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## 1978 Ray Family Papers

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Route 2  
Lebanon, Ky. 40033  
January 20, 1978

Dear Folks,

It's becoming an annual affair - our being out of school 3 + 4 weeks at a time in January. Last year because of the unusual snow + sub-zero weather we were able to have school only one day in that bleak month. So far this year we've held classes just 4 days. With our present 19" of snow on the ground, not much is moving in Lebanon. Of course this is a record for us. The nearest comparison was a 15" snow in 1917, which I don't seem to recall myself. I don't even attempt to drive on bad roads, so I am snowbound, but Bob can always get out with his tire chains (which he acquired after last winter's fury). I think he likes to venture out into the white stuff when so many other people sans chains are immobilized. Needless to say, Ky. is hardly ever prepared to clear its roads of even 2 or 3 inches of snow, so you can imagine what a loop this has thrown them for. Basically we just sit + wait for ole sol to melt things back to a passable condition.

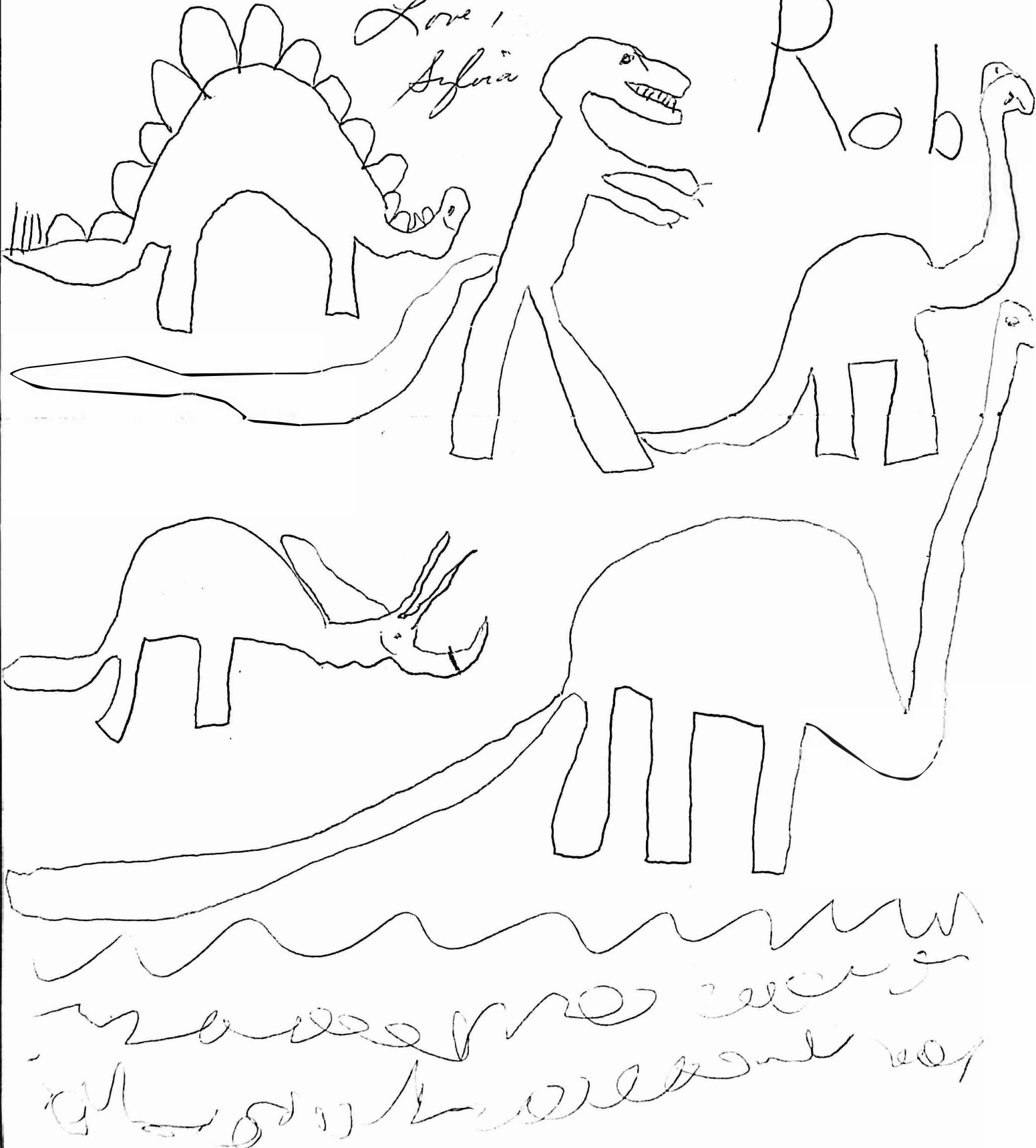
The girls are not at all impressed with the abundance of snow. They couldn't care less that there's a drift on the patio as tall as they are. They concern themselves now these days with investigating my lower kitchen cabinets. Audrey is the ring leader, she learned the other day how to open the cabinet doors + has since passed on this valuable piece of information to Priscilla. Audrey tends to be a bit bossy, it seems:

Love  
L.S.

her first words learned just yesterday are "I know!"

Rob, while I left the room a few minutes to  
change a baby, has added a postscript to this  
letter, it seems. Perhaps he will grow up to contribute  
more than dinosaurs to the Rabin.

