

If you do publish
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an article my family would love a

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THE STORY OF VIVIEN

She was born on June 23rd 1903 in Lee, Surrey, England,
the elder daughter of Captain Basil Charles Combe,
Master
Mariner and his wife Edith Neville, nee Rymer-Jones. At
the

age of two she left with her mother for Honolulu via New
York and San Francisco to join her father whose ship the
"C.s. Restorer" was based there. Capt. Combe had assumed
command in Singapore on February 1905 for her new owner the
Commercial Pacific Cable Company and sailed across the
Pacific arriving in Honolulu in April of that year.

The ship's task was to maintain the company's telegraph
lines which ran from San Francisco to Shanghai and beyond.

The family continued to live in Honolulu until
1908

when the "Restorer" was based to Esquimalt harbor
and the

family moved to Victoria. Life in Hawaii was very different
in those days, there were very few tourists and the city
of

Honolulu was quite a small place. Young Vivien
attended a

kindergarten at Punahou College in 1907. On arrival
in

Victoria the family rented a house on Cook Street.

In 1909 Mrs. Combe and Vivien paid a six month's visit
to

their English relations. On the trip over the, then
seven

year old Vivien, performed for the first time on the stage.
Aboard "R.M.S. Canada" she sang a solo "Yip-Addy-i-Ay".
This was her first performance in a lifetime given to the
theatre.

It was in 1911 that the family moved into their new
home on Verrinder Avenue. Vivien received her education
at

St. Margarets school and it was there that she decided
her

forte was the theatre. She took singing and dancing
lessons

and started to take parts in plays. She was Hebe in "H.M.S. Pinafore" in the Old Victoria Theatre in 1912.

On November 2nd of that year her sister, Adele Laura, was born. These were happy days. There were many visitors to the family home on Verrinder Avenue. One of the early ones was Harvey Combe, a second cousin, who was the Registrar of the Law Society. He was an ardent golfer, one of the original members of the Victoria Golf Club and many times the B.C. champion. His daughter Lenora, who married Hew Paterson, followed in his footsteps and his winning ways. Another frequent visitor was Judge Stanley from Honolulu. His two boys Desmond and Dermot were boarders at the university School and his mother, Lady Heron, stayed with the Combe's shortly after Adele was born.

Aboard the "Restorer" many parties were held and to bring the guests to the wharf A.T. Goward, the then head of the B.C. Electric Railway Co. and a good friend of Capt. Combe, arranged that special street cars were provided.

Vivien was also having a good time at St. Margarets acting in school plays and playing tennis and basketball. Then in 1914 war was declared against Germany and the "Restorer" sailed to Seattle and berthed at the Bremerton Naval Yards. Until this time the ship had flown the Union Jack but now, for the greater protection of this vital and specialized vessel, she was to sail under the neutral Stars and Stripes. She contigued to carry that flag for the rest of her life.

The family moved to Seattle and rented their Victoria home. During the war years they lived in two Seattle houses. Vivien started school in Seattle in September 1914 and it

was there that she met Whilimena (Willie) Blankevoort who became a very dear friend for many years. Vivien was unhappy in Seattle, missing all her friends in Victoria and it was not long before she was back at St. Margarets as a boarder. In 1919 the war ended and the family returned to Victoria and found their home in a deplorable state. The "Restorer" with Capt. Combe in command remained in Seattle. During the war years, while Vivien was a boarder at St. Margarets she continued to interest herself in school plays and spent her holidays with the family in Seattle. Here she remembers spending her weekends on the ship with her friend Willie.

On the family's return to Victoria she and her sister Adele, both attended St. Margarets as day girls. In 1919 Vivien put on Cinderella in the school gym. She remembered the visit of Edward, Prince of Wales, later Edward VIII.

There was a splendid ball given for him at Government House and her great friend Jean Donald received an invitation, however she being several months younger was judged to be too young and much to her chagrin was not asked. Several years later the Prince again visited Victoria and this time she got her wish and had the satisfaction of meeting him while he was with a friend of hers.

She graduated in 1920 and when her father asked Miss Barton, the headmistress, what profession Vivien should follow, he was advised interior decorating. Courses in that field not being readily available, Vivien took a business course at St. Ann's Academy. This was a shame as she proved later on in her life she had a natural flair for design. After completing the commercial course Vivien got her first job in Spencer's Tea Room. There were many of her school friends working there with her and they all had a rather good time. Lunch there then cost about 50 cents and

she recalls that she was once left a 25 cent tip! She spent her first earned money to buy a copper coal scuttle which her sister now has.

In March 1922 the "Restorer" returned to Victoria from a repair job at Midway Island and it was to tie up there and not in Seattle. From then until 1941 she was to berth in Esquimalt or Victoria waters although still retaining her New York registry and the Stars and Stripes.

While anchored in Esquimalt Harbor in 1922 the birthday of the Captain's elder daughter gave rise to one of the gayest parties ever held on the ship. Paddy Heaton's orchestra greeted the barge loads of guests who were ferried over to the ship from the wharf. Chief Steward Robb served a sumptuous repast and dancing followed until the small hours.

Soon after this event the ship was to receive orders to proceed again to Midway Island where the cable had faulted.

On arrival at the island she ran into a vicious storm. Capt. Combe, although he felt ill, was not able to leave the bridge for several days. He became so desperately ill that he was forced to give in and turn his command over to someone else. The repair job took much longer than usual because of the dreadful weather and when she finally docked in Honolulu the Captain had to be taken to the hospital where he remained for weeks. He never regained his health and had to relinquish his command after 18 years service. He returned to his wife and children in Victoria where he lived on as a

semi invalid: until his death at the Royal Jubilee
Hospital
on December 27th. 1926. During these latter
years he had a
summer cottage built on the north shore of Esquimalt
Lagoon.

The family entertained their friends there
and really
enjoyed the isolation which then existed beside;
.that seldom
visited spot.

Vivien continued her acting career. She took part in
many amateur performances and joined the Victoria
Little

Theatre. She recalled acting with the Campbell twins
and

with Eva Hart who was a popular singer in those days. 0
She

was given parts in many of the plays that were put on
and

her work came to the notice of Mr. Reginald Hinks who
was

producing shows at the Playhouse Theatre on Yates
Street.

Vivien joined him acting in the plays he produced each
week.

Hinks wrote ~ 11 the scripts and picked out the songs.

These were topical of the events of the day and were very
popular with the public. Vivien's roles were her first as a
professional actress and she soon made a name for herself in
Victoria. She carried on at the Playhouse for the next two
years, usually taking the part of the comedienne.

After Capt. Combe's death the family was left with very
little money. His pension ended at the date of his death
and hospital bills had consumed most of the family's
savings.

Vivien, now 24, realized she would have to earn her own
living and do what she could to help support the family. Her
talents were theatrical, and while she had done well in
Victoria and was highly thought of, the scope there was not
great and the rewards were small.

She decided she would try for success in England where
the scope was much greater. Therefore she travelled to
London and found a place to live at the Theatre Girls Club
on Greek Street. She did achieve some success but the

competition was fierce. She found living in a big city with very little money was very discouraging and was homesick for the free and easy life in Canada.

