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Dear Bill

Maggie Aldridge Smith

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D E A R B I L L

by *Maggie Aldridge Smith*

Author's Note: These were letters written to Bill Daniel in the Fort Cobb area during 1929-1930. School and the ability to attend were the main theme of the letters.

Apache, Oklahoma
May 29, 1929

Dear Bill,

Hooray for you! I saw you boxing Saturday night. Pretty good. I think I mean it was pretty good you didn't see me.

I was at Oak Grove not very long ago. I saw you, but I couldn't speak. My knees played Yankee Doodle, and my tongue wouldn't move.

Hope you aren't ill. You don't have to answer this, but I'd feel much better if you did.

Vivian and I are certainly enjoying ourselves.

Sincerely yours,
MEA

Apache, Oklahoma
Tuesday night

Mr. Ozell Daniel
Fort Cobb, Oklahoma

Dear Ozell,

I suppose you will be surprised to receive a letter from me, but you shouldn't be surprised because I will do anything, "ALMOST." ha ha

I came home from Elk City Friday night and Sunday night Maggie came and got me. Of course I had to come stay with her. I wish you could be down here with us. We are nearly as mean as we used to be. Maggie gets so mad at me sometimes. But I can get by with her by telling something good.

I saw you in Carnegie last Saturday but you didn't see me.

Maggie has been singing and just made me forget all I ever knew and that wasn't much. ha ha

OX All mistakes are hugs and kisses.

Your Aggravating Friend
Vivian Smith

CHILDHOOD

Carnegie, Oklahoma
February 24, 1930

Dear Bill,

I'm sorry, Bill, but I've sure fixed things for you now. I don't see why I didn't think and not say anything, but I did and I'm sorry. Will you forgive me this time? I'll tell you what I've done.

Last Saturday Vivian and Vera Kelly came into the store. Of course I said something to Vivian about getting a letter from you. Vera says, "Oh, Pearly gets letters from Bill all time." I knew I had been "talking out of school." I'm sorry. Perhaps Pearly won't care. I hope she will not be angry with you.

I see the kids from Oak Grove quite often. They aren't much in love with Lutie Mae. Why? Do you know?

No, Billy Boy, I'm not getting serious. I couldn't if I tried.

"HUNT AND PECK SYSTEM" for typing: I think I've been trying the "Find and Peck," and I believe yours is the best for I still can't type and you type letters. So I'll learn your way a while.

I must study lessons now. I may send you a picture pretty soon (if they are any good).

Bye Bye MEA

EDITOR'S NOTE: The author didn't just write letters that year. The Carnegie High School Debate Team coached by Ramona Allen, of which Maggie Aldridge Smith was a member, won the Southwestern Conference championship.

Apache, Oklahoma
Route 5
May 30, 1930

Dear Bill Daniel,

Suppose you thought I was never going to answer, but I IS at last.

I heard your father was ill not very long ago. Did you come home? I thought I saw you one day on the street. I said, "Hello, Bill"; the boy waved, but it wasn't you. He's been speaking to me ever since.

How's your crop? Our cotton is a patch of weeds since all these rains. However, we are trying to hurry and work it out. Sure has rained an awful lot lately. I must hurry and get this mailed—you hurry and answer and don't wait so long, please.

Respectfully, your friend, MEA

Apache, Oklahoma
Route 5
June 17, 1930

Dear Bill,

Since you didn't get my last letter and it came back, I'll write again. Vivian told me she saw you at Oak Grove the last day of school, so I thought perhaps you had left Canton.

Talk about grass, weeds, sun, and work; well—you can't tell me anything new about any of these. What have you been doing? Riding a plow or a hoe handle?

I can hardly wait until school starts again. No telling where I'll go to school, though. I've been quite undecided. Daddy needs me here with the crop work. I want to go back to Carnegie. Mattie and Clarence are down here. The store has quit business. My sister and her husband (Izette and Bud Lowery) are down here, too. So we have quite a group of workers.

When you come this way, be sure to come by to see me. How is your crop? Grassy? It's been raining. When we could get into the fields, we had to do oats and wheat. The cotton and corn are grassy—not very clean. Answer soon and so will I.

MEA

Apache, Oklahoma
July 28, 1930

Dear Bill,

How does this warm weather find you. In a swimming pool having a big time. That's where it finds me when I have time to get there.

I'm getting to be real lazy—as if I hadn't been that all my life because I just want to sleep and read all the time. Mama is visiting her father in Siloam Springs, Arkansas; therefore, I don't

CHILDHOOD

have much chance to sleep and read.

I went to Wewoka last Sunday. Came back before I wanted to. I wanted to stay a long time. I must stay out here a while now because I'll probably have to stay out there a whole nine months. Ain't that the worst luck? I want to go to school at Carnegie, but I can't. So—

All our nephews and nieces have visited me since Mama left. I wrote and told her I'd be gray headed before I'm seventeen if they stay.

Hang crepe on your nose—your brain is dead if you think I haven't time to read long letters. I have time to read them but not to write.

I must get to bed; it is late, but:
Remember me at morning
Remember me at night
Remember me F.O.B.D.
And don't forget to write.

LOVE TO YOU, MEA

Apache, Oklahoma
June 24, 1931

Dearest Bill,

Glad to have received your letter and your maxim "Better late than never." Bring Vivian and come over Sunday night. I'll be counting the minutes until then 'cause I can hardly wait to see you kids. I'll write her and tell her to prepare to come. If anything happens that she can't come, you come anyway.

Swimming, fishing, sleeping, and reading—running around—has been my routine this week. I've enjoyed it immensely too because last week I found myself a constant companion to the cow. Probably will repeat that performance next week.

It is so hot here it would make a Honolulu girl (if one were here) want to shed a few more garments. Impossible? Did I hear you say? Not quite!

Must drop Vivian a line now, so I'll close, expecting to C U soon.

I remain yours, MEA □

MAGGIE ALDRIDGE SMITH is originally from Western Oklahoma. She presently lives in Siloam Springs, Arkansas, and has served for seventeen years as the director of Ozark Writers and Artists Guild now located at Crowder College in Neosho, Missouri.