

December 18, 1960

Sunday

Dear Marion,

Thanks for the pink & blue butterflies. Yes, I plan to stay here instead of going to visit the Pascoes in an orange grove in Winter Haven. I would, if I went there, have to leave the dogs in a kennel and would have the annoyance of traveling crowded highways. I'm going to the homes of friends for two occasions Christmas day.

I'm told I'll have to wait for the clock until after the holidays for the man has sent for parts. I don't know whether that means more than wire of the proper weight to replace the cords or whether it includes more. The bill will be 12 or 13 dollars, I'm told Mrs. Putnam, wife of the jeweler, is in the Eng. dept. and gives me this information. I don't know the man who does the actual repairing. I wish I had the clock on the mantle Dec. 22 because I'm having 8 or 9 persons here for fruit juice before we go out to dinner. I haven't called the Holts of N.H. yet but plan to invite them. The pecans were as flimsy this year as I have ever seen them. Many seem withered in the shell – but even at that the larger nuts sell for 69 cents a pound. Someone who grows pecans thought the excessive rain washed away the pollen.

As to the fan, if you don't need it, I might be able to use it in summer or perhaps in winter if I set it in the windows between balcony and the big room. Perhaps it would draw up the heat also. I've tried burning soft coal with oak logs and now I'm buying charcoal by the 20lb pound bags. It seems cleaner.

If you send the fan, Marion, please send it C.O.D.

I'd like to give you the price of it. You have been so utterly generous.

With Love,

Laura

December 30, 1960

Dear Marion,

Thank you for the beautiful bird-card. I think you and Lou might enjoy the cards I'm sending. Three or four (of) the birds I've never seen. However, I'm rather sure I saw a bluebird about a week ago. Saw also a meadow lark, ruby-crowned and gold-crowned kinglets and a white-eyed vireo.

I've had five tall holly trees planted near the house (in addition to a half-dozen others of various sizes and varieties) so at last I feel rooted.

This sunny afternoon I am sitting in the front seat of the car and Kip is snoring in the back. Meg is in her box in the house. She runs when we go near the car.

I imagine you took your mother riding on Christmas. I hope she too had a good day.

With Love,

Laura

April 21, 1961

Sunday

Dear Marion,

I'm sending a letter I wrote the N. Y. Bank and perhaps you'd better keep it in case McCarthy responds, for I have no other copy. I am sending McCarthy a copy but not signing my name, for it is not addressed to him, nor am I writing a note to him, since he will soon perceive the reason for the letter.

Dr. and Mrs. Pohly left this morning, after a visit of a little more than a day. Dr. Pohly says Illinois generally pays (insurance companies) a minimum of three thousand, even though the individual is responsible, and the "nuisance value" for loss of life may well be ten thousand. He thinks McCarthy may have received that from the company. I imagine my N. J. cousin got the jewelry-and possibly my sister also.

I'm sorry your mother is in such desperate straits. But you have the peace of mind which comes from knowing you have done all you could to make her comfortable.

Last week a graduate student heard dogs barking on top of the biology building and went up to find deplorable conditions-a mother dog trying to get through the fence at a pup outside and many starving dogs in pens-big and little tossed together. I went up, at someone's behest, and found one pup dead but not put in the trash pail, and the mother dog in a cardboard box as she tried to nurse three pups. She was very thin. The ribs showed on many of the dogs. One had a collar but no tag. The President of the Humane Society and the veterinarian who is treasurer went up a couple of days later and found only six dogs. I think someone brought small dogs from the pound that could not be "used", and those were destroyed to wipe out "evidence", though I think the student newspaper took pictures earlier. I got the mother dog (a beautiful springer spaniel-hound combination, I think-black and white) and took her to a friend's house-where the two of us feed her. One pup died shortly after I arrived at the friend's house, but the other two are plump. This evening I took a Daschund belonging to a Negro to the veterinarian to be spayed-he worked for me one day and that was his way of paying.

The Obedience Club entertained patients at the tuberculosis hospital today with obedience trials. Then other breeds of dogs were shown. I took Kip, and, as usual, he barked much of the time at other dogs.

The Seth Thomas clock has just struck eleven. I'm going to write a note to the graduate student interested in the Humane Society and tell him of a meeting-then go to bed.

I hope you're able to relax a little in the spring weather.

With Love,

Laura

June 14, 1961

Dear Marion,

You inquired when I mailed the air mail letter. I'm not sure. Sometimes I carry mail around in my purse until I go to town.