During this period she visited a number of her English relations and made many friends. She was always very good

at meeting people and keeping in touch. For instance through

a friend she received an invitation to a reception at South

Africa House where she met Elizabeth, the Duchess of York,

now the Queen Mother. Among her memorabilia is a copy of the

invitation signed by Elizabeth and others who attended

including Vivien Combe.

She was a prodigious letter writer and fortunately for

the producer of this account some of her letters and those

she received have survived, as have some of her diaries.

Meanwhile in Victoria her mother came to the conclusion that, as Vivien was in England and as her relations lived

there, she and Adele should go there too and perhaps stay

on to live. Therefore she rented the Verrinder house and

booked passage on the Royal Mail freighter "Loch Kathrine"

sailing to England via the Panama Canal. She carried 12

passengers and the trip lasted six weeks. They stayed in

England for six months but found life there so different from the one they had grown to love in Canada that

they

decided to return. Vivien agreed feeling she would be able to get work there.

They booked return passage, again on the "Loch Kathrine" via the Panama Canal. The trip was a happy one and the two sisters got on famously with the cadets and officers aboard.

On the way they enjoyed a stop over in Jamaica.

Back in Victoria Vivien was welcomed back at the Playhouse but unfortunately the theatre soon closed and she

had to find another job. She learned to master the art of riveting china and glass and worked for antique stores and

Monty Bridgeman's china shop.

Mrs. Combe and a neighbour Mrs Treherne started a little store they named "Cornbetree" selling B. C. handicrafts on

commission. Cornbetree was not profitable and did not last long.

Then friends of the family asked Mrs Combe if she would consider boarding young girls from out of town while they attended art school, business courses etc. This was a happy arrangement and many of these girls became their dearest

friends, namely, Betty Johnstone Shaneman,

Poppy Beale

Glaspie, Joan Proctor Morris, Madie Innes

Hewlett, Issa

Jones Dobell and Dodie Tremayne Hamilton. Verrinder became a

meeting place for young people, among them were, Alan King,

Les Hardie, Jack and Roy Shadbolt, the Leeming boys, yours

truly and other current beaux. We had sing songs around the old player piano, acted out charades, played

parlor games,

went on hard-time country dances and scavenger hunt~. On

saturday there was the dinner dance in the Crystal Ballroom

at the Empress Hotel, with Billy Tickle's orchestra and

later Len Acre's. The cost was \$2.50! The girls always

wore evening gowns and the boys dinner jackets.

It was a formal age and during the "Big Depressio~" we all had to

work hard for our money, but we did have a lot of fun and no regrets.

Vivien was very active in theatricals, producing and directing, sometimes with Mrs Dorothy Wilson of the Russian Ballet School. The costumes and sets were always outstanding, she could make anything superbly and was very good at organizing work parties to become involved.

Her Christmas Pantomimes and other big productions were very popular. I remember particularly, Alice in Wonderland, Cinderella and Dick Wittington and his Cat all performed at the old Victoria Theatre. She also entered plays in the Dominion Drama Festival, often with success.

The Naval Officers put on a hit production of "The Middle Watch" in which Vivien played a leading role. In fact she was very well known and admired in Victoria and many old timers will remember her as Daisy with Al~n King in their "Bicycle Built for Two" which they performed many times for various occasions.

As well as her theatrical activities Vivien found the time to work for Peggy Napier in her Murdoch's Antiques on Fort Street and was Peggy's bridesmaid when she married Victor Bartholomew. The two girls had a keen sense of humor and we thoroughly enjoyed their stories about some of their customers. One we remember was about a woman who was walking in one of the display rooms and spotted the Three Feather

Coat of Arms of the Prince of Wales with the motto Ich Dien.
She called to Vivien saying, "I've forgotten my
"Lafin" but
can you tell me what the sign says". When Vivien
told her
it means "I Serve", the woman called to her friend
saying;
"Emma Jane come over here and look at this sign it says
"I
ServQ", gee wouldn't that look cute above our bar"!

In June 1933 Adele and I became engaged and were
married in October of the following year. Vivien was much
involved in the arrangements for our wedding. We were wed by
Archdeacon Nunns at St. Mary's Church, Oak Bay and the
reception was at the family home on Verrinder.

World war II started in September 1939 and Vivien felt
she should become involved and travel to England.

However
her mother and friends dissuaded her saying that as
she
suffered from hay fever and such severe bouts of
asthma,
sometimes ending in hospital, she could easily
prove a
greater hindrance than help. So off she went to Montreal
and
stayed with her father's younger brother Aubrey, a
civil
engineer, who lived in Westmont. There she found work in the
china department of the Henry Morgan Co. She worked
there
for about three years.

I had returned from England and Adele had joined me in
Kingston in the spring of 1941. We were living in the staff
quarters of the Royal Military College. We soon contacted
Vivien in Montreal and it wasn't long before she came down
to Kingston to meet her new nephew Roger then about nine
months old.

Vivien had not been really happy at Morgan's because
she did not speak French and found that many of the customers
resented this. Therefore she decided to leave Montreal
for

Toronto where she had applied and been accepted for
work at
Eaton's. She left Morgan's, travelled to Halifax for a
visit

with a childhood friend Jean Donald Gow who had married a naval officer and was stationed there. Then on for a short visit with us before reporting to Eaton's in Toronto for work in their china department. Vivien continued working at Eanon's for the next fourteen years.

While we remained in Kingston we saw Vivien fairly often. She had Christmas with us in 1941. Came to visit us after Patrick was born and was his godmother at his christening. She lived in several apartments in Toronto, made many friends there and seemed to live quite a gay life.

In 1943' I was posted to England to command a R.C.E.M.E. workshop and Adele, her mother and our two boys returned to Victoria. I should have mentioned earlier that mother-combe had been with us in Kirigston from shortly after we had moved from R.M.t. to an ap~rtment in the town.

Meanwhile Vivien had been promoted to the Display Department where she arranged flower and table displays in the store and in outside locations such as the Canadian National Exposition. Later she moved on to the Fashion Bureau.

Here with a number of other quite senior st'aff members she had responsibilities for fashion- decisions, gave lectures and arranged displays. She attended seminais arid was sent on courses to Parson's school of interior design in New York city. In 1952 I was sent on a business: trip to Washington D.C. Adele was with me and we 'met Vivien in New York on our way home. She was staying there on one of her Fashion Burea assignments. We gathered she was doihg well, wa• enjoying

her job and was well thought of by her company. In fact she was now on a first name basis with the senior staff including David Eaton.

While living in Toronto Vivien had made many friends with people who had similar artistic interests and it was with Aileen Adams and her friend Myra that she took off on a trip which lasted six months and took them over a good part of Europe.

They left Toronto, in January 1953 and sailed from New York aboard the "S.S. United States" for London. On arrival they stayed at the famous Gore Hotel which had recently been refurbished and the Elizabethan room opened for the Coronation. They dined there and found it quite an experience, guests, friends and strangers sat at long refractory tables and waitresses dressed in Elizabethan garb served food as it was eaten in that period on pewter plates. Later they came around with very large bowls, for you to scrape your leavings into, for the pot! "Two young men were sitting opposite me and one said to the other, how do I get the attention of the waitress? His friend replied. "As she passes pinch her bottom, that was the way they did it in Elizabeth's time!" "An older man was sitting next to me and I remarked to him I seem to know you. Do you work for Eaton's in Toronto?" With a smile he said, no I work in Morgan's in Montreal." I am Henry Morgan." The right boss in the wrong shop!

