

The letter below recently arrived in our box courtesy of Carl Christensen of San Francisco. He introduced it with this explanation:

*Recently, while cleaning out some old "stuff" I ran across a letter apparently written by Mrs. Charles Krill to my mother--then Aleita Schortgen, while she was attending high school in Ferndale. Mrs. Krill died prior to my birth but I do remember Charles Krill. [Mrs. Krill was the Schortgens' mother; Charles Krill was the children's stepfather.] Charlie smoked a pipe and had a severe case of what was probably Parkinson's. In any event I always thought he was going to burn down the country when he attempted to light his old smelly pipe using a big kitchen match with hands and arms shaking and waving around...*

*The Helen mentioned is Helen Schortgen who later became Helen Allgaier. The other names mentioned in the letter such as the Roscoes are most likely familiar to most of the old valley residents. I assume the "new road" mentioned is most likely the road now known as the Bullcreek road. Thought you would get a kick out of the motherly advice: "You better be careful how you go with young men..." The Earl mentioned is Earl Schortgen who later became a Humboldt County Supervisor and owner of the five and dime store in Fortuna. I believe he was in the Marines at the time in Hawaii.*

*Aleita later married her high school sweetheart Alfred Christensen who became principal of the Ferndale High School. Following the death of Alfred, years later, she married another Ferndale HS grad and mutual friend Rolland Landergen [father of Rollandine Rorick]. Aleita was a teacher at the Upper Mattole school for several years.*

Petrolia, Cal.

Oct 26,1919

My dear Aleita,

This is Sunday evening so I will answer your letter. Helen went over to Reynolds yesterday evening and we were all ready to go over to Mr. Geo. Hill's after our flour but before we got started it started to rain so we had to stay at home. It has been awful cold the last three mornings...a white frost it has killed all the melons and tomatoes. Helen just got home and she is talking a blue streak so don't think anything if I get it mixed up, in this letter.

Lew Roscoe took Mr. Mrs. [?] and Helen and Soney Reynolds over the new road to Dyerville, so Lelena Georgie and Helen went over to Old lady Roscoe's to-day. Florence Frenck [sic], Miss Etter and Miss Buchanan were there, they had a nice time. I suppose you heard Helen Roscoe was married last night. She married Joe Burnell. I knew she would never be an old maid like Agness.

Well Leta I was sure glad to hear you are on the honor roll, I hope you stay there. You got a fine card. I thought you would go to see Rose when you went to Eureka. You better be careful how you go with young men without a chaperone. The misses won't like you coming in so late and I am afraid you will get talked about if you aren't careful. Dear Leta I will send you a little butter soon and some jelly, butter is scarce. Chas. and I will go after the flour some day this week and then we will send you a box or two.

What is the matter with Earl that he doesn't write. Chas. and I went up to Bill's after pears and on our way home we stopped at Markhams and nothing would [do] but we must stay for dinner so we stayed most of the afternoon. I think you were all home last year at this time. I hope you all come home for Xmas. Helen said Miss Roscoe told her that Crystal wrote to some of the Thrap children and said Rose had to quit school. Poor girl I do feel so sorry for her she was so ambitious and wanted to learn.

Well there is no news so I will quit and go warm my feet before they freeze. Write soon.

Lots of love, Mama

(I am sending you 25 cts to send me some of the soap dye one pkt for brown and one for navy blue for cotton goods. Send it right away please.)