

3 November 1945

Dear Ones,

The prospect for the weekends seems to be rain and more rain - well, I have nothing special on tap. Thorpe is in the midst of a real Thorpe day - excited one minute, calm the next, contradicting himself right and left, bluffing and arguing - he is without a doubt a real character; you can't phase him. Between Prosser and Fournier and Carter the odd jobs should all be taken care off; I don't imagine, though, that the three would get along very well together. I wonder what Prosser is like at this stage of the game; as you say, I never could get enthusiastic about him. Your mentioning the Statton Bar Mitzvah, Mother, tied in with Arthur Kober's dedication to his Mother of his excellent book "My Dear Bella." He recalls the traditional self-criticism of the Bar Mitzvah boy as he pays tribute to his Mother. The dedication is well written and warm and Kober closes with the words, "Momma, you crying?" My only recollection of my own thirteenth birthday is that I was in a trance as I gave my speech ("my" speech is hardly accurate, but we'll let it go!) and it just seem^{ed} to come out my mouth without any effort on my part; then of course I proceeded to listen to Rabbi Lewittes' remarks to me, and relaxed by leaning against one of the posts on the Bima. I imagine that that did not look too well, but I guess that I was hardly in the mood for a rabbinical lecture. May first of 1937 seems a long way away right now.

It seems as though everybody in Portland was in the hospital on October 19th or rated flowers for some such reason. Now to answer Uncle Lou's note of the 19th - again I'll say that I am not writing separate letters to Uncle Lou on the assumption that what I write to Bolton Street will reach him; he is included in "Dear Ones." I appreciate the spirit of Uncle Louis' letter, but it is obvious that he is unacquainted with the Army structure known as United States Armed Forces of the Middle Pacific and its sub-command of the South Pacific Base Command. The overall commander of this theatre is one Lt.-Gen. Robert C Richardson who must be very much afraid that with the closing of this theatre he will be returned to his permanent rank which I imagine is something like corporal or sergeant. He and his cohorts, specifically his unimaginative underlings at SoPac and Santo, believe that "haste makes waste - and civilians out of soldiers." All indication would show that it is their intention to water down and interpret war department directives in an effort to slow up the general demobilization picture. They continue to fight their paper work war and have yet to show that necessary willingness to slash through endless streams of red tape; in all probability they have given the War Department a very warped picture of the conditions in the Pacific - they must have, otherwise something would have been done about this area. "Keep our commands" is the battlecry. For that reason you will understand that any attempt to get out of active duty except on the basis of a specific directive from Washington would be thrown back at me before I could blink my eyes. No one is being released - I told you about Pud Brown; there are others - Charley Everitt, Charley Fontenay Rosey, maybe as many as five or ten more - with better than two years in the Army overseas and three in the service, whose applications to placed on the surplus lists are bounced back with terrifying regularity. You have to have an iron-bound war department circular to get out of the service. I am still junior to almost all the officers here in time overseas and time in the Army; I am in what is on paper an essential job; there is no circular or directive on leaves, releases, or what have you under which I can apply for discharge or anything else unless I agree to stay in the Army or some such thing - (One exception is that I am eligible for New Zealand leave, but that is hardly an adequate substitute for a trip home and out.) In fact we have received directive after directive saying that there is no such thing as a surplus officer in this theatre and that all personnel will be utilized until they become eligible under the point system. I dislike having to go over this again and again - the Air Forces may be different, the Army stateside may be different, it is a cinch that nothing so far offers a way out of Mid Pac.

Ok for now - I will continue this later in the afternoon; all you letters are up in the tent.

on the Bounty." It is raining again and I thought I would scoot down to the office to write for a while. I heard from Don Harms today - and a batch of mail from October 2nd came in; it cut sharply into the missing groups - it is exactly a month old. Incidentally, to give you an idea of the mail service, Don's letter was mailed the 29th of September and just arrived today - 35 days to come from New Cal to Santo - rowboat??? During lulls in the afternoon (ahem) I managed to write to Bill Snower and to Don.

Lo and behold! the DAR and Constitution Hall and Negro performers are back in the news. As I recall Marion Anderson finally sang on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial when the DAR was adamant in the face of pressure from Mrs Roosevelt and other Washington leaders. Now it is Hazel Scott with the added complication of her new husband's being a duly elected Representative of the State of New York to the National Congress. As Mrs Craig pointed out in her commentary, this time we have not only race questions, but the dynamite of politics at home and in relation to the example we set for the rest of the World. It seems to me that the result is a good deal of confusion. First of all it is granted that despite its name, and its importance in Washington, Constitution Hall is as much a piece of private property as the local Masonic lodge. There is no dispute there. However to try to limit this discussion to how one uses private property is to be ridiculous - this is manifestly a public matter, just as much as are those matters which come under the jurisdiction of, say, zoning laws. Now the DAR is theoretically an organization to commemorate the link that members of this generation have with those who fought to free the colonies from English domination. The very nature of its make-up denies to it the private characteristics of a bridge club or a mah jongg league; the DAR presumes to be a part of the American scene for a specific reason - it cannot ignore the social significance of its very existence; despite itself, it is identified with the principles of the Revolution. Right or wrong, in terms of private property, this places a social obligation upon them which they cannot ignore. And the DAR has failed in both the Anderson and Scott cases. As for the politics, Mrs Truman obviously has chosen to reject any role in the dispute - whether as the first lady she can choose to be so wholly indifferent is a matter for long dispute - the point is that the President did take a stand and a wise won, if a little outspoken. Prejudice is a funny thing - it is fundamental that we realize that even if we practice it ourselves, it must never be condoned in others! If everyone would take that point of view prejudice would be no more. Mrs Craig's mentioning that the Women's Press Club had never had a Negro speaker was well put, but the criticism by members of the club of the DAR action is not denied to them by their own faults.

