

COUNCIL IN CHARGE OF CHAPEL

Building erected by US Army men

The preservation and upkeep of St Christopher's Chapel, built by American troops in 1943 in the Nerimbera district, has been taken over by Livingstone Shire Council.

The only original and active member of the St Christopher's Chapel Committee, Mr Jack Fleming, and trustees Mr Ron Gough, Mr Kev Geaney and Mr Ian Power, are placing their recommendations for the management and improvement of the chapel and its grounds with the council.

Last year the committee re-roofed the chapel.

The trusteeship was set up in 1957 when the St Christopher's Chapel Committee was formed, comprising half Australian and American committeemen.

This week, council officers and representatives met Mr Fleming, Mr Gough and Mr Geaney at the chapel to inspect the buildings, grounds and amenities.

Proposals for caretaking and upgrading the buildings and grounds will be the subject of discussion between the trustees and the council's recreation, parks and sports advisory committee.

The chapel has become a popular venue for weddings with 25 ceremonies performed there in 1988 and 34 in 1987. Its historic significance and interest to tourists has grown over the years.

The only funeral held at the chapel was for one of the original committee members, Mr Roy King, about 10 years ago. Two trees planted in front of the building bear his name.

Mr Fleming, 73, said the chapel was built by 800 men of the US Army's 542nd Engineers in 1943. The stones for the stone-pitched walls came from Nankin Ck. It took about four months to build.

St Christopher's Chapel was virtually neglected from 1945 to 1956 until the chapel committee was formed in 1957.

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● Some of the trustees of St Christopher's Chapel (from left), Mr Ron Gough, Mr Jack Fleming and Mr Kev Geaney inspected the grounds yesterday.

195

266. Sheehy Street
North Rockhampton
4701

Dear Ivana Carol,

I must apologise for not writing sooner. Thank you for the Book, I really enjoyed it. Everyone has read it & all have liked it.

We are all O.K. here. Pauline's family is pure growing up. They were talking about what they wanted to do when they leave school. Young Paul (he is only 3) had to have his say. Said he wanted to be a Cat. When Pauline asked him if he wanted to be a cat doctor, he said no, just a cat. He plays with the cat all the time, Pauline says he talks ~~to~~ it, when he is by himself, otherwise he is Jenni Shadow when she is home from school. Sue still does a morning at the Child Care Centre at the Church. Steve goes on holidays next month

He doesn't plan on going away. Said we could go on Day trips. I'm afraid that all I can do these days.

The weather is starting to get warmer now. I suppose it will be really hot in a few more weeks.

Well I still have a few more letters to write, so I say Cheerio for now.

Joyce Wiv. Steve & the
moore family

Dear Ivan:

Thanks for the Pinger address
I plan to have Jack Fleming of
Rocky - Chapter get in touch with
the family.

A. Service of Remembrance is held
annually on the Sunday nearest the
4th of July at the chapel.

In Remembrance of the 41st Div. +
our Independence day.

(A. Copy for you) Jack Fleming in Center:
- Yes your "Sand table" is the ~~only~~
dry spot of sand on the Beach for
a map.

Love your book

Ed Eben alex.



Plagiarism claim hurt: McCullough

By RICHARD SHEARS

Colleen McCullough, Australia's international queen of the historical and romantic novel, is ready for battle to defend her ideas in court if necessary.

McCullough, accused of plagiarising the work of a Canadian author for her next blockbuster about the last 100 years of the Roman republic, says that, no matter what mud her critics may try to throw at her, she has a clear conscience.

"Yes, of course it would hurt me if anyone decided to take legal action," she said at her Norfolk Island retreat.

"Some people may not like my books. That's their right to judge. But no one should accuse me of plagiarism because I don't need to stoop to that."

The allegations, by a Canadian magazine writer, that she had plagiarised the work of the late Lucy Maude Montgomery stunned McCullough.

"I don't have to steal someone else's work," she said. "I have too many good ideas of my own."

She agreed there were similarities, but said there were two simple explanations.

She had read Montgomery's work avidly as a child — in fact she used to read an astonishing 40 novels a week — and she concedes it is possible that her subconscious recorded certain phrases and events.

But more likely the similarities between her work, *The Ladies of Misalongo* and Montgomery's *The Blue Castle* was that both were writing in a certain genre — "We were writing in period. I based my book on my experiences and those of my mother and Montgomery obviously based hers on her own experiences."

"We both experienced poverty and the way of life as she wrote about it was similar to the way of life I had experienced."

"Sayings that she had



COLLEEN McCULLOUGH ... "I don't need to stoop to that."

heard were around in Australia, too, just before the first world war, the period in which my book is set."

Ms McCullough said this explained why she and Montgomery used such phrases as "oddly smart" and "keep all their goods in the shop window".

"If people find similarities it's because life in the small towns, the

make-up of families, the way the towns had a leading family, were the same in Australia and Canada."

The basic plot in each book involves a spinster — the one in Montgomery's book being told she has a year to live, the other in Colleen's work deciding to pretend she has only a year.

In each case, both plain women succeed in snaring a man.

"The idea for the plot came to me because I knew yet another woman who decided to go for a man on the basis that she was dying, when all along she was quite all right."

"This particular person, who shall remain nameless, made up this story and worked on the poor fellow, playing on his emotions."

"I thought it would make a wonderful plot for a book I wanted to work on for light relief while I was writing the far more serious work *A Creed for the Third Millennium*."

"There was certainly no stealing on my part. I am too proud of my work and my ideas to resort to that."

"I think that Lucy Montgomery, who comes through in her writings as a really nice person, wouldn't be upset at all by my book. Wherever she is, she is probably turning about in circles with indignation for me."

This for CAROL.

No bull, Sheryl's the boss

SHERYL McCorry buried a nine-year-old boy two years ago. She dug the grave, put the body in and delivered a sincere, but unconventional eulogy.

It was the eighth time she had presided over a burial — just one of her duties then as manager of Louisa Downs station in the Kimberleys of Western Australia.

The dead Aboriginal child had been pinned under a stolen bull buggy. What followed gives an insight into an amazing woman who has endured more than most, yet remains strong and sensitive.

Mrs McCorry remembers the day well. It was scorching, the temperature had soared to around 40 degrees. A four-wheel-drive had been stolen from the cattle station. Two Aboriginal children had taken off across the wasteland. Mrs McCorry had to find the children and retrieve the vehicle.

The memory of her own five-year-old son, who had been killed that year in a freak accident, also in a four-wheel-drive, made the task all the more traumatic.

"I knew one was dead even before I left home," Mrs McCorry says. "It was just a feeling I had, so I grabbed some sheets. Then off I went. I had a few elders in the back and they were wailing. I came to this creek that I couldn't drive through, so I got out and started to run. I had to run a couple of kilometres in the shimmering heat. I kept thinking I could see a vehicle. I was totally exhausted, but I kept running."

WHEN she found the bull buggy the boy, Jeffrey, was dead, his body crushed under the vehicle's weight. The other boy who had been driving was in shock.

Mrs McCorry remembers vividly trying to move the four-wheel-drive off the twisted corpse.

Although exhausted, she was adamant she wasn't going to leave Jeffrey there in the scorching mid-afternoon sun. Almost single-handed she had to lift the vehicle off the child. She then took the body and the injured boy back to the station where 200 mourning Aborigines were waiting for them.

Mrs McCorry had to hide the child who had driven the vehicle from the community which wanted revenge.

IN Queensland, about 20 women are in charge of station properties. Mrs Lorraine Nagel, of Charlotte Place, Cunnamulla, has run a 28,328-hectare property with 12,000 sheep and cattle since her husband died 14 years ago.

Mrs Nagel, who for the past three years has had her son helping her, said: "Your heart breaks when the droughts are bad and your stock suffers — but it's a way of life and my roots are deep."

Mrs "Buddie" Wagstaff, of Thornleigh, Blackall, managed her 40,469 hectare property with 20,000 sheep for many years by herself. Her husband died in 1969. Six years ago, crippled with arthritis, she hired a man as station manager.

"I don't believe in hiring women managers even though they have the capabilities, if not the physical strength," she said. "If you employ a married woman manager, what do you do with her husband? If you employ a single woman, she could meet someone and in six months leave to get married. Anyway, a woman would have to be crazy to want the job, unless of course it's in the blood — as with me."

Miss Kerry Phillips, 19, graduated recently from the Longreach Pastoral College as a third-year jillaroo specialising in animal production. She works on the Mulgrave property at Blackall. While the owners are away, she manages the 18,211 hectare station with 12,000 sheep, 300 cattle and a quarterhorse stud with 20 mares and two stallions.

Report: JANINE COHEN
Pictures: BARRY BAKER

Sheryl McCorry, 38 ... designer clothes and Italian furniture not enough to keep her happy: "I couldn't live in a city."

neighbor, Napier Downs, an hour's drive north of Derby.

She is 38, a softly spoken, vivacious woman. Station life hasn't hardened her; it has only made her more resilient. Her waist-length blonde hair is often pinned up. She wears diamond-studded earrings and rings even when mustering. She has that country twang to her voice and an infectious laugh. She detests socialising and prefers the company of men. Her idea of a good time is hard work.

The woman who does not shudder at chasing and tying up a bull is terrified of cities, especially such mod-cons as lifts and "those moving stairs, what d'ya call 'em?"

She says: "I couldn't live in a city. I couldn't live like that with someone next door having a blue,

or with the neighbor's dog barking its head off."

Two years ago, Mrs McCorry resigned as manager of Louisa Downs. It was the afternoon the Aboriginal child was killed: "I dropped the lot then. I had had it. I couldn't bury any more people."

Mrs McCorry, her husband, Bob, a contract musterer, and their three children moved to Broome where they had a log house on eight hectares. It was the first time in almost 20 years that Mrs McCorry had not worked on one of her beloved cattle stations.

IT wasn't long before she became bored. The designer clothes in her wardrobe and the house full of imported Italian furniture were not enough to keep her happy.

A year later Mrs McCorry was out at Kimberley Downs. There is no Aboriginal community on this station. For many years a community followed Mrs McCorry from station to station because they saw her and her husband as their minders. "They said we had the best-fed Aborigines in the Kimberley," she quips. Today they still refer to the woman as "yummin," which is a term of respect.



Sheryl supervises work on the cattle property ... as capably as any man, says her husband: "If the blokes play up, she straightens them out."

"I was reared around the Aboriginal people," Mrs McCorry says, "but I don't believe that I will ever get to know them."

Mrs McCorry was born in Darwin, but raised in Arnhem Land, where her family were the only white people. Until the age of 18 when she left Arnhem Land, Mrs McCorry did not see television or use a telephone.

Later her family moved to Broome where she met an American who she says railroaded her into marriage. "He told me if I didn't marry him he was going to pick me up and take me anyway, and stupid me believed it," she says. "I was scared, quite frankly." They soon divorced.

Then she met Bob, 20 years her senior.

"I put my foot out and tripped him, and that was it," Mrs McCorry says as if she was referring to a young steer. And so began two love affairs, one with the cattle station manager and the other with his way of life.

THESE days Bob works as a cattle musterer and is away for six months at a time. "I made up my mind years and years ago that I had to learn everything I possibly could about stations because one day I may have to do it myself," Mrs McCorry says.

She now finds herself in charge of about a dozen men who live on the station. She eats with them and works alongside them fixing fences, chasing bulls and checking water bores.

Mrs McCorry is an approachable boss, but there are rules like "no swearing". She says: "I tell them if there is going to be any bad language it is going to be mine, but I don't think it is necessary."

Bob says his wife is as capable as any man: "She is fair with the workers, but she is pretty bloody hard-headed when she's got to be. If the blokes play up, she straightens them out."

One of the most terrifying incidents was when multiple killer Joseph Schwab was on the rampage in the area. Bob was away mustering and mysteriously one night someone padlocked the entrance to Kimberley Downs. The tension got too much so Mrs McCorry packed up the four-wheel-drive and her three children, Leisha, 10, Christy, 8 (her foster child), and Robert, 2, and went bush.

"I could sleep out there, but I couldn't sleep here," she says, glancing at the homestead. "I know the bush. I felt safe there."



Net Amy



66 Sheehy St.

Dear Ivan and Carol,

Well by gee by gum I'd best get busy and let you know that "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" arrived safe and in good stead. I'm well into it already. Thanks very much. You made my week. Enjoyed the Tacoma News Tribune write-up by Meryman. She did you Royal as they say. I even learned something from it I'd not known before. That was your Dad's middle initial stands for Campbell. I knew ofcourse it was C.C.Doig but never knew what the 2nd C. stood for. His brothers and friends used to call him "Chick" and "Chuck", as I remember. It certainly was an in depth interview. Judging by the large picture you seem to be in good nick and sporting a nice bushy beard. I've yet to grow one. Too hot here to put up with same.

That is the best thing about Xmas now: hearing from relatives and friends over that side. Had a tape from Ma rj. and several letters and cards from other friends Morris Glenn among others. That reminds me his address is Morris C. Glenn, 315 W. Clark, Livingstone 59047.

Don't mind about dragging me down memory lane. I do not mind at all, in fact rather like it. Edith Brekke I remember well indeed having gone to High School with her. Had a letter and card from her bro Olaf. Amazing how tall and large Olaf grew. Some where along the line he must have taken an over dose of steroids. That guy you met in Butte who spoke of fetching mail to your Grandmother was probably an ex-Sixteen resident. Marvellous about the one in Salem that knew the Badgetts. Had you met him in Texas it would have seemed more logical as that is where Walt came from. Yes they were in Ringling when I was growing up there. Knew them well, as you say, fine people. As to this bloke Jim Waning no bells started to ring in the old grey matter. Must have been just after or just before I was born. My 1st recollections come into being at Moss Agate, though I was born Between Goat Mt. and the Crazy Mts. (follows eh?) I can see where Mom would have made an impression on him. At that time she would have been a really good sort. She'd also have been very much a greenhorn and coming from Wisc. easily stirred up by happenings in the "bush". Re the bit about my "old man" and the fiddiling(msp), I guarantee that to be folklore. Of his many talents, playing fiddle was not one. Speaking of talents he had, come to think of it, as a young, many and varied.

man

He toured with a baseball team thru the mid states that is Wisc. Iowa, Mich, Minn., and etc while in his late teens. Musically h'd a fine tenor voice and sang in the so called barber shop quartettes and even traveled as an entertainer on the river boats on the Mississippi. Played a fine mouth organ till he lost his teeth and ofcourse, yodeled. As well he played the "bones", black gadgets, 2 in each hand that sounded much like castinets. A fine ballroom dancer doing one-steps, two-step, the Waltzes and etc. Calling square dancing was his specialty. When I was around 8 or 9 he was very much in demand where ever the dances were. We seemed to always go in those days. When I was around 8-9 he was much in demand at Ringling (Mike Ryan's Hall), Moss Agate School, (heaps of people came from W.S.S.S.) They'd take the turn off at cotton-wood creek road so it wasn't all that far. Also at dances at Calkins and Wall Mt. School. Whatever musicians were playing would always turn up with some bones and he'd sit and play with them, 2 in each hand. They made a sound like a castinet. He never had any of his own. They were black things that looked like black rib bones. Re his work skills he was a teamster thru Idaho, Mont. and the Dakotas. long before he married Mom. Among others he drove for Wells Fargo. At one time while still in Wisc. he was a painter. I'd guess he'd served an apperentice ship as it was in the days when they got the linseed oil, the pigments, and etc and mixed their own. Somewhere along the line he got poisoned with Turps and had to give it away. He was real allergic to turps, came out in a rash and things. He worked many years in logging camps in Wisc. and Mich. Sha rpened and set all his saws, and that's not easy. He knew abit about farming and cows (nothing about sheep) and everything about horses especially draft horses. Good harness fixer and self made black smith. No problems shoeing them. He was hopeless with automobiles, the Model T Ford being the only one he could live with. In later years he became like we all must, worn out and obsolete. Like so many of the others the depression of the 30's really got to him. I never got on real well with him, I think because I was

By the way
I see this proof reading
I'm castinet happy.

frightened of him, though he never belted me. Bud was his favorite son for sure. Don't know why I'm telling you all this. Probably already knew it anyway.

