

The United States Printing & Lithograph Co.

85 to 101 North Third Street

Brooklyn, N.Y.

WILLIAM OTTMANN
VICE PRESIDENT

PHONE - GREENPOINT 4400

Aug. 18th, 1930.

Dear Dr. Penfield:--

On my return from Europe last week, I found your esteemed letter. I will appreciate a word from you when your organization is sufficiently well advanced, in order that my contribution may be made in a manner which will permit me to deduct it from this year's income tax return.

I know you will be interested in a word about William. He enjoyed the trip immensely, and seemed to grow and expand every day. I have never seen him so alert mentally and so active physically, and his charming manner delighted all who came in contact with him.

It may astonish you to learn that he took a deep interest in dancing, and I had a pretty big task every evening to stop his activities in that direction when I felt that he had enough. He swam in the pool on the steamer each day on both trips and exercised in the gymnasium. It was not the easiest thing in the world to get him to take what I considered enough rest, as he claimed that he knew when he was tired and how much rest he needed. I thought it best to let him proceed along those lines, although I watched him very closely and instructed Gordon Petrie to keep his eyes open all the time.

We had very calm voyages both ways. We flew from Bremen Haven to Berlin in a small fast monoplane. The distance was about 200 miles, and it took us two hours. William had never been in a plane before, but he undertook the trip in the same spirit that he faced his operation, and you know what that means. Fortunately, the flight was a very smooth one compared with some others that I have experienced in the past. The psychological effect on William was excellent. I am not at all anxious for him to do any more flying unless necessary, but I think it was very important for him to have the feeling, and to tell his family and friends that he had a flight in a plane.

His weight has remained about the same - 168 lbs. stripped, and his appetite is very good. He subsists on an all around diet, which includes considerable sweets.

It might be advisable for me to check up with Dr. Gayelin. William seems gradually to be acquiring the conviction that he is cured, and while I do not wish to disturb his serenity on that point, I nevertheless give him an occasional faint admonition not to become fatigued, in order that he may have a mental reservation which would serve him in good stead in the event that something should go wrong. It would not be a good thing to have the boy convinced that he is cured, and then have something happen. The result would be disastrous to his subsequent peace of mind.

Nevertheless, my own optimism is growing from my intensely close observation of his actions and reactions. It would do your heart good to see how the boy has broadened out in all respects, and how spontaneously and immediately his mind reacts to all conditions and situations. Everyone who came in contact with him remarked on his quickness of repartee and the ready manner in which he always sees the humor of everything that is said. Personally I am convinced that the mechanical thing you did to his brain corrected the cause of his trouble. My only reservation consists in respect to the possibility that the inexorable attempt of nature to restore conditions of its own former making, may possibly in the future bring about a readjustment which will destroy the effects of your work. Nevertheless, I consider that possibility daily growing more remote, although I am holding myself in a mental attitude which is ready for any eventuality. In other words, I am not putting my head in the sand and permitting myself the repose and confidence from which a sudden awakening might find me unequipped to meet the resulting situation.


Gordon Petrie returns to Montreal on Sept. 13th. No definite plan for William has been made. What he naturally wants to do is to remain at the Westchester Country Club until it gets cold, and then go to Lake Placid for the winter sports. Personally I feel that sort of life would in a few months become a habit which would be permanent and might destroy the ~~future~~ usefulness in life to himself as well as to others. I feel that with the co-operation which now exists between the Trustees and myself, William can be influenced, without the appearance of an imposition of undue hardship upon him, to lead a more constructive life.

When Gordon Petrie leaves, there is no one in sight to take his place. I think William would like to come and live with me for a little while until we can get him settled. I shall discuss the matter this week some time with the Trustees of his mother's estate and other members of his mother's family.

I don't like to take up too much of your time, but am constrained to write at this length because of my knowledge of your deep interest in anything that concerns William.

With kind regards, and hoping that you are having a pleasant summer, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Wm. Ottmann'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Wm. Ottmann.

Dr. Wilder G. Penfield,
Mc Gill University,
431 Pine Ave., West,
Montreal, Canada.

WO--G.