[Transcription begins]

#54 - Labor Day - September 4, 1944
After supper

Dear Douglas - As long as the ink lasts in Marilyn's fountain pen, I will use it, then I must resort to a pencil. We are at Coles for two weeks, coming down here yesterday (Sunday) just before dinner, Mrs. Pine having finished her month's stay here, the night before. We are having the four downstairs rooms at 168 papered & the ceiling calsomined [whitewashed] & it seems easier to get right out & let the men have a free rein. Dad did not want to tackle the job himself so is having it done. I wish we might have the floors done at the same time but guess that must wait for awhile.

The whole Buffum family have been to Waukeela & together with Stafford Allen, did some mountain climbing. The Buffums called on us Friday night after their return & Timmie told us of his cross country trip by plane, 18 hours flying time but four days of making contacts & waiting [for] planes going this way & I think it cost him about $12. You probably know just how it is done, signing up at either a Navy or Army transport field & then waiting your chance. He returns to the coast tomorrow for further assignment & Tommie must have left for Florida today. He looks fine altho his eyes are not yet entirely well--he is the only one of his group to be assigned to sea duty--all the others have shore jobs & he does not know yet where or what it is to be. Saturday afternoon he, Timmie & Charlie Leach appeared for a surprise call, Charlie having come down to spend the night at Buffums' in response to a telephoned invitation from Tommie. He is plump & jolly as ever & knows his plans pretty well for the next few months. May specialize in children's surgery for his profession. They all saw Daryl and Marilyn. The latter has developed a lot in the past two years and is so much more friendly with other people than she used to be. The boys enjoyed talking with her & we only lacked your presence to make the thing complete!

Five years of war & it begins to look like the end of the European phase--Drew Pearson, a commentator predicts it for September [indecipherable] at the latest [several nontranscribable lines] more and more of your friends heading for the Pacific. Allen B[indecipherable] goes in about ten days, Don Kern is at Pearl Harbor, Timmie is on his way--hope you meet some of them.

We had a nice letter from you on Saturday--your spirits seem excellent--how about your health--you never mention it and I take it for granted that you are all right or you would say so.

Thursday we had a very pleasant day aboard Douglas Young's 30' cruiser with Mr. & Mrs. Y & the Marbles. The boat is a beauty--Mathewson cruiser with every appointment for comfort. We went almost to Newport with luncheon served on board & then treated to a lobster dinner at the Lobster Pot at Bristol. Mrs. Young said she never laughed so in her life & would never eat a lobster again without thinking of Dad. You know how he is when he is in the mood.

In the midst of all the flurry of getting ready for going down to Coles, Dad appeared with a kettle full of grapes which he had discovered dead ripe on our vines so that I had to take enough time to do up 20 glasses of grape jelly.

By this time you probably have my letter telling of Grandma Reynolds and Aunt Hazel's visit to Sandwich & their call on Mary & Brad Shaw. Marilyn just missed out on seeing them as she had just met Bill & gone to supper with him. He is still at Rockland. Mr. & Mrs. Schmid are driving Bill's brother, Wallie, to the same school from which Everett Jones graduated Saturday & Marilyn is going to stay at their home to keep Mr. Schmid's mother company while they are away. Dad has a meeting for the CYMBC & will sleep at the house at Grand Avenue so as not to use the gasoline, so I will be down here all day tomorrow, tomorrow night & all day Wednesday with just Daryl--it will seem very quiet, altho she will keep it lively enough. When Chip barks (as he does practically every breath he draws!) she claps her hands together and says sharply, "Kwiett! Kwiett!" [untranscribale lines] calling "Come here, Bingy."

On our arrival at Coles we discovered two mourning doves had just left their nest in the tree between Whites' house & ours (just in front). They are smaller than a pigeon, dust gray, make no sound that we can hear (altho the old birds have a very plaintive repeated cry from which they receive their names). The young birds have spent all their time right at our steps or on the roof looking down at Dad as he paints the back of the house & and at night roost just above the ground between Kerns' & our house. They are absolutely fearless & we are so afraid that Bing will get them but for some strange reason Bing is spending practically all of his time in the house. He has not been down here for three summers but he wanted to go upstairs & prowl around the first thing! He stays on the porch, watching the world go by for a short while, then asks to come in & curls up in one of the chairs.

This story struck me as funny--a young priest was going to hear confessions for the first time so he asked an older priest to stay around the curtain and see if he did it correctly. After hearing his first one, he went behind the curtain & asked the older priest how he did to which the reply was "All right, except in one place. You should have said, "Tut, tut!" instead of "Wow!"

I meant to tell you that while we were sailing along in Doug Young's boat, a new DE from the ship yard passed us. She was flying the British flag & we could see her British crew aboard--I believe they call that type of ship a frigate but she looked to me very like the Elden & I could picture you at your station. I know you are proud of her record & of the thousands of miles she has traveled.

Saturday night, I listened to Pirates of Penzance, beautifully done & the Major General done by Florenz Ames whom Dad & I saw in "Pinafore" last winter. I sat with my eyes closed for the whole hour and saw it all again as you did it at Trinity church, when the various solos were sung [by] Herb Tucker and Lambert Lindquist & all the others were flashed on [my] memory screen, to say nothing [of] Frederic himself, in the person of one Douglas Leach! Next week I look forward to "Patience" & will let nothing interfere for

that is seldom given. How many a young man must have hummed to himself "When I first put this uniform on!"

Seems to me you managed to make a little maple sugar go a long ways! I will try to find some more & send it to you.

How about Christmas presents? What can you use? What do you hope to get?

All my thoughts, love and prayers for a grand boy.

Mother [Transcription ended]