

Lorna Livesley Chambreau
letters to and from family
1947

Yakima
Feb 4-1958
Saturday the 4th

Dear Norna;

You see by the enclosed that Pop is really better. Think he did pretty good for not having written for so long, and having such a shaky place to write, too, don't you? He has quite a bit of tremor in his hands and legs, but that will pass with his weakness I suppose. I was telling him how much you wanted to come up and he said that was going to be the first letter he wrote.

The Doctor has told him some of how sick he has been, that he was in the iron lung etc., but not that they thought it was something in the brain; that, I'm afraid, is something that would worry him too much. As it is, he tries to figure it all out, what happened and why, but most of it is a complete blank to him of course.

He has had no oxygen now for two days and night; sat up in a chair a little while yesterday and looks and acts more like himself, thank heavens. He sure had us scared there for awhile, as you know. We let the night nurse go last night but will keep the day one on for awhile. Doctor wants to give him another spinal to see if the pressure is holding down where it should. I imagine it will be another week anyway before they release him. He wants to be able to get around some, go to the bathroom and such, before he comes home. After that it will be a gradual thing, match. Whether the trouble is eliminated or will occur again sometime no one knows but Time and he isn't telling! He will have to be pretty careful for a long time I imagine.

He has really confounded the doctors and us all by making any recovery at all, and as the Doctor says "We still don't know what caused it or what his trouble is, really." So that's how it is at the moment. As it happened its well that you didn't come up, isn't it, and saved your pennies for later on when we'll all be back to normal...I hope.

Ant went home Wednesday and Tiny plans to go about a week from tomorrow; looked into ways and means yesterday and has decided to go to Portland and take the Daylight from there I guess; its about half as much as flying, which she considered too.

Now the anti-climax has sorta set in and we are all kinda dooped; Sis is crabby and has a cold, Tiny has been working on one, too, and I don't feel so hot myself. I'm still spending a good deal of time at the hospital, tho now that Pop can read a little himself and has the radio again, I don't do much but sit and read and keep him comfortable. Went up last night to see Jean Mead Dahlin and her new baby, about two hours after the baby was born...a girl this time, and was she tickled. Named Marv.

The bills roll in, but the Doctor bills weren't as bad as I had expected, which helps. Its been an expensive month, as you can imagine, but that's secondary to the fact that Pop is getting better...or the fact that he is here at all. If we only knew what its all been about, tho, so we could take precautions. Doctor is still toying with the idea of a drug poisoning from all the "histamine" drugs Pop has been taking the past few years;;;he says people have gone a little crazy on these drugs, and Doctors, too, and now they are beginning to think they may have destructive as well as curative powers. For some people anyway.

Well, Floss is velling at me to come and try on a dress she is making for me, so spose I'll hafta and more later. Hope your phone bill this past month didn't break you up in business; that the kids are all well again, that spring is there, that the Harkness problems are absolving themselves, and so on.

Much love to you all,

ms

Monday

May 28
1947

Dear Ruthie,

I'm very glad I heard from you this morning. I thought I'd die if I didn't. Have sure missed your letters. Been about two weeks since I've written, hasn't it?

Well, well--it's just that life has been so interesting. Somebody wants 16 of Edward's songs for \$1,0000 apiece; the grocery man insists on delivering me free groceries; the kids have decided to get their own meals and do their washing--and with Edward it's just love !love! love !every minute till a girl never has a moment ! D'ya believe it?

No,--like everyone else--we've been having a hell of a time/ Dennis has been very sick; the dentist is suing; all our checks are bouncing, bouncing, bouncing; the cupboards are bare, bare, bare; everybody wants money, money money and we actually don't know where the next meal is coming from; the school dintist says Michael has cavities in his permanent teeth; the doctor says Dennis' testicles havn't come down and he should have some shots--also his "birthmark" should be tak en care of; the weather is gloomy and cold just from man-made smog etc. etc--aren't I DULL?

What have I done? Did I write you about my trek with the trhee kids to the library and park. That was two weeks ago, because the books were due ~~yes/yes~~ Satur day. The library is nice, and so is the park. Getting the tired kids home with a load of groceries in Saturday evening traffic was not nice. Julie darted out into traffic the way they do and I nearly died of fright. But we got home.

Then I have been out on my grocery procuring battles, which are not fun.

Then I went out with Dennis and Julie in search of a doctor one day and walked nearly to Medcalf's restaurant before I founf one whom I didn't like and couldn't pay.

I've been sideways to the neighbor's to phone a doctor. I've been backwards to the neighbor's to check to see if I wanted any of the crap which she was giving to the Salvation Army. I've been across to the neighbor's to return a baby syringe. And I've been down the s street to the neighbor's to consult about getting rid of three kittens some other neighbors "kindly" gave the kids. (They 've disappeared at last--I don't know where. Every kid in the neighborhood took them home inhopes of keeping them and they always returned till I swear I thought they'd be old enough to be having more kittens before we got through.) So you see, adversity gets you acquainted when frændlines won't. The girl across the street had her baby--a girl. Have to go and watch her and her troubles some day !

Visitors? The man came with the summons. A weeping lady came wiht Junior to show me the welts my child and his friend had inflicted on Junior. Henry and Bebe came for Henry to say goodbye before she set off on her travels. Maxine and Robert have been down several times as they do when Henry's gone. Helped eat up the one good dinner we've had the other night, but we had fun.

Those are my contacts with the world--the constant rubbing of elbows with one's fellow beings that keeps one's scial consciouness just sparkling ! The rest of the time I have been coopedup ~~yes/yes~~ taking care of Dennis--and the house and the kids etc.

All those who have something interesting to do may now be dismissed. Those who care to wade through hell and high water with me may read on---

Julie goes to the toilet now--when we remember to take her. She talks a lot. (like her mother). Her hair is getting browner and browner. She is outgrowing some of her donations. Would it be foolish to send them on to that rich Miss Judy Jacobsen?

Dennis is growing up--plays peek a boo; patty cake feeds people and all that there junk. I don't know what his illness was--a severe cold I guess. Anyway he slept and threw up for two days and nights solid and ran a temperature (rectal) of 102-103. It was frightening to see our big bruiser so weak and listless and I, personally, was scared. Edward wasn't--and therefore wasn't much moral help. But he finally pulled out of it and seems fine now. I fully expected to see all three of them break out in something, but they didn't, for which I'm sincerely thankful. Learned a lesson there because I'd been beefing about how much trouble they were. And the other day I was GLAD to have Dennis pulling the kitchen to pieces under my feet--at least he was well!

Michael, too is growing--they DO, y'know. Yesterday I wore his sock to the store before I realized my mistake. Have a new theory about his asthma or else it's just an excuse to use the vacuum. (thanks for the book--I wished I had it...I'm Clyde's daughter, y'know.) Anyway now it seems to me his attacks are relative to the amount of dust in his room and under the bed--so I've been keeping it very clean with the vacuum and oil d rags etc. and it seems to help. But I suppose something will explode that theory.

Will continue with a hodge podge of ideas as they come because I can see life is getting ready to grab me by the neck again any minute--- Have so much to say and shouldn't say any of it--should be noble and keep my mouth shut.....

Does Tiny EVER stop fixing her house? Hope she doesn't regret some day that she'd let the house go a little and spent more time on her kids. (Don't tell her I said so--I can just HEAR her). And what's wrong with getting excited over a new toaster--the spoiled brat?

I'm so mean and nasty and broke that I'm going to trade the Revere pan in for trade (the only thing they'll do) instead of giving it to Tiny or Henry. Convinced myself they really didn't need it. Yell now if any objections.

Would like a picture of Judy--any about?

Henry and Harry are going by train--in private compartments. Henry's first experience with traveling decently. Says she has been shopping every day but won't say what's she's bought. From what I've heard tho--they sound old ladyish and dull--knit suits n'stuff.

Bebe fell in a store and splintered her arm so Maxine has her out here taking care of her. Some people make a profession of perpetual slight invalidism. Meow!

I'm not smart. I'm just one of these people who has to ruminate and chew their cud--like a cow. Ask Edward if I'm smart!

Maxine and Robert are quite in a dither about the bank party Robert's throwing at their house Thursday night (with Henry's permission. I told you, didn't I?) Sounds like it's going to be a drunken brawl to me and they just took advantage of Robert's youth to get some place to throw it.

I was quite upset about Hazel, or did I write you that? (I am losing my mind!) She always seemed so nice, and sweet and shy. Dreamed about Edie and Barbara and all of them before your letter came. Was so busy talking to them I overslet.

That's where all the money is--in those slot machines up there !
I wondered ! Lemme at 'em !

There are kids beginning to appear n every doorway will have to quit
Enjoyed Mrs. Piggie-Wiggle except I thought and found Michael thought
too that it was too moral in tone.
My my how many changes you have up there. Will have a lot to check
up on when I come up next summer won't I?