It's great to see all those Mont. places mentioned in your book. I roomed with Bill Barnes from Craig, at M.S.C. in Bozeman. Naturally he was taking agriculture, coming from Craig. We joined the Ntl. Guard while at M.S.C. Two nites a week we trained and were paid for same. The extra dough came in real handy. We went to go back the next year and instead we were mobilised so ended up at Ft. Lewis. All this certainly changed our lives around. Bill later became a P-38 pilot and our paths crossed again in New Guinea, though I never got to see him. Niehart, that's where Marj. and family came to Ringling from. Her father (Tom Hogg) taught there and came to Ringling as our High School Principal. Had a major in English and also taught Latin, and Spanish. Your Mother learned Latin from him. Helena is ofcourse an old stamping ground too. When I worked for Pymale at Townsend we often went over there on weekends. Down in the other end of Mont., that is Miles City and Glendive, I did my senior year at Terry which is half way between the two.

You are not wrong about the trip you and Carol are contemplating as there's no place like Mont. in the Spring and Summer. Also the roads have improved so much it's hard to remember how bad they used to be. No doubt in the backblocks and by ways there will still be plenty of rough ones. You'll soon get used to driving one of those motor homes. They've got to be easier to drive than some of the trucks you've driven. You won't be on a tight schedule either, take your time and enjoy. And yes don't forget Phillipsburg and Marj. Incidentally you'd best not send those tapes over here. It's just too far and too risky and I have read the book. I'd guess they are a very pricey article. I'm sure Marj. would relish them. (Just a thought).

Things seem to be OK here. We've settled in. I do little other than read and watch T.V. The Cricket season is in it's last stages, more's the pity as Joyce and I both enjoy watching it on the box.

Now here's something strange, Aussie women love watching Cricket much more so than the men. This is perhaps because they never had to play it all through school as the boys did. You must have come up against it a bit when you were in England.

Denis and Pauline have bought of all things, a milk run. He got jack ~~fo~~ working for Goodyear. They wanted him to do some underhand shenanigans with the customers, decided it was best to get out. He's one of the few tradesmen who still have scruples. His hours of work now are from about 2 A.M. to 7-8 A.M. so he has the rest of the day to be with the family. Makes it easier for Pauline as he can mind the kids while she teaches Piano in the afternoons.

They have 4 kids, Luke 7, Jake 5, Amy 2, and Jenni 3 months. Luke and Jake both go to school so they are rid of them for part of the day but Amy and Jenni need 24hr. surveillance. Their house and car are paid for so not too many worries.

Steve is still going strong. Has a good steady job and now a motorbike. Got rid of all his cars. He uses our Datsun when he needs one. He lives in the other flat and has a student border (17 yrs, and studying computers) at the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Educ. Extra money for Steve and so far they are getting on OK.

Well, that's about it. Please for give the stuttering machine. Always great to hear from you. Am enclosing a bit of this and that. Might amuse you.

Love

Paul Joyce, of course

P.S. Viv is still fighting the battle of the bulge.

Dear Ivan and Carol,

Here it is another Xmas coming up, so best do the right thing and write to you once again. I'm another year older, no wiser, and certainly no richer. Should be thankful for what I have got now, a good roof over my head, solid walls around me, and no steps to climb. I am infering that we have shifted to a new address. The old place had not a good roof, and I don't think the walls were all that solid. I shouldn't say anything against it as it stood us in good stead for 25 years. The steps were getting steeper(it was on high blocks)everytime Joyce and I had to climb them especially on shopping days. These 2 unit flats we' bought are at ground level and are much smaller. Joyce, Viv, and I live in one and Steve (who wanted to leave home) lives in the other one, so we're all happy.

No doubt you've had another busy year churning out the fiction. I had a letter from Morris Glenn and he said he really enjoyed English Creek. He reckons that's just how it was. Reminded us both of our own childhood. Certainly we have both been thru much of what you wrote about.

I had heaps of books at 13 Nathan St. and most of them had to go. Just not room for them here. I hate throwing books away. I sold a few of the papers/ backs, but the hard backs I gave to St. Vincient De Paul's. Hopefully some one may get some good out of them.

A very traumatic time to make a shift like we did. ~~Talk~~ Thank heaven Steve is a weight lifter as he copped the ~~brunt~~ brunt of it. I'm not much chop anymore for that hard yakka. Ofcourse Denis really helped us too. He's a champion son-in-law. We had 2 garage sales, one there and one here. Still a few odds and sods left and we're dickering with a 2nd hand merchant for them. Sooner they go the sooner we'll be able to get the truck into the other garage.

Alma writes to me now and again so I do get some clue on Bud, and what is happening, atleast with her mob. They are all growing up fast, that's for sure.

Dave phoned me when Bud had the heart attack, and I was expecting the worst. A pparently he came good and is not too bad again. Poor guy has had his share and then some.

We have a new Premier in Q'ld. now. They finally put the skids under "Hockey" Joh Petersen. Ahern is the new "king-pin". He's only about 50 yrs. old. Joh was 75, so things may improve in Q'ld. Us oldies are not like old wine.

On the National front(Federal) our HAWKE is still out there flying with the best of them. He belongs to that "I've been every where" club, hob-nobbing with Ronald, Mihail, and Molly. (I don't think he and she see quite eye-to eye though.) For being a Labor leader he's astounded every one and especially the Labor party, Right, Left, Center Left, and Middle. Personally, I don't think he's doing too bad. The opposition are finding it very difficult to get him into a corner. Between him and Hogan, more and more people are waking up to where Australia is. Heaps of Yankee tourists now.

The Nipponese are well dug in here. Down at Yeppoon, which is a bout 26 miles from Rocky, on the coast. Big Hotels, motels, golf courses, and the largest swimming pool in the southern hemisphere. The Jap tourist trade is increasing by leaps and bounds. Good for the economy just so the buggers don't stop here. While they were building some of the die-hards around Yeppoon put dynamite under one of the structures and blew it up. Needless to say they were never caught. Since then things have been fairly quiet.

Just finished watching the 10:30 news. Regan and the Russian are still clinking glasses and proposing toasts so that part's OK. Now Ivan, I'd like to ask a favor of you (another one, I know I owe you and then some). However you'll enjoy this one. Next time you are in Montana stop off at Phillipsburg (211 W. Stockton) and go and see Marjorie Durand. You'll find her a very charming, and intelligent person. You'll not regret anytime spent in her company. It'd be a great thrill for her and you'll find out why if you do this. Thank you.

Must close now as I've several more of these Xmas miss
els to write yet. All the best for 1988.

Love,
From

Carl, Mary Ann

Hello Ivan and Carol,

It's that time of the year again when one must so hope this finds you both well and happy. We are not too badly off. No good groaning as they say, nobody wants to listen. I had this machine looked at. That's what I think he did looked at it and dropped the oil can on it as well. As you can see it ~~is~~ is splashing off, also it's mis-spelling again. The service isn't what it used to be.

Big things happening over there from what I read and see on T.V. Names being used there that I recognise, such as Poindexter and North. Ofcourse I don't know if it's the same tribe. Poindexter's were big money and at one time they lived around W.S.S. and Ringling. (half way between Vinton's place and Ringling on the right, going to-wards Ringlin). I'm pretty sure one of your Aunts divorced a Poi ndexter to marry your Uncle. Your Uncle Claude. I could be wrong. I can even remember what she looked like. Blond, very beautiful, and a fine horse-woman. North (the name) I seem to associate with the Ringlings. They married each other. It was all so long ago and I was only young so perhaps I'm mixed up.

I suppose one must line up and take sides so I'm all for Donald Reagan getting the Big "A". Shultz I reckon is O.K. Leave him there. President Reagan may come out of it in one piece. Let us hope so. Maybe I shouldn't be saying this, I don't know which side you are on. Enough politics. It'd be absolutely impossible for anyone man to know what is going on in Washington D.C.

Big happenings over here, too. The Pope just completed about a week's visit. Didn't get to Rocky, but covered a lot of Australia. Stirred the Aborigines up at Alice Springs: land rights and etc. Some nut in Brisbane was set to throw a petrol bomb on him but was picked up in plenty of time. He's got stamina and to spare, almost as good as the Queen.

Murdock's take over of several Newspapers here is the other sta rtling happening. I don't understand what all the fuss is about but there is certainly a lot of controversy over the deal. Job worries, probably, and the fact we'll get only biased news. Can't stop it so why worry, that's my opinion.

It's Spring here now and starting to get bloody hot. The hibiscus, frangi-pani, Poinsettias, and poinciannas, are all in full bloom, just to mention the common ones. Our Tamarind tree at the back has just dropped all it's leaves (messy thing it is) and getting new little leaves all over. Next, it'll bloom and there will be little balls of fluff floating around 13 Nathan St. for a week. The mango trees have let us down badly this year. None on and the ones that are fall off when half grown. In the shops here in Rocky they are selling for \$2.50 each and Rocky has thousands of mango trees. A bad year.

We have 3 grand-children now. Latest addition was Amy. I may have told you this. She's at the crawling stage now. Heaven help us when she finds her legs. I'll never catch her. She's a very rowdy child. Comes of having 2 brothers, probably. She can't talk but that doesn't stop her from using her voice. She'd just about win a coooo-eeeeeee contest right now.

Luke (the oldest) has just finished his 1st year at school. Did well, too. Has brains. Has been swimming for a couple of years now. He goes to a Catholic school, St. Joseph's in Wandal. 7 years there then he'll go to Christian Brothers College for his hi-school. Jake starts pre-school after Xmas.

A while back I met a guy from Seattle. In the next street, I was cutting a lawn and he came over to talk. He was staying with some people across the street and they told him I was a "Yank". His name was Dick Goodall. Don't know what his racket is in Seattle, I think he'd be retired. He might be in the phone book.

An old guy (author) in the news here while the Pope was here. He's evidently written a few stories about the Catholic church and etc. The only one I've read is "The Devils Advocate". His name is Morris West and he's Aussie and lives in Melbourne.

We wish you both a Very Merry Xmas and a happy 1987. Hope it's another productive year for you.

Love,



Hello Ivan and Carol,

Recieved your letter a few weeks ago so best get the lead out and answer it. Good to know you are both well and keeping the noses to the grind stone. It's good Carol gets that extra bit of time. Probably puts it to a good use helping you?

We are pretty much OK here. Older and feebler, less inclined to get up and go. I'm still chasing the lawn mowerd about but not quite as much. It's winter now and when the hot weather hits us again I think I'll have to give it away entirely. Can't cop that heat like I used to. Joyce is just getting over the shingles and the flu, not a good combination. However she is recovering from both with out going to hospital. Everyone else is real healthy. Steve lives on salads all week and gets into the meat and cooked dishes on week ends. Try ing to keep his weight down. I can't see any extra weight there but he seems to think there is. Viv is getting "fair dinkum" and is losing weight steadyily. She's very much into the Hobby-tex show; is even a dealer now.

The Moores are all OK. Enclosed find some photos of the young ones. Luke (1st year at school) wrote their names on the back for you. Amy is a lovely girl and a champion eater. Just hope Pauline doesn't run out of milk. She(Pauline) had a cold awhile back and rubbed some Vicks on her chest, needless to say Amy didn't approve of that caper at all. She just latched on and then tried to keep her distance. Just as well they stretch. We often have them up here to mind, while Mum goes shopping.

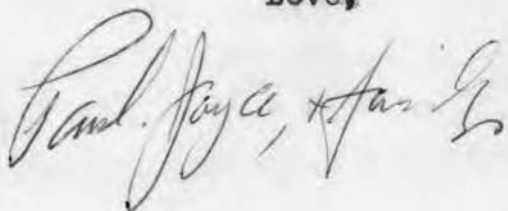
Speaking of the letters, I must get mine atleast all into one pile. Some are here, there, and Mrd knows wheere. Wally was perhaps more system xatic than me. All my letter s to Joyce before we were married was in a trunk in Ringling along with some other gear of mine, but Wally said the trunk and all disappeared so that's that. All my notes, lab manuals and drawings// from that year at Boze-man were left at the Men's Coop. in Bozeman when I went into the Army and I left a couple of barrack bags of books letters and etc, in Manila when I flew back here to get married. No telling whre any of that got to. About that letter about Joyce and my marraige, Steve has expressed a desire to see it so after he does he can return it to you if that's OK with you.

Now you really pose as a poser with this thing with your Dad and Mom. The 1st I knew of it was when your Mother passed away. She(Mom) reckoned Berneta shouldn't have been out there in the back blocks so far from hospitals and doctors. She'd much rather have seen you all stay and live in Arizona, where I take it Berneta was reasonably healthy. Her and Charlie must have had a big confrontation about it and no agreement. They were both very bitter about I mean with one another for along time after your Mother's death. I talked to your father for a short while one day after I came home, but that was the only time I saw him before I came back here. We didn't talk about Mom and she more or less told me just what I've said here. I'd have like to have been with him a lot more but things just didn't work out that way. He was always a great help and friend to all us Ringers. He especially looked after me. If he was forman I was always sure of a job, and always knew what to do cause he'd show me and tell me. He was like an older brother and soemtimes like a father. For sure I got more good advice and help than I ever did from my own father. We had great times together socally too. Hunting, fishing, dancinag, playing baseball, and even brought the gloves over and taught me² box for the first time. He surely was a guiding light in my early years. He and Mom used to get on great too. He'd often take Mom over to stay with Berneta when he was working. Well, don't know if any of this is any clue but it's all I know. When I go thru Mom's letters, if I come an anything pertinent I'll send the letter.

Tell Dave and Nellie and family Hello from us. Would love to see you all again. Time is always too short on trips like that. Haven't heard from Dave but I realise he is one busy Man.

It's Sunday here and I want to mail this in the morn so will say 'bye for now. Good luck with the homesteader.

Love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paul Joyce" followed by a flourish.

Our darling little Daughter's here
And are we proud? You bet!
There may be sweeter girls around
But we haven't seen one yet!

We named her *Amy Elizabeth*

She was born on *25th February* at *3:21* o'clock PM.

She weighed *6 lbs 10 ozs*

Her proud Mother and Dad are *Pauline & Denis Moore*
Big Brothers Luke & Jacob

Hello Ivan and Carol,

Recieved your letter a couple of days ago. Very pleased to hear about the funeral and with your resume I could really get the picture. A sad time for all of us. All those months of suffering for him. Makes one ask the old unanswerable question "Why?". It must have been awful for Delores. Sitting beside every day and watch~~ing~~ it happen. Wally was lucky to have loved and married her. Pity it hadn't happened much earlier. She'll really be lost and lonesome now. I've written to her, and it was a really hard letter write. So much to say and not knowing how to say it. I'm very glad we were able to be over there and spend the time we did with them.

