

*“Seven Ages, after Shakespeare” by Eleanor “Ellie” Ann (née Hennessy) Hohman (1932-2019), written in 2013 at the request of her granddaughter Jane Hohman.*

First Age: My entrance occurred on Nov. 7, 1932 in Hartford, Connecticut. My family and I didn’t linger long there. We moved to Agawam, Massachusetts, where my little sister Ruth made her entrance. By all accounts, I was pretty happy as a young child—with very little “mewling and puking” in my mother’s arms.

Second Age: I wasn’t a “whining” schoolgirl. Nor did I “creep like a snail’ unwillingly to school. I always looked at September as my favorite month. I enjoyed buying a new pencil box and carrying it to school each fall. By this time, we were living in Mt. Lebanon. I was incredibly enthusiastic and always tried to do my best until...I reached junior high and high school. At that point, my main goal was to be popular. I guess I was—to some degree at least. The extent of my ambition was to be a cheerleader, and I succeeded at that. My grades were fairly good, but they could have been much better.

This same attitude continued through my college days--- or I should say “colleges.” I attended three of them. Rosary College in River Forest, Illinois, Penn State and the University of Pittsburgh. I enjoyed all three, but I always liked change. So I followed through on that. As I moved back home to attend Pitt, I was able to get to know Grandma better—my mother’s mother. She always lived with us, but this was different. We were relating on an adult-to-adult basis (or almost so, in my case).

Third Age: As a young adult, I worked briefly as a social worker, a job to which I was singularly unsuited. Switching gears, I went back to Pitt to earn a Master of Education degree. During all of this time, I dated various boys/men, but no “woeful ballads” for me—at least as best as I can remember. I met your grandfather just before I started teaching third grade in Larchmont, N.Y. We married and immediately moved to England where he was a Captain in the US Air Force at a hospital base near Cambridge. During our time in Cambridge, I didn’t take advantage of all the wonderful goings-on in the town. My fault, I fear. Now that I look back on it, I wish I could have attended Cambridge University. And guess what? Your dad was born while we were living there. Yes, he’s both an English and an American citizen. Eventually we returned to Pittsburgh, and I entered the...

Fourth Age: Mom years--- and what exciting years they were. As you can imagine from being around your dad-Tom and Uncles Greg, Eric and Ken. Each one had his own unique strength, charm—and weaknesses. I have to say “weaknesses,” but right now it’s hard to think what they were. I should confess, however, that I occasionally felt “full of strange oaths.” I loved almost everything—watching all of them playing/arguing with friends in the back yard – or even playing on their own. My fondest hope is that they’ll be one another’s best friends forever and ever and ever.....

Those years featured periodic trips to New York, where we bunked down with favorite sister/aunt Ruth and took advantage of nearly everything. It was during this time that I

took up activities that led to the next stage of my life—membership in AAUW (viewing a wider world) and tennis (competition), even though I was a terrible tennis player.

Later, as I realized that I would have to earn a living, I began to wonder what I could do. Hmm. I thought perhaps I could learn about money to make money. So I did. I went back to Pitt to study accounting. That turned out to be a good plan.

Fifth Age: My professional career began when I passed the CPA (Certified Public Account) exam. After a couple of clerical jobs, I was lucky enough to be hired by PNC Bank. I actually liked all of these jobs, especially working with and getting to know younger colleagues. I was always (and I mean always) the oldest in any of these settings. I tried to avoid making my “eyes severe” and spouting too many “wise saws.” Still, I had opportunities for which I’m eternally grateful. Otherwise, I might have been on welfare.

Sixth Age: My retirement years. I never really felt that a “slipper’d pantaloon” would become me, so I’ve skipped that article of dress. I do have “spectacles on nose,” however. What a ride it has been—with my sons engaged in lasting relationships with wonderful women. And to put icing on the cake, so to speak—six wonderful grandchildren. I’ve learned so much from all of them.

And to bridge the gap between the last two stages of life, I have the Osher program for seniors at Pitt. (I guess Pitt has played a large part overall in my life.) What fun I’m having! I’m learning so much about all kinds of subjects—from art and literature to science and economics. Additionally, I’ve met so many people with similar interests and a yen to learn as much as possible in the retirement years. And some of us are still lucky enough to be able to do some biking, hiking and a bit of camping. A little travel comes into the picture as well— France, England, two trips to Canada with Ruth and numerous other family trips.

Seventh Age: As to “second childishness and mere oblivion,” that has yet to come. Even as I think of the end, I still feel that I’ve been extraordinarily lucky to have gotten this far—in good health and with my wits about me—surrounded by family, albeit at a distance, and friends nearby. I like to think they love me. I certainly love them. (Of course that includes you and your sister Leah.) All in all—it has been and continues to be a good life.

### *Shakespeare's Seven Ages of Man*

All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players,  
They have their exits and entrances,  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,

Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.  
Then, the whining schoolboy with his satchel  
And shining morning face, creeping like snail  
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,  
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad  
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,  
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,  
Jealous in honour, sudden, and quick in quarrel,  
Seeking the bubble reputation  
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice  
In fair round belly, with good capon lin'd,  
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,  
Full of wise saws, and modern instances,  
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts  
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,  
With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side,  
His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide,  
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,  
Turning again towards childish treble, pipes  
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful history,  
Is second childhoodness and mere oblivion,  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.