This incident was typical of Vivien. Everywher~

she
went all over the world, she would soon spot
an
- acquaintance. She had an extraordinary memory for faces
and
an interest in people that made this possible.

Continuing I quote from Vivien's diary: "On our first
day in London we took the bus to Picadilly and had our lunch
in Lion's Corner House. Then went to Canada House and got
tickets to the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. I went to
see my dear Aunt Ada, actually mother's aunt, who was
nearly blind. She lived in a big apartment house with an old
friend Miss Willowby. 11

"Murray Rymer-Jones and his wife
Molly asked me to
lunch at the United Services Club. The last
time I have seen
him was in 1927, when I had been staying
with his mother and

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"I then went to stay with Aunt Ada and came down with a
terrible cold as I invariably did in London. Next I visited
Genieve Millman (Irving), whose bridesmaid I had been many
years ago in Victoria. I also went to see Miss Barton my old
head mistress at Sb... Margarets School! .. I found time as well
to go and see Nessie Bell at the Theatre Girls Club where I
had lived on my previous stay in London."

"Aileen and I went to view a dress collection. Oliver
Messel was there. We talked to him about his wonderful White
Bedroom which all had raved about in one of the big revues.
He is Anthony Armstrong-Jones' uncle."

The preceding paragraphs illustrate Vivien's
usual
activity in looking up old friends and seeing the
sights in
the places she visits. Knowing that she did not have
the
time to travel around the country to visit -11
her Combe
relations she wrote to them and invited them to

come to
London and have lunch with her. Uncles Leonard and
Herbert
the latter with his wife Millie and Aunt Mildred met
her at
Victoria Station for lunch. She was still
suffering from
the cold and had a bad attack of asthma. She felt
awful and
had to call a doctor, who gave her shots.

"Myra was ill too and we had to cancel our plans to
attend the openings of several Paris Fashion Houses. Aileen
went by herself. The doctor's bill was 12 pounds 12
shillings. We gave him a tin of crisco! He had come to the
hotel three times.."

In February they went to the airport and took a plane to
Lisbon. They found rooms in the Mira Parque Hotel.

"We
spent our first day walking around the city and visiting
the Marques de Pombal park. Here we saw the famous Estufa
Fria greenhouses with displays of exotic tropical plants."

"Next day we took the train to Estoril. We met a very
nice couple from California who persuaded us to move to the
Atlantico Hotel facing the ocean. our friends picked us
up

with our luggage and took us there. We booked rooms at \$2.00
per day including meals! I. Aileen arrived from Paris and
joined

us. Here we spent our remaining stay in Portugal. Estoril,
at that time was the home of a number of disposed European
royalty. We saw the ex-king of Italy and the Archduke of
Austria-Hungary and took photos of all the royal houses."

They drove to Sintra where they visited the Royal
Palace and the Pena Palace atop the rocky hill above
the

town. They spent another day visiting the old
quarter of

Lisbon, the Alfama, the Castelo Sao Jorge and the area
along

the banks of the Tagus. Altogether they were three
weeks in

Portugal before travelling down the west coast, crossing
the

Spanish border and continuing to Seville.

"We left Seville the next morning, stopped in Jerez to visit a winery. This is where the famous sherry is produced. Then we went on to Algeciras and crossed over to Gibraltar by ferry. We tried to find somewhere there to stay without success. Aileen and I walked over the hills and saw the apes. We had to return to Algeciras to spend the night. It was an unattractive town and I suffered from a bad attack of asthma, dogs were everywhere! We took a bus to Seville and I went right to bed. We were staying at the hotel Christina and I had a comfortable room overlooking Marie Louise Park. My throat was very sore so I went out to try to buy a gargle, as I did not know the Spanish word for it I put my head back and pantomimed gargling. They understood and I returned to my bed and slept most of the next day. While in Seville we visited the Alcazar, the fabulous Cathedral and the Macarena where they keep the famous religious treasures used for the Easter Parade. Our Lady of Esperanza was there, she is the Virgin for the bull fighters."

"On March 9th we left for Granada and arrived at the Alhambra Palace Hotel. In Granada I visited the Alhambra, the Generalife gardens and the old Arab Market. It was cold there as you are at the foot of the snow capped Sierra Nevada mountains."

"I took the train to Madrid and met Aileen and Myra at the Emperado Hotel, We took an excursion to Toledo where we saw El Greco's house and the Cathedral. On March 16th we took the train to Barcelona. It was a pretty trip."

Vivien noted in her diary that she went for a walk, saw the magnificent cathedral, the market and then on to

the zoo,
where she met five little girl~ who asked the time.
she took
the children into the zoo to see the monkeys which they
called monos. "I tried to talk to them in Spanish
and did
well enough for them to direct me to the right
bus for my
hotel. It was a delightful experience I would not have
missed
for anything."
The following morning they went by ship to Genoa, where
they spent the night. Vivien noted that they saw the
house
where Christopher Columbus was born. They left for Rome
the
next day and stayed at the Hotel National. Vivien had
run
out of money and had wired her mother to send some to
the
American Express in Rome. It had not arrived but this
did
not prevent her from seeing the sights. She saw
the
Colosseum, Hadrian's Villa, the Vatican and the
Catacombs.
The others decided to head north but as Vivien's money
had
still not arrived she borrowed some from Myra and went by
bus to Naples. She carried on to Sorrento by train.
Luckily
travel was very inexpensive in Italy at that time! Here
she
met some youths who wanted a passenger to help pay the
fare
for the Amalfi drive and on to the Isle of Capri.

"On the way we stopped at small town of Revello and saw
that a movie was being shot at the cathedral square. I went
over to see who was in the cast and recognized Peter Lore,
Robert Morley and John Houston. the director. The movie was
Beat the Devil. Later on at the Garden Party at Buckingham
Palace I saw Robert Morley again. That time elegantly
dressed in a frock coat and top hat!

"The following day we went to the Isle of Capri. The
ride out to the island was very rough and it had started
to

rain. Nevertheless we had a terrific day seeing the lower town and having a most memorable boat ride through the Blue Grotto. Next day the lads and I went by train to Pompeii where we spent a fantastic two hours touring the ruins. There was so much to see; the house of ill-repute, the lovely wall murals, the mosaic of a dog, the stone ovens and the petrified loaf of bread!" We returned to Rome via Naples and I was delighted to find that my money had arrived and I was able to repay Myra."

The preceding paragraphs illustrate that Vivien never let a temporary shortage of funds interfere with her plans. In fact we could never understand how she could manage so well on so little!

"Solvent again I took the train to Florence. I stayed at a pensione to save money. It was clean and cheap.

In Florence I visited the Uffizi Gallery, the Convent of San Marco and Michael's statue of 1 David. I went to see Mrs Coskell and had lunch in her garden. Then was shown over her lovely 14th century house with its wonderful collection of Chinese paintings. I spent another day visiting San Gimignano and Siena by bus. Then on to Venice and travelled up the Grand Canal to San Marco square, the Basilica and the Doge's Palace. I went for a gondola ride with an Australian girl--took photos of a wedding party in a gondola and saw the Bridge of Sighs".

