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Sunday night
Jan. 15, 1956

Dear Folks,

Am incapacitated and reminded in forceful way that I'm not as young as I used to be but it's fun finding this out. I've been tobogganing again only the last time I ignored a very important detail when I went over the high jump. Believe the high jump was a large cake of ice which the toboggan hit telling it to one side and I wrenched my back. It's been so sore I couldn't sleep it, but now the day after the soreness is gone and I'm able to lead almost a normal life. Was able this afternoon to wash both cars and shine them up. This is the second time of the dozen or times that I've gotten hurt. The last time I'm sure I was going 60 mph. That's too fast for a change of direction to occur. I'll watch this item from here on out.

The Robin was very interesting this time. I enjoyed the Nashville Rega contribution as well as every one else. The big news up this way is that Joe Wilco is embarked on an educational course in Mich. State University. I wish each of you would write him a letter of encouragement. If the guy ever meant business he does now. It's going to be hard for him to get in the groove but I firmly believe he will do it. I expect to go by to see him tomorrow as I am going to Lansing. His address is Butterfield Farm M. S. R. Lansing. This kid has plenty of possibilities if he will only blow down. I expect to keep in pretty close touch with him until he gets in the groove.

Saw most of the Nashville Rega and all at B-G. & Square Ymas and it already seems like a young life time since then as I've been on the whirligig, on the go ever since with only a few minutes here and there for fun. tobogganing, eh? I'll well punish you.

Pinch & Jack lets have your new address.

Sunday night, Feb. 26, 1956.

My dears:

Over a week since Audrey wrote her part in the Robin and I pro-

mised to send it on that next day, but I have had hindrances, such as Jack

Hewson Ray "Little Man". He is a cute little fellow, and good when he is

comfortable. The doctor prescribed some drops in his milk, and they made him

sick. He vomited the bottle I put the drops in, and that threw him off his

schedule making him want bottles all through the night. Then I have been

washing out his garments by the day, but the worst is over now. I hope he is

on a permanent schedule now, sleeping and eating his life away, and will not

have to be stipped two and three times a day. He has had a bath every day

since he arrived to visit his Aunt "Gin", and he is a one-person job, and has

had as much attention as the first baby usually gets. However, I do not want

to keep him, if you are grinning. I have reached an easy and comfortable place

in life and am too old to take on a thing like this permanently, and do not

want to be confined as long as a baby would confine me until he is able to do

for himself. I have practically divorced Ray, moved into the front bed-room

and never go any place with him, but he is the best person alive. If I should

say I wanted to stand on First St. Bridge and wave a red flag, he would say he

didn't know why, but if that was what I wanted to do, he would help me. He is

down-right funny about this baby, don't want to keep him either, but everytime

he cries, he wants to know what I have done wrong now. At first I just could

not get his bottle right temperature until I realized I have no feeling on

under side of my wrists, and began trying it higher up on my arm. I am going to

keep him until the 10th of March, and then I shall be glad to give him up. I

shall have to find something to do to keep me busy when they first take him,

almost spring and maybe I can be out in the yard.

I have neglected my own son taking care of this one of Bill's

and Audrey's. He said over phone he wanted me to send him some home-made cookies

and candy, and the week is up and I have done nothing about it, and Marie left

a whole bag of Christmas nuts she was carrying to Florida, and said she would

not use. I have not been too confined with Little Jack as Mrs. Carver baby-sits

for me 50¢ an hour, and last week I went to two night parties and one noon luncheon

(over)

Joe; I didn't think there was enough in this Ruby to send on to Jim Ed & Billy, and told Bill I was not.

If I write on the back of this sheet, Ed will send me some stationary, but I don't care, too far to the desk to get some more, and then somebody might come in, and this will not be mailed for another week. We had a nice letter from Babs, Ed and Joanna, and ~~sounds~~ like she is enjoying Texas, and will be stationed in Oklahoma she says. Both of you too, Thanks! for being so good to our off-spring. I doubt if ^{he} would make it if ~~he~~ were not for his Uncle Ed. If he doesn't make a "C" average he says he intends to enter University of Kentucky. He just did not have any high school background, and he ^{is} doing well to keep his head above water. I am sure proud of Em, and her grades. She is my favorite little college student.

