

JILL TO AL MAY 8?, 1942

Darling –

I hope you'll forgive the awful paper and the scratchy pen but it's the best equipment I can find.

Your special came -- very belatedly (you should air mail a special to make it really effective) and I hoped pictures with interest. Hank looks like Herb Blumer - or does he? - and appears to be a fine broth of a man. I shall fix him up with either Rosable - the racy type - or Marion Gerson - the pretty, sweet (but intelligent) type. Marion is somewhat shy and comes from a very sheltered background, but she's a damn nice girl, far and away the nicest I know, with the possible exception of Gertie Goldsmith. The only trouble is that she lives at the Ambassador, an inconvenient location.

Sweetheart, I'm awfully sorry about our phone conversation and the letter following it. In a way, I'm glad I wrote that letter. That is the way I feel basically, I guess. But I forget that I also feel other ways. While I think that essentially I am a confused and - for lack of a better word - apathetic personality, most of the time I behave and react as a normal happy person does. I think that, given the responsibility of a husband or a job, I can behave appropriately. I think I know how to act, even though my motivations to action are weak. (Please don't misunderstand me -- don't class yourself as a motivation and then get angry because you think I think you don't count ... I just mean that my most deep-seated wish is to retreat from everybody and everything, and sit in the sun. But as long as I don't do that - as long as I realize that there are things and people important enough to deny that wish - I guess I'll be all right).

If you're willing to take me this way, knowing that perhaps I am not entirely what a person should be - and I think my analysis of myself is correct as far as it goes - then let's get married. Certainly we can be happier together than we can singly.

But we can't get married Sunday. The license bureau isn't open.

As that humorist in the County Building said when I called him, they're all in church -- and we should be too (he said). I can get my test Saturday & call for it Monday (takes 24 hours). Oh, & I can't get the license by myself because we both have to bring our certificates. So - if you still want to - let's get married Monday. I'll be able to take the day off if I tell them what for. I just hope I don't lose that lovely \$40 a week job in the process of telling them. You can come to work Monday with me & then we can just walk across the hall & get the license. Hot dog! (Corny, ain't I?)

Monday night I dragged one suitcase down to the South Side to look for a place to live. I went to the Harvard Hotel and such places, & got so overwhelmingly disgusted I hopped right on the I.C. & went back to home & mother! Jesus, I've been spoiled by our apartment. And guess what! They didn't rent it after all. Apparently, the people who were going to take it welshed on the lease. Anyway, there was a big For Rent sign in the window when I biked by. (I left my bike with Jane Tallman, having no way to bring it to the North Side).

I'd like to take our apartment again. With the incentive of making a place for you to come home to, I really could fix it up nicely. (The incentive plus my income of \$200 a month.) Your mother suggests that I wait upon your decision, wisely enough. Unless I hear otherwise from you, I'll delay the home business until you come home. As usual, I leave everything to you. But really, honey, the idea of a hotel room curdles my blood, & 5479 is so familiar to me that I wouldn't feel lonely in it while you were away. Not very lonely, anyway.

I ought to mail this now.

All my love,

Jill

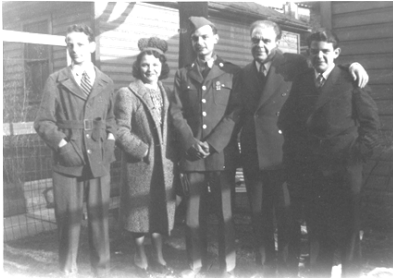
"**W**HY should I get married?" he asked himself repeatedly. There were many reasons why the marriage should fail; like the bumblebee,

according to the laws of aerodynamics, ought not be able to fly. "But," so went his line of thought, "we're coming near to the end of the world in a certain sense, something so big is happening that to refrain from an action, otherwise quite reasonable and called for to cement the most important relationship of our young lives, would be cowardly. To cement it, to commemorate it, to celebrate it, would be fitting and proper."

So they did it. He hitched a ride to a town some distance away where the fast train from Miami paused and one could climb aboard. The train was full of bronzed slackers, big city slickers coming back from vacations in Florida, a hard-looking business crowd, both men and women, mostly Jewish, he noticed, with an embarrassment that they would not have felt, but his friends, the Oppenheims, the Gersons, the Hess's, would have, and old Hank would be fit to be tied. He was disgusted with them and hostile; "Not my kind of Jew," he thought. "Where was the war? In their pocketbooks. Where's the Promised Land? Miami! Damn, don't they know what the War is about?"

