

*Handwritten letter from Margaret Rucker Smithson to Miss Erie Davis, Richwood, West Virginia  
Postmark: Scranton, PA. Apr 6, 1941, 8-pm*

Saturday

Dear Erie,

I was so glad to hear from you, and intended to answer right away, but I always got sidetracked.

I am glad that May is going to have her own home, but I know you will miss them very much. You will have to visit them often, and the country is nice in the spring and summer especially.

I am glad Verma married a nice boy, but it does seem crazy to marry so young when he does not make enough for them to live on. I'd want my children to have a better start in life than that. Of course, they have no children yet, but a man usually has more ambition to try to get ahead, before he is married, and while he is trying to get ready to get married. Perhaps he will be ambitious to set up a home, and that will make him hustle, and especially stick to a job. The best of luck to them.

Bit was up last week with Rosalie, and what a Rosalie! She did not seem the same baby we last saw in November. She is 10 mos., and must weigh nearly 30 lbs, But I never saw such an active baby. She never wears shoes or stockings in the house, and has not had a cold all winter. We put her down on a blanket, and she balances on her stomach and goes thru all the motions of swimming, then rolls wherever she wants to go. We always sat her down, and she inched over as far as she could, and then just tumbled the rest of the way to get on her tummy. Sometimes she bumped into something in tumbling over, but she never cries. She is so active. I cannot see how she stays so fat. She stands up by things if she can hold on, but cannot pull herself up yet. She has blue eyes, and lots of light blond hair, but it is not as white as Bit's was, and will no doubt be brown later. She is so fat her cheeks almost hang, but she is so alert and bright, and quite pretty. It is so quiet where they live, and she noticed all the new noises here. Whenever a streetcar passed she stopped playing to listen, and she was simply fascinated when she saw one. We had a grand time all week, Dill came up Friday and they went back Sunday. Bit said she was the happiest baby you ever saw. She laughed and talked to everything and showed how happy she was to be home again. Bit said she rolled from room to room.

Norma had the grippe in Jan., and a streptococcus throat in Feb. She was very ill, but recovered nicely, thanks to Dr. Sureth. Will had a heart attack Christmas Day, but seems much better now. I have been well all winter, to take care of the others.

Erie, I have been looking up our family history, and I have found some interesting things about our ancestors. Ruth accidentally found a reference in the Library about John Bransford which she had not time to look up. Well, I finally went over, and I found so much I kept going. We are direct descendants of Charles Brandon who married Princess Ann Plantagenet, sister of Henry VIII (famous for his six wives). Anne was a granddaughter of King Edward III of England, which takes up back to the throne of England. The movie "When Knighthood was in Flower" is the story of Charles Brandon and Anne. Mary had told Bit about it, but I did not know she had any proof, and I did not believe it. But I found it in biographies and in, "A Compendium of American Genealogy", so I am convinced.

Henry VIII made Charles Brandon Duke of Suffolk after his marriage to Anne, and the name was changed to Bransford. Charles died in 1545, and after the death of his son the title passed to some other favorite of a new King.

John 1<sup>st</sup> was a wealthy planter of the Barbados. John II came to Va. He married Mary Kingsford, daughter of Sir Wm. Kingsford. John III married Judith Ammonette. Their son Benjamin married Sarah Hatcher, daughter of Frederick Hatcher, a Revolutionary soldier of Cumberland Co., Va. Their oldest child, Sarah W. married James P. Patteson – They were my great grandparents, who took my mother back to Virginia after her parents died.

John B- III was imprisoned in Va for allowing a Baptist minister to hold services in his house. His wife, Judith Ammonette was the daughter of Andre, son of Jacob Ammonette, a French Huguenot who fled to America to escape persecution in France. The motto on our coat of arms is “No Fraud is a safe hiding Place”. Of course that is the translation as the motto on the shield is in Latin. We have a lot of relations in the south who are still very wealthy, as the Bransfords were one of the really rich families of Va. I have a lot more information about them but it is too long to write. I’ll try to get Bit to copy (type) it for you later. Norma is just learning the touch system, so I do not want to give her any copying until she gets used to doing it without looking at the keys. So I’ll have to wait until we [go] down there or she comes up for a week. Rosalie keeps her too busy when she is alone. I’ll enclose one sheet of data.

I did not know Nettie named her baby Eleanor Rosalie, I am glad she is well. I have a couple of sweaters to send Nettie. Ruth’s roommate sent Norma 3 or 4 recently when Ruth came home, so she has too many.

I miss Billy and Marilyn so much. I made a set of doll clothes for Marilyn’s doll in Feb., so I made Marilyn a couple of dresses too. I hope you answer soon. I wrote Mary and Cousin Floidie about our ancestry, and I have not heard from them since. Hope the news does not affect you like that.

Loads of love,  
Aunt Margaret

*[Erie Davis was Margaret Rucker Smithson’s niece by her sister, Lucy Blanche Smithson;  
Nettie and May are names of two sisters of Edie;  
Bit is Elizabeth Woodson Miller, daughter of Margaret Rucker Smithson;  
Dill is John Dillard Collins, Bit’s husband;  
Rosalie Collins is Bit’s daughter;  
Norma is Norma Miller, a second daughter of Margaret;  
Ruth is Ruth Miller, a third daughter of Margaret;  
Will is William C. Miller, Margaret’s husband;  
Billy and Marilyn are Margaret’s grandchildren by her son William C. Miller Jr.;  
Verma, Mary, and Cousin Floidie are presently unknown.*

*Transcribed by Gary Collins in July 2003 from a Xerox copy provided by Phyllis Anne Bransford.]*