Joe, your letters are always good also, can't say that Jack's are any better, but I was just referring to double space, easy reading. Your family seems to be doing all right, and all happy, which is the main thing in life. However, I am gladd the heavy work is over. You are too soft for such work.

Ruby, you and Jack are going to have a good time settling in your new home, if you ever do get it, and I want to see it the first one. Ray picked up your drawing of the floor plan, and said, "did Sylvia do this"? and I said "No, she could have done better than that, that's Ruby's wild floor drawing but it ~~sounds~~ better than it looks in the drawing.

Ruby, I have no record on our mother's wedding day, but she was born Jan. 31, 1875, died Aug. 18, 1915, and Papa, born in 1865 died Aug. 31, 1907. he was 41 and she 42, died young didn't they, and Eleanor died in August also, at age of 52.

Jack, sounds like you live cheaper at the "Flame" than you could at home. We are not eating too fancy at our house just now, but little Jack is getting all he wants, but just plain cooking Ray likes better.

Ed, Ray wanted to call you this morning, but I told him to wait until around noon when you would be in, and then he went off and didn't come back until you were no doubt off again some place. Joe said he was going up to Roscommon this week-end, and seemed to be counting it a great treat.

Almost at the end of my paper, and will say Goodnight, and Ed, I have plenty of paper, "honest Injun"

Love, Virginia

P.S. We have been having windy weather and plenty of rain, rivers all up, but rain was needed after several years drought.

After several years drought. Ruby: I am not worrying about Uncle Vigil, I was just asking if I should write Mildred. I didn't. Aunt Kate and Uncle Jim are disagreeing about taking over his affairs because his mind is not good enough to transact business. Uncle Jim says let it alone and Aunt Kate wants to tie up his sale. Do it so cattle expected to bring about \$1000 a head.

March 22, 1956

My dears:

I have had the Robin several days, but things piled up on me, and only today have I found time to send it on with this short addition.

Yesterday was Uncle Virgil's funeral, and a very nice one it was, a nice day, and Dr. Myer Broadway Methodist preacher preached his sermon on Victory over death. Mildred's school faculty sent three or four lovely floral designs, and Julian's company, ^{also} and a bank of pretty flowers. None, Ruby, were any prettier than the ones we had our names on. I saved the beautiful metal basket Ed's faculty sent and I could not get yellow roses, only a few, but had yellow snapdragons, mums and roses about a dozen. Everybody said it was one of the prettiest there. Ruby said no use adding the whole family of names, and so I did as she suggested. Uncle Jim was sick, bordering on pneumonia again. All of you write him and tell him how sorry you are and also write Aunt Kate. They both feel it doubly because they are getting older every day themselves and know it will not be too long with either of them. Aunt Kate has broken so much this winter, pretty tottery and slow as Auntie was in her last days. She has stayed in town all winter with this steam heat and has had no colds, and has called it the first vacation she ever had in her life, and just loved every minute of it, but says when it gets warm she will go back out to the country. Rhena and Elizabeth have been driving out there every night and it has been hard on them.

Mildred and Marie are planning to stay until after Sunday, also Julian to wind up their dad's estate. Rhena has been appointed executress, and they may get off sooner than they think. Mildred said he had notes amounting to about nine thousand but the farm should be worth forty thousand dollars. It is in good shape. Marie said it was mortgaged for all its worth, but Mildred didn't think so. I have not seen them since they went to the bank and found out everything. I hope Mildred gets back what she loaned her Dad when he bought the farm. I believe Julian will see that she does.

Uncle Virgil had not sold his cattle, about eighty head, and when sold should more than

pay his funeral expenses. They had a six hundred grey steel casket, very pretty one I think Marie and Mildred have just come in from looking over the financial state, and Mildred said there was a fifteen thousand mortgage, and this Mrs. Hulsman presented a check for over two thousand written back in November, but it was a cold check and they may not have to pay if they never put that much in the Citizen's bank.

Brown called and asked me to call him when I knew hour of Uncle Virgil's funeral, and I forgot it until too late for him to serve as Pall Bearer, enough of other nephews, however, using Boadley & Homer Howell. Love, Virginia.

Ruby, Mildred thinks I should have written her, but I told her you thought I should not, and I told her Marie was here and knew all the details and if they had one of them come here and had their dad declared not competent of tending to business and a court order would have been necessary and one of them stayed with him until the end is the only way they could have kept this Mrs. Hulsman from making her claims, and getting no telling how much out of him.

