

Sunday, April 20, 1941

Dear Mother and Daddy,

Another week nearer mid-term tests so I'm bearing down as well as I can, what with spring in the air and (?) coming up in about three weeks. But I got 92 on my negative ion test in chem. So I feel pretty fine! The weather has been lovely until this past week – it has rained every day and I'm so disgusted with it! Not a bit like spring in Iowa. It has been too warm to even wear a coat.

I received my formal Friday and thanks so much for rushing it. I'll get my laundry bag off tomorrow. I have only one class tomorrow morning and that's at 9:00. But my afternoon is full. I have Household Equipment from 3 to 5. Last Friday we cooked chocolate pudding on the surface units and toasted bread, baked cookies and broiled hamburger in the oven. My partner and I used an electric range and it shore was fun!! Its so easy to use and regulate the thermostat and everything – we made a few little mistakes! – such as putting our cookies in for the required seven minutes and taking them out snow white! Our teacher laughed so at us! We had been trying to bake them at 300° instead of 450° so you can imagine. We weren't using the thermostat correctly and didn't give the oven enough time to heat up. Our teacher is a married woman and simply swell! She's been married for twenty years and tells us so many funny stories about her husband and family and experiences. I never realized that there was such a big difference between a prof who is a married woman and one who is just an "old maid." Its very noticeable. Mrs. [Brashcar?] is so understanding and sympathetic and human and fun.

Last Wed. the Ames merchants put on a home furnishing show out here at the college and we went over to see it instead of class. Mother, you should have seen the ranges – gas and electricity – and refrigerators they had on display. They were wonderful. I'd sure love to start on one of those \$150 deluxe electric ranges but I s'pose I'll be lucky to start married life with a little oil burner! Some of the back splashes looked like the central board of an airplane, they were so full of gadgets – minute-minders, etc. And the refrigerators! One had two doors – the outside door and an inner one with locks on it for fruit and eggs and that one opened into the refrigerator. It costs \$350 installed. Wow! The models this year are wider and higher but not as deep as the one we have which eliminates reaching. We saw some grand interior decorating displays that El would have loved to play around with.

I was so sorry Connie couldn't drive down with Mr. Zeleny but it would have been too expensive. We talked about it a lot and what we'd be doing if she were here. I keep thinking of just a year ago this week-end when Mother and I were down here on the campus.

Sometimes I get pretty concerned about our financial situation. It worries me that we're having such a tight scrape because my college education. I'm so in the dark about how things are and I want to know just what's going on. I just can't go to summer school this summer. I want to get a job. I want to work and earn some of my own money and I have the experience of holding a job. I'm half-way thru college and have never held down a job in my life. I've never even taken care of people's children. I'm going to get a summer job. I can pile on my work and get thru in two more years easily. I'm ahead of my schedule anyway, so why is summer school necessary?

There are four more after me that are entitled to a good education and I can't take it all. I take so much from you. A lot of it being the oldest but a lot of it is just me. The oldest makes the most experience mistakes and by the time Conny & El are ready, you'll know all the short-cuts.

I certainly don't mean that this year has been a mistake because most certainly has been just best choice we could have made. I need the most practical course I can get, with this war coming on. I wouldn't be any other place, but my previous training hasn't been right. I should have taken some business courses in high school and some science and home ec. But all the same, I feel that I must get a job this summer.

This war seems to be coming so fast. I've gotten so that I can't read the papers anymore, I get so upset about it. I look at the headlines to see if England is still there and that's all. So many of the college kids feel that we have so little time to have fun and be happy. I read somewhere that when you were going to college, peace, prosperity, security were just taken for granted as lasting forever but we're not being fooled by any of that stuff. We know darn well what we're in for and it's not so much fun looking forward to it.

I guess a lot of us are getting pretty jittery but we want to live normal happy lives and are afraid we won't have the chance. But if we get into a war we won't waste any time regretting what we've missed 'cause we'll be too busy.

I wish I were home. I sure do want to talk to you. But I guess you know how we feel because you went through it in the last war. And then there's the marriage problem. I don't know but what I'd get married too if a war should catch us and I had my man. My room mate is bound and determined that's the first thing she'll do and so are all the engaged gals I know. I tell them they are foolish but at the same time I wonder just how "silly" it really is. They tell me, "Look, you've never been in love. You just don't know what you'll do." Well, maybe.

This letter certainly got involved so I'd better get o bed and sleep it off!

Love,

Virginia