Have a couple pages here I wrote in a black moment. Better delete
them and just give you the gist of it--won't do anybody and good.
Don't know what in the world Edward is going to do about the dentist
thing. Reely feel that he's old enough to start getting himself out
of some of these scrapes--he's the one that gets into 'em. Henry an
Harry and Clyde and I have taken pretty good care of him for years
now and I'm getting damn fed up with suffering for his rashnesses.
or whatever it is. So was Miss Gashweiler. That's why she sued him
for that little bill in SF.

I'm tired of things like living like I did around Xmas ^{slack}--yet being
presented with a highly impractical, pearl gray \$30/suit--then being
sued for a dentist bill that was due then. And being elaborately
wined and dined on my birthday and cashing in a bond for groceries
the next week (really !). Maybe some women like things like that--
and a little bit's all right--but if Edward ever thought about other
people he's know I didn't....not year after year after year.
aI thought I'd picked a "winner" financially, but I know now I didn'.
A "winner" isn't always broke and borrowing and racing through
every cent he's ever had and insurance policies and bonds and other
people's money the way Edward has ever since I've known him. And I'm
getting too old to keep thinking people will suddenly change and be
different after ten years. I urged him to join the musician's
union because I thought that'd be some protection for a person like
him, but he's chosen to quit it.

yet we'll all go on taking care of him--one has to once it's started.
And people like him only crack up and cause more trouble when left
to shift for themselves...and tho he's no financial wizard he thinks
he is (and never realizes he brings a lot of this stuff on himself
and he's as nice as any other guy to be poor with, I suppose etc.
etc.

Evidently I shouldn't go on like this because it's getting very dif
ficult to write.

Have thought lately that every time a woman has a child she alienates
herself more from the world of men and their ways and finally gets
to ~~xx~~ viewing men as one views a giraffe at the zoo. How do you feel
when you see a giraffe? Well that's the way I feel about men !

Am going to suffer for those unkind words, I see, for as I wrote them
the kids worked over a box of SODA crackers on the floor I vacuumed
this morning. GOODBYE !

Mrs. Piggie-Wiggle

over

Dreamed up a wonderful idea for Edward but guess no one can get excited about some one else's ideas - he didn't take to it anyway

Thought with the great hne + cry for Children's ^{RADIO} programs + Edward knowing Betty Mac Donald + "Mrs. Piggie-Wiggle" just out + Edward with so much unused Children's music + us living here so close to the source of programs of Betty so much at the peak of her fame that it should all be combined into the new Radio program for children "Mrs. Piggie-Wiggle" - written by Betty MacD. music + adaptation by Edward C.

But no - Edward didn't
"feel" Mrs. Piggie-Wiggle,

Yakima
June 1 - 1949
Sunday, June oneth

1947 DC
Dear Harrassed One;

Your letter gave me quite a jolt...in more ways than one... I almost believed the first paragraph...mostly because I'd like to no doubt. No matter what else life does to you I hope it'll never rob you completly of your sense of humor...maybe a bit grim at time, but still "humor." Your Granpa Eaton gave you that, I betcha...he always kept his in spite of life and "aina, and both, you'll admit, are formidable.

I'm glad I didn't know little old Dennis was sick or I would have been scared, too. He's one of my favorite babies, I hope he knows, and I'm relieved that he's better. Life will have many scares like that in store for you as long as you havd youngsters, so you might as well gird your loins for it. Cheerful, aren't I?

Anyhow, that testicle business you must attend to. Its easily remedied so they tell me, but should be done for his future welfare. Jay's youngest has, or had the same thing...I heard "die telling Eve about it, but didn't listen very sharply...now I wish I had, because she said what Dr. Rotten did for it, and now he's all right. Will have to check on that.

My first instinct after reading your letters is, of course, to fly to your assistance, but I don't know what good that would do, do you? Or anything else for that matter. Pop could take care of the dentist thing for you, he says, but it would only be postponing the eveil day, wouldn't it? That is, if those things come too easily they happen again, don't they? But as we told you, we'll help if and how we can, so don't hesitate to ask.

Wish you kids had stayed in SF...you were certainly as well or better off there...but its a little late for that, isn't it? I did think that warmer climate would eliminate colds and asthma etc., but if it doesn't...why?

The package I am mailing I did NOT rush out and assemble after your letter...I had it ready. Thot maybe you could use another dress like that one if you liked it...after all one does have to wash them now and then...and Lou practically gave me the blouses for you, so....I don't know how Miss Judy is fixed for clothes, but imagine Tiny can use them, Has Julie grown up to a 3 already? JoAnn is wearing a 4.

You should know, who better, that Tiny's fixing is merely an outlet for her frustrations. And she'd rather do that than take care of kids, tho I will say she tries...she just isn't the type. Sis, I think, strikes the happy medium between the two of you...she isn't an especially good housekeeper nor a baby sitter, but does both moderately well. She is a much better disciplinarian than Tiny, and gets a much bigger kick out of JoAnn and her doings than one would suppose, I know, from her calm exterior. She just hides her feelings and emotions in the old Eaton manner. Bud does, too...do you?

Henry should see the wild dress ant talked me into buying...I'll have to take a picture and send you. It has dancing ladies thiiiiis big, but strange to say everyone likes it...big full sleeves and draped skirt...doesn't it sound wild? Even Jidn remarked about it last night when I wore it to Higs, so it must be a startling change at least.

Am anxious to know the outcome of the bank party...can just see Robert playing the host!

Wish you didn't have to trade in the pan, but its ok by me. Do you know that one can get so used to NOT buying things for oneself that even when one can and does you never get over a feeling of guilt about it? That's me. For so many years I didn't, and now I do, but I generally have to turn around and buy something for somebody to ease my conscience...queer, isn't it?

Your Mrs. PW idea sounds good, but you should know by now that your ideas aren't marketable! Some day, maybe Edward will realize that he should

have listened to them and made them so, but you can't tell men anything, especially when they are young. Just let him dither along just the mere fact of having a family to support will keep him going. Or should. Pop admits now that had he not had a big and growing family he probably wouldn't have made much of a living...some men just need that incentive.

Maybe you should come up THIS summer?

I wish I could live long enough to know you when all this "sound and fury" are past and you are a nice middle aged mama with time (and money I hope) on your hands, and then we could really sit and visit. Life just isn't run right...I think we should have out old age first and gradually get younger...certainly we would appreciate youth more then...ho hum.

~~xxx~~ Just talked to Sis and she said Liz came out and spent the ~~afternoon~~ evening with them last night because she was mad at Phil. He certainly reminds me of Slim in his younger days...sorta like Ed, too...happy go lucky and irresponsible. Know that Liz gets awfully irked at him...don't we all?

If I should enclose a little something in this would you keep it to yourself and use it as an emergency? Or are groceries emergencies?

Well, be glad you have a talent and one you should be able to make a penny or two with now and then...other women do, even with families, as I was always told...you know how you read where they sit up nights after the kids are in bed and write or draw etc.? Do we just lack the guts or what? Certainly you could do something as good as Mrs. Piggie Wiggle...that sounds like ant I know. I get a little bored with her raving about how you have allowed yourself to be sunk in domesticity.....

No, you hadn't written about Hazel...she really was one of my favorite people...there's a gal that certainly took a lot and kept sweet withal...but I will say for Slim that he last few years he has been wonderful to her and they seemed to find a congeniality they never had in their younger days...one does sometimes, you know.

The Dr. told Paula she might have a chance to get preg the first week of July...and that's the week she takes off for home! She thinks it's a good joke, but Bud doesn't. Why he wants a child now I wouldn't know; they don't make enough to keep themselves...have no home and he isn't satisfied with his job or his salary....I guess that's how Nature puts over these things...one just doesn't know till they've tried it.

JoAnn got thru her tonsilectomy fine...seemed to bother her ears more than anything. She was in the children's hospital all day, and it just made me sick to see all the little sick kids...some of them really bad. One little girl that made me think of Julie, in an oxygen tent for a week in a coma and they hadn't been able to find out what was wrong with her. Another 3 year old with a ruptured appendix, and of course a dozen or more with polio and its aftermath...

Well, I wonder if I can think of something cheerful to say before I close. Emery is making JoAnn a cute youth bed...he does swell work once he gets started at anything. Pop is planting moss in the patio this morning.... I painted it...tile red...and nearly wrecked myself doing it. Its much cooler after our really hot spell...heard on the radio yesterday it was raining in Hollywood. They certainly mowed them down this week end in the planes, didn't they?

Well, enuf of this. Must go up to Sis and get the vac...tomorrow is my day to use it. Having good luck with yours? It isn't much different from the new Royals I've seen. Much love to you all and more anon,

me

Monday

June 24-1947

Dear Momma-Poppa,
In the first place, thanks--in more ways than one; for not lecturing--for doing it and being so nice about it and all. Borrowing gives one a nasty feeling no matter what the circumstances. Be assured that it was the darn hot water tank that threw us--could have made it otherwise I think.

Don't know yet how we'll arrange the payments as I haven't talked to Edward, but will let you know. We'll write it right into the budget just as if you were an old bank--how do you like that?

Edward's borrowing on his life insurance was nothing WE did--that was done before my time with him and has never been paid off.