He came into Chicago, it was Saturday morning, and they were to stay with the folks on Addison Street. Jill and he went downtown to get a marriage license and learned that they needed a blood test, so they had to find a doctor who would testify they were free of venereal disease, which this one, caught emerging from his office, granted could be deduced from the man being a soldier with a recent Wassermann test on his card and the girl looking too neat and prim to be down with the clap.

The Mom and Dad later joined them as witnesses, Hank having flown the coop, and they went over to the City Hall, where the problem now turned into a search for someone with the authority to conduct a civil marriage. Found: one heavy-set bespectacled dark-jowled Slavic type from the County Clerk's Office, who could perform the ceremony without a tremor of emotion, and free them after a few minutes to go out with the folks for a cup of coffee. Then home. He showed up late for roll-call on Tuesday, but the CQ covered up for him.



The family: Ed (then 15), the Mom, the Dad, Al, Victor (then 13).



Jill and the Mom.



Al, Dad and Mom

AL TO JILL MAY 13, 1942

Dearest Love,

Wed. noon

The last couple of hours of premonition last night have not tarnished the brilliance of the three days at all. Beyond doubt, you are the world's greatest companion and lover. Who else would discuss the nature of science twelve minutes after

marriage instead of mooning and lowing. Who else would follow along the devious and violent phases of my emotions without doubting whether I would make a good husband? But I will be one. And I know you will be a wonderful wife -- I just can't wait until we are together for good to prove it. I really deeply appreciated your comforting when I was so gloomy last evening.

Now I feel much better. I slept all night until 8:00 this morning on the train and felt much better.

I got here about 11:00. The Sergeant didn't seem to mind my getting in late. Chester Duvall who went up with us & was supposed to be back Monday is still AWOL. I wonder what happened to him. If he calls, please let him have a little money if he needs it.

When I think of you keeping an apartment for me with my meager but precious belongings in it and, yes, even my bank account, I feel very happy.

Until I see you very soon, all my love,

Husband & Lover,

Al

THERE was not to be an end to jealousy on his side nor of lust. His large concession to fidelity was "not to go out of my way to look for women" and, when he did encounter an attractive female, he prided himself on playing with the lowest cards in the deck -- no squandering of money or resources, no lying about his marital status, no promises, no dressing "fit to kill", no interference with his higher calling, whatever that would be. He did have a need to experience women, or, as they said in humbler quarters, he was not ready to settle down yet. Womanless, in the presence of mixed singles, he could not but compete, for that, too, sexual competition, was part of his make-up. Still he was in love as he had been for years, unceasingly unfailingly ready to sacrifice anyone else for her, thinking practically of her alone as the object of love and sex.

It was before his marriage, for instance, that a dance orchestra came in from Paducah, Kentucky, with singers and dancers, and a beautiful girl danced; he cut around and through everybody with boldness and aplomb until he was alone with her, and had her dancing and scribbling down her name and address in Paducah; the Camp Tyson newspaper gossiped about his encounter with the hottest thing seen thereabouts since the Balloon went up in flames. He actually hitched there one fine Saturday, and inquired the whereabouts of her house at a barber shop nearby. On the one hand it was simply to ask for an address; on the other hand, it was a prudent bit of reconnaissance and intelligence, because he heard that she was married, that her husband was jealous, and that "folks heah ain't partial to soldiers cumin roun fixin to make trouble and gittin too friendly with the girls." So he wandered off after the butterflies of the pleasant Dixie Spring day.

And there had been a strange moment on his first trip to Chicago, when he took a slow train and at this town where the train stopped, it was Galena, Illinois, he had time to kill and was in a hotel that had a balcony running around its foyer, where a beautiful woman took up a conversation -- she seemed to be with a party, for there had been two men talking with her. Suddenly she threw her arms around him and kissed him passionately and he was entranced, wondering what would happen next, when she pulled away as from a lover in an Italian Opera, sighing and throwing him kisses, and went tripping off down the stairs and out and he wiped off the lipstick and walked around some more and concluded that he could make nothing of the affair. A contribution to the War Effort, perhaps?

AL TO JILL MAY 14, 1942

Dearest Jill, Thursday morning

I'm on guard today and therefore have time to write you before patrolling the dusty streets. I saw Chungos last night. He's quite disgusted with army life tho one of the best soldiers I've seen

yet. And a great admirer of you, I might add. In fact, everyone to whom I've introduced you, -- even Hank, who advised me from painful experience against marriage.

