

Saturday

Oct. 23, 1941

Dear Mother and Daddy,

This has been a hectic, full week for me. De Voto's lectures started Tuesday and I covered every single one. The evening lectures I wrote up over at the Student Office afterwards – Tuesday night I worked over these until 11:15. The next day four of us – the college A.C. correspondent, college cor. For the Des Moines Register, separate from the Ames Tribune and me. I had my picture taken with him – just De Voto and me!! That night, Wed., I worked at the Student until 12 midnight then I had to study for a short Chem quiz so didn't get to bed until 1:30. But the next day I found I had 50 inches in the paper!! If you'll look at the Thurs. Daily Student all the stories on the front page are mine except 3 – the "lead" story and several in the corner – and those were just the stories on the front page! After I'd cut my stories out there wasn't anything left of the front page!! Thursday evening Major Eliot spoke. He was very good. My write-up is in the Friday Student. And I interviewed him afterwards he was very nice and when I thanked him he bowed very low and said "you're entirely welcome Miss Brainerd." With all those people – with Pres. Friley to Gen. Lincoln standing around.

In the Fri. Student, front pages there is also a story on Gen – Rush B. Lincoln being here. He sat directly behind me at the lecture and talked to me! I didn't know until afterwards who he was.

I go to these lectures alone because I have to go right over to the Student afterwards and write them up. When I walked into the Eliot lecture the State Gym was pretty full. I went over to the head usher and asked him for an estimate of the number of people present – and also announced I was covering the lecture for the Student –

He said, "All, the press! The press deserves nothing but the best! Just come with me, I'm taking you up in front!"

So he walked me way up in front past all those people and took me back stage and I talked to all the dean heads and Departments who were waiting for Eliot to arrive. I really felt privileged and important. The reserved section was supposed to be for faculty and important guests (in evening clothes) only and they are the best seats in the house. When I left to sit down, Mr. Murray – (in the Econ. Dep't,) who was Eliot's host – said "just take your pick of any seat in the house."

So I sat in the very front row, right under Major Eliot's nose! I could even see his eyes glitter! It was wonderful. And he was so nice and kind to me.

Thursday – that same day – I had been invited by the Eng. + Speech Dep't, too tea they gave in De Voto's honor. Only about 140 students were invited. But I couldn't go – I was waiting for Major Eliot to arrive so I could interview him.

Friday Dr. Greene, head of the Eng. + Speech Dep't tipped me off on a wire De Voto had just received from Jesse J. Lashy, Hollywood, about a projected motion picture on the life of

Mark Twaine. The story is on the top of the front page of the Sat. Student. So I ran over to the Union and interviewed De Voto again. I had about a half-hour talk with him again. He's really swell – that's the only way I can say it. I told him I hoped Lashy signed him to a contract because then when his name came on the screen with the picture. I could say in a stage whisper to all those around me "I know him!" He got a big kick out of that. He also told me I'd done a very good job of writing up his lectures.

Thursday night I was over at the student until 12:30. Friday night I studied here at the dorm until 2:45 and had classes from 8-12 this morning. So I'm ready to fold up. Weeks like this came only several times a quarter, tho' – they're not the usual thing, thank the lord. Now I'm studying for another Chem. test.

When I worked late on the paper, my managing editor always called my house mother and tells her I'll be out late and then she'd let me in when I came home. But someone is supposed to see that I get home safely and stuff like that so the first night – Tues – about 10:30, a man wondered into the press room and sat around and pretty soon Lyle Abbott asked him if he's take me home. He had a brand new car and said he'd be delighted. I missed his name in the introductions. Wednesday he came over a brought me home, too. Thursday night he also drove me home and bought me a cup of coffee. About that time I got curious and asked who he was. One of the boys said, "oh, that's all Mitchell." I nearly fell over! Maybe that name doesn't mean anything to you but here in Iowa it's a household word. He's publicity director for the P.E. Dep't and conducts the Sports Round up over WOI – He's a good guy and a real good friend of my instructor Rod Fox. They both graduated from here about 1930 and worked together for the next 10 years on a Mason City paper. As a result Mr. Fox says "Hi!" to me instead of not recognizing me. Incidentally, Rod Fox, my journalism instructor is the brother of Kirk Fox, editor of Successful Farming.

I love journalism so much. We're really one large family, working together and having fun together. We're all so much more closely bound together than a casual group you meet in classes because we all have in common that kick and thrill we get out of our work. Everyone calls Mr. Fox "Rod" and Miss Goeppinger is "Goep" Every Sunday morning the journalists eat breakfast together at a special table over at the union. We have staff picnics and "30" parties to celebrate the last edition before a vacation. They usually didn't date affairs. We all just go and have fun in one big gang. Its so wonderful to be part of a big group that share's my enthusiasm for my work. I've never known anything like that before. If I start talking about journalism to any of the kids in St. Cloud they just look polite. Jeanne Mel and Doris May just look bored and disinterested. Life must be so shallow for people like that who don't have any completely absorbing interest – except men. I like men, too, but I like journalism better right now. Every time I meet girls on the campus I feel so sorry for them because they aren't taking journalism! I told that to Al Mitchell and said "maybe it will wear off tho'." He said, "No, it won't. After ten years mine hasn't worn off."

I'm turning in 350 inches at mid-term. I get straight "B" on my stories, now. However, as I said before, its Rod's fixed policy to give straight "C" at mid-term, for some unknown reason!

Chemistry worries me all the time and that's to be expected. I spent three hours on it four times a week, in spite of the fact that all I talk about is journalism. But Chem. is hard, even harder than last year and I'm having a struggle.

Next Saturday night I'm going to go to the Engineer's Carnival. You'll be reading about it in the Student. Are you getting the papers regularly? Mid-term will be over then and I'm going to let myself take a vacation – a short one.

I'm sending this special because I'd like to ask you if you could send me my allowance before Nov. 1 – preferably as soon as possible. I have to buy my Bomb now and that's \$3.00. I've decided not to go to the Home Ec. Ball this year. The tickets are \$2.50 and its not worth it –

I'm so tired I can't even write, so I'll stop now so I can study several hours before going to bed.

I think of Eva May so much and Aunt May, too. It is so hard for her, too, and then to think she was there when it happened. I have been trying to teach myself to face the minor disappointments and sorrows – even being dropped from school – with strength so that I may have the courage and fortitude to meet the big ones in my life. I think I'm a very lucky and happy girl.

Love,

Virginia