We didn't call on you when we were attached because I really felt that--hard as it was on both of us--it was high time to learn to take the consequences of our actions and learn to take care of ourselves--if you know what I mean.....

Don't worry about giving us bad advice. We probably would have done the same thing anyway--not having the slightest idea what to do and no money.

You say something about borrowing at the bank at 6%. You didn't have to borrow for US, did you?

I'd like one of those articles of Bud's. I think that's pretty fine, myself. I thought he was just kidding about that sports writing stuff. Couldn't imagine an Eaton being so athletic, I guess. Bet mom gets a thrill out of having one child a "newspaperman"--she always wanted one of us to. Good for him!

There's something about you guys expecting us to ask for a loan that I don't like and I can't quite put my finger on it. However I guess we deserve it.

Yes, I do remember when we owed the Belliveau's money and I knew why we weren't friendly with them, too, so ha! ha! I was a smart child, you know.

Mae Stone. My my.

That's a good deal for Miana, but things like that don't just happen to people like that d'ya think? Can't you just hear her saying, laughingly, "Well, when you go don't forget that I'd just LOVE to stay in your apartment."

My, Edward and I were sitting here yesterday thinking how lovely a boat trip on Puget Sound would seem about now--you lucky people! When you've been in this place a while Puget Sound sounds like lemonade on a hot day. I'm not crabbing--it just seems that way.

What does one get 8 year olds? I could have given you a list yeaahhh long----

MY, ~~///~~ isn't your family full of news this month? Bud's by-line; Roddy's ~~measles~~; the Chambreaus law-suit; Sissy's baby; Paula's trip etc. etc. !
I'm very thrilled about Madeline, though I shall wowwy, wuwwy, wuwwy about her. I hope to be kept posted. Tell her for god's sakes to keep that stork chained in the back yard, too ! She would be so quiet about it, wouldn't she? And tell me, is a small Em called an "n"? I immediately got out two boxes and struggled to decide which old baby clothes should go to the good will and which to Sis. Most ended in the Good will as, somehow, I've given them pretty good use lately. The things that were left were mostly the pretties and impracticals that didn't get used very much. And if I didn't use them why should she want them? However the only way to decide such a thing is to send them and do as you like. A good many of them are sentimental things. Y&know--Tiny made some, Henry made some etc.

Yes, Life's article gave me quite a lift. But, of course, I notice the men didn't read it ! At least not Edward. He doesn't care to have it pointed out that I'm saving him \$10,000 a year etc ! Glad to have it proved statistiacly that these so-busy years will calm down eventually. Got a kick out of lots of thin s they said like that gal that said girls should study in college to the sound of babies crying, etc. !

Where do you get that family of four stuff? Every time I count noses I get five ! humph !

Tell me about the "stinky horrible" apartment the Eatons have. Am curious.

Back to your other letter, Ruth--Expect Henry back next week end --and Harry. We're all sure waiting for that car ! Pop, I really thought about Fathers' Day, but, as usual didn't get anything done about it.-- I've already thought of making bookcases out of that dumb "fire" place, but want to wait till the kids get big enough to stay out of things.

Oh yes, the other gr at news is that Dennis has been walking for about a week. Started before he was eleven months old. Any runners up for that record? (in the family) Cute. He just like a little red rooster ! He weighs 25 3/4 pounds (julie weighs 27) Seems so funny to have them both putting around ! He points at everything now with a fat forefinger and says--(very clearly) uzzat-un? which I'm sure means "what's that one?"

Michael is a very happy child since shool's out. The first day he got a crew of kids together on his own hook and had them clean all the weeds out of the back yard--did a good job, too ! Sometimes think school's too much discipline for kids when I see how much more relaxed they are out. He had a perfect report card. Literally. What does one do now? All A's and all the highest mark in that list of things about their behavior that they put on cards these days. Also he whiped out a piece of music Sunday-left-hand chords and all--that's really pretty. He wants Edward to give him lessons.

What were all those things I was going to write about? We went up to Harknesses last Sunday. Maxine sure keeps the place up a lot better than Henry does--it looked swell--and she gave us good food, too. Then I actually bundled up the kids and went up for a couple hours the other afternoon. Can see that Dennis walking is going to free me somewhat.

Have a lot of jottings here for a letter I never got written--also the beginning of a father's day poem that never got any farther. They all seem outdated now so won't send 'em. Things like--Poor Liz and asthma--GAWD! Your lamps sound good. Got an announcement from Howie and Jeanie. Still have the ten. (Thanks for the last.) Oh well here's some of 'em anyway--if you'll pay 5 cents for Tiny's letters- you oughta for mine. How's Tiny and her troubles?

Oh yes, would you be pleased to know that the neighbor girls and I are getting VERY chummy? Decided I just had to get outside myself. The most congenial one--because she has the two little boys--is moving though--always my luck!

Well, I'm very sleepy. Will be glad when life eases into something beside work and sleep.

I couldn't have written this letter if you hadn't relieved my worries, Clydie--I do appreciate it. If happiness has anything to do with a great sense of relief you've made us happy!

More anon--
much love,
Lorna



*I have launched another ship--
my last?*

Dear Folks

July 6 - 1947

I'll give you a break and copy this one off. Oh damn kids, anyway, I see Michael has been playing with this and ruined it & When you have kids that's ALL you have and no kidding!

As you see - I gave up.
Your "fun" box this a.m.
Michael & his friends are so
impressed at his "nice grandma"
as he calls you. He's even been
telling the neighbors how good you
are to him. Contributions not so hot
for a gal with a tooth. Thanks a
lot.

Feel low this morning —
~~Don't~~ please excuse. Just
a little combination of being alone &
foodless with 3 kids & the curse on a
scorching hot day & trying to suck
the juus out of this abcess like
he told me — mits —

Here with some junk I forgot
to put in the other letter —
wouldn't bother if it weren't
for those 5 well envelopes.

This isn't the way I wanted
to raise my kids — I ain't
snapping & snarling at
them in sheer desperation —
do any of us — huh?

Aw — Shut up — Lorna

I love those pictures.
They're not only good
but struck me in a
particularly homesick
mood. Glad to see
Bud's not fat.

Is that really Sis - or
the Duchess of Windsor?

What a trim little
figger you have Ruthie,
and isn't Clyde a
handsome man. Also

we think Jo Ann's a
little beauty in her
latest pictures - This
isn't bull - I actually
thought all those shots!

Didn't need to send
the negatives back.

Here with some of our
negatives - but do
send them back as
Maxine claims she
wants some.

Aren't Snapshots
a shock

(over)

especially when one
feels like this —



and looks like
this — !



the more I hear
young mothers hoping
for the time when their
kids are older &
old mothers enloving
the time when their
children were young
the more I think
it boils down to -
yesterday & tomorrow
are easy - but
today is always
hard.

July 1947

I have come far
enough along
the road now so
that my mis'takes
have borne fruit
& I can join the
rest of you now
in saying
"I wish I could do
it over."

Why is it - canst
told my why?
On this chance you
can rely.

On the days your
house is clean
Not a visitor is seen?
The day you scorn
Such futile labor -
On that day will
come a neighbor.

Violence has entered our morning! Talk about the war! All they're doing is "removing noxious weeds" in the vacant lot next door. There's a thunderous tractor + harrow (or something) (any way it's harrowing!) + crew of 4 men (2 negroes) + they've set the whole lot on fire. Both my babies are screaming with fright at the noise, the fire, the dust + smoke + the negroes. They did warn me to take down the huge ~~stool~~ wet washing I had out. Thank god I hadn't vacuumed + dusted or I almost did!

All the neighborhood kids are perched on our fence having a wonderful show.

Makes one marvel
at the overpowering
destructive urge
in the male! Boy-
when the boys set
out to destroy they
really do it! Dennis
& Mike are enjoying
it ^{thugely} ~~now~~ while Julie
& I gail in our
corner & think
how we're going to
miss those pretty
green weeds with
the birds flowers &
butterflies & how
we now have to
look out on
desolation & clean
dust forevermore.
But the boys have
again proved their
power over the
elements —
Hurrah! for their
side!

Just another
little "Cuthie now"

② Wonder if Judy's
"flea-bites" are alive?
Notice in my allergy
reading that kids
with a great deal
of intestinal upsets
are usually allergic
to some food. After
all they're Clyde's
grand children, too,
aren't they? Didn't
Ting used to have
hives?

Do you mind if I
save some of these
letters of yours for
years + years + years?
And give 'em to Julie
when she's going through
the same old story?
Wonder if I'll ^{be wise} ~~have~~
~~sense~~ enough to let
peace pervade my

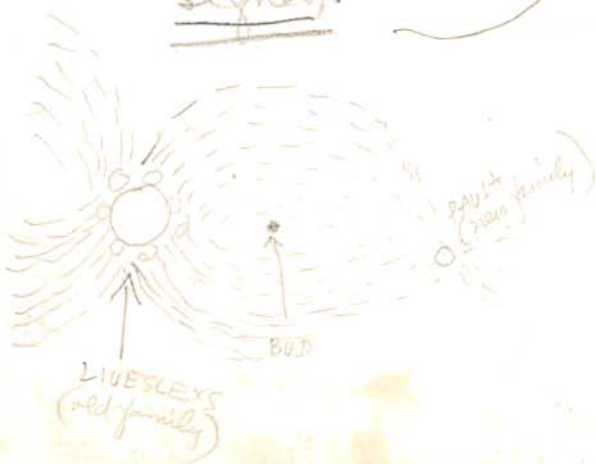
later years like
my mother or if
I'll be one of these
meddlesome, reforming
"advising" grandmas
like most of them
Seem to be?