I was sorry I wasn't home when Dave rang. He and Joyce had a good talk in any case. I know he was truly shocked by Wally's condition. Myself, I just can't imagine him looking like that. Terrible. I knew he'd have a large funeral. He knew everyone and covered a large territory. Don't suppose he had an enemy, never heard of one if he did.

Things are OK here now. Viv is settled down again and the Dr. says she'll have no more of that same problem.

For Xmas I made a tape and sent to Marj. and Don Durand. Marj. is blind so I thought the tape best for that reason. I put plenty of nonsense in it to make her laugh. Don said they enjoyed it. Had the whole clan(I guess he means his mob) into listen. He says now they all want to come Down Under, so the tape must have pleased. Don also sent a big new article about that huge metal statue they erected near Butte. The logistics were truly ~~ast~~ astounding. I'm hoping some one will send me a postcard of it. If it can be seen from Andaconda it must stick right up there.

Dave mentioned in one of his letters something about perhaps I could claim social security benefits for the time I was in the Army. I still have my social security cards so what do I do? Best I get it while I'm still about. I was in the Army a fair while (3 1/2 yrs. in this neck of the woods. Some before that, in the States. It'd be like money from Heaven after all this time. I remember when Pearl Harbor happened, they shot us straight up to Port Angeles to watch for Jap Subs. Had to stand guard up this high, fir lined hill and stare out at the Pacific. Plenty of seagulls and lots of waves. No Japs. I digress. Maybe should work thru the Consul here?

I'd like some of that Seattle weather here about now. Hot, humid, and no sea breezes, that's how it is. Sweat drips off of anything that sticks out. Very cold in Montana, so Alma tells me. That Billings is especially cold, and the wind gets a proper sweep thru there. Just as well her caravan is well insulated.

We are all waiting for the 21st to come. That's the day Pauline has her 3rd offspring. Hopefully a Grand-daughter this time. These grandsons give me more than some what. If they aren't crawling up me back, they are screaming till I can't hear meself think, or they are using SHARP scissors. Or they've got the good pen Dave gave me and are making dots. Just too much TV. They become terrorists before they should. A pretty, loving grand-daughter to nurse would be a pleasant change.

I'll pull up now Ivan. Thanks very much for letting us know all about it. Your present efforts re the bird sculptors intrigues me. Certainly something different.

Love
Paul Joyce, Jr.

Hello Ivan and Carol,

If I want a Xmas card, I'd best get the lead out send a few, so here comes yours. Hope you are both enjoying good health, and happiness. We are not in too bad a shape; still have to beat these hot humid months coming up. They fairly sap me strength.

Joyce was in hospital for a few weeks with a bowel disorder. They (the Drs.) contemplated surgery but finally settled for drips and anti-biotics and thankfully they did the trick. She's had no trouble with it since. Of course Her artheretic foot gives her curry sometimes, but she lives with it. They assure her they can fix it somewhat, by breaking the toes and putting in casts and etc, as I say they assure her but they've failed so far to convince her. Her decision. I'd shy off too.

Viv was not so lucky. She's had one big operation and was in hospital for several weeks. She's home with us now but has to go back in for another opp at the end of Dec. No cancer (thank God) and after this one she should be OK.

The rest of our mob here are healthy. Pauline is due her 3rd offspring in Feb. sometime. We're all hoping for a girl. Even her 2 sons want a sister. Some more sharing to do. They don't much like that word, as it gets pushed at them quite often by Mum & Dad, and Joyce and I. Sometimes it works.

Luke, her eldest son is in pre-school (you daren't say Kindergarten) and starts primary at end of Jan. at St. Joseph's. It's a catholic school. (Denis is catholic). That pleases me as from my observations they do the best job. For a start the teachers are either Nuns or Brothers. Far as I can see they are dedicated people, more so than most you'd find in the public. The catholic kids seem to excel in whatever they do, sports, academically, or music. They are all quite proud to be Christian Brothers. My opinion; plenty would disagree.

Summer is just starting here now. 1st Dec officially. Rockhampton looks great too. We've had good rain and plenty of sun lately which is all this place needs to put on a show. Rocky is a town of trees. All sorts of trees. The Jacaranda (lavender), the poinsetta (red) and the Frangipanni (white and pink) are the most startling and they are all in full bloom now. The grass is greener than green and grows faster than I can push the mower. I must admit, I am slowing down, and it takes a direct order to get Steve on the end of it.

Steve's not a complete loss (garden wise) however. A couple months ago (Spring fever, perhaps) he dug up one of the beds, went out and bought a couple of bags of manure dug it in and planted sweetcorn. We are now enjoying several feeds from those efforts. Ofcourse, you know who weeded the corn. He did keep the thrive up to it though. He loves corn off the cob. Water is no problem here as it comes from a barrage in the Fitzroy, a very large river. Also we have terrific pressure here at 13 Nathan St. I believe it has something to do with the reduction in the pipes bringing it in. It's a very old place hence the difference in the pipes here as compared to the newer houses about this neighborhood. Whatever the reason it's a real bonus.

, It's good news these 2 big shots getting together, Reagan and Gorbachev. Atleast now they know what each other really look like close up. I don't think either one was frightened of the other, which in itself is good. There was an article by Nixon in the Sunday mail to-day. Made good sense (if he wrote it?) All we can do is hope some real good will come out of it. I'll bet it drove the intelligence mob right up the old wall. It'll give a lot more scope to both sides now.

The Cricket Season is on here now. Football is over. So, switch on the TV what do you get, one station, Cricket, the other station (there's only 2) Tennis. Even Mr. McInroe has decided to honor us with his presence. I'll bet the sponsors heaved a sigh of relief when he showed. It looked doubtful there for a bit. (Bad back, why wouldn't he). Dad says he has to marry the gal too. You must take to the cricket abit Ivan. You've been over there so must have copped a bit of the jargon. Viv and Joyce are both ardent fans as are just about all Aussie women. It sorta leaves Steve and I cold, although Steve understands it, having come up thru the system. I'll take baseball anytime. They play it a lot here now the last few years. Even put it on TV when they can't run anything else to ground.

Had a letter from Alma or I'd not know what's happening over there at all. Haven't heard from Wally and Belores for ages. They owe me too. I'll give 'em a nudge with a Xms letter. Dave would be to busy to write and I just don't think Dan writes letters.

Morris Glenn took out a years sub. for me of the Montana magazine, which has shown up pretty regularly. Maybe I told you this, oh well, it's very nice to get it. Even gave you a run down in one issue. Naturally, that guy didn't know what he was writing about. Critics are only writers who have fallen by the way-side.

Getting near the bottom again, so I'd best pull up. I'm sure I couldn't fill another one. All the best to both of you.

Love,
Paul, Joyce &
Pam

Hello you Two,

Now, let's see, where'll we start. #Start at the very beggining", OK. The Book arrived on 1st March. I reckon the big delay was on this side. There's been a big strike on here in the customs and public servant scene. Everything's been laying stacked on the wharves (Wharves) for several months. Never the less it was a thrill to get it the other day. Morris Glenn (my old Pal) sent us a subscription to Montana Magazine for Xmas and we've not recieved (2 words) that yet. Must be a periodical. Looking forward to that to..

We've been lucky having heard from several persons over there. Alma, Morris, Dorris and Jim Taylor, Shiplett, Marlo, Marjorie and Don. (Incidentally, I think Don WAS a Forest/ Stranger.) You said you were going to see Marj and him. Have you? They are lovely people and full of information about Ringling. They live in Phillipsburg. Also heard from Wally and Delores. Also from Fern Vinton and Clarice. Now there is a prolific source of info and well embellished. For imagination I'd back Fern against anyone. We want to see them and we'd not been there more than about 10 minutes and he walks over and slams a big old 45 Colt into my hand and says "There she is". I gingerly pointed it at the floor and said "Oh yes". Never saw the thing before in my life but he reckoned we'd gone hunting rabbits with it. My memory may be slipping but not that far. He was an only son and she and Clarice had 9 children. He says the name Vinton will be around for a long time. He's not wrong.

Wish we had some of that wind blowing up Two Medicine, right about now. It's terribly hot and humid here, day in and day out. 33 or 34 degrees and a humidity of 96. Light fluffy clouds and no wind. Every-day I just hope I can make it. Really gats at me. I go out for 2 hrs. in the mornings mowing and gardening and 2 in the afternoon. When I finish its just like I'd crawled out of the swimming pool with all my clothes on. No chorline smell, though. I think about those lovely cold winds that used to sweep across the sage brush there at Wally's place.

Some of those words in English Creek take me back many a long year, about 45 or 50. For example, Muckymuck (your Grandfather used that one a lot to denote any one he thought was a "Toff". He always put a High in front of it. Also the Democrat wagon, coal oil, gut wagon, and many more. I'm really enjoying this saga. Man, I dig you.

Now family. Pauline is teaching Piano. Has 12 students. Half hr. sessions for a large sum, so she's helping very much to pay off the mortgage. Denis is Works Shop Supervisor for Goodyear Tyres (tires) and gets a bonus monthly and an overall yearly so they are set.

Steve sold his camper van and used the money from that to buy a Premier Holden Sedan. 1st time he's been out of debt for years. Says everything is cash from now on. I hope he means it. So far he's not courting very seriously. (u) Doesn't want to get too serious, the way he throws money around. Diamond Jim Brady (without the diamonds).

Joyce is OK. Vivis OK too. Cricket keeps them fairly well occupied on the T.V. Steven or I never watch cricket. All the women here are keen on it. They play a lot of baseball here but you've got to be lucky to see it on T.V. I watch the footy, Rugby Union and Rugby leagues. Good games.

I'll sign off now. Thanks muchly for the book. It came in very good shape. If you see Dave and Nellie say "HI" from us. All the Best.

Paul, Joyce & family

Hello Ivan and Carol,

Just a few lines to let you know that "Inside This House of Skye" arrived in perfect condition. You're a good packer. There were no visible signs of stress or strain anywhere. We really enjoyed it. I especially liked the photo of the Catholic church sitting up there on the hill. In my day there was a house sitting there too, where-in lived the Hoggs. Your mother boarded with them the 2 years she went to Ringling High School. I can remember we used to go up there and pick her up and take her home for the week ends. She was ofcourse older than Marj. but they were like sisters. She really enjoyed the time she spent with them.

I don't know what is happening over there as No body has written lately. At Xmas we recieved a spate of Xmas cards from my old school mates but there's been very little since. Delores wrote and told us about Wally's lip transplant but since then We've had nothing. It's not because we haven't written either, as we have. Must be Wally's tennis elbow, I have the same complaint myself.

Don't you worry about not showing us around. It was really great meeting you and Carol. Carol was like I'd pictured her in my mind, but you were'nt. I'd thought you'd be a tall guy. I don't know why I thought that but I did. The other time I saw you you were 5 yrs. old with red hair and an abundance of good freckles.

It's good to hear you are working hard and had a relentless year. If the mind is active, the rest will look after its self. Myself, just turn that around, if the body is active the mind is at rest. Follow that one,???Didn't think you would.

Jo, Grand Viv are well and happy. Steve gets his holidays in 2 weeks and he, Joyce, and I are going up to Cairns and live it up for a week. Rented car, self contained flat. and Etc. They have an International air port now and are quite proud of it.

Last year while we were over there, Steve was here by himself (with the dog) and it rained the whole time. So, he deserves a good holiday this year. We'll take some photos and send you while we're ~~at~~ there.

This letter will come as a surprise to you, won't it? You thought Xmas would be the next time you heard from us. Well, anyhow, I'll send you a Xmas card too. Well, keep in touch.

Love,

Paul Joyce, +3

I don't know what is happening over there as time goes on with them. One week here five weeks. One letter enjoyed the the week ends. One was organized over from well. To be on there and back and no and take her home for went to visiting her school. I can remember me being home. Last winter received with from the 5 letters and was a home sitting there too. Where-in I had the center sitting on there on the hill. In all that time if I especially liked the photo of the Catholic of across of Britain and more. We really enjoyed don't a good book. There were no letters from the house of John, sitting in perfect condition. Just a few times to let you know that "I'm in" Hello I am and good.

Hello Ivan and Carol,

Well, to use that Yankee phrase, "How are you doing"? Hope you are well and happy. We're OK for the most part, creaking, and groaning, in the joints, hate to face up to steps and small hills, don't relish the hot humid days, so most of it is just age catching up with us. That was speaking for the wife and I. On the other hand I go for an hrs. walk every morning from 5 to 6, which I enjoy. It's along side a lagoon and no houses so just have to commune with Mother nature and the birds (black swans, ducks, laughing jackasses, parrots (black and white), crows, pee-wees, and magpies to mention a few. Then I have breakfast and work gardening or mowing for 2 hrs. in the forenoon and 2 in the after noon. In between times I read, listen to the tape recorder (Jazz or classical) or just have a nap. Eat well and sleep well and don't watch hardly any TV. So, all in all, I can't complain. Joyce sleeps too much in the day time but that's not really her fault. She has to get off her wonky foot and it's hard to stay awake if one lays down. She stays up late at nite and drinks too much coffee. Don't tell her I said so. As far as Viv and the young ones go they are full of beans all the time. Viv has been taking out all the prizes in the weight watchers of late. A couple of silvery cups and a big tray of fruit. That's for loosing the most weight of any of them for the week. I can't see it, but those scales don't lie.

Pauline has finally started teaching piano. She has 11 pupils at present. That should take a bit of the weight off Denis as the sole provider. They'll be able to pay off their house more quickly now. Denis works as a brake specialist with the Goodyear mob.

Steve is going strong at the moment. Had 2 wks. off with a pulled muscle in the back. I think he enjoyed the 1st week but was getting bored the 2nd.

Hope you enjoyed your sojourn in Scotland if you're not still there. Too cold to be there now. I'd think it'd be as bad as Montana if not worse. I suppose you both picked up that Bobbie Burns twang while you were there. I think I'd like his poetry if I could translate it. Hope the Novel is progressing. I can see there'd have to be a powerful lot of research before you even started. Do you have to promote what you write or does the publishers do that? Anyway I hope it hits the top list.

Hot and humid here now and very dry. The rainy season is near so anything can happen. That always brings the cyclones down the Q'd coast. Hope my roof stays on.

Have had several letters from Delores. She's a marvelous letter writer. Just like being there talking to her. If it weren't for her I'd not know what was happening over there. Wally's tennis elbow is playing up as usual. Hope Bud stands the winter OK. Must be hard on him then.

Federal election coming up here on Sat. The papers are full of nothing else. One good thing, by the time they all say their bit, it goes to make fat editions. Them and the Super market adds. There's plenty of starters for the election. To name a few Labor, National, Liberal, Democrat, Country, Anti-Nuclear, and the communist. I may have missed a few. Doesn't worry me as I've yet to vote, either there or here. I'm still an alien. The Gallup polls all reckon Labor and Mr. Hawke will win by a huge majority.

I'll sign off now by wishing you both all the best for 1985. En-closed a clipping about one of Australia's literary greats. Thought you might enjoy reading it.

