

*From the
Journals of
Ellen Ernst*

The Widewater Journals

*The green step, the fuller breath
The grand horizon's wider view
The sense of life which knows no death
The life which maketh all things new.*

Introduction

The property at MANOMET was once the summer estate of Dr. & Mrs. Harold Ernst. Harold Clarence Ernst, born in Ohio in 1855, descended from a line of independent, high spirited folk. His grandfather was a prominent leader in his village in Germany. After refusing to obey an order to impose an unfair tax on his villagers, he left his homeland to settle in America. Harold's father, Andrew Ernst, one of the founders of the Horticultural Society of Ohio, inherited this same sense of opposition to injustice. He and his wife, Sarah Otis Ernst, were outspoken abolitionists, and their home in Ohio served as an underground station for escaping slaves. Sarah was also a public figure in the women's suffrage movement. This same pioneering spirit, social consciousness, and commitment to high principles passed on to Harold. He, as well, found these qualities in the wife he chose, Ellen Lunt Frothingham.

Dr. Ernst was admired and respected in the medical field. As a treating physician and Professor of Bacteriology at Harvard Medical School he wrote numerous medical papers, lectured to thousands of students and treated hundreds of patients. His pioneering research in the field of bacteriology made a significant impact in the treatment of infectious diseases, including diphtheria, tuberculosis and rabies. He presented the first lectures in this country on the study of bacteriology. He served as editor of a major medical journal and was for several years the president of a prominent medical association. He served as Major in the US Medical Reserve Corp during the Great War, in charge of the New England Division of Laboratories while still practicing medicine and teaching at Harvard. In his laboratory he made the tuberculin for all of Boston as well as the antitoxin for diphtheria. He accomplished all with tireless dedication and integrity and often in the face of opposition from those who were ignorant to new research in this field.

You might wonder how one man could do so much and from where he garnered the energy and inner resource to achieve these accomplishments. I think the answer, in part, may come once you have stood on the bluffs of Manomet, for he must have found great comfort and respite in his home by the sea. With his devoted wife of nearly 40 years by his side to share the beauty of this land, he must have been renewed and restored with each visit and ready to return from the fields of Manomet to the field of medicine once again.

Dr. Ernst's wife, Ellen, was active in humanitarian affairs in their community of Jamaica Plain. She was President of the Helen Weld House, a community center, whose stated goal was to provide for "the education and improvement of the working people of the community." Ellen was also one of the founding members of the Tuesday Club which is still in existence today, providing the Jamaica Plain community with engaging cultural, educa-

tional and historical programs. She was also an early charter member and founder of one of the earliest schools for the hearing impaired, The Speechreader's Guild. She was one of the founding members of the Footlight Club, a community theatre in Jamaica Plain and it is possibly there that she met Harold Ernst, as he was also one of the early members. In 1883 at the age of 24, Ellen married the 28 year-old aspiring Dr. Harold Ernst. They settled in Jamaica Plain but often spent summer weekends visiting Plymouth. Eventually, they purchased a windswept twenty acres of land located on the bluffs of Manomet overlooking Cape Cod Bay where they built a summer home. While choosing a name for the estate was often the subject of good humored bantering and debate, (for a number of years it was named Cedar Bush), it was eventually given the grand title of Widewater.

In the time that they lived at Widewater, Ellen kept journals, which were referred to as the "House Book". Over the more than thirty years that they summered here, she filled the pages of one book and much of a second. After the passing of Harold and Ellen, their nephew Roger Ernst began a third journal. The following is an attempt to share the essence of these journals and, ultimately, to make known to all who visit Manomet, the gracious and humble spirit of those who first loved this land.

*{1} John Woodford Farlow, Nov. 1922, Memoir of Harold Clarence Ernst

Journals of Ellen L. Ernst

1896 - 1937

A New Home by the Sea

Ellen and Harold Ernst had been married thirteen years when they spent their first night in their new summer home above the sea. It was the beginning of many leisurely, long vacations to come – sun-kissed spring mornings spent golfing, fishing and gardening, stormy summer afternoons sheltered indoors sharing meals with treasured family and friends, cool October evenings nestled before the fire in the company of their beloved dogs. Ellen's journal entries speak of picnics on the bluff, of star gazing in the evening, and of botany parties with the local ladies.

Ellen's first journal begins with the entry:

The house first slept in August 8th, 1896. The large upper room cleared for occupancy. All else in dire confusion still, with shavings and saw dust and burlapped furniture abounding. Two days later saw a great change of appearance.

*The green step, the fuller breath
The grand horizon's wider view
The sense of life which knows no death
The life which maketh all things new.*

June 14-20, 1897

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E. (Ellen) went down on the 14th to open the house for a botany party. The party followed on the 15th. Following the party came four lovely days & we scoured the fields, beach & woods near Island Pond for flowers, many of which we after wards analyzed & studied. The 17th was passed at Island Pond, where we had lunch. All of the 18th, nearly, in studying on piazza over our many flowers.

