

A String of Pearls

by Ann Joyce

Have you ever wondered what happened to the famous pearls that Juliette Gordon Low sold, more than half a century ago, to keep the Girl Scouts going?

Well, we did. To honor the Girl Scout Birthday on March 12, we went in search of the story for this issue of AMERICAN GIRL.

The answer, we found, was practically under our noses. Mrs. Meldrim Shonnard, a native of Savannah, Georgia, who was the Girl Scouts' first national treasurer, lives just a few blocks from Girl Scout National Headquarters in New York. And it was Mrs. Shonnard's first husband who bought the pearls for his young wife.

"In 1913," Mrs. Shonnard told us, "I married Ted Coy (he was a Yale man, like Daisy Gordon's father and brothers) and we went to live in Washington, D.C. That was the year that Daisy Low decided to set up a national office for the Girl Scouts in Washington. She rented a room in the Munsey Building, which was the newest and finest office building in the city, and brought Edith Johnston from Savannah to be national secretary.

"She also announced that I was to be national treasurer—which was very funny, since I can neither add nor subtract. But Daisy knew no fear. To her,

Edith Johnston was the ablest of secretaries and I was the most capable of treasurers. Actually, it turned out all right because my husband did the treasurer's work. He was with the bank that owned the Munsey Building, so it was quite convenient.

"I held this exalted position for a very short time, as we moved to New York in 1914. After that, Daisy would often stay with us when she came to New York. We were half amused and half admiring at the energy she threw into her Girl Scout work.

"In those early days, her brothers and sisters were simply indignant about this project. Daisy was putting all her life into it, and they—especially her brothers—did not see how it could succeed. They didn't want her to be destroyed by failure.

"When Daisy decided to sell her pearls, my husband bought them. I think it was twenty-eight hundred dollars he paid. We were just starting out then, so our friends were startled when they asked what he was buying me for Christmas and he replied, 'A string of pearls.'

"I used to wear them all the time—to parties and balls and luncheon at

the Ritz. They looked right with everything, any time of day, and I had been told that real pearls should be worn constantly because your skin feeds them. Years later, sad to say, they were lost and I never got them back."

Although Mrs. Low was much older than the Coys, she invited them to visit her at the shooting lodge that she rented in Scotland. Mrs. Shonnard remembers the occasion as one of great gaiety. "Daisy," she explained, "was never any age. Young people adored her; attractive young men, especially, used to flock around."

There is no doubt that Juliette Low's magic with young people was responsible for the successful introduction of Girl Scouting to this country. For if she had not won girls to the new movement, her impressive social contacts and her genius for getting people to work in Scouting would have been of no use.

From a handful of girls in 1912 to a membership of almost four million in 1970—that's the record of Girl Scout growth. "I visited your national headquarters not long ago," Mrs. Shonnard recalled. "That beautiful, big building—wouldn't Daisy be pleased to know!"

Then she added, "I'm sure she does know." □

By you

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About two weeks later we took her to the vet to get her shots. She yelped and hissed and screamed until we got her out of there.

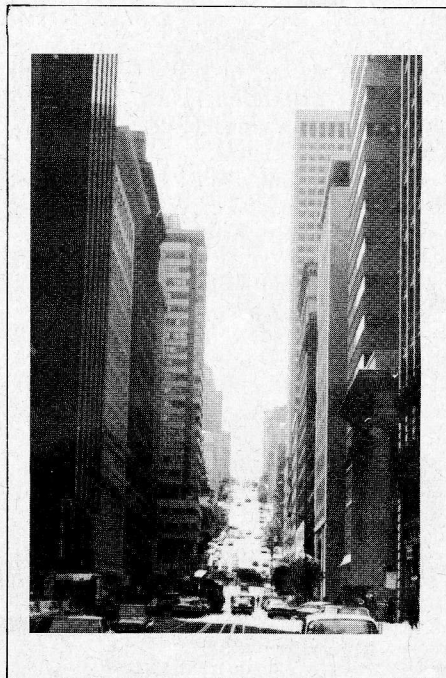
Then we noticed she never drank her water. We hunted all over the house to find her. Finally we found her in the bathtub drinking to her heart's content. She jumped out of the bathtub, down the stairs, and onto the bench in the kitchen, beside the bird's cage. She began to stare at this creature jumping around behind all those bars. From then on, Turtle was jumping around *outside* the cage, trying to get in!

Quite a while afterwards there was a terrible storm. Turtle had been outside practically all night. It was beginning to get late, so we called her; but she wouldn't come as she usually did. About half an hour later we heard a very weak "meow" at the door, and there was Turtle, limping helplessly on three legs. We let her in, and right away she lay down in her bed.

The next day we took her to the vet, her dear friend, to see what was wrong. In a few days we found out her hip was completely shattered. She seems to have gotten over that in the last few months.

Turtle still gets in the bathtub and enjoys a ball of yarn once in a while. She stands on her hind legs begging for food, and everyone just loves her.

Mary McCreery, age 12, Hamilton, Ohio



Honorable mention

Fiction: Sandy Schreiber, age 15, De Pere, Wisconsin; Diane Berry, age 13, Dayton, Ohio.

Nonfiction: Lissa Adams, age 12, Edison, New Jersey; Patricia Irvin, age 15, Baltimore, Maryland; Patsy Riddle, age 14, Macon, Georgia; Janice Hysjulien, age 13, Othello, Washington.

Poetry: Dianna M. Conklin, age 11, Brooklyn, New York; Lizabeth Rebak, age 13, Sioux City, Iowa; Michelle Hawks, age 16, Memphis, Tennessee; Mary Ann Masar, age 14, Euclid, Ohio.

Art: Kim Burleigh, age 14, Irvin, Pennsylvania; Leonita Mohn, age 16, Lansing, Iowa; Angie Roberts, age 14, Bradenton, Florida; Mary Fernholz, age 12, Winner, South Dakota.

Photography: Kay Graziano, age 12, Clifton, New Jersey; Dixie Parker, age 11, Kent, Washington; Sharon Johnson, age 13, Essex Fells, New Jersey.

Photography award

Anne Fletcher, age 14
Staunton, Virginia