Love,
Paul, Joyce & family

17/Dec/1977

Dear Ivan and Carol,

Just a few lines so you'll know we're still about. We are reasonably well. Old age and some of it's complaints catching up with us. A year gone before we even realise it. We are experiencing an unusually hot summer this year. Violent storm at present. We had hail about the size of eggs one day last week. No broken windows as luckily it came straight down. Last year we had one and it broke about 40 panes of glass on the west side of the house. The insurance paid for it so no problem. When you come out don't come for Xmas. June, July, and August are the coolest months. If you plan to hike, you'll won't some cool days. We're about 26 miles from the coast. Cool breezes and beautiful scenery there anytime. Day long boat trips out to the Islands. Fishing if you're keen. I've yet to catch anything worth while. But I don't try very hard. Steven does, but he's had no great luck either. Both kids are home on holidays now. Steve put in for several apprenticeships but to date, no reply. If no luck he can go back to school for another year, as he's only 15. They both passed OK. I went down to Brisbane and attended the graduation at the Con. Pauline was in the chorus. Very colorful and very musical, the program. We also got her her new place to board for next term. It's a private home, I met the people and they seem quite nice. She should be well looked after there. She's still keen on the music so should do well. Flute last term (passed) and the harpsichord (of all instruments) this term and piano every term of course. They've a new 4-5 storied building, with everything laid on. It's situated just at the edge of the Botanical Gardens so is really quite pleasant. The students are all quite dedicated as are the teachers judging by the concert I heard. Pauline and I also went to See the Opera Carmen one after noon. Very good too. Put on by an all Aussie cast. All the same I was glad to get back to Rocky. These big cities frighten me now. I wouldn't drive a car there, that's for sure. Free ways, one way streets, and any number of other traffic hazards. Does Not worry Pauline. She doesn't drive a car there but she rode her bike all the way into Roma St. Station and I reckon that would be worse. She does drive the car here at home.

Well, I'll sign off for now and write again
latter. Hope you both had a good year.

Love,

Paul, Joyce, Jennifer

14/Dec/1975

Dear Ivan and Carol,

xmas in the offing, and I'm running late as usual. One of the years I'll beat it and get everything done right on-time.

Hope you are both well and happy, and prospering. Here, we are all fairly well, and though not thriving, getting by ok as long as we both keep working. Getting closer to our objective, as Pauline graduated from the Grammar School a couple weeks ago. Things are shaping up for her future efforts, as we have it from a pretty fair source that she is to get a scholarship to the Q'ld. Cons. of Music. She has filled the application form and made a tape of her playing both of which now will be sent down to Brisbane. They have a place near the cons. where they board, that is the ones who go there. She has made application to get into there.

Steve's finished his 2nd year at the Grammar. His present plans are to be an electrician, a schuba diver, and a fisherman, Sorry, I've got them in the wrong order. Fisherman comes 1st. He's only 13 and is taller than I am and weighs about 196 lbs. Heaven help us when he grows up. Played football for the school this year. They reckon he was a bit hard to tackle.

I sent a tape to Wally and have written to Bud. Haven't heard from them yet, but will in the near future, no doubt.

All election excitement here over the last few weeks. Headlines to-day are FRAZER BY A MILE. I can see a bad year coming up with strikes, and confrontations galore. Enclosed find a few pertinent clippings.

Well, AMerry Xmas and Happy 1976 to you both.

Love,
Paul, Joyce, + Reuben.

8/Dec/1974

Dear Ivan,

Received your letter, clipping and the card. Thanks very much for looking after everything and letting me know all about it. Time and money beat me, I just couldn't get there. It was a shock when Wally rang. I couldn't get my wits together to have a very lucid conversation. I've thought of many things since that I wanted to ask and talk about. I still have a sort of numb feeling when I think about it. Just doesn't seem right that Mom's not here any more. Guess I should be thankful and grateful for all those years she was there. One always knew you could go home to Mom and everything would be OK. I think the fact that you made it possible and gave her the confidence to come out here and see us made her happy. I tried to get her to settle down for a longer time, but it wasn't home and she kept to her schedule. Seeing her off at the airport was one of the most difficult moments of my life. I knew that was it and she knew that was it.

Surely hope Bud is getting along alright now. It'd really be a terrible blow to him. Why people are singled out and given so much to bear for so long a time as Bud was is beyond me.

However you've sorted out the things is OK with me Ivan. Thanks again for that. Let me know about any costs I could send you. I'll do my best.

It's good that she had such a large funeral. I'm certain she'd have many friends and no enemies. As you say her thoughts were never of herself but always of others and how she could help them. The kids took it quite hard here. She was a champion as far as they were concerned. Taught them to play solitaire and card games and she and Steve had a good session in plastic weaving. I think it is good and right that she is buried next to your father. Perhaps someday I'll be able to visit them.

Wally seemed quite natural on the phone. Thank heaven I was there when it rang. Viv took the call

and said someone wanted me from overseas. To be truthful, I thought it would be Bud. We talked for a bit and then Wally said "well, I'll let you have it". Then he told me just what you've said in your letter about her last moments. Except for the fact we were on strike(a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ month one) I'd have been at work.

It'll be a change for Wally looking after daughters instead of sons. He'll enjoy it. They are more easily managed than sons. Sons seem to take the competitive attitude, atleast my son does. He's only 12 so perhaps he'll wake up to himself. I can still out run and out fight him, but he's a better muscian and a better swimmer.

We hope that you and Carol can come out sometime in the future and see us and spend some time with us. There's always free board and room and you can have one of the cars to get about in. You'd not want to hike here as it's to far between places. If you ever do decide to, let us know and we'll get out the red carpet. I last saw you when you were 5, and you'd not remember me at all, but we'll catch up.

I'll close now by wishing you and Carol a Happy Xmas and a prosperous New 1975. Xmas want seem the same here as we were always in the process of getting Mom a tspe ready. Well, By for now. Thanks again for everything.

Love and the best,

Paul, Joyce, & family.

Hello Ivan and Carol,

The wife gave me several cards to pick from, some with kangaroos, some with koalas, but I did the right thing and decided on this. After all Xmas is about Christ. There's too much commercialism on everything that matters these days.

Anyhow, here's hoping you are both enjoying good health and happiness. We are all well and happy here.

I'll bet you really enjoyed your stay in England and vicinity. That's the one way to see it WALK. It doesn't go by so fast then. It's not very big, but what a history.

Yes, we did send a tape to Mom. I didn't say much to you in it as I ~~am~~ didn't (everytime I back spce it goes crackers) know you were going to be there. To make up for this oversight we will send you a tape of your very own. That is., some time in the New Year. OK???? You say you enjoy music Carol, so you'll get music. It's laid on here. That is, as long as ~~the~~ Dad stays on their backs, and that's ALL the time. I was never a Champion myself, but I sure made a couple. Pauline is contemplating teaching music for a living. She also has several other contemplations too.

All these troubles at home (Montana), well I don't know what to say. For better or for worse, that'll do me. Anytime my wife can find anyone better than me (in the same age group) well good luck to her. Maybe that's what wally is saying too.

One thing I do hope that Bud comes out alright. He's had so much to put up with for so long. I haven't written to him as there again I don't know what to say. I don't want to say the wrong thing. There is a place in Sydney for people suffering from that complaint. Evidently it is the best, as they come over here from The States to go to it. They reckon there is nothing to compare with it over there. Also they seem to think there will be a breakthrough on treatment for it anytime now. All we can do is hope and pray it will be soon, and that it will help Bud.

Mom seems quite bright in all her letters. It's really good to hear from her. All these trouble bother her. She'll just have to take them with a "grain of salt". We're all too old to listen to her now. She gave very good advice in the past when we were younger. Much of it I listened to, and there is much more that I wish I HAD listened to. She always seems in good spirits when she writes, but the worry shows thru.

I'll sign off now. We all wish you both a very Merry XMAS and a happy and prosperous 1974.

We'll send this to Montana in hopes it'll catch you there.

Best wishes

Paul Joyce, & results.



*Merry
Christmas*

*To Wish You
the Blessings
of a
Joyous Christmas
and a
Happy New Year*

*SEE
(OVERLEAF)*

24 Dec. 1987

Dear Paul--

After all these years, the Nathan St. address goes into retirement from my address book, huh? Carol and I will think of you now in your flat; our sole experience was the winter of '72-3 we spent in London, where we promptly had to forget American notions of finding an "apartment" and learn to inquire about a "flat." A locating service ~~wasn't~~ that went by the name of Universal Aunty soon found us one; yours sounds cozier and more weathertight.

Dave called last night, inviting us to fill in two places at their Christmas dinner table where expected friends had to cancel out, and we regretted we're already committed elsewhere. Especially since Dave and Nellie are having roast beef, and our destination is going to feature turkey! I did get to see Dave and his son John, though, about three weeks ago when I was signing books at a shopping mall down toward their end of Seattle. John is growing tall, and seems maybe to have Nellie's quietness; I gather from Dave's report that it's Shanie Beth who has inherited the McAfee gift of gab and mischief. Dave ruefully says Joyce is much entertained by the fact that he now has a child of the pesky sort he was.

You're right that I am in the book-churning business as usual, and it dawns on me that I don't remember having shipped a copy of the latest to Australia. I'll remedy that, just as soon as the postal service gets past Christmas. This one is called Dancing at the Rascal Fair, and is the story of the grandparents of the English Creek characters; homesteaders to Montana, arriving in 1889 and following their lives through the big winter of 1919. It's been far and away my most successful book in terms of sales and notice; I'll try think to insert with your copy of the book a sample interview, done by a young woman now on the Tacoma newspaper who lived some years in Montana.

Also, at the risk of dragging you along memory lane, I wanted to pass along to you, Paul, some of the moments I've had this autumn as people out of our Montana past would come up to me in bookstores or speaking halls. I found a lot of those moments very surprising, and many of them emotionally moving. In no particular order, here's a list of some of those people:

--Edith Brekke, not a surprise, because we see her occasionally in Helena, but just a pleasure: dressed in a handsome russet pants suit, looking very trim and spiffy.

--an elderly gent in Butte, whose name I didn't recognize but who had come down to the bookstore in his best (quite ancient) suit and tie to let me know he used to fetch the mail to "Anna" Doig; I can't recall where that was, but I think at one of the little spots along the Milwaukee Road. As what he was telling about occurred long before I did, we had a disconnected conversation--interspersed with his exclamations of "How about that!"--with me trying desperately to recall distant details of my aunt Anna's life so I could figure out what he was talking about. Only after he left, with me still baffled but with him having gone away happy, did I realize he was talking about my grandmother, Annie Campbell Doig, and not Anna--and I would have loved to have asked him some things about her!

--in Salem, Oregon, amid the booksigning a guy approached me, pulled from his pocket an old sepia photograph of a very wide woman sitting with a very lofty

man standing directly behind her, and asked me, "Do you know who these are?" I said, "They look like Kate and Walter Badgett," and so they proved to be. I've lost track, Paul, whether the Badgetts were around Ringling when you were a lad as much as they were the few years I lived there with Grandma; but in my time they lived in the bungalow just down the slope and a bit to the right of Grandma's house. Directly downslope from the Brekkes, in ~~most~~ other words. And they were mighty people in our lives, Grandma's closest friends, outsize in all ways--Kate nosey, ornery and kind of queenlike, all in one, while Walter was as eloquently softspoken as he was towering. The photo-bearer was, I think, Walter's grand-nephew, and he said he has one other picture of Walter, as a guard on a Kansas penitentiary chain gang.

--And finally this, from Eugene, Oregon, when I did a reading at the University of Oregon a few weeks ago. Amid the people wanting to talk to me afterward, a good-looking but plainly dressed man evidently in his early sixties said, a bit hesitantly: "You're a busy man here. If I could, I wanted to talk to you about your grandparents." I was trying to get away to supper with a friend, and figured I might be in for what sometimes happens, a person telling me a tale about their own family that something I've written reminds them of. I said politely as I could, "Yeah, I am busy, I'm afraid. What about ~~them~~ my grandparents?" He: "I knew Tom and Bessie." Well, his name is Jim Waring, and again I don't know if he'll chime in your memory; but he was a boy on a ranch near Goat Mountain in the Wilsall country when you Ringers first came to Montana. If I have it right, your folks stayed, or worked at, the Waring ranch at some point early in their Montana life. Jim said he remembered playing with my mother--I didn't have the wit to ask if he remembered you--and he had a couple of stories to pass along. Both are about Grandma, who made a real mark in his memory. Your dad was doing some wagon freighting of somekind into Yellowstone Park, and Grandma went with him. In the tent at night, she was awakened time and again by some sound she couldn't identify, a kind of big BLOOP. No creature she had ever heard; very mystifying. Next morning, she found that the camp had been pitched near to some of Yellowstone's boiling mud pots, blooming merrily away. The other story--you'll know better than I whether this actually fits your dad and ~~his~~ mom in all its particulars--again is about a wagon trip, when your dad turned the reins over to Grandma while he did some fiddle playing to while away their travel time. His fiddling slowed and slowed, until at last he was dozing. Grandma, stuck with the driving chore, angrily veered the team and wagon into the stones at the side of the road, jouncing Tom Ringer rudely awake--he demands to know, can't she even drive? while she demands to know, can't he even fiddle? What do you think, Paul--a likely tale, or just one of those that ought to be true?

Well, I simply wanted to share those with you. Montana and I suppose inevitably the Doig and Ringer past will be on my mind for the next couple of years yet, as my next book involves characters--Jick from English Creek will be back--driving around Montana during its statehood centennial celebrations in 1989. Carol and I in fact will have to do some traveling around by motor home, perhaps early this summer, in the sameway my characters are. It should be interesting, and we hope fun, although either of us has ever driven one of those monstrous motor homes, such as a Winnebago 25 or 30 feet long. I guess we'll see if we can rent one in Billings, and head out for places such as Ekalaka and Jordan and Miles City. I'm intrigued by your mention of Marjorie Durand in Phillipsburg, and we'll indeed try to see her. One last bit before I close: my books are now on audio cassettes, done by a reader who's not too bad (though a bit off with some Montana terms, such as pronouncing logey "loggy"); if you have access to a tape recorder and would be interested in a bit of listening--actually, a book amounts to about 20 sessions of 45 minutes each; Carol and I listen to one 45-minute side of a cassette each night--I'd happily loan you an extra set of English Creek. If I do say so myself, it's fairly entertaining! Anyway, let me ~~know~~ if it's something you'd like, and meantime, our best to you and Joyce and Pauline and all.

7 May '86

Dear Paul--

I've just finished my day's writing on my homesteader novel, and so had better try to bring myself from there in 1910 to the present time. One all too unfortunate reminder of modern times--we're getting our first Chirnobyl rain today, the first moisture with radioactive traces from that nuclear plant fire in the Ukraine. Not even close to a risky level, the experts keep saying, but how anyone can think of that stuff accumulating in the air and water and earth without being glum about it, I don't savvy.

However, it's not our current perilous time but one of the past that made me think I'd better drop you this line, and tell you about a World War Two trove of letters that has come to me, by way of Wally. At that point a month or so before he died, when he was naming his pallbearers to Dave, he also specified that I was to get a packet of letters my mother had written to him during the war. I was greatly gratified--although I have many photos etc., I've never had anything written by her--and so last Sunday I drove down to Dave's and picked up the packet from him. (Brief family report: John is now a tall polite boy, blonde as a barley field, and Shaney, who was a baby when you were here, is a chattering charmer. My father-in-law Frank was with me, and upon meeting him Shaney asked this 83-year-old gent, "What's your mama's name?") When I got home with the letters I noticed immediately they all were postmarked 1945. That told me what I was in for, and indeed it was the case: they were my mother's letters to Wally of the last six months of her life, the last letter only a week before her death. Also in the packet were two letters from my dad to Wally in the aftermath of her death, and several letters from your mom, Grandma, throughout 1945. Grandma's letters bring me to the immediate reason for writing you: in one of them was your letter of 28 May, 1945, telling her you and Joyce are about to be married. (You were in Midgee, so as I savvy it, the letter went from Australia to Grandma in Wilsall, then back out into the Pacific to wherever Wally was on the Ault!) Is it something you would like to have? I ask rather than forthwith sending it because I know not everyone has my fascination with the past. Either way, the letter is a couple of pages, in pretty good condition, and I think quite charming as you recount the wedding preparations etc. So, let me know if it's an artifact that that should make one more trip across the Pacific, all right?