How is the job and the apartment? Don't think for a second that I don't appreciate your really swell situation. I love the thought of your working the way you are and will only ask you to leave if I can offer you nearly as much somewhere else.

I'll let you know immediately that I get my leave. Perhaps it will be in time to help you with all the moving and fixing.

I walked into a lot of work yesterday afternoon after my little lecture on current events. A crew of us tossed and lifted heavy gas cylinders until supper time. You are correct about my hardiness. I have hardly a pained muscle this morning.

The biggest balloon in camp almost got away yesterday when a little convoy balloon tangled with it. They poised together for a minute in the air, looking like two lazy, copulating carp. Then a tear appeared in the big fellow and he was hauled down rapidly.

I was offered the chance to write a daily column of Tyson news in the Louisville Banner, which I refused but definitely.

When you get time would you send me a pair of sunglasses to use while working on balloons & looking at you?

Today I'm reading I Saw France Fall by Rene Chambrun, a bood of ex post facto predictions. Review of causes of the fall of France coming over week-end. Much love, darling, from your devoted husband -

Al

JILL TO AL MAY 18, 1942

Dearest --

I hope that starting with this week, I shall find more time to write you. I am about half way through the list of people I have to

write to. It's getting so I'm beginning to view all letter-writing as a chore. It almost seems that getting married has taken away one of the things we enjoyed so much in our relationship -- my writing letters, and your getting them.

I wish to hell you were here for a number of reasons but the one that comes to mind right away is that you could, in person, make your little brothers clean off their desk. It is a helluva mess, with hardly enough room for the typewriter carriage to move.

I spent the weekend out south, and this is what I did. I walked around with Rosable Saturday afternoon, looking for apartments, more to satisfy myself that 1413 was a good place than for any other reason. There wasn't anything, of course, in fact, there weren't any vacancies. The lady rented the 55 dollar a week place at 1413 which I hadn't wanted anyway; besides the view and the price, both of which were unspeakable, I would have rattled around in there like crazy. Well, anyway, the man in the front apartment at 50 dollars is going to leave sometime for the army, and she is going to speak to him tomorrow to see if he won't leave right away and let me have the place. In any case, I'll get it sooner or later. It's a darling apartment, compared to every place else, and I'm sure we would be very comfortable there.

Then I went to Joan's new place for dinner and overnight. They live at 79th in a brand new house, built under WPB orders for defense workers -- a two-family job. Under private auspices, of course. This is the first new apartment I've seen in the whole damn city of Chicago, and I was very impressed. They have four and a half rooms -- two bedrooms and a living room and a sort of dining room and a kitchen, and it's all very modern and shiny and intelligently planned. So unlike the crap the rest of the city is used to taking from the rentiers. Tom came home from work at 11 and we stayed up til three talking. I didn't want to -- I always get sleepy at 11 now, but Tom had brought home a pint and as Joan says, he gets so little chance to talk to people. They are trying to persuade me to join the Communist Party, my

maiden invitation incidentally, and they talked my ear off for two hours while I nodded drowsily and they got increasingly tight on the Bourbon. I told them I didn't think I'd make a good Communist; I'm much too lazy, not to mention disenchanting, but they oh no'd me, that I was coming along in my political development very well. According to them, they had held off for two years from asking me before because I wasn't politically mature enough, or something like that. I don't know who they think they're kidding. They want me in the party because of the McKeough campaign, which they'd like to have a finger in. Which incidentally, is the only reason why I would want to join the Communist party. I probably could learn a lot about political tactics from them, perhaps things that would get me in good with the boss, to put it crassly. However, as I insinuated to them, if I can learn those things without joining the party, I certainly wouldn't join the party. And, of course, there is every chance that I can pick up a certain amount of information from the outside. Joan is arranging for me to meet an official of the party--arranging is hardly the word. She's practically dragging me by my hair to him. I still don't know what's in it for them -- I'm certainly the lowliest among the low over at the Hall -- but I shall see...

Incidentally, some dilly around here, I hope it wasn't your father and if it was, I take it all back, told Gill, your ward Committeeman, that I was working at the City Hall, and he (Gill) called up Barnet Hodes and raised hell -- how did I get the job and why wasn't he asked to recommend somebody for it, etc.? Hodes was worried about how Gill might have known --it certainly was a long shot that an unknown like me could come to his attention, and Lundy suggests that I move to the South Side as soon as I can. Politics...oh joy. And still I color maps.

