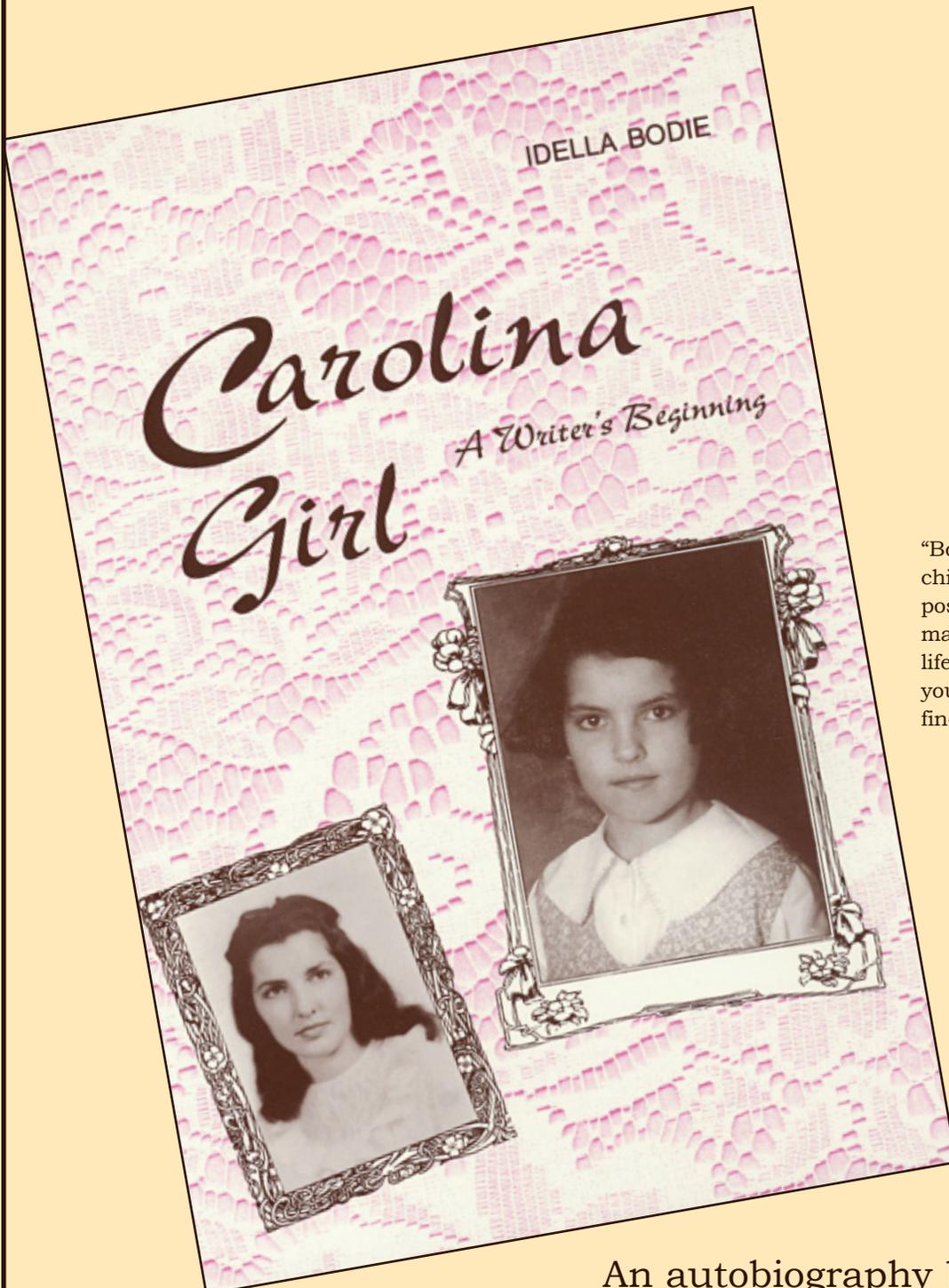


*Springboard for Personal Journal Writing to*

# CAROLINA GIRL

*A Writer's Beginning*



"Bodie looks back on her childhood in this picture-postcard town with nostalgic magic, recapturing a way of life that is so alien to today's youths that they surely will find it fascinating."—*The State*

An autobiography by Idella Bodie

# Synopsis of Book

CAROLINA GIRL, through the viewpoint of author Idella Bodie, recreates people, places, and problems of the Great Depression and the sacrifices and heartaches of World War II. Growing up during these historic periods is depicted in rich detail with tender simplicity and sometimes humor. In this story of an age, the reader follows the author's personal journey of maturation in becoming a teacher and a writer along with finding her life's mate.

## Pre-Reading Activity: Understanding Time and Place (Setting)

The Great Depression, beginning in 1927 and lasting through the early 1930s, is ranked as the worst and longest period of high unemployment and low business activity in modern times. Thousands of stockholders lost large sums of money or were wiped out. Prices of farm products fell. Banks, factories, and stores closed, leaving millions of Americans jobless and penniless. Many people had to depend on the government for handouts of food. Times continued to be hard until 1939 when jobs to produce material for World War II put money back into circulation.