One member of the botany party, Clarabel Gilman, writes:

Manomet in June – 'tis rolling green hills, and little ponds in the hollows, and fields snowy with daisies; 'tis curving brown sands, and white dunes with their golden mats of hudsonia; 'tis the fragrance of bayberry leaves, the freshness of sea breezes, and the sweet music of song-sparrows; and away up on the highest bluff, in relief against the blue sky and overlooking the blue sea, 'tis a house of rest, where comfort and kindness and peace have their home.

A Bit of Heaven

With pen in hand, Ellen illuminates the natural beauty surrounding her:

October, 1896

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We rose to see the sun rise that we might grasp all the beauty that the day could give us. Such a sunrise words could not paint it. The morning moon is in the heavens, and a perfect rainbow toward the west, while the sun rose from the Sea, red and clear into a sky flecked with gauzy pink clouds. A sight to bear away in our memories.

May 17, 1897

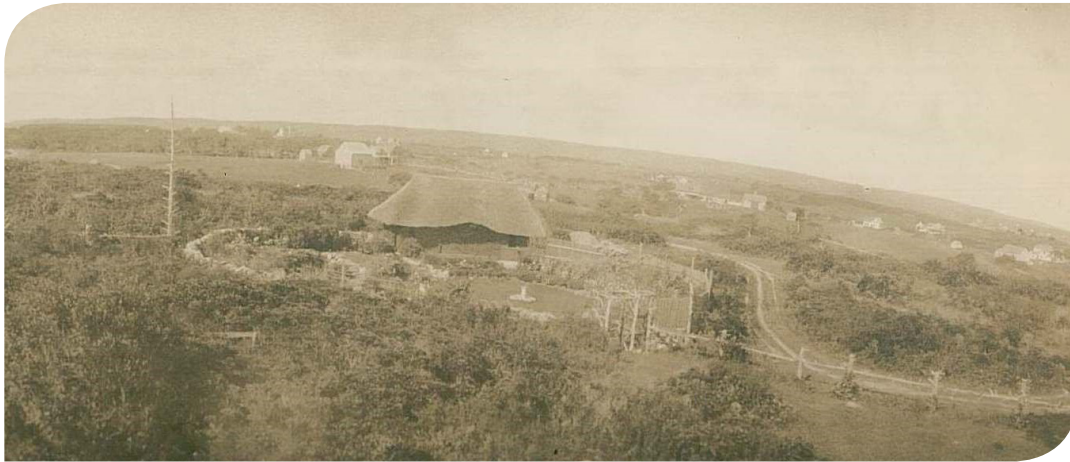
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Passed days of entire delight. Warm enough to sit in the meadows on the sunny side of the rocks and on the beach. Grass turning green, carpets of blue violets, white ones in the bogs, bushes still brown, but making a beautiful soft color, almost purple in the sunshine; birds pouring forth a welcome to summer, and to us, we fancy. We would gladly continue to make part of all this quiet stir of returning life: So peaceful, so inspiring.

May, 29 1900

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Beautiful days... we had a renewal of delicate tender leaves and blossoms. The apple trees a glory and the oaks most perfect in an indescribable softness of color which massed together on the hills and in the woods gave a vaporous ethereal look to the landscape. Our small fruit trees trying, many of them, to do the duty of trees of more experience, and to bear blossoms to the world. We spent some time in frustrating their ambition, robbing them of the buds and blossoms they were putting forth.



Aug 21, 1902

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This evening a wonderful aurora, lasting all through the evening. It formed an arch of lights, like comet tails high up in the heavens, extending almost from horizon to horizon north west to north east. A very wonderful sight. We noticed that the stars were visible through the rays of light.

This summer paradise attracted many visitors, and it seems all were a welcome surprise at any time:

This might be called visitor's day for to our pleasure came in the afternoon Edith Hedge and Kate Ellis. Then to dinner Thirza & Fred Thayer, and Miss Peaks from Canada, their guest, also Thomas and Laura Russell. In the early afternoon came Mrs. Edward Hedge, and later Esther, Barbara and Harriet Kendall. Mr. R. and Esther to tea, and thus we had a full day among our friends. A wonderful day throughout. Mild, tranquil, sunny, "a bit of heaven broken off" for earth.

Adoring Guests Galore

Not only is Ellen's love and appreciation of this landscape expressed throughout her writing, those sentiments are also expressed by visitors who wrote entries in her journal. Manomet was home and respite for the many that came from near and far to roam its fields and breathe in the ocean air.