"April 26th I left for Nice by train passing through Milan and Genoa enroute. On the train I met a young Norwegian

Publisher and we had drinks, the next day we met again, dined together and walked to the old part of Nice. I went on a bus tour to Monte Carlo. A very nice Englishman who was sitting next to me in the bus accompanied me to the gaming tables in the casino. We had drinks and then danced for awhile. Another day I bussed to Canne~ and--walked along the front, then visited the Garibaldi Museum. I travelled to Paris by train the next day. In my carriage there were two old spinsters. After awhile one turned to her friend and said "She is an actress I think!" Vivien stood out in a crowd. Her clothes, ~any of which she had designed and made herself were always in good taste and she knew how to wear them to enhance her appearance.

"It was May when I arrived in Paris and on every corner lily of the valley were being sold. It was beautiful. I went up to the top of the Eiffel Tower, then walked past the Ecole Militaire, the Palace of Chaillot and up Ave. Kleber to Place de la Concorde. I saw an exhibition of modern art at the Petit Palace and then back to my hotel in the rain.

The next day I took in the Louvre and then visited the Museum du Jeu de Panue to see the Impressionists paintings. On my third day in Paris I took a bus to the Bois de Bologne. I wanted to see what I had been singing about so many years ago at the Playhouse on Yates Street; "As I walked along the Bois de Bologne with an independent air, etc, etc." After this I followed the left bank where the

artists sell their pictures. I bought a Toulouse
Lutrec for
2500 francs! I visited Notre Dame. On my last day
in Paris
I went to Versailles and wandered around the gardens."
On arrival back in England Vivien still had several
weeks before her scheduled trip back to Toronto. She stayed
in London looking up old friends and visiting places she had
missed earlier. In her diary she mentions the Chelsea
Flower Show, Greenwich and Kew Gardens, also a number
of
theatres, one of which was the Haymarket with Noel Coward in
Blythe Spirit.
Another entry in her diary describes the Buckingham
Palace Garden Party that she and Aileen attended. "
We
passed through a large reception hall out into the gardens
to the rear. There were hundreds of people milling
around.
The Queen looked very regal as she received her
guests.
Princess Ann was there and looked very nice. It was a
really
memorable occasion."
"While at Eaton's in Toronto I had used Wedgewood china
for a number of table displays and had a letter
of
introduction to one of their London executives. I phoned
him
and he arranged a luncheon and a tour of their factory
at
Stoke-on-Trent. we saw the china being made, painted
and
fired and I found it all very interesting. When I asked
my
guide why the town was so foggy he replied, there
would be
something wrong if it wasn't, as that would mean
the
potteries were shut down." In fact during the war
smoke
from the kilns had camouflaged Stoke from the German
planes
and saved many lives.
As Vivien still had time before leaving for Canada she
did some travelling around England. These trips took her to
Bath and, as she added, to see the baths and buy bath buns!

Warwick Castle was visited, the famous earl was an ancestor. On she travelled to Stratford-on-Avon, Oxford, Bristol and many other places.

Uncle Leonard was her godfather, she visited him and his wife in Horsham. They had been married in Ceylon and Leonard gave her three delightful paintings of Ceylon flowers. Today these hang in our dining room in Vancouver and are much admired.

Murray Rymer-Jones invited her to a meeting at Scotland Yard to see the police dogs perform. Vivien was enormously impressed with their training. Murray had been the first to introduce working dogs to the Metropolitan Police. He was a very senior officer in the force.

It was now time to say her good byes and be off to Southampton to board the "S.S United States" for New York. As they left the docks they saw the ships of the Royal Navy lined up for the Spithead Revue.

She was back at the Fashion Bureau in June. It had been a very eventful trip where she had seen and learned a

great deal and met many new friends. Her work under Dora Mathews continued as it had previously, arranging displays at such locations as the Canadian National Exposition.

She lectured on such subjects as table settings. She took a course on photography and worked with photographers and for relaxation attended an art course in Kitchener.

Vivien retired from Eaton's in 1955 after 14 years service with the firm. She told Adele she felt she was

getting a "diamond E brand on her brow" and was considering going into business for herself. However after casting

herself adrift, she decided to spend that winter with a

friend Torchy Faulkner in Mexico. They left Toronto in

November by car, with Torchy's two children, and drove right

across the U.S.A. and on down to San Miguel

Allende in central Mexico, where they arrived ten days later.

Here they rented a house and attended classes at the Institute.

Vivien took up pottery, wood carving, jewelry and photography.

In December she and Torchy went on a trip which took them to Mexico City, Taxco, Veracruz and Orizaba. "My visit

to Orizaba was one of curiosity and sentiment. I had always

wanted to see the place I had heard so much about from

mother! My grandfather, Alexander Manson Rymer-Jones, a

civil engineer, had arrived here in 1871 with his young 22 year old bride Ernestine. In 1872 their eldest son was born.

A nanny was sent from England with a complete layette for

the baby. The child was very fair and the Spanish people named him nino blanco (little white boy). In those days

Mexico was a wild and dangerous place and the young couple slept with revolvers under their pillows.

Adele and I visited San Miguel in February 1956 and the three of us went on a short trip to Morelia and Patzcuaro.

Vivien seemed to be very happy in San Miguel where she had made friends with other artistic people at the Institute.

•••.

She left Mexico in March and returned to Toronto as she had

to find another job.

After her return from Mexico Vivien and a partner Margot started a business they called "Flair". They rented space on the second floor of a building on Young Street.

Here they set up a display room with tables on which there were settings of china, silver, table cloths, flowers etc.

"We had people come to lecture on the correct win~ to be used with various foods, Margot lectured on flower

arrangements and I on correct etiquette; the placement of

silver, china, napkins, ash trays, etc. for various

occasions. We hired a model to demonstrate how to walk, sit and what to wear." The business was not profitable. It was probably before its time and it did not last too long. It was during this period that Alan Edwards who was originally from Victoria and had been employed by Eaton's became a close friend of Vivien. He was an artist and interior decorator. They became engaged. "It was Alan who persuaded me to leave Toronto and join him and his mother in Dallas Texas where he had 1 work. He said it would be a good place, for someone with my talents and there was greater scope in the U.S.A. than in Canada". Vivien accepted his advice, went to Dallas and became a landed immigrant. She worked there for the next two years. First for the Nieman Marcus departmental store and then for Lambert 1 s landscaping. From one of her diaries we noted that while in Dallas she attended A.A. meetings and as she certainly never had a drinking problem we suspect it must have been because of Alan. Early in 1958 she left Dallas for Puerto Rico. Alan had proceeded her and had a good job doing interior decorating for the Caribbean Hilton Hotel. He got Vivien work making dresses for the waitresses at the hotel. These were very well received, so it was decided that they would start a business they named Carrib Casuals. Alan did silk screening with Puerto Rican motifs and Vivien des'igned sports wear which they sold to the shops. "I sold one outfit to Mrs. David Eaton". We hired a young boy to help with the silk screening and a woman to do the machining of the dresses. Their local help proved to be very unreliable and Vivien

became frustrated. Alan drank too much and Vivien could not get along with Mrs. Edwards. She decided to leave Puerto Rico and return to B.C. Her engagement broke off. When she arrived in Vancouver, Vivien was at a very low point in her career. She was broke and very depressed.

