

Dear Family,

May 22, 1994

Laura is now in Centenario, a well-to-do suburb of Guayaquil and a total contrast to dusty, poor Machala, several hours away in the countryside, where Laura spent her first five months in Ecuador. After so long there, she had become much a part of the members and other people there; it was difficult to say goodbye.

The people are not as humble in Centenario. They are busy, well off, & not very interested. Still Laura has been blessed with an excellent companion there to start with (one just about ready to go home) and with some opportunities rare for that area to teach & baptize. Laura has mentioned that some people and missionaries don't seem to have much faith or expectation of miracles, but that she had become rather used to & spoiled by them in Machala. And now in Centenario, she mentions teaching and a baptism there soon after her arrival. She knows she has been greatly blessed, & we feel greatly blessed by her letters & labors.

We talked with Laura a long time the day before Mother's day. She has felt a lack of normal physical energy for a long time & has now confirmed that she has some energy-sapping amoeba. We're praying that the medication she is now taking will help eliminate the problem.

Sherlene & Daniel finished the semester and started spring term. Sherlene finished with straight A's except for one A-; real tough!

Sherlene is taking cello lessons!-- from Roger Drinkall at BYU, an accomplished cello performer whose international concerts are accompanied by his wife (Baker-Drinkall). She had to get her strings, bridges, & bows re-done which delayed her first lesson. Then came the shock that her bowing was violin style & not right for the cello. So she is re-learning her bowing technique. It's great to hear some cello vibrations again. (Now why would he choose use the word "vibration" when he could say "rich melody," "sensational tone," or the like?)

Her other class for summer term is a German / Slavic family history lab from Ray Wright, who supervises the teaching & scheduling of that course. During the first class he was so impressed with Sherlene's obvious knowledge of the Personal Ancestral File program that he said she could start teaching a Beginning Family History at BYU this fall instead of waiting til winter semester.

Daniel is taking a class on the linguistic history & development of English: apparently England was overrun many times from many directions, with all contributing (for better or worse) to the language. Romans, Danes, Welsh, prob. Scottish & Irish, Swedes, French. They probably returned the favor in some cases, too. Hence this mongrel tongue with it's impossible spelling. Daniel is also working long hours currently to earn money for a semester in London. He did manage to see the last Jazz-Denver game with some (Tracy) Hall cousins & has been dating a certain young lady for a few months now. We'll see.

I (Dan) have been working on programming project to enhance the handling of text styles in WordCruncher (a redesign of the handling of font & size changes, tabbing, bold, italic, subscripts) & "hyperlink" handling (built in text links to other text, graphics, or audio bytes that can be activated by clicking a mouse button)--also on my Dead Sea Scroll project to link each word of text with its Hebrew dictionary form. I still don't know any Hebrew, but wish I did. On the side, I am also planting a few more trees and shrubs while the spring lasts. Dan (1/1/94)

Michelle, now

I think Dan pretty much covered the territory. It was great to have Charlotte and Virginia here the week of the Women's Conf.--we missed you, Liz--sure hope you're feeling better by now. I had a cold like that a while back that seemed to hang on and on and on. . .

Daniel just got called today to teach the Gospel Doctrine class in his BYU student ward (again--that was his call in his former ward). He's going to the same ward as Zina and Hunt Tracy--he loves to hang out at their place after Church--it's grand to see cousins be such good friends. I got a copy of Betsy's talk on family scripture reading for my memory book--you all ought to order one from her, too--it's tops!

I just wound up teaching our ward's Beg. Fam. Hist. Seminar. It was sort of a let down not to get to prepare this week. The best way to learn is to teach--I feel a difference when I prepare a lesson, as contrasted with just sitting there and listening to someone else teach. Unless Tracy Jr. is teaching it--I learn so much whenever I get a chance to listen in on him. Right now I am auditing two fam. hist. classes at the "Y," trying to prepare for teaching this fall (I'll have a class of about 30-35 students, Tuesdays and Thursdays at 2-2:50). If they like my teaching, they'll look at me for a full-time slot, on condition that I get my Ph.D. So far, though, I haven't found a Ph.D. program I think is worth that investment of time and energy. I'm getting too stubborn in my old age. I want to take what I want and not what some department tries to stuff down my throat. I'm not sure I want a full-time teaching career, anyway. I think it would be great to teach maybe one class a semester and then have time to take classes on a random basis and still do genealogy research and maybe some writing on the side. Bro. Ray Wright is very flexible--he's letting me fill all my homework for his German Lab by just taking the time to organize and type Mom's research and collections on the Turnbaughs. I've been typing 8-12 hours a week on that. I've also had two afternoons at the Salt Lake Fam. Hist. Lib. this month--I could live in that place.

David told me a few weeks ago that he has submitted all the temple work that minister's wife gave me to do on her family. Since her minister husband (who has died) is a VanDyke, I gave the material to David and Karen to see if there is a connection. They did not find one, and I just assumed David would mail it on to Salt Lake. So was it ever great to learn he submitted it all on a disk. This woman and her husband had had the missionaries into their home, and I think she has a testimony of the gospel--or at least of temple work. She was so anxious to get the temple work done on all the research her husband had done from our Morristown, NJ Fam. Hist. Center, she wrote a letter asking that the work be submitted for temple work and even got two witnesses to sign it. Thanks, David!

Our home in New Jersey is giving us headaches. It's not much fun to be a landlord long distance (Dan says--he handles most of it). Our renters have paid each month, but they reneged on their part of the contract to keep up with the weeding and mulching outside--wrote us a letter and just plain said they could not afford to keep their end of the contract. So, we're paying nearly \$1,000 to mow down our garden (which cost us a fortune to create--surrounded by ties) and plant grass there, because they refuse to keep it up and insisted we do it--and also we had to re-gravel the drive because there were so many snowstorms and ploughing this winter--plus we had to remulch everything. Their contract ends Nov. 15, and so we are now trying to decide whether to keep renting it or whether to sell it. If we get stuck without it not selling that would be a minor disaster. So we would appreciate your prayers that we make the right decision about this. I would prefer to keep renting it because I don't want to be bothered with building a house and moving again (to avoid capital gains). But Dan has been the landlord and he would rather sell and get it over with. We just had the water heater go out--that will be more hundreds of dollars. I am just praying whatever happens happens fast. I need to concentrate on just being a good teacher next year. I am so thrilled to be able to teach my favorite thing in my favorite setting. And to see some results. You know how Sunday School teaching is--most of them just sit there and do nothing. We love you and pray for each of you with your individual hopes and decisions. Sherlene

Love to all