*Long days, long weeks of peace and love
Replete with happy augury
Days past and gone for evermore
Oft lived again in memory*

OLGA FROTHINGHAM

*The dancing waters of the Bay
The blue domed splendor of the day
The starry radiance of the night
The Aurora's gleaming spears of light
The Shining stretches of the beach
The white winged seagulls airy reach
The Home with comfort beyond praise
The Garden where Titania plays-
These charms no mortal can forget
They lure us back to Manomet.*

NAOMI BYNNER

Heartfelt was the appreciation and adoration that visitors had for their always gracious and kind hosts. Good humored expressions of affection are evident in the following letters and poems left by visitors:

POEM BY DR. PELHAM WINSLOW WARREN

*When here with "Mine Host" and his sweet little wife
One forgets all the cares, and the worries of life
For we fish, and we play, we sail, and we swim,
Spend the pleasant days outdoors, the stormy ones in.
So this charming, delightful retreat by the sea
Brings joy, health, and happiness always to me.*



POEM BY REVEREND LANGDON FROTHINGHAM

*Sun upon the water
West wind strong and free
Where's the doctor and his wife?
Fishing in the sea
Mid day meal is over
Mouse is in the trap
Where's the doctor and his wife?
Gone to take a nap
Full moon in the heavens
Moonlight on the deep
Where's the doctor and his wife?
Talked themselves to sleep.*

Four Legged Friends

Ellen and Dr. Ernst enjoyed not only the companionship of their family and friends, but also found joy in the company of their dogs, their horses, cows and kittens. There are many photographs and heart warming stories of them throughout the journals.

Sept 16, 1905

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Landed in Boston in the early morning, and waiting only for a sight of our newly married sister and her husband, we took an afternoon train and drove over reaching the Holmes at dusk. We shall never forget the enchantment of that drive, and the fragrant air from pine woods and meadows filled with bayberry and sweet fern. Europe had given us no such fragrance in spite of all the interests she opened to us. Robin (the collie) and Robert were waiting at the house, and the dear dog's joy was so touching. Robert told us that it was the first time all summer that he (Robin) had gone up to the house, but that in the morning he had gone up and would not be coaxed away. What whisper of our coming reached his faithful heart?



Oct 5, 1910

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The housewife stays for a week longer, and closes up on October 5, returning to city reluctantly. To make things easy the Professor comes down with an automobile, and wife and dogs and plants are stowed in. The puppy Clyde is getting excited at his ride and is watched carefully and held by his collar for many miles until he seems to feel tranquil. Then in an unguarded moment he suddenly springs out - apparently after a chicken! For a sickening few minutes his mistress thinks he is killed or mortally hurt, but no - he does not show evidence of hurt that we can find, only his cry when

moved shows there is one. He is easily lifted on a piece of cloth and laid in the bottom of the automobile where he rides peacefully till home is reached. Here we send for a veterinarian who says there is a fracture of his one hind leg. So the poor little dog has to wear a plaster cast for three weeks, but this in no way seems to damp his spirits.

Doctor, Lawyers, Captain and Chief

Some of their guests were summer neighbors, others were Dr. Ernst's colleagues from Harvard, and many were family. They were artists, poets, doctors, lawyers, suffragists, politicians, ministers, farmers and firemen. Artists, Maurice Fromkes and Julia Bacon found respite here. Louis Brandeis, later to become Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, visited with his wife, Alice, who was an active, outspoken suffragette.



Another frequent visitor was the doctor's good friend, and Harvard baseball team captain, Frederick Thayer, who invented the catcher's mask in response to the formidable curve ball of Dr. Ernst. (Not a batter could hit it; however, it struck the catcher far too often and thus led to Fred Thayer's invention of the catcher's mask.)

On one particular occasion the Thayers were especially amused by a boundary dispute between Dr. Ernst and his neighbor, Mr. Brooks

October 1900

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An event of some moment was the claim of a right of way across our land to a piece beyond purchased by Mr. Brooks. The Man of the House (Dr. Ernst) having recently bought a large field joining our boundary, had supposed that he thereby limited the right of way to himself and to Mr. Platt who owned the next field, between that bought by Mr. Brooks and ours. Not so thought Brooks who without question began

to haul his lumber through our grounds. An exciting hour was that when the Man of the House, supported by his legal brother, stood on Aug 22nd at his closed gate way, waiting the approach of two loads of lumber, Brooks with swelling front and coatless figure marching before. After a quiet warning that his passage would be considered trespass, he dramatically threw open the gate, and bade his teams pass through. His claim now awaits a legal decision.

At this time our guests were Mr. & Mrs. Thayer, whose relish of the situation was keen.

Cedar Bush

The doctor and his wife apparently had a lively dispute of their own concerning the name of their homestead above the sea. Sister, Jeanie Ernst, reveals this in her poem:

*On August twenty seventh we came
To enjoy this house without a name
A spot albeit unbaptized
Whose beauty might be advertised
So great is its intrinsic charm
Its atmosphere so full of balm
With view widespread of land and sea
Of sunset sky and Cedar Tree!
Alas! This tree! Sole "olive branch"
Is a bone of contention upon this Ranch
Our host proposes in politic tone
That as "Cedar Bushes" this place shall be known"
His fair little wife with a wily smile
Suggests that the matter be "dropped for awhile"
And, tomorrow, from her desk in its nook
Heads her next letter "Awinatook"
It brings a part of her primal plan
To let the name smack of Indian
Content, if her homesteads soubriquet*

