

2021

1956 - Jan. 30

Carolyn Brown Dodge

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Recommended Citation

Dodge, Carolyn Brown, "1956 - Jan. 30" (2021). *Carolyn Brown Dodge Letters*. 104.
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Letter #1 (Dark Blue ink, Blue clip)

Envelope

Mrs. E. H. Robinson
Rt.1 Box 22
Sidney, Montana

Letter

Jan. 30 – 1956.

Dear Carol: I better get started at this while our colder weather holds. Its purely discouraging to do much but read + write + such. This is the end of three months of snow – a most unusual thing for us. Jack had some slides taken last fall + we all remarked about how different everything looked in the green. Its been recuperation weather for me – I think lack of activities can help one a lot this winter – but many are complaining about it + even I am wearying some of the white stuff. It was so icy for awhile that I dared not get out + walk but have walked some daily in the past two weeks and I feel better for it. I always have a sore spot or spots after I walk but the doctor said it would gradually disappear unless an actual injury. So few people here walk. I saw one of our neighbors drive down town three times one day - + his wife never walks even when its nice. This house is a different color + needs exercise - + enjoys it. I figure its about seven blocks to our post office + grocer so its fourteen blocks both ways with often and cup of coffee + good fellowship while down town so I walk often. Went down at noon one day when the temperature was zero + still enjoyed it. I purely feel better for it even with the sore spots. I walk on cleared roads – we have few sidewalks – but if I watch its not too slick. I have to watch the slipping – that could be bad.

I've been pasting pictures in albums, it's a long job + messy but one I'm glad to be getting done. I guess I haven't really caught up since my last operation 15 years ago. Boynton seems to enjoy looking threw them as much as I do + it sure is interesting to see the changes. I have been cutting or tearing them down to get more of the essential parts in the book – or more in the book. One book is almost full now + I have another book with just the Dodge boys in it – our Dodge boys - + its really something to see. Nothing quite replaces snap shots. Have another album with only photographs in. I like it too.

Leather work has also filled in part of my time. I sent for a peirse (pierce?) kit + made the peirse which has an ivy leaf design + no backgrounding _ like it especially. The design with less falderal. Then made a leather key case + scratch coin purse to match and - a bill fold. If I can draw off the design well enouf my contour belt will also have ivy leaf. The peirse and stuff are all dyed cordovan + are really pretty I think. Our instructor things it would be better otherwise but we never see eye to eye on these designs so I think nothing of it. I like the leather work but a lot of the work is noisy so I can't do it if someone is going to be disturbed by it. Anyway its not good to do if someone is sleeping or studying.

Well, at the start of the day there is no way to know what day will bring. Its 5PM now + I am in a motel at Quincy. Have had a couple of hours here while Boynton is out speeding. He needs to stay over night so have a warm place to stay. I have to laugh tho, I lay on the bed reading + resting + got colder and colder, turned the thermostat higher + higher + no results. Thermometer read 65° and thermostat that said 75° - then I had looked again + where thermometer climbed to the right to raise the temperature , the thermostat read to the left – so I had it set at 65 or lower.

Good thing I finally put my glasses on. Its getting better now. I'm a pansy, but no activity doesn't keep me warm.

Boynton to meet a Montana potato seed man here this PM. Said he didn't feel so good so waked me to come along. It's the only way I can help + I get out + they can do it their way. I was invited to a baby shower this PM but had the package ready + we stopped at the place of the party + left the gift. It's a shame to pass up these things sometimes but I feel I should help Boynton too - + always want to go someplace. The old reen around on my heel you know.

Jack picked up mother Saturday PM took her to town to shop, carried her groceries in for her then I beat her out for the PM. He was going back to town in evening and took her back in. she had plans for Sunday school +/-or church yesterday and to baby sit afternoon + again evening. She has been having a half dozen jobs a week and confined so far to a about four families, Makes it about right. Its good to get acquainted with the children and their habits. These families too mostly pretty careful about late hours. Mother says she wakes at six whether she goes to bed early or late - but sleeps threw the night better if she starts late. At our place, we were inclined to turn in too early for her. Each time she comes out she packs away a few more things - + wonders what to do with it all. So do I but I think I'll get a big old fashioned trunk to put most of her things - except the dishes - in so they'll be together when she wants them again. She talks of going to Leonards about the "first of the month" but is still evasive about which month. Her little set up has worked out so well in so many ways that she's quite content + as long as its winter she probably is as well as better off there. I suggested she plan to be at Leonards for Easter - or some definite time like that. Now she thinks Easter is about right. I haven't been getting I to see her much - its been ten days or more since I've been to Ellensburg - One way to save money (to pay income too) I talk to mother by phone most days.