I can see the reason for the meeting in Dublin NH which was headed by Justice Roberts, but I cannot grant validity to the majority report of the group that met. It is good in theory and it is an admirable goal - but it is proposed as a practical and immediate step. The very fact that the UNO is having trouble getting started should indicate that the more complex and committal plan proposed would never be agreed to - it must come as the successful outgrowth of the UNO. To my mind Roberts and company are not on the right track - they did not come up with a program to strengthen the present basis of agreement, they came up with a substitute. I am not especially pleased with the current turn of events throughout the world - there are many sore spots and we are not ready to solve their ills - but this is not the time nor the condition right for starting off on what is practically an entirely new tangent in international relationships.

I seem to be very long winded tonight - oh well.... thanks for bringing me up to date on the Parkers - I am glad that Billy is well and entirely OK as his comment on getting readjusted to American girls would indicate. The start of the Venezuelan revolt seems to indicate that it is for the best; at least the effectiveness of the revolt has left the situation clearer than that in Brazil and Argentina; it is obviously going to be some time before the Argentine situation clears up, although there are some indications in the news I have heard that the Vargas move was no more than a gesture to help clear the air in Brazil by a constitutional method and the winter elections will come off on schedule. We can only wait and see. In general despite the Balkan distrust, the disputes over Tito and the other governments in power, the European picture seems to be clearing up to allow for new consolidations and clarifications of the various issues involved. Certainly there is

no ground for major dispute or even distrust in the questions which have arisen up to this point. Time is an important factor - it can solve as many problems as it creates - and important as speed is, confidence and trust do not spring up fresh overnight. They must be carefully cultivated - and the ancient axiom that two wrongs don't make a right can never be forgotten. The failure of one group does not justify a slackening of effort on the part of the other - rather it should intensify it. More on this topic - an old one, to be sure, - when I come to some of your later clippings dealing specifically with Russian relations.

I see that you are still keeping the Council house in order, Mother - I wish you felt the organization secure enough to roll along without the necessity of your constant attention. I can understand your position and I only hope that you take these things in stride and do not concern yourself too much with them, one way or the other. I am glad that Uncle Louis resettlement at home is going smoothly - I'll bet the cottage was a mess for the first few days. I think that so far his handling of his personal adjustment has shown excellent judgment.

There were two letters in the old bunch of mail which came in today - they covered Uncle Lou's first day in Portland, Lou Raybin's release, and Daddy's health - I am glad that I got your letter from Hartford, Daddy, which had previously answered my questions. It is good to know that Lou Raybin is happy and that his new start in Law is sincere - I can only wish the same to all the Lou's in the family! (How subtle is that???) Speaking of subtlety, my darling Mother, your letter of the 3rd of October was about as subtle as a ton of bricks - I am glad to see that you and Grandpa Thurman are in complete agreement that I should not be in a hurry to marry and that you saw fit to report the conversation to me!!!! However, as I have already told you, I recognize your repetition of this strain of advice and commentary in your letters as the exercise of your maternal prerogatives - I just wonder how you will introduce the subject next time?? I guess the only thing to do is not to see Willie on my way through California (lest I fall victim to the first girl I meet) and to studiously avoid Indianapolis, Youngstown Ohio, and Connecticut College until I have met all of Judy's eligible girl friends and seen all the nurses at the BI! Ah, yes, rest assured that I return to states (when and if) "with myself under control" and with a firm conviction to play the field! It is good to know that the family "beams approval" at the idea that eventually I will marry!! I am steeled against any "emotional decisions!" (At the present rate, unless I hear from Dot and Lois again before many moons pass, you will not have to worry after I clear California! I wonder if I said the wrong thing in one of my letters?) Well, enough of this - all in good fun, Mother. I am secretly married to Ingrid Bergman, anyway. (I see that I am still splitting my infinitives right and left - I definitely have to return to college.)

I am glad to hear that Lester Diamon and Seymour Bergman are overseas - that is very reassuring to me as I start the week that will see the completion of my 18th month overseas. With reference to Winchell, the days of bearded and haggard Marines on Santo has long passed. It was early '43 that the Marine Raiders were in training across the Renee river. Of course, I will say that most of us are haggard right now and one of us, Charlie Fontenay has a beard, so generally speaking the adjectives might still apply. I am glad that you enjoyed my little fantasy on my Santo prospects - oh, by the way, Don said that Charlie Lesh says that in view of the critical (?) shortage of Ordnance officers there is not a chance in a million of my leaving here until all the Ordnance is taken care of - great. Thanks for the report on the Samuel Thurman branch of the family - I hope that Esther is fully recovered by now; Uncle Sam and Aunt Hattie deserve to spared all the discomfort they can. Some day I may get around to meeting Sol and Margie and their families. I think you are right in your summary and analysis of the reasons for our holding on to Bolton Street Mother - I am all for a large Menikoe establishment, but not at the sacrifice of Bolton street. The reasons you cited covered the ground much better than I could have.

OK for tonight - this has certainly turned out to be longer than I had anticipated -

All my love, *Sumner*

Regards to Doris