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1954 - Sept. 26 - 1

Carolyn Dodge Brown

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Letter #6 (green ink, white clip)

Sept. 26, 1954

Dear Carol: Received your letter & wanted to sit right down & answer it — but couldn't then & haven't since. I have had to make myself kind of answer letters in their turn — I wrote to some too often & others not at all. And at present letter writing seems extremely difficult to get at & keep at. Maybe it will improve as work slacks off but I don't know. It doesn't seem to be lack of time so much now as the lack of ability to stick to it — & that's lack of personal discipline I suppose. So many things are different for us I guess I'm flighty because I can't adjust to it. It seems odd for Dodge to be gone so much. I have an adjustment to make to that each fall but before he at least got home nights — tho usually too tired to visit — or sleep. But he has been home 24 hours or less for each of the last four week ends & you can imagine all the catching up he has to do here — on farm stuff, spud stuff & his numerous other little projects. A payroll to sign for Rural Fire district, a meeting to make arrangements for state fire commissioners meeting, and each time a dozen to see about spuds, insurance, etc etc etc. I can do none of it for him & if I try I do it not quite right. Damn — I wasn't going to say that — but that's the way it seems to turn out so often. I do to see him in his diggings sometime during the week if I can but don't always manage. There are certain things I have to stick around here for — & besides when I am over there — there is little I can do to help. I did go to Moses Lake & look at trailer houses one time but then the dealers just came to see Boynton & he can't talk to them when he's busy. Trailers are interesting to look at tho. They sure put a lot into them — from bedroom & bath to upstairs bedrooms. Just like shopping for houses but not as much variety or choice. Prices for 27 ft trailer with bedroom & bath — used ones — start at around \$2000 & run from there to near \$3000. New ones start at \$5000 & the two story job was priced at \$6250 — price lowered

because it had been used as a demonstrator. We find the trailer lot dealers hike that price rep considerably over what allowed the seller — as much as \$900.00 on one we knew of. But it sold before the consignment time limit expired. Because of starting in new territory in the spud business & because I need to be here on the farm yet awhile we haven't pushed the trailer idea too much. If we do get one — it will probably be some spur of the moment thing. Sure would be a radical change in my housekeeping schedule. I'd have to find something to do to keep me from getting lazy.

This new spud enterprise is really something. I don't know if I've told you much about it but the company rented a warehouse — complete with sorting machinery on the Great Northern tracks at Winchester — 6 miles from Quincy — 12 miles from Ephrata. The location is good and since there are many farmer Kittitas Valley growers over there on that new land, Boynton has been able to break into the business pretty well. Prices so far have been low but the quality is good. The markets Boynton ordinarily used are mostly western and they just didn't absorb the supply so he has had to establish different outlets in eastern markets. He talks to Chicago, Kansas City, Minneapolis etc almost daily. I shudder to think what the telephone bill must be. It was often lots over a hundred dollars with their Kittitas operations and with calls going further its liable to grow a lot. Kittitas shed will open soon after Oct. first I imagine. But back to Winchester they have had over 200 ton of spuds go three the shed in a day. They load 6 to 9 cars daily and some goes by truck too — but not daily. They have a bulk cull deal that trucks run under for culls for stock feed — but the company gets the culls and sell them for feed. To keep track of culls for each farmer is quite a headache so if the farmer wants his culls he has to make precious arrangements. Our weather has been wonderful and hto the potatoes are mature over there, there just is no storage — and the spuds too warm any way. Boynton went to Wenatchee

and rented cold storage for twenty car load of spuds but that adds hauling as well as cold storage to the cost of spuds. However movement so poor it seemed the thing to do. Kittitas Valley spuds are more liable to go into spud cellars, commercial storage etc. but always enuf move to pay expenses of digging etc etc. When a crew gets to running here too – it will really be a drag. One good thing tho, help seems to be plentiful. Many men at warehouses daily looking for work. That helps – because each man tries harder to please if he knows there are plenty waiting to do his job. Boynton hasn't run into Reynolds I guess. Those fellows really have sunk a lot of money in those farms. Seems like so many have developed their places complete with house, sheds etc and only a minority are getting along with makeshift. Well – its nice if you can do it & save it but I imagine the land turnover in ten years will be terrific — Has been already I know. — —

Boynton does have a room at Bell Hotel in Ephrata now I called him the other evening, waited ten minutes then hung up. Then central called me back & said to wait a minute. Mr. Dodge was busy with another long distance call & she would connect us soon. Guess he seldom eats supper without a call coming for him. He does get his room reasonably & food there is good & they put up a lunch for him – so it is working O.K.

