

6-17-1970

Henri Temianka Correspondence; (skinner)

Gwen Skinner

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Skinner
c/o Kittredges,
2350 SW 26 ave.,
Ft. Lauderdale,
Florida.
June 17th.

Dear Henri & Emmy,

It's high time I dropped a line in the post to let you know where the journeying Skinners have got to. We've had a simply marvellous time since last we saw you, and I hardly know where to start.

Mexico we found rugged down the coastline, and most interesting sailing ground. For the most part, the weather held good, & though we did have one bad storm around Magdalena Bay, and a Tuantepc Gulf 'norther' gave us a bad time when we were in Salina Cruz at the bottom of Mexico. Loved Costa Rica and found the people a much prouder race of central Americans than the Mexicans.

Megan flew home from Acapulco on the 15th of December, supposedly to see her 'girl friends'..her 'grandmothers'..and her 'boyfriend'..in that order. Three weeks later we received two delightfully old-fashioned letters from each of them(Megan & her boy-friend John), asking permission to get 'engaged'. To which, of course, we consented. He's a very nice young man, ~~da~~ son of our very good friends, and we've known him a long time. They were scheduled to both join us in Jamaica this last April, but John, who is a cadet officer with the merchant navy, decided to keep going with his studies and sea time, so that he becomes a 1st Officer at the beginning of 1971. They both prefer to spend the year with us seeing Europe and England, rather than the east coast of America. So instead of the original plan, they will join us next winter in the Caribbean and do the Atlantic crossing etc. I can understand that Megan prefers to visit Europe, with her own interest in painting. In the meantime, she lives with John's Mother and Father, and I gather has a lovely bed-sitter cum studio of her own at their house. She won one of four equal prizes in a New Zealand Art Festival soon after she returned home, and has been asked to display two paintings in a 'well known NZ painters' exhibition very shortly. She feels very honoured to have been asked, and is by far the youngest.

Panama Canal was interesting, and we absolutely loved the San Blas Islands and the Cuna Indian ladies with the wide gold bands through their noses. Spent seven weeks in Cartagena, drinking in history and atmosphere, then had a perfectly appalling trip over to Jamaica. Of course, the automatic pilot had to have broken down, so with no Megan on board, Bernie and I have been physically steering since Panama. Rather tiring, but nevertheless enjoyable. We stayed in Jamaica, at Port Antonio on the NE coast for five weeks. Met adorable people there. Paul stayed for a month longer than Bernie and I and went to Hill School, thoroughly enjoying his first ever break away from parents. He chummed up with a boy there who actually could fly his father's airplane..at eleven years old. It was all very sophisticated!

Had a good trip through the Bahamas to Miami, and we are repainting here at Fort Lauderdale before attacking New York and the

America's Cup Races. This place we are tied up is a little piece of quiet heaven...rather rare for Florida I gather. Five acres of grounds that belong entirely to these yachting folk Bob and Mary Kittredge who sailed down to NZ in their boat eight years ago. They have a lovely lagoon with a couple of friendly? alligators, turtles by the score, squirrels, rabbits that don't even move out of your way, all sorts of gorgeous birds and ducks etc. You'd love the peace and quiet Emmy.

I wait anxiously now to get to New York, Henri, to try my book out on the market. Did I tell you that I also have a couple of children's manuscripts sitting up there waiting to find a buyer?? Have been trying to teach myself to play classical guitar, and at last something that ~~so~~ sounds vaguely like music is emerging! We still have no instrument or ideas for Paul. Maybe I shall find someone in New York to start him off on a blowing something-or-other!

Bernie sends his fondest regards, and hopes along with me, that you will join us somewhere. We have some wealthy shipping people in Florida contemplating ferro-cement yacht building, and may yet become involved in business on the American scene. The ideal thing, of course, is to build hulls in NZ and ship them to US which is what is being contemplated. Then we could live at the lesser pace in good old NZ and make a few trips to the 'outside world'...which seems a sound scheme.

Well, I must not ramble on more. Bernie particularly looks forward to New York as he has a sister living there with eight children. I need a good stiff gin just thinking about it! Do write..we don't want to lose touch with some of the nicest people we've met. How is David? Please give him our fondest regards.

Sincerely,

Allen Skinner