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1962 - May 9

Carolyn Brown Dodge

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Letter #1 (Blue Ink, green clip)

Letter

May 9, 1962

Dear Carol:

So glad to hear from you again. Have had two notes from Adelaide since with optimistic + brief reports of Aunt Grace's progress. Had hoped for Aunt Grace's sake that the way would not be long + hard for her but sounds like she has the Brown Stamina. Do hope Adelaide's visit has given her comfort + enjoyment + some relief for Mary _____ + Ed. Adelaide's latest said she wished I'd given some instructions on the use of the bedpan for she found it awkward + difficult to handle. One of those things is never easy or pleasing to handle or use – especially for one of Aunt Grace's size but I got a chuckle out of Adelaide's expression. Felt real pleased that she had time to write twice. I now must try to find an appropriate card to send to Aunt Grace – perhaps for Mothers Day. Feel so much the loss in not having a mother to remember on that day by some little thoughtful expressions but appreciate the status that I have in my own family – especially since I am also a grandmother.

Steven is a month old today + doing well. We have had the pleasure of Shelley & company more since his arrival + she demands + gets our undivided attention when we can help her here while Sandy takes Steven to doctor etc. She loves the baby and wants to hold him often + Sandy + Bill very careful to let her do it. We can hold him too for awhile but then its time for him to go to bed + our pleasure of it ends - + our attention returns to Shelley. She was here all day yesterday + was so good. Even went to a party with me + I was so proud to take her along.

The party was a farewell for Margaret Reynolds. They have sold out here + left to make their new home at Hayden Lake in the house Bing Crosby built there for vacation time. It is an acre + a half with a seven room house facing the lake. Margaret feels sure its only a temporary place for them but was enjoying the attention to the brochure of their new home. It was just one way they could sell their farm holding – to take this place – but it will be a change + Paul felt he must make a change. His health has been poor + their holdings pretty big here so now they'll rest + vacation + hope for the best. Margaret said it was a seven room house with four bathrooms. I would imagine six burner stove, three ovens, dishwasher, disposal. Etc. Lots of lawn, lots of windows. Their place here had had front yard dug up ever since I first saw it - + still is. Had to put in bigger septic tank + Paul wanted to put in underground sprinkler system so it just stayed dug up. So they had little or no lawn here + Margaret had already enjoyed mowing their new lawn on a "your ride it" lawn mower. Said they needed side delivery rake + pitch fork to finish the job! She invited the group there for a club meeting sometime. Only 3 hour drive, she said, but that would be six hours by time we got home unless we all brot sleeping bags etc. Anyway she enjoyed our honoring her departure and we all hope they will find a new home, one they can enjoy as well as they did their home here. Margaret would rather not have made the change but knew Paul needed it – so there it is.

I was quite concerned over your report of Aunt Alice. These Brown men have had lots of patience it seems. It is always a shock to see the deterioration of the mind of our family – as I so well know from my experience with Aunt Allie. I've been so grateful that Aunt Grace had been to Ishams + seen the condition + that Edna + I also made the trip there that fall + Edna knew what Ed Isham + I had to face in doing what seemed essential in the case of Ismams such a short

time afterwards. Dad's mind wandered at times but so close at other times + I was so grateful we did not have to have him go to confession that Aunt Allie had, It is pitiful + terrifying + surely something that is not easy to forget. Such tragedies give me nightmares a long time after its all over + done with. Some are doozies – probably some quite complex from what psychology articles say – but whether or no – it's a tough situation when you see such conditions in one of our own + suddenly have a fuller realization how things have been for another we've heard of. Hope Aunt Alice's condition not as disturbing as to Aunt Grace – she has enough worries.

This has been interrupted several times + my line of thought strays – anyway that's an excuse for the condition. We've been having cool showery weather with some recent frosts that has left its mark on growing things. Looked like we'd have a big crop of apricots + peaches this year hope some will be left. Have had only one or two of each fruit on trees since we've been here. Peaches are easy to buy here but nice apricots harder to find. We were given a box of them last year and enjoyed them fresh + canned but they didn't last long enough. Our raspberry canes look the best this year that they have looked so far. Not enough to can but should have all we want to eat. The lilacs are beginning to fade but have surely been beautiful. Lots of leaf growth + the blossom heads immense + all in bloom at once. I do like them. One peony had three or four blossoms early but frost or maybe dandelion spray finished it in a hurry. Second pink one has a dozen blossoms now + more buds coming out daily. A darker colored one now starting to blossom. Two smaller ones apparently want to wait another year or two to show us what they are like. The latest peony is probably three feet high now + loaded with buds + we hope Memorial Day will see it in full bloom as it was the year we bought the place. Tulips are still out but fading + they must be dug + divided this year. They all seem to be nice varieties in red, lavender, + yellow shades. I'd like to get a little more variety of color but like what we have too. To the side of the car port are four posts - two of which had clematis growing by them – both purple. I blew myself for a new one this year + planted but the post between the two purples. It is Madame De Coultre - + the picture it looked like a pink or light lavender color. The fourth post has a flowering quince by it - + its thru blossoming. Our severely trimmed trumpet vine is beginning to get some kind of trellis built in triangle shape to let it grow out above our dining room window which is on the east + the only window which could use an awning. I think that even hooks or eye screws with rope strung across might do the trick + would be easier to take down when vine needed trimming + mess cleaned up again. I'll have to consult the expert tho to see if it will work + can be done that way. First planting of glads are up + only iris which I dug up + replanted last fall are slow in developing. I can get plenty more starts at the house in Kittitas tho. We are trying to get things in that will take less care yet look nice from year to year. It's plenty of work but we need the exercise since we no longer have the "trips to field twice a day with lunches" to give us our exercise. It is wonderful to be needed + wanted + appreciated and we each fill those spots in our own way. Said for you for doing what pleases your men. Someone will always foot the bill at some things we do – but it's our lives + let us live them our way as long as we can - + like you say "then let us pass on!"