Don't know whether
your enclosure was
something of my own
or something copied.
Think the notation on
the side is the source.
(Flatter myself, don't I?)
That' diet list isn't
practicality - Everybody
does that I notice - I
jot's down unrelated
things on any available
piece of paper -
However - it all
shows what I think too
Edward says I never
do.

After I got through
 With my washing to day
 I flopped in the sand
 And thought—as I lay—



"Why—that looks kind of
 pretty—
 Those towels in the breeze
This is my art work now—
 Just things like these."
 So I lay thinking
 Thoughts of the kind—
 When I looked again—
 Saw my art-work was
Signed!



(947 DE)

July 6 - 1948
Monday the 6th.

Dear Folks -

I'm sorry you have to have letters like this - but the kids broke my pen and they won't leave me alone when I type. So it's this or nothing. If I wait till night I'm too weary. In fact - they were both busy till I sat down to do this & here they are - damn 'em!

So you'll probably never hear the scads of things I've been going to write - but I'll try. (Now Michael's decided to write and interrupts every two minutes to spell a word!)

The Harknesses came back from their trip a week ago Friday bringing Cora lie (a cousin) with them. Guess that was a wonderful thing - that trip. How that company can afford a thing like that ?? (while so many people go without essentials!) They went back on the train in separate bedrooms. They stayed in cabins that were stocked with smoked turkeys, cheeses, etc and liquor just for snacks. And every night there were banquets with table favors like silver dollars, cigarette lighters, etc. When they left the ladies were each presented with a portable Philco radio apiece! (And Robert had just

<sup>& the
loving</sup> bought one!) They sent them pictures of themselves
in which they both look very swanky & well-
dressed. Guess the liquor flowed freely.
Harry ~~got~~ "bought" a 2-week leave
of absence ^{from the priest} from his pledge for the trip!
On the way back they stopped to visit
Henry's relatives in North Dakota.

However, our fond hopes of having
a car around for the summer are dashed as
Harry is leaving tomorrow I guess. Gee, you
people that drive even to the bathroom have
no idea what a magical convenience a car
is!

Well, we all had plenty of trouble to
greet 'em with, the biggest of which is that
Maxine has to have 2 more operations at
\$500 a piece + hospitalization and spend the
summer in bed. Seems she's known this
was coming up for 6 months but hadn't
told Henry, thinking — as kids do — that
she was "sparing" her. The result is that
Henry & Harry are knocked for a loop, thinking
their troubles were over in that quarter.
This hasn't anything to do with TB — she
really is over that. It's just a repair job —
(~~a major operation~~) tho' not a very pretty one —
to clean up the mistakes they made in the
Sanatorium. It's the bunk — but ~~tho'~~ it
doesn't warrant the stew Henry & H. are making

2 over it. Maxine, herself, is very resigned about it in spite of the fact that she and Doug have just announced their tentative engagement. (That's the way they do down here.)

So the Harkies are shipping Coralie back to her mother & woeefully settling down to another siege. I hate to see it, too, because it deprives me of both company and help just when things were beginning to perk up. The neighbors I was getting chummy with is moving away, too. Ho-hum!

Well - will get the troubles over with first. That so-nice check of Clyde's practically slapped us in the face. Being a personal one - they would only honor 100 of it until ok'd. which was a blow - because - as you know - we needed it. It's all right now - tho - so will be figuring out the payment & sending him that.

However - to tide us over until the check was ok'd I spent the \$10 on groceries for the week-end. And what happened? I fought off kids on a hot after noon & baked a couple of pies & asked Coralie, Bob & Maxine to dinner (thinking to relieve Henry - fresh back from her trip). Edward never showed up

till ten o'clock that night. He'd gone off
on a binge ^{of all the bars} by himself because he felt so sorry
for himself. (That was a blow because
he's never done that & has always agreed
it was foolish.) And Henry was mad
because she'd already gotten dinner for the
kids — Ho-hum!

They say it's not fair to kick a guy
when he's down but seems nobody really plays
that way. Edward gave the credit association
a reference where he still ~~worked~~ the dope
(he forgot!) so they're on his neck now;
everyone seems to have dreamed up some
bill to hound us with & now, today, my
face is swollen clear out to here with
a tooth that doesn't even show a cavity!
First time that ever happened to me.
Guess the cavity's in the side as it's been
killing me for a week. Spose it'll have
to come out — a front one, too — damn it.
The price of poverty! I can't get anybody
to stay with the kids is the main
trouble & then that 3-day holiday. Henry
knew I had a tooth-ache but she
didn't make any offers. She & Harry both
act very queer — Edward's noticed it, too.

③ How some ver — I'm going to the dentist this afternoon & our finances are straightening out — so!

Michael still has arth ma. He's just had a lovely seige for the 4th — he always gets on one any exciting occasions. He has taken to writing music again now that school's out — but oh boy! you sure have to handle these artists with kid gloves — don't cha?

Well — a pause while I get lunch — then I'll try to end up with a brighter picture —

Love that poem! Am flattered you send me things from your collection. Add them to mine & I will probably pass them on to Julie! Is it meant as a hint for me? Personally — (not considering myself) — it epitomizes Henry's mistake to me.

The car — the holiday and all has brought a change and a relief of monotony. Henry had us up there for a couple of delightfully haphazard Henry picnics — one the Sunday after they got back & ~~therefore~~ the 4th.

The first one all four kids piled into the car & drove to the beach & it was nice to get out — even with kids. The second one she promised us roast beef & my Linsley

tongue was hanging out but how my face fell when I saw the overdone - stringy brown portion we were doled out on a piece of bread! Michael had some fireworks (his first & was he excited!) and the babies stayed up later than ever to see them.

One of Chamberlain's old WPA old maids blew in from China & we had a nice evening call on her in a friend's lovely house - also went to see Ken Murray's Blackouts with them. We all met at the theater door (which is a dumb way to go a-theatering) I had to wait 1/2 an hour alone; the other parties showed up slightly tight; Edward appeared at the crucial moment looking like a Hollywood no-good & bearing a cake in a huge tin box in a shopping bag some other old maid had presented him on the way out. We sat on the cake all through the show (which amounted to a better-than-average vaudeville, I thought).

Then we were whisked home without a drink or even a cup of coffee.

Yesterday (Sunday) Edward & the Harkness kids took my kids to some park while I took my Summer "vacation". An afternoon home alone! Joy! But I was so tired & exhausted from my tooth & other things that I spent all the time sleeping!

④ Well - must sew this up.
Haven't seen any packages yet.
If I don't get any more written on
this - love + goodbye for now -
Lorna

I've decided having a tooth pulled is
like having a baby - by the time it's
ready to come out you don't care!

Back from the dentist now and
I'm draining + look much better -
thank (awd.) Guess it's badly abscessed
+ had to come out - sure tastes awful.

This is the most suspicious damn
town I've ever been in - Can't say I
blame them - with the fakes + conny people
it abounds in. No one will trust you for
2 cents + nobody thinks of honoring a
personal check - not even if you're dressed
up. Had to pay \$5 to get away from
this dentist - (maybe his head.)

Well - I go to bed to die for awhile
and see what new kicks in the pants
tomorrow will bring -

Love -

Lorna

(Did I ever send you those last negatives?
Max + the kids + I on the porch etc.?)

July 27-1947

Dear Ruth —

"Peopled and warm is the valley — lonely and chill the heights" — How many times I've headed you just to that and I always think of it when I get a letter from you. Your letters have a cool, impersonal understanding as if you stood high on a windy peak watching — like Buddha — our hot, torrid struggle in the valley. I can see that my anguished cry down there sounds no louder nor more wailing than any other. And I envy you. Being somewhat of the same temperament I expect to climb up there myself some day. Stick around.

They truly call it middle age; I don't feel Maxine's ardor any more than I feel your "ennui." I find that the most solace is in my contemporaries like Cora — whose cry is as anguished as mine. Also — it has occurred to me that I really haven't any troubles that time couldn't head. But I find time completely out of my jurisdiction somehow —

Another thing I stand in awe of (beside Time) is "art" — or what have you. ~~They say it's~~ Michael is just getting over another "spell". They are beginning to assume a pattern; tension; cough; wheeze & agonizing; quiet and a deep sleep. Then he always goes to the piano and writes a new piece. It baffles me to see that child perched at a piano with pencil and paper wresting something out of it; to sit there and out of somewhere start to play a really pretty melody and then fit it with ~~the~~ proper chords for two hands — all without

"book-larnin'". I'm not saying he's anything special - I'm merely saying that's what he DOES. Strange.

