

**Glenn Rice's photograph album of his Jordan/Jerram family
in early 20th century**



Elizabeth Cesarine Jerram and her mother Elizabeth Jordan, née Wood, circa 1920-24



Elizabeth Cesarine Jordan, probably 1904 the year she married Herbert J. Jerram



Elizabeth C. Jerram (née Jordan) 1944. Reading letter from son John (his photo on radio) who was away at war. He flew in B17s over Germany



1913: Frederick Jordan and his family. Fred with Kittie alongside him,
wife Katherine holding baby Frederick born 1 March 1913.
Tragedy devastated the family only two years later, as told below by Glenn



Ivy Katherine "Kittie" Jordan (1911-
1915)

Families memories recounted by Glenn Rice

One Family's Near Encounter with *The Titanic*

For those of us who knew Grandfather Jerram, we were more than familiar with how “resolved” he could be when he was certain he was right about something, or when his “limey” anger would be up. And yet it may have been because of this resolve in going ahead once he had made up his mind that most surely did save his young family from the disaster of the sinking of the *Titanic*.

His wife, my grandmother, once told me this story in 1958 or 1959 of how granddad had insisted the family sail to America on the Belgian ship, S.S. *Lapland*, instead of the great new ship *Titanic*, in 1912. The previous year, in April, 1911, granddad Jerram, along with his father-in-law and brother-in-law [grandmother's father and brother] came to America aboard the steamship *Pomeranien* [which sailed at that period from London to Montreal], just one year before the other members of the family. Their plan was to secure a place to live in Los Angeles, Cal. and find jobs with which to support the rest of the family when they finally arrived.

Grandmother Jerram related to me that as the time approached for the *Lapland* to sail, her brother Fred Jordan expressed a desire to have all the rest of the family members come to America on the new luxury liner that was getting ready for its maiden voyage. Sailing for their new life in America was not only grandmother, but also six year old daughter Ivy (my mother to be), and one year old Violet, her infant sister. Also coming over was my great-grandmother Elizabeth Cesarine Jordan and Katherine [Kate] Jordan, wife of grandmother's brother Fred, and their one year old infant daughter Ivy Katherine [Kittie]. Another woman, Clair Julia Jordan, relationship unclear, was also a passenger as well.

When brother-in-law Fred expressed his wish that they all come on the new ship, granddad did not take to the idea. Apparently Fred began arguing his point which raised that Old English Anger of Granddad Herbert Jerram. "No, by God" shouted grandfather. "My family has passage on the *Lapland* and they are going to come over on the *Lapland*. If you want YOUR wife and child to come over on the *Titanic*,

you can, But mine WON'T!". Perhaps to prevent any further argument or create any bad feelings, Fred finally did give in to granddad Jerram and allowed them all to come as planned.

Word of the *Titanic's* disaster did not reach the public right away. It was only when the family arrived aboard the *Lapland* and they had disembarked that the news reached them. The three men who had arrived the year before were waiting at the dock when the ship made port, and when the women came ashore, my Grandmother Jerram told me her brother Fred fell to his knees there on the dock, grasping his young wife and child and wept uncontrollably with the thought that he had nearly sent them to a certain death, for they would most surely have been among the "steerage" passengers and would have all been lost.

While this tragedy WAS avoided, there were two other tragedies that befell Fred and Kate Jordan. On August 6th, 1915, little Kittie Jordan was killed in a house fire, and on October 5th of that same year, Fred himself was killed in an accident while at work.

Glenn H. Rice May 8th, 2003

Ivy Katherine [Kittie] Jordan

By one account Kittie was just 11 months old when she and her mother came to America in April of 1912. She and her mother Catherine [Kate], along with her grandmother Elizabeth Jordan [my greatgrandmother], and her Aunt Elizabeth Jerram [my grandmother], her cousin, my mother, Ivy Jerram, not yet 7 years old, and her cousin Violet, about 1 year old, were crossing the Atlantic Ocean on SS *Lapland* at exactly the same time as the *Titanic* (which unlike the *Lapland* did not reach the American shore). Her father and both grandfathers came to America the previous year, April, 1911, to get jobs and find a home for the family to live in. The ship's passenger list gives her age perhaps incorrectly since subsequent research of her death certificate shows she was born in August, 1911.

My mother, Ivy Jerram Rice, told me the tragic story of the fire that claimed this beautiful child in 1915 when she was just 3 or 4 years old. Her parents, Frederick and Kate Jordan, soon had a new son, born in March, 1913, and to help provide for the family, they attempted to raise some baby chicks in an incubator in the home. A fire resulted from faulty wiring, burning the house down and trapping little Kittie before

she could escape to safety. Her father ran back into the burning house to rescue her, but the flames were so intense he could not find her. He suffered serious burns and had to be rushed to the hospital. A recently discovered newspaper article is quoted as saying "Katherine was the first to smell the smoke and aroused her parents. From the front room where she slept, she screamed that the house was full of smoke, thereby waking them. They grabbed their 2 year old son and rushed out, thinking that in as much as she had given the alarm she had already escaped. A search could not find her so it was then her father reentered the burning home, all to no avail. It was only after the firemen had extinguished the flames that her body was recovered".