I had to laugh about your tale of the clothes. The clan here generally passes clothes around quite freely. Boynton's youngest sister gets lots given her because she is so handy at making things over. If her supplies are good or the clothing too good to cut into she is very liable to pass these things along to someone the right size. Our boys have bot their own clothes for years and gladly use something for free. They have more than they need mostly – but surely accept extras if offered. The brother's family at Pullman have much sent them by relatives & when the kids outgrow clothes they are brot here to be used up by younger & smaller cousins. However, as usual there is one fly in the ointment in the farm of a sister in law who accepts

things graciously & then in a side remark says the girls can use it for play clothes, or takes them & then never wears them. Confidentially that is what happened to two dresses I had that you might be able to wear. Shes had them several months yet has never worn them – I asked her. She said she was still too hippy. I'd told her to use them if she could. But if they didn't fit I had a place for them. So we all have our stories. Seems that the ones who need them most are the ones that accept them the poorest.

Believe me – I know these nasty letters are upsetting. One of Boynton's brothers is separated from his "first" wide and she goes on a letter writing binge once in awhile and I have to take my turn at being recipient. During the winter I got a 15 page letter – 15 pages written on both sides of all 15 pages — going back to 1941 – 1946 – 1939 etc etc. and condemning Dodges for breaking up a perfect marriage, condemning the farmer husband for being such a flirt etc etc. Well – it bothered me a lot, I took it to one of the other families & we read it & hashed it over — & my mind was at rest. I wrote a page of carefully thot out statements — including the fact that I was no more Dodge than she except that I'd stuck with mine even tho, even he, was no paragon of perfection. But I got another letter from her, & then another — but the two latter ones I did not answer. They were dropped in the furnace — as yours is now about to be! I do like to keep them until answered – but no one read yours except me. And I enjoyed it — with all its yakiness, believe me. Boy would we hash if we could get together once a month! Don't you need to take a trip? Can't you come out to see us? We'd sure like to show you the new Columbia Basin farms. The spud business & our own set up here. And you remember how Boynton likes to show people around. He's busy now for sure but would find time to show Ernest what gives. You know, their "association" goes back a good many years.

What? The end of another page already? I refuse to make this 15 — it wouldn't be fair. You wrote three but they were a little bigger than this paper — weren't they.

Oh yes. I wanted to tell you my laugh. We've had a series of "shot gun" weddings & the boys & I were hashing them over. I said, "They teach personal hygiene in high school, what do they teach you?" Bill said, "Well – our teacher said 'There's only one way to keep from getting into trouble – Only one sure way. Keep them zippered up boys, keep them zippered clear to the top!'" Isn't that good! I knew you'd get a bang out of it too – That's all now.

Carolyn.

Disclaimer written at the top of the last page

This is the one to throw away fast

Mother has never indicated to me that there was a reason she hadn't come to your place except Aunt Graces demands, Lucy's demands etc. I think it must be one of those accumulations of circumstances & do hope she's been there by now. You know – we did take a lot of advantage of your hospitality last year. It was so generously given & you all treated us so grandly – well I'm sure its nothing personal. Surely been no mention of it. Mother did mention a visit to Veras & going to see Lena in Sidney. I hope she makes the trip to Minnesota. I have encouraged her to visit there while there & when she is ready to come back maybe she will be content to stay here. Seems like if she finds a place she is needed that is not too distressing she'll be OK. I call & answer adds frequently thinking there might be something good here & I'll run into a few — but of course shes not here to take them. Many are for board & room in exchange for companionship, or child care or some such. One was no housework except evening meal for her & three children — youngest 10. Parents both worked evenings. Sounded pretty good. Mother would like to help the constant wrangle & high tension are too much for her. It's a sad situation.

I'd hoped Edwin would do better & be more steady than Uncle Loren was but he seems of the same cloth. And as Aunt Grace went along with Uncle Loren & helped as she could, so does Mary with Ed. They do it differently yes – but the principle is still the same. A pretty unsound business seems like. I remember the central states Guernsey field man telling of the fancy barn Edwin had — but that the milk was not as clean even then as most is from lesser set ups. Their whole outlay has never gone strong to order & cleanliness & probably never will.

Well – now this is it!!! —