

[Transcription begins]

#72 Dec. 27, 1944 about 8:30 P.M.

Dear Douglas - Just how can I express to you our appreciation and thanks not only for the very lovely gifts but also for the clever way in which their purchase was planned and executed & the thought which conceived the idea. As I wrote you in a previous letter, your box addressed to "the girls" had arrived and it sounded as though the contents were broken, so I opened it at once, and found the little souvenirs of Hawaii, and as there was apparently nothing for Dad, I bought him two books at the last minute with your name on the tag. We had just finished trimming the Christmas tree Sunday night, when Maude Buffum's brother, Alan Williams (6 ft. 4" tall) appeared at the door with a huge box. Dad didn't know him and was sure he had the wrong house, but just then I appeared, hearing the commotion, and immediately thought of you and your sly little ways! It was a loving thing to do and I know the check you sent Mrs. Buffum to use was far too generous, but we thank you over and over again. She used excellent judgement [sic]--a beautiful brown pocket book for me from Tilden & Thurbers. I know it is the finest and most expensive one I have ever owned and will go beautifully with my fur coat and I am sure will last me as long as the coat does. Daryl has a lovely powder blue sweater and preens like a little peacock when she has it on. A solid mahogany coffee table for Bill and Marilyn is something which they will enjoy all their lives and in years to come in their home will be a reminder of the past and a thing of beauty. Dad's gift was a suede jacket from Shepard's but I think he will change that, as he is very much attached to the one you sent him last year. We cherish the little cards which traveled so far back & forth across the ocean's expanse. Many, many thanks again for making our Christmas so happy.

Marilyn and I were very busy before Christmas, taking turns going downtown or staying with Daryl but by Saturday all our purchasing was done, altho our vegetables were not delivered until quarter past midnight Saturday night. The First National Store promised me a turkey but had to disappoint me at the last minute. Mr. Dick, however, was able to get me one at a turkey farm, where he has always bought his and it was a fine 17 pounder. Bill came in late Saturday night, unexpectedly having been called into Rockland for a week or two. Dad & I went to a very fine service at Calvary in the morning, choir loft full, the lovely plaster Madonna & child surrounded by pine boughs & flood lighted on the platform & a very helpful sermon by Dr. Erbe. Then again at eleven P.M. we went to a carol candle "light" service at Calvary. All the Schmids came to 168 to stay with Daryl so we could go and when we returned we brought the Buffums & 22 hamburgers from the diner and stayed up until two o'clock! Daryl was up at seven, had her breakfast & then was whisked away by Marilyn & Bill as the Schmids always have their gifts before their breakfast. In about two hours they returned & we went to work on the piles of beautifully wrapped gifts. I think we have all had a tendency the last two years to make an extra effort to make Christmas a memorable one, knowing how incomplete at best it is without you here. Daryl, of course, was the centre of attraction but her favorite immediately was a large dark brown bear, which she named "Growl" and which has been her constant companion ever since. A toy telephone has proven a great blessing for when mischief-bound, we simply say, "Someone wants you on the

telephone” and she forgets everything & rushes to answer. Dad gave both Marilyn & me a very lovely string of pearls. I gave Dad a World Globe, a good sized one, and he is fascinated by it and I think it really will be a source of much interest to him.

He had several good books, some very handsome ties and the usual tobacco, et cetera, a new box of pastels, fruit cake, picture puzzle & several records--book of favorite musical comedy selections including “Easter Parade”--Meditation from Thais & a very fine collection of the favorite Christmas carols by the Masters Choir. Marilyn & I had many choice items for our home--and Marilyn gave me a recording of “Sextette from Lucia” a \$3.50 record with Galli-Curci & Homer, which I have wanted for a long time.

Marilyn & Bill & Daryl then went to Schmid's for dinner & by that time the Millards had arrived (not Larry) so four of us sat down to the traditional Leach Christmas dinner but as you can imagine, there was plenty left over to carry us thru the week. Later in the evening all the Schmid's came up again & last night Bessie Snow & Marilyn Snow as well as the Henriksons called & tonight, Ensign John Brown & the Joneses, so you see we are having open house as usual--your very thoughtful Christmas cards have arrived and I will see that they are delivered.

This year, Dad fixed the mantel very attractively. He made a red sleigh for the four gilt reindeer & used for the driver the Santa Claus which Madeleine [indecipherable] gave us so long ago, do you remember him? He put cotton batting as a base and background & tucked in a few little lighted houses & small figures.

John Brown had a lucky break, for his destroyer returned to the states for over-haul & he flew home from Seattle & he & Charles were here for Christmas--Roger having to leave before that. He is keeping his eyes open for you--had a letter from you dated last July, when he reached Seattle!

I hope I have told you everything about Christmas you wanted to hear, our cards this year, were the pictures Herb Henrikson took enclosed in a Christmas folder and I shall enclose one or two to you in each letter until you have the set. Don't send them back, destroy them if you have no room for them, as we always have a set for ourselves.

Tomorrow night Dad has his first political meeting and I will be glad of a quiet evening at home.

Horrors! Dabney! What a name! But we are still struggling for a boy's name!

Snow has not bothered us too much as yet altho the Saturday before Christmas was pretty tickle-ish driving because of icy roads.

We thought of you constantly during the Christmas holidays and hope that you can be with us next year.

Marilyn will write soon, as will Dad.

We had some lovely Christmas cards, one with Mary Noyes' picture & one with Harold & Isabel & Sonny Brown on, I presume you have them also.

All our love and prayers and wishes that the New Year will see many changes for the better & our boy with us again.

Mother

Lucille Ralph has a little girl. [Transcription ends]