Joe, Julian got your address, and said he was often around Washington on business and wanted to look you up. He also wanted Ed's address, but doubted if he would ever be in that neck of the woods. Julian is a huge fellow, and looks so much like his mother in the face.

Roscommon, Mich.
Apr. 23, 1955

Dear Folks,

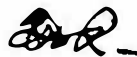
The Robin has been here almost a week and I forgot about it until Chullus arrived. Since he has been here I've slowly worked up to writing in the Robin and he has inserted another entre to bring it up to date. Sorry I kept it. I should have mailed it without writing in it for I have been awfully busy since this thing came. Next week will be of much slower pace than the last three. In fact, I'm taking the day off tomorrow (Monday) to be with Joe and Alice. Alice came over Sat. Night and is going back Monday Aft. She looks fine and seems to be happy in her job at Petoskey. We all had an enjoyable time last night. Tacked until 2:00 A.M. Joe Wilse came back with us and stayed last night. He went home this afternoon. Joe Wilse seems to be much better oriented toward his work than last quarter. I believe he will make the grade this semester. He seems to be trying harder. He didn't do so badly last quarter considering his previous school work. He has a heavy lab. schedule but that will be good for him in helping him to get his feet on the ground.

I met Joe at Willow Run air port and we visited with Em a little while. she couldn't come home for she had so much work to do. Missed her. Sorry to hear about Uncle Virgil. I couldn't have come to the funeral, under other conditions I would have. I even forgot to send flowers. Did anyone send flowers for me? If so, I'd gladly pay the cost.

The whole gang is listening to T.V. and toasting their toes by the fire and eating nuts from South America. There's no yak yaking and they are all glued to the task of getting the most out of every minute. Strange how this modern life grips us. Could have placed an "e" before the "s" in "grips" and that would also go.

I'm beginning on my Ph D. Have to do a thesis and a language. May spend one semester on the campus next winter. Any way, I will be a busy customer next year, but I will have lots of fun doing it. I'm going to analyze the resource base of an area around here. It's a big problem, but no one has ever tackled such a thing before and I'll have lots of fun with it.

Love,



March 26, 1956

**Admissions Officer
Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan**

Enclosed is an application for admission to the Graduate School. I understand from checking with your Graduate School that the expiration date for me to continue work on a Doctor's Degree elapses this year. I would like to extend the time one or two years more. I expect to finish requirements for a P.H.D. by August 1957 but I may not complete the work by then; hence, an extension of time would be necessary.

After notification from the Graduate School, provided I am admitted, I shall get together a committee and proceed according to your instructions.

**Edward M. Ray, Superintendent
Training School**

**EMR:amp
enc**

Bowling Green, Ky.
June 27, 1956.

My dear Ones:

I have had the Robin several days trying to find out where to send it, and wrote Audrey to answer where they were, and of course that sweet eister wrote right back that they are still at Burkville, and next day Bill drives in on his way to Trenton to see about Principal of that school. He hasn't decided where to settle, Burkville, Springfield, Oarden, Ind. or Trenton. He will tell you what he decides.

Ray, Joe and I are pretty much in the groove, doing our daily duties and enjoying a nice, peaceful evening life. I believe we are all three enjoying our home more than ever this summer. Joe goes to work at eight o'clock at Gerard-Bradley Funeral Home, and is on ambulance call which has not been too bad up till now. Could be this will pay so good, \$200.00 a month with expensee, and regular incrsase. If he gets an increase before September, could be he will decide to be an undertaker instead of Forestry Chief like his Uncle Ed. Ray thinks now he will take his vacation the middle of July, and wants to go to Mammoth Cave; says he cannot stand a long trip, and thinks he can rest better in one of those Air Conditioned Cabins, and of course wants me to go with him. He is a lot better in every way than since I wrote before. Eats anything he wants to without teeth, sleeps like a baby, goes to bed early and gets up early, fresh as a daisy. He is in much better physical condition than I am. My blood pressure still runs 187 over 100, or was last Thursday when I worked at the Red Cross Bloodmobil, and they wouldn't take my blood. I feel fine, however, and do anything I want to do. I have answered all kinds of calls, church, oivio and social, collected Red Cross, Heart, Community Oheet on my street, and have attended all WSOS meetings this year. However, I do notice that my menfolks do not want me to go on any trips alone. They want somebody to be with me, and veto anyplace that is etrickly alone. I will be sixty in August, and they seem to think I am dead old. I don't feel that old.

