

THE MOST UNFORGETTABLE CHARACTER I'VE MET

A young Norwegian girl at the age of eighteen set sail for the United States of America. Her name was Gina Ruud. She had no particular training but her enthusiasm and zest for life overcame all obstacles. For Gina there was no phrase "it can't be done". Her greatest handicap when she arrived in this land of freedom and opportunity for all was not being able to speak the language. This left but one field open to her - and that was housework. It never occurred to her that it was menial or lowly, in fact, she lent dignity to any job she undertook.

Gina became the educational as well as social leader in her church. The women in those days did not enjoy the freedom they do today. She was the only one who dared match her wits with the men in the debating society. Often, to their embarrassment, she won. She married the man who was considered the "catch" of her group and in the course of time three daughters were born to them. Gina took this responsibility seriously. Her interest was with her family and home first - last - and always. But not so with her husband, Marcellus. He was proud to display them all dressed up on a Sunday afternoon, but the daily routine of three small active children did not appeal to him.

It was no wonder then that he could not resist the urge to seek his fortune in the famous gold rush of Alaska. Gina was left alone to care for her girls. He came home in a year minus the fortune. The spirit of the prospector was in him and after a few months at home he went back to Alaska.

Just before the birth of her fourth child the wife was informed that her husband had lost his life in the huge land slide at Kilkoot Pass. Most women would have become embittered but to Gina this beautiful golden-haired child was a solace and gave her strength to carry on. When this child was three years old the father suddenly appeared. He had been far in the interior and was both shocked and surprised to hear of his supposed death. The tragedy of it was that the tears were not far behind the joy of reunion and having the father home again. The hardships and deprivations he had endured had taken their toll and he died of a lingering illness.

Now the education of her daughters became Gina's primary interest in life, her indomitable spirit never knew doubt and the possibility of failure never entered her mind. All these years the family worked as a unit, tightly bound together with their love for one another. Any happiness that came to one must be shared by all. The mother's keen sense of humor always helped to solve the most difficult problems. Her quaint, picturesque idioms spoken with a charming accent were a never ending source of delight because they were more colorful than the original. One of her favorites was, "I blow my own canoe." She was friend and counselor to rich and poor, young and old. She enriched the lives of all she met. She lived to see her girls realize the aspirations she had instilled in them. Hers was the type of womanhood that had made America great - and for me the most unforgettable character. Gina Ruud was my MOTHER.

....Ruth A. Trosper
Daughter of Gina Ruud Anderson
(Date of writing - unknown)

(Ruth inherited so many of those fine qualities - like Mother, like Daughter! I do hope that those who read this enjoy it as much as I do each time I read it. Rändi Brown)