

February, 1950

Dear Friends,

In recent years, at Christmastime, I have received and enjoyed letters which made up abundantly for the dearth of news from dear friends during the year. Each time I was eager to acknowledge them promptly together with the welcome influx of Christmas greetings. Yet, as successive Christmases come along, I find that I haven't managed to answer even briefly. This year, Jon carefully decorated a stack of penny post cards with the TB Christmas seals we had on hand, and they remain, otherwise unmarked, in our desk drawer. So, at last, I've decided to jot down, for mass distribution, a sketchy journal of the doings of our family during the first year of our residence in California. I recall ruefully the so-called "Thanksgiving Newsletter" which Helen Bang-Jensen and I started to write for International Student House alumni one fall, which was finally dispatched as an Easter Letter the following spring. Therefore, I hopefully dub this our "Equinoctial Epistle" and will aim to complete it by March, not June.

As most of you know, Woodrow left Washington in September, '48 to join the faculty of the University of California. It seems strange for a historian to be teaching in the Department of Speech, but the classes in "Logical Discourse" are given by men of various social science backgrounds. Unlike most on this huge campus, classes are small and teaching by "conference method" is possible. Woodrow is able to pursue his research on colonial Mexico on the two days a week when he has no classes. In addition, he had the opportunity to spend last summer in Mexico on a research project for the Bancroft Library and was able to continue some of the work he had done there ten years earlier.

Jonathan and I stayed behind in Washington to await the arrival of Ruth Gail (Oct. 21), and when she was seven weeks old, we flew to Glendale to stay with Woodrow's brother, Noah, and his family. During the Christmas vacation, Woodrow joined us, and we all flew up to Berkeley on New Year's Day to stay with friends for a couple of weeks until the cottage where we now live became vacant.

My initiation into the climate of Sunny California was quite shocking. The first week was "unusually" cold: pipes froze and burst; in February, it was "unusually" rainy: our dirt basement was flooded and bucketsful of water had to be bailed out several times a day for a week. Even after our persistent colds cleared up, we were house-bound, for the yard was continually muddy. Like most Bay area houses, ours was far from weather-proof and the winter which was mild compared to those in the East, seemed far more severe. Then, suddenly it was spring, and, without fanfare, flowers and bushes in our yard burst into bloom and fruit trees planted near the curb on nearby streets provided colorful borders. Far into fall, the weather was fine. The natives, in all fairness, termed it an "unusually" fine summer. My parents, who spent six weeks here, could hardly have chosen a better time to leave New York for their first trip West. Yet, from St. Petersburg, they now write that the Florida climate is far superior. Truly, it takes some acclimatization for an Easterner in this area. The much-talked of morning fog seems to presage a rainy day, but I finally learned the native optimism and customarily hung out laundry on lines still wet with fog, knowing that the sun would shine brightly by lunchtime.

Being confined so much at home with two small children was extremely trying, but I found release through the parent-nursery schools maintained by the Berkeley Board of Education. Jon and I both found congenial friends during our first semester and now that he has started his third term, it is an integral part of our life. Mothers "participate" one morning a week and attend a class one evening a week, where experiences are pooled and the able teacher offers guidance on handling of pre-school children. Jon finger paints, models clay, hammers and saws wood, paints with water paint at an easel, climbs on the jungle gym in the play yard and has access to tricycles, wagons, autos and many types of equipment not available at home. This spring the children are to work a garden plot of their own. In addition to these activities, nursery school has given him a social life of his own and he has matured enormously in the past year.

Ruth, who has been able to walk since her first birthday, is a happy little girl just now beginning to enjoy Jon's companionship on somewhat equitable terms! For a long time, after all the dislocations to which he had been subjected, he vented all his emotional disturbances on her, but now he is much more stable and likes to play with her and to teach her from his growing store of wisdom. He takes delight, along with us, in trying to interpret Ruth's jargon.

For several months now, we have had "reciprocal baby-sitting" arrangements with two other couples, and enjoy much more freedom to go out without the prohibitive cost of professional sitters. We get to an occasional concert in San Francisco: the Symphony is somewhat over-rated. The undependable brasses recall to me the National Symphony in Washington. Yet, the printed programs, annotated with score excerpts, make listening a great pleasure, even when there isn't a fine soloist to compensate for the second-rate performance. There are so many of Woodrow's friends here (some of whom I haven't yet had an opportunity to meet) that I haven't taken time to participate in faculty wives' functions, with the exception of attending the yearly tea given by the President's wife. One activity I've missed is folk dancing and I hope that Woodrow and I can soon join the class which is held once a week at the school just two blocks from us.

Our major preoccupation these days is finding a house. We're fortunate to have this garden cottage (owned by friends of ours) as long as we wish, but we're eager to buy a house which will give us more space and the privacy Woodrow needs for working at home. We've come to the conclusion that the only house of that size up in the Berkeley hills we could manage financially would be twenty-five years old or more. We aren't reconciled at this point to the idea of buying down in the older part of town where it is impossible to enjoy the breathtaking view of San Francisco and the Bay. So far, nothing suitable has turned up which would cost under \$18,000.

Yet, we're hoping that we shall before long be able to have our own house, one that will permit us to invite you, in all seriousness, to come and stay with us when you visit Berkeley.

Well! I have actually managed to type this off at one sitting, despite the constant interruptions by Ruth, who is impatiently awaiting Jon's return from school. Now, if I can manage to append personal notes sometime in the next month, I shall be wishing you Happy Easter in good season.

Sincerely,

Terry