

November 7, 2016  
(October Letter)

Dear Samantha,

This seems like the season of waiting. I have been spending the last few weeks waiting for medical tests, for plumbers and furnace checkups, for Halloween, conference calls, and for my treatments to start. After those, I will be waiting to discover my reaction to the treatments, to get to BC, and for Christmas visits.

I used to think that waiting was the fate of children. Waiting for birthdays, holidays, trips, school, high school, university, weekends, and “getting there” always seemed to be a big part of my life. Looking back, it’s the activities that I remember rather than the waiting times for their arrival, of course, but I can recall thinking how it will be nice to grow up and not having to wait so long for things to happen.

But here I am, back in the waiting game. I expect in a year or two it will be the activities that I remember, however, so I guess that things don’t change that much with age after all.

My father was a super wait-er when I grew up. In those days, he would get only a week holiday per year so much of Dad and Mum’s dreaming time was spent planning what they would do during that week. It always involved camping of some sort. Many evenings I would find them hovering over maps spread out on the kitchen table working out the route to take, the campsites to stop at, and the equipment they need.

In our household, camping meant car-camping. We had a 1939 Chev that Dad fixed up for the trips. He built a huge box that would fit on the roof and constructed it in a way that it could serve as a table once it was unloaded. You can see the box on the top of the car in the photo on the right. It was probably taken somewhere on the Hope-Princeton highway from the look of the hills. As we were climbing our way through those mountains, we would often have to stop and let the car cool down since it was hauling a large load of people and stuff. If you look carefully at the photo on the left you can see the table set up behind me as I munch on something tasty.



All our camping equipment would go on the roof since the car trunk was rather small and the back seat was crammed full of three boys. The long trips could easily turn into whines and complaints about who was bugging who along the way but we seemed to enjoy the trips in the end. Part of the process involved switching places frequently so that we all got a chance to have a window seat as a reward for suffering the middle spot.

Most of our travels were in BC. In those days, the provincial campsites were free and you could assume that there would be at least one place available – except for two of our favorite spots: Bromley Rock and Sidewinder campsites (the latter on the Thompson River). These were small stopping off points in the river valleys that did not have much space for campsites. We would always plan to arrive at them early so that we could pick up a site from someone who was leaving.



Dad, Pete, and Bob would be sure that we stopped at plenty of fishing spots. They were more interested in this than I, so I would leave it to them or tag along to see what else was of interest. On some occasions I would bring some paper and pencils to try out my sketching. You can see copies of a couple of those sketches on the next pages.

In 1966 we took a trip to the Kootenays



MAR 66

in the south-east corner of BC. I remember it well since we took an old road from Christina Lake to Castlegar that concerned Dad. In those days it was only a gravel logging road that was famous for its steep climbs, narrow turns, and fast logging trucks. He took some extra water for the radiator in case the engine got hot and slowly climbed his way up the mountain with his eye on the road ahead. That trip we also got to Nelson and Dad took a nice photo of us on the lookout over the city. Bob and I thought we were very cool in our white cowboy hats.

Our main destination was to visit Renata – but I told you some of this story in a previous letter. Renata is the town that is now under the water of the Lower Arrow Lake, having been drowned by the rising water behind the Arrow dam. You can read about the community via the following link:

<http://billreimer.ca/personal/documents/familydocs/Renata.pdf>. You can also see some of your Great-Great Grandfather Reimer’s photos and notes about them via this link:

<http://billreimer.ca/personal/documents/FromPJReimersRenataAlbumFromRenataBillReimer.pdf>. If you wish to see the album, let me know and I will e-mail you the password.

After years of travelling with the camp box on the old car, Dad bought a new car and decided to build a trailer for it. I remember him welding the frame together in the back yard as he started to put the plans into action. He designed a lovely little “teardrop” trailer which was just big enough for 2 people to sleep and with a made-to-order “kitchen in the back. Dad even made a frame for Mum to sew a canopy so they could change clothes standing up outside the sleeping compartment. The result was a perfect setup for he and Mum. When they moved up to a VW Westfalia, Elaine and Ralph became the owners of the “Little Blue Angel”. I don’t know what happened to it after they were no longer using it.



Love,







W. J. M. H. E. L. Y.