*But harmonize with Manomet
The lord of the manse thinks the fisher-folk
Would regard such a name as a simple joke
And into further discussion pushes
By declaring again for "Cedar Bushes"
"But where are your bushes?" his wife rejoins
As a second Indian name she coins
And adds that "Sea Girl", "Idle-Wild"
Or "The Dunes" might do in accents mild-
Ignoring these suggestions ample
He waves triumphantly toward his sample
A'neer his gate-post- his Cedar Tree
Standing gauntly against the Sea!
Perhaps t'would happily solve all if
They could compromise on "Cedar Cliff"
Thus at the end of its second year
Unchristened stands this domus dear
Each summer guest his brain has racked
But the right inspiration lacked
Avowed the place "without a peer"
But left behind no bright idea!
Yet, whether it hath a name or not
Tis a lovely lotus-eating spot
With warmth of welcome and loving cheer
For all the favored who enter here*

Eventually, Ellen yields to her husband's wishes:

A name for the house has always been subject for discussion, and that of Cedar Bush determined on from the first by the man of the House as being the local calling of the hill, received special opposition from his wife. But with that yielding disposition so common to women, she determined at last to sacrifice her prejudices and on his birthday, July 31st offered him the following verses, entitled:

AN ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY A NAME

*Cedar - bravely hast thou stood
Breasting every varying mood,
Borne on Nature's changing face; -
Winter storms have on thee beat,
Summer spent her languid heat,
Yet thou standest in the place
God hath set thee, ready still
With failing life to do his will.*

*Not his will that thou shouldst stand
In sheltered corner of the land,
All thy life a peaceful calm; -
But upon this headland bold,
Overlooking ocean old,
Bid to guide with upheld arm
Men, who sailing on the sea,
Turned their watchful gaze to thee.*

*Strong the root and stout the heart
Needed to fulfill the part
Thou wast called on to perform;
Naked now, and gaunt, and pale,
Torn by many a boisterous gale,
All thy youthful beauty gone,
Victor – still thou wavest high,
Tattered banners to the sky.*

*"Cedar Bush" men quaintly call thee.
Odd the name for aged tree,
Youth forgot long years ago; -
Yet the name hath kindly feeling
For the age that o'er thee stealing,*

*As though men would have thee know
Thou hast won a lasting beauty
Through thy task of strenuous duty.*

*Cedar bush, thy name bestow
On the home which rises now,
Where thy lonely watch was kept.
Like, thee, may it long fulfil
It's destiny upon this hill,
And when years have by its swept,
Still find hearts that love it well,
Coming neath its roof to dwell*

Woven throughout Ellen's journals are stories of experiences at home and abroad which left lasting impressions. The first of these being a trip she and Dr. Ernst took to Japan.

1910

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This year a wonderful thing happened, and a dream of a life-time came true.

We journeyed half way round the world, even to Japan, land of flowers and gardens, and wayside shrines; of smiling children and gentle women and kindly men; of fair scenes and strange dwellings and costumes, and a lasting impression of beautiful Fuji.

Ellen's enchantment with the gardens of Japan was reflected in her own gardens back home.

As to the weather and the gardens-

Two fiercely hot days followed our arrival 9 (at Manomt): Sunday the 25th of June being intense 96 degrees. These were the end of discomfort however, and cool days enabled us to do a lot of work in the gardens and about the trees and vines. It rained just enough to keep the ground in fine condition and make work pleasant. An unusual number of foggy nights and forenoons helped along the vegetation when rain fell no more. A new feature is a lily pond at the foot of the slope. This was dug out and

cemented last autumn, and rich earth put in. This spring a number of fine lily bulbs both white and pink, and striped grass and arrow head, all given from his own pond to us by Mr. W.A. Underwood – were planted and have at once yielded many blossoms.

All things are subject to vicissitudes however, and it soon was manifest that the pond leaked. So it is now being thoroughly overhauled, and the cracks in the bottom cement filled up. Lilies, grass and gold fish meantime occupying tubs. The gold fish are part of the life in the pond, the promise being to eat mosquito larvae, which they accomplish thoroughly.

The flower garden has yielded a mass of blossom, the Japanese Iris were superb; and the sweet William, clove pinks, rambler roses, foxglove, pansies, bergamot give a wealth of color everywhere.

New additions to the garden, a Japanese stone lantern in the garden, a Japanese garden basin placed by the piazza side of the house where the birds can be observed when coming for water and the crackers we put upon it for them, a stone pagoda placed by the cedars back of the lily pond: also two Buddhistic images which are put at the garden gate.