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She rented an apartment in the west-end of the city and landed a Christmas relief job at the General Post Office. She also worked as a census taker, and found the work extremely tiring in the wet cold winter weather.

She heard of a possible job with the Canadian Broadcasting Commission, applied for it and was hired for their costume department. Here she designed and made costumes for their productions. While with the C.B.C. she met Josephine Boss who became a great friend.

For the summer months Vivien travelled to Banff Alberta and worked in the Toggery Shop. It was here she made her first contact with the Bahai Faith that was to have such a great influence in her life later on.

In the spring of 1961, while in Victoria, Vivien met Desmond Stanley. The Stanleys had been great friends of the

Combes in Hawaii many years ago and Desmond and his brother Dermot had been educated at the University School in

Victoria. Desmond persuaded Vivien to come to Honolulu where he would sponsor her. She decided to go and Desmond

met her on her arrival in April. She soon got a job as a nursing aid at the Monalau Hospital.

In 1962 Adeie and I travelled to Honolulu to see her. She was still working at the hospital and owned a little white volkswagen. She had settled down and made many friends in the city. The warm tropical climate of the islands suited her and she was her old self again.

In December that year her mother became critically ill and Vivien came to Victoria to be with her. On January 9th.

1963 her mother died and after the funeral Vivien returned to Honolulu. During the past year she had again come into contact with the Bahai Faith and had been attending meetings. The new religion had a great appeal and she became a convert.

Bahaiism is based on the teachings of a Persian prophet, Baha'u'llah. • He taught that religion must be the cause and source of love and unity of all the people of the world. He believed in the oneness of mankind, the oneness of religion and the individual's personal search for truth. His objective was to unite the people of the world under one religion and one social order. There were to be no churches, no clergy and the faith was to be spread by informal talks in the homes of the people,

Vivien felt that the life she had been living had little purpose. She wished to bring her new religion to others and in order to do so she felt she must learn a great deal more about it.

She therefore planned to go on a pilgrimage to Haifa in Israel where the House of Justice, the headquarters of the Bahai Faith was located.

In the autumn of 1964 she purchased an airline ticket that would take her around the world. She planned to travel across the Pacific to Japan, then across Asia to Haifa, from there to Greece, then through Europe and home by the Atlantic. It was her aim to meet Bahais in the countries she visited and learn more about the faith so as to be better able to spread her new belief.

She left Honolulu in November and flew to Tokyo. Spent some ten days in Japan, traveling as far south as Osaka with a stop off in Kyoto. In these centers she was met and entertained by local Bahais. She saw puppet shows and was impressed by the stories that were told by this means. Later on Vivien was to use puppets in her missionary work.

From Japan she continued to Hong Kong, came down with a very bad cold and spent four days in bed. Her next stop was Bangkok, where the weather was warm, and she

recovered from the cold and thoroughly enjoyed the sights. Vivien never went anywhere without meeting interesting people.

While in Bangkok staying at the very posh Oriental Hotel she

met and went sightseeing with The Hon. Charles Strutt, a cousin of the Duke of Norfolk,

Next on to Delhi where she took a side trip to Agra to see the Taj Mahal. Next to Teheran and was met by Bahais, staying with a wealthy family who had interests in Pepsi Cola. They arranged a trip for her to Isfahan and on to Shiraz.

It was in the latter city that the Bahai Faith got its start and Vivien visited some of the holy sites and also had time to see the wonders of Persepolis.

Returning to Teheran Vivien flew to Tel Aviv and took the bus to Haifa. Here with a number of other pilgrims she stayed at the Pilgrim House and visited some of the shrines.

At Akka (ancient Acre) she visited the place where Bah'u'llah the prophet had been imprisoned and died.

Her next stop was Athens. Here she visited many of the famous sites; the Acropolis, Delphi, Corfu, etc. She fell in

love with the country and found a special spot on the small island of Poros in the Aegean which she felt would be the

ideal place to retire to. English people were buying land

there and were planning to build. Vivien was so impressed that she signed an agreement and made an advance payment to purchase her dream home. More about this later.

From Greece she flew to Rome which she knew well from her stay there in 1953. It was so cold, then midwinter, that she headed south to Palma Mallorca and remained there for the month of January. In February she was in Zurich, then on to Frankfurt. In Hiedelberg nearby she saw Josephine Boss' sister. Then Amsterdam in March and from there on to Honolulu via Toronto and Vancouver.

On her return to Honolulu Vivien continued acting as a companion to elderly ladies. First there was a Mrs. Judd, a member of one of Honolulu's oldest families. After her came a Mrs. McCoy, a wealthy woman with a large estate and a staff of about fifteen. She treated Vivien as a daughter.

Vivien also spent a lot of her time at the Bahai Center and regularly attended the weekly meetings known as "feasts", although they had nothing to do with dining. They were feasts for the soul!

Time was passing and by July 1968 Vivien would be 65 years old, She planned to retire and build a home on the property she had purchased in Greece. For living expenses she had a life interest in her mother's estate and after her sixty fifth birthday would be eligible for the Canadian old age pension and a U.S. social security pension that she had been contributing to from the time she had become a landed immigrant in Dallas Texas. However in order to receive the Canadian pension she had to prove she must have lived in Canada for at least 25 years and had been a resident for one full year immediately prior to her 65th birthday.

To meet the latter condition she returned to B.c. and obtained employment at the Toggery shop in Banff where she had worked previously.

After working for the summer months in Banff she and a friend Margaret Cornelius flew to Prestwich Scotland, hired a car, visited Glasgow and Edinborough, then headed south for London. On the way they made a number of stops to visit friends and relations. They arrived in London in October and Margaret returned to Canada. Vivien spent several more weeks in England. She mentions seeing her aunts Dorothy and Mildred and visiting her cousin Jack Combe, his wife Barbara and their son Gerald, a lad of 19 who had recently graduated from "H.M.S. Worcester" to embark on a career in the merchant navy. A Combe tradition! She also travelled to

• Greenwich to see Murray Rymer-Jones and his wife Molly.

In November she flew to Athens and got a room at

the
Greek House Hotel. She got in touch with Adrienne Allison,
a
cousin of Patrick's wife Margaret .. Her husband Steven
was
with Canadian External Affairs and they had two children.
In order to complete the purchase of her property
in
Porus she traveled there by ship to pay the balance
of the
purchase price and legal fees. There was
some delay in
waiting for a draft from Yorkshire Trust. However the
money
arrived and the deal was completed. Vivien
then had a
meeting with George Kelyvas, a local architect,
whom she had
selected to design and supervise the construction
of her
house. She was very disappointed to learn that the
cost
would be a great deal more than she had bargained
for.
Kelyvas' fee alone would be \$2000. She would have to delay
construction for at least two years to save
sufficient
funds.
After several weeks in Porus, with visits
to other
islands nearby she returned to Athens and the
Greek House
Hotel. The weather had turned wet and stormy
and Vivien
found that Greece in the winter was not, the
ideal place
she had pictured. She suffered from a bad attack
of asthma,
spent Christmas with the Allisons, travelled
around southern
Greece and even considered the possibility of
going to Crete
or southern Italy. It got colder and colder, ice
formed on
the puddles in Athens and Vivien was
coming to the
conclusion that the idea of retirement in

Porus was a mistake. Perhaps she would be better off in Canada or Hawaii! She wired Adele and asked her to find her an apt. to rent in Victoria from February 1st saying she would be arriving in Vancouver in one week's time. On her arrival she confirmed that she had given up her plan to build on the island of Porus and retire there. Later she was to donate the property to the Canadian Bahai National Assembly. She moved to Victoria to stay with an old friend Jose Godman on Saxe Point Esquimalt and was to remain in Victoria until September 1972 when she went to the island of St. Helena as a Bahai missionary.

