

Eleanor, by Doris Thompson

Hello Windsor Garden Writers group, from California.

My relative story is about Eleanor, she and I were married to 2 brothers, John and Alfred. Eleanors mother, Liisa Maki and her 3 sisters immigrated from Ylistaro, Finland in her early 20s. She met and married a Finnish man, John Kutta who was born in the United States. They settled in Fairport Harbour, Ohio.

Their only child Eleanor, was born in 1917. Liisa died in the pandemic flu influenza in 1919 when Eleanor was 2 years old. Eleanor's father was unable to care for her so her mothers sister, Emma and her husband took her in and raised her with their 3 children. They lived in a beautiful town called Chagrin Falls, Ohio.

Eleanor became a good swimmer, learning on the nearby Chagrin River, and then became a good ice skater there in the winter time. After high school there, she met Her future husband John and when they married they went to live in Willoughby, Ohio. They had 2 children, Ann and Jeff.

When the children were 7 and 13, they left Willoughby to live in Los Angeles in 1951. Before they moved, I had met Eleanor's family in Willoughby. And when Alfred and I married, we also moved from Willoughby to Los Angeles.

Eleanor became my best friend and sister for me, i was 20 and Eleanor was 14 years older. We had a lot in common, married to brothers, living in a strange new place and my mother also died when I was 4, but not of the Spanish flu like Eleanor's mother.

Eleanor found work quickly and later worked at Hughes Aircraft till she retired. She was so handy with her hands, all kinds of sewing, she once made a big braided rug for her living room floor. She knew how to refinish furniture and we have some family heirlooms of her work.

She was a wonderful aunt and the kids loved her. And of course, she always loved swimming and being near the water. We bought a vacation place in Baja Mexico on the beach. She loved being there and when she died at age 87, her family had her ashes taken out on the water by the local fisherman's boat, while family stood on the beach watching. And now in this present time of 2020, with this new flu pandemic, our family is thinking about Eleanor's mother's passing with the flu. Take care everyone and be safe.