The Garden House

Beneath the nurturing hands of Ellen and her much cherished gardener, Otto Anderson, the golden meadows of Widewater were transformed into a lush garden of jewels above a sparkling emerald sea. Tucked inside a necklace of stone walls, the garden flourished with velvet roses, dancing wands

of larkspur and fox glove, globes of peonies and sweet sprays of honeysuckle. Winding stone paths led the way to wisteria laden arbors, serene lily ponds,





smiling stone Buddhas, Japanese lanterns and apple orchards. Set in the center was the most charming feature of all, a cedar board tea house with leaded glass windows and a curving, thatched roof. The two great doors of the house swung open wide, beckoning visitors in for cool lemonade on a sultry summer day or a cup of steaming tea on a brisk autumn afternoon. The Tea House rose up on the shoulders of the garden like the head of a jaunty old gnome in a straw hat, with a beguiling grin and great, fuzzy brows arching above twinkling eyes.

Although Harold and Ellen did not have children of their own, they had many nieces, nephews and young friends who came to visit often. These children must have felt upon entering the garden that they had journeyed into the realm of fairies, for it held just such magic.



Throughout Ellen's journals she shares stories of local historical events. In July 1914 Ellen tells the story of a memorable event in Massachusetts history.

July 1914 – Opening of the Cape Cod Canal

We were taken back to Pocasset in the afternoon with the children, spent a pleasant evening and night with the family, then in the morning of the 29th we two and Langdon and Olga went by automobile to New Bedford, where we boarded the Rose Standish, secured seats in the very bow, and had the pleasure of being part of the gala official opening of the Cape Cod Canal, a clear day, but very windy. Still this did not discourage us at all, and we held our front seat till the end.

Heavenly were the days of laughter, rest and play, but they were not without times of anxiety and hardship.

Fire and Fury

September 12-18, 1900 – The Pine Barrens Fire

It was with deepest and most heartfelt gratitude that we found ourselves able to help our friends in their distress. A sudden change in the fierce wind which had been blowing all the day of Sept 12, swept a raging forest fire upon their place, and in an incredibly short time reduced to ashes the lovely home which was the delight of all

who had been made welcome there. Watching the extending line of smoke from our piazza, we felt at last that their place might be in danger. So Roger and we two drove up to see if there was anything we could do. Leaving me in the carriage at one side of the line of fire, and where were collected men & women, horses and wagon, trunks & bundles in strange medley, the two men pushed on, and at last brought away Mrs. Briggs & Bussy and the women with them. Glad enough we were to bring them to shelter & protection. Then followed several days of anxiety at the extent of the still active fires, and for Mr. Briggs who was away almost continuously day & night fighting the flames. The long drought of the summer made the woods as easy prey to the flames, and all efforts to quench them seemed in vain, till at last in the night of Sept 15th came a down-pour of rain, which lasted well into the next day, and gave a great sense of relief to us all. For nights the sky had been reddened and for days the horizon clouded by the fires burning both about Manomet and on the Cape. Only a change in the wind one day saved this little town from destruction, it is thought.



Gathering clouds of last evening gave grateful morning of rain, and we woke this morning to find a heavy easterly storm. The waves were rolling in, and we looked now and again at the "Edith" straining at her moorings, and hoped she would ride the storm out as she has before. When just dressed for breakfast we looked again, and lo! The boat was headed straight for shore. It seemed that her end had come. We hastened into oil skins and rubbers, called Robert and made for the beach, where already some men had gathered. These lay the good boat in the sand, the waves rolling her from side to side, and dashing over her. All through the day the men worked to get her hauled up above the high water mark, assisted by several energetic neighbors, and observed by a gathering of spectators. She was found to have escaped all injury in a marvelous way. With all the rocks she had not struck one, and by great good fortune the tide was high, so she was carried over many dangerous rocks which in less deep water she would have struck. It seemed amazing.

July 13, 1918



After a fine week, today had a thick fog all day on the water and over this point. It proved a day of great anxiety, for Otto went in the early morning to take the new dory from Mrs. Platt's beach-where he had put it the night before – round to our

own beach. The fog thickened and he lost his bearings, and we could get no trace of him all day or night. The Life Saving Stations along the coast were notified, and the power boat from our own station was searching constantly, yet no trace of Otto could be found. Even patrol boats from the Charlestown were sent out in the evening by personal request from H. who came down in the afternoon. We had to go to bed still anxious, but in the morning found that he was back safely. He said that he got no sound from any passing craft nor the searchers, that when the fog lifted after five o'clock he could see no land; at 8:00 he saw a light house light which proved to be the Gurnet, and at 11:30 he landed somewhere along Rocky Point, left the dory and walked home, reaching his room at 2:30. We had left a thermos bottle of hot coffee for him and bread, but he did not see it until daylight. He said the dory leaked very badly, and that he was having to stop and bail that which first lost his direction, and constantly confused him afterwards. Fortunately, the sea was perfectly calm.

