

April 23, 1985

Dear Harold,

My mail drought is over, got your 4/14/85 and your 3/27/85. The rich batch of enclosures and exhibits is much appreciated - much of it maddening but enlightening nevertheless.

We have one chimney. I will pay heed to a competently installed lining and will consult informed friends for expertise, thanks. Especially thanks for preventing me from getting ripped off by the tree cutters.

I wrote Jerry McKnight at his home. We have only pine (useless) and oak (quite good) for burning. The treasures of our forest are holly trees - some are 20-30 feet tall and very beautiful especially in winter (which, of course, I will not cut them down).

I do have 2 good oak trunks for chopping blocks - very stable indeed.

I see what you mean about JER's fixation for Mark Lane. Anyone who thinks Lane pinned Hunt could also believe that Lane will return on a white horse and spring him as well.

I see what you mean about the rooftop - no escape or one so cumbersome that the assassin would never get away from the crime scene. I remember the FBI keeping track of the hours it expended in the MLK investigation (to impress the press, I guess). Wouldn't it be great if they were forced to account for the man hours devoted to attempts to rebut, discredit and bury your work and your FOIA requests (the "get Weisberg squad").

Take care.

Best Regards,



4/27/85

Relet 23, pine is not entirely worthless as a firewood and putting a liner in a chimney that lacks one is not necessarily an easy matter, so a few cautions.

There is hard pine and soft pine, the former of the type that in lumber is referred to as knotty pine and the latter, generally, as white pine. Both burn and anything that burns generates heat. Both also tend to yield more creosote on burning and it is the deposit of this substance on the walls of the chimney, where in time they can catch fire, that is hazardous. However, if you burn a stove with any regularity, the chimney ought to be cleaned regularly (yearly here) and in that time you ought not have any major creosote problem.

In general hard and heavier woods yield more BTUs. Now I'm taking down some of the hard pines here, all damaged or dead, and I've both separated the pine from other poorer woods and the dead pine from the still living, this because once dead it is dried, burns more easily and completely and with less creosote. I'll burn it first and that gives the rest more time to dry. There is less creosote deposit from burning pine if it is burned more rapidly, i.e., gets more air, so it is good to use when you are home and can tend the stove. White pine is not a good coaling wood and the woods that leave coals continue to yield heat and the coals themselves help air get to fresh wood that is added to the fire. But it is not valueless and the little I've had, from trees that had to be culled, I used when I could watch the fire. Doesn't last as long as other woods, but does give some heat and can also be used along with better burning woods.

My recollection from my years long ago as a volunteer fireman is that chimney fires had two general origins. (A fire in a sound chimney is not the kind of fire that damages houses and years ago people used to burn their chimneys out regularly. It is a way of getting rid of creosote but I've never used this method although some years ago when I'd neglected to clean the chimney it burned itself clean.) One is from an imperfect chimney and the other is from faulty original constructions, from wood having direct contact with the chimney. The chimney ought to be sort of free-standing in the sense of having no contact with anything that can burn, like wood.

The chimneys are of masonry and mortar, whether or not lined, and with age some of the mortar can crumble, which permits access to fire in the chimney. If there is a liner, it also is connected with mortar sealing the joints. A good original job ought mean safety after many years. But the liner is in direct contact with the masonry, usually brick, blocks or stone, and as I recall with mortar making a bond between the liner and the chimney proper. It is not an easy matter to insert heat-tempered masonry liners, if they were not included on construction.

However, prepackaged liners may be available and prepackaged chimneys I know are. These are metal and insulated, which is supposed to be an improvement. Some homes would not be attractive with some times of external prepackaged chimneys, I imagine, but perhaps in some instances they are practical and not unattractive. I've no personal experience with them. I do know that they are used in new construction.

A single chimney usually means one in the center of an old house, with provision for a number of stoves or in an older house most rooms not heated. In a relatively new house generally for a fireplace on initial construction, with the furnace also using it. An external chimney is easier to improve if improvement is necessary...Remember also that when the stovepipe enters the chimney there must be no air leaks. Some fireplace inserts, like mine, merely seal off the front surface of the fireplace so that air can't get past. ...Care is necessary but heating with wood can be worth the original trouble, is more economical, and helps with the ignored but continuing energy (petroleum) crisis. In haste,