No, I got no picture of Aunt Nelli + if she sent one to mother I didn't see it - but I think mother got one. I wasn't in very good shape to remember all that was told to me at the time. We got nearly 125 cards (x-mas) besides the many get well cards and notes. I missed them all when they quit coming but the Christmas letter has beat responses from several Christmas so worth while. I got only a signed card from your mother but was glad to be remembered that much. I always enjoy Blanches + Harrys letters at Christmas. Its quite a thing to get a lot of their kind of letters done + sent but I like it --- especially the personal additions that are usually made. How we enjoy the pictures too. That's what I wanted to do this year but I must admit - I was the one who didn't get a picture taken!

I have heard from Aunt Grace + Dorothy lately. I hope the deal works out for them however is best. Dorothy's letter told about the hospital + how they had her peel all those vegetables - but it was better than doing nothing. She also expressed her bitterness in being forced to leave her dear mother + daddy. Sounded to me like someone had talked too much about it + 'who was to blame.' Its too bad for surely, Aunt Grace and Uncle Loren needed the rest + relief from her care.

Aunt Nelli's idea of a get together is a good one but I know always means a real effort on someones part. You shouldn't go if the trip seems too much for you. I always feel the time or date shouldn't make any real difference - the main thing is to have a time when you can all get together. When Boynton's mother got such an idea - we left it up to those who had to travel to set the date since the majority of the family in Washington. The time they set was bad - starting about rodeo time - + spuds come right after rodeo - or did then. Everyone busy but we had a glorious ten days of having extras around - the sister from Ohio was here that long - + it ended the Sunday following Labor Day - that Sat. + Sun. being the only days all of the family was

together - nine children – all living + all there. The in-laws were also there - but were surely glad to take back seats. It was a wonderful, proud time for Mother Dodge + in three weeks she was gone - - but traveling + visiting her children + only sick three days. How grateful we have been for those good days together. I've often wondered if we'd have been able to break away + go to Ohio for such a doing – now we know we can + did for a very different type of thing. What I mean to say in all this is that the effort it takes to fulfill a wish are sometimes very gratefully remembered + well worth while. I think the date the least important - the idea is to be together awhile.

Yes, I saw “not as a stranger” and read the stay + would see the show again if given a chance. Its my kind of show. We do not have T.V. + we don't see many shows. I like them more than Dodge does but we just don't go much. I do enjoy Drive In shows in the summer + often a car-load of us ”gals” go to see a show. Boynton likes them too + it seems to relax him to sit + watch + smoke a cigar. And yes we got Marks picture for Christmas. I was real pleased.

Joan is just a wonderful girl. When here in December she rode up on the bus with a friend of mine who was doing nurses aid work at hospital I was at. She came in to tell me about meeting Joan + how much she enjoyed her visit with Joan + Joan was as pleased with Mrs. Beck. Peculiarly once when Dean was here he made a date with Mr. Beck at our college + talked Geology with him + was so pleased with Becks compliments of Boynton. A small world. Joan can carry on a conversation, go out + round up a chair, clear a bedside table for a tray + so forth and has that eye for seeing + the ability to do whats needed before most people even see it. And many don't do anything about it even after they see it. I was so proud of her + wished I did not need to be laid up when she came. I had written her tho that I would be so she knew ahead.

We ordinarily pay 75 cents per pint for fresh oysters with specials going as low as 49 cents - - and good oysters too. They are huge ones – mostly 8 to 12 to a pint. Can occasionally get 12 to 16 + I do if I can. We haven't had them for awhile. I'm inclined to get a couple crab instead.

Mother Heard from Betty twice – Aug thrice + from Karen once. And the packages came for Christmas on time - but not a word in them or with them – but on time. I think mostly Law is home only weekends + perhaps its easier for her to get things done. He kind of puts the pressure on - or used to. I think he has improved. Betty cuts a whale of a slice for herself but I decided long ago it was her own life + we were better of letting her run it - + just help as we can. We never know what all governs a persons way of life and its better to let them live it + maintain an ostrich attitude if possible. And by the way, Betty makes me think of Aunt Allie more than anyone in else in the family. I can't say why, for surely their home lives are not similar - but there is something. Mother didn't appreciate that but I still had that feeling.

The boys are in school. Jack really studying + Bob just going to school as Jack used to. The main thing is to get passing grades - just barely passing – but now Jack wants better ones. Bon registered late for college classes but got in and after voice tests got on the teaching group. They have a big class + 50 only for trips. Spring vacation calls for two - two day trips + practice has started for it. I'm glad having him in directed work again.

I gotta quit. This will wear you out. Did you oil the cuckoo clock to quiet its voice - or are you used to it by now. Take it easy – gal – I am. I hope you can go to St. Paul tho. Bye now Carolyn.