

3-11-74
Box 600-192
North Miami Beach
Fl. 33160

Dear Peggy:

So glad to hear from you and to learn that you have many interests to explore. How wonderful, also, that you were able to find a new fellowtraveler whose interests parallel yours! May you continue to live with awareness and mental excitement.

I have been waiting until I had time to think about your request about the early years of your wonderful mother. I am so busy all the time and have been doing extra things to the house, like insulating the attic floor, having the outside trim painted, etc. buying new Oriental rugs for my bedroom and the waiting room. Now things are beautiful and I can enjoy the fruits of my labors for the rest of my life. The electric bill is so much less with the insulation. It will pay for itself in a year.

Helen's daughter, Betty Murph, and her family moved back to Louisiana this week and I gave them a dinner party last Sunday. Rocky and Jeanne Harper and their two little boys were here also, making ten altogether with the girl in the apt. So now I shall have only one relative near me, - Rocky and his family. (Oldest son of Connie's daughter, Betty Harper.)

Your mother had a profound influence on my life. Hearing her play the piano at night when I was a child going to sleep made me love the piano. How she ever did so well with so few lessons, I do not know. She even played Chopin Waltzes. When I was born she was already a big girl of ten so I became her special charge. She was always interested in men, she confessed to me years later, and when the newest boyfriend would try to give her a hand in wheeling the baby, she said I would shriek and express my disapproval. (What a brat I must have been). I remember when we moved to Philadelphia from Greensburg, Pa., your mother was teaching in a negro Missionary School in S. Carolina and returned home at night and, what a thrill she came up and hugged me as I was asleep, I guess. It made me very emotional I remember.

She always yearned for the finest things in life, music, art, literature. She had "One Foot in Heaven" with her soarings and ambitions always. The tragedy of her life was that she was not able to go to college, though her High School teachers said she was a "natural college material!" No money!!! I do not understand why there were no scholarships in those days? So she got odd jobs, took lit. courses at the U. of Pa., no credits, and worked at Curtis Publishing Co. as a correspondent for such a paltry sum that her father made her quit. Socially she was radiant. If she could have had a college education and found a job worthy of her talents she could have soared to the top anywhere in the world.

Instead - she lived in a small town, raised a fine family, lived in her imagination and writings what was denied to her on this earth. Never any complaints, never any disloyalty to family and the spot on this earth she could not change. A really beautiful character, who found beauty wherever she could and lived by it. Her children are blessed with a wonderful heritage.

I am sorry I discarded a western Magazine with a story written by Edythe Squier Draper, but I have reached an age when I am trying to lessen my possessions. Come to see me if you can, with your fine husband!

Love always,

Peggy

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Squier, Margaret

To Peggy Varvel Smith, Pittsburg, Kansas.

North Miami Beach, Florida. [March 11, 1974]

1p. 22x28cm. TLS, "Peggy," with envelope.

Recalls Mrs. Smith's mother, Edythe Squier Draper.