

# Edith Florence Bodell

*December 18, 1928 ~ October 29, 2020*

Edith Bodell, nicknamed Ena, was born just before the Great Depression in London, England to Ernest Robert Smith and Edith Elizabeth Davies. She was the middle child of three sisters. In the hospital where Ena was born, she was lucky to have been chosen to sleep in the ‘Queens Cradle’ while a newborn. This privilege was only available for babies born close to Christmas. This special beginning cemented a love of England for the rest of Ena's life.

Ena experienced a life full of adventure and trials. As a child living in war-time England, she was evacuated from her home in Rushden Gardens, Essex to the countryside twice due to the bombing of London. She also won a scholarship to attend boarding school - all thanks to a special teacher named ‘Mr. Buckley' who had encouraged her to do her best. In her last month of life, Mom spoke fondly of Mr. Buckley and mentioned that he supported her educational efforts and that he had a beautiful smile.

As a young teen, Ena found a job at a button shop, before working at a fashion house as a bookkeeper. She and her friends loved to see the latest styles and would try on all the designer’s samples. This instilled the appreciation of fine sewing at which she excelled at the rest of her life.

Edith’s young heart was captured by an American sailor stationed in post-war London, named Bryant ‘John’ Bodell. They had a whirlwind engagement and married soon after on March 5, 1949. After a honeymoon in St. Andrews, Scotland, they set off and began a life full of international travels with the US Navy. The growing family moved every 1-3 years, crisscrossing the US and Europe for nearly 20 years. In the early 1960's, Dad was offered a choice of a 3-year Navy assignment in Honolulu or Naples, Italy. Dad chose Italy, as Mom would be closer to England and her family. Mom loved being much closer to England for those years and the family was able to tour much of Europe during that time.

Ena and John had five children in seven+ years. Having a boy, then four girls, Mom often spoke about those years of young motherhood as the best of her life. Ena became a young grandmother at age 41 with the birth of her first grandchild, Alisa. Another was added 9 years later (Katy), then a third 8 years after that (Jonathan). Then a flurry of 5 more in quick succession (Molly, Elizabeth, Rachel, Nolan, and Anna) rounded out the group of her beloved grandchildren. With only one grandchild living nearby, the others would come visit each summer, Granny B had lots of time for memorable fun.

Ena was a lover of nature, history, art, music, and dance of any kind - she exposed her children and grandchildren to her passions. As children we camped, went to museums and listened to music - all the time.

In 1969, after surviving three wars, WW II, Korea, and Vietnam - ‘John’ retired from the Navy and the family moved to SLC Utah, where John had been born. Ena had transitioned from a London city girl to a world citizen, to living in

the foothills of Mt. Olympus in SLC. Mom found absolute beauty and spiritual peace in the Wasatch mountains.

Material possessions for our family were not as important as life experiences. John and Ena took their children on many trips. Mom treated each relocation as an opportunity to be a tourist. Trips like going to Mt. Vesuvius, Pompeii and Herculaneum, Blue Grotto in Capri, Black Forest in Germany, castles in Luxembourg, Holland, Madrid, we camped on the beaches of Normandy, France - it was always an adventure. Moving to Utah provided us opportunities to explore many National Parks and the Intermountain West. We had just relocated to Utah, and Mom had already planned a camping trip to the Grand Canyon. Mom's travel adventures even included a trip to Tehran, Iran accompanying Dad on a computer sales business trip just before the Iran hostage crisis of 1979. Mom loved to travel, and she instilled the love of learning about different cultures in all her children. This was a testament to her strength and curiosity about the world around her.

Mom loved to read voraciously -- mostly non-fiction – biographies were a huge favorite. She must have read ‘London’ at least 6 times - learning more with each page - about the beginning of her ‘heart’ home.

Playing games was an essential and fun part of all family gatherings. Hearts, Monopoly, Scrabble, and Rummy were a few favorite games. Mom was the one to beat for sure - we were suspicious of her inevitable wins - but it was reason to celebrate if you beat her score.

The Utah Quilt Guild was lucky to have Mom's skills. She contributed many ‘squares’ as a compilation with others to create quilts for charity auctions. The work she did required incredible and meticulous hand stitching skills. All her children and grandchildren continually received beautifully knitted afghans, Aran sweaters - or handmade doll clothes, blankets, quilts, and pillows. Mom created a large volume of beautiful pieces of art throughout her life. She was a gifted, prolific, and well-respected seamstress, quilter, and knitter.

Mom was a very talented woman: an oil painter, stain glass artist, basket maker, and a writer creating mini-stories about her life. These ‘Forget-Me-Nots’ are precious documented stories about her life experiences. She made most of our clothes as children and her entire wardrobe when she went to work at JCPenney’s. Mom also volunteered to read with young school children at the local library after school. She often spoke of how much she enjoyed being around the children and loved being able to help them with their reading skills. Mom was a Renaissance woman, and as we grew up, it felt as if our Mom was not only beautiful but could accomplish anything she set her mind to.

Ena stayed active in her large garden at home which included a beautiful rose garden with ‘Queen Elizabeth’ and ‘Princess Diana’ varieties of roses. England was never far from her mind and heart.

To stay fit, Ena enjoyed Tai Chi at the Holladay Senior Center, but mostly she walked and walked and walked. If you happen to be walking with her - the pace was like a run! You had to keep up!

Christmastime was special, filled with traditional English fares like roast beef, Yorkshire pudding, oven-roasted potatoes, mincemeat tarts, Christmas pudding with “hard” sauce - and of course - Christmas table crackers filled with jokes, small gifts, and the famed, festive paper crowns which were worn by all participants at the holiday meal! Mom hosted her children and grandchildren each year, filling her Utah home with retro Christmas decorations, delicious food, and lots of fun. There was usually a generational divide between upstairs and downstairs, and it’s true that Granny B never knew what really went on in the basement.

It’s hard to write anyone's lifetime experiences and legacy in such a short space. But overall, the importance of someone’s life is what wonderful qualities move forward in their children, friends, and descendants. Mom passed along something different for each of us that knew her and loved her.

Edith, Ena, Granny B, Mum, Mom - is still alive in us all.

She will be missed forever.