November 2, 1918

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At nightfall a fierce wind came up, increasing to a hurricane. We were roused many times in the night by its fury, and had two panes of glass blown in. Daylight showed a mild scene of driving snow, and an ocean lashed to raging billows. It seemed as if no object could survive its wrath, and a sense of surrounding disaster impressed us. H., had to make two trips through the blasts to the Holmes' for food, and labored hard to keep great fires burning on the andirons. But the wind seemed by Sunday evening to have penetrated every corner of the main house, and we at last shut ourselves into one room, which we could keep comfortable. The following morning, Monday, we escaped at breakfast time to the Holmes'. The storm had subsided, but the roads were impassable from drifted snow and fallen trees and poles; so we put on tramping costumes, and walked around the beach where inverse waves were still rolling in, and the shore showed the havoc caused by the force of wind and water. The tide had risen nearly to the old Manomet House and the bluffs been much washed away. Our own Cedar Point had suffered, but it had protected our bluff from great wear. The old Cedar tree had bravely withstood the gale, but lost a limb, almost half its life, in the struggle. By afternoon we were able to get to Plymouth. Three hours in a sleigh. Such havoc as met our eyes all along the way, and especially near the Hotel Pilgrim, where the cottages on the beach and the bridges had been swept away. No trains were running, so we spent the night in Plymouth, and on Tuesday morning were able to start for home.

"The worst storm in fifty years" so said the daily papers, recording sad details of loss of life, and suffering at sea. Well could we believe, who though safely housed, had felt its fury.

Of all of Ellen's journal entries there is one which stands out as the most moving and powerful.

The Great War

August 1914 – The Great War

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August 1914 will be written black on the pages of history, and in men's memories who now live, for it has witnessed the wrecking of the World's Peace, and the beginning of a terrible war in Europe. Nations who were outwardly friendly a month ago, are now struggling in fierce and awful combat, and dismay and horror are spread over the face of the earth. Thousands of tourists are stranded in Europe, unable to return, because this catastrophe came seemingly without warning, and ships were at once withdrawn. Among those are two of our brothers, Louis Frothingham, and Paul and his wife.

It is staggering that such a fearful war can be in these days we call "enlightened". The gloom of it is like a blight on life and joy seems to have fled.

Over the next five years, Ellen writes often about the impact of the war both locally and abroad.

1914

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E. comes down to Miss Punchard's whose house is once more open. The Spring has been very cold and very rainy, and all growth is backward. Also, it is very hard to get any work done, for labor is scarce and very high owing to the war, and locally too; partly owing to the building of a large new hotel where many men are being employed in digging and carting and grading. The Great War has caused an alarming scarcity of food, and everyone is urged as a patriotic duty, and in the light of real necessity, to plant as many vegetables as possible, especially potatoes, and to

conserve carefully all surplus, - So of course we are anxious to plant all we can, and behold no one of the farmers on whom we can usually depend to plough for us can do anything.

Robert Owens, who for so many years has been our dependence here, has moved to Plymouth and gone into the Cordage works, and E. could only get three and a half's days help on the garden. This meant really hard work for her in helping uncover and fork over the beds, and in transplanting and planting.

Much canning and drying done this summer in response to the appeals from the Government to conserve everything possible. So though we always do a goodly amount, we did more.

During the war, Ellen organized a group of women and children who gathered monthly at Widewater to make bandages and clothing for the French wounded and displaced.



1915 - From one of the children:

I rolled 1 dozen bandages – and I fold thirty sponges for the French hospitals – and I had a lovely, lovely time.

In 1918 Ellen writes:

For the third season a group of summer neighbors have met here and made surgical dressings for the wounded soldiers in the Great War, dressings which have been

distributed in France through the American Fund for the French wounded. Through their sympathy and faithful work we have been able to contribute a trifle to the great need, and while so doing have created friendships among ourselves which might not have come to pass.

1918

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Again we are privileged to come here and find the same beauty of nature and sense of peace which is so strengthening and uplifting in these days of suffering and horror and suspense.

May 31

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This time at our own dear home, H & E together. Very hot summer days. On Saturday June 1st a long dirigible balloon flew over, a big gray sinister looking thing resembling a huge fish out of its element.

June 14

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The family move for the summer, but H is delayed until the 15th by his work. Now "Major" Ernst, as he has entered the United States Medical Reserve Corps, and is given charge of the epidemic and laboratory in the Northeastern Division. This in addition to his usual work keeps him very busy, and he will have to forego his accustomed summer here, coming down we hope for two days each week for refreshment and rest.



July 22

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This morning's paper tells of an attack by a German submarine on some empty coal barges and tug off Nauset on Sunday morning Barges and tug sunk in full view of people on shore!

Sept 23

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This day the Harvard Medical School opens, and the "Professor" returns to take up his work. Exit the "Major", his special service to the Government being accomplished for the present, re-enter the "Professor".

Boston is in the grip of a very alarming and serious epidemic of influenza, called the "Spanish Influenza", as first Spain and then other countries in Europe have been afflicted with it. There are many deaths resulting in Boston, the highest mortality so far being 202 on October 1st.

Oct 12

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The epidemic continues so severe that even the Harvard Medical School closes its classes from October 10 to 21, so H could be here most of the time. All theatres, entertainments, meetings of every kind, schools & even churches have been closed for three weeks.

With the ending of the Great War, Ellen writes:

June 22, 1919

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Again after five years of the Great War we can look out on the sea and not feel the awful tragedies taking place in the mighty and devastating struggle which has wrecked so many happy homes and taken so many lives.

