

20 July 2009

Dear Bill,

We brought only a roomful of Mother's furnishings up from Memphis when she came home to our house from the hospital in December 1993. After she died the following September, I shipped her dining room table and chairs to Caroline and sold her twin beds at a local resale shop. I kept her old wing chair and had it reupholstered for our living room. That was about it, except for an old two-drawer gray metal file cabinet that we moved down to the basement in haste to reclaim our bedroom.

Now I am clearing space to make a working studio for myself in the basement. I opened that file cabinet for the first time in 15 years! Not much, mostly junk like old appliance receipts/manuals/warrantees. But there was one file marked "Bill's File," which is enclosed. Therein are a couple of items of interest: the Delta Democrat-Times article (which I copied for you because the original is at risk of disintegrating) and your baptism certificate.

The latter item is dated December 13, 1936, when you were three years old. I wondered why a christening then, why not when you were an infant? Uncle Lancelot was one of your witnesses/godfathers along with Tom McEachern and Mrs. Caruthers Ewing. Odd that Uncle Lancelot would be on hand, I thought. And then it dawned on me that your little brother had died just two weeks earlier, probably without having been baptized. Mother must have been beside herself with remorse, given her strong Christian faith. It pains me to think of her carrying that anguish all the rest of her life.

On another note, I e-mailed Caroline yesterday for an update on Ellen and learned that Ellen is in the hospital, getting intravenous pain relief. She can hardly breathe. I wonder how long she can hold on in this condition. She will be 65 on November 3. Drat those cigarettes that killed our mother and now our sister.

Be well,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Anne", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.