

2nd November 1956
G.P.O., Hobart
Tasmania, Australia

Mr. B. E. Rathje
Rathje & Woodward
203 East Liberty Drive
Wheaton, Illinois

Dear Bert:

Thank you for your letter of October 20th. It is the first pleasant one I've received down here in a long time. The situation you describe is pretty much as I suspected it to be.

My brother Schuyler has an intense love of money which at times over powers his better judgment. Thus he gets into affairs which he has no business. The house moving affair seems to be one of these cases. It is now clear that he wishes to be relieved of a bad bargain. I don't blame him and I think he should be allowed to. I rather thought this is the way things would turn out if I made deep enough inquiries. Instead of blaming me for preventing him from making a fortune, he should thank me for keeping him from losing his shirt!

It is immaterial to me whether Schuyler or Joe Muehlfelt buys the house. If whoever buys it has to put something into it, there will be an incentive to see the job thru which would not exist if the house were merely given away. I am opposed to this business of just destroying things merely as a matter of expediency.

If you can get Joe to pay 1000 dollars for the house and garage, please draw up the necessary bill of sale papers. Send them first to Louisville for Schuyler and his wife to sign and then down here. If everything is in good order, I will sign them and return them along with the other documents direct to you.

Somewhere in the voluminous correspondence was a statement about cutting multiconductor lead sheathed telephone cable and the associated great expense. This

is probably the method described in a line mans hand book of instructions which at times assumes the authority of the Bible. Actually there is a much better way of getting a house past one of these obstructions. The cable is loosened at each pole for eight or ten spans to each side of the road in question. A small block & tackle is then fastened from pole to cable and the cable let down gradually a bit more on each pole until it reaches the ground at the road. A small trench is cut in the road to accomodate the cable. The house may then pass over. Cable is then hoisted back into position and fastened to poles. No interruption to service or damage to telephone plant. The whole affair depends upon gaining enough slack to allow the cable to be lowered a dozen feet or so without damage. I recommend its use.

Returning to the house; I have always felt pleasantly toward the place and it was my hope that someday I might be able to return and live in it again. If Joe can find a nice place out northwest of town on a slight rise of ground with some trees about and then do a good job on basement foundations and rehabilitating the eaves, I might be interested in buying it back from him when I return. As far as water and sewerage are concerned, the private systems available today are as good or better than those provided by the city. The gas burner in the furnace will need to be changed to oil and the bathroom and kitchen plumbing will need to be modernized. However I could take care of these matters later. My future interest depends primarily on the house being placed in a pleasant location with a high dry basement. Obviously I can't tell him what to do in detail and I'll leave matters to his judgment. If I'm not back when the job is finished, please have him send to me some fotos of it in its new surroundings.

Best regards,

Grote Reber