Dennis is awfully cute - now - being a one-year old - how could he help it? He has always been our "non-cuddler" and now suddenly he runs to everyone. He ran up to a strange lady in the market and wrapped his arms around her legs. Henry is loving it and, of course, takes it all quite personally. She has always been a little hurt 'cause Jodie wouldn't warm up to her. Hope she won't ruin Dennis. As you know - when Henry sets out to devote himself to a child - there's no such utter devotion in the world ~~except~~ except - perhaps - in the Catholic Church!

I loved Bud's other article. Really! Not kidding. The kids got the old sense of humor - not?

Don't advise me what to do about Edwards' drinking - one doesn't have much to say about it - I find. One can't remake an adult. Besides he doesn't have much chance to err these days. Maybe that's the best solution, huh? After all 1 and 1 make 2 don't they?

(Reason I let the tooth go so long... it was a hidden cavity & didn't show a thing.)

I had one hell of a time with that tooth before I got through. Didn't know a tooth could do that to you. The dentist drilled a hole in it and told me to suck on it for a few days. I had a face like a balloon and was incapacitated for a whole week. Anyway I guess I swallowed the stuff or something because I swear I was sicker one day than I can ever remember being. I got violently nauseated when I so much as sat up and absolutely all I could do was wave a feeble hand and ~~weep~~ at the kids. Finally had Michael call Henry and she & Max came and took over while I slowly recuperated. Stumbled to the dentist in the afternoon and had it out and have been swell ever since.

Forgot to tell you last time we were at Henry's. Julie locked herself in the bath room. Didn't bother her any despite the excitement. She finally put the key in the lock and walked out as per instructions - all very calm.

Went up to Henry's yesterday for a picnic on the yard. Wonderful relaxation to sit coolly under the trees and have some one else get the food and mind the kids. Saturday was a beller - 102° and what that does to kids (& grown-ups) I'm sure I don't have to tell you! It's really just right to day, thank heaven.

Who went?

Are you and Sis and Tim all going to be one place at one time? It's hard to keep track at a distance. Thought you were still on your boat trip and here you are back already. Really mean to send each

Sis and Tim boxes of clothes and meant to write 'em too. Betcha I don't get the letters written but will send the stuff one of these Saturdays - (my only day out now.) Tim's letter sounds calm for her.

Imagine them flying up! I simply can't! Don't know as I could do it if I had the chance.

Well - dam! My quiet evening I was going to use to finish this is being all used up disciplining Michael while father reads a murder mystery in bed!

I never ceased to be embarrassed about Edward and finances. I've told him and told him to send that thing back to Clyde and as usual he procrastinates and procrastinates. I'll send it myself one of these days I guess.

Maxine was taken to other doctors by Henry and now they're going to play along for another couple of months. Don't know what's going on - really. She must be in love - she's so moody lately.

Would love some raspberry jam, jelly etc.

Paula's not really jealous of Bud - (Please see scientific diagram of magnetic fields set up by families.) It's pretty hard to start a new family too close to the influence of an old one - I KNOW!

Michael's birth day was a huge success I guess. Any way it produced wheelies for 3 days before and we still have them. The Harknesses baked him a glamor cake - letting him dictate exactly what he wanted - after their fashion. Edward bought him a "steam" shovel he wanted and a light for his train. The Harknesses came down and stayed for dinner and he had a couple kids in for ice-cream. I must say he certainly appreciates and plays with everything he gets.

I'm sorry you think I'm soft-soaping you about your boxes. You've forgotten how it is to be poor and not have even essentials. Then to have someone send you a copious supply of just what you need when you need it, in the right sizes, and more glamorous ones than you would have bought give you a feeling that is quite beyond my meager vocabulary I'll admit.

So please pardon me if I say again:

Mike's suit is exactly what I said he needed down here and doesn't have nor had any prospects of getting. He seemed very pleased with the holster - guess one needs a 2-gun one these days - I wouldn't know. And those books he just pores over - he loves that stuff. Did Clyde read 'em before you sent them?

We all thought the corobay was cute - never saw one before. The pants & shirts as I say are very badly needed - awful cute and I think you're ultra smart to realize he'd take the large size. The bit is wonderful! I've been struggling along with some nasty little homemade numbers, kidding myself every day I'd make some new ones and never do.

The shoes I'm going to send back — So ha! ha!
They're right in length but not wide enough.
"little" brother ain't little.

Maxine got Julie something too. And Henry
and I didn't approve. But after I saw how upset
she was I realized she'd have to have something
until she's old enough to understand. I weren't
you smart to send the "baby"-suit. She wept cause
she couldn't wear it. Hope I can take her someplace
so she can. The neighbors don't approve of them
running in the hose — say they'll get polio-
did we?

We'll have to work out some way about
these close birth days — had 'em both on Mike's & that
didn't work. Had one hell of a morning straightening
out difficulties. Mike appeared fully-clothed in
the living room at 6 a.m.; at 7:30 all the kids in
the neighborhood were here; and at 8 I was
mending broken toys!

The shoes are in the nick of time as my others just
collapsed — don't seem too bad. The slip I'll keep — being
stingy. The shoulder covers needed in this dusty clime —
etc — And I do love my envelopes —

So I think I'll stick this dull thing in one
and get to bed as I can see I'm
going to get very little sleep tonight —
we're always out of Benadryl —

lotsa love —
Lorna

Wednesday
Aug 6-1947

Dear Everyone but me,

There are definitely times when I could kick myself for letting myself be moved so far away. Wouldn't you just love to have me and my three underfoot now, too? Well, I would. You see I'm under illusions that this letter will get there when The Jakes and all are there. Figuring out such things is one of my blank spots however and I'm probably addressing myself to thin air.

Golly, though, do you suppose it would really happen that I could get up next summer? I won't let myself think about it because my anticipator's getting pretty sore from rebuffs.

Well, wherever you all are I envy you. I'd like to be enduring the hot weather on Ruth's patio instead of on queer Henry's lawn. For it has been HOT. As a former dweller on oceans....well...uh...anyway I find I enjoy anything up to ninety degrees, but ten days hovering around a hundred PLUS three kids PLUS no yard PLUS no ---well---I'll be awfully glad when we have these bricks laid that Henry gave us so we can sit in back in the shade!

We finally have a beautiful new screen door--with a g

grille, not "grill", mind you, but Grille. My, it's wonderful to get something you've been wanting so long and so badly. Now the kids have more fun banging it and holding it open for the flies. Also this country will undoubtedly soon be inherited by the ant family. We are now sharing all our food with astronomical numbers of them--not daring to use any poison around my dear chilluns--and the big red ones won't let us sit in our sand in back--they bite us! The Valley, despite the charming wish-thinking of the Harknesses, is usually several degrees hotter than Los Angeles proper. Out here it's just like a tinder box--the fire engines are hooting and hollering around all the time. There seems to be a perpetual grass fire on the hills--glad I gave up smoking!

Sometimes on week ends when Edward's home we flee up to Henry's where the grass and trees either make it cooler or make it seem so a dn she "forces" us to eat, so it's always a nice relief. Last week end Maxine's boy friend took us up and back,--nice. Last week end Edward and Robert rented an enormous truck and we used that--also to convey the bricks and a large order of food.

Maxine got shipped off to Portland, Seattle and way points much against her will. The reason? I don't know. She is supposed to be gone a month. I suspect Henry's trying to break up this romance--she was so set on Max's going and there seems to be no other reason. So she's up there now. I'd suggest that you wandering people connect except I can't see any reason why you should--the ages are so different and Maxine's so shy. She'd be interested in a dashing date, I know, but can't think of any, can you? She'll be at C.M. Wescott's at Kirkland anyway if anyone wants to get some first hand dope on us.

She expects to be gone a month and I miss her already. She's my best chum and most willing and wonderful nursemaid.

Max and Michael and I went to a broadcast of a dumb kids' program at CBS while Henry stayed with the wee wuns. It was very interesting. They certainly have an ultra ultra swank place here--natch. Henry had Michael convinced he would be on the program and win all the prizes, but they had their kiddies lined up from days back--also natch. and Thank God.

Henry and Max also prevailed upon me to go see "The sea of grass" with them one night. I enjoyed it--didn't know they got so "deep" in movies these days, and so did Max--tho double features are much too long for one unaccustomed as I am--- Henry didn't care for it--She thinks there never is an will be a picture as wonderful as "The Jolson Story". S

Robert (Harkness) is signed up for night "college" I guess this fall. He's going to take one of those vague courses that seem so wasteful to me---but, then--I don't know much about college. He also distresses his mother unutterably because he shows a strong penchant these days for drinking, smoking, poker and swimming parties. He's supposed to be getting a new car this fall, but haven't heard the latest--

Maxine and I went shopping for a wash dress for me one Saturday. We took all afternoon while Edward succumbed with the kids under Henry's trees. Was so exciting to actually buy a new dress that we didn't want to miss a single one. Then we ~~went~~ slipped into a bar and had ourselves a drink--shhh! Then we came home and got a glamor dinner and drinks ready and Henry and Ed and the kids came. Then we actually got Max and Henry tight and had fun.