It is raining this afternoon, as it has been doing for several days, after intensely close mornings. Kip is lying on the floor of the kitchen and Meg and Bonnie (the spaniel-like dog from the roof of the biology building) are on the davenport. We found excellent homes—after I'd run advertisements six times, for all the pups. Bonnie (as Mrs. Vernon, who kept all for a time, called her) was at a place about 20 miles away for several days. We left a pup with her. Then the young woman called and asked me to get Bonnie—she said she wasn't eating, etc.—but she wanted to keep the pup. After much wrangling and searching-for she said the pup was lost—she finally produced it, when I told her it belonged to someone in Tallahassee and she would be asked \$10. The Tallahassee girls who got it were on the lawn the other night playing with it. They seemed to enjoy it more than the swimming pool in the back yard.

But we were afraid to let Bonnie go out again. When I visited her at Mrs. Vernon's she'd snuggle up to me. When I got her from the woman in Havana, she cried for joy and licked my face. She now runs happily after rabbits in the woods near the house—and, alas, I'm afraid she frightened away the chuck-will's-widow. It is a responsibility to have another dog—for 15 years or so—but Bonnie is as little trouble as any dog could be. She is short-haired, black and white. She's learned to mistrust dogs—she is still afraid of Kip—but she's had experiences with people and other animals—at the pound and elsewhere. I plan to take all three to the mountains July 28, after summer school. Perhaps I'll try to drive at night; I don't know whether a motel would admit three dogs.

As I look out the window I see a flicker digging in the grass. For the first time since I've lived here I had all the grass cut with a lawnmower—the cost between \$40 and \$50. Next time the work should be easier.

I'm glad I decided to stay here in this interval of two weeks for I've done things about the place that should have been done earlier, such as waxing floors, replacing a few pieces of bathroom tile, fixing faucets, etc. I've asked the man who finished this house to figure on a carport, 10 x 22 feet. I plan to have storage on one side under the eaves. If I close it in all around I may be able to keep Meg and Bonnie in it during the daytime.

Your fan is invaluable—it allows me to sleep upstairs at night.

As to cremating your mother and having the service in Massachusetts—it seems the best thought, regardless of what your father's family might think.

As to asking Mr. DeBevoise to handle all my affairs, I think it might be a good idea. Since I've not heard from my brother, he might "handle" him too—and the Iowa farm, that is, my share.

In a letter of March my sister writes:

"Just got back from Jake's where I had to sign and he notarized my signature on copies of Right-of-Way easement that the Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative wants because it proposes to build a 69,000-volt transmission line along the fence line on the north boundary of our farm. Jake said we might as well

sign as they'd do it anyhow. There is a possibility that the line will run on the neighbor's land on the other side of the fence, but they write 'In order to introduce a reasonable amount of flexibility for the engineer in establishing this line, we make a practice of obtaining right of way on both sides of the proposed line.'"

She doesn't say whether anything was paid to us for granting the easement.

My share of the rent on this 160-acre farm, with black soil a foot deep, is about \$400 a year. It seems it would be worth my having Mr. Debevois handle it, though he took half.

I'm contemplating-if he can handle all my affairs-and I haven't written him again because I haven't had answer from the Bank to his questions-letting him keep all my business papers and the will if he'll draft it. I could go to N.Y. for a day in the first part of August I think. By driving to Marion, N.C., and leaving the dogs in a kennel and my car in a garage, I could take a night train to N.Y. and arrive about 10 a.m., I think. Then I could get a night train back to Marion. Having a lawyer at that distant would save any chance of a local lawyer's commenting on one's affairs-but Mr. Ausley probably wouldn't.

I suppose a "general" will could be made-that is, one person put in charge of distributing things-and that person could be informed by letter of any differences one might like to make in distribution.

I doubt that there is anything that can be changed in my uncle's affairs-but it may be that some undiscovered alliances may be revealed, perhaps among one's own relatives.

My dogs have the constant problem of fleas. Before I leave for the mountains I'll have to spray the house thoroughly.

I'm glad to have your opinion and Lou's about my problems. I'll let you know.

With love,

Laura

October 12, 1961

Wednesday Evening

Dear Marion,

I'm sending some odd pieces of yarn given me by a friend. Also my skirt pattern and the trimmings. Mrs. Lowery might have use for them. I hope all is well with you and that you will have a drive to Sugar Loaf to see the fall colors. The 10 X 12' dog house is being finished - with electric light and heat, glazed tile floor & cherry veneer paneling on the inside on the outside redwood siding and cedar shingles.

With Love

Laura