

The Eliza Saywell Letters.

The following is a series of letters that were part of those received by Louise Elizabeth Saywell Heath during the time period 1937 through Dec. 6, 1949 from her first cousin once removed, Eliza Saywell, who lived in Chatham, Kent County, England Eliza's death certificate was located in England. It reads that she died on 10 February 1952 at the Milton Regis Hospital, Milton Regis, (next to Sittingbourne), Kent County, England. She is listed as Eliza Saywell, a female, age 73 years old. Her address was 2 Mills Cottages, The Mount, New Road, Chatham. She was a spinster and retired housekeeper, the daughter of George Saywell. The causes of death were listed as Syncope, Failing Cardiac Compensation, Myocardial degeneration, and Bronchitis. This is certified by C. L. Law Wilson, LRCP. A. N. Makin is the person causing the body to be buried. That person's address was 258 Rochester Street, Chatham, (probably a friend since she said that she had no living relatives left in England in one of her letters.)

- letter one -

This letter and envelope are etched in black, to show mourning for the loss of her brother, George, during the year. This is the only letter of Louise's, which has the envelope still with it.

2 Mill Cottages, The Mount, Chatham, Kent, Eng. Dec 13, 1937.

Dear Mrs. Heath,

But as your Father is my first cousin may I be a little less formal and say my dear cousin. I was indeed pleased to receive a letter from you and I thank you all for your kind sympathy. It was a great blow to me to lose my dear brother, (George), I had looked after him since Mother died in 1905. Father died in 1913 and since then George and I had jogged along and looked after each other, so you may be sure the loss to me is a big one. Nellie my only sister died 1926 aged 46, so I have seen them all pass on and now, as far as I know, I am the only one of the family left, [in England]. I have always thought it a pity that we had not heard anything of your Grandpa (Edward Saywell) for so many years. I had wrote but of course do not know whether my letters reached him. Cousin Tom Saywell, [Thomas Richard, son of John Bennett Saywell], of Cleveland used to write to me and since he has gone his son and daughter in law, [Elmer J. & Blanche], write. It was them sent the paper to your grandpa. I felt I would like him to know George had passed away. Please give my love to your grandpa. I hope he is keeping well. Mother and Father used to tell us about him and I have a photo of him and your grandma (Harriett Clark) with Minnie (1882-1920 m Edward Hanna) and Willie (George William Saywell) when they were small children (before they left England in 1882).

Aunt and Uncle Feakins of Tunstall lived to a good old age. One son, Charlie (Feakins), is still in Sittingbourne. Annie and Frank are in Australia. Some of our cousins named Shilling and some named Spice are in Sittingbourne, also. Some of the Ransomes, who your grandpa will perhaps remember were my Grandma's sisters.

Thank you for telling me all about my cousins. I am afraid I cannot write a very long letter this time, I have been ill and am not very strong yet. Have a heart that is weak, left breast off, so Dr tells me I must go slow. Am glad to know there is a nurse (Marie Saywell) in the family. It was what I wanted to be, but instead of being hospital nurse have had plenty of nursing in the home. Do you not think it is some times marvelous what we can do and come through. I loved my church work and Sunday School class. (I am a Baptist) But health compelled me to give it up. Do not get younger, of course. Shall be sixty next birthday (born ca 1878). Do not feel so old though, I think much depends on ourselves. We have a lady minister. She only commenced her ministry in October. I like her very much and I think she will be a great worker for the Master.

I must close for this time and with love and all good wishes for a happy Christmas and a bright and happy New Year to you all. Hoping you will write again.

I remain
Yours very sincerely,
E. Saywell.

The Eliza Letters cont.

- letter two -

2 Mills Cottage, The Mount, New Road, Chatham, Kent, England.

February 8, 1938

Dear Cousin,

Many thanks for your kind Christmas wishes and the nice handkerchief you sent me. Hope you all had a very happy xmas and New Year. Mine was a lonely one. I missed my dear brother very much. Hope you are all well and that you received my letter. My love to your Grandpa (Edward Saywell - Eliza's Uncle.) Please show him these pictures. Chatham is very different to when he knew it.

I see by the Papers you are having winter. We have not had a great amount of snow, but gales, fog and rain, with sunshine for a day or two last week, but back to fog today. I have two cousins in Lockport, New York named Bartholomew. One is in the County Clerk's Office. Also a cousin, W Blake in Michigan - "Port Huron", who is noted for honey. Twin(?) Mathews were my Mother's sisters. I am the only one in England on this side as well as yours. Hoping you and your husband are well.