I still slip over to my funny little neighbors' when the heat and kids get too unbearable. She has shade in her yard--and grass. B't we're not too thick nor are our kids. They're gonna move, anyway.

Well, that's all the "news" I know except the dentist pulled another tooth for me--a back one this time. "For every child a tooth," they say. Well, it's worked so far with me--naturally Dennis, being so big--would rate TWO!

So, hello, and goodbye. Didn't mean to go so long without writing, but simply cannot find an appropriate un-kidded moment.

Am anxious for news of every single one of you--want to know what each one looks like (is Sis preg yet?); what they say, do wear and smell like--see? Some one please oblige!

Lots of love.

Absentee member Chambreau

Aug 1947

Dear Ruth,

I wrote a general letter--as you do--but I have a few more things to say to just you--interested?

Like: I didn't realize the Doolittles were building a house--tho they talked about it. How big a one? We told her we'd let them experiment with that radiant heating or whatever they called it and if it worked, we'd try it on a house! What became of Doris? And Donald?

I don't like to have poor Jid so sick. When you don't mention that he has been I always hope that means he's all right. Is that something he'll just have to put up with now?

Enjoyed your cartoon immensely. Wish I'd done it. Thought my two-baby friend across the street would like it but she didn't seem to think it was funny. Herewith the same thing. Guess I thought--waved everyone into it!

Was thinking of Tiny yesterday as I washed and dressed the doll she made Julie. Still think it's the cutest and best made one I've ever seen.

It finally dawned on Edward how funny the Liz-Susan-Phil Boyd joke about "wuwvy, wuwvy, wuwvy" was, so he's written a "popular" song about it.--"Worry, worry, worry!" It's cute and he actually got as far as writing some of it down--but that's as far as it will ever go. If he ever should cash in on it you ask them if he has to pay them royalty!

Do you remember how many warts Michael had? They're suddenly disappearing at the rate of one or two a day--as warts have a way of doing. He's up visiting Henry tonight--grandma's do come in handy, so I'm using his putting to bed time to write this. I'm beginning to think I'll be almost glad when school starts--I'm a little tired of having carbon dioxide made in my kitchen every day.

Denny's a big husky of course. He puts around like nothing now--even he ights in going backwards, and even knows enough to stay out of the street. He's beginning to sorta talk--brings me things and says "heah, Nanna--so I'm at the beck and call of three of them now.

Julie, I see, is going to have a hard time with those two brothers and her liking for quiet pastimes. She must have gotten over her "negativism" because now she says "Yawss" to everything. Why do I bother to tell you what they say--I dunno--seems the easiest way of showing what stage they're in.

Well, have a husband batting around so will stop awhile---

Edward said some time when I wrote you to tell you he really enjoys your letters--he thinks you write very good ones and every once in a while remarks about some subtle twist you give something that he thinks is very good.

Also he likes the gray dress very much--as do I. WE think it's very smart--don't hink I'd spoil it with someof my corny embroidery. It exactly fits, too without any alterations! It's really light enough to wear out if the evening here--if one did. How nice to have some one just send you a new dress--now I have two--counting the one I bought (wash dress). Ed was staring and staring at me the other night and finally with a shout of glee told me the black lines on the dress that we all thought were just part of the design said, "Fun-Time-fun-time"!

Doesn't seem as if it would be ethical for Jim Bell to give you Benadryl, but it would come in handy. Seems we're always out when we need it and the drug store's so far away. Gee, Magnolia Avenue is sure building up lately, speaking of drug stores--may be one near us soon. However we seem to be in a strangely zoned district as all the new stores are dumb things like interior decorating, fishing supplies, chiropractors, etc. Nothing a bit practical that anybody could use. But then that's the way with the people down here--they'd evidently rather die than be practical. Which also reminds me--they have a plane flying around at night now with a neon ad written on the wings--can't they even leave the SKY alone?

Oh, meant to say and got sidetracked--herewith an old prescription you might give Jim if he needs one.

Also meant to say your timing on the stockings was right AGAIN--mine were all going to iec s at once. How DO you do it? Ed hankie is out of this world--haven't seen one like that for years--much too nice for him to polish his shoes with--as he does.

Tell Liz she's jut better skip the bookplates. I promised someone in SF some and never did get them done. Can't even get things like mending done--so---

We enjoyed the Herb Caen article very much--still a little loyal about SF. I guess, as it got us on the defensive--

I've tried to find out if the water we use in our yards is "irrigation" or "city" but everyone assures me it's all one. We have a sprinkler now and the kids have fun in their "baby" suits once in a while.

By the way--Edward laid the bricks Henry gave us last week end--andnow we have a place to set a couple chairs in the shade--sure helps. It's not very much, but we're getting there--slowly.

Much love to all—
Gordon

Thursday Oct. 3
1947

Polleeeee!

I do feel like a champ now sending this list when you've sent half the stuff on it for no apparent reason. What ARE we going to get for Xmas? Not that we deserve anything else!

The hicky P.O. here is so short-handed that when the ^{package} came the morning Penny & I went to the doctor's (I knew they would!) they wouldn't come back again & left me a notice I'd have to pick it up myself!

Do you think I could stay here & wait a few days till Robert could get it? Heck no! I bundled up all three kids (it's really like fall this week) and went up and the bus and brought it back. It would be a heavy one with thin string!

However - we had a jolly expedition - really. It was our first venture out with Penny without the taylor-tot & he was a good boy. They all were. Michael carried the package all the way home so I wasn't bothered anyway. We went in & got some ice cream & they were good there, too. Course - it was a rare day in which mama had actually gotten an after noon Snooze & wasn't in any hurry. I seldom have

Made me feel free!

trouble with the kids when I'm not tired!

I certainly couldn't have a better shopping service if I did it my self! I think that jacket & suit are wonderful - & so homa-ish (as you say.) I've been breeding a jacket for my black slacks - I always have to wear my coat. As for the linen suit I much prefer myself in black but I find around kids it almost has to be washable - so what could be better?

The fit - ha! I'll have to break down & admit that I'm fatter than usual - I haven't been able to get into my regular clothes since I left Henry's. And I have been seriously considering one week of diet - that's about all it would take! So this is just the impetus I need because the things fit perfectly - as far as size goes - but it's a dab of PLUMP here & there - if you know what I mean. So I'll keep them because I want them if it's all right with you - & take off that 3 pounds, Golly - what a lift it's have something new to wear!

The Sox & training pants were so badly needed it was pathetic —
their toes & fannies were on it —

As for the other stuff — you can see where they are on the list. Michael said this afternoon "Haven't you any good cookies?" And then, there they were. And he teased & teased me for some good candy — and, then — there it was! All morning I've been taking Julie's books away from Dennis & wishing he had one of his 'cuz he couldn't tear — & there it was! I swear it's uncanny. — as if you had television of our house in yours. Edward put his foot through a sheet ² to the night — just when I was gloating 'cause sheets were one thing I had enough of! I think I'll build a meal around the pepper-hack — looks awful neat & good. The pants you've been sending Dennis are fine for him — I like that "bunchy fanny" style — Julie's dress is cute — and needed — Is it because I need everything — I'm not giving you a line — As I told Edward I don't think you & Sis & Ting realize how we've been going

without — I mean our standard of living has definitely lowered compared to what yours is — and mine was. We actually appear in public in ragged clothes & with our toes out of our shoes once in a while!

Well — that's that and I do thank you — if you only knew how much — As Michael said — leaping around the room — "Isn't Ruth a WONDERful Grandma?"

Might as well send the list — since you send stuff anyway & might as well keep on hitting the nail on the head — tho I feel like a beggar —

Thanks —

Worder

Dear Mom -

Thursday Oct. 31
1949

Won't get the typewriter out as Julie is still awake and she'll pester me. Dennis finally went to sleep so maybe I can accomplish something even tho Mike's due in 15 min. Dennis is now climbing out of the crib & won't stay put for a nap - so - much troubles for me. Have ~~about~~ no more babies now - I guess.

Yours and Tim's letters inspire me - wish I could always answer them when they first come. Have written Tim & asked them down for Thanksgiving - will be with - but I yearn for some one of my own tribe - haven't heard from her yet -

As usual - Clyde gets only an apology about his birthday - I did think about him - have been a lot lately - since I've decided I might be one of these gals with a "father" complex - want all men to be like my papa - However - all I can say is - my quotation again - "You have to be poor to appreciate the luxury of giving". Wrote that before - remember? Some run it into the ground, huh?

According to handwriting analysis - Tim's handwriting is that of a placid, easy-going, lazy sort of person and mine of a nervous worrier - queer - ain't it?

Dennis cries.

Trine sent us 2 of those booklets — Michael did love them — & much to my surprise — so did Dennis & Julie — never dreamed of that!

Cute picture of Jean Vahlin. Thy, we girls sure look more like our mamas as we get older, don't we?

I did write you about the shoes & spread box — Can remember the thing I said — Such as: The green one is perfect for Michael's room, the white ones I'm not using yet as I just slaved over making some out of scraps. Dennis' shoes were just the right size even tho they seemed big to me, too.