Well – I guess I'm in a pensive mood. A letter from Bob yesterday demanded a long letter from me because he had let his feelings show + I know he was lost + homesick + wanting to get away from school. I know the type of work he is doing is hard on the emotions but it is his choice + for the most part he enjoys it. We all long to do things differently at times yet have a job to do + do as we have been trained - whether its pleasing or an awkward bed pan.

You may guess by now that it is another day. I enjoy my three consecutive days at home. I work now Monday's + Fridays tho this week I have half day Fri. + half Sat. Until Aug. 1 – will

have two or 2 ½ days per week. The new nurse taking the three easier days until she gets used to the routine. The regular nurse comes on days to order supplies + plans on about a half day a week most of her three months off. Due to a family death last week I worked 3 ½ days but we do what we can to help under those circumstances. So many helped us so many ways when we needed help + I was glad to be free to help them too. But also glad to know I hadn't agreed to a full time summer job.

Speaking of dirt – we were loaned the book “Calories don't count” + I've been reading it with interest + a definite question in my mind as to its feasibility for anyone with cholesterol or heart condition. I know it wouldn't be satisfactory for ulcer diet but its fun to get the reasoning of the author – who used it + lost weight – but had no physical disabilities other than obesity. According to his definition I am obese – (which I know) even tho not overweight. What I need is conditioning now, the advantage of TOPS is the group psychology + no matter what the diet – being with others with similar problems is a help. Like birth control, dieting is self control! When I hear the young group that Sandy goes with talking of their feelings of the catholic church (to which they belong) on birth control I am often tempted + sometimes do say that any birth control is simply self control. At least Sandy agrees with me for she + Bill + I have talked this over often enouf. I don't know what the priest would say but after one of their discussions over some church paper article - Sandy went to the local priest + blew her top. Said that “between the government telling us what we can grow + what we can sell, how much we must pay etc. + the church saying what percent they (church) must have, what we can eat + when we must go to church, how many children we must have – we have no say now unless we ask the priest – even when we can have intercourse!” I guess she left him speechless – but she came away feeling she'd said her say + if they didn't like it they'd find a church with more liberal ideas! I could only pat her on the back for having a mind of her own – even tho the church might not approve. Now how did I get into that? They are still Catholic but say they have their family now. Of course many say that + have more but she had the satisfaction of saying her say. Sandy is such a lady like little person these bursts of temper really surprise many, even me sometimes.

Carol, I don't know what happened when I start a letter to you. Never seem able to quit. Hope the forgoing side line hasn't shocked you too much. I thot of throwing the works in the fire + start over but didn't know when I'd get another written. So now you can read my ramblings and grumble or laugh at them + start a fire with the works before it shocks some less tolerant.

Its Thursday evening + another day about over. I found a Mother Day's card + have it ready to send to Aunt Grace. Also one to my secret pal. We plan to go to a family picnic at Ellensburg Sunday. A nephew + family home on leave before going to Manila. This is the cousin Bob visited in Virginia on his way to school last August. He spent Easter with them too so we are eager for more visits with them. They did come one day last week + had lunch here but I was working + had only my hour at noon to be with them. When I had to leave Shelley said “Where you going Grandma?” I said ”I have to go + earn the bread + butter” she said “oh” + Boynton said “Good – that means I can stay here + visit.” Anyway, a family picnic Sunday should be fun + I hope it's a nice warm day. This takes in the nephew families – Sorensons + Dodges + his wifes families too so it can evolve into plenty of people. Jack had said they'd be there if possible but had expected it to be somewhat later. Do hope they can come tho.

Have had no word from Betty since we were there about Nov. 12. It seems a shame for her not to write at all _ that was always a cause of worry to Mother. I read her occasional letters or a copy of those we write in duplicate – Edna, Len, etc. but haven't neem very interested when there is no response. Edna doing exceptionally with letters now and they do seem to enjoy their

new home. Harold has been getting more fun out of buying cards for my birthday etc. + always gets real good ones. Like "happy birthday – this is the year isn't it? Edna said he bot that when we saw it + saved it for several months to send to me.

Now I'll quit. Its really not much of a letter but I must have let off a lot of steam. Hope it don't burn you up.

Thanks for writing. I'll try to contain myself better next time

Love
Carolyn