I remain

Your loving cousin.

E Saywell

This letter was written on the back of a six picture fold out of scenes in Chatham: Victoria Gardens, Entrance to Dockyard, Town Hall Gardens, Sunset from the Pier, Town Hall and Military Road. All of the scenes are folded up and connected to a brown envelope. The front of the envelope says, "Collotype View Letter Card of Chatham, Valentine's Series British Production." There is a 1 1/2d. stamp in the upper right hand corner. On the back it says, "Valentine's Letter Card. Postage 1/2d. if not stuck down and Sender's Name and Address only. 1 1/2 d. if stuck down and used as letter."

The Eliza Letters cont.

- letter three -

2 Mill Cottages, The Mount, New Road, Chatham, Kent, England

Oct 20, 1939

My Dear Cousin,

Your most kind and interesting letter safely received. Thank you for writing again. So many times I have thought of you and meant to write, but somehow it seems an effort to write letters now. At one time I could manage quite easily, but I suppose as we get older and have illness, our nerves suffers and things are more difficult. I was pleased with the snap (photograph) you sent me of Alice. She looks a bonny girl and I expect now that she is beginning to get around a bit. She will keep you busy. I always think it so marvelous to see a child's mind unfold and see them interested in all that is going on. Glad you enjoyed your visit to your Father. It is nice to renew old ties and friendships. How I wish I was near enough to know you all. Glad your Grandfather is well. His is the longest life of the family. My Father was only sixty three (when he died) and if living now would have been eighty nine. Please give him my love. Glad you enjoyed reading the papers. I will send some more. Do not expect they (the mail censors due to the war) have stopped them going through. I thank you for your prayers for my safety. However far apart, we can pray for each other and in these trying days we do need a strong hold and steadfast faith in The Heavenly Father to enable us to remain calm and unafraid.

So far we have only had one lot of gunfire here, but lots of people have left Chatham and the children have been evacuated, at least some of them. I cannot understand some parents keeping them here, for of course there is much that the enemy would like to get at. Chatham is a Naval and Garrison town. Then there is the dockyard and short airplane works. But thanks to our defence and R. A. F. (Royal Air Force) so far they have been turned back.

You mentioned the gas masks in your letter. I shall never forget how I felt when I saw the children going away with them slung across their shoulders. We have to carry them with us wherever we go, but lots of us hope we shall not need to wear them. We have steel air raid shelters in our gardens. I had to go in there last Tuesday just after dinner. It is dreadful to think that one man (Hitler) has caused so much sorrow to many hearths and homes. But I do not think we could have done any other than fight in the cause of right and justice for small nations. God grant you or your little one will never know war in all its dreadfulness. I am afraid this is an awful scribble but am not at all well. Dr tells me I must only just do as little to keep my mind occupied. And it seems as though that's as far as my strength will let me.

With love. Praying God's richest blessings on you and yours.

I remain
Yours sincerely,

Eliza Saywell

Kiss Alice for me.
Good night. God bless you.

The Eliza Letters cont.

