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Letter, Virginia Brainard to Dudley and Merl Brainard [January 24, 1943]

Virginia Brainard

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Sunday, Jan. 24, 1943

Dear Mother and Daddy,

How's the president and his wife? And the rest of his family? I'm getting along all right. Am so busy I hardly know what of the 50 million things ~~xxxxxxx~~ to do next.

This week I had a chance to work on the Ames Tribune for the rest of the school year but I've decided not to take it. At first I thought they just wanted me to write all the college news and send it down to them--campus correspondent, you know. And I heard they'd pay me 50 cents an hour for it. That didn't sound too bad. But then it developed that they also wanted me to work down there during the mornings and do general reporting and make-up work, etc., and that's out of the question. I haven't the time and wouldn't learn any more than I'm already learning about editing, proof reading, make up, etc. Miss Geoppinger advised me very strongly not to take it. And she also said that when I graduate in June and if I have several weeks before starting my job that I'd be able to get a job anywhere I wanted one to fill in anywhere I wanted to here in Iowa. The small town papers are desparately in need of people to help and will take anyone about anytime who is available. None of our journalists ~~xxxxxxx~~ will be available, of course ~~xxxxx~~ and the department has to turn down one paper after the other.

Of course any job like that for me in, I think right now, out of the question because, if I have any time at all after graduation I'll come home and rest and see you. But it does suggest an opportunity for Connie. I don't see why she shouldn't get one of those jobs if she wants one. They don't pay alot but most of her pay check is clear profit anyway because it doesn't cost too much to live in a small town. If she could get a summer job with a paper in Osage or Ossian or some other place like that where we have friends and relatives it would be pretty nice. And there are also small papers in Minnesota that will be needing people-- maybe even the St. Cloud Times although that's a daily paper and most of the ones I have in mind are weeklies. Of course, it's journalism work which she may not want. She hasn't had as much training as I've had but I think she could handle it. But this also indicates the availability of jobs for this summer. Tell her to write me and give me her reactions of this and also just what she wants to do and also keep my eye ~~xxx xxx~~ open for other jobs. You know, ~~xxxxxxx~~ experience working under the editor of a small town paper, usually the town's leading citizen, or working for a business firm looks much better on a personnel record than counselor at a summer camp. The editor I worked under at Eagle Grove last year, Ward Barnes, is one of the three most outstanding country editors in the United States. William Allen White is the second one of the three.

I've been doing some talking around about my own job come next June. I asked Miss Goep if she thought I'd have any trouble getting a job and she just ~~xxxxx~~ laughed. There are so many ~~xxxx~~ good jobs that can't possibly be filled that ~~xxxxxxx~~ those of us who graduate in June can just about have our pick. I've told her that my first choice is newspaper ~~xxxx~~ work--a job on a big paper like a Chicago paper as foods editor. Second choice is a job with a magazine.

Do you know what's happen'd to my good white silk blouse? I can't find it here. Dad, I leave it at home? It needed washing.

P.S. My light blue shorts that I have to wear for gym classes here are up in the attic - they're in one of those boxes that I sent home last summer. Can you send them to my parents?

If I'd graduated in December I could have gotten on Better Homes and Gardens. Third choice is a publicity job with a large food company. We are usually paid about \$115 a month and I don't know if salaries have gone up. I'm practically sure I can get one of the big jobs in Chicago but am not so sure I want to work there. Jean Ross and I think we're going to start writing to magazines and newspapers all over the country and find out what's available. We have to do it on our own, however, because Chicago is about the only place where the Iowa State placement office can get us jobs. Iowa State "works" Chicago--all the journalism graduates go there and hire other I. S. journalists.

I'd like to know whereabouts in the United States I have some "pull" or can get pull. And where do I have connections that would help me? I probably won't start applying for jobs until May but I want to get things lined up before that. I could probably get into Minneapolis or St. Paul but, honestly and truly, I wouldn't want to live in the Cities. It's ~~be~~ near home but that's the only good thing about it.

Fred came up last ~~in~~ night for the Wintermezzo formal dance and we had a lot of fun. He said that it seemed like a dream to be back at Iowa State and dancing in Great Hall watching the civilians playing around as ~~though~~ though they'd never heard of a war. He doesn't know when he'll leave Camp Dodge but his name is on the shipping list and most of the men have gone from camp directly into foreign service. If that happens, he won't even have a chance at officers training or anything else. The poor guy is absolutely whipped. He can't even sit down and keep his mind ~~concentrated~~ on one thing. He can't concentrate. All he can think about is how his feet hurt or how his head aches! And he doesn't know what's going to happen to us. I'm still surrounded by all the things we have in common but he's living a completely different life and he thinks we're growing apart. He's worried about it and completely lost. He's so far away from our own college life together that he's confused by the sudden change. I think he'll pull ~~out~~ out of it eventually. Last night he said, "The only thing anyone could say that would help at all would be to tell me that the war is over." He's not afraid as far as fighting is concerned. But he's in a stalemate as far as his own life is concerned and not just because he has to take time out from his education to fight a war--but because he knows what's happening to him and he can't fight it. He said last night, "I knew ~~that~~ I'd change some but I didn't think I'd change this much." And he's worried. I'm just as lost as he is. And there's so little I can do to help him when I can't see much of him. ~~But~~ However, I may go down and stay with Lillian again this Saturday night. We have a lot of fun and she likes Fred. He's stone broke again but payday is next week end--Sunday, to be exact. If he gets paid Saturday he may come up. If not, I may go down.

What do you think about me getting some shoes in Des Moines when I go down again? According to information we're getting here, shoes are the next ~~thing~~ thing that will be rationed and the new ones may not be too well constructed. Would it be a good idea to get some now where I can get a good fit and good shoes? I don't want to ~~be~~ hoard but I'm going to be doing a lot of walking these next few years. Well, I'll do whatever you think. I got my suit Friday and I love it. Have you been able to get those shoes of mine that I had fixed at Gussies?

Love,
Virginia