These were the years when Vivien started to make puppets and put on shows. She had been seeking a medium to spread her Bahai religion and became convinced this could best be done with puppets. She would design and make the puppets then using her experience in the theatre, write the scripts and direct the plays to illustrate the principles of the Bahai faith. As always Vivien went all out on this new project. She joined the Puppetiers of America and attended a number of seminars in various centers in Canada and the United States. She took a course in carpentry and learned to make very excellent puppets out of balsa wood. She also made a stage on which to operate them.

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She rented a studio and wrote plays to demonstrate the facts she wished to portray and tried to enlist and train assistants to work the puppets. The latter proved to be her greatest problem as she found it most difficult to keep them motivated.

Her first venture was with the B.C. Coast Indians. She had read George Clutesi's "Son of Raven Son of Deer" and had based her scripts on the fables of the Coastal tribes.

She then set out with her Indian puppets to put on shows for Indian Bands up and down Vancouver and the Gulf Islands. Her shows drew good audiences in the villages but she was disappointed when they did not produce many converts. However, in spite of the lack of positive results she persisted with her puppetry and put on shows in Victoria for mixed audiences. Adele and I attended one of these at the 'War Amps hall on Fort Street and Oak Bay Junction. As well as her work with puppets Vivien became very interested in the Victoria Maritime Museum and became a docent.

In the summer of 1969 She accompanied Jose Godman to England. Vivien visited a number of places in Wales and attended a Bahai school held at Harleck Castle. She was also

in Ayrshire Scotland, crossed over to Dublin Ireland where she took in a performance at the Abbey Theatre and went by car through County Wicklow. She also mentions staying with Combe relations and with Angela Beanlands the daughter of Cannon Beanlands one of B.C.'s early clerics.

On her return to Victoria she rented an apartment at 1418 Newport Avenue and brought out some of the possessions she had left in Toronto in 1957 when she went to Dallas. She lived here for the next three years and regularly held meetings for her Bahai friends. She also entertained her wide circle of friends from her earlier days in Victoria in her tastefully furnished suite. There were also frequent trips to Vancouver when she stayed with us or her many friends on that side of the straits.

One interesting event that took place in August, 1972 was a tea at Vivien's apt. for Eva Hart, who she had often acted with some sixty years ago. For this event Vivien had gathered together many of those from the theatrical world of those days. To name a few; Eva, Noel Cusack, Archie McKinnon, Eva Petch, Pierre Timp, Len Acres, Billy Tickle, (., C' C 1 ~-'. j /~ I I...; " .• - l i

In the summer of 1972 while attending a Bahai meeting in Edmonton Vivien volunteered to become a "Pioneer" (Bahai missionary) on the very isolated island of St. Helena in the Atlantic Ocean. This remote island located some 1500 miles west of the African continent and 1000 miles south of the equator is a British possession and is administered by a Governor who is also responsible for Ascension Island 800 miles north west and the Tristan da Cunha group far to the south. It has no airport and can only be reached by ship.

It is served by ships of the Castle Line which sail between London and Cape Town and call at Jamestown its only port about every three weeks.

The island's population is approximately 5000, of very mixed racial origins. There is practically no industry and very little agriculture so most of the food and all supplies must be imported. In days gone by it was the port of call for many ships traveling to the far east but today it is a backwater and the islanders have little opportunity. Some are employed by the cable and wireless service that has a station on the island and a few others find work on Ascension Island where the Americans have an airport and satellite tracking station. The British Government attempted to start an industry growing hemp but it did not prove to be a commercial success.

The most noted event in St. Helena's history was its place of exile for Emperor Napoleon after his defeat at the battle of Waterloo, until he died there in 1821.

Vivien rented her apartment in Victoria in September 1972 and traveled to England. Just after she got there her aunt Dorothy died and she was present at her funeral. Then she flew from London to Johannesburg and after a short stay there traveled on to Cape Town as she planned to leave by ship on Sept. 27th. for St. Helena. This was not to be and it was not until November 15th. that she could get passage to the island as all ships were fully booked. However she made the most of her time in Cape Town. She was very impressed with the beautiful country, visited the wine growing area at Paarl, traveled to the Cape of Good Hope and viewed the city from the top of Cable Mountain. The only thing she took exception to was the treatment of the blacks and colored which she found very wrong and so much in conflict with her Bahai belief.

On November 15th. she finally set sail for St. Helena. Vivien described her departure in a letter home; "The docks at Cape Town were stretched out for miles it seemed, we finally found our ship, the "Good Hope Castle", with accommodation for 12 passengers. We sailed at noon and as we headed out to sea we looked back to Table Mountain, then stood on deck till Cape Town disappeared into the distance. We weren't to see land again for three and a half days". She found herself in very good company as among those on

board were the newly inaugurated Archbishop of South Africa and a Chief Justice who was going to St. Helena to take five court cases. "My cabin mate was a girl from Tristan da Cunha who was going to the island for a course in midwifery. The trip was a pleasant one, the weather fine and the sea calm. We seemed to be always eating or sitting out on deck enjoying the sunshine."

"On the 18th. we were all up on deck straining our eyes to see the first outline of the island. Finally we saw a large rock corning out of the mist. St. Helena appears a foreboding place with its massive crags rising abruptly like a huge black castle from the ocean. As we neared our destination we could see what we had viewed in pictures; two towering rocky bastions on either side of a beautiful green valley in which the small town of Jamestown is prettily nestled. We turned into the harbor and anchored. I could now see the people on the quay. Nearly everyone comes down there to see a ship enter the harbor. Soon small boats were corning alongside to take us to the dock and as I landed I looked into a sea of faces and then saw a young girl holding onto a baby carriage. She said "Are you Vivien Combe". and I knew it must be Barbara George. She introduced her husband Basil. It was unbelievable! Here I was on the island of my dreams at last and had just met the couple that were to become two of my greatest friends." Prior to Vivien's arrival there were only three

Bahais

on St. Helena. The Georges and Cliff Huxtable, who was Superintendent of Schools. It was her aim to seek converts using puppets to create interest in the faith.

The first

objective was to form a Local Spiritual Assembly which

requires nine members. There was a considerable opposition

from the Anglican Clergy on the island to her missionary

work and she had to be very careful not to publicly preach

her faith. However by putting on puppet shows and teaching

the making and operating of puppets to the children in the

schools she was able to reach her initial objective in six

months and by the time she left St. Helena in August 1974

there were some twenty active Bahais on the island attending

their weekly "feasts" (meetings).

Vivien's first residence was at Yon's Cafe, but it

wasn't long before she found a house to rent and moved to

Adam's House on Market Street where she was much more comfortable. She moved several more times before she left

the island. Vivien soon started to work on her puppets and

in order to put on shows she needed a stage. With the help

of Richard, Vivien and Cliff, they constructed one out of packing cases.