Ray and I went to the tea at the President's Mansion Sunday afternoon, and saw the newly decorated home, and it is nice, wall to wall carpets all over the house, blue-green walls and woodwork, and new down-stairs furniture. Upstairs there are two boy's rooms, and the daughter's posger bed room, than the Master bedroom, large

outside porch. I thought of Joe's family, and decided it was arranged just to suit their number in family. They also have a third floor finished to make spare beds for extras, but looked hot up there. The only thing it was not air-conditioned, and should have been spending that much money. The kitchen was perfect, all pine, orome topped cabinets, brass fixtures. Tea was served in a tent on the lawn after viewing the new house. I also belong to a small luncheon club, only six of us, and we meet weekly if everybody can, but every two weeks if someone is out of town, very informal. I am going to Owensboro, August 12th for School of Missions for five days. Dorothy Cooper and I are going together, and room together. She is the finest friend I have and is slowly going blind. I have another good friend, Mary Chandler Moore, who is going blind, or they thought she was, until suddenly she regained her sight, and now they think it could be eye tumors. Her sight is not too good, but is getting better. The Church Secretary, Mary and I registered all the preachers at the Preachers Conference. They have it at Western, and give the preachers Dormitory rooms. It's quite a job to get them all settled. I did want Sylvia to go with me to Owensboro, as the have clinics for children, but she said when I mentioned it to her she didn't want to go to any more school. I will mention it again about time, and she may change her mind.

I see very little of the family since Aunt Kate has gone back to the farm, but they are all about the same. Dot Callis says Uncle Jim is exactly like Frank was, and she thinks he will not live long. He has a hacking cough and cannot seem to get his strength back. They can't do a thing with him, however, goes out in wet grass and does everything he wants to. I can just hear him telling them, "Hell, No", when they order him around.

Aunt Kate wants Uncle Virgil's place kept by the children and let her and Rhena run it, 10% profit for Rhena, and she will do the bossing just because she wants to boss. Uncle Jim says they should sell it before renters run it down, and they should be able to get \$25,000.00, but they are holding it for forty, and will probably keep it at that price. I think Marie will step in and demand that it be sold when six months is up. Milligan is charging them plenty lawyer fees, and nothing settled about Mrs. Hulsman yet. Their lawyer will make it drag out as long as possible to get more fee for himself.

Bill is standing over me rearing to go, and I will not even read over and correct mistakes. Love to every one of you, Your sister, Virginia.

27
1253 Park Street, November 26, 1956.

Dear Robin:

Our big brother, Will B., was here Saturday and took the Robin home with him, and ordered me to write and send on right away so he could rush it on for Ed to have while in the hospital. Here it is Tuesday and I am writing mine. Ruby I doubt if I will get a prize, because I should have had mine written for Brown to take home with him. I got it Friday, but worked Saturday. I work very few days, and it does look like they ask me the day I would rather be at home. Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Fisher are such fine persons I hate to refuse them. Mrs. Fisher's son, John was visiting her and Mrs. Jones daughter came the same day, and they really needed me if they had time to see their children.

My mind has been so much on Ed, and his accident I can't remember much else that was in the Robin. As Ed says it is so slow getting around that the news is so old of no interest.

Babé baby is news and cute also I would say. I am enclosing my copy of the picture Babs sent me, and as she says it shows off the cradle her daddo made for Pamela more than it shows how cute she is. You can see she is plenty cute. I am stapling this picture to my sheet and dare anyone to take it. I am just showing it as it is cute and no picture was enclosed.

Ray has sweated out his two weeks vacation, and is now happily at work again. Ruby and Jack, Mildred Scott & Charles Myers were at Atlantic City during that time, and wanted us to fly up and be with them. The only way we could have done it was to fly, which Ray has never consented to do, but the trip would be more than two hundred dollars for both of us round trip, and Ray said he just didn't have that kind of money. So, we went to see Bill and Audrey, and spent the next week-end at Mammoth Cave, and Ray griped all the time about the room, no hot water and dirty. The last time we stayed up there was before Eleanor died in a \$9.00 a night room Ruby had reserved for herself and Jack, and that was nice, but the room in the hotel was only \$6.00, and not as nice. However, we did enjoy the drive back by a shaded country road, came by Pig, Ky. and Bill came out on the highway where you lived before you moved to the Musz farm. The trees were beautiful, and the weather perfect, so we did enjoy the cave trip, and took a trip through the cave, the big Mammoth. Ray had never been through the cave.