Lasting Memories

1919

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H. comes back Friday night Oct 3rd. He brings word that a reception will be held at Harvard Sunday afternoon Oct 5th for King Albert of Belgium and Queen Elizabeth, full professors and their wives being invited.

Such an opportunity to stand in the presence of a man whose greatness of soul the World War has shown, could not be missed and we leave by automobile Sunday morning, sending trunks by train.

An afternoon to be remembered; followed on Monday by the ceremony in Saunders Theatre of conferring a degree upon the great Cardinal Mercier of Belgium.

Two stirring occasions to honor two noble, great souled, courageous men.

1921 - August

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The day for which we have all waited when the President of these United States came to Plymouth to honor the Tercentary Celebrations. We watched the President's ship Mayflower as it appeared with its escort of battle ships and destroyers at the entrance of the Cape Cod Canal, and as the impressive formation passed by the headland towards Plymouth. Then we watched the fine procession in Plymouth, and in the evening went to a performance of the beautiful Pageant.

The last performance of the Pageant "The Pilgrim Spirit". This wonderful production, written and directed by Professor Baker of Harvard has made a profound impression. With a seating capacity for 10,000 people, on the last four nights thousands more came hoping to obtain a seat, and were disappointed. Many crowded on to the wharf nearby or stood on side streets to catch a glimpse of the actors as they entered or left the grounds. 130 people took part, Dr. Francis T. Miller, the eminent historian and international authority on pageantry said "The Plymouth pageant was the greatest event of the kind since the ancient Greeks and Romans. Professor Baker has achieved the highest mark in all the centuries of pageantry."

Harold & Ellen—A Love Story

Ellen's affection for Dr. Ernst is warmly felt throughout the journals in her many references to her Beloved, the Man of the House, and the Good Doctor.

April 1900

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A perfect day. Warm, sunny, full of lovely sight and sound. Harold worked over his writing all the morning, and E. and Roger basked in the sunshine and picked bayberries, and put them to boil over the fire in the iron kettle. Before tea, H. practices his oration on us and received the approval of his small and partial audience. After tea we read, in turn, our March diaries. Roger's and Harold's diaries are written at the

request of Mr. Lane, Librarian at Harvard College, who issued a request to certain of the Instructors and students to keep detailed diaries for the month of March. These are to be sealed up for sixty years at least, with the expectation that they may be as interesting at that time, as old journals of today are to us. My diary was kept purely as a matter of personal interest to see what became of a month of days.

September 20th, 1908

Dawned fair and beautiful on our Silver Wedding Day! We gave the whole day over to pleasuring just by ourselves.



September 1915 (a letter)

Well, Beloved, here it is evening and I am back again in this house which without you does not any longer seem like home...Harriet...is to take care of you... and I hope will make you comfortable...William's lighted the little hot water heater so I hope the house will be comfortable for you and you not take cold. The moon is shining, and I know it looks in on you too. Good night and take care of yourself for your loving wife.

The magic and beauty of Widewater never faded for Harold and Ellen, and the comfort and joy it brought them endured through the years.

Behold us about to enter on our twentieth summer in this home above the sea. It hardly seems possible that so many years have come and gone since we first saw the foundation of the house laid, and looked forward to happy possession. No regret has ever touched us at the choice we made, and sea and shore and sky are ever more beautiful to our eyes and hearts. Relatives and friends have shared our joys, and by their presence woven glowing threads of association into our memories.

Manomet

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*A headland pressing to the sea,
Sea spreading to the sky,
A sky o'er bending tenderly
A land where summer lies
Love longing for a boundless life
Life searching for its source
God's love o'er bending human strife
Guides and protects the course*

The Death of Harold C. Ernst

Ellen's last journal entry closes with the poignant account of her dear husband's passing in September of 1922, after a sudden illness.

In the early morning of Wednesday, August 16, we left together for Boston, but only one of us returned; the other stricken by hideous pain on board the boat to Plymouth the following morning, in the midst of full enjoyment, was carried to the Jordan hospital there to pass through an operation for a hidden and unsuspected trouble, which seemed to make recovery impossible: yet by skilled care of devoted physician friends, by faithful nursing, by an atmosphere of cheer and hopefulness, and by the vitality of a body pure and normally vigorous, life almost was the victory in a struggle of three long weeks duration.

At last the exhausted frame was overwhelmed and the spirit fled at Two O'clock in the morning of September 7th. In all that time we were not separated, but day and night with only short disjointed hours required for rest or for some needed errands, were together "until death parted"

While delighting in the beauties of nature, enjoying the societies of friends, and taking life-long pleasure in outdoor sports, in some of which he excelled, he was ever ready to set all aside for the exacting calls of a profession whose ardent disciple he was.

Loving intensely this Manomet place which he had made so truly his own, he was denied the yearning to come back here and to fulfill the hope that we both cherished that we could pass lengthened summers here as time lightened his work in the world.

