

Dear Don -

Saturday No. 2.
Mar 22, 1980

I don't know how you feel about religion
but I can't write about Grand mother Bessy
without including religion. Grand mother
was a devout Methodist. She loved her
church she loved God and her Bible. But
most of all she loved Jesus Christ. I
used to tell her that she was in love
with Jesus and I should think Grandfather
would be jealous. He was jealous
of ministers and wouldn't let G-ma
invite them to dinner.

My mother and father belonged to
the Presbyterian church - probably because
of the strong Scotch ancestry of my
mother's family. But they seldom
went to church. When I was very small
a Catholic nurse maid often took me to her
church. I loved it and knew the monks
and nuns by name. One day I told
Grand mother that God was not in her church.
but He was in grandfather's church. From
then on things were changed. Grand mother
had my sister and me baptized in her
church and saw to it that we went to Sunday school.

When we were teenagers we changed to the
Presbyterian Sunday school because more
our friends were there. When I was old
enough I joined the Presbyterian Church.

The Minister Ernest was in Peluskey he
went with me every Sunday evening to
the service and then on to a social hour
at the Minister's home. Mr Albert was
especially interested in Ernest and his
desire to write.

I always felt there was something
special about Grandmother. I couldn't
have explained it then, but now know
it was a spiritual quality. She was
a frail slender figure. When young-
they said, she was quite beautiful with
long brown natural curls. Grandfather

took care of her much as Sidney took
care of me. Her first love was killed in
the Civil War. She said she married
Grandfather ^{(at 18) Grandfather 10 years older} because she knew he was a
good man - and would give her a good home.
Her mother had died when she was ten -
leaving an infant baby girl. When Grandmother
married she took her sister to live with them.

This was my great aunt ^{Waller} Lara who later had
four daughters. One married Arthur Vandenberg -
one Guy Hankey in Petoskey - One married
Sidney French in the flour milling business in
Grand Rapids (or near there) and the oldest married
Dr Charles Jennings, whose sister married a
McCune. I believe you said Ruth is related to
the McCune family.

Grand mother had a big influence on me -
tho I tried to fight against her teachings.
She ~~over~~ developed my sense of responsibility -
and sometimes I suffered inside from a feeling
that I couldn't live up to what God was
going to expect of me.

That winter when Ernest would often spend
the evening - he and Grand mother would
visit while I sat at the big living room table
~~table~~ - studying. I believe he was more honest
with her than with most people. He didn't tell
her the tall tales of the war that I am certain,
now, were out of his imagination and not reality.

After a while she would retire to her bedroom
off the living room, but would leave the door
ajar. ~~Ernest~~ Ernest would often stay quite late. He
said he had trouble sleeping. I believe his war
experiences did something to activate his brain -

in an abnormal way. I believe this worried his father.

So this was how Ernest came to know my grandmother and admire her wisdom. Grandmother kept up on current events and subscribed to a Washington paper. She believed in Republican policies and persuaded Grandfather to change his switch parties. She said this country could not prosper without a protective tariff. How right she was. She was also quite musical with a good voice. In early years she sang in the choir and played for the Sunday school.

Grandmother was proud of her Puritan ancestry - and claimed, but never tried to prove, Mayflower heritage. She was a DAR and had papers proving some ancestor helped in founding Harvard.

She constantly impressed it on me that my behavior must be beyond reproach. So like what Ernest did to my reputation. I suppose pride had to fall.

Dear Don -

Sunday. Mar. 23, 1980
No. 3.

I have just read with interest your notes of 1966. The things you write about touch only a few places in my 17 and 18 year old mind. I remember the Park Hotel was considered a shady place - and the O'Neals - shady characters.

I remember hearing people say that Ernest was up to no good in going there.

I remember that Ernest once introduced me to someone named O'Neal and ~~saying~~ ^{said} later that he was proud of me that I was polite. It would never have

occurred to me not to be polite.

I have no memory of sitting with Ernest in an ice cream parlor. I can think of no reason why Ernest would want to escape my mother - or any why she would care where he was.

Mother did often go to the store - her main source of income. I don't remember anyone named Rice or Mrs Martin. If I was in the store it wasn't often for neither Pudgy or I were allowed to loiter there - too many men. So often people relate a one time occurrence as a continuous thing. I remembered that one Ernest went to the store to collect a prize for the largest fish. Someone complained that he collected the prize but didn't buy anything. How could he with no money { His father wanted to force him to take some job or position in business }

I feel sad for the Ernest of those days - I'm glad my Mother and Grandmother asked him to dinner. I'm sure Mrs Quinlan, ^(She was the Christian Scientist) must have wanted to help him, too. Grace Edith was only fourteen - but mature for her age. Ernest told Mary that he was engaged to G. E. ^{and Irene} as well as to one. This all in three months.

If no one in Petersburg knew where I
lived - it was largely because of the
story. I wanted to blot out Mary Bump.
Until you came along no one knew I
had ever known Ernest H. Fortunately
by then no one cared.

Thank you for sharing your notes.
I can see all the places you mention -
~~as~~ as they were and as they are now.

I would like to go back one more time -
but now I haven't the strength for
travel. I'm sure I will have
more urges to tell you this and that.

Ernest usually ended his letters -

as ever or as always -

Marg.



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