Jo Ann's accident shook Ed & me to the core. Golly what a scare! He says he would have passed out. And Sissy so "delicate", too. Just when is her date — won't I ever see her preg?

No — I didn't get any Yakima pictures. Triny's social life sounds like fun — ~~imagine~~ lots better than mine for all my deserting her. Imagine having ^{time & money} to do any thing about the skirt issue. As the poem says I "skirt the issue" — A Bendix — my! my! My Apex is definitely busted but have to struggle along with it. I knew Triny would have Is she going back? More about Doris, please. ^{for Judy!} _{ha! ha!}

(2) - Oh - I really give up on Henry. What you say about over solicitude about the kids & then leaving them has struck me, too. But that's the way she acts lately - kinda coo-coo - Yes - she'll be back for Xmas.

I'll be glad - in a way - tho I'm sorry to have to admit I prefer her gone. But her kids are so dependent & have so few friends - as you know - that it means two more kids on my hands really - and, while I'm a lonesome kid - they don't quite furnish the kind of companionship I'd like - besides it's damned expensive feeding them all the time - oh well - there's good & bad in all things I find - will save my "hormalysis" for another time -

Got myself steeped in doctor & dentist appointments this week so have been "on the gad". Must say I like it - even for such horrible reasons. ~~Got~~ Didn't lose this tooth, thank heavens; have to have a lot done on poor Mike (am paying for my youthful foolishness now.); & got Dennis' shots finished. Now - for Xmas -

You people and your Xmas shopping
Apall me — if we can eke out some
home-made presents before New Years
hope you'll all take them in the spirit in
which they're meant —

Well — well — am sleepy now —
have nothing exciting to report —
our weather is definitely chilly around
the edges & we still have no heaters
(just one lil one) — but we can go to the
store in the afternoon without sweaters —
Can you?

Would like very much to see you
all — dammit.

Much love —

Lorna

The kids are all ready for Halloween. Michael
is going to a party in Super-Cowboy costume but
first he wants to dress Julie up & take her
& her jack-o-lantern out "trick-or-treating".
We have three jack-o-lanterns on our table.
Edward took Julie & Michael with him last
Sunday to "work". They were experimenting with
sound film — ah Hollywood!

Nov. 14
Monday 1947

Dear Neglected Ones —

This is wonderful! I really am very thrilled about this pen — seems I never have the time or energy to write all I want to say — (or at all, huh?) — but this way I can go to bed and dash off something — (if I don't fall asleep!)

Maxine has been taking over all my evenings — dam me. I am so exhausted at night that it does not please me to have to sit & chat till 11 every night

It was funny about the cookies, Ruth. I decided this morning they came to make some — then yours came & in the evening Maxine appeared with a batch she'd made!

Had to hear from you that the Jakes were coming — thought maybe I'd gotten the address wrong again — We really are looking forward to it — found I was very disappointed when I thought maybe they wouldn't come — Yes — Maxine says she can sleep two —

Poor ant — husbands, good or bad get to be kind of a habit — don't they?

I was taking Dennis for his last shot — smallpox. I should have said "pediatrician" & not scared you so — How — in — hell d'ya suppose I get to the doctor's etc?

By very unsatisfactory bus service. Edward is home on Mon. & Tues. mornings so I go then — or else Max helps me — she's really a swell help.

Have a great seige of taking Mike to the dentist — he needs \$8 worth of work done! — his teeth are bad — So, you see, you really won't get much for Xmas + I'm not kidding —

Yes — I must say Michael certainly has gotten his money's worth out of that train — he loves it.

Maxine had us up there for dinner yesterday — Sunday — she has been learning to cook in Henry's various absences & she really does a swell job.

It's cold — winter — even here. And we have but one heater even yet. — also have had 2 dust storms — nasty, dirty things! Haven't been away from my kids except on family business for over a month — the kids are all fine — seem to have better health this fall — maybe we needed that sunshine this summer —

Must write Ting + get to sleep —
lots of love — and thanks again
for the pen and cookies
& all — nice people —
Lorna

Dear Ruth —

Nov. 17-1947

Am so glad to get a letter from you today.
I needed it — I just won't like her "letter" —
it's extremely dumb —

Cookies, etc. are always welcome around here.
Just write us up on your income tax as "charity".

I won't bother about sending the stuff
about the train for Mike this time — as you've
already got his stuff — involves looking at stuff
and I won't get this done if I do.

Ymas really scares me. Edward is not
going to get any records made — I can see
that. But please hold the thought we meant
to —

Is Sissy's time so close? Oh dear — it
makes me sad somehow — guess I sorta
figured maybe she could be different +
wait till I got there — but I can't,
can one?

Yes — we heard from Felix + they seem
very excited — hope it will be fun for everyone —
it will for me —

Thanks for SUNSET magazine. Now
we all have to fix the yard! We're counting
on the winter rains to put in some grass
& stuff — (remember this time last year
at Hemet we were having floods!) but, no —
we are in for a 15-year dry cycle it
seems and nary a drop have we had.

In fact I really realize we're living on a desert now. I told you about our dust storms — 2 weeks of 'em! The air is so dry that everybody's skin is chapped & cracking — very good for asthmatics, too — as you can imagine. The humidity is something like 50% below-normal, Clyde!

Michael is being wonderful about his dental work. Put it off so long because he made such hellish scenes nobody could work on him. So I applied myself and all my child psychology study and all my powers and ingenuity and lo! and behold! he is their star patient. As life goes, he and the dentist get all the credit and mamma gets none!

Tell Bonnie hello for me — sorry she had to have an operation —

Sorry about Clyde, too. Thought he had that little business cleared up a few years ago. Aren't bodies marvellous?

Wish I could be there for your turkey — thanks giving is a job for mamas, I find.

No, you're quite wrong about my coming up next summer. The truth of the matter is I can hardly wait. In fact I'm a little afraid I shall find it hard to come back.

One grows older, you know, even daughters. And the fire burns ever lower even in headstrong romantics like your eldest.

Mapine, by wanting to see some old drawings, started me on a great housecleaning of my past — and after a week or so of wading through it — it is now all washed & ironed and stored away waiting for the next *déroulement* when one burns the whole business.

(I remember when you burned all your old stuff & I was horrified — I couldn't see how you could do it. But, believe it or not I do see it now — it really doesn't matter, does it?)

I expected to agonize & weep & regret around like I always have over it & it was quite a shock when I read my old love letters and they made me laugh — they sounded like Noris! — and it was

more of a shock when a great feeling of relief swept over me as I realized the romantic phase of my life was over — but over and I could adjust the soft, comfortable gray mantle of middle-age about my shoulders & quit striving over a lot of things that belong to youth and ~~not to me~~ ^{need} not bother me from now on.

I was really quite at peace for several weeks — a feeling I haven't had in years — long enough for me to know it was really true & not sentimentalizing — till circumstances made me realize that I can't relax yet for my eldest child, Edward, is still struggling through the morasses I have first been through and I have to go back and assist him — (subtly, of course.) Like all dependent people he has always resented his dependence on me and now that he senses that my support is being withdrawn he resents that. Ah — me! It's all a great problem and I do get deeply weary — sometimes.

Sometimes, too, I sense that Henry has simply gotten ^{out} from under on dealing with the problem of her now adult children because she just isn't up to it. It requires a certain amount of "cruelty" to ~~make~~ ^{help} kids grow up and I don't think she can do it. I'm quite sure she doesn't understand it at all —

Anyway — I seem to be responsible for her three, too — in a way — At least I have to do more or less mean things to them to preserve myself for my own brood. That's another thing about assuming "middle-age" — one has to admit one's endurance has a limit. Circumstances now are such that I have ^{almost} sole care of my three (Edward ~~contributes~~ is home to contribute about 6 hours a week of child "care") and at nine o'clock at night I am ready to call it A DAY — (as I've said so often) but no! With Henry gone her kids are lonesome, usually broke, & afraid to stay alone at night so they come down here & want to play ^{& eat} every night. And I've found I simply cannot take it. Maxine has

broken with her boy-friend & Robert with
his girl-friends & as you know, tho' se kids
havent any friends — so we receive the
full brunt of their very large social
demands. I admit I owe Henry a great
debt but I expected to pay it to her
later, personally, and not take over her
kids for her — not at this time — when
my own are at their most demanding.

Ah well — I got that off my chest.

Anyway — I am counting, counting,
counting on my trip home — I only
wish it were sooner. This has been
a very hard move — one I have never
seen sufficient reason for and the
strain, poverty, overwork, and resentment
are wreaking havoc with an already
badly-begun marriage.

So — get ready to dust off your
listener as you can see there will
be a great unburdening when I see you —
poor thing. (I do wish these damn Harknesses
would talk so you didn't have to create
scenes to put a point across!) 108

I have done nothing other than reported.
Merely work and grab as much sleep
as I can between rounds - really very
wearing. Have been warning Edward
& Max & Bob that I was reaching the
saturation point, ~~but being~~ not having
had an outing to myself away from
the kids in over a month, but they only
look at me queerly as if I were an
old crab and couldn't take it. So, this
week-end when I blew up at them all
they act so amazed & run scurrying for
cover & don't show their heads for days.