The other reason I write, Paul, entirely has to do with my interest in the past and how families survive, sometimes in spite of themselves. I fully knew and wrote as frankly as I could in This House of Sky about the bad feelings between your mom and my dad, in the years before they miraculously made up, to bring me up. These letters, which I find extraordinarily powerful emotionally, show that the situation between them was at least as bad as I ever thought. I know you were far away from the scene, but do you have any idea of what came between them? It's plain that my dad used the fact of sharing a house with the old Wilsall ~~widower~~ John Wesling against her, the years she cooked for Wesling; but that wasn't the first instance of a cook under the same roof with an employer--and it's entirely similar to the way Dad ended up in life with your mother. So I tend to see that rankle of his as an excuse against her rather than a real reason. Any notions you have as to when or why they drew apart so sharply, I'd certainly welcome. I ask not for curiosity's sake, or at least not only for that, but because it interests me enough to try write sometime, maybe as fiction, a brief story of what took them apart--which would show how all the more astounding it was that they ended up in life together, in some form of love. One of the best critics of House of Sky says I'm actually writing about accommodation, how people learn to accommodate to each other and the hard parts of life; I guess that's right, and I'm simply trying to search deeper how accommodation can happen. So, anything you can think of, I'd be more than happy to hear, and please feel free to be frank about my dad, as I can become the writer rather than the son to hear it.

Other than dealing with surprise letter packets from 41 years ago, I guess life is going much as usual here. Carol is having an exceptionally good

term of teaching, this spring, as she's teaching only 2 classes instead of 3--but at full pay. In short, she's on $\frac{2}{3}$ medical leave, recompense for straining her voice a year ago last winter when she had to teach in a classroom with a broken furnace. So she's feeling good, the voice seems recuperated, and we're both looking ahead to summer. Montana isn't in our picture this year--I have to stay here at the typewriter and finish this homesteader book--but in '87 we'll be out there for considerable time. Here's hoping you and yours are well, and all the best from both of us.

4 August '86

Dear Paul and all--

Excuse this gaudy letterhead paper; it's a printer's error (I estimate he made the letterhead only about five times too big) that I'm trying to work off on understanding correspondents.

We very much appreciated the photos of the young Moores. They look like a lively clan. And thanks greatly for your response to my question about my dad and your mom, Paul--I think you hit the nail on the head with your answer. In the letters I inherited from Wally there are a couple from my dad to him, in the months after my mother's death, and it's plain from them how stunned and grieving my dad was; the fact that she died out there in the mountains, so soon after Arizona, must have weighed terrifically on him. Yet I find from her letters to Wally that she felt livelier and healthier than I ever imagined she could at that stage of her life; her letters right up to a few days before her death show her going right along with life. Anyway, I can well see how people could come to cross-purposes in the aftermath of something like that, especially with me, and the question of who could best raise me, thrown into the bargain. So, I much appreciate your delving back into memories that aren't the easiest or pleasantest to revisit.

As to your letter about the event of May 31, 1945--belated happy 41st anniversary, you two!--it properly belongs with your family, and here it is, enclosed. I've made a photocopy to put with your mom's letter to Wally, for completeness of the record as I try to hang onto these family letters, and so the original is for you or Steve or whoever to keep. Actually, I think it ought to be framed and hung in the living room, as testimonial of a blushing groom--what do you think?

Speaking of letters as we have been, I thought you might like to see the enclosed clipping.

Not too much to report here; I'm deliberately making this a quick brief note, so as to get the wedding letter to you before I lose track of doing so. I continue to bang away at the homesteader novel, and will be doing so the rest of this year. Carol and I are just back from Colorado, a 3-day trip to a resort called Vail, 100 miles west of Denver. I was invited there to speak to a group of about 60 presidents of Methodist colleges, all of whom had read (or at least were assigned to read) This House of Sky. I was told frankly that I was the "intellectual" relief from their other sessions on fund-raising, ~~studies~~ decline in college enrollments, and so on. The Colorado Rockies were spectacular; Vail itself is at 8,300 feet in elevation, and we were out and around at 10-11,000 feet much of the time. It truly makes the heart pound, exerting at those altitudes, and so we were careful in what little hiking we did. Now, it's back to home, and normal--enjoying the vegetable garden and fending with friends passing through on their way to the Vancouver world's fair. We hope you're all thriving--best from us both.

12 March '86

Dear Paul--

Sorry I haven't managed to get back to you sooner about the Social Security matter, but Carol's been down with flu, I've had a writing deadline to meet, and letters just have not been in the picture. Anyway, such as I know of the Social Security is this: I called the Seattle office and the woman there said she would send you a request postcard--from the sounds of it, you'll have to fill in that card and mail it back to Social Security, requesting to know your Social Security contributions through the years. This Seattle clerk also said she thinks you'll have to make any application for Social Security benefits through the U.S. Embassy--in Canberra, I suppose? (A public library can probably get you that address, and just sending your letter to the ambassador ought to get it handled by somebody on his staff.) I think if I were you, given how slow and complex the paperwork of all governments is, I'd go ahead and write that letter to the embassy--even before you receive the Social Security request card, unless it reaches you magically fast--explaining your situation, your years of Army service and any other Social Security-covered employment you may have had (before the war?), your citizenship status, provide them your Social Security number, and ask ~~them~~ their assistance in finding out if you're eligible for Social Security benefits. My thinking here is that an embassy may get quicker answers from Social Security than an individual citizen; also, if you're told by the embassy that the first step is to send a request postcard to Social Security to find out your contributions, you'll already have that underway.

Having said this much, I ~~now~~ now have to say this may not amount to anything for you. Carol is skeptical that it will, thinking that Social Security has a minimum number of years--actually I believe they measure it in quarters of years, for some reason known only to them--that your Army service alone won't total. On the other hand, the friend of ours who recently began drawing Social Security on the basis of his Marine career (which was a full 20 years) thinks the minimum may have been dropped or abandoned. I am in the middle of these views, merely thinking it can cost you just a bit of paper and postage to find out one way or the other. So, this is about as much as I know, or apparently can do: it looks as if the U.S. embassy will have to carry the ball (they do carry the thing in rugby, don't they?) for you, okay?

We're within about 10 days of Carol's spring break from college, when we'll spend a recuperative week on the Oregon coast. So, all goes pretty well, if a bit too swiftly, here. Congratulations to all on Amy. Did I tell you I coincidentally have a character (not my most winsome one, sorry to say) named Luke in this next book?--Lucas to his Scotch friends, Luke to the Montanans.

all best wishes, and good luck

Dear Paul and all--

I was glad to get your letter, Paul; they're always a delight. Mixed emotions here about the family health report: sorry to hear about the operations but relieved they weren't worse than they were.

Well, we have snow here in Seattle, have had it for nearly 2 weeks and are getting damn tired of it. The temperature was 19 when I got up this morning, and it promptly sank to 16. Two sizable snowfalls, 5-6 inches each, hit us, rare for this city and ungodly early in the season--it's still 20 days until "winter" here. Carol has been walking to work, about a mile up the hill to her college, and I've stayed hunkered in here at my typewriter. Her college closed one day because of the snow--the enrollment ~~xxxxx~~ is nearly 5,000 students and virtually all of them drive to campus--but kept open the other days despite sparse attendance. We bought a new car, our first-ever brand new car, the day before the snow, then looked at it sit outside through the next several days of storm. Have driven it since then, and like it, especially the front-wheel drive, which handles much better on snow, ice, slush; it's a ~~Buick~~ Buick, which these days is about the size of a Honda or Toyota. Carol (she did the shopping) looked at a Honda, but this car was about \$5,500 less than a Honda would have been; Hondas are selling like crazy in this country. The Japanese have really given the American car-makers a run for their money, these past several years.

Like you, I'm awaiting a Christmas card report from Wally and Delores. Carol and I did make a trip to Montana this summer, but went past their place about 5:30 one morning and so we didn't barge in. Edith Brekke reported she saw Wally at the Ringling school reunion in August. Not only do I wish you guys could have been there for that, I wish I had been! We had company, painting of the inside of the house and sundry other chores to do, and so felt we just couldn't afford time for the trip. At Marion Lucas's behest I donated one of those INSIDE THIS HOUSE OF SKY photo books for a door prize, and Joe Pitman, some of the former depot agent in Ringling, won it; I received a letter of thanks from his wife Betty and then there was a note of thanks from Joe tagged onto that--Carol said it looked like Joe was a grade-schooler being forced to write a thank you letter for a Christmas gift. Anyway, if I heard right some 400 people showed up--none of them of course the quality of you and me, Paul.

The time we did spend in Montana, about 3 weeks, was fairly disheartening this summer. A terrific drought, maybe the worst of the century. Crops were plowed under by the 14th of July in northern Montana, too short and scant to harvest, and hay was terribly thin. Carol and I were in Great Falls the 2nd of July, when a big forest fire broke out about 40 miles from White Sulphur, and that afternoon at 4 it was 100 degrees with a 55 mile an hour hot wind. Maybe you Aussies are used to that sort of thing, but we wilted in our tracks. Most of our time was around Helena, where we were able to borrow a house while friends were in Europe, and I gathered some good research on homesteaders at the Montana Historical Society. Didn't get to see Edith Brekke, who was visiting other Brekkes. I'm about halfway through the writing of this homesteader novel, which will be about the grandfather of the boy Jick I wrote of in English Creek.

I appreciated the article about Jon Cleary. Coincidentally, I bought and read his best-known novel (here), The Sundowners, not too long ago; I had always liked the movie, and thought the book was dandy, too. Quite a number of Australian writers are making their reputation in this country as their books show up here, and I say more power to them. Inasmuch as Montana is somewhat regarded as part of the "outback" here, I feel some kinship with the people who write of your great spaces and geography.

A word about cricket: Joyce and Viv, I admire your knowledge of it, but I'm in the baffled crowd with Paul! The one match I ever saw was not in Britain, but when I was in college near Chicago. Commonwealth students, nicknamed "The World", played the students from India, and I gave up watching in exhaustion when the score was something like India 210, The World 150.

That's about it from here. We are steady and thriving, and very much hope this finds you so, too. Let's do keep in touch--this too-large world can stand some of that. love to everybody

Dear Paul--

We greatly enjoyed your letter, and in these dark December mornings we'll think of you strolling around the lagoon in the Australian summer dawn. I envy you the birds, especially the black swans. Both Carol and I have a passion for watching birds, and often go to a long sandspit in the Strait of Juan de Fuca to see the waterfowl.

Given that Delores is your correspondent, you know more of Wally than I do. (I expect a Christmas letter from him any day, though.) And of Dave, I don't know much more, except that he has persevered with his schooling to the point where he could enter the University of Washington this autumn; I think he takes classes in the morning, goes to his Boeing job in the afternoon. Dave does have an endearing side. When he phoned a few months ago to tell us he'd been accepted at the University and his years-long quest for a college education, a course or two at a time, could now go on, he said: "I never was known for doing things the easy way!"

In late October I spent a week in Montana making bookstore appearances for my new novel, and let me think a bit here about people and places you might know. Brekkes, endless tall solemn friendly Brekkes appeared in the bookstores to say hello to me. Perhaps they were still out on the homestead in your Ringling years, but I think I remember that Alice Brekke arranged a kind of reunion when you, Joyce and Viv were in Montana? In any case, this time the Brekkes were male. Once it was Maynard standing before me, then after a little while another was standing there, so similar I wasn't sure it wasn't Maynard back again. But no, I think this one was Larry. All this was happening in a bookstore in downtown Bozeman, and then I went to the bookstore on the Montana State University, and in the line there was a towering young bearded man who looked familiar, could he be...? Yes, this one was the son of Olaf Brekke! May the Brekkes go on forever, and it looks as if they will. In Great Falls, a man came up and said he was Fred Stewart, who had taught school in Ringling around the time my mother was there. I met somebody else who was related to the Arthurs; somebody else, kin to the Kuhnes family. A professor of philosophy at Montana State U. in Bozeman is a descendant in the family of Tom and Mary Kerr of Sixteen. Astounding, the number of us in the world from Ringling and Sixteen.

You wondered about our Scotland trip. We were there most of July and it went well; indeed, with the strength of the American dollar then our money was worth more every day, and so the cost of the trip was much less than we'd feared. Most of the time we lived in university housing--St. Andrews, Glasgow, Edinburgh--and in Edinburgh had a furnished flat, usually used for graduate student housing, on the Royal Mile a hundred yards from the famous Castle. I managed to gather the research I needed for the next novel, about people coming to homestead in Montana in the 1880's, and Carol took photos of the towns and the landscape for me.

Since then, much of my time has gone into the promotion of my novel English Creek. (Not all the reviews have been nearly as glowing as the one on the back of this, but most have been praising.) The publisher does some, such as advertising, but because my "fame" or whatever it is is mostly in this region--from Montana to here--I'm the one who knows the most worthwhile bookstores to sign books in, etc., and so I do much of the promotion effort myself. When I'm finished with it all on Dec. 15, I'll have autographed about 3,000 copies of my book (out of what we hope will be 25,000 copies sold, as a national total). One of those, not so incidentally, will find its way to the Ringers of Rockhampton, but I suppose it'll take months. I just received a card from my literary agent in London thanking me for books I sent her--in August! I can't fathom how they handle overseas parcels; it seems to me ships simply don't go that slow any more, so why does it take such colossal time?

Before I sign off, thanks for the articles about Xavier Herbert. I much wanted to read "Poor Fellow My Country" when it was published here a few years ago, but it was so immense and the print was so small that I was daunted, and I am not easily daunted by a book. A number of Australians have strong literary reputations here: Thomas Keneally, whom I admire greatly; Elizabeth Jolley, David Malouf, John Hooker.

Our best to you and yours, Paul, for 1985. Write again when the spirit moves you--or sooner!

17 Nov. '83

Dear Paul, Joyce and Viv--

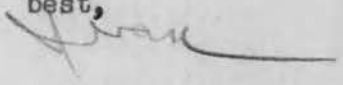
I hope this comes through in decent shape. We've had an awful problem of the publisher shipping these books in this country; they seem to be just a size to slide around in whatever they're mailed in, poke out the corners, and arrive damaged. I've chosen a tight-fitting envelope to try defeat that, but we'll see. Do let me know if the cover is badly damaged, as the publisher will provide me extra ones and I can send a decent one along to you.

To me, this book is something of a mixed blessing. It's more somber than I'd like, and I much wish the photographer had shown some of the people of the country. But some of the photos are of the country you visited, Joyce and Viv, and that you grew up in, Paul, and so I hope the book can be a mild sort of memento of your journey here earlier this year. I very much wish we, and Dave and family as well, had managed a less ~~unpleasant~~ hectic welcome when you came to Seattle; I in particular regret not having had the intended day to show you around here, but I know the lodging situation and the weather argued for you all to head back to Montana. Anyway, we're exceedingly glad we had the evening of all of us together here at our house.