Love,  
Sylvia





Route 2  
Lebanon, Ky. 40033  
April 21, 1978

Dear Folks,

I am anxious to rummage through the box of vintage Robin letters. Emily + Bill, I assume you are presently enjoying them. I hope we can expect to see you sometime this summer. Remembering the delightful weekend we had with you when you came three years ago, I hope we can repeat it. As Bob will be at Western Ky. U. this summer working on his rank I certification, <sup>130 hrs. above</sup> quite obviously I'll be home all summer (as will Bob <sup>on week ends</sup>).

I am truly looking forward to summer + my 5 weeks' vacation with the children - even though I plan to housebreak two 20-month-old daughters. I have high hopes of success, as I have read that twins are often trained more easily than singles, and, of course, girls are supposedly easier than boys.

We've been quite fortunate up to now in being able to have good help to come in and take care of the babies + the house while we're at school. But come Monday we'll be out of a sitter, as she is moving away, + we must undergo the initial ordeal of taking the babies to out to a babysitter. Fortunately there is a well-run establishment for pre-schoolers very conveniently located within a few yards of both the high school where Bob + I work + Rob's elementary.



Last week when Rob had a spring break, Mama's school was in session, + she took Rob to school with her one day to have him tell to her classes some of the stories he's memorized from records. On a recent trip to Bowling Green Rob had entertained Mama + me with the recitation of two stories, one of which lasts a full 45 minutes (Kipling's "Kikki-Likki-Lavi"). I wondered whether he might be self-conscious in front of children he'd never met, although he's always been ready to tell any adult any of his 8-10 stories at the drop of a hat.

Mama said he was not the least shy but rattled off three of his stories to four different classes (even some 6<sup>th</sup> graders.) I don't know how he is able to memorize verbatim, as he has done since he was 4, but it seems to be a rather effortless pastime for him — listening to the recorded stories as he plays around in his room. It's amusing to hear some of his stories told with a British accent (because the record's narrator is British).

Aunt Joanna, Bob + I usually have breakfast with the Today show, as you say you do. We seldom see more than the first half hour, as we must be off to school, but I appreciate the capsulized news — and their announcing what day of the month it is, which rather helps to organize my day + put it into focus (as I am often somewhat out of focus upon arising in the morning). I agree that a few of their newly-revamped segments are sometimes cloyingly cutsey + trendy, but all-in-all I find the program a pleasant way to get my eyelids open.



Aunt Joanna, did you read Beatrix Potter to your girls + grandchildren? I began a collection of her small treasures a couple of years ago for Rob. Once I began buying them I became addicted + couldn't stop till I eventually had all 25 of the little books. (As you can guess, I enjoy the stories + pictures every bit as much as Rob does). Until I became a Beatrix Potter aficionado all I knew she'd written was The Tale of Peter Rabbit, learned about, of course, in an early library science class. Does anyone else share this appreciation for Miss Potter? I love the Potter characters on the wallpaper frieze I put up in the girls' room. And I have launched onto a project of making stuffed animal characters fashioned after the Potter drawings. The bought, stuffed characters cost between \$10 + \$15; I can make them for considerably less + have from a book of Potter patterns + enjoy creating them from fake fur, felt, etc. So far I have finished only Peter Rabbit and Jimmy Lipton (a squirrel).

We must have a thorough account of the Virgin Island trip, Uncle Joe + Aunt Jettie. I guess it's been more than 15 years since I've seen Jim + Ed.

I must comment on Dad's baby picture. Of course I'd seen it before but never noticed the lovely hand-worked gown he's wearing. I don't suppose it still exists, probably not as indestructible as the cherubic tot wearing it eventually turned out to be.

For some time I have been intending to frame + hang a number of old family photos I've been hoarding. Of course the Oldest Chap in the beautiful white gown and the innocent expression must occupy a prime position in the gallery.  
Love, Sylvia





Route 2  
Lebanon, Ky. 40033  
August 18, 1978

Dear Folks,

Today we've completed a week of school, & it's only the middle of August. It's plenty hot, but if we're tortured with a third snowy winter, I'm sure we'll eventually be thankful for having begun school this year earlier than ever before.

My guardian angel has come through for me again. I was all prepared to take Audrey & Irisine out to a sitter this school year, but two days before school started I got a call from our former "come-in" sitter asking if we could use her this year. She's 24, by far the best sitter/housekeeper we've ever had — so, needless to say, I welcomed her back with a hug & kiss. She worked for us last year till Christmas, when she had to leave us to help her sister with her newborn twins.

The girls are well on their way to being "housebroken." This was my summer project, begun as soon as I was finished at school in June. They're younger than many people consider <sup>ideal</sup> potty-training age (12 yrs. old Oct. 18), but I think that considering they were just 21 mo. old when they started in training pants, they've made good progress.

They're both talking a good deal now; Audrey is still as bossy as ever & is still a couple of pounds heavier than Irisine.



Rob is in the second grade + is now learning that one is not supposed to like little girls - or being called "doll" by me.

Bob finished this summer's post-graduate work at Western Ky. U. just in time to plunge into teaching the following week. There'll be one more summer's work for him on campus; by this time next year he should have the school administrative certification he's been working on.

Jack, who has been working all summer on an archaeological dig in Missouri, begins his graduate work at W. of Missouri this fall, where he has a research assistantship.

I daresay we won't see the Robin again till Dec., so merry Christmas, everyone!

Love,  
Sylvia