My Sister, Martha

Compiled by D. A. Sharpe

Martha de Noailles Sharpe was born September 7, 1927.  She is the elder of my two sisters, the only siblings of mine.  The 1927 year of Martha's birth was a whirlwind year for the nation.  [Frank Billings Kellogg](Martha%20de%20Noailles%20Sharpe%20was%20born%20September%207,%201927.%20%20She%20is%20the%20elder%20of%20my%20two%20sisters,%20the%20only%20siblings%20of%20mine.%20%20The%201927%20year%20of%20Martha's%20birth%20was%20a%20whirlwind%20year%20for%20the%20nation.%20%20Frank%20Billings%20Kellogg,%20U.S.%20Secretary%20of%20State,%20proposed), U.S. Secretary of State, proposed a pact for reunification of the world powers to conclude the loose strings remaining from World War I.  It was finally agreed to the following year and became known as the [Kellogg-Briand Pact](https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/kellogg).  His accomplishments with that pact earned him the [1929 Nobel Peace Prize](https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1929/).  Frank is Martha's sixth cousin, twice removed.

It also was the year [Ernest Hemingway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernest_Hemingway) wrote his "Men without Women" short stories, Franz Kafka wrote "Amerika," Upton Sinclair wrote "Oil" and [Sinclair Lewis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinclair_Lewis) wrote "Elmer Gantry."  The theater world was stunned with the first talkie movie, "The Jazz Singer," starring [Al Jolson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jolson).  That exciting introduction to audio thrill began with the curtain raising to an empty dark screen, the audience embracing a stillness of silence, which was shattered with the golden-throated voice of Al Jolson saying from behind the blank screen, "You ain't heard nothing yet!"

For the musical lovers, [Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II](http://www.imagi-nation.com/moonstruck/albm32.html) wrote "Show Boat" that year.  Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart wrote "A Connecticut Yankee."  The popular songs for 1927 were "Old Man River," "My Blue Heaven," "Let a Smile Be Your Umbrella" and "Blue Skies."

[Charles Lindbergh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Lindbergh) flew into the history books of eternity with his non-stop trans-Atlantic flight to France.

Source:  "Time Tables of History," Bernard Grun, pages 490-493

On the very day of Martha's birth, [TV pioneer Philo T. Farnsworth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philo_Farnsworth) succeeded in transmitting an image through purely electronic means by using a device called an image dissector.

Source:http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/20040907.html?th

Martha was born on the 394th birthday of [English Queen Elizabeth I,](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_I_of_England) daughter of [King Henry VIII](http://www.dasharpe.com/Genealogy/HenryVIII.html) and his second of six wives, Anne Boleyn.  Martha's sister was [Elizabeth Anne](http://www.dasharpe.com/Genealogy/Jumper,Elizabeth.html), born two years later in 1929.  Anne Boleyn's sister, Mary, married William Cary, who would be Elizabeth's uncle.  William Cary is Martha's 20th cousin, 13 times removed on our mother's side of the family.

On our father's side, William Cary is the seventh cousin, five times removed of Edward Southworth, the first husband of Alice Carpenter, Martha's seventh great grandmother on our father's side.  Alice's second husband was of historical significance, being [William Bradford](http://www.dasharpe.com/Genealogy/Bradford.html), the Governor of Plymouth Colony in the New World for 33 of the first 35 years after their 1620 arrival on the Mayflower.

William Bradford is the second great grandfather of Herbert Pelham, the very first Treasurer of Harvard College in the English Colonies about 1643.

Martha was born in Laredo, Texas where her father was in his first pastorate as a Presbyterian Minister.  It was the [First Presbyterian Church.](https://books.google.com/books/about/History_of_the_First_Presbyterian_Church.html?id=nth3YgEACAAJ)

Martha's middle name, de Noailles, is a strangely beautiful French middle name found in this very non-French family.  The source of it really is a mystery.  However, oral tradition has it that the name was taken from a friend of the family.  The name appears as the middle name for Martha's grandmother, Mattie de Noailles Simons Sharpe, as well as in her second great grandmother, Anastasia (Fannie) de Noailles Lafayette Hewlett.  If the friend of the family story is correct, the friend was probably that of the parents of Fannie, who were Lemuel Green Hewlett and Rebecca J. Harvey, the parents living in [Hopkins County, Kentucky](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hopkins_County,_Kentucky) at the time of the birth of Anastasia de Noailles Lafayette Hewlett (Fannie) and all of her six siblings.