All is well with us, although still busy. This has been a relentless year. In August Carol's parents moved out here, after 80 years in New Jersey, and she's put a lot of effort into getting them resettled. I've meanwhile been battling to finish my novel about Montana during the Depression, and am now just a few weeks from doing so. Thus far, 1984 looks like a saner year.

Carol and I were in Montana for a month this summer, but in the White Sulphur country only for the 4th of July, and Wally and Dolores weren't around. We did get to Ringling, and saw the Doig brothers' alcohol plant in operation.

And there's not too much else to report. You are in our thoughts, and we're glad to have had the pleasure of seeing you three. Merry Christmas.

best,


73

Dear Paul, Joyce and family

Before long we'll be off to Montana to spend Christmas with Grandma. We can make only a short stay -- fly there on the 22d and back home on the 26th -- but it's better than nothing. She may have written you that she came out here to visit us for about a week in September when Wally drove out to see Dave and Nellie. Her health is pretty good, especially for someone of her age, but she had good days and bad days. So far she seems perfectly capable of living by herself as she has been, and we all think that's the best thing she can be doing. Wally keeps an eye on her, and a number of her friends in town visit her and drive her uptown for occasional shopping chores. So, while she is not ~~xx~~ as thoroughly vigorous as she was before her heart attack of a few years ago, she seems to be doing fairly well.

I assume Grandma has been keeping you posted about the family affairs in Montana. Bud now is in a nursing home in Helena; Grandma said in her last letter she and Wally had visited him. I think he may want to be moved to the nursing home in White Sulphur (in the basement of the hospital there) when there is available space. Also, as I understand it Wally has filed for divorce from Joyce. I really have no notion of what happened there, not having talked to either of them about it.

Now that Carol's sabbatical is behind us, we're both back at work much as usual. This summer I edited an anthology about American city life which will be published as a textbook in '74, and just recently I finished a sample chapter of another book. Carol continues to teach journalism and English at Shoreline College, still liking the job very much.

I can't recall how much I've told you about our stay in Britain. We enjoyed London last winter; the weather was very mild, and we walked all through the city. In March we went to Wales, then to Ireland, and early in April to Scotland. I ~~didn't~~ didn't manage to look up the Doig ancestry there, because I've never had any details about where the family came from. I did write to Dad's sister ~~M~~ Anna for some information, but it came too late to be of any help. I was impressed, however, by how much some parts of the Highlands look like Montana.

Late in April Carol's mother and father joined us for 2 weeks of sight-seeing in Britain and then a week in Holland. We all flew to New York together, and Carol and I then drove across the U.S., visiting friends along the way. We were travel-weary by the time we arrived back in Seattle, certainly. But it is a trip we'll treasure, perhaps a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

This country is undergoing some confusion in trying to adjust to the Arabs' petroleum shutdown. Gas rationing may be in the offing, and rationing of heating ~~oil~~ fuel seems definite. Unhappily the Nixon government seems unable to handle this situation -- or maybe any other -- very well, and it may be a troublesome winter for some people here.

That's about the sum of the news from us. I believe Grandma said you're sending a tape to her, so we'll undoubtedly hear that at Christmas. We hope all is well with you, and that you have a fine holiday season.

best wishes

24 Dec. 1987

Dear Paul--

After all these years, the Nathan St. address goes into retirement from my address book, huh? Carol and I will think of you now in your flat; our sole experience was the winter of '72-3 we spent in London, where we promptly had to forget American notions of finding an "apartment" and learn to inquire about a "flat." A locating service ~~which~~ that went by the name of Universal Aunty soon found us one; yours sounds cozier and more weathertight.

Dave called last night, inviting us to fill in two places at their Christmas dinner table where expected friends had to cancel out, and we regretted we're already committed elsewhere. Especially since Dave and Nellie are having roast beef, and our destination is going to feature turkey! I did get to see Dave and his son John, though, about three weeks ago when I was signing books at a shopping mall down toward their end of Seattle. John is growing tall, and seems maybe to have Nellie's quietness; I gather from Dave's report that it's Shanie Beth who has inherited the McAfee gift of gab and mischief. Dave ruefully says Joyce is much entertained by the fact that he now has a child of the posky sort he was.

You're right that I am in the book-churning business as usual, and it dawns on me that I don't remember having shipped a copy of the latest to Australia. I'll remedy that, just as soon as the postal service gets past Christmas. This one is called Dancing at the Rascal Fair, and is the story of the grandparents of the English Creek characters; homesteaders to Montana, arriving in 1889 and following their lives through the big winter of 1919. It's been far and away my most successful book in terms of sales and notice; I'll try think to insert with your copy of the book a sample interview, done by a young woman now on the Tacoma newspaper who lived some years in Montana.

Also, at the risk of dragging you along memory lane, I wanted to pass along to you, Paul, some of the moments I've had this autumn as people out of our Montana past would come up to me in bookstores or speaking halls. I found a lot of those moments very surprising, and many of them emotionally moving. In no particular order, here's a list of some of those people:

--Edith Brekke, not a surprise, because we see her occasionally in Helena, but just a pleasure: dressed in a handsome russet pants suit, looking very trim and spiffy.

--an elderly gent in Butte, whose name I didn't recognize but who had come down to the bookstore in his best (quite ancient) suit and tie to let me know he used to fetch the mail to "Anna" Doig; I can't recall where that was, but I think at one of the little spots along the Milwaukee Road. As what he was telling about occurred long before I did, we had a disconnected conversation--interspersed with his exclamations of "How about that!"--with me trying desperately to recall distant details of my aunt Anna's life so I could figure out what he was talking about. Only after he left, with me still baffled but with him having gone away happy, did I realize he was talking about my grandmother, Annie Campbell Doig, and not Anna--and I would have loved to have asked him some things about her!

--in Salem, Oregon, and the booksigning a guy approached me, pulled from his pocket an old sepia photograph of a very wide woman sitting with a very lofty

man standing directly behind her, and asked me, "Do you know who these are?" I said, "They look like Kate and Walter Badgett," and so they proved to be. I've lost track, Paul, whether the Badgetts were around Ringling when you were a lad as much as they were the few years I lived there with Grandma; but in my time they lived in the bungalow just down the slope and a bit to the right of Grandma's house. Directly downslope from the Brekkes, in ~~exact~~ other words. And they were mighty people in our lives, Grandma's closest friends, outsize in all ways--Kate nosey, ornery and kind of queenlike, all in one, while Walter was as eloquently softspoken as he was towering. The photo-bearer was, I think, Walter's grand-nephew, and he said he has one other picture of Walter, as a guard on a Kansas penitentiary chain gang.

--And finally this, from Eugene, Oregon, when I did a reading at the University of Oregon a few weeks ago. Amid the people wanting to talk to me afterward, a good-looking but plainly dressed man evidently in his early sixties said, a bit hesitantly: "You're a busy man here. If I could, I wanted to talk to you about your grandparents." I was trying to get away to supper with a friend, and figured I might be in for what sometimes happens, a person telling me a tale about their own family that something I've written reminds them of. I said politely as I could, "Yeah, I am busy, I'm afraid. What about ~~them~~ my grandparents?" He: "I knew Tom and Bessie." Well, his name is Jim Waring, and again I don't know if he'll chime in your memory; but he was a boy on a ranch near Goat Mountain in the Wilsall country when you Ringers first came to Montana. If I have it right, your folks stayed, or worked at, the Waring ranch at some point early in their Montana life. Jim said he remembered playing with my mother--I didn't have the wit to ask if he remembered you--and he had a couple of stories to pass along. Both are about Grandma, who made a real mark in his memory. Your dad was doing some wagon freighting of somekind into Yellowstone Park, and Grandma went with him. In the tent at night, she was awakened time and again by some sound she couldn't identify, a kind of big BLOOP. No creature she had ever heard; very mystifying. Next morning, she found that the camp had been pitched near to some of Yellowstone's boiling mud pots, blooming merrily away. The other story--you'll know better than I whether this actually fits your dad and ~~me~~ mom in all its particulars--again is about a wagon trip, when your dad turned the reins over to Grandma while he did some fiddle playing to while away their travel time. His fiddling slowed and slowed, until at last he was dozing. Grandma, stuck with the driving chore, angrily veered the team and wagon into the stones at the side of the road, jouncing Tom Ringer rudely awake--he demands to know, can't she even drive? while she demands to know, can't he even fiddle? What do you think, Paul--a likely tale, or just one of those that ought to be true?

Well, I simply wanted to share those with you. Montana and I appose inevitably the Doig and Ringer past will be on my mind for the next couple of years yet, as my next book involves characters--Jick from English Creek will be back--driving around Montana during its statehood centennial celebrations in 1989. Carol and I in fact will have to do some traveling around by motor home, perhaps early this summer, in the sameway my characters are. It should be interesting, and we hope fun, although either of us has ever driven one of those monstrous motor homes, such as a Winnebago 25 or 30 feet long. I guess we'll see if we can rent one in Billings, and head out for places such as Ekalaka and Jordan and Miles City. I'm intrigued by your mention of Marjorie Durand in Phillipsburg, and we'll indeed try to see her. One last bit before I close: my books are now on audio cassettes, done by a reader who's not too bad (though a bit off with some Montana terms, such as pronouncing logey "loggy"); if you have access to a tape recorder and would be interested in a bit of listening--actually, a book amounts to about 20 sessions of 45 minutes each; Carol and I listen to one 45-minute side of a cassette each night--I'd happily loan you an extra set of English Creek. If I do say so myself, it's fairly entertaining! Anyway, let me know if it's something you'd like, and meantime, our best to you and Joyce and Pauline and all.

4 August '86

Dear Paul and all--

Excuse this gaudy letterhead paper; it's a printer's error (I estimate he made the letterhead only about five times too big) that I'm trying to work off on understanding correspondents.

We very much appreciated the photos of the young Moores. They look like a lively clan. And thanks greatly for your response to my question about my dad and your mom, Paul--I think you hit the nail on the head with your answer. In the letters I inherited from Wally there are a couple from my dad to him, in the months after my mother's death, and it's plain from them how stunned and grieving my dad was; the fact that she died out there in the mountains, so soon after Arizona, must have weighed terrifically on him. Yet I find from her letters to Wally that she felt livelier and healthier than I ever imagined she could at that stage of her life; her letters right up to a few days before her death show her going right along with life. Anyway, I can well see how people could come to cross-purposes in the aftermath of something like that, especially with me, and the question of who could best raise me, thrown into the bargain. So, I much appreciate your delving back into memories that aren't the easiest or pleasantest to revisit.

As to your letter about the event of May 31, 1945--belated happy 41st anniversary, you two!--it properly belongs with your family, and here it is, enclosed. I've made a photocopy to put with your mom's letter to Wally, for completeness of the record as I try to hang onto these family letters, and so the original is for you or Steve or whoever to keep. Actually, I think it ought to be framed and hung in the living room, as testimonial of a blushing groom--what do you think?

Speaking of letters as we have been, I thought you might like to see the enclosed clipping.

Not too much to report here; I'm deliberately making this a quick brief note, so as to get the wedding letter to you before I lose track of doing so. I continue to bang away at the homesteader novel, and will be doing so the rest of this year. Carol and I are just back from Colorado, a 3-day trip to a resort called Vail, 100 miles west of Denver. I was invited there to speak to a group of about 60 presidents of Methodist colleges, all of whom had read (or at least were assigned to read) This House of Sky. I was told frankly that I was the "intellectual" relief from their other sessions on fund-raising, ~~stagnant~~ decline in college enrollments, and so on. The Colorado Rockies were spectacular; Vail itself is at 8,300 feet in elevation, and we were out and around at 10-11,000 feet much of the time. It truly makes the heart pound, exerting at those altitudes, and so we were careful in what little hiking we did. Now, it's back to home, and normal--enjoying the vegetable garden and fending with friends passing through on their way to the Vancouver world's fair. We hope you're all thriving--best from us both.

7 May '66

Dear Paul--

I've just finished my day's writing on my homesteader novel, and so had better try to bring myself from there in 1910 to the present time. One all too unfortunate reminder of modern times--we're getting our first Chirnobyl rain today, the first moisture with radioactive traces from that nuclear plant fire in the Ukraine. Not even close to a risky level, the experts keep saying, but how anyone can think of that stuff accumulating in the air and water and earth without being glum about it, I don't savvy.

However, it's not our current perilous time but one of the past that made me think I'd better drop you this line, and tell you about a World War Two trove of letters that has come to me, by way of Wally. At that point a month or so before he died, when he was naming his pallbearers to Dave, he also specified that I was to get a packet of letters my mother had written to him during the war. I was greatly gratified--although I have many photos etc., I've never had anything written by her--and so last Sunday I drove down to Dave's and picked up the packet from him. (Brief family report: John is now a tall polite boy, blonde as a barley field, and Shaney, who was a baby when you were here, is a chattering charmer. My father-in-law Frank was with me, and upon meeting him Shaney asked this 83-year-old gent, "What's your mama's name?") When I got home with the letters I noticed immediately they all were postmarked 1945. That told me what I was in for, and indeed it was the case: they were my mother's letters to Wally of the last six months of her life, the last letter only a week before her death. Also in the packet were two letters from my dad to Wally in the aftermath of her death, and several letters from your mom, Grandma, throughout 1945. Grandma's letters bring me to the immediate reason for writing you: in one of them was your letter of 28 May, 1945, telling her you and Joyce are about to be married. (You were in Midgee, so as I savvy it, the letter went from Australia to Grandma in Wilsall, then back out into the Pacific to wherever Wally was on the Ault!) Is it something you would like to have? I ask rather than forthwith sending it because I know not everyone has my fascination with the past. Either way, the letter is a couple of pages, in pretty good condition, and I think quite charming as you recount the wedding preparations etc. So, let me know if it's an artifact that that should make one more trip across the Pacific, all right?

The other reason I write, Paul, entirely has to do with my interest in the past and how families survive, sometimes in spite of themselves. I fully knew and wrote as frankly as I could in This House of Sky about the bad feelings between your mom and my dad, in the years before they miraculously made up, to bring me up. These letters, which I find extraordinarily powerful emotionally, show that the situation between them was at least as bad as I ever thought. I know you were far away from the scene, but do you have any idea of what came between them? It's plain that my dad used the fact of sharing a house with the old Wilsall ~~mother~~ John Wesling against her, the years she cooked for Wesling; but that wasn't the first instance of a cook under the same roof with an employer--and it's entirely similar to the way Dad ended up in life with your mother. So I tend to see that rankle of his as an excuse against her rather than a real reason. Any notions you have as to when or why they drew apart so sharply, I'd certainly welcome. I ask not for curiosity's sake, or at least not only for that, but because it interests me enough to try write sometime, maybe as fiction, a brief story of what took them apart--which would show how all the more astounding it was that they ended up in life together, in some form of love. One of the best critics of House of Sky says I'm actually writing about accommodation, how people learn to accommodate to each other and the hard parts of life; I guess that's right, and I'm simply trying to search deeper how accommodation can happen. So, anything you can think of, I'd be more than happy to hear, and please feel free to be frank about my dad, as I can become the writer rather than the son to hear it.