One thing about Henry - (and all mummies)
she would offer to take over for me if
I really asked - but, not her kids - they'll
help if it pleases them - but they'll never
assume full responsibility - (oh - here
I go again - it will be so good to see Ting
& some body other than a S - d - Harkness
for a change!)

The out come of Maxine's lovely
dinner party for us a week ago was
that they were broke all week & I had
to feed them the next night - But I

thought that was kind of cute - expected it -
used to do those things myself!

There's one drunk less in the world -
one on our block here got hit & killed
by a car while "under the influence" -

Must get at things again -

lots of love -

Lorna

Tuesday Dec 1947

Dear Ruth,

Well, the great Visit is over. And it was a nice one. I truly enjoyed it--even the confusion and interminable dishes and meals. It was a pleasant change from my months and months of lonely routine. I was really sorry to see them go and finally realized what you mean when you always say "I miss you before you're gone."

The kids got along fine. Roddy and Michael really enjoyed themselves and kept very busy. The few brushes they did have were due more to fatigue than anything and instead of fighting they'd separate and read for awhile. Why, they even "tussled" and enjoyed it!

Julie and Judy were very chummy while their mamas regretted they'd given them names so nearly alike. Poor Julie has never had a girl to play with down here and it amazed her that there were creatures in the world who were so gentle and congenial. She really seemed to blossom out. I always said those two boys kept her suppressed.

The timing was good. They arrived when they said they would--about 2 Thursday afternoon and we had dinner when I said we would--about six. And a darn good one. Maxine, as I've said is learning to cook, so I turned over a lot of side dishes to her and she was a big help. They also helped financially. Yes, we had a turkey. And DON'T send this one to Tiny but we starved for the week before and after to get it.

No one, including Ed, got very tight at any time, though we consumed a lot of liquor. What seemed good to me was when Tiny, Max and I collected the little kids and whisked off up to Harknesses for awhile without even an eye, yes, or no, or "may I?" or "will you drive me" to the menfolks! Such freedom!

The sleeping was a problem. I thought it would be smarter to leave arrangements more or less up in the air till I learned more about everybody's sleeping habits, but I see now I should have laid down the law in the beginning and saved a lot of bickering.

Yes, Judy IS cute--after you get used to her smallness. She has such starry eyes. I think Roddy looks more like Jake. Tiny had a nice, NEW look when she stepped out, and Jake was browbeaten into being very congenial. I don't consider Judy especially spoiled--perhaps badly handled sometimes--she seemed quite normal to me--so maybe mine are spoiled, too. Tiny's the spoiled one--wow! *than he did*

We went for a ride Friday and finally saw the famous tar pits and the xmas trees. They are pretty--really the prettiest xmas decor I've ever seen.

Tiny seemed to think it was awful for Jake to want to visit his relatives, but it didn't bother us nearly as much as she thought it did.

Anyway, all in all, I'm glad they came and I feel like a new woman. We needed such a thing to point out to us our troubles are mainly circumstances and not personalities.

My other news is that a stubborn breaking out on Dennis' face turned out to be impetigo ! Nuts ! And right after Tiny just got Judy cleared up--hope they didn't get it. Anyway everyone tried to tell me it wasn't so I didn't take him to the doctor's until today, and now it's gotten so bad I'm going to have a hell of a time--right before xmas, too.

I had one of my wild trips to the doctor's. Maxine defaulted on me without being able to tell me; walking those two little kids three or five blocks at each end of the street car ride; struggling with them during a longwait at the doctor's; trying to figure out how to buy a days' food, prescriptions and transportation with \$3; trying to keep Dennis corraled from the horrified people we met; and finally, struggling through the most unpleasant and painful treatment prescribed after we got home ! S'great life !

And yesterday I had to listen to Michael's super struggle with the dentist from which he came out scratched, but filled. He was so worn out from his week end that I guess the idea of coping with a novacaine shot for the first time in his life was too much for him. But he calmed down when he found out it didn't hurt.

Michael and I have changed desks--this is the first time I've tried to type with the new arrangement and it's very comfortable--aren't you glad ! I see he helped himself to a stamped envelope to write you with--hope there's one left for me ! I was glad only one of the ~~1/4~~ packages came while Tiny was here--you weren't supposed to get everything on that list--twerp ! Julie is enamored of Santa Claus this year and insists on opening the packages-----but I shan't.

And speaking of Christmas--it's much too early--as usual. We've had our xmas decorations up since before Thanksgiving and the big Santa Claus parade here was the night before Thanks. Ymas has become nothing but a merchandising stunt ! But in spite of it, I should like some holly if you can get it and send some. It is fun to have three kids to do for even if it's a struggle.

And I'm glad you understand that we will get their stuff first--even at the expense of the rest of you. No, I don't remember the lean xmas. All I remember is that sometimes the quantity was less than other times and therefore disappointing. Tiny says the same. So you see you had all your worrying for nothing.

I don't see how we can have our pictures taken with impetigo all over us ! And I couldn't find anybody to order your name labels in time--but we'll undoubtedly whip up something corny even if it's only an illustrated poem.

Maxine is devoting ~~herself~~ *herself* to getting a magic skin doll.

Items: Henry and Harry are starting back this week.

Yes, I saw the poem. and loved it.

Yes, the mood is over.

Sis doesn't look one bit preg, dam'er.

Isn't clyde A FINE FIGURE OF A MAN--ym !

our weather is eking out some rain.

My high school course in Journalism makes me appreciate the size and position of Bud's by-line.

Diaries?--mmmm---wait till I come up.

How can the Johnson's afford 65 guests?

"

love, Lorna

Monday

Dear Ruth,

Dec. 16, 1947

I know, I know. I've been meaning to write you all week. Have been struggling with impetigo treatments, Michael home with flu (mild) and a couple corny home made xmas presents instead.

This won't be much of a letter because I seem to be having a touch of our annual Christmas flu myself and don't feel too spry. Hope it makes the rounds and we're over with it before the day when we can open these many, many packages arriving from you spoiling people.

I feel very humiliated about xmas this year. That's one of the things I've learned in this, the hardest year of my life--how humiliating poverty can be. I know you and Henry etc. understand, having been through the mill yourselves, but I do feel sort of mean about the younger members of the family who don't know what three children can really do to the budget.

Anyway, we are getting each of the kids one biggish present and that is absolutely all we can manage. So sorry. The records Edward really was getting organized about aren't going so well. Seems the people aren't being very cooperative about them--so you may or may not get them. If I had more time I'd try to make some corny ideas I had, but it's too late now. We'll remember you all when we "come into that money, though...."

Henry and Harry are back. I don't think Harry looks so well, but no one seems to care. Henry seems more like her old self and we really had a fine time when we went up there for dinner yesterday. Then we went for a ride to see Hollywood Boulevard and let the kids see Santa Claus and it was good to get out. Maxine has taken over all the housework, cooking and gardening which rather baffles Henry, I think. Instead of realizing that Maxine is working off a strong frustrated homemaking instinct she thinks she's being ousted and treated like an old lady...Ah me...

Herewith some films of the Jacobsens' visit. Sen them on to Tiny if you like. We had a very nice letter from her--Edward thought we ought to keep it it was so nice.

Mike was very pleased with his dollar as you see. Hope you haven't started something!

That dish cloth you sent is really something. I like it. Did you try one? I've been looking for a kind of dishcloth that wouldn't get sour.

I don't blame Tiny for not wanting to spend xmas alone. Golly, that's one time I don't like it either. Will never forget how homesick I was in Honolulu that year.

I think the impetigo is licked. That penicillin ointment is wonderful stuff!

Yes, my pen works, tho I'll admit not as well as Edward's expensive one. Suits me fine, tho.

Yesm I always liked Burke and always thought he get somewhere. I haven't taken on any more weight than I had when you saw me last spring, but I was heavier than usual then--heavier than I used to be in SF.

You know how it is when you're "visiting". One sits around and eats. I've never lost the weight I put on during at stay at Henry's. She always forces you to eat so, too. However don't worry. I can't AFFORD to outgrow my clothes !

We got Sis' package and another one from you. Gues you like to know don't you? That's about the umteenth ! I'm as excited as he kids ! and still feel like a heel about that list. Will never do it again. Didn't know you'd take it so seriously.

Mike has already gotten a comic book, which makes him very popular in the neighborhood--to get them in the MAIL ! Are there two? They also send pictures for their rooms, you know, whixh they get a big kick out of.

Well, my family appears and I must about my duties--start thinking how much I'd like to be putting around with you in this the holiday season--but can't allow myself such thought--gettintoo old and maudlin.....

one doesn't get much xmas psirit in this "mild" climate--xmas is definitely a northern holiday----

well, lo tsof love and merry xmas !
to all---though I do hope to write
again before then.....

Lorna

P.S. Would Bud & Paula be interested in
my double waffle iron? We never
use it — my family doesn't seem to like
waffles !