Before Martha was three, the family moved to Little Rock, Arkansas in1929.  Her father's call to his third pastorate (he was a Presbyterian pastor) was to Ballinger, Texas, 1935.  These were the depths of the depression days of the economy in the United States, yet God's providence continued to give adequate sustenance for the family, including having a maid to help with the children and domestic chores of the home and for what was expected of a pastor's home.

By 1941, when the children were three in number, the family [moved to Houston, Texas](http://www.dasharpe.com/Autobiography/Divided%20/Chapter%20%203.html).  From then on, the family did not have domestic help in the home.  Martha fared well in school, graduating from [San Jacinto High School](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Jacinto_High_School_(Houston,_Texas)) as Magna Cum Laude in 1944.  Her academic acumen and academic record brought her entrance to [Rice Institute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rice_University), a school of great renown in academics.  After a year at Rice, her desire to branch out in life led her to the [University of Texas at Austin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Texas_at_Austin), the school from which both of her parents had graduated in 1925 and1926.

It was at Austin that Martha met Victor Marcus Ehlers, Jr. in the context of activities at the Westminster Student Fellowship at the [University Presbyterian Church](https://upcaustin.org/).  Vic had completed military service in World War II.  The young couple wanted to marry and get on with life, even before graduation, which they did.   What brought me, Martha's little brother, to accepting Vic onto the scene dating her was his [bright shiny Ford Coupe convertible](https://www.google.com/search?q=1946+ford+convertible&client=safari&rls=en&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=glJ8EHOkcfP9FM%253A%252C9JUr6A3hEzHArM%252C_&usg=__BpjVMKxJsDsG4hTLLJHahHgcp5g%3D&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjknq7KgbPaAhUk9YMKHQf6DvUQ9QEILjAA#imgrc=glJ)! Boy, was it classy.  Once he offered a free ride to me around the neighborhood, I thought he was a fine friend for my sister!  Martha was a member of the [Phi Mu Sorority](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phi_Mu) Alumnae and participated in its alumni activities much of her life.

She was a life-long Presbyterian, serving in later years as an [ordained Elder](http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/ruling-elders/definition-of-ruling-elder/).  She participated in her church's life wherever she lived, such as in Sunday School, Presbyterian Women's organizations, etc.  She was a member of the Mothers' Club of [Alpha Delta Pi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alpha_Delta_Pi) and [Alpha Gamma Delta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alpha_Gamma_Delta) Sororities, and served on the [Panhellenic Counci](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Pan-Hellenic_Council)l.  Her love for history was fulfilled somewhat in her activities as a Docent at the [LBJ Presidential Library in Austin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lyndon_Baines_Johnson_Library_and_Museum) (named for [U.S. President Lyndon Baines Johnson](us%20president%20lyndon%20b%20johnson%20favorite%20soft%20drink), a Texan native).

Martha enjoyed domestic engineering, raising her two daughters, both of whom were very talented girls.

Martha was widowed for about seventeen years.  She experienced dementia, and coming to live with Nancy's family was necessitated.  They lovingly took care of her through the home and through several institutions.  She lived back home for much of the last year of her life, though it may have been a couple of years since family members had been able to exchange meaningful conversation.  One thing the family did learn was the singing of old time hymns brought a response of seeming gratitude and recognition to her, and so we sang a lot for Martha.  She really could not be aware that her daughter, Lynne, succumbed from cancer three months before Martha died.

Her last few years were spent home-based in the residence of her daughter, Nancy and her family.  The Reeves family were so generous in providing an apartment built into their home.  Their care was so meaningful to Martha and to the rest of us in the family.  They lived in Williamson County, the next county north of Austin, Travis County, Texas, where Martha and Vic had raised their family There was a closeness there.

Her going home service in 2002 was a celebration of a Christian life with many family and friends together.  The woman conducting the service, the Rev. Ms. Kelly Chadwick, was a family friend.  I gave a eulogy about Martha.  The service was held at the [Weed-Corley-Fish Funeral Home in Austin](http://www.centraltexascremation.com/funeral-cost/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIos2Cg4Oz2gIVEZ7ACh0-yQAQEAAYASAAEgJr8_D_BwE).  Her burial was at the [Austin Memorial Park, Austin, Travis County, Te](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/40065712/martha-denoailes-ehlers)xas.  Our first cousin, Harry Franklin Sharpe of Georgetown, Williamson County, Texas, attended the services.

Composed by Martha’s brother

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