Other than dealing with surprise letter packets from 41 years ago, I guess life is going much as usual here. Carol is having an exceptionally good

term of teaching, this spring, as she's teaching only 2 classes instead of 3--but at full pay. In short, she's on $\frac{1}{3}$ medical leave, recompense for straining her voice a year ago last winter when she had to teach in a classroom with a broken furnace. So she's feeling good, the voice seems recuperated, and we're both looking ahead to summer. Montana isn't in our picture this year--I have to stay here at the typewriter and finish this homesteader book--but in '87 we'll be out there for considerable time. Here's hoping you and yours are well, and all the best from both of us.

12 March '86

Dear Paul--

Sorry I haven't managed to get back to you sooner about the Social Security matter, but Carol's been down with flu, I've had a writing deadline to meet, and letters just have not been in the picture. Anyway, such as I know of the Social Security is this: I called the Seattle office and the woman there said she would send you a request postcard--from the sounds of it, you'll have to fill in that card and mail it back to Social Security, requesting to know your Social Security contributions through the years. This Seattle clerk also said she thinks you'll have to make any application for Social Security benefits through the U.S. Embassy--in Canberra, I suppose? (A public library can probably get you that address, and just sending your letter to the ambassador ought to get it handled by somebody on his staff.) I think if I were you, given how slow and complex the paperwork of all governments is, I'd go ahead and write that letter to the embassy--even before you receive the Social Security request card, unless it reaches you magically fast--explaining your situation, your years of Army service and any other Social Security-covered employment you may have had (before the war?), your citizenship status, provide them your Social Security number, and ask ~~them~~ their assistance in finding out if you're eligible for Social Security benefits. My thinking here is that an embassy may get quicker answers from Social Security than an individual citizen; also, if you're told by the embassy that the first step is to send a request postcard to Social Security to find out your contributions, you'll already have that underway.

Having said this much, I ~~now~~ now have to say this may not amount to anything for you. Carol is skeptical that it will, thinking that Social Security has a minimum number of years--actually I believe they measure it in quarters of years, for some reason known only to them--that your Army service alone won't total. On the other hand, the friend of ours who recently began drawing Social Security on the basis of his Marine career (which was a full 20 years) thinks the minimum may have been dropped or abandoned. I am in the middle of these views, merely thinking it can cost you just a bit of paper and postage to find out one way or the other. So, this is about as much as I know, or apparently can do: it looks as if the U.S. embassy will have to carry the ball (they do carry the thing in rugby, don't they?) for you, okay?

We're within about 10 days of Carol's spring break from college, when we'll spend a recuperative week on the Oregon coast. So, all goes pretty well, if a bit too swiftly, here. Congratulations to all on Amy. Did I tell you I coincidentally have a character (not my most winsome one, sorry to say) named Luke in this next book?--Lucas to his Scotch friends, Luke to the Montanans.

all best wishes, and good luck

Dear Paul and all--

I was glad to get your letter, Paul; they're always a delight. Mixed emotions here about the family health report: sorry to hear about the operations but relieved they weren't worse than they were.

Well, we have snow here in Seattle, have had it for nearly 2 weeks and are getting damn tired of it. The temperature was 19 when I got up this morning, and it promptly sank to 16. Two sizable snowfalls, 5-6 inches each, hit us, rare for this city and ungodly early in the season--it's still 20 days until "winter" here. Carol has been walking to work, about a mile up the hill to her college, and I've stayed hunkered in here at my typewriter. Her college closed one day because of the snow--the enrollment ~~is~~ is nearly 5,000 students and virtually all of them drive to campus--but kept open the other days despite sparse attendance. We bought a new car, our first-ever brand new car, the day before the snow, then looked at it sit outside through the next several days of storm. Have driven it since then, and like it, especially the front-wheel drive, which handles much better on snow, ice, slush; it's a Buick, which these days is about the size of a Honda or Toyota. Carol (she did the shopping) looked at a Honda, but this car was about \$5,500 less than a Honda would have been; Hondas are selling like crazy in this country. The Japanese have really given the American car-makers a run for their money, these past several years.

Like you, I'm awaiting a Christmas card report from Wally and Delores. Carol and I did make a trip to Montana this summer, but went past their place about 5:30 one morning and so we didn't barge in. Edith Brekke reported she saw Wally at the Ringling school reunion in August. Not only do I wish you guys could have been there for that, I wish I had been! We had company, painting of the inside of the house and sundry other chores to do, and so felt we just couldn't afford time for the trip. At Marion Lucas's behest I donated one of those INSIDE THIS HOUSE OF SKY photo books for a door prize, and Joe Pitman, some of the former depot agent in Ringling, won it; I received a letter of thanks from his wife Betty and then there was a note of thanks from Joe tagged onto that--Carol said it looked like Joe was a grade-schooler being forced to write a thank you letter for a Christmas gift. Anyway, if I heard right some 400 people showed up--none of them of course the quality of you and me, Paul.

The time we did spend in Montana, about 3 weeks, was fairly disheartening this summer. A terrific drought, maybe the worst of the century. Crops were plowed under by the 4th of July in northern Montana, too short and scant to harvest, and hay was terribly thin. Carol and I were in Great Falls the 2nd of July, when a big forest fire broke out about 40 miles from White Sulphur, and that afternoon at 4 it was 100 degrees with a 55 mile an hour hot wind. Maybe you Aussies are used to that sort of thing, but we wilted in our tracks. Most of our time was around Helena, where we were able to borrow a house while friends were in Europe, and I gathered some good research on homesteaders at the Montana Historical Society. Didn't get to see Edith Brekke, who was visiting other Brekkes. I'm about halfway through the writing of this homesteader novel, which will be about the grandfather of the boy Jick I wrote of in English Creek.

I appreciated the article about Jon Cleary. Coincidentally, I bought and read his best-known novel (here), The Sundowners, not too long ago; I had always liked the movie, and thought the book was dandy, too. Quite a number of Australian writers are making their reputation in this country as their books show up here, and I say more power to them. Inasmuch as Montana is somewhat regarded as part of the "outback" here, I feel some kinship with the people who write of your great spaces and geography.

A word about cricket: Joyce and Viv, I admire your knowledge of it, but I'm in the baffled crowd with Paul! The one match I ever saw was not in Britain, but when I was in college near Chicago. Commonwealth students, nicknamed "The World", played the students from India, and I gave up watching in exhaustion when the score was something like India 210, The World 150.

That's about it from here. We are steady and thriving, and very much hope this finds you so, too. Let's do keep in touch--this too-large world can stand some of that. love to everybody

Dear Paul--

5 Dec '84

We greatly enjoyed your letter, and in these dark December mornings we'll think of you strolling around the lagoon in the Australian summer dawn. I envy you the birds, especially the black swans. Both Carol and I have a passion for watching birds, and often go to a long sandspit in the Strait of Juan de Fuca to see the waterfowl.

Given that Delores is your correspondent, you know more of Wally than I do. (I expect a Christmas letter from him any day, though.) And of Dave, I don't know much more, except that he has persevered with his schooling to the point where he could enter the University of Washington this autumn; I think he takes classes in the morning, goes to his Boeing job in the afternoon. Dave does have an endearing side. When he phoned a few months ago to tell us he'd been accepted at the University and his years-long quest for a college education, a course or two at a time, could now go on, he said: "I never was known for doing things the easy way!"

In late October I spent a week in Montana making bookstore appearances for my new novel, and let me think a bit here about people and places you might know. Brekkes, endless tall solemn friendly Brekkes appeared in the bookstores to say hello to me. Perhaps they were still out on the homestead in your Ringling years, but I think I remember that Alice Brekke arranged a kind of reunion when you, Joyce and Viv were in Montana? In any case, this time the Brekkes were male. Once it was Maynard standing before me, then after a little while another was standing there, so similar I wasn't sure it wasn't Maynard back again. But no, I think this one was Larry. All this was happening in a bookstore in downtown Bozeman, and then I went to the bookstore on the Montana State University, and in the line there was a towering young bearded man who looked familiar, could he be...? Yes, this one was the son of Olaf Brekke! May the Brekkes go on forever, and it looks as if they will. In Great Falls, a man came up and said he was Fred Stewart, who had taught school in Ringling around the time my mother was there. I met somebody else who was related to the Arthurs; somebody else, kin to the Kuhnes family. A professor of philosophy at Montana State U. in Bozeman is a descendant in the family of Tom and Mary Kerr of Sixteen. Astounding, the number of us in the world from Ringling and Sixteen.

You wondered about our Scotland trip. We were there most of July and it went well; indeed, with the strength of the American dollar then our money was worth more every day, and so the cost of the trip was much less than we'd feared. Most of the time we lived in university housing--St. Andrews, Glasgow, Edinburgh--and in Edinburgh had a furnished flat, usually used for graduate student housing, on the Royal Mile a hundred yards from the famous Castle. I managed to gather the research I needed for the next novel, about people coming to homestead in Montana in the 1880's, and Carol took photos of the towns and the landscape for me.

Since then, much of my time has gone into the promotion of my novel English Creek. (Not all the reviews have been nearly as glowing as the one on the back of this, but most have been praising.) The publisher does some, such as advertising, but because my "fame" or whatever it is is mostly in this region--from Montana to here--I'm the one who knows the most worthwhile bookstores to sign books in, etc., and so I do much of the promotion effort myself. When I'm finished with it all on Dec. 15, I'll have autographed about 3,000 copies of my book (out of what we hope will be 25,000 copies sold, as a national total). One of those, not so incidentally, will find its way to the Ringers of Rockhampton, but I suppose it'll take months. I just received a card from my literary agent in London thanking me for books I sent her--in August! I can't fathom how they handle overseas parcels; it seems to me ships simply don't go that slow any more, so why does it take such colossal time?

Before I sign off, thanks for the articles about Xavier Herbert. I much wanted to read "Poor Fellow My Country" when it was published here a few years ago, but it was so immense and the print was so small that I was daunted, and I am not easily daunted by a book. A number of Australians have strong literary reputations here: Thomas Keneally, whom I admire greatly; Elizabeth Jolley, David Malouf, John Hooker.

Our best to you and yours, Paul, for 1985. Write again when the spirit moves you--or sooner!

17 Nov. '83

Dear Paul, Joyce and Viv--

I hope this comes through in decent shape. We've had an awful problem of the publisher shipping these books in this country; they seem to be just a size to slide around in whatever they're mailed in, poke out the corners, and arrive damaged. I've chosen a tight-fitting envelope to try defeat that, but we'll see. Do let me know if the cover is badly damaged, as the publisher will provide me extra ones and I can send a decent one along to you.

To me, this book is something of a mixed blessing. It's more somber than I'd like, and I much wish the photographer had shown some of the people of the country. But some of the photos are of the country you visited, Joyce and Viv, and that you grew up in, Paul, and so I hope the book can be a mild sort of memento of your journey here earlier this year. I very much wish we, and Dave and family as well, had managed a less ~~unpleasant~~ hectic welcome when you came to Seattle; I in particular regret not having had the intended day to show you around here, but I know the lodging situation and the weather argued for you all to head back to Montana. Anyway, we're exceedingly glad we had the evening of all of us together here at our house.

All is well with us, although still busy. This has been a relentless year. In August Carol's parents moved out here, after 80 years in New Jersey, and she's put a lot of effort into getting them resettled. I've meanwhile been battling to finish my novel about Montana during the Depression, and am now just a few weeks from doing so. Thus far, 1981 looks like a saner year.

Carol and I were in Montana for a month this summer, but in the White Sulphur country only for the 4th of July, and Wally and Dolores weren't around. We did get to Ringling, and saw the Doig brothers' alcohol plant in operation.

And there's not too much else to report. You are in our thoughts, and we're glad to have had the pleasure of seeing you three. Merry Christmas.

best,

Dear Paul, Joyce and family

Before long we'll be off to Montana to spend Christmas with Grandma. We can make only a short stay -- fly there on the 22d and back home on the 26th -- but it's better than nothing. She may have written you that she came out here to visit us for about a week in September when Wally drove out to see Dave and Nellie. Her health is pretty good, especially for someone of her age, but she had good days and bad days. So far she seems perfectly capable of living by herself as she has been, and we all think that's the best thing she can be doing. Wally keeps an eye on her, and a number of her friends in town visit her and drive her uptown for occasional shopping chores. So, while she is not ~~xx~~ as thoroughly vigorous as she was before her heart attack of a few years ago, she seems to be doing fairly well.

I assume Grandma has been keeping you posted about the family affairs in Montana. Bud now is in a nursing home in Helena; Grandma said in her last letter she and Wally had visited him. I think he may want to be moved to the nursing home in White Sulphur (in the basement of the hospital there) when there is available space. Also, as I understand it Wally has filed for divorce from Joyce. I really have no notion of what happened there, not having talked to either of them about it.

Now that Carol's sabbatical is behind us, we're both back at work much as usual. This summer I edited an anthology about American city life which will be published as a textbook in '74, and just recently I finished a sample chapter of another book. Carol continues to teach journalism and English at Shoreline College, still liking the job very much.

I can't recall how much I've told you about our stay in Britain. We enjoyed London last winter; the weather was very mild, and we walked all through the city. In March we went to Wales, then to Ireland, and early in April to Scotland. I ~~didn't~~ didn't manage to look up the Doig ancestry there, because I've never had any details about where the family came from. I did write to Dad's sister Anna for some information, but it came too late to be of any help. I was impressed, however, by how much some parts of the Highlands look like Montana.

Late in April Carol's mother and father joined us for 2 weeks of sight-seeing in Britain and then a week in Holland. We all flew to New York together, and Carol and I then drove across the U.S., visiting friends along the way. We were travel-weary by the time we arrived back in Seattle, certainly. But it is a trip we'll treasure, perhaps a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

This country is undergoing some confusion in trying to adjust to the Arabs' petroleum shutdown. Gas rationing may be in the offing, and rationing of heating ~~oil~~ fuel seems definite. Unhappily the Nixon government seems unable to handle this situation -- or maybe any other -- very well, and it may be a troublesome winter for some people here.

That's about the sum of the news from us. I believe Grandma said you're sending a tape to her, so we'll undoubtedly hear that at Christmas. We hope all is well with you, and that you have a fine holiday season.

best wishes

13 Nathan St.
Rockhampton, Q'ld.
8/Apr/1966

Dear Ivan,

As the Aussies say "give it a go", so I shall. I'd probably be the world's worst letter writer in all categories. I'm sure Grandma would verify the fact of one.

Thank you for the pictures and the Rotarian. Lovely to get them. You indeed have reason to be proud of your wife. She appears very charming/lovely in the photo, as I'm sure she is from what Grandma and you have written. The best thing that can happen to a man is a good wife. When one looks around, it's obvious how seldom it happens. I was lucky too, hence Australia.

I really enjoy hearing from you and reading your letters. Needless to say, I thoroughly relished the Rotarian issue. Your article took me right out of 1966 back to about 1931-34. About that era, I'd have given my left arm for some boots with high heels and a stetson. Actually, I don't think I ever had a pair on. Our heroes (Bud's and mine) were your Uncles Claude and Verri~~ck~~. Both were riding rodeos at that time or thereabouts and doing well. We always had your father to check with on the finer points. Incidentally your Uncles were all pretty good baseball players too. They used to all assemble for a picnic plus the other Scotsmen and families from Wall Mt. and vicinity, choose sides and play all after noon.. Your Grandfather usually umpired. We kids would chase the home runs that went too far into the surrounding bush. Following the picnic was generally a dance. The Schottische was always played and your Grandma Doig was unfailingly partnered by one of her sons. None of this mid-nite finishing, they were always good till 4:A.M. "The good old days". Everyone had plenty of stamina and didn't let their worries show.