On December 7, 1941, Japan drew America into World War II by bombing Pearl Harbor. The surprise attack brought Americans together in a patriotic spirit of love for country and support of the boys in uniform. Until the end of the war in 1945, citizens sacrificed personal needs for the war effort and freedom.

Students could interview older family members or friends and share their experiences with the class to gain a better understanding of the Great Depression and World War II.

## Author's Notes on "Journaling"

Life is made up of a succession of experiences. Writing down these memories is a voyage in self-exploration. Journaling not only documents personal happenings and the writer's emotional involvement in those events, but it looks

out at the world. It brings in the historical background of the time and shows how particular events affected family and friends. As the students write, it may be helpful for them to think of a close friend with whom they are sharing thoughts. Sincerity in writing makes the reader see, hear, and FEEL the emotion of the writer. Recording personal experiences and impressions can open a writer's eyes to the world, to listening and watching, and thereby bring his writing alive.

## Note to Teachers

The guide will be more effective if used in its entirety in the chronological order of the book. If time does not allow that order, chapters could be read aloud. Discussion may precede journal entries. Periodically, writings may be voluntarily shared with the class. For your convenience, writing topics are listed with chapter pages of similar writing. Some writing assignments need a better understanding of the book's content for more in-depth writing; consequently, these topics are placed at the end of the suggested topics.

## End Product

Journal entries may be compiled as a keepsake. If the goal is to create a "memoir," space might be left after each entry for later editing and polishing. (Or skipping every other line will allow room for proofing.) Entries, arranged in chronological order, could be bound. A title that characterizes the author, photographs, year of compilation, and a brief biography might be added.

# Objective of Writing Guide

The purpose of this guide is not to study the author's life but rather to use her experiences to draw similar ones from students. Regardless of the time difference, feelings evoked in disappointment, losses, hurts, and moments of happiness are universal. Reacting to these events shape lives and

determine futures. In reflecting and recording experiences, the student will not only come to know himself better but will work toward clearer expression of thoughts and ideas.

## Suggested Writing Assignments

Some writing topics involve cause and effect, better understanding of personal relationships, character development, and critical thinking. Others call for descriptive writing with emphasis on the senses in time and place. All include the most essential requirement of any piece of writing: a clear beginning; a middle, which propels the writing forward; a change or a moment of insight; and a satisfying ending. In all entries students might be reminded of the five W's of journalism.

*Chapter 1* (p.1)—What is your earliest memory? Where were you? What happened? Who else was there? Were there smells and sounds? Describe them. How did you feel about the incident? Then? Now? Do you think this experience reveals anything about your budding personality?

*Chapter 2* (p.4)—When you were little, what person in your family did you look to for comfort when you were hurt, frightened, or in trouble? Why do you think this was so? Show a time when this person comforted you. What do you think you learned from the experience?

*Chapter 4* (p.9)—Think of a jingle, chant, or song you especially liked when you were growing up. Write down as much of it as you can remember. Did you use it jumping rope? Playing a game? Who else was involved? Why do you think rhyme and rhythm appealed to you?

*Chapter 6* (p.17)—Describe a typical summer evening in your home when you were younger. What room did you normally use? Did you have a spot in it? What were other family members doing? Do you remember these evenings as pleasant? Why or why not?

*Chapter 9* (p.32)—Describe a time when you were disappointed. What was the occasion? Where did it take place? Did this disappointment involve others? Did

you learn anything from the experience? Can you see humor in it now?

*Chapter 11* (p.41)—Do you have grandparents? Do you see them often? What do you enjoy about them? Record some of your favorite grandparent stories. How do your grandparents differ from your parents? If you do not have grandparents, choose an older aunt or uncle to write about.

*Chapter 15* (p.59)—What was a favorite game (not a sport) you played during your younger years? Describe the game to someone who might not be familiar with it. Why do you think this game gave you pleasure?

*Chapter 16* (p.63)—Tell about a neighbor you enjoyed. What was the neighbor's family like? How many members were there? Why did you like living near them? Cite a particular time you treasured their friendship.

*Chapter 17* (p.65)—Paint a word picture of a fair or carnival you attended. As you show the rides, games, food booths, and crowds, remember the sounds and smells. How did the experience make you feel?

*Chapter 21* (p.83)—Describe a Christmas that was different from others for you. Was it happy or sad? Include others who are in that memory. How were you affected then? How do you feel now when you look back on it?

*Chapter 22* (p.90)—In earlier generations young people were not encouraged to share their feelings. What is something that bothers you that you have not shared? Writing about a problem or owning up to troublesome thoughts sometimes helps in seeing things in a different way. Write about something that troubles you.

