

DEAR OLA MAE

Many of the entries in the decaying autograph book begin the same way: "Dear Ola Mae." Though some 75 years that have elapsed, a timeless quality about human needs and feelings comes through clearly. Even as in Ola Mae's day, we still desire sincere friendships and still want to be liked. These thoughts -- so fresh and meaningful when they were written -- speak for themselves across the decades:

Don't get peeved at us, and come to see us
Christmas, 1923. -- Irma

Yes, Irma, I am quite peeved. But as to you, I ask
that you still remain as a close friend. -- Ola Mae

I'm "Mrs." now but hope you love me just the same.
-- Myrtle

Although we don't live close together, I hope we
shall be close friends. -- Muriel

Do you love me? Yes, I'm crazy about you. -- Your
Auntie Mary

When you have finished here and go out into the
wide, wide world, will you always remember me? --
Lilyanne

I realize that I'm a pest, but you do love me just a
little, don't you? Well, I love you, just like a hog loves
slop or better, and I surely have had some good times
at your house. Love me? -- Clare

Always remember your classmate at business
college who couldn't write dictation and always count
on her being your friend. -- Mary

Can you remember when we first met? We've been
friends for a long, long time. Here's hoping we remain
the same through thick and thin. -- "Lingo"

Please remember me and my good qualities, few as
they are, for I will always think of you as one of the
sweetest girls I ever knew (and I mean it). -- Bernice

When the golden sun is setting and your mind from
care is free, while of others you are thinking, will you
sometimes think of me? -- Flora

I'm your seatmate while in bookkeeping, and
although we've idled several moments with amusing
thoughts and words we've spent there happily, we
don't count them "lost," do we? In your golden chain
of friendship, please regard me as a link. -- Geneva

It's been a long time since I wrote in here so I'm
writing again to tell you that I still love you, only lots
more, and I hope my plans will somehow or other
work out as perfectly as yours have. Do you reckon
they will? Well, anyway I have a good example to
follow in you. -- Clare

I don't know anything else about Ola Mae, but it's
only natural to wonder about her. Was she successful
in maintaining the friendships that seemed so intense
and personal in her youth? And did her plans
continue to work out perfectly? I hope so. The cares
of this world and the urgency of the moment have an
almost irresistible way of creeping in and spoiling the
important ... if we allow them.