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Owen to Jim, 27 December 1957

Owen T. Palmer

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OWEN T. PALMER, JR.
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December 27, 1957

Dear Jim:

Joanne and I received the Christmas card and note from you and Dutch this week, and we were greatly distressed with the news of the difficult time you have been having. Oxford seems so far away except for sports news, and I have lost my contacts with the younger group who are students at the University; as a result your message was the first inkling that Joanne and I had received that you had not been well. We trust and hope that your recovery will be speedy and complete, and that 1958 will be the best ever for you and your family.

The bad news concerning your health was tempered considerably by the wonderful report on Bill. It is impossible to believe that he is ready for college, but it is reassuring to know that apparently he takes after his mother.

All in all the Palmers have had a very good year on the Coast during 1957. I guess it might be said we are in a rut; but it is a delightful and enjoyable one. Business is good enough so that we can pay most of the bills, and bad enough so that I can go fishing almost as often as I wish. I have always liked to fish, but the fever really struck about two and a half years ago. A business neighbor showed me that fish stories could be more than fiction, and I have managed to provide the seafood around the house for the past two years. The inevitable result was that it cost me ~~money~~ more money to catch them than buy them--especially the deepfreeze that Joanne decided was absolutely imperative. Whenever you feel that catching a few speckle trout or redbfish might improve the quality of your history department, please call. We have plenty of room, and I am loaded with equipment.

George Thatcher still drops by for coffee about three or four times a week. Although ~~Clayton~~ some of Clayton rubs off on him from time to time, ~~we~~ still have some hope for him. The Dixie Press is now printing the Keesler news, which venture is decidedly profitable, but most unstimulating. I am afraid that George's wee small voice on the editorial page of the guide amy end up in total silence.

While my reading has suffered recently, it appears that my education is about to commence again. My older daughter Jan, who is now in the second grade, and the ~~younger~~ younger, Genie, who begins school next fall, are on the verge of knowing more of the answers to every question than I do. When the public was worrying about Johnny not reading, they could not have known about the Gulfport local schools, for I am certain that the youngsters in Jan's class read better and understand more than when I was around.

We had our share of tragedy this Christmas. My nephew who has lived next door to me (my sister's son) almost all his life, was killed in an automobile accident on the 23rd. He was 21 and a senior at Vanderbilt. My sister is an English instructor at High School, and he had always been a great source of pride and comfort to her. He was always very close to Joanne and me, and I had a belief that someday he would practice law with me in Gulfport.

For a few months it appeared that this area would be in for a knock down political battle for Bill Colmer's seat. Our mutual friend Boyce Holleman looked too strong. Billy Meadows was also planning to enter the race; I presume Eddie K. was interested along with Upton Sisson. Naturally my support would have been with Billy since I had been one of the Gulfport city attorneys for five years; but at this time I had grave doubts that either he or Eddie could beat Boyce. Perhaps the situation will improve before the next time.

The Coast is probably expecting too much at the forthcoming session of the legislature. Our dreams are tremendous, but the people at Pascagoula proved that you had to dream of the impossible before hard work could produce even reasonable progress. Our legislators are convinced that the more populous counties will secure a few extra seats in the legislature as a few crumbs are passed around. I frankly believe we will make a good show for state ownership of ports, but the frictions, ^{between} ~~ever~~ the areas on the Gulf Coast indicate to me that there ~~can~~ never be found a common ground for agreement. The biggest project of Harrison county is the development of an inland waterways and industrial ~~sitaxxxx~~ locations on the various streams north of the coast line. Brown-Root company has just been retained for a \$75,000.00 survey. That gas tax money is burning a hole in our pockets, and we are desperately afraid that we will lose it unless we can come up with a project that will appeal to the local people and stimulate the imagination of that group in Jackson (it may be wishful thinking to believe that ~~has anything to do with~~ as a group they have anything with which to imagine).

Joanne and I are most serious in our invitation for you and Dutch to ~~get back~~ drop in on us at any time. Again Joanne joins me in wishing for you the speediest possible recovery and the best of everything for the Silvers during 1958.

Sincerely yours,

