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WOOD
September 28, 1980
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Dear Family,

Yesterday we went over to visit Mr. Bauchman, an elderly gentleman who used to live next to us when we rented the home at 2311 on 18th St. I'd done a little baking ^{for HKM} the previous day as we've had a cool spell in the weather for a change. While we were there, the people whose home we rented brought over the family letter. Sherlene had mailed it to our address of two years ago. It had been there for only a few days, however, so there isn't much of a delay on the Washington D. C. end of things.

I forgive you, Sherlene, for the long letter and clipping additions. If all of us did as much missionary work as the two of you, the Church would be growing by leaps and bounds. That was an excellent write-up in the Weakened article. Sherlene and Dan never do things in a half-hearted way. Laura's baptism sounded like such a wonderful occasion, I wished I'd walked all the way there so as not to have missed it! I also appreciated your Christmas suggestion using the tapes. With your permission, I'm going to copy and distribute it in our Relief Society Homemaking Session this week. It's full of good questions and suggestions.

Dad mentioned half-jokingly that he's looking for someone to ghost-write his life's history. Though Sherlene may be (forgive me, Sherlene) long-winded at times, I think she has the most "native" talent in the family for writing. Why don't you write a best-seller, Sherlene about the life and times of Tracy Hall. Of course Betsy, too, has a lot of natural talent. If we could just get the two of you together, lock you in a room for a year with no one allowed to enter or leave, we'd have it made. I read in the newspaper about a couple of housewives who did just that. They decided to write books together and have several best-selling novels now. Actually, true confessions out front, I have daydreams about writing your life history Mom and Dad. I was even going to write a chapter for your birthday and send it to you Dad. It was going to be a chapter about your parents, a little historical background on them, a little about your early childhood and so on and so forth. The trouble is--I don't know that much about your parents background or your early childhood. I know a few stories, but I don't know places and dates and things like that which are rather important to life histories. I know you lived in a tent with your Mom and Dad for a short time while they were building a home. And I remember some of your school stories while you were living in Marriot. I remember the story about the dining room table and the Graduation suit. I know you used to help Grandpa with the electrical wiring in the homes he fixed up. And I know you picked rows and rows of vegetables to sell in town. I've heard your "courting" stories, but don't remember details very well. So you see, I'm not an apt candidate for writing your life history. Why don't you move back here for a year or two and we can work on it together, Mom and Dad. Doesn't that sound like a wonderful idea? All this day-dreaming I've done lately, has made me realize how much I really don't know about my own parents. Of course, with a memory like mine, I don't think I could write my own life history accurately!

Our neighbors down the street are moving today. They had the only other young child on the block, a little boy a few months younger than Warren. She went back to work when Keith was a year old. He's an attorney with a small energy firm in D. C. With their two incomes, the income taxes were killing them, so they are moving to a \$147,000 home and are going to rent their home on this street for \$550.00 a month to an older woman. That way, they can depreciate their home (or something like that) as rental property and get a tax break. It is hard for me to imagine having enough money to put a downpayment on a \$147,000

home without selling your existing home. They will clear an extra 200 dollars on their rental home each month which will more than cover the cost of any repairs and their yearly property taxes. The rentee will have to pay all utility costs in addition to the \$550 dollars monthly rental. Mom, can you imagine our little three bedroom colonial renting for \$550 a month? Theirs is exactly the same size as ours, although their basement has been made a little more useable. Their yard is a little larger and in much better condition, as well. Still--\$550!!! I'm grateful the Lord allows us to see some benefits of staying at home with our children on a day-to-day as well as an extended basis. Otherwise the benefits of an extra income would at times seem overwhelming.

