

## Birthday Wishes from Home (1946)

*John Q. Barrett\**

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Robert Houghwout Jackson was born on February 13, 1892, on his family's farm in Spring Creek, Pennsylvania. He was the first of his parents' babies who survived. He later became the brother of two sisters, Ella Marie Jackson (later Springer), born in 1894, and Helen Mary Jackson (later Adams), born in 1904.

As they grew up, Robert was particularly close to his baby sister Helen. She was eleven years old when their father died in January 1915. Starting then, Helen, and also their mother, who did not earn income outside the home, became dependents of Robert, age twenty-two and a lawyer for just over one year. Robert's close relationship with Helen continued for all of his life. She called him "Bob," as not every member of the family did—that nickname was too informal for some, such as their mother.

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A 1941 Jackson family gathering, somewhere in Chautauqua County, New York. L-R: Irene Jackson (Robert's wife), Robert Jackson, Angelina Stickle (his mother), "Aunt Mable" (?), Ella Jackson Springer, Erie Springer (Ella's husband), Helen Jackson Adams, Harold Jackson Adams (son of Helen and her husband Percy Adams), and Kenneth Ingeman (Ella's and Erie's son-in-law).

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In early 1946, Robert H. Jackson was a justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, but he was away from that job, serving in Nuremberg as chief prosecutor of the former leaders of Nazi Germany. He had a United States Army Post Office mailing address in Nuremberg: Office of U.S. Chief of Counsel, APO 403 U.S. Army, Nürnberg. But mail from the U.S. did not always reach him. When it did, it often had spent weeks in transit.

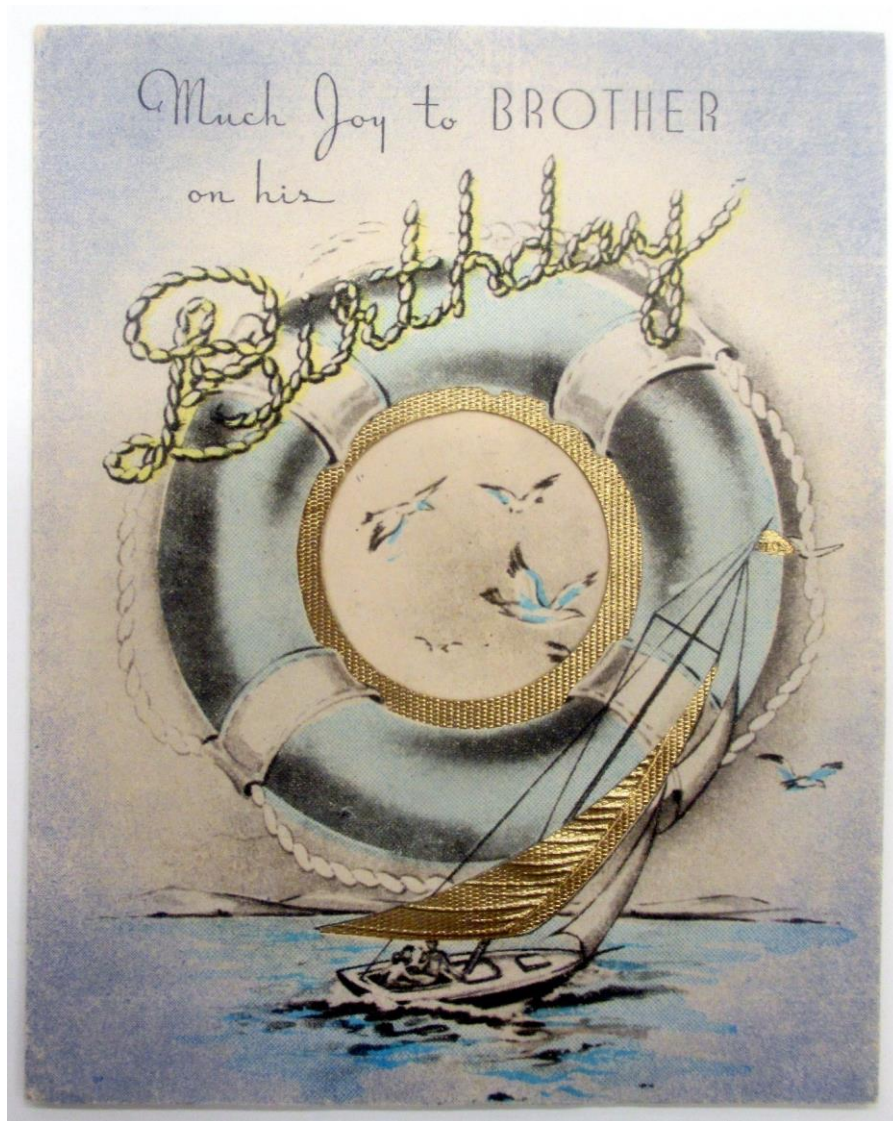
Helen Jackson Adams knew from her writing to Robert in Nuremberg during Fall 1945 that the mail was slow. So in January 1946, she mailed her birthday wishes to him weeks early.

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In January 1946, Helen, living with her husband and son in what had been her childhood home in Frewsburg, a village in Chautauqua County, New York, mailed Robert a store-bought card. She antedated it to his coming birthday, February 13. The card shows a sailboat. At one level that is odd—Frewsburg is inland, in farm country. But maybe it was a sly reference to sending the card across the ocean.





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Helen enclosed a letter to Bob. She updated him on family news, including the recent death of a relative in nearby (to Helen) Warren, Pennsylvania. She reported on their hometown's winter weather. She also reported what she had heard recently, on Walter Winchell's Sunday night national radio show, about Bob's prospects for finishing his work in Nuremberg and returning home soon. She sent her good wishes to him and to his son William (named for their father), who was working with Bob in Nuremberg.

Frewsburg, N.Y.  
Jan. 16, 1946.

Dear Bob:

I have no idea when to send a card so that it will reach you for your Birthday, so no matter when you receive it, it is for your 54<sup>th</sup> birthday? Am I right? Time flies so fast I can hardly keep it straight, but guess you were twelve years old in Feb. and I was born the following April.

Aunt Alice Gregory died on New Year's morning, on a Thursday and the funeral was the following Thursday. Ella and I went to Russell by bus, then Ella went from there with Mary and I went with Uncle Frank and Aunt Alice Lounsbury. The Lounsbury's had asked me to ride with them before Mary, so I felt I should go with them. Guess Aunt Alice Gregory had suffered terrible. They kept her under the influence of Hypno, but when she came out it took three to keep her in bed. Am glad for her sake and Josephine she didn't have to linger and suffer any longer. If I hadn't known who was in the casket I could never believed it was Auntie, she was so thin, and without her glasses I could not see one familiar look.

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water ever since.  
So far we have had a nice winter, not too much snow and not too cold. We had over a week of very warm weather, thawed off all the snow and ice, and one day it would rain then sun shine just like April. We have a little snow again now, but it has been a beautiful day today, was gone last night but the sun has warmed it up now.  
I heard Walter Winchell say Sunday night that you are coming home for good in March. Hope he knows.  
Love and best wishes to you and to Bill  
Helen.

Alas, Justice Jackson did not make it home from Nuremberg until August 1946—it turned out that when Helen was writing to him in January, he was still early in the hard work of the trial.

Luckily he did receive Helen's card and letter, which surely pleased him. He saved them, among other precious things.

