

Houston, Texas,
January 17, 1990,

Dear Mrs. Ball:

Thank you very much for your most welcome Christmas Card. It was very nice and I appreciated it very much. It did me lots of good and lifted my spirits.

Mrs. Ball, this has been a tragic year for me. My wife became ill during May and I lost her New Year's Day. She had a tumor in her brain and one in her lungs. She never had a chance. In May I noticed that Charleen was becoming a little confused with dates and names and places and her memory was not as sharp. I took her to her doctor and she was diagnosed as having anxiety symptoms because of the grave illness of her brother. She got a trifle worse in June and her doctor gave her a prescription for her nerves and to make her sleep better at night. She did not get any better but she leveled out and made it OK. Her brother died in August and the 10th of Sept. she did not know who she was where she was or who I was either. I took her to her doctor and he knew on first sight that something was bad wrong. We put her in the hospital and in short order through ~~bold~~ blood tests and x-rays the tumors were found.

The tumor in her brain was growing in that part of her brain that controlled her thinking, reasoning and memory. Both lungs had tumors. She was given radiation and chemotherapy treatments all of October and half of November. Her pain started the latter part of November and increased every day it seems. The doctor told me the only thing we could do was to make her comfortable and give her medication for the pain. She had a stroke in early December that left her unable to walk, feed herself or to talk plain. She slipped in and out of a coma Christmas Eve but rallied on Christmas Day. She started going into a coma the day after Christmas and the next day I could not get any response from her in trying to awaken her. She rallied at the hospital but Sunday she became very restless and was in extreme pain. They put her to sleep with medication and she never awakened. She died peacefully in her sleep. She just quit breathing. I lost my first wife the same way.

I am getting along OK and I am going to get better. We have to go on living. I did have my garden as a hobby but the past two years I have been cutting back on it and my daughter who is an avid gardener has taken over all of my tools and equipment so the only hobby I have left now is genealogy. I have not worked with it since early in May so I am sort of lost there as to getting started again. I have dozens of letters from all across the country that I have received from other genealogical "bugs" that I have not answered.

That may be my first order of buisness, to answer those letters.

You know that I have discovered in my research, that I am not a member of your Ball family of south Mississippi as I had thought and Tom had thought, for so many years. My BALL ancestor was a Valentine Ball and wife Suhannah LEWIS of Middlesex County, VA. They were married there in 1730 and my Valentine Ball may have come from New Jersey to VA.

I have turned all of my research notes, records and references on your BALL family over to a Mrs. Margaret Ball Miller of Houma, LA who is very interested in family history and she said she was going to try to put it all to-gether into a book. I told her if she ever did I wanted a copy to go to you. I hope she finishes it this year.

On January 14th my daughter who, with her husband, lives and works in West Germany as civilian employees of the Armed Forces there, presented me with a grandson. He is the first male in the family. She called me to tell me that everyone and everything was just fine. The bright sun really broke through the dark gray clouds with that call. I have sadness in my heart but it is tempered and will be replaced with happiness.

Thank you for your thoughtfulness at Christmas time.

Sincerely,

RCBall