Ken Solomon who was Barry's "boss" at the FCC left his job there to follow his wife to California as she was offered a job with a top-notch law firm there. They "found" him a job at another law firm in the area. They have two children, Barry just learned this weekend that they are separated. I'm sure that extra income does not have a lot of meaning to him now.

wrong - she didn't take the Calif. offer, but went with a big firm here,

while he moved over to NTIA (Nat'l Telecommunications + Info'n Admin.). I was really touched by the messages given in the Women's Broadcast from SLC which I attended last Saturday. Brother Packer gave the closing address and minced no words in speaking about where our priorities and loyalties should be. It was such an inspiration meeting for me. I sang two songs with six other ladies which were outlined for the meeting. I also came home determined to cut the cord off my television set and spend more quality time with my children. Right now they are watching Sesame Street. Woe is me!!! I vowed when I got married that I would never use the television for a baby sitter. I do it all the time. And though it is educational material they are viewing, I know the quality of learning and the quality of their time would be much improved if Mom were teaching them instead of T.V. I would like to fix the basement up into a fun, learning-type environment so they would have a place to learn and play instead of just a junk and storage room as it is now. I think I'm using my lack of adequate space as more of an excuse than it should be, however.

adopted and one natural

Our kitchen is more or less finished except for the electrical work which is a big job. This means of course that I cannot use that dishwasher we purchased in July. The kids are bored by Sesame Street, so I am going down to make cookies with them. Well, the chocolate chip cookies are in the oven so I have eight minutes to type and the children have eight minutes to get into who knows what trouble. Nathan has shown a real mechanical ability lately which has included several attempts in the past several days to dismantle my sewing machine. He can point out and identify ten things under the hood of the Mustang including the air cleaner, the battery, the radiator, the engine the alternator, the fan, the fan belt, the solenoid, etc. as well as tell you where the oil goes in and where the water is put into the radiator. He meets Barry at the door with a plea for him to show him the engine, which usually must be done via flashlight as Barry has been keeping very late hours at the office in the last month or two. The cookies would be delicious, except that Nathan poured the salt over the measuring spoon spilling it into the bowl. And since Mommy didn't wish to quadruple the recipe, we will enjoy very salty cookies. As it is VERY VERY QUIET downstairs, I'd better go see what the trouble is! Well, it's just as well that I went down. The cookies are done (which doesn't say a lot for my w.p.m. typing abilities) and the Cheerios were in a big mound on the dining room floor. Nathan has learned the fine art of trouble-making which begins with the ability to pull a chair over to where ever it is needed. This week he has emptied my freezer, and half a dozen other dasterdly deeds which has made my life less than dull of late.

done

While I was reloading the cookie sheets, the kids came upstairs turned the water on in the bathroom and dumped a pint of water on the study floor. My kids are born mischief makers. They surely don't inherit it from my side of the family! I was always a quiet, neat, studious, obedient child. Now you see why I turn the T.V. on. It mesmerizes them!

Warren has left the cute, charming, delightful stage and has turned into a terrible two at seventeen months. I find it hard to believe that he is the same child that two weeks ago was so irresistible. We'd like to have Grandma Wood come out for Christmas, but I'm afraid she won't be able to stand the change in her second grandchild. He had Grandma Wood charmed beyond belief when we were there this summer. Nathan has at times been unusually nasty to his Grandma Wood, so she was so pleased to have a grandchild who was pleasant to her. I'm afraid if she comes at Christmas Warren will be like Nathan was when she came to Arlington the ~~last~~ ^{before last} time. He would push her away from him yelling "No, No, No" at the top of his voice. Fortunately, Nathan's past that now, but I'm afraid Warren's just entering it.

I continue to arrange and plan and execute the activity time for the 3-8 and 9-12 yr. olds in our ward Primary. I've never had any difficulty relating to the younger group and finding fun things they'll enjoy. The older group, however, is proving to be a real challenge for me. I find I lie awake at night planning activities which will hold their interest. I've drawn heavily on Mom's past success with the older girls when she taught Primary. She was famous for her salt water taffy rewards for scripture memorization. I've used the same principle in scripture chase competitions, article of faith puzzles, ^{etc.} and have found as long as there is competition and fun involved, they'll participate. It's really too bad that competition is such a motivating factor in our children's lives. It can really be both detrimental and beneficial, depending, of course, on the individual child. I also conduct the music time for both groups, so my Sunday participation in Relief Society and Sunday School consists of about ten minutes of each.