Joe is doing all right, doing nothing some of the time, but when it rains it pours, people all seem to die at the same time. He was up this morning at five to pick up a body at hospital, Hershel Webb's mother, while the two embalmers, Ennis and Parvin were picking up Tom Wilson, that makes five bodies in the funeral home, Bob Aspley's funeral this morning and a McCormack who worked for the Coma Cola Bottling works this afternoon. Henry Bradley, Jr., who will heir the business wants Joe to learn the Funeral Directing end of the business, and buy into the business with him when Granny Gerard dies and Camilla retires. He says embalmers are a dime a dozen, and Joe is just the type to direct funerals. Joe has never done any embalming and doesn't seem to want that part of it. His Aunt Kate has told him she will finance him when and if he wants to buy into the business. Joe knows everybody here and is well liked. More and more people are calling for him to direct their funeral already. The Aspley's asked that Joe take charge of their family. It seems to please the owners when someone asks for him.

Joe has a girl, and it seems they are getting pretty serious and mentioning the month of June quite frequently. Her name is Wilma Elkins from Richardsfills, and she is a big tall gal, religeous, does not drink or approve of Joe drinking, and he has almost stopped drinking even beers. She has an apartment across from the Gerards, and Camilla made the match, and thinks she is a fine girl. She has been a stenographer, but says she makes more at the Derby, and makes buttonholes and makes production, which is about \$79.00 every two weeks. Joe has had her up to the house, and we liked her, but Ray thinks she is older than Joe, and she is two years older, but they make a good looking couple, and I have told Joe this is one question he will get no help from me on. This is a life-time decision he will have to make for himself.

This is all I am going to write, and may not see any of you until summer unless you cometo see us. Sylvia and I are planning to visit Ruby, Joe and Jettie as soon as school is out. We do wish some one in the family could visit us during Christmas.

Love, Virginia.

December 22, 1956

Dear Ray,

I am waiting for a call to inform me that Emily has arrived in Roscommon; then I will drive in to get her. Dr. Martzowka called to tell me that she is riding home with his wife and daughter and that they called from Saginaw at 8:45 to say that they had dense fog and slippery roads and would be late. It is now 11:00, and they should be arriving soon. I went to Grayling tonight and had dense fog in spots as I went but had fairly good driving on my homeward journey.

Ed says he feels fine, and he looks much better. He says he has only five more days to put up in traction, and I hope he is right. The doctors are going to take more X-rays soon. He has the brace, and it doesn't look too comfortable. He is worried about eating with it on, but I would be more worried about sleeping. The doctor said he will have to wear it three or four months.

Our weather isn't very Christmasy. He

have had three bright warm days, and almost all of the snow has melted. The roads have been good - for Michigan roads - for three days.

Em and I will spend Christmas with Ed. He has a very pretty little Christmas tree. We have the prettiest tree we have ever had, and I suppose Emily will trim it.

I have about a million cards to address yet, and then I am going to get some sleep. I do want to clean up the house before Christmas! It has hardly been touched since Thanksgiving. This was one welcome vacation.

Merry Christmas to all Rays,

Love,

Joanna

Dec. 28

I am sorry that I lost the Robin. I have been looking for it for a week and just now found it where I had put it away for safe keeping. I had gone through all of Ed's mail and our Xmas. mail several times!

Ed was still in traction when I left the hospital at 5:00 yesterday. Rays had been taken, and the specialist was there, but Ed had received no report. He was becoming very impatient - for the first time. If he has to stay in traction longer, he is going to be

very badly disappointed.

We had a nice day Christmas. Em and I had our dinner in the room with Ed, and we opened presents after we had eaten. Ed had a very pretty little tree, chimes, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ doz. red roses sent by friends.

Ed's doctor took egg nog over Christmas Eve, and they had a little party. The doctor and the nurses have been wonderful!

Emily has an invitation to Detroit for New Year's Eve and may leave Monday. Ed expects to be home by then, but I doubt that he can be.

Love,

Joanna