

Letter from Robert Walker Carley to Margaret Alice Carley

Alan R. Rogers

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This document contains a letter that has been folded up inside a bible that once belonged to Robert Walker Carley, who was born May 22, 1834, in Ireland and died Aug. 5, 1872, in Seguin, Texas, at the age of 38. At the time of his death, Carley was Rector of St. Andrews Episcopal Church. A summary of Carley's life can be found [here](#).

The letter is addressed to "Alice," who was probably his daughter, Margaret Alice Carley. If I am deciphering the handwriting correctly, Robert is writing to Alice on her birthday. About half way down the first page, he writes "you will want to be very good now as you have grown so old—now eight years—what a great girl." Margaret Alice was born on April 23, 1860. This letter therefore dates to April, 1868. Although Carley had enrolled in Harvard in 1867, intending to graduate in 1868, he left the program early and was therefore probably not there when this letter was written. He asks Alice to give his "love to the baby." This was probably Alice's half-brother, Robert Walker Carley, Jr., born March 2, 1868, to Robert senior's second wife, Fannie Lamont.

Margaret Alice married Robert D. Glass. My grandmother, Mary Glass Chamberlain, was one of their many children.

Here is my best effort at a transcription:

My dearest Alice,

I have just [thought?] that this is your birth day, so as I cannot be with you to congratulate, I must do what is next best, that is, write you a line. You will want to be very good now as you have grown so old—now eight years—what a great girl. You will be able now to get such perfect lessons, while [or which?] your [indecipherable] so big, that your teacher will be very glad indeed. And [we?] will all be very glad to [missing] you get on nicely, and then [indecipherable] you will go into the common school, and that will be something [grand?].

What fine sunny weather we have. I often wish that I could ask you and [Frankie?] [out here?] to enjoy the pleasant sunshine.

I send you best love and many birth day Kisses.

Do not forget to be [missing word]. I hope you get along nicely with the [indecipherable] and help all you can. [It?] pleases everyone to see a little girl [industrious?].

Give my love to the baby, and give him a Kiss for me.

It is beautiful to hear the birds sing out here in the woods.

Your loving father

Robert Carley.

I would welcome corrections or additions to this transcription

Alan R. Rogers

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"My dearest Alice.

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that this is your last a.
~~so a. I cannot be last~~ you
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What is next best, that is
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What fine sunny
weather we have. I often
wish that I could ask you
and Frankie all here to
enjoy the pleasant
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Send you best love
and many birthday
kisses.

I hope you get along
nicely with the housekeeper
and help all you can
Please very much to see a
little girl ~~now~~ ^{now}
Give my love to the
baby, and give him a
kiss for me.

It is beautiful to hear
the birds sing out here
in the woods.

You loving Father
Robert Bailey.