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Olive Dewey Plant 1883 - 1976

Married in the spring of 1913 when she was 30 and he was 53, Olive Dewey was Tom Plant's second wife. The newlyweds presumably worked together to plan and coordinate the construction of this property and to select the furnishings and finishes for their new country estate, which was completed in 1914.

Olive grew up in Toulon, Illinois. Before meeting Tom, she attended Wellesley College in Massachusetts, where she studied Greek, and graduated in 1905.

After Tom died in 1941, Lucknow was foreclosed on, and Olive was forced to leave. She took only small and portable personal belongings with her when she returned to her family in Illinois. Eventually Olive moved to California, where she passed away in 1976 at the age of 93.



What was Olive like?

A few letters and a poem attributed to Olive; historic photographs; as well as stories from friends and family reveal that Olive very much enjoyed the scenic beauty and tranquility of the Lucknow estate. She loved gardening and working in her greenhouse, driving her own car, horseback riding, crossword puzzles, golf and winter sports, and playing bridge.

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Letters from Lucknow

Below are excerpts from letters Olive wrote from Lucknow.

1930 (for the Wellesley alumni newsletter)

My manner of living is unchanged. We are still in the country and each year I grow more enamored of nature and the wonderful scenic beauty of our part of New Hampshire. It is all the time an inspiration and a lifting up out of the materiality of daily living. Outside of my house, I superintend my flower garden and quite a large greenhouse and do a good deal of work in them myself. I drive my own car and do my own marketing once a week in our nearest town, seventeen miles away. I sew, read and study, play a little golf, have our friends visit us, and as I have no children, my husband gets a good deal of attention. I send every good wish to you all and the hope to see many of you at our re-union in June.

1935 (for the Wellesley alumni newsletter)

I am still doing the same things, although my activities, at least along travel lines have been curtailed, thanks to that ogre we call the "Depression." But my husband and I enjoy our home, and we could not travel far enough or long enough to find any more beautiful spot than this lovely section of New Hampshire.

In 1940, Olive wrote to her parents about a visit from her nephews.

The boys made me a nice visit. I enjoyed so much having them, and I think they had a good time. I was rather about John's being able to amuse himself, especially while he was here alone, but I needn't have worried. If there was anything he did not do or any place he did not go and look into, I don't know where it was.....Tom gave him a rifle and I told him he could shoot porcupines and woodchucks and he got one porc., two chucks and a crow. He had a canoe on our pond and he went all over that more than once....He ranged all over the place, down the stream, up the mountain roads, down to the MacDonald place two or three times (after woodchucks), and into every old building and shed on the place. While he was here alone, I saw him only at meal times. He played pool alone and with Maurice and with Tom, and the last night they were here, we all played. He examined all the country around, and the heavens above, through the telescope and told me what he could see....He and Maurice went up to the tops of our mountains one day, in our mountain car....Don't feel badly about my not coming now, for I intend to see you very soon, one way or another... Much love to you and all.

Olive

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