I can well see where you'd be kept on the jump, though my knowledge of editing and etc. is practically nil. Grandma wrote me that you had had short stories published. However, your work must be extremely interesting and gratifying. By now you've probably had the notification of acceptance. I can assure you of one benefit, it'll be a big improvement in climate. You'll be able to both chuck away your red flannels.

We are all okay here. Cold, belly-aches, and the usual but nothing serious. My main ache and pain are kids, Steven at the moment. Mag, mag, mag, while I'm trying to write to you. He's playing with one of those plastic holed boards, making designs with the numerous oblongs and squares and every other square he must have his father's advice and comment. Needless to say he's getting a few strongly worded statements as to what will happen if he doesn't pipe down. He's at Kindergarten this year. Catches the bus each morning large as life. Has about 6 blocks to go. I must say he's keen, wants to go Sat. and Suns. as well. Starts Grade 1 after Xmas.

Pauline is the "star" of the family at present. She's in Grade 3 at a Girl's School. Came 4th in her class of about 30 the last "shake up" they had. We are all proud of her for the effort but not nearly as proud as she is of herself. Assures us she is capable of rising to even greater Heights, namely 3rd place. We have her taught Ballet and piano. At Ballet she shines, passing her first exam with honours. With the piano, Dad must stand over her or there'd be no practise. What ever she does she has a ton of self confidence. Always calm, cool, and collected, if there is an audience (no matter how small). That's what gets her by. I would that they'd both been born 14 yrs. ago atleast. However we've no controll over such things. It wasn't for want of trying. I really think one gives them more time and attention and appreciates them to a greater extent than when Mum and Dad are young too. Now don't take this for advice.

Judging by the photo you sent your Dad seems to hold his age well. Grandma looks a bit thin on it, but as they say "we're not spring chicken any more". I'd like to pack up and come home for a while and see all of them, but it's only wishful thinking. If I could win the lottery we might. I've been lucky in many ways but never in financial ones.

Bud has certainly had a rough go. I'd be all for a few less rockets and an open slather on money for medicine and research in same. They have made marvellous advancements in medicine but in some cases it's been a case of pinching the purse. I'm speaking of here ofcourse as I don't know how it is there. For instance here they had a public drive for cancer research funds, not to mention that the Government hospitals are maintained here by State sanctioned lotteries. Our local Rockhampton Ambulance hold fetes, lotteries, and etc. to raise money. It's the only free Ambulance service left in Queensland.

Rotary seems to function very energetically here in Rockhampton. Principally made up of the "nobs". Drs., Lawyers, managers, and etc. Am enclosing a picture from our morning paper of the President here, Dr. Bottcher.

Dear Mr. [Name],

I received your letter of the 10th inst. and was glad to hear from you again. Best regards to all of us and Hoping to hear from you soon.

Now that I have broken the ice, I will write you more often.

As the weather is so cold here, I shall probably be writing you more often.

The world's worst letter writer in all categories. I'm sure Grandma would verify that fact.

Thank you very much for the photo. You indeed have reason to be proud of your wife. She appears very charmingly lovely in the photo, as I'm sure she is from what Grandma and you have written. The best thing that can happen to a man is a good wife. When one looks around, it's obvious how seldom it happens. I was lucky too, hence Australia.

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White Sulphur Springs,
Montana
Nov. 3, 1974

Dear Paul, Joyce and family

We're down to the last details of Grandma's household, and I'll take some time this Sunday afternoon to tell you what I can of the past ten days. Ray and Marlo will be in before long to move the things of Grandma's which they're taking to Forsyth. I put Carol on the homeward plane from Helena last night. Wally and Dan moved a pickup load of furniture and belongings yesterday to Wally's new household in Townsend. By tonight, I'll be the only one still here, with a few days' chores ahead before I load the car and head for Seattle. So, little by little, the family peels away from the last remembrance rites of Grandma, and returns to everyday life. Your own last mementoes of her, however, will be some considerable time in arriving. I'll mail the box of keepsakes when I take this letter to the post office in the morning. It's a miscellany, but the best we could do in sorting out what we hoped would be meaningful items. In the box will be a homemade quilt, apparently quite an old and valued one; a collection of photos; a few household knickknacks; and an assortment of Grandma's handwork, such as crocheted pieces. Also in the box is a wristwatch, which Grandma wanted Vivian, as the eldest of your children, to have. The other keepsakes I suppose simply should be allotted as you think best, Paul.

I don't know how much Wally was able to tell you when he phoned, but this is what we know of Grandma's last day, Friday, Oct. 25. We've all been thankful that it was a typically vigorous day for her. In the morning, she worked on a quilt she was making for her neighbor Florence McAfee. There was a funeral that afternoon, I believe for one of the sons of Willard MacDonald of Sixteen, Paul. Grandma served at the coffee hour held at the Senior Citizens Center after the funeral, visiting with many old friends as well as the several members of the Senior Citizens Club who have been her best chums in recent years. Wally had called her at noon to see how she was, and they chatted for awhile. Sometime in the day, she called the Lucas ranch to have Marion bring her a dozen eggs. Then in the evening, she phoned her best friend in the Senior Citizens Club, Brooke Young, for a ride to the Club's weekly card party. The two of them were nearly at the Club when Grandma slumped over. The hospital was only a block away, so within seconds Brooke had driven her there and run inside for the doctor. Grandma never responded to the doctor's efforts. As you know, her heart had been bad ever since the severe attack the spring after she visited you in Australia, and it simply and finally gave out.

As for the funeral, the songs sung were In the Garden and Beyond the Sunset. The readings were from Ecclesiastes III ("To every thing there is a season...") and, I believe, from a chapter of Romans which I can't recall. The pallbearers were friends and neighbors from here in White Sulphur: Ben Hereim, Dan Finn, Bernie Lucas (the son of her close friends Chuck and Marion Lucas, Paul), Leonard Chapman, Ray Russell, and Spike Short. In the memorial book are 120 names, nearly all of whom attended the funeral (some who were unable to be there came to the funeral home separately in the few days before the funeral). Some names you may recognize, Paul: the Art Watsons, the Fern Vintons, Volga Doig, Walter and Villa Doig, Alfred Mesmer, the Lucas family, Johnny Gruar, Mrs. Jake Mitchell and her son Charles, a number of Zehntners and McAfees, Kathryn Donovan, Edith

Brekke, the Jim Bill Keiths, Dorothy Kuhnes. All the family managed to come, except for Bud. Dave flew from Seattle the morning of the funeral, was met at the airport by Sherry, and they arrived here about half an hour before the funeral. Dan drove back from college in South Dakota. Carol and I drove from Seattle, arriving the day before the funeral.

The day after the funeral, we set to work on dismantling this household, and apportioning Grandma's things. The house, as you probably know, has been in my name ever since my dad died. I'm going to try to sell it, not wanting to have the headache of renting it nor the upkeep problems of letting it stand empty. Nearly all the furniture is mine, too, dating from when Dad was alive. But there were family pieces enough to go around -- a fine oak dresser, dating from the house in Ringling, to Wally, a set of my mother's dishes which I'll loan to Dave, quite a lot of kitchenware to Sherry, a number of small items to Ray and Marlo, a lovely quilt for Dan. Bud has no place bigger than a dresser drawer in the nursing home, but Ray and Sherry store his things for him. To me, the most striking point was the tremendous amount of sewing goods and handiwork material we found as we went through Grandma's belongings -- drawer upon drawer of cloth pieces. It impressed on me the countless hours she spent that way, passing the time, anything to keep busy and be doing something ~~far~~ fine and kind for someone else. Anyway, with Wally and Emma, Ray and Marlo, Carol and me, we managed the apportioning with no real problems, and ended up still on the best of terms with each other, which I think isn't always the case.

Financially, there literally is nothing to ~~xapak~~ speak of. Grandma had about \$200 in her checking account, most of which will go to pay off the last monthly household bills. She, Carol and I had about \$300 in a joint savings account, money which dates from when my dad was alive. She had about \$100 in a savings and loan account, with Wally listed as co-depositor. That's the total. We'll put whatever money is left after bills toward the funeral costs, and Wally and I will split the remaining expense. Grandma is buried, incidentally, in the grave next to my dad's, and we'll have a matching tombstone put up.

Family news, some of it much happier than most of this letter, a little of it not. The very good news is Wally's new marriage and family. He and Emma are wonderfully happy; they have the same interests, both loving the outdoors and hunting and fishing, and Wally seems delighted to be raising a second family. Emma is bright and personable, and everyone in the family already adores her. (As did Grandma, in the few months she knew Emma well.) Ray and Marlo seem well situated on a ranch at Forsyth, and their four children are charmers. Sherry has a rockier row to hoe. She's been a bit ill recently -- nothing awfully serious, as far as I know -- and she seemed to take Grandma's death harder than any of the rest of us. However, Carol and I saw her last night, and she was in much better spirits, perhaps because Alma was spending the weekend with her. Alma, by the way, looked fine; what her new life is like, I really have no way of knowing. And Bud at the moment is not very well. Ray and Wally hope to have some doctoring done on him the next few days, to see what's been causing him some stomach pain recently.

And that's about it from here. If I can answer any questions for you, please write. Do you have the new address? It's 17021 10th Ave. NW, Seattle, Washington, 98177. We all thought of you ~~faq~~ frequently these past several days.

Best regards
Aaron

9 January 1977

17 m

Dear Paul

I was pleased to get your Christmas letter, as I'd been trying to put together one for you. Carol and I hope you all had a good holiday season. Ours was plain but pleasant; we went to New Jersey to be with Carol's parents, and flew back a few days later.

There are a couple of major reasons I've been looking forward to hearing from you, and the first is that we've recently mulled the idea of a trip to Australia. No time soon, I hasten to add -- if we manage to go through with it at all. But we would like your advice about such things as seasonal climate. The cheapest time for us ever to travel -- in that Carol would not have to take leave from her teaching job -- is mid-June through August. We had imagined, or read somewhere, that that would be your rainiest time of year, and since we have our own long soggy winters here in Seattle, the idea of traveling into another wet winter season didn't appeal very much. But you remarked that your summer is so hot, which makes us do some re-thinking. If we did come, it likely would be with another couple, our closest friends here, and the four of us ~~vaguely~~ vaguely think we would like to make a transcontinental trip, from Sydney where we know a few people to Perth to where they have friends. Also, since we are all hikers, we're interested in some trail-hiking in Tasmania. What kind of weather could we look forward to, knowing how unpredictable it is in any event, in June-July-August as against, say, January-February-March? I suppose that is such an expanse of country that a person should simply assume there'll be all manner of climate and weather, and plan to travel regardless. But anything you can tell us from experience would be helpful. When we did come, incidentally, we likely would spend no more than a week or so in your neighborhood; I know visitors go stale after much more than that.

Anyway, this is nothing which can eventuate in the next year or so. Carol and I don't seem to have the energy for such a project -- our jobs and home-owning seem to have diverted a lot of that. What we hope to do this summer is spend as much time as possible in the mountains in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming. We haven't been back to Montana since Grandma's funeral, and there are people I'd like to talk to and places I'd like to see again. Montana brings up my second set of questions for you, Paul. I've been working on a book, a memoir about growing up in Montana, and inevitably it brings in my dad and Grandma as the "family" that brought me up. I've managed to find out quite a bit about the background of the Doig family and how they came to Montana; Dad's sister Anna has helped a lot. But I know less about why -- or even when and how -- Grandma and your family came from Wisconsin.

Do you happen to know the year that Grandma, your dad, and my mother moved from Wisconsin? I gather that it must have been about 1915, when my mother was a couple of years old, but that's something of a guess. I'd also appreciate anything you know about why they came, although I think my mother's asthma was always given as a main reason.

I'd be glad, too, for whatever memories you have of Grandma from your younger days -- the years at Moss Agate and in Ringling. You know she was a pretty good story-teller herself, and I have on tape some of her own stories of those times -- how somebody sliced off the fingers of your glove with an axe once when you were sawing wood, for instance. It'd also be a great help to have any sayings or expressions you can remember her using. (For example, I wrote to Edith Brekke a while back to ask something about her parents, who were such good neighbors to Grandma and me when we lived in Ringling in the early 1950s, and Edith recalled that whenever one of the Brekke kids said they didn't know the answer to something, Mrs. Brekke would say: WELL, YOU BETTER LEARN!) I know you've been a long time gone from Montana and into a life of your own in Australia, but anything that does stick out in your memory would be helpful. I might say that if it's quicker or simpler to talk any memories into a tape recorder, I'd gladly pay for your tape and mailing costs.

Well, enough of my being a nuisance on that topic. I'll sign this off and get it into the mail. All is well with us, and I hope later this year I'll be able to report to you on Montana.

29/August/1971

Dear Carol and Ivan,

Just a few lines to let you know everything is going lovely here. Mom arrived after a very enjoyable trip. I was there waiting for her in Brisbane and was able to see her but not get to her till she got thru Customs. I think she looks real well. She both eats and sleeps well too, which is very good. Her plane got in at 6:15 and we stayed in the air port till 10:45, as at that time of the morning there was no where else to go, and it was very comfortable there. The air port is about 15 mins. by taxi from Brisbane.

We had a very smooth flight to Rocky (less than an hour) and my mob were there to meet us, so all was well. We had lunch, then went down and saw Joyce's mother, and brother for a little while. Joyce's mother asked Mom if she was "knocked-up" from her trip. Mom was probably a bit startled by the question and didn't answer, so I saved the day by saying she didn't seem at all tired. It's a phrase they always use here but of course you'd never dare to use in the States. I told Mom about it after, so she'll be set now if anyone else asks her.

Yesterday we went to the Capricana Procession which she enjoyed. She used up one film and part of another. I surely hope they come out OK as it was sort of off and on with the sun. Shining one minute and cloudy the next. Capricana is the city's festival and lasts a week. She came at the right time for it, as it started yesterday.

We are off to the beach today when Steve gets back from Sunday school. I'm typing this while we're waiting. Mom's just finished three letters so we'll stick them all in a letter box on the way out.

The kids have had a whale of a time since she's been here. She showed them how to play solitaire. They've been at it ever since. I used to play cards, but over the years have forgotten how to play. I'll ask her to show them pitch and rummy and whatever else she fancies as they love games.

Mom's mind is certainly very active. She notices everything and asks all sorts of pertinent questions about ~~it~~/them. She can't sit still either, is always helping one way or another. I'm glad she's that way. She never was one to sit still and still isn't.

If there's any papers you want Ivan, just write and tell me what and I'll see what I can do. Mom brought some your articles which I read and enjoyed. Almost like being home again.

Well time is running out so I'll close for this time. I'll keep you informed on the leaving schedule.

P.S. THERE'S A ROPEO
ON HERE NEXT WEEK-END.
She quite looking forward
to that.

Love,
Paul, Joyce, + Butts

AEROGRAMME

BY AIR MAIL · PAR AVION



MR. + MRS. IVAN DOIG
15004 LINDEN AVE. NORTH
SEATTLE, WASH.
U.S.A. 98144

COUNTRY OF DESTINATION

SENDER'S NAME AND ADDRESS

P. T. RINGER
13 NATHAN ST.
ROCKHAMPTON, Q'LD 4700
AUSTRALIA

POSTCODE 4700

TO OPEN SLIT HERE FIRST