- letter four -

July 26, 1943

Eliza Saywell, 2 Mill Cottages, New Rd, Chatham, Kent, England

Dear Cousins,

I am afraid I got in a muddle about writing. I haven't been so well for a few weeks and was thinking I had answered your kind letter. Now that I am a little better again, I came across your letter and find I ought to have wrote before, I expect it was sending Bill's birthday card, (which I hope he received), made me think I had done it. Well dear, I hope this will find you all well, you must have had a busy time with the children poorly through the winter, but hope they are now bonny and enjoying the lovely sunshine which I hope you are now having. We haven't had a very nice summer so far, so much rain and cold wind, but the last few days are better, so perhaps we shall have a hot August and September. One thing there is a bountiful harvest, abundance of fruit and corn, with all in sin and wickedness and destruction, God's promise that, "While earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, summer and winter, shall not cease remaining." It is kind of your Dad to be interested in my letters, I am afraid the writing is very bad. Hand is shaky and will not do as it once did. I expect it is your Dad in a photo I have and your Grandfather and Grandmother and your Auntie Minnie. When I can get upstairs again, I will send it to you if you have not one. I heard on _____ a week or two ago that no furniture, photos ,of any description must be sent to U S A if over 75 years old, so the candlesticks are off for the present as they are much older than that. I am sure that like us you are all very pleased at the turn of events the last few weeks. It is sad to think of so many being sacrificed not only on the battle fields, but the dear little children, who have been taken while happy in week day and Sunday Schools. I hope the day will never come when you have to endure bombing with all its horror. Thankful to say we have had a few quiet nights, it is very wearying to be disturbed night after night, but we have not suffered so much as some towns. I sometimes wonder whether the enemy would have bombed our towns, citys with cathedrals, churches, etc, if they had thought it would have come back to them. They certainly know what it means now. It is a continuous roar overhead when our planes and your are going over. As I am writing I can hear them but too high to see. I hope Ralph will not have to give up his teaching by being called up. Hope your sister and her husband are well and that they are still able to be near each other. What a day of thanksgiving and enjoying it will be when God sees fit to bring the war to an end. May it be His will to do so soon. Thank you so much for the booklet about the I had not seen anything quite like it before. It is very helpful. I was amused at the cartoons, "What is a Porterhouse steak" and hamburger. Glad your paper's speak so highly of Mr Churchill. I hope the friendship between him and your President and our two countrys will be a lasting one. Hope you are able to have sufficient food without the worry of standing in queues. We still have one shillingsworth of meat and two pennyworth corned beef weekly, so you can understand it does not run to meat every day, however we have never been hungry, which is a lot to be thankful for. I will send a card for Alice's birthday, so if it arrives too soon you can keep it till the day. How I should love to see her and Bill. I used to hear from Blanche (Mrs Elmer Saywell), but it is over twelve months since I heard, probably letters were lost coming and going. Now I must draw to a close and get ready for the night, which I hope will be (a) quiet one. [The blitz was going on and London and England were getting bombed almost nightly.]

With love. I remain you affectionate
Cousin E Saywell

Good night - God bless you all.

XXXXXX for Alice. Thank her for the pretty picture she sent me.

XXXXXX for Bill.

(Letter found and added to Eliza Letters July 9, 1996.)

The Eliza Letters cont.

Included with letter four, July 26, 1943, was a post card with a picture of Winston Churchill and one of his speeches.

The Spirit of Britain.

"We shall go on to the end..... We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and in the oceans, shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air..... We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and streets and in the hills... We shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island, or even part of it, is subjugated and starving, then our Empire across the sea, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, will carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the new world, in all its strength and might set forth to the rescue and liberation of the old. Britain will fight the menace of tyranny for years, and, if necessary, alone.

(Letter found in some papers mother had given me some time ago, and added to the Eliza Letters, July 9, 1996. AB)

The Eliza Letters cont.

- letter five -

November 20, 1945

Eliza Saywell, 2 Mills Cottage - New Road, Chatham, Kent, England

Dear Cousins,

I was very pleased to receive your welcome letter and the pictures of you all. What a lot of relatives I have in your part of the world! And as far as I know I am the last here, but I suppose someone has to come to that. I think your friend (Jesse Hart who stopped to see her when he was in England after the war. This is when he brought the Saywell candlesticks home to Louise) thought it was lonely for me, but I have never regretted looking after my Father and brother when Mother passed away in 1905. Don't you think that we have compensations, even when the road may be a bit difficult if we just trust our Heavenly Father and try to do His will. I have one friend who cannot understand me not looking forward to the end (death), but I tell her that all the time my life is spared God has something for me to do, so am content to wait His time be it soon or late. I have many blessings and much to be thankful for. I hope this will find you all well. Sorry Alice broke her are, but hope it is quite straight now. They are two lovely children and I am sure bring you much joy and happiness. I think Bill is like his Daddy. I was pleased to see a picture of Dorothy, having met the one who I think will be her future partner. I wonder if you have got the candlesticks yet? I think that - by what I was told (probably by Jesse when he visited) there might be a wedding soon so am enclosing a card which when the time comes I would like you to post (mail) for me. If you will please do so. I hope your sister (Marie) is well and that her husband will soon be home (from the war) with her. I expect your Father will be glad to make his home with her.

We are having proper November weather, fog which I do not like, however it is nice not to have to worry about blackout or showing a ray of light anywhere. Like you, I think it will be a very long time before things straighten out. After nearly six years of war and everything having to stand on one side but the winning the war we cannot expect any other. We must have patience and trust our leaders will look to the only one who can bring peace out of all the chaos that now exists.

