

MOVIES

New York and Hartford, Conn., as boardinghouses. "When I'm not there," she says, "it's open house to any of my friends who need a place to stay."

Although Katie's California house was built for John Barrymore, it reflects the informality and casualness of her life. The walls are bare except for travel posters; most of the furniture is functional, some of it homemade.

The studioliroom where I interviewed her contained a huge gas heater which was trying vainly to combat the cold draft pouring in through open windows and doors. Scattered about the room were a sculpture, an easel, brushes, a few paintings (Katie refused to point out which ones she had done), a parcheesi game, a picture of George Bernard Shaw, some books, including Bette Davis' "The Lonely Life," and a tray with Scotch, soda water, and glasses (mostly for guests; Katie prefers milk—eight glasses a day).

HER OUTFIT matched the setting. She wore loose beige pants, a black knit pull-over sweater, brown buckled Oxfords, and white socks. Her reddish-brown hair was pulled back tightly in a tousled bun. She wore no make-up, and the freckles which are her trade-mark were as obvious as always. "I was never interested in clothes," she said, "and I can't stand wasting time fixing my hair or nails."

Katie's boyish mannerisms and attire date back to her childhood in Hartford. "I used to cut my hair in a close crop and call myself Jimmy," she recalled. "This solved the problem of being accepted by boys. To tell you the truth, I looked more like a boy than my brothers—and I was tough! I used to get into fights with boys and usually I won."

Katharine was the second oldest of six children. When her older brother died in an accident, she took his place and remained close to her father all his life. He died only a few months ago at 81—shortly after he and Redtop, as he called her, had taken a trip to the Middle East during which they used every means of transportation from jeeps and boats to horses and camels.

It is rather surprising that Katie didn't follow her father's footsteps into medicine. "He was a neurosurgeon, and I watched him operate many times," she told me. "It didn't bother me at all; I rather enjoyed it. When I

went to Bryn Mawr, I had hoped to study medicine, but then I said to myself, 'Oh, well, women surgeons—who's going to have any confidence in them?' There was so much prejudice against professional women in this country that I gave up the idea and decided to get my B.A. instead."

Her decision is surprising considering that her mother was a famous champion of feminist causes. "She was always involved in rallies and parades, and I used to go with her," Katharine recalls.

Once Katie talked herself out of medicine, becoming an actress was a logical step; she had always loved the movies. "I would shovel more snow than any boy in the neighborhood to get money to go to the movies. In the summer I cut lawns and did other odd jobs to buy movie magazines. I could name every actor and actress and every film ever made."

Katharine made her Broadway debut in "The Warrior's Husband," which led to her being signed for her first film, "Bill of Divorcement," opposite John Barrymore. With the release of this film and "Morning Glory," for which she won the Academy Award as Best Actress of 1933, her career went into high gear.

BUT ALTHOUGH she has been in films for more than 30 years, she has appeared in fewer than 30 pictures. "I do very few things, but I pick parts with extra care," she explained. "If you have a very good role, you generally get nominated for an award."

Her selections have resulted in some of the finest performances in movie history—in "Little Women," "The Philadelphia Story," "Keeper of the Flame," "The African Queen," "Summertime," and "The Rainmaker."

With a comparatively light work load and no husband or children to occupy her time, it would seem hers is a lonely life. But Katharine insists not. "I have always been very close to my family, much more so than the average person." That's why she was so hard hit when her mother died in 1953, and even more so when her father died a few months ago.

"Dad and I were almost inseparable—girls are usually closer to their fathers. I helped raise my brothers and sisters, and they were like my own children. And now their 16 children are like my grandchildren. Me lonely? For goodness' sake, no!"

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