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January 10, 1988

Dear Uncle Joe and Aunt Jethie,

Had a good time during the holidays. First, I stopped at Joe and Celeste's and got my first look at 7 month old Adin. He looks alot like Alexandria did at that age. From Joe's, it was on to Lebanon and a few days with Mom and Sylvia's family. Mom and Sylvia and I are tentatively planning on a vacation to Europe sometime in June. I'm looking forward to that. Last, I spent a couple of days and New Year's Eve with Glenn and Sonya in Ohio. Glenn intends to finish his doctorate degree in June.

While cleaning out the house and outbuildings at Dad's farm in Ohio, Glenn found some very interesting old letters of Uncle Joe's which date between 1916-1947. Enclosed is a copy of each. One is yours, Uncle Joe, to Uncle Roy (Bunch?) when you must have been about 9 years old. The others are letters to you from Aunt Ruby, Aunt Ginny, Dad, and Uncle Ed. I had no idea that these letters existed and how they came to be in our possession is a mystery. However, I suspect you sent them to Dad and he never returned them. The most interesting letter to me is Dad's letter which was sent to you eleven days before he and Mom were married.

Love,

February 17, 1998

Dear Barbara,

You may be aware that Sylvia and her children, Joe, Glenn and his children, and I have recently started an "electronic Round Robin." Sylvia graciously volunteered to be curator of all letters in this new Robin (one advantage of e-mail). She also recently mentioned that you have copies of most (or many) of the Ray Robin letters from its inception. If it would be acceptable to you, we would like to make copies of most of those letters for several reasons. First of all, I believe it is always wise to have a copy of important documents in a separate place from the originals in case of a disaster such as fire, tornado, etc. (by the way, Glenn and I, and I think Sylvia also, has a copy of Uncle Joe's recollections for safe keeping). Second, we would all love to read the old letters--I am sure they are fascinating! I remember reading some of the letters when I was growing up in the late 60s and early 70s, but to read some of the earlier letters would be very enlightening. For example, Eleanor Ray died the year that I was born, so I never got to know her. By reading some of her letters, I could probably get a vague picture of what she was like, etc. It would also be fascinating to follow the careers of our aunts and uncles in their own words. Third, at some point down the line, Sylvia, Glenn, and I might organize the "Best of the Robin" letters into a family history of sorts.

Anyway, we would like to know if we could arrange to make copies of the letters that you have. I guess there are several options to accomplish this. From my standpoint, it would be preferable if the letters could be shipped to me by certified mail or the safest way possible. This would reduce the burden on you of standing over a copying machine for hours, but if you think mailing them would not be wise, I will understand. If you would prefer to copy them yourself, I would be happy to pay for the copying costs. Do you have a rough idea of how many pages there are? By the way, just how many years do the letters that you have span, and whose letters do you have? Do they include all of the siblings or just a couple? And are some of the letters from nephews, nieces, children, and grandchildren? A third option might be a trip up to Michigan, but I personally could not make such a trip in the near future.

Any advice and information you have regarding the old Robin letters and their reproduction would be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jack

Jack Ray
3263 East Lombard
Springfield, MO 65802

P.S. I will be going on a two week vacation beginning Feb. 21, so I will get back to you in mid-March.

e-mail: jhr929t@nic.smsu.edu

tel. no. 417-889-2554

copy: Emily Moore

March 13, 1998

Dear Jack,

I would love to share the Robin letters if we can find a way. I really don't want to send them anywhere. They are a gigantic treasure and I feel responsible for them. They are as safe here as they could be in a private house, I believe. Mother gave me two W.W.II ammunition cases to store them in. Our basement is almost like a bomb shelter, and I keep them down there unless I am using them, as I have been since your letter. We have six inches of concrete and steel mesh and beams between the basement and the first floor. The ammunition cases measure 26.5" by 12.5". They are similar in size to the boxes holding 5,000 sheets of paper but about 7" taller. They are almost too heavy for me to lift. One box full we brought back on the plane from El Paso and the other one Uncle Joe sent me later.

The first box is all in order. I took the letters out of the envelopes and filled them in manila folders by year. They are from 1927-1977 and pretty well fill the case. The other case has a stack of loose sheets of paper about 12" deep and many envelopes with complete Robins enclosed. Emily and I have been planning to work on them together for the last five years. We haven't made any progress for the last three. Our mother has been in such bad health that we don't want to leave her in town alone. Em has been coming to stay with her whenever we go on vacation. We have vowed that in August we will arrange to have more time together so we can finish the second case.