*Chapter 23* (p.94)—Readers often identify with characters they get to know through books. Now that you have gotten to know the main characters in this book, does one have character traits similar to yours? How do you see yourself? Are you comfortable with your personality?

*Chapter 24* (p.95)—Tell about a time when you or someone in your family was bitten or stung or had an accident. Where were you? Who else was involved? What action was taken? What

was the outcome?

*Chapter 25* (p.98)—Describe a happy day when all of your family was together. Where were you? What were you doing? Show your reaction and that of other family members. What made it a day you remember?

*Chapter 26* (p.101)—Draw a word picture of an older person (not a relative) that you remember from your younger days. Why do you think this person remains a vivid memory? Tell about a particular episode with him/her that stands out in your mind. How did knowing him/her influence you?

*Chapter 28* (p.107)—Recall a fun time with cousins. Where were you? Who was there? What were you doing? What made the occasion so memorable?

*Chapter 29* (p.111)—Describe a teacher you think you will always remember. Emphasize good traits that outweigh any shortcomings. (No one is perfect.) Describe this teacher's appearance, actions, speech, and anything else that would make a listener feel he knows this person. Do you feel the same about the teacher as you did when you were in his/her class?

*Chapter 30* (p.115)—Have you ever done something that you look back on as being foolish? Tell about it. What did you learn?

*Chapter 32* (p.121)—Have you ever gone along with others or "the crowd" just so they wouldn't call you a "baby" or "chicken"? Cite an example. Would you do that again? Why or why not?

*Chapter 34* (p.134)—Write a character sketch of one of your parents. Blend her/his appearance with her/his personality. Tell how you saw or felt about this parent when you were younger and how you see her now.

*Chapter 41* (p.152)—What is your favorite holiday? Choose one year and show how your family celebrated it. Why do you think this particular day is so special?

*Chapter 43* (p. 159)—Tell one big invention or discovery of your lifetime. What difference has it made in your life?

*Chapter 47* (p.173)—Have you ever experienced a catastrophic fire? If so, tell about it. If not, think of another tragedy you have gone through and describe it. Show its

effect on you and others.

*Chapter 49* (p.179)—Tell about a pet you loved and lost. How did this loss come about? How did you feel?

*Chapter 57* (p. 208)—Do you remember your first girlfriend or boyfriend? How did you meet? What attracted you to this person? Were your personalities similar? Are you still friends? Explain.

## General Journal Entries

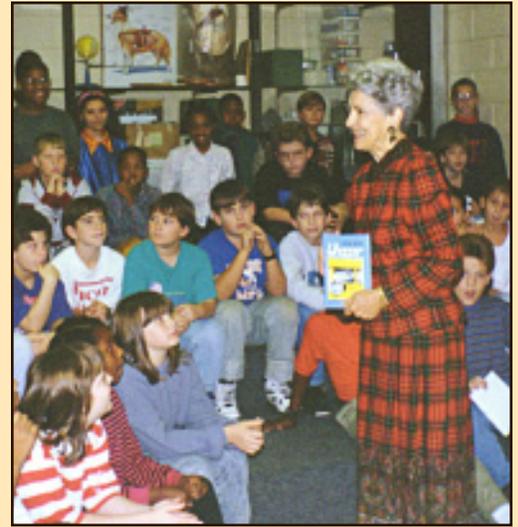
1. Following through on your response after Chapter 23 on character traits and personality, create a detailed character sketch of yourself. Include your likes and dislikes. What kind of books, music, and movies do you enjoy? What things do you dislike from foods to world affairs? Are you shy? Outgoing? A "people person"? Work into the sketch your physical appearance and choice in clothes, as well as your manner of speaking. What or whom do you think helped to mold the person you are? In other words, turn your "writer's eye" upon yourself and develop a self-portrait at this point in your life.
2. Describe how your life might have been different if you had grown up during the Great Depression. Consider your home, clothing, songs, dances, books, schooling, methods of transportation and communication, as well as your values.
3. If you were planning a time capsule to represent the age in which you now live, what would you include in it? Explain your choices.
4. Consider the place reading has in your life. What were your favorite books, or characters from books, when you were younger? What type of reading do you enjoy now? Explain why you think these books and characters have appealed to you.
5. Do you already have an idea of the career you would like to follow? Do you envision having a family of your own one day? Do you believe that holding fast to your dreams and working hard brings rewards. Define your feelings.

## About the Author

“I grew up on a farm near the small town of Ridge Spring, South Carolina. Years during the 1930s etched indelible memories of the Great Depression in my mind. I have gathered many of those memories, as well as ones from World War II, to show ‘the way things were then.’

“My mother’s gift for storytelling and her host of friends and relatives fed me words to use with my imaginary friends. Soaking in sights, sounds, and smells of my young world gave me a ‘writer’s eye’ and left me with a burning desire to record my world. Pencil and paper were magical tools.”

–*Idella Bodie*



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