

April 29, 1980

Dear Marge:

I have your letter of April 24 just as I was about to answer the one of April 18. I aim to get a flu shot but didn't this year, rationalizing this delinquency by concluding I would probably get protection against the wrong strain. I did however do one good thing. I got a pneumonia shot at the VA. This is something new and lasts 3 years. I got it on the premise that pneumonia is the greatest enemy of the aging and I am a little gun shy since my father and a brother died of same. Average age of 91 - that is really hard to believe, the inference being there are some over 100. Your picture of the old people is very vivid, the leaves of various hues fluttering about, with the gold ones here and there among the brown. It is a great mystery to me that man has not solved the status of the aging in all these eons of mankind. I have concluded that the race lives mostly in the future, in the land of great hopes and hardly at all in the present. A snivling little rascal of a child is respected somehow because he MIGHT amount to something, probably he won't, but he might. I think that is the size of it. I think this is wrong but that is the way it is. Perhaps as the population grows (older things will change.

Still on this letter, I wish as much as you do that I could visualize the correct picture of those October 1919 days. It just struck me that the best way to put this right once and for all would be for you to write a sketch of that time yourself in one piece rather than having to be heckled by my little out of focus bits and pieces. That, I think, would be really fine and would assure that the garbled versions would be nullified by reason of being superceded. Of course I know that you have touched on many of these facts, including the Edgar reference, in earlier letters, but putting it all together "by one who was there" would have certain values that synthesized research could never achieve.

Speaking of the Stroud House reminded me of a little penned sketch done for me some years ago by Ken Van Hoessen, a young admirer of yours. I have taken the liberty of having a facsimile made of the sketch and I now send it on to you for your comments, corrections or spin-off evocations. I was at Ken's cottage in that area & he was very kind to me. It was he who told me how to find the Charles farm house which figgers in 3-day Blow. I had an enchanting time walking around the area, trying to evoke the past of Hem and Bill and looking wonderingly at the stone foundation, which is all that was left, and noting that large birch trees were growing out of the basement. From the top of the stone foundation I could look out upon the lake like others had done before me. I take it you stayed at Dilworth's, not Stroud's, when you were over-nighting in Horton Bay. Ruth and I ourselves walked down that famous sandy road to the mill site on more than one occasion, and it was fun to see the ore ships out on the lake far away, motionless one moment and then gone the next.

(over)

In re Ernest staying over in Petoskey I always thought he wanted to hole up there and do some imperishable writing without any relatives or friends around. And also, I suppose, he may have been waiting for something to happen, what with the Connable Toronto offer hovering in the background. And of course there was always freckle-faced you.

No, I don't want to see a romance. I mean I don't not want to see one, I just want to see what there was. There may not have been a romance going on, probably there wasn't; but there was something, and it was pretty nice. Love aint everything I guess. Ordinary human relationships figure in the ~~uninterrupted~~ the course of history too.

Glad the pictures got back there quickly. I enjoyed your talk about Ernest Ohle & was intrigued that that he knew Hadley's uncle. That makes two connections between Horton Bay and Hadley. The other, of course, is that Bill Smith's sister, Katy invited her to live with her in Chicago after Hadley's mother died in the summer of 1920. (Odd, macabre note. Hadley's father & Ernest's father committed suicide, as did Ernest, so we have Ernest's oldest son, Bumby, in the curious position of having lost both his grandfather's and his father by suicide); and it was at the apartment of the girls, or rather, perhaps at Bill's married brother's apartment, that Ernest met ~~Hadley~~ Hadley.

The weather, at last, is delightful here after a long spell of ~~mm~~ coldish rain. The woodsides are that lovely red caused by the leaf buds of the maples. And just about every other kind of growing thing is busting out all over. We don't have much good weather up here, only about four or so growing months, but when the weather is good it is grand. Ruth and I are struggling to right ourselves after the winter blahs. Once more there is hope - except for one thing - the Iranian situation. Nobody knows those folks have had me hostage too all these months.

Hope everything is fine and your health good.

And much love,

Aug 1977

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