As tragic as this incident was, another terrible accident was soon to occur that would claim the life of her father, and bring more sorrow to this family. On October 5th, 1915 he was killed by falling machinery while at work. My mother, Ivy, who was only 10 years old at the time, told me of the burns on his arms that he received while trying to rescue Kittie, were still visible at the funeral. One month later, on November 23rd, 1915, his widow Kate, gave birth to their third child, a daughter, Rose.

In all the years since the 1940's I have often thought of Kittie Jordan, and when looking at the photos of her, I wondered where she might be now, since no one had told me more about her. In 1999 I started a search to find out more about her. Where she was buried, the particulars concerning the fire, the coroner's report, and most importantly, the death certificate. I could not find any of them. A search of the records for both the city and county of Los Angeles and the bureau of vital statistics in Sacramento, California, revealed no death certificate had been issued. I then asked the Los Angeles coroner's office if they had an inquest report on file, since an inquest should have been held concerning her death. None could be found. During this time of my search, I had been keeping in touch with Kittie's brother, Fred Jordan, the little 2 year old boy who had survived the fire with his parents. He is now 88 years old and lives with his wife Rachael, in Highland Park, California. One evening I received a telephone call from them suggesting that I might ask the Los Angeles fire dept. if they had any report on file concerning the fire. I could then determine the date of the fire and perhaps locate an obituary or news story that would shed some light on the mystery. I called the LAFD arson dept. and was promised they would attempt a search to locate their response. A short time later I received a call back from them and was told a report had

been found stating they had responded to a fire at the Jordan's address on August 16th, 1915, in which a child had been killed. A search of the newspapers and another search of the records office revealed no death certificate was filed. What had happened? Where was little Kittie Jordan? The only proof she ever existed was her name in the ship's passenger list, a couple of old photos, and the word of a brother who was too young at the time to remember her. Then approximately six months after the call from the arson dept. I received another call from them. This one was from a Capt Steve Ruda, LAFD, who was doing some research on past cases for public relations. He suggested he would like to do a follow up on the fire in 1915 at a later date, and would I like a copy of the report that was filed at that time? It was fortunate that he did, because the report he sent me had the date of the file stamped on the front of it. August 6th, not 16th. I went back to the old newspaper files, began at Aug. 6th instead of 16th, and found the news article right away!

But again, no record of death listed for this date. Now armed with a copy of the fire dept. response, the newspaper story, and the two photos of the child, I again descended on the Los Angeles coroner's office intent on speaking to the coroner himself. It was then that I met the records supervisor, Maria Campos, who listened to my story of the lost little girl, and she informed me there were some old records stored away in the basement they had not yet transferred to microfilm. She promised me she would do a search soon and would call me in a month or two to let me know if she had found anything. I then showed her the photograph of Kittie Jordan as she smiled for the camera so many years ago. Campos looked at the photo for several moments and then said, "I'll see what I can find right away, and get back to you within the week." Four days later she called. Here's the reason we could not find any record. Her name was Katherine Jordan, but somehow it was misspelled "Gorden" on the coroner's report. Back to the hall of records I went, only to be frustrated again. Still no record even under the name of Gorden. Then, on just a hunch, the gentleman at the records office searched again, this time under the spelling "Garden". *He found it.* Upon examining it I discovered several discrepancies that are now being officially corrected in the State vital statistics. I noted that the person who submitted the information, such as the family name, was a neighbor who lived nearby, and not a parent or other relative who would have given more accurate information. Finally, there on this document was recorded the cemetery in which she is resting, EVERGREEN cemetery, Los Angeles, California. Here in Evergreen also rests her father Fred, as well as her grandparents, Fred and Elizabeth Jordan (née

Wood). And it was here that her brother said she was laid to rest. However, the cemetery files did not have her listed under Jordan, but rather Garden which was then crossed out and then had Jordan hand printed over it in the old ledger books. I made three different trips to this cemetery, as well as three to the county cemetery located right next to it, searching through all the records they had on file and could not find her listed because the information had been submitted incorrectly. They informed me that when I get the corrected death certificate they will make the correction on her name at the cemetery. She won't be lost anymore. At this time, December 1, 2001, Katherine [Kittie] Jordan lies in an unmarked grave, for her grieving widowed mother, with two small children to provide for, could not afford the expense of a marker. However, her brother and his wife, her nephew and cousins, will have one placed for her very soon.

A postscript to our search for Kittie

November 12, 2002, was the day her grave marker was finally placed. Eighty-seven years and three months after her untimely death, this beautiful four year old child, who called out to her mother and father on that awful night of August 6, 1915, alerting them of a fire ravaging their home, has finally been given the engraved monument she deserved, among all those who rest in peace in Evergreen Park.

As her brother Fred and his wife Rachael and I looked on, I felt a sense of closure to this episode of our family's life, that now she has been found, and the circumstances of her death, and the reason for the loss of information concerning her short life have been solved. And now her brother and Rachael have placed the marker upon her grave at last. It was the last thing we could do for her. As Rachael spoke this prayer she said, "We hope you are looking down upon us and see we did this out of love for you". This little *Saint Katherine* was indeed there, and does know we love her.

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