I forgot to mention that 1942-47 is missing. Uncle Joe lost some when he moved one time, and I suppose those are the ones. I got a shock the other day when I dipped into the second case for examples to send you. I assumed that they were from 1977 on; however, there are several envelopes from the 30's. I chose to copy those for you rather than worry about returning letters to the exact spot as I need to do with ones in the folders. The letter I am sending from Aunt Virginia was in my genealogy stuff. Uncle Joe made copies for us at the time. The one from my dad is the first one in the file.

You asked who the participants were. The six siblings and Miss Ella Jefferies were the initial members. Aunt Martha added sometimes followed by my mother, Aunt Jettie, Uncle Jack and your mother. Uncle

Ray Harmon never wrote that I remember. There are many letters that really weren't Robin letters. They were between siblings. I guess that some of them were put in the Robin at the time, and maybe Uncle Joe added correspondence found when a member's estate was examined. Miss Ella Jeffries was a teacher at Western [geography]. Uncle Brown lived with her while he was in college as did my dad. Ruby and Virginia made clothes for her for years. She was my Grandmother Mason's oldest sister. We always called her Auntie Jeff in my family. Joe Wilson did also. I just remembered when thinking about this that Joe Wilson and Emily and I adopted each others relatives. He called my Aunt Louella Mason "Aunt Louella" until the day he died, and she loved it. We called his Harmon aunts Aunt also. If there are references to Auntie in the Robin, they refer to Aunt Iris Howell. She was our grandmother's twin sister Iris. We mostly called her Auntie Howell in my generation, but she was just Auntie to the Ray children.

I am glad that you wrote because I never would have expected you to be interested in knowing about Aunt Eleanor. If I have time I will write some of my memories of her. No children ever had better aunts than we did, and I loved them all including Jettie and your mother.

I am sending a sample letter from each beginning member. I took the samples to my computer advisor for suggestions on copying. The typed ones are no problem. Some are on onion skin paper, but they scan or copy well. The hand written ones are more difficult. It is not unusual to have six or eight sides to a handwritten letter. That is why I cannot even guess how many pages we have. The volume up to 1977 fills two of the cases I described. Of course there are file folders and some envelopes included. Dave chose to use 2,000 sheets to talk about. I am also sending you a copy of the notes he made as we talked. He said that the most economical thing would be to buy a copier just to copy them-rather than pay the charges at copy places. He estimates 150 hours to copy 2,000 sides. That would give us one copy and the same storage problems I have for one other person.

We also explored computer methods. The main drawback is that each of us would need the "Page Keeper" program in order to read a disk that letters had been scanned onto. He estimated 20 handwritten letters or 35 typed ones per disk. If we should get a new computer and a scanner, scanning should take about the same time as copying. He could then make us a CDROM for \$10.00. He said that "Page Keeper" could be included on the CDROM, but the legality would be dubious. He

takes great pains to be ethical so I don't know if he would do that after reflecting on it. This would be the ideal situation as everyone could have a copy for \$10. I think the scanning would take much longer than he estimated if we did it right. Each letter would need a title and then could be put into files according to subject. For instance you dad's letter could be filed under Work, Family, and Moves. That would make a particular letter much easier to find. The page keeper would cost \$280 and the scanner \$200. We have thought of getting a new computer whenever we can be sure that the 2000 problem is fixed. Dave said that he had investigated doing this kind of work as a business and calculated that having it done by a business would cost \$2 a side.

I think I will try to find time to file the rest of the letters by myself. Then perhaps Em and I could inventory them in August so that we know exactly what we are deal dealing with. I would be glad to have you come up and copy them if that is what you decide you want to do-if we can work out a mutually convenient time.

Emily said to tell you that her e-Mail system crashed and she lost all addresses. If you could send your and Sylvia's address, she would be back in business.

Did Sylvia share the genealogy information I gave her with you? I have been spending more time on it than on the Robin of late. Aunt Virginia did some wonderful work on it. We could get that on a CDROM also.

Let me know if you have any better ideas than I have about this. They did talk about keeping the letters from the very beginning and it is my wish that we do the best we possibly can for them. Uncle Joe and I discussed giving them to Western Kentucky University if the time should come that none of my children cared for the responsibility. That would make them less accessible for all of us, however.

Sincerely,

Barbara Sutter