It was made so

that it could be moved to any place by car.

place by car.

Tranter was not able to stay on St. Helena for long as

he could not find work there. Vivien had started to give

classes in the schools on puppetry to both the teachers and

the older children and soon she was putting on shows for

both adults and children. She was able to use a large hall

in the ballroom of the old Consulate Hotel which seated 400
for her adult show,s. These were often packed.

She also put on shows for children in a big room in her
house. The youngsters sat on the floor. Very often there
were knocks on her door and she would find children who
would ask the "Puppet Lady" when there was to be another
show.

The themes Vivien used for her shows were quite varied.
She did a historical play about Napoleon's life on the
island and went to very considerable trouble to dress
the
puppets in authentic costumes and produce background
scenery
for the period. In this connection on the invitation of
the
French Consul to St.Helena she visited Longwood the estate
up
in the island's center that had been where the Emperor
had
lived. She was taken through the buildings and
shown
pictures and records of Napoleons stay and the Consul agreed
to record on tape an introduction to her play.

For the children she used traditional small plays
based on nursery rhymes and biblical stories and for
her
Friday firesides she attempted to portray basic
Bahai
beliefs.

Her social life on St.Helena was very limited and was
almost entirely with her Bahai fellow believers.
There was
little social contact with the official v.r.Ps. who
tended
to treat her as a rather unwanted missionary whose
work
would unsettle the islanders. As for the
islanders
themselves, who were very like children, there was of
course
no intellectual bond.
After Vivien had achieved her aim of forming a
Local
Spiritual Assembly in May 1973 she began to think
her work
was complete and the time had come to plan her return

home.
She had to renew her visitor's permit at that time to November 1973. However she decided to stay on. She continued her work, saw her Bahai flock increase until there was a solid group that would persist in spite of the opposition of the Anglican Church. When her visa expired again she actively tried to seek a passage to England. This became quite difficult as one of the Castle ships serving the island was lost by fire. It wasn't until August 1974 that she finally left the island for London and then home to Canada.
She arrived in Vancouver in September and stayed with Adele and me for about two months. During this time she traveled to Victoria, gave up her apartment there, sold her furniture and belongings and then headed for Hawaii, where she had decided she would make her home.

Vivien continued to live in Hawaii, from the spring of 1974 until early in 1986 when she returned to Victoria.
During this period she embarked on two more missionary expeditions. The first to the South Pacific from September 1978 to March 1979 and the second to the island of Malta from February to October 1984. More about these two trips later.
In Honolulu she continued her work with puppets, putting on shows to promote her Bahai faith. She also spent a great deal of her time at the Bahai Center, where she handled the mailing out of information to Bahai centers throughout the world and also occupied

herself with maintenance including flower arrangements. Vivien kept up her prodigious correspondence with close Bahai friends whom she had met during her travels and from time to time attended important Bahai conventions in Canada, the U.S.A. and around the world. For instance in 1977 she made a second pilgrimage to Haifa and during the trip stopped off in England to visit Barbara George and family with whom she had shared so many experiences in St.Helena. As well Vivien visited her friends and family in B.C. In 1983 she took in the 75th anniversary of the founding of St.Margarets School where she had been one of the earliest pupils. There she met many of her friends of many years ago. Adele and I visited Vivien in Kaneohe Oahu in 1977. She was sharing a house with a friend, Kay Ruggles. We found her in good form, still very much occupied with her good works. It was in the next year that she started off on her second missionary trip to teach her faith using puppets. This was to the islands of the South Pacific, Australia and New Zealand. She flew to Pago-Pago in American Samoa then crossed the straits to Western Samoa where she took part in the laying of the foundation of the first Bahai House of worship in the South Pacific. She traveled to Tawara, in the Gilbert Islands to stay with a couple Sam and Lynde Tranter. Sam was the brother of Richard Tranter who she had known in St.Helena. They had a lovely home built after

the style of the Gilbertese Murishas (meeting houses), with the sides open to the lagoon beach. She spent a week with the Tranters who were Bahai pioneers and put on three puppet shows. In the Gilberts she traveled to different atolls and villages with eight other Bahais to give concerts that included singing, dancing, guitar playing and the puppets, which the villagers called "dollies".

"They joined us in the maurishas to listen and watch." Vivien wrote. "Then they entertained us with their singing, guitar playing and old and new dances." She added I ~ I slept outside on the deck of the catamaran. It was simply beautiful. I have never seen so many stars!"

At one time when the catamaran went off to another island, the rest of the group traveled from place to place by motorbike, by truck and once by bulldozer. Bahai friends in the villages brought them gifts of coconuts, papaya, bread and fish. Some of the fish were bony and some not good to eat but the Gilbertese knew which were good and how to cook them.

It was in the Gilberts that Vivien gave a radio talk on her puppets. Sometime later a young Gilbertese university trained school teacher, who heard the talk, came to ask her how to make puppets and how they worked, as he wanted to teach maths with them.

Leaving the Gilberts Vivien went to Australia where she did some teaching in Sidney and Melbourne, before visiting Norfolk Island about 1000 miles east of the Australian mainland. Norfolk was originally settled as a penal colony but later the "Mutiny of the Bounty" people were resettled there from Pitcairn Island. Vivien wrote that she met

Peter Christian, a direct descendent of Fletcher Christian of Bounty Fame and put on a puppet show for the school children of the island in their only school. She also did a puppet show in Peter's home for his family and invited friends.

Next came five days teaching puppetry and giving a show at the Bahai summer school in New Zealand before continuing on to Nuku'alofa Tonga. She spent a month here. It was quite frustrating at first as she did not receive much assistance from the local Bahais. Adele and I paid her a visit there in February 1979 and found her staying at a guest house run by an islander named Sela. We remained in Tonga for three weeks and spent our time exploring the island with Vivien and hearing all about her experiences in the South Pacific. After we left for home Vivien was able to find more help in her teaching with the puppets and did shows on Tongatapu and some of the outer islands.

She left Tonga at the beginning of the second week of March, spent a couple of days on the island of Nauru and arrived back in Honolulu on the 13th. She had found her South Pacific experiences stimulating. She had taken a great number of photographs and on her return to Hawaii was able to assemble these and lecture about her successes in teaching with puppets.

Vivien moved into an apartment on Ala Wai Terrace and

resumed the life she had lived before her South Pacific trip, continuing her work at the Bahai Center and attending the weekly feasts. There were however changes taking place with the Center's administration. Younger members of the group were becoming more active and were taking over responsible positions and oldsters like Vivien were feeling rather left out.

In July Vivien left on a visit to B.C. arriving in Vancouver on the 11th. and leaving for Victoria the next day. Betty Shaneman met her at the ferry and they drove to her flat at Dunsmuir House on Esquimalt Road. As Betty was leaving for Denman Island the following day she left Vivien in charge. Vivien stayed on for the following eight days and looked up a number of her old friends. Nora Paterson had suffered a stroke and Vivien went to see her at the Jubilee Hospital. Nora didn't seem to know her. Jose Godman was also at the Jubilee and Vivien saw her too. Michael Johnstone drove her out to John and Liz Barclay's to collect two portraits of her that had been stored in their attic. One was of her as a child and the other by Mike Orr showed her with a low neckline, smoking a cigarette. We have never been able to trace these portraits. On the 20th. she took the train to Courtney where Betty met her. They drove to Betty's home on Denman Island and stayed there four days, visited Hornby Island and then drove

back to
Victoria. Vivien stayed on in Victoria,
visiting other
friends and attending Bahai feasts. Then back to
Vancouver.

