

Our circle of worth-while friends has broadened considerably - which means that we get more out of life. It seems odd to say so, but we had to come to the mountains to get acquainted with our neighbors in Lynwood! The Superintendent of Schools in Lynwood is now one of our best friends, whereas we had only a nodding acquaintance before. His wife and her family are just our type too, and they have a little girl about Coral's age. I visited with Mr. Mercer down near San Diego at his wife's family home and had such a lovely time. They have a ranch about twenty miles from San Diego. The father died last spring and Mrs. Mercer's two sisters teach school so the mother would be alone except for a hired man part time. One sister drives home from Bakersfield where she teaches, every second week-end - and it is about two hundred and sixty miles EACH way - making five hundred and twenty miles for her to drive Friday night and Sunday night. The other sister, Miss Mary Durbin, teaches in Santa Ana which is only one hundred miles each way. She goes home the alternate week-end. By the way she knows Mabel Whiting and Mrs. Thatcher in Santa Ana. Do you still keep up a correspondence with Mabel W.?

This reminds me that Will Ament is one of the faculty at Pomona College and writes the book reviews for the Los Angeles Times. You would be able to renew many old friendships with former Oberlin people if you should visit out here. You probably know lots of them who are out here whom I do not know.

Tuesday A.M. We have just come back from collecting great big bunch of mistletoe up the hill a little way from the cabin. I wish we could send you some. This is the first time I have ever gathered mistletoe with clusters of beautiful white and pink berries on it. Sunday we went ~~out~~ and picked out a Christmas tree and Teddy had the pleasure of cutting it down. We used lots of cedar branches for decorating the cabin, hanging sprays from the logs overhead. It looks quite Christmassy and the cedars smell so nice.

If we don't get this letter off this morning it will not get to you before Christmas and it really is a Christmas letter wishing you all a very happy and successful vacation time. Thank you again for your lovely Christmas presents to us.

Lots of love to you all from all the Beldens California.. That reminds me of something else. A week ago last Sunday we entertained a couple of families from Lynwood here at the cabin and one family was the Charles Scranton family who live not far from us in Lynwood. I don't know our exact relationship but we are related as he claims the same Scranton family way back as we do. Maybe we can trace the relationship more accurately when we have the opportunity but I know so little about relationship and our forebears that I would have to ask you or Mary and Ellen.

As ever your loving
brother
Selden

You got a good bargain in your car . I am so glad you got it. You must have applied yourself very conscientiously to learning how to drive to get along so well that you can drive to Milwaukee and everywhere. Have you been keeping expenses on the car complete so that you will know just how much it costs to run it ? I hope so so that we can compare notes. My speedometer reads 99,630 miles today - it stopped working for about six thousand miles so the car has really gone nearly 106,000 miles since I bot it. When it touches the 100,000 mark I am going to try to get all the figures exact for cost per mile, miles per gallon of gas and so on. The gasoline average has been getting less as the car has been getting older and also it has been less since making so many trips to the mountains hauling big heavy loads of lumber and rocks and things and our big trailer. I made the trailer out of a Hudson front axle using the same size wheels and tires as the car so the tires would be interchangeable . It is sixteen feet long and weighs 650 lbs.empty. I have hauledssmuch as or more than two tons on it up the mountain grade.

What are the chances of you all making a trip out to California some time to see us now that you have a car ? It would be so nice to see you again and it would be grand for our children to all get acquainted at this age. It is so much more fun when cousins know each other during their early years instead of when they are grown up. If they never get acquainted until they are grown up they do not feel the close relationship so friendly and vital a thing.

I have been trying to get Ellen and family and Mary to come to California but it looks as tho I had better give up . Cant you figure out some plan with them and all of you come out together? When I came back from Chicago alone last time the actual car expenses totalled only about thirty-five dollars , and it would not cost any more for the car full of people than for one. The auto camps are so convenient and cheap too, after you get this side of the Mississippi it is not as hard to drive to California now as it is to drive from Chicago to New York. There are pavements all the way and it is a most interesting and educational trip. It seems as tho there is hardly anybody in California who has not made at least one trip across the United States. Many of our friends have driven back east several times. The Carlsbad caverns of New Mexico are one of the interesting educational sights worth making a trip on purpose to see. The Hoover Dam or Boulder Dam whichever you prefer to call it is also one of the great attractions of present age. The Redwood Highway thru two hundred miles of the the Giant Redwoods is worth the trip for that alone. Yellowstone Park or the Yosemite or Brice Canyon or the Grand Canyon of the Colorado are all extremely interesting and worth a great deal in the way of a braadening education for the children at a small total expense. Think it over ; see what plans you can make and write us. A vacation up here in the mountains would in itself be an education and worth while for your children as it is and has been for ours.

We have had lots of company up at the cabin since we have been living in the mountains. Most of them bring as much or more food than enough for themselves so that company has not been any extra expense altho it means extra work as well as pleasure for Coral. We feel the year has been well spent insofar as friends are concerned

From Selden Peckler

Pine Cove, Idyllwild, Calif.
Sunday 16th December 1934.

Dear Evelina and Henry -

Thank you ever and ever so much for your lovely and very generous Christmas letter with check enclosed. It will certainly make a lot of difference what sort of Christmas we have this year. Coral sent off an order to Sears and Roebuck with most of the money so that if we do not get a chance to get to the stores again ~~that~~ the children would have your presents anyway. You really should not have sent so much money Evelina. I hope you have not skimmed on your own Christmas to give so much to us.

Thank you also for that check for five dollars which you sent some time ago for the special purpose of helping us sell the cabin. I put an ad in the best Long Beach paper with no results. It is hard to know just which way to advertise a cabin with the best chances of good results, but I really believe this is not the best time of year to spend any more money on advertising it. In the spring when people are considering what to do during their summer vacation, and then during the summer, are the best times. We are still living in this cabin as our second one is not finished yet.

Today the weather was just perfect following a four day rain. The rain was badly needed as always is the case in California. However we have already had more rain this fall than normal, but last season was the driest in years, which accounts for my saying it was needed. We live at the 6300 foot level. From the 7500 foot level up to the tops of the mountains there is lots of snow. It certainly does look beautiful. I don't know how deep it is but right now the big trees are still covered with the mantle of snow and look so white! The children have been hoping all the time during the storm that it would turn to snow here, but you can be sure I am most thankful it did not ~~snow here~~. We have to get in more wood for winter and hope to finish the fireplace in the second cabin so that we can get moved into it. That cabin is right on the main highway where the county keeps the snow plowed off when it storms, so that we could get in and out all winter. This cabin we are living in now is in a much nicer location but is back in from the highway and would be hard to get to in case there should be five or six feet of snow as sometimes happens. We have heard various stories about the amount of snow here two years ago. Last year there was only a very little but two years ago there was six feet of snow in one storm and a total of fourteen reported altogether. We do not know how true these reports are but one close neighbor was snowed in for a month with six feet in the one storm when he only came up here for a week-end from Long Beach. Among the presents you are giving us for Christmas, the order for which was sent to Sears-Roebuck, there is a Flexible Flyer. The children will get a lot of pleasure with it when there is snow. They really do not know a thing about snow. Coral has never seen it until this fall and Teddy cannot remember the snow in Oberlin when he was less than two years old.