Barry has nearly finished caulking and painting all of the windows on the outside of the house. We are in a bit of a hurry because we have ordered storm windows for the house which we hope will arrive some time in the next six weeks. There are fourteen average size windows. Each storm window is costing us about \$84.00. In addition, this same outfit doing the windows will replace the back beam on the house which the squirrels ^{have} obliterated. That will cost us a little more than \$300.00 We've now lived in this house for two years. When we first started making payments on the house, almost half of Barry's FCC paycheck was going into our mortgage payments. While that is no longer true, we still find that almost all of our paycheck except tithing and food money is being sunk into the house in one way or another. While it is sometimes easy to wonder why we don't have any savings in the bank (or very little), I think we can be proud of the fact that in two years time we have managed to pay back the \$7,000 our parents loaned us for ^{part of} our down-payment, have made three trips to Utah and Washington State, and have sunk who knows how much (including \$2500 for a new kitchen) into our house. My pride is only a little diminished by the fact that our car is running on faith alone, and we are still using for living room couches the two sofa beds we bought from David and Karen when we were first married and they were living in New Jersey. Ah well, all in good time! Barry's job earns us a good income and offers him excellent career opportunities and is a detriment only in that I miss SO MUCH being near my parents and brothers and sisters. Sherlene has threatened to hang us if we so much and whisper about a move West. I don't think she needs to worry. Our situation is looking more and more permanent, which has

bring
bring

I love you, Grandma and Grandpa! oodj9we

J

Nathan did this while I spelled
out the letters.

been and is a difficult mental adjustment for me. Our Relief Society President, the wife of a local obstetrician, (sp.?) offered some consolation by reminding me that in time the distance between myself and family would seem less as we would have the means to go home whenever we wanted without feeling financially pressed to come up with the money.* For some reason, I find that hard to believe. I think doctors make a lot more money than lawyers. Maybe she's right, but the waiting seems long. Meanwhile, letters will have to fill the void, so keep 'em coming!

We love and miss you all and pray nightly that you'll be blessed in your individual families where your needs are greatest.

* Easy for her to say - her kids' grandparents all live within 5 miles of their house in NW. Arlington.

Love
Dinger

P. S. We think we'll be having a spring baby, unless this is another false alarm. I'll know for sure in two days time when I'll see my O.B.
Barry's part:

OK -- we are free from guilt this time, having mailed the Hallmanack within three days of receipt. BUT SHERLENE HAD BETTER NOT SIT ON IT FOR OVER TWO MONTHS AGAIN. Forgiveness for this lapse does not guarantee your personal safety should you sin again. (I am typing this on a non-correctable machine at the office. Forgive the errors, even if I typo again. (How's that for a double standard?)

Because I have this set of letters and promised to mail it today, I get to break the news. WE ARE DEFINITELY FOR SURE EXPECTING CHILD #3. How exciting...at least to us. If the pattern in my family is followed, this one will be a girl.

The others are fun, too, though I wish Warren hadn't started turning two so early. Nathan said his first unprompted, intelligible, more than one clause evening prayer last night. Our hearts were warmed to hear him remember "Papa Hall...Mama Wood" etc. (That means bless Grandpa Hall and Grandma Wood. Grandma Hall got left out presumably because she doesn't need any particular extra blessings right now. But we have certainly been concerned about Dad's eyesight, and hope things are improving. Take it easy!

I need to get going to this reception for lawyers willing to help with the Reagan Bush campaign. Virginia is at a church meeting. I got a replacement for a missionary split I was going to do tonight-- we have a couple of good investigators who are coming along around discussion #3. The main problem seems to be getting them to church. We are hoping the annual Elders Quorum Lobster Dinner (flown in live from Maine, cheap) will help to make the first step easier.

Does anybody want to apply for the new VHF television channel assigned to Salt Lake on September 8? It's going to be worth somewhere in the middle eight figures to whoever gets it. Local Indians/Hispanics with broadcast experience but no other ownership interests preferred.

Betsy, I enjoyed rereading your letter but please take it out this time. On the other hand, I wouldn't mind Tracy Jr. finishing his page 2 on the second time around. Love, Barry