How the time slips away. It hardly seems possible that it is only four weeks next Tuesday to Christmas. They are allowing us quite a little extra rations Christmas week. If I am not able to write again before then I hope you will all spend a very happy Christmas and may the New Year bring all happiness.

Glad you enjoy reading the papers. Afraid this is rather a scribble but I am not too well and a bit shaky.

Love to all
Your affectionate cousin.

E Saywell

Good bye. God bless you.
Alice XXXXXX
Bill XXXXXX

The Eliza Letters cont.

- letter six -

2 Mill Cottages, The Mount - New Road, Chatham, Kent, England

January 6, 1949

Dear Cousins,

With great pleasures I received you very welcome letter before Christmas. Thank you for it, also card and good wishes, not forgetting the pictures Bill sent me. (Probably drawings as Bill was 6 1/2.) I hope you all had a very happy and enjoyable Christmas and that your Dad (George William Saywell, Eliza's first cousin) and Marie and family were able to join you, so that you had a nice family party. I tried to picture you and the Christmas tree in the window. A friend came and was with me over Christmas. Just the two of us had a happy time. I had rather a lot of pain just before, but it eased up and I was able to sit up just for tea. Every one is very kind and although it is so many years since I have been ill, they do not forget me and God has given me "full measure, pressed down and running over" and I feel it even more so when I received the parcel from you tow days ago. It is so very kind of you to take so much trouble, but I should not say that for I am sure it is from goodness of heart. Thank you very much and may our Heavenly Father bless you abundantly. I am glad to know you were well and the children doing well at school. You must have a very busy life with your teaching and running the home with husband and children.

I can understand there is not much time for letter writing. Thank you for the magazines, very nice and interesting reading. When I opened the box the lovely little face was looking at me. The hymn "Tell me the stories of Jesus" is one that five little girls sang to me one Sunday when they came. Tell alic and Bill I wish they could come and sing to me.

My Pastor came this afternoon and we had a blessed time around the Lord's Table, in following His command, "This do in remembrance of Me".

Now as I am beginning to make mistakes it is time I stopped writing. So with my love to all, many thanks for all, and the best of wishes for all that is good during the year just entered. May God's richest blessing be upon you and yours.

From your affectionate cousin

E. Saywell

XXX
XXX

We have not yet had any snow. I heard these is plenty in your part of the world.

The Lord thy God careth from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. Deut. 11.12

The Eliza Letters cont.

- letter seven -

The last letter is really a Christmas card. It is a very plain 4 1/2 x 5 1/2 opaque cream colored card folded once with a red border on the front. There is a small drawing of a man carrying a bundle of sticks up a path to a castle like building. The printing on the front says, "God bless your home this Christmastide. His peace with you for aye abide." Also on the front more printing which says, "With kind thoughts and best wishes for Christmas from." She has signed her name and written, "E Saywell. Love to all."

Inside the card is blank with space for a letter.

2 Mill Cottages, Chatham, Kent, England.

December 6, 1949

Dear Cousins,

I had hoped to write a letter for Christmas, but have got down again. Everything seems an effort so will write as soon as I can. Hope you are all well and that you will have a very happy Christmas.

God bless you all.

Your affectionate cousin,

E Saywell

Happy Christmas Alice XXX

Happy Christmas Bill XXX

This is the last piece of correspondence that was received from Eliza Saywell that Louise still had in her possession. Eliza would have been 70 years old. We know from the 1950 Christmas letter to Dorothy and Jesse that she still sent cards for at least another year and that her death was not until 10 February 1952. The hospital where she died had been the old Milton Union workhouse before it was converted into a hospital. It was here in the workhouse that her grandfather, William Saywell, had died 7 October 1898, fifty five years before.

ADDITIONAL Eliza Letters: 14 June 1999

During a visit from my cousins, Dorothy Hart and Becky Hart-Williams, I was given two letters from Eliza Saywell that were written to Jesse and Dorothy; one in 1948 and one in 1950. Dorothy and Becky had found the letters among Jesse's papers. (Jesse passed away on 16 January 1998.) Jesse stopped to see Eliza when he was in England at the end of W W II. Jesse was the only one in the American family who ever met and talked to Eliza. He brought the Saywell candlesticks back in his nap sack for Louise. Eliza mentions him in letter number five. In the same letter Eliza mentions that their might be a wedding coming up meaning the one of Jesse and Dorothy. They were married 8 March 1946 in Epworth-Euclid United Methodist Church in Cleveland, Ohio.