Yet to her who must remain without him, his spirit seems near, and she hopes while life remains to share the blessings here with those who already love it, and with others who may find it beautiful, even as he would have wished who left so rich a legacy behind.

Following this entry, Ellen transcribes several letters written from friends, family and colleagues in memory of Dr. Harold C. Ernst. It is ever so evident the great impact this man had in the lives of so many and in the field of medicine, and evident is the admiration and respect he inspired in all who knew him. Yet, it is Ellen's expression of devotion woven throughout the fabric of her journals that truly gives insight into the life of this great man.

Ellen's journals are a love story. They are a testament of her abiding love for family, friends and the natural world. In response, the reader cannot help but feel deep affection for her. For it is all of the qualities that she holds dear in others and in nature—beauty, simplicity, integrity, playfulness, courage, gentleness and kindness—all of these are reflected in her. Ellen closes with these words:

*"Life is ever lord of death, and
Love can never lose its own."*

Although she continued to spend her summers at Manomet for the remaining years of her life, she no longer wrote in her journal*

Epilogue

The Ernst's nephew, Roger Ernst, who had grown up spending his summers at Manomet, and whom Ellen included in so many of her stories, inherited the property as Ellen wished. Roger loved this land as dearly as his aunt and uncle had loved it, and he took up the keeping of the journals. Just as Ellen's last entry closes with the passing of Harold, Roger's first entry begins with the passing away of his beloved Aunt Ellen. The few following pages give a summary of events that took place in the last few years, and with this record Roger closes the second journal of Ellen's.



Roger writes:

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"Aunt Ellen closed this House Book with Uncle Harold's death, September 7, 1922.

She spent every summer thereafter at Widewater, having a few of her family and intimate friends as house guests each year...

During the last few years she became more fragile and had to curtail some of her activities, such as sea bathing and walking up and down the hill over her estate, but her garden remained always an absorbing source of interest and pleasure. She worked in it herself almost every day.

In the course of these years, many changes took place in her family...

The summer of 1937 found Aunt Ellen stronger and better than she had been for a long time. She had a number of houseguests, worked more in her garden, and in all her activities showed greater vigor. All this made the summer a particularly happy one in her beloved Widewater.

In the last week of September she sent her maids on vacation and moved down to Otto and Annie Anderson's house. Otto had been caretaker of the estate for over twenty years, and a year or two after Uncle Harold's death Aunt Ellen had deeded him a lot of land near Nestledown on which he had built a comfortable all the year round house, had married and settled down. One of the last things Aunt Ellen said was how fortunate she was to have two such faithful and dependable people as Otto and Annie to look after her

She spent this last week leisurely closing Widewater for the winter. One day, in trying to pull out an electric base-plug, she over exerted and brought on a rather acute attack of the heart trouble from which she had been suffering for some years. Characteristically, when it was a question of her own health, she refused to send for the doctor or to allow any of her family to be notified. She became worse, however, and on Sunday, October 3rd, the day before she planned to return to Jamaica Plain, she sent for Dr. Reed of Plymouth. We had chanced to drive down to spend that day at Manomet and arrived shortly ahead of the doctor. He ordered her at once to bed, but advised her being driven home on the morrow if she felt rested after the night, as he expected she would. We decided to spend the night at Widewater and to drive her up. We did not let her know, as we did not wish her to worry about our comfort. Neither did we telephone any of the family, as we knew that would only have disturbed her and as Dr. Reed had not suggested any imminent danger.

She seemed much better and quite cheered at the surprise of seeing us after breakfast the next morning. After she dressed we drove her up to Widewater, right across the lawn to the piazza so that she would have no length of walk. She laughed and said she had never before allowed anyone to do that except her sister-in-law, Mrs. Paul Frothingham, when she was ill. She came in to the house, superintended the final few acts of closing the house for the winter, directed me to stop the clocks, and (we all) drove away, leaving Otto and Annie to lock the doors. We had just bought a new car, the easy riding of which she enjoyed. It was a bright, sunny morning. She seemed in good spirits, though quiet, and said she would not make the effort to talk

much during the ride. She kept making brief comments, always pertinent or amusing, which showed that she was keenly alive to the beauty and interest of the ride.... We drove direct to Greenough Ave, where we found awaiting her faithful friend, Miss Scales, her cook, Mary Brennan, and a nurse from Dr. Vickery's, for whom we had telephoned ahead.

Aunt Ellen was able to walk, apparently easily, into the house, thanked us in her sincere way for staying over to drive her up, and said, with a little laugh - "I feel so well I shouldn't think of going to bed if the doctor hadn't ordered me to". She smiled and waved to us as we drove away to leave her to go to bed under the nurse's care. Hardly had we reached our house in Brookline when the telephone rang with Mary's word that Aunt Ellen had died, quietly and instantly, in a chair while preparing for bed.

Thus most naturally and serenely, and without more than possible remote forebodings of it being the last time, Aunt Ellen closed the dear house at Manomet and with it this book."



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