Early in August she left for Akron Ohio for a puppet
seminar. On her return learned that Nora Paterson had died
and together with Adele and I attended the funeral. After
this she returned to Honolulu.

In 1980 her old friend Eileen Stanley died. In May 1981
Vivien again came to B.c. and left for Chicago to
attend a

large Bahai convention.

Vivien was in Vancouver again in August 1982 staying
with her great friend Josephine Boss. Patrick, Margaret
and

the children were staying with us at the time. We
had

arranged that Vivien would meet the rest of us at Mother
Tucker's restaurant for supper and this was the first
time

we realized that Vivien had become quite forgetful
and

confused. She stayed on in Vancouver until September
then

traveled to Montreal for a Bahai meeting.

In May, the following year she was staying with
Josephine again and we began to hear rumors that she
intended to go to Malta as a pioneer. This was the most
disturbing news as we felt she was now rather too confused
to head to this far off spot.

Back in Honolulu Vivien was able to return to
her

apartment in Ala Wai Terrace,

In June/July 1985 she spent a month in Victoria and
Vancouver trying to decide if she should continue to live in
Honolulu or return to B.C. Her choice was Hawaii where the
climate suited, where she had so many friends and got so
much enjoyment and comfort from her religion.

We however were becoming very concerned. For her age
she was in excellent shape but mentally her memory was
failing badly. We did not oppose her return but I wrote to
her great friend Lil Hollinger to ask her to keep us advised
if Vivien's condition worsened.

By the following winter Vivien was finding that living
alone in a small apartment in Honolulu was becoming

difficult for her. Her rent had increased dramatically and she became worried that she had sufficient funds.

In February she gave up the apartment and returned to

B.C. On her arrival we noted how badly her memory had

deteriorated. She had a friend in Nanaimo and thought she

might live there but after a visit decided no.

We took her to Victoria and found an apartment that she liked in Beckley Manor on the Dallas Road. Here she was beside the sea, not far from Beacon Hill Park and within walking distance of a shopping mall. She moved in.

In Victoria Vivien had a host of old friends and there was an active Bahai Community. We believed she would be happy there. She remained in Beckley Manor for the next two years.

During this period she made one short visit to Honolulu to see her old friends there.

Her problem became her continuing loss of memory. She became lonely. She often forgot invitations and so saw less and less of her old friends. Her Bahai involvement became less also.

we consulted the Social Services people who advised she should move to a home where she would be with more people

and have her meals and other services provided.

Roger found a vacancy at Glenshild Lodge, a residential hotel on Douglas Street near the Parliament Buildings and not far from the City center. She moved there in May 1988 and it remained her home for the following two years.

She got on quite well at first but as time went on she began to need more care and this the hotel could not provide.

Roger again took on the job of finding a home where more services were given. Through Social Services he

obtained a vacancy in the James Bay Lodge on Simcoe Street and Vivien moved in on April 1990. She is there today.

Her

physical condition is still very good but her memory has now quite gone. She recognizes Roger, Adele or me when we go to see her but does not connect our relationships to one

another. However she is happy there and her disposition

remains friendly and caring. The staff like her and she is very considerate and kind to the other patients who know her as the "nice lady".

Vivien is still clothed conscious. One day Adele bought her two nightdresses, warm ones with ruffles at the sleeves and neck. Vivien took one look at them and remarked; "These are the kind that little old ladies wear!" However she remembers nothing at all about her exciting and adventurous life and to us this is so tragic.

Here lives a woman who was so talented. Someone with a host of friends all over the world, someone full of life and always willing to accept challenges. She is now spending her final days in a place where there is only monotony and sameness. However we must be thankful that, in spite of other problems, she retains her sense of humor and can still whistle beautifully the favourite tunes of days gone by.

God bless you" VING TWINKLE"
ADDENDUM

About five years ago Vivien broke her hip and consequently spent about a month in the Jubilee Hospital. She was next moved to the Mount St Mary's Hospital on Burdkt Street.

Here she was much less mobile and spent her time in a wheel chair. Gradually her condition deteriorated and her mind was more confused. About 2 years later she did not recognized us

However one day, at lunch time she was sitting at a table in the dining room. Adele came and stood in the doorway looking for her. Vivien suddenly looked up and on seeing her said.

"There is Adele". We were amazed and Adele went over and gave her a big hug and sat beside her. On the other

side was
a nurse feeding a patient. She pointed across
Vivien at
Adele and said; "Miss Vivien who is that?" Vivien
replied;
"Dont point it's rude!" That was the last sensible
remark we
heard her make! Since then she only garbled
nonsense. It
was tragic to see her in such a state but we were
thankful
that the staff took such good care of her and always kept
her immaculately groomed. No one could have been kinder.
She
had been in hospital for five years when we were
informed by
her doctor that the end was near. We could only feel
it
would be a merciful release for her.
Vivien died at 3 a.m. January 16 1996

Mr Guy Barclay
3216 West 27th Avenue
Vancouver BC V6L 1W8
DATE: May12, 1981.

To: Local Spiritual Assembly of the

Bahn'is of Honolulu, Hawaii

It is cy specific and carefully considered
request that in the

event of my death I be buried in the Baha'i Garden
of Light in the

Hava11an Memorial Park, Koneohe, Hawaii or nearest burial place within one
hour's travel

time from place of death

I furthur request that

all Beha1 i laws and directives on death and burial
be dutifully

observed.

o~ all arrs.ne;ecents with respect to services,
funeral, and burial and

.•• that the Local Spiritual Assembly ca.rry

out this request with lovinc

"

care in accordance with Baha'i Scriptures
and customs and that all

. well oca.ning and interested :friends and
relatives refrain from inter-

. ference n.nd deviation from r:ry ovn wishes which arc:

Flowers or Contributions fl1wers from n1n-lihi 1 is;
c1ntriauti1ns from laha'is.

-----'

Music, if desired Yes, •sweet Scented Streams•

. •'...••

....

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'

'• ..

,

Type casket desired -----
cheapest ,Precessien, if desired No ,

"

Open or closed coffin display cl1sed ,
Single or joint burial with
no

graveside ,
, Service (chapel, r,raveside or

oeoorial) Nnoes and
addresses

Mrs. GuyBarclay, 3216 27th Ave., Vancouver,B.C., or Yorkshire Trust Co.,
be notified: W.

of persons to

Victoria, B.C., or Mrs. E. Hollinger, NSASecretary, Hawaii, Tel. 595-3~14
Other instructions: Musical selection •Fascinatio!

.'

I Leave all unspecified details and all
unforseen events to your

d,iscretion, knowina and requcstine tho.t the
u,cal Spiritual Assenbly

will execute them in oy best interests and in
o.ccordance with your

_•_d_~----

duties.

Signed ___ ft_~_•

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— The Story of Vivien Combe (Used by permission of the curator)