- letter eight -

Letter addressed to: Mr. & Mrs. J. Hart, 14309 Savannah Ave., East Cleveland 12, Ohio, U.S.A.
Post mark is Rochester & Chatham, 3:15 PM, 22 November 1948, Kent.

21/11/48

2 Mill Cottages,
New Rd.

Chatham
Kent, Eng.

Dear Cousins,

I suppose that as your mother and my father were closely related I can call you Cousin Dorothy. I think your mother, [Minnie Saywell], must have been my father's, [George, brother of Edward Saywell], niece that I used to hear about long ago, who was a tiny girl when your grandparents, [Edward and Harriet Clark Saywell], left England for U.S.A. I am afraid I have been neglectful in not writing before to thank you for the most interesting letters I received. I was very pleased to hear from you and to receive the lovely snaps of you both and your dear little son, [Danny]. What a lovely boy! And do you know as I looked at it, [the photograph], I could see a likeness to my brother when he was a baby, so I think he must be like Dorothy's family. You certainly had a good time in getting about, [the country]. And I hope all the things you were hoping to do this past summer materialised, (English spelling), and that you are all well.

Afraid I cannot, [come up with subjects] with much of interest as I am unable to get out, but very little. Much of my time is spent in the room where I was when your husband came when he was in England. I wish I had seen him again, but was pleased even for the very short time he was here. We had a very unsettled summer, a few fine days & then rain, but one good thing it was a good harvest. Things are just a trifle easier here, [after the war and rationing], as far as food goes, although butter, margarine, lard, cheese, bacon, sugar, tea and sweets are still rationed. We are to have 4 ounces tea, 8 ounces sugar and two ounces sweets, extra for Christmas, and a fortnight ago had 4 ounces currants, and 4 ounces sultannas [peanuts], as I am now seventy I had three bannanas this week and there are some oranges coming so [I am] a little better off this year. However, there is much to be thankful for, especially when one thinks of the hundreds who lost their lives during the bombing and so many still suffering from the war. I hear on [the] radio about the dockers strike in your country and yesterday just before time for the Queen Elizabeth, [ship], to sail some of the crew walked off and delayed her. They hoped to sail today. What a hold up with everything it will cause!

How quickly the time passes. It hardly seems possible that Christmas is so near. It is a little early, but would like to wish you a very happy Christmas and a bright and prosperous New year. I am alone, as [I am] the last of the family, but a friend is coming to spend Christmas with me.

Please excuse my writing. It is not easy to write now. I soon get tired.

Love from your affectionate cousin,
E. Saywell

I have not heard from Louise lately. Expect she is busy.

I think everyone here [is] delighted with Princess Elizabeth's baby being a boy, (Prince Charles 1948).

Good bye. God bless you.

The Eliza Letters additional continued

- letter nine -

Letter addressed to: Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Hart, Jr., 1028 Greyton Road, Cleveland, 12, Ohio. U.S.A.
Post mark is not too legible as the ink is lost on the stamp. Rochester & Chatham, PM, ..c, 1950, Kent.

2/12/50
12 December 1950
[The English write the day first then the month.]

2 Mills Cottages
The Mount
New Road
Chatham
Kent
Eng.

Dear Cousins,

I am really wondering what you must think of me for not writing before now to thank you for the most interesting letter and the pictures of you both with your two bonny boys. If thinking of you would have wrote, you would have heard long ago. It is just that I have so little strength and a lot of pain at times, I cannot manage it, so I hope you will understand and excuse bad writing. You certainly did some traveling and I hope the weather has been real summer and that you have been able to enjoy yourselves as much this year. I cannot tell you much that I have done as most of my time now is spent in one room. Once during the summer I sat in deck chair in the garden. I sometimes wish I could go upstairs for a change, but I cannot. Must be content here. I have friends come in often and my Pastor is most kind. He visits me often and every month comes and I have the joy of partaking of "The Lord's Supper". I am sorry to say he is leaving Chatham next month. I know that I shall miss him very much.

Our summer was not a very good one, a few fine hot day and then wind and rain, but when I read of the blizzard and loss of life in your country, it makes one feel we have no cause for complaint.

The news from Korea does not sound too good. I hope it will not effect you much and that you will never know war overhead as we had during the two World Wars. It is a terrible thing and I had hoped men had learned that it is better to live in peace.

Hoping you are all well.

With best wishes for a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Yours affectionately,

E. Saywell

XXXXX
For children