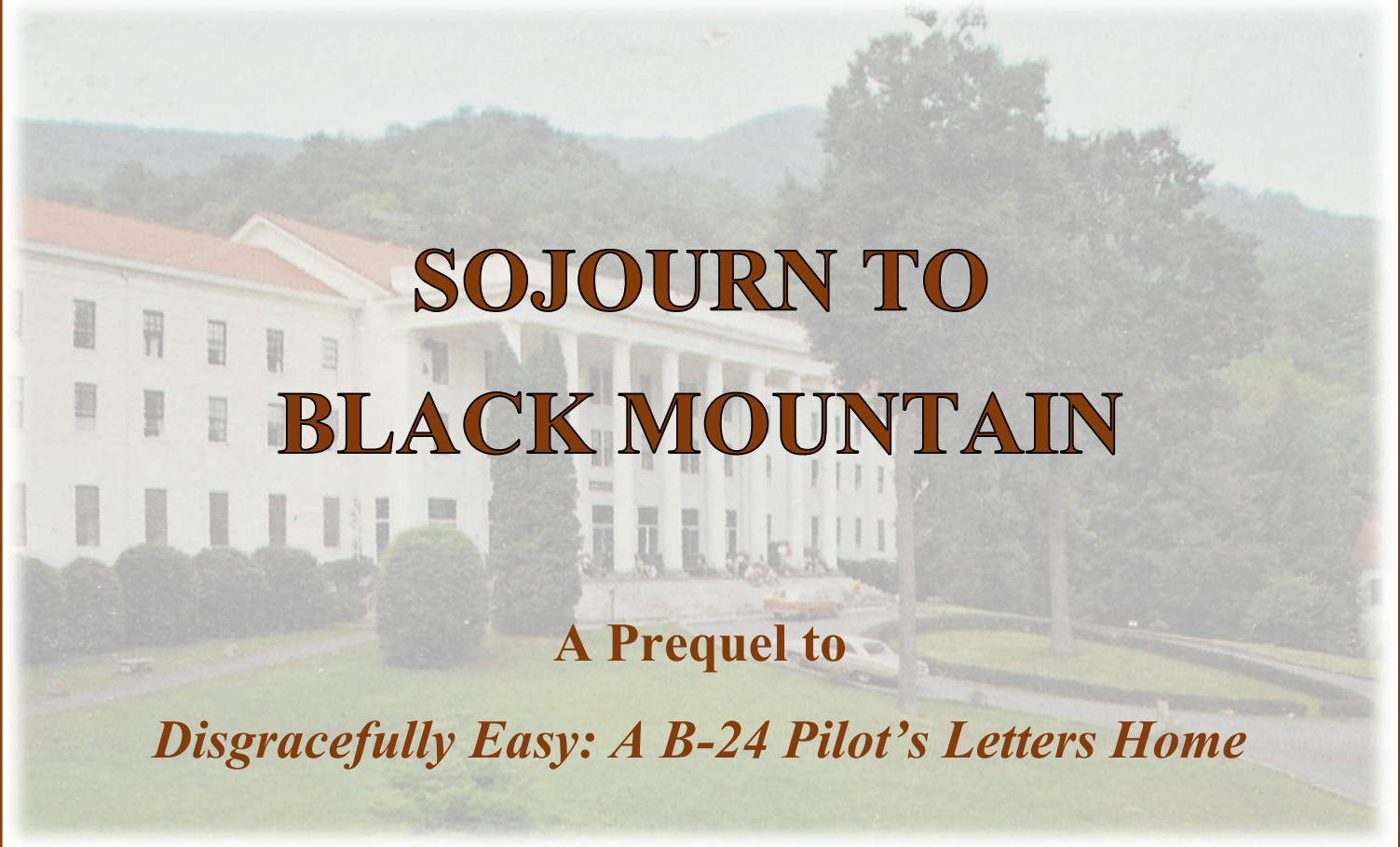




SOJOURN TO BLACK MOUNTAIN

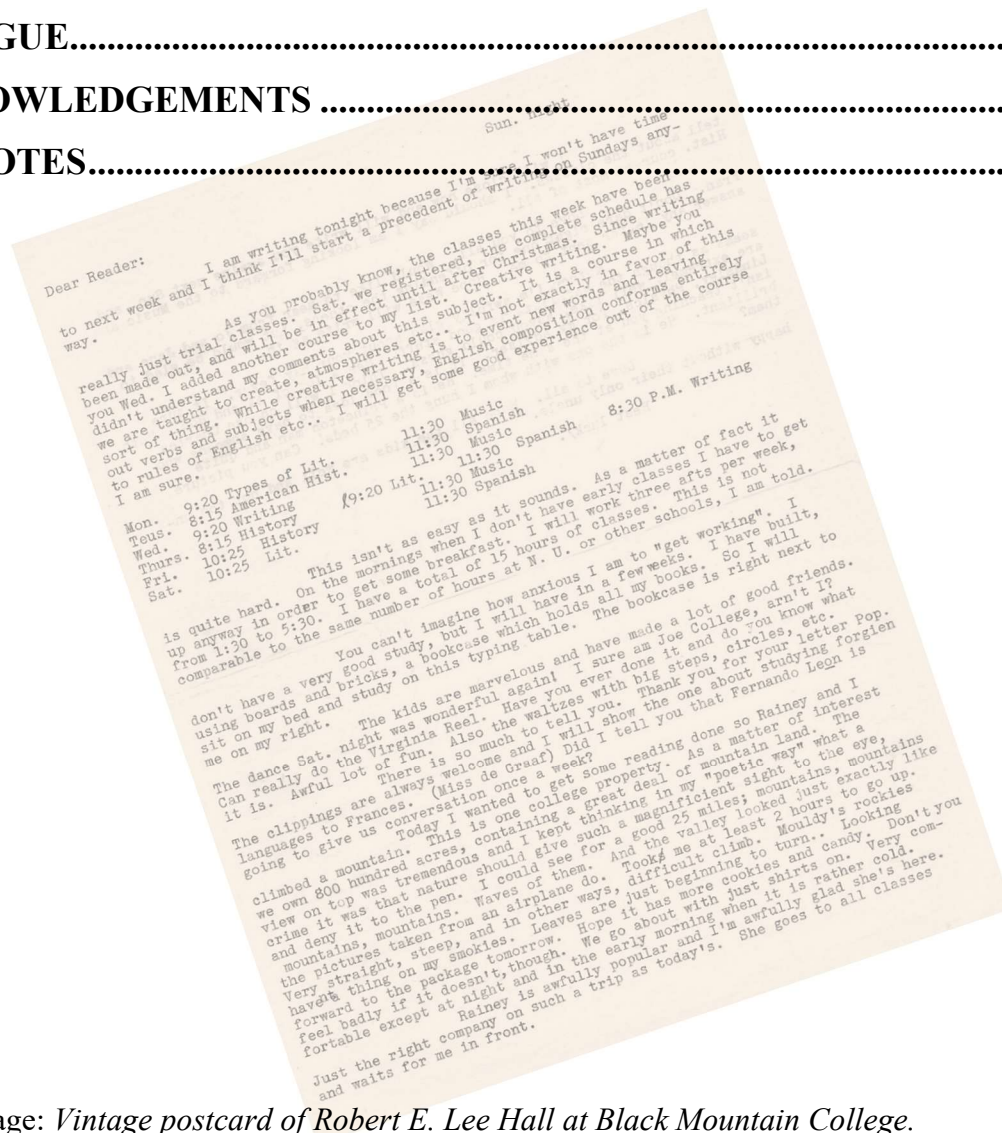
A Prequel to

Disgracefully Easy: A B-24 Pilot's Letters Home

Tom Hanchett
September 2026

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	1
GROWING UP IN EVANSTON.....	2
ABOUT BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE	7
BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE CORRESPONDENCE-FALL 1941	9
ILLUSTRATIONS.....	35
INTRODUCTION TO SPRING 1942 BMC CORRESPONDENCE.....	37
BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE CORRESPONDENCE-SPRING 1942.....	41
EPILOGUE.....	72
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	73
END NOTES.....	74



Cover image: Vintage postcard of Robert E. Lee Hall at Black Mountain College.

INTRODUCTION

Bill Hanchett's World War II correspondence was published in my 2025 book, *Disgracefully Easy: A B-24 Pilot's Letters Home*. Before my father's Army Air Forces service, he attended Black Mountain College, a liberal arts college in North Carolina for one year. In this document Bill describes his freshman year at this unique college. I am sure my father would have wanted to continue his education at Black Mountain College, but family finances and World War II intervened. What follows is not meant to be a comprehensive history of the college. It is only a snapshot in time. Sometimes the letters describe specific problems that Bill and his family faced. Unfortunately, subsequent letters often do not reveal the resolution to the problems Bill discussed so the reader is left in suspense. Through my father's letters we view the college as he experienced it during the academic year of 1941-1942. These letters were in the same package as his correspondence from the Army Air Forces. They were found at the time he passed away, so no one had a chance to discuss them with my father. To begin with, Bill's pre-Black Mountain College adventures and correspondence are summarized in the following section.

GROWING UP IN EVANSTON

Bill Hanchett and his five sisters grew up in Evanston, Illinois, a town north of Chicago bordering Lake Michigan. In 1922, when