

Roberts Hall

Iowa State College

Ames, Iowa

Oct. 22, 1940

Dear Mother, Daddy, Grandma and family,

I'm so sorry I haven't written for so long but I've been so terribly busy studying for tests. Every time I had a spare minute there were just dozens of things that had to be done so I just haven't had time to breath.

Well, its almost November now. Time is going so fast. How I love it here!! You should see the campus now! I just can't describe how beautiful it is. And every morning at 8:00, noon at 1:00 and evening at 6:00 the Campanile carillon plays hymns and Iowa State songs and old timey and melodies. The air is so crisp and spicy and its just a gorgeous thrill to be alive. These are the small things that make colleges memories a beautiful and complete picture. It is certainly a wonderful experience. I don't believe I've ever been happier or ever will be as happy as I am now. The full and very satisfying program of work during the week is a challenge and keeps my time very full so I'm not so apt to waste it and slip back into lazy, shiftless habits. And the social program over the week-ends is so much fun! Sometimes I think that I've never known what real fun was until I came down here. At T.C. parties and dances were serious, crucial affairs and we were all so sophisticated and rather blasé about them. Down here there's none of that. We all go out and have a simply marvelous time wholesomely and naturally, I'm dated up for the next three week ends and one of my dates (Nov. 2) is to the Engineers Carnival and Dance – the biggest event of the fall season. I feel very honored and thrilled. I wish you'd send me my other pair of brown pumps. My date is 6 ft. 6 in. tall so I want higher heels. He's house director at the biggest men's dorm—Hughes Hall where Edwin King from Omaha stayed last year.

My work continues to fascinate me. Chemistry is hard for me to grasp. I have trouble working out some of the equations and problems because my math is weak. But I'm going to go to some of the help-classes and practice on the problems. I like the experiments very much. They're fun to do but I'm always afraid I'll blow up something!

I'm learning a lot in Textiles and Clothing that is already becoming valuable to me in buying inexpensively yet well. I like the course and my teacher in senior (?) of the division and has a reputation for knowing more about textiles then anyone else in the state.

Journalism is coming along more easily than at first. I'm so handicapped by (?) new but that's the "Message to [Garcia?]"! I've five or six pretty good ideas for stories lined up so I think I'll make the grade. Still have to be a good one, tho! I'm now handling news from Welen Hall as my own dorm and also from the two men's dorms.

Speech is pretty easy altho' I'm in a junior-senior class. I think I'm doing pretty well, altho' my standards may be quite different from the departments! We are giving five minute informative speeches now and I spoke on the movie I made for the church.

I dropped my sociology class. I know you'll be disappointed to hear that but I talked it over with my counselor, and house mother, and journalism teacher and they all advised me to drop it in order to give (?) all the spare time possible for journalism. So I dropped it and I'm certainly glad I did, now. There was no point wasting my time int here when I needed time so desperately for things of much more value.

I don't believe I've ever felt better, physically as well as mentally, as I do now. I eat just tons and I've gained about six pounds already. You wouldn't (?) me. I eat regularly and walk so much that I feel wonderful. I'm afraid I don't get enough sleep, tho', and that can't be helped much.

Last Friday I heard Louis Untermeyer speak. He's been giving a series of lectures on Literature and Life here at the college. He was very entertaining and I was profoundly impressed by what he said. He pointed out that America has at last stopped borrowing her art and literature and culture from Europe and is developing her own. He mentioned Grant Wood our "top" painter and Eugene O'Neil, (?) Sherwood, John Steinbech and many many others who bring out typically American problems and our customs and traditions. He even mentioned Fred Astaire and Bill Robinson, the famous negro tap dancer, as great artists in the creation of a typically American form of dance. He urged us not to look down on jazz and sewing and dancing and literature and drama of American life and problems but to be proud of all these and other things because they are AMERICAN and express the culture of the (?) of our people. It was a good section in Americanism and he emphasized that America must be made the shelter of all great form of art and that soon our nation will be the only one which will preserve freedom of all forms of expression. "We've declared our cultural independence," he said.

I thought he was wonderful I saw Mary Woodward, there, and Hazel too. I was so surprised because I haven't seen them or heard from them all fall. Hazel says she's been thinking about one ever since (?) and is going to call me soon. Aunt Julia is much better and I'm going to see her and cousin Mary before they take her to Davenport for the winter.

We had our open house here at the dorm Sat. afternoon. It was simply wonderful! I had a wonderful time. I invited five men – Donnie Mck. Among them – but he didn't come. I went out to the Woodcutters Chicken Dinner and Ball Dat night our at the YMCA lodge. My date is a "Y" fellow and sweet, too. Friday night I went to an all College Dance at the Union and to an exchange at the Phi Kappa frat house before that- from 7:00-8:00.

Quite an honor has been handed me and about four other girls and we're thrilled about it. I've been named assistant proctor for my section of the hall. I have to keep the halls quiet and I can give proctor marks if some of the girls won't settle down. Its rather a dubious honor form that point, tho!!

This afternoon I wrote the lead story for the ward systems newspaper. It comes out Sunday and I'm quite excited.

I received the \$5 you sent me, Daddy, and thank you very much. My money still hasn't been located nor the person who lifted it, of course, but Mrs. Young thinks we'll locate the guilty

one. I want you to please understand that it was not one of my room mates. We were all together at the time it happened. Also, none of us are under any suspicion whatsoever – that’s perfectly obvious by the way we’ve cooperated in trying to help Mrs. Young and in my being named assistant proctor. Your remark about that made me feel kinda badly because there are absolutely no grounds for any suspicions along any of those lines. And I need my money with me all the time, I haven’t the time to bother with getting out my trunk and unlocking it & locking it and messing with keys and losing them everytime I need school supplies. I think it will still work out.

I hope that my very late presents helped to prolong your birthday celebrations! I hope that Daddy could eat most of the Candy finally! I sent it to him, not to the whole family!!

I’ve been wondering about Thanksgiving vacation. It’ll cost me over a dollar a day to stay here and I’ll have to move out. We all have to stay in our dorm. What do you think? I might go home with Virginia. Would that be all right? We’ve spoken about it over twice but nothing is definite yet. Mary Louise Halstead is going home for Thanksgiving. If I don’t go home, I wished you’d see if you could send my radio back with her. I need it because I have to listen to four newscasts a day for journalism and we can get only two stations – WOI (Ames) & WHO (Des Moines) on Janet’s. It cramps my style somewhat!

I didn’t have to have my typewriter serviced but now I’ve broken a link in my watch I wore out so I’ll have to have that fixed.

I mailed my laundry again this morning. The sheets weighed it down somewhat but it cost me only three cents more to send all that home, whereas laundry here costs 6 cents per sheet. How I love to get those cookies!! Num!

I’ve got Daddy’s and Eleanor’s birthday letters just about finished! I’ll mail them by the end of this week – I hope. I know that’s awful but they take thought and care.

I’m so swamped with work I just can’t get everything in. Its terrible but its fun, too.

Don’t forget to try to send my other brown pumps and what shall I do about thanksgiving?

P.S. I can’t let you know until my next letter if I can get a refund on my \$5 deposit.

Love,

Virginia