

July 28th 1945

Dear Ones,

Last night Hal came over and after chow we went to his theatre to see a very mediocre picture "Bring on the Girls" - Marjorie Reynolds was the only technicolor bright spot in it. Since his unit is leaving they manage to get all the latest pictures at their theatre as long as they remain here. The mail yesterday brought a TIME magazine, notes from Juj and Judy, and three letters from home in which you outdid yourselves - wonderful page after page reporting on your various excursions. I did not bring them down to the depot with me so I will answer them tonight when I finish this letter up in the office. Now that I have written everybody more or less preparing them for the news that I have moved, it seems that my stay here is as indefinite as ever; it is foolish to try to guess how long I will be kept here - the possibilities range from days to months. There is nothing special on tap for the weekend; I'll have to dig up something to read. I was glad that you heard that Carl Kilpatrick is home - I haven't heard from him for many months and I was beginning to wonder whether or not he had been a casualty in Europe; no recent word from Paul or from Bob Stuart or Franky Allen - the Portland gang is not very communicative, with the exception of Neil.

I am now up in the office. I have written to Juj and to Judy; mail today brought four letters from home and a letter from Neil (he proved my point about his being a good correspondent.) Right now Art and I are planning to get up early and play some Tennis - it depends a lot on the weather and on how early we get up, of course! My game must be rusty as hell by now. Art and I had a hilarious session tonight - he is in charge of the laundry and I have not been getting back my clothes at all; so I got out a pencil, bit off the eraser, and using the unsharpened end as a swab, inked my name in broad letters over my pieces of clothing. If they don't come back this week I shall suspect a conspiracy and it will cease to be a laughing matter! (Thorpe just asked me what I was smiling about - he is down in the office, too. I guess I just naturally smile when I write to you. He pulled one today that has me in stitches still; in commenting on the Potsdam ultimatum he said that he thought that the Japs might "recapitulate!" Sometimes he is a hilarious Mr Malaprop and all my self control is required. This afternoon some Frenchmen came down to look at some of the vehicles which have been offered for sale to the islanders and I had to leave the yard lest I burst out laughing at the conversation. The Frenchmen speak poor English, their Tonk and Native assistants worse, and Thorpe was imitating them; that is, giving a semi-French accentuation to his words - rather like the equivalent American situation of the tourist conversing with the Indian on a reservation. If I could capture it on paper - it is impossible, I fear - it might be a classic of sorts.)

In one letter, Mother, you refer to news on "Sears and Allen" but I guess the clippings got lost or that they will show up in a later letter - Don Sears and Franklin Allen? Probably nothing very important. One of the Herald clippings (by June McConnell) had the bright theme that Marcantonio and Rankin are alike in many ways - it boils down to the fact that they are both able politicians and know their way around in political maneuverings - but that is like saying that Adolf Hitler and Fred Allen are alike in many ways because they both put on their pants before tucking in their shirts. One of the TIME articles on the end of the Polish Government's exile talks of the factor of the new emphasis on "class" as one of the elements in its defeat - "class consciousness" is one of the world's oldest factors especially in feudal Poland; the point is that the class consciousness is now with the people - and that gives it a different light, and to my mind a better light.

Your four page letter on your trip was excellent, Mother. Thanks for the news of Dick Carvel - I hope that he writes if he gets the chance; he certainly is leaving for overseas under trying circumstances. I have no idea what sort of a fellow he is now - I remember him best as the fellow playing in the sand-pile!! We were not especially close those few months we were both at college. What has happened to Irene?

I recall Camp Modin from the fact that Peter Frank went there; I can well imagine the atmosphere that pervades the place, and your report of the Berksons and the Dushkins started my

thinking about what I might have been like had my youth been dotted with the more orthodox experiences in religion (and in things like music lessons!) For all my sympathy with cultural movements in Judaism and my recognition of the necessity for preserving the basic tenets of orthodoxy in their original form as our religious heritage, I think that had I been subjected to them to the point of being forced to absorb them, my life would be a turmoil similar to that of Lou Raybin - not that I blame the element of orthodoxy in his training for his current situation. I do not feel that you can apply a religion whose roots go back through the centuries with the same validity which it had during its inception and growth to the world today; religion is belief and it is also a code of conduct; it comes into contact with every phase of human activity to some degree or another - formal religion can have the widest range of significance depending upon the individual. And just as I feel that certain policies of the Catholic Church which are the outgrowth of ancient dogma are outmoded and inapplicable to the world today, so I feel that in itself orthodox Judaism does not offer a realistic approach to our current problems unless the adherent escapes completely into the sect. Every individual has a different mind and will react differently to the forces involved in his formative years, and I feel that it is as unwise to go to the extremes of orthodoxy as it is to go to the extremes of not implanting any appreciation of spiritual values in a child at all. (I must admit that my approach to religion is still that it is a personal rather than a community concern and that in truth each person evolves his own religion through modifications; my approach - caused of course by my own background and my educational experience - does not place the religious community above the overall social-economic-political community in importance.)

The MJC camp seems to be off to a wonderful start - you had a fine array of supporters at your opening meetings. I am glad that you found the facilities of the camp so good... despite the inclement weather. Kaufman sounds like quite a chap; the story of his concern over Georgie Lewis and its significance was good. The program which he suggested of charities, medical work, education has great merit. Both he and Sachar are right as far as stressing the "Jewish" factor involved, the element of pride and inner assurance as a source of our strength. There is a great deal of self education that we must do. We come back to the old questions and the old conflicts - despite my belief that religion is primarily a personal evolution, I do not deny that religion puts you in a social group and that as a member of that group - whether you admit it or not - you fall heir to its social position and problems. And I heartily endorse any movement which enhances the position of the Jewish community and of the individual religionist - with the exception of of political movements which run counter to the overall political picture. (Isn't Sachar very close to Herb Fineberg?) I see that the Goldfines brought this name problem to a head right off the bat; I wish I could have been there. When you talk in terms of \$20,000 you are talking about a lot of money. I hope that the camp committee can solve the problem to everyone's satisfaction. I also wish I could have seen Sidney Davidson - I have always liked him and got a kick out of his showiness; I have never had the occasion to see any show of meanness or pettiness in Sidney. You probably have. I wonder if the Garfinkles who used to own Birchcrest are any relation to Irv Garfinkle ~~to~~ whom I was very close at Reynolds (and whose wife lives on University road - 35, I think - near Uncle Harold, I guess.)

That sort of covers things for this evening; I will try to get to your other letters tomorrow -

All my love,

Regards to Doris

Sammy