Today I left Joan about noon with a severe headache, in fact all three of us had severe headaches. How I got mine I can't imagine, since I only had one shot of that devil's brew they drink but that perhaps is sufficient. And I went to Betz's. Betz's father has bought two more English bikes which brings the total up to six. But, poor thing, he is getting rid of one of the Cadillacs.

They certainly are disgusting people in a way, but I always like to have one rich friend, just for comfort. We drank cokes around the pool all afternoon in approved station wagon fashion and riffled through copies of Harper's Bazaar. (Oh, you'll probably get that publication confused with Harper's Magazine and miss the point).

I came home early and am waiting for Paul to call. He called last night when I wasn't home. I don't like very much to talk long distance. It's particularly embarrassing to talk to Paul; he's so restrained. Or maybe I am. Gosh I missed you this weekend. As you know, it's worse when you have leisure and the weather is beautifully stormy or beautifully beautiful, and there is no you to walk with.

Oh, there is the most awful thunderstorm now. The thunder just cracked terrifically, and Cooney and I both ran under the bed.

Oh, Jim Anderson, your water-polo playing mate, came over to visit Betz this afternoon. I was quite surprised to see a familiar face. And a stupid one.



graz179: Jill and the notorious Cooney

Darling, I'll send your glasses soon. Vic can get them wholesale. Incidentally, he was raised to 25 cents an hour. Some going. Enclosed is telegram from Buss and Mir and letter from Unk,

Loads of love

AL TO JILL MAY 15, 1942

Dearest love,

Still no letter from you two & a half days after my return. Are you resting on your laurels as an epistoleer? You know that the only reason I married was to get regular mail while in the army. You can't just destroy the expectations on which life is built.

Little you has been productive of two behavior patterns on my part the last two days. One, I spent my hours of guard thinking of you, fondly for the most part, tho occasionally I think maybe you're a bigger nuisance than you're worth.

A guard post is a personal thing after the first hour. I know when I pass the great rustling tree hereafter I'll think of us playing on the beaches of California, because the noise was that of the sea. In the background of that whole stream of consciousness during the black watch from two to four A.M. was the measured clump of my shoes which persists like a metronome in the recollection.

A sentry's night is a funny thing, mostly confused impressions on a dulled mind. A grunt, mumble, and squeaking of springs when the second relief is wakened in the middle of the night. Then a stumbling for the door, a second of attentive bodies, a "right face", and off to relieve the old guard. The new & old meet, a greeting is muttered, cartridges are transferred from one rifle to the other and you are left alone. What did the other sentry say? Something like "I've been walking guard with a big, black snake." Pleasant thought!

On my second slow round I see my companion. He is slithering along ahead of me. I have half a mind to let him be, any company being something, when two tipping bucks come along & I challenge them. "Pass," I say, "and watch out for the snake." Their sodden eyes see a huge serpent and after a furious battle of stones and words, crush the demon and walk away, arm in arm.

"Nobody loves a snake," I thought. "A worm, yes, but not a

snake." My shadow seemed like a snake, thirty feet of legs and rifle. With the natural persistence that makes it just to call love an obsession, I think of you and wonder if you're sleeping well.

Just as I pass, and greet the neighboring sentry, the relief marches into view. I eject my cartridges. "Nice night" I say to my relief. "There's a dead snake in the road; don't mind him." He stirs and laughs a little and begins to walk. I feel very happy, light a cigarette, and head for my bunk.

My other activity since I left my beloved spouse was an intense effort to finish my officer's application in order to get my furlough for next week-end. And I think I shall be. I enquired about my application & was thoroughly enraged when I heard it was still dormant. I took over personally and, with application in hand, barged into office after office, shocking all Army standards of procedural propriety. I saw majors, captain, lieutenants and numerous sergeants with blunt requests for action. One captain, poor soul, was perplexed no end by the irregularity. He was actually horrified to have my paper in the office and complained time after time that he couldn't understand how the papers were there. I ignored the asides. But lord, how they strained and squirmed to pass the buck on any number of details.

Now it is completed and I should be on my way at the end of next week. Will you be settled in an apartment by then? Maybe I can help you make it our home with my finishing touches, pipe, dirty clothing, and thrashy notes on Representation.

Olie wrote "Isn't it wonderful" to me sixteen times. He should talk. Even you at a distance made his words weak.

Best love from

Balloon Chief Al

JILL TO AL MAY 19, 1942

Darling --

I love snakes. I really do. The next time you meet a snake, don't

kill it. Save it for me. I don't see why people get so excited about them. They are very pretty to look at, and do you have to pick up everything you see?

I got six letters and a telegram today, and have a stiff headache from reading them and from the prospects of answering them. Every damn cousin and his dog has congratulated us, or have I told you that before? Diana wrote enthusiastically of married life with Oliver; at least I think she wrote enthusiastically. She has without a doubt the worst handwriting I have ever seen. I feel like sending her a five-spot for her wedding present, so that she can have her typewriter fixed where Vicky stepped on it. Anyway, she wrote me five pages on both sides, the gist of which was that she had a perfect wedding (champagne and flowers and everything, at which I twinge with envy), a perfect husband and a perfect apartment. Well, I have a perfect husband too, I guess. Funny thing, but there's quite a distinction between a perfect husband and a perfect man. You, of course, come reasonably close to being a perfect man; if I didn't think so, I wouldn't have married you. But as for being a perfect husband ... somehow, the vision of you acting out the role of the perfect husband -- you know, flowers on Sunday, dishwashing, a diamond ring every fourth year -- is just too ludicrous for words. However, I'm sure we will have a very good time the rest of our lives, each acting out the role of the perfect mate and panicking each other with gentle fraudulence of our behavior.

I sent Carol a very fancy pair of pajamas from Saks, which she can return without difficulty. Nobody has sent me anything yet, but Betty Betz and the girls from Esquire and some other girls I know are giving me a shower Wednesday, or did I write you of that already? Tomorrow night I'm going to see Watch on the Rhine with Marion. For free! What she didn't tell me that night was that the agent she knows not only gets her good seats, but gets them for nothing. The noblesse oblige of the profession of press agency. (I guess I told you her father is one.)

Oh, darling, how wonderful if you can come home this weekend. Maybe you will be able to help me remember the name of that

woman who rent the apartments at 1413 east 60th. I've been raking my brains all night trying to think of her name so I could call her and demand the apartment for this weekend since my husband is coming home. Are you really in Officer's school or accepted for same? If so, which one? You're certainly not very explicit.

Everybody is out tonight. The boys are at the movies, seeing a double feature I've seen already, your mother is somewhere and your father is reading the paper. I took Cooney for a long walk tonight and he fought with four dogs. I was carrying a can of dog food on the way back home and walking in the alley. There I met Jeannette. She asked me to come look at her new Packard which, incidentally, is a big hunk of junk, and for some reason I laid the can of dog food in the alley while I went into the garage. When I came out it was gone and boy, all I can say is that this is a helluva neighborhood where they go around stealing cans of dog food. I don't blame you for being so suspicious of everybody. Since then I have been moodily leafing through the summer Ward catalog. All of a sudden I got very tired of looking at men in air-conditioned jock-straps or whatever those things are that keep you warm yet enable you to Breathe through every Pore.

My boss had a hangover today and we discussed Aaron Bell, whom he knows only slightly but likes. He says that the telephone company is suing his father, which is good for a laugh, you know, The Bell Tel. Co. vs. Alexander Bell. He knew all about that phone bill business, which came up in the course of the conversation.

I am going to eat some strawberries now.

Love,

Jill

[Enclosed a clipping from the Chicago Daily News, with a picture of a man slapping a woman, captioned: 'It had to be the real thing "In This Our Life" because Bette Davis' honest brand of acting wouldn't permit a stagey slap. Dennis Morgan didn't

enjoy his work.' Jill wrote: Doesn't she look like me? Even I noticed it!]

AL TO JILL MAY 16, 1942

Dearest Jill, Sat. - 16 May

You are a woman and I a man but there is more to the difference in our letters than that. Basically, it is your correct intuition of our first meeting -- you are a blithe spirit & I am serious. No wonder your letters are such little gems of quickness & light. And no wonder I'm always straining for a generalization, for a reason, for a scheme. I have lots of the Thomas Mann in me with a shinier surface, smoothed by many social contacts into a frequently flashing manner.

And I often envy your dashing style and interesting touching up of trivialities. I tend to disregard everything which seems to lack meaning, but still wish sometimes I were less exacting and more pattering. However it be, I have resolved the difficulty by marrying the pattering, or should I say, shuffling female.

I never could comprehend your slovenly gait, by the way. How do you manage to keep so much feet on the ground at the same time? I notice, however, shortly after the connubial knot was tied by the clumsy boy scout from Cicero that you began to bound a little. Never fear, little bird, before many moons are gone you will pounce and jounce in the best De Grazia style. Ask Miriam.

Today's book section: Reviewing: I Saw France Fall -- or "What I didn't see would fill volumes", by Rene de Chambrun, bourgeois lawyer of Paris. Ghastly analysis! Blames Popular Front without any first-hand reason. Repeats capitalist slogan thinking. Account of Battle of France & the Maginot Line interesting & not too grim for the tea room.

Coming soon: Review of Dragon's Teeth by Upton Sinclair.

Sunday -- A day of rest, indeed!. I've just read Silliman Evans'

Nashville Tennessean and the morning's still young. Last night I read widely in Fortune mag. All in all, I get a lot of reading done in this battery. I never fail to read Time, Life, Newsweek, the newspapers and other incidental information. It gives me some sense of accomplishment and my ambition is to come out of the war as book-learned as I entered it. Besides, reading is one of the few things, fighting is perhaps the only other, that I can do which consoles me to your absence.

Yesterday, the sky was studded with balloons. An official photographer was around and therefore all the balloons were sent up. Any airplane passing thru was almost sure to hit a cable.

Little Tommy di Pietro left for Chi on a 3-day pass yesterday. I think he'll call you & give my best. He's a striking case of how soft-hearted a tough guttersnipe can be.

The food in A Btry isn't as good as it might be tho I eat my share of it. This morning - cottage-fried potatoes, bacon, oatmeal, coffee, toast, milk and a piece of cake from one of the boys. Here it's 10 o'clock & I'm salivating at this recital. But the toast & bacon were cold. Don't get me wrong, because I've not suddenly become persnickety. (Jeez I'm hungry; wonder if I can hold out till dinner at 12?) You can also take this as a hint to mold a few air-sealed cookies for me in the future sometime.

In Upton Sinclair I find this description of you -- "Everybody agreed that this young Juno was made for motherhood; she had ridden horseback, swum, played tennis, & had a vigorous body. She hadn't turned pale when she crossed the threshold of this hospital (hospice de la maternité, or even when she heard the cries of another woman."

Better yet is this clipping I culled from an old New Yorker, in all good humour, mind you, as you many years from now. [*word missing?*] Good, isn't it?

No inspiration of any kind left & .. my pen ceases to flow tho not my love for you and your drape shape.

Ever yours,

Al

JILL TO AL MAY 22, 1942

Sweetie-pie -

Cheez, it's cold here. I can hardly write. So cold that my feet have shrunk two inches. Hey, don't be so nasty about my feet. If you do you'll get a whipping, and I will also refuse to read your book reviews, consider you a second Thomas Mann (sic!) and send you the pair of dark glasses that Vic got for you cut-rate and that you probably will find to be so.

Last night was the shower at Betz and I received a nice slip (too long), a bottle of terlet water, an atomizer, a cigarette case, a bag and beanie to match, a yellow nightie which I promptly returned, and indigestion from the dinner. The evening, despite the painful presence of 12 women, passed quickly enough, because we sat at little bridge tables to eat, and of the four of us at one table, three were New Deal Democrats and we spent the evening trying to wither Jean MacEldowney, the banker's daughter, who is a staunch Republican of the Trib-Nazi party line variety.

Maxine, one of the soundest-for-a-woman New Dealers I have ever met, told about the morning of her 21st birthday. Her mother woke her with a kiss and said "My dear, welcome to the Democratic Party!"

I read Gosnell's mss. on rural-urban conflict today in Ill. politics and found it invaluable & by that I don't mean without value. Really swell for my purposes. Thank you, Mr. G. I'll send you Mr. Brook's head next November.

Darling, tell me more about Officer's Schools & your plans for furlough. Did I write you that the apt. on 60th Street won't be ready for another 3 weeks? I think I did.

Watch on the Rhine was wonderful, but, funny enough, altho

our seats were middle orchestra (for free, too) we had trouble hearing, which mitigates against an effective criticism of the play. Paul Lukas is my no. 2 matinee idol, next to Jean Gabin.

Paul & Ann called Monday night and also wrote the most wonderful letter to us. I'd send it to you but it will make this too heavy & you can see it when you come home. They were so happy to hear about it, and apparently, from the communications I've received, the rest of the family was too.

Diana writes ecstatically (how do you spell it?) of her new apartment and husband. Did I write you that too? Everything I'm saying tonight has a familiar ring.

How I miss you! Every time I see the sun set, or Lincoln park green and glowing or the moon slitting through over the buildings, I want to be walking with you, hand holding and shuffling along the way we used to. We always had such good times together, just walking alone. I think jealously now, that we never did it enough. Always too many people.

I'll brave the sleet and cold now.

Your faithful courier and incidentally wife,

Jill

AL TO JILL MAY 23, 1942

Dearest footsie (I dood it!)

Sat. 23 May 42

Your sweet little note came this morn and I only read it 4 times leisurely, 3 times hastily, since I had just had the exquisite pleasure of hearing your lovely voice over the phone. You do have a pleasing tone now that you're over your original shyness and your voice is audible.

News!! Definite this time, obtained by means extra-legal but who am I to wait for the army's enervating system of information to operate. I just popped the question to the officer in charge, and, after some hemming, hawing & glaring, he spoke thusly (as

Virgil would write), My leave begins the 3rd of June, I'm in the class starting the 13th of June at Camp Davis, N. C., Coast Artillery. Ten lovely days with my bride. Whew! Poor bride! Lucky man! Until then, I'll be reading like I've been doing and digging ditches otherwise.

The 306 and 307 are moving out in a couple of days for the West Coast or the East Coast; definite, no?

Buss wrote this morning. He announced that a baby is expected; I guess I might as well send along his letter.

Hank is back, liked Marion which isn't hard to do, and didn't have too good a time in N.Y.C.

Your bridal shower must have been some affair. I hope the terlet water doesn't interfere with l'odeur naturelle which Havelock Ellis commends very highly.

A 120 lb. gas cylinder glanced off my right ring finger the other day but it will be all healed by the time I come home.

You're right about walking. It's the sport of kings when one's in love. We'll cover the Streets of Paris, Bari, Naples, Venice and Shanghai before long, sweetheart.

So long, not for long. But the mail leaves right away. Your lover,
Al

JILL TO AL MAY 25, 1942

Darling -

I got your special a while ago and I think it's just marvelous that you're definitely coming home the 3rd (which is a Wednesday, if you don't know it) and definitely going to Officer's School. The 13th is on a Saturday. Isn't that a screwy time to be going to School.

It goes without saying that I loved talking to you Friday. Too bad you had to call twice, tho. I rarely ever get home before 6:15.

About twice of 3 times a week I get stuff at Hillman's. Thursday I have to walk all over the Loop to find a stand which carries the New Yorker. The rest of the time I take the things back I buy at lunch hour.

Yesterday I got my bike from Tallman's * (*somebody stole the light off my bike while it was there) basement & biked it all the way up to Addison along the Outer Drive in ONE HOUR & TEN MINUTES. It rained too part of the way & I had to stop & wipe off my sunglasses. (It was sunny while it rained.) Isn't that marvelous? It was fun too. I certainly love biking. Today I took Cooney and we rode around Lincoln Park, especially the Montrose Harbor section, for about two and a half hours. That was this morning. This afternoon we ate a lot and Eddie and I lay out on the porch (I lay, he sat - a division of activity not reached without a dispute - too bad there's not more than 1 cot on the porch) & read & dozed. Then we cleaned my bike & washed the dog. Now we are about to eat again.

I'm thinking of getting Vic a bike. Not that he deserves one. He's an awful brat. But it would be nice if all the active members of the family had bikes, particularly for Glen Park this summer. Without a car, the family will have trouble getting back & forth from the lake. And, as it is, I'm not exactly anxious to have Vic use my bike. While I've got the dough, I just don't have the time to be chasing back & forth between repair shops.

Betty Betz's father has six bikes & maybe he'll sell me one. Otherwise, Vic knows a boy, etc.

That was an awfully nice letter from Buss. I wrote them a couple of days ago thanking them for their wire. I'll write again in re embryo.

Last night I went to the union dance I told you about a month ago. I had forgotten all about it til yesterday morning, & then I looked at my calendar, & there were the words "U O P W A dance" staring at me sardonically. So I called up Rosable, the only girl I know who had guilt feelings about her political inactivity besides me, & she said she would go. Bus Brown &

she came over last night in his chic convertible, & I put on my social conscience & we went. It was pretty dull, altho there were a lot more people & a lot more drinking that I had expected. I danced with one cute, albeit elderly sailor; he was a good dancer but he left after he danced with me. I can't see why. There were a lot of other servicemen there - some old union or C.P. organizers, some invited at random thru the USO, some there simply because they were colored (a necessary trimming for left-wing parties). The band, 4 punchy negroes from the Garrich Stag Bar, was fine, albeit not for dancing. People bought me a lot of drinks but I got bored and left at 12:30, which was still too damn late, considering how unwilling I was to go & how bored I was most of the time. I didn't get home til 1:30 cause I waited for a bus that never came. I was sort of scared walking back along Addison: a lot of men in a car stopped & asked "Where's Addison", but I didn't answer & they went away. I always keep my glasses on when I'm alone late at night, on the premise that nobody would conceive of a girl with glasses as being a whore.



Vic, Jill and Ed

I'm so sleepy - I hate staying up late now, for some reason or other. I guess because it's harder to sleep late in the morning the more tired you are or the more you want sleep or something.

Bus & Rosable are an unwholesome couple. He's a drunk & a neurotic & she's a nymph & a neurotic & between them I feel very secure & patronizing.

I love you honey & am sorry to regale you with such a dull letter

but all this exercise numbs my brain. It's 8 now & we're going riding again!

All my love, dearest

Jill

JILL TO AL MAY 28, 1942

Darling --

I guess I haven't been very good about writing. I guess the imminence of your presence decreases my desire to write. Anyway, every time anything happens that is worthy of being transcribed and sent to you, I think, oh well, you'll be here next week and can hear about it them.

I have a new excuse for deviating from my usually literate style -- I fell off my bike tonight. While there is nothing to worry about, I don't feel so good. I fell on my elbow and knee right after supper, and my delicate nervous system, something incomprehensible to hardy boors like you, causes me to feel whoopsy and peaked. I can't figure why I fell off. It's the first time since I got this particular bike. My feet just slipped off the pedals and over I went.

Coony got into a three-cornered fight tonight with a scotty and a bull pup and he doesn't feel so good either. He limps. But no signs of abrasions.

Victor is in bed too. He was sent there for unusually recalcitrant behavior.

Your father is playing cards and your mother (quote) is sore. You should be glad you're in the Army.

The landlady called up about the apartment today. It will be vacant on June 1st, at which time she is going to get the decorators. I told her that as long as it is going to be decorated on Monday and Tuesday, I might as well wait to move in until you got home and could help me. However, in your letter tonight

you said you'd like to have it ready by the time you get home. I don't know if that will be possible. Monday is June 1st, you know, and it will be hard for me to do all that moving on a week night. However, it will be time enough for you to decide and let me know before Monday.

My job is about the same. I got a letter today from some mfg. company whose blind ad for personnel assistant I had answered about two months ago. They want me to come in for an interview. The company is at 200 W. Huron. Maybe I'll go, I don't know.

I'm awfully excited and happy about your coming home, much more so than I sound in my letters, I suppose. All my emotions about you come in those odd 15½ hours when I am not sleeping or contemplating a letter to you. As soon as I don the latter, I get very sterile indeed. I guess I'm just lazy, or am getting the typical white collar worker's dislike of parchment, pen and the written word. And when I'm sleeping, I either don't think of you or else I have bad dreams. I had a very bad dream indeed last night. I dreamt you slept with that Lynn Farnum girl and caught a delicate ailment, and Lynn and I had a dispassionate debate about whether I should marry you. I didn't think I ought to, but I sort of wanted to anyway. I guess in the end my pride won out and I didn't. Morbid, ain't I? I don't think that dream meant anything except that I am capable of being jealous, at least in my sleep.

Best love to you,

Jill

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Mom to Al - attached to May 28 letter from Jill

Dear Babe

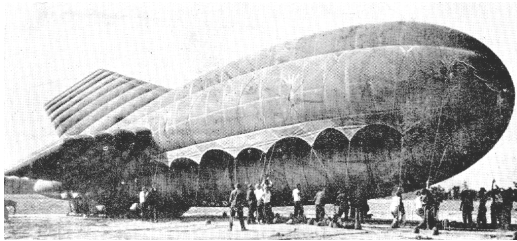
While Jill is typing you a letter I will write you a few lines as we are going for a walk when we're through. We received a letter from Buss today telling us he would like to come for a few weeks to go to Glen Park. Won't that be swell. I only wish you

come too, maybe if Jill isn't with you she can come too.

The reason we don't write more often is that we figure Jill writes & tells you most important news, she is fine and appears very happy here. I think she will tell you about the apartment. I guess it's OK and available for when you come home next week. How is Hank? Say hello to him for me. Let us know just when you are coming, time, etc.

Love from all

Mom



Barrage balloon and crew
at Camp Tyson.

End of May 1942 letters

