

1902

GENOVA 44
MEXICO CITY
MEXICO, D.F.

Sept. 15

September 10, 1951.

*Answered
Joy*

Dr. Owen Sypherd,
University of Delaware,
Newark, Dela.

Dear Owen :

I have just received your letter of September 6th. I am afraid that I did not receive your letter of May 29th, or if I did, it must have been mixed up with some answered personal correspondence at the house by my personal secretary who lives there with us. Incidentally, I have had a former secretary of mine who was with us many years in the Foreign Service, living with us at the house during the last four years, as she retired from the Foreign Service just about the time that I did. It was my intention that I would spend about four or five hours a day in the Company offices and the rest of the time I would be working on three books that I had in mind. Very few things turn out the way we plan them, and as a matter of fact, although she has been living with us at the house during these four years since I retired and live in Mexico, I have not done a stroke of work of writing, except an occasional entirely confidential piece for the military authorities at home on some of the diplomatic aspects of some of the major problems we unfortunately have to deal with today in our country. My work in the Company was so absorbing that it made it quite impossible for me to do any writing, and I am very sorry to tell you that I have lost some of the desire to write. I do not like to say that because I think I should, and so many of my friends who were most intimately connected with major affairs from 1930 to 1940 in particular, still think that I should do so. The fact however remains that I have not done anything and this personal secretary whom I had at the house has not been doing anything except Company work which I could not find time to do at the office. I am terminating the arrangement at the end of the year and she is going to live in Taxco in Mexico which is a delightful spot to retire.

Whether I will write later on or not I do not know. I am trying to rearrange my life somewhat. I have not been so well during the last three or four

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months due to a stomach ailment, but fortunately it is getting very much better and I begin to feel like my normal self again. On the whole I am feeling quite fit and I am happy to say that Marion is in good health. We have slowed down the tempo of our living quite a good deal. We spend five days of the week in Mexico City, and the weekends we spend religiously at our house in Cuernavaca, which is really a little jewel. I am really terribly disappointed that you do not come and make us a visit, as I know you would enjoy it, and the trip is such an easy one. My doctors have told me here that I am in good shape and should have many years ahead of me, but they tell me that I must cut down the tempo of my work. I have been working about ten hours a day even since I retired in 1947 and I have had quite a good deal of responsibility, and it is a little too much for 68. I have just about decided to spend three weeks of the month in Mexico City and one whole week of the month at the house in Cuernavaca. Of course I do not like to stop the tempo of my work, but perhaps it is the wisest.

I am particularly happy to have had this word from you and to know that you are so well, and so active. I think one has to keep on doing things. The only thing one must not try is to do too much.

I did spend a few weeks in June in Washington, New York and Toronto on business, but I was so occupied that I did not have a chance to see any of my old friends. It would have given me a lot of pleasure to spend a week with you north. I can appreciate that life has changed there. After all, so many of those with whom some of the best moments of our life were bound up, have disappeared. There is not anything to be done about it.

I was sorry to hear that Bob Richards died the other day. He has had a long and useful life. It will be a great blow to Lydia. - We are hoping that Caleb and Helene will come down here for January and February of next year and spend this time quietly at our house in Cuernavaca. Caleb has been working too much all his life and has had the unfortunate habit of not taking

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any holidays. He simply must take things easier or he will actually cut his life short. They spent a month at the beginning of this year in Mexico City and in Cuernavaca and it really did Caleb a world of good.

The passing of Pilling and Norris has left, I am sure, a great vacuum in your life. I was attached to them as you were, but during more recent years we had not seen so much of each other, so their passing does not mean the same to me as it does to you.

Why not come down here and spend a few weeks or a month with us? Marlon and I would be delighted. You know that you would live here with us exactly the life which you wanted to live and I think you would find that your habits would not be interfered with and that you would have all the comforts you have in your nice home in Newark.

The work which I have been doing during the last four years, has fortunately turned out quite well on the whole and we are very happy in our life here. It may surprise you, but I am not a bit unhappy that I retired from the Foreign Service. It is time we had a good long talk, and many of them.

Marion joins me in love and good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,


George S. Messersmith.

GSM/go