July 1, 1947

Dear Mrs. Walker:

I was very much interested in your letter and glad for you and your husband that you are having a chance to use the farm, though I recognize the difficulties of being squatters. I think, however, if your mother-in-law has lived on the land twenty years, the other claimants have very little legal right. I think, however, you should as soon as possible get a legal decision as you do not want to put in a great deal of work and then lose the land.

One hundred miles a day is a lot of driving, but it can be done and it is good to be on your own land, if your mother-in-law has really reformed and is going to make life more or less pleasant for all of you.

Very cordially yours,
Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

Weeks have slipped into months since I promised to explain to you our return to Skidmore. This is still Skidmore, tho' by a stroke of luck we are to have our mail brought to our front gate, as per above address. This is the same farm, still belonging to Maurice's mother. Because our eviction 11 years ago was somewhat by invitation on the part of the owner & because it was executed at the cost of great sense of failure, headaches & material loss on our part, we were rather agreed on the determination not to return here, ever. But "the best laid plans —"

When we promised ourselves & each
her never to be culled bricks here, we were presuming the temptation would never confront us. It's so damned easy to resist imaginary temptations!

Apparently my mother-in-law underwent a complete revolution in her thinking. When the War department declared her youngest son dead and settled accounts she announced her intention of dividing everything she possessed among her 3 remaining sons, living out her life on the pension. Her 3 sons were skeptical, but she proceeded as announced. Richard and Robert seemed well pleased with her arrangement, and she stated that Maurice and I were the only ones of her family with whom she felt she could spend any amount of time, especially any period of disability!! Furthermore, it happened that Maurice was the only son who had ever had any love for this place, amazing fact!

To wind up the entire situation was to give Maurice a deed for her part of the 58 pathetic...
acres. My still small voice whispered to me not to take up residence in any part of Bee county, until the deed was as given & recorded, but in the face of my transformed mother-in-law, in view of my own firm resolution to be an extraneous person in my wonderful good luck of Maurice’s safe and sound return to us; and considering the trip I was offered — a trip to Calif. for Christmas! (after 10 years in exile) — so we moved here; here we’ve been working out our days & nights to make a livable house, keep back the South Texas “jungle” from our yards, get a toe hold on some stay-at-home income. That much of the picture is the same as before. There is the brighter side, the in our children; in Maurice’s good job at Corpus Christi; in the Mother’s different attitude; and there is the great challenge, for it is a rare & fine thing to be given an opportunity to try again on a situation where one has felt shame & defeated. The
4 miles per day. Maurice drives takes a lot of energy & we, of course, are 17 years older, but the better for wear & tear, but the R. E. A., the natural gas, the usable car — the scales are pretty evenly balanced on all that.

The snag, this is: we are squatters, thru' all the 20 years of my mother-in-law's widowhood she was ignorant of, or stubbornly blind to the fact that the property has some disagreeable claimants who manage to make it impossible for her to sell, divide or give away!

So now they tell us.

If this all sounds a bit fuzzy to you — so it seems to us, also. Maurice, tho', is a happy man & that is worth much to us, his family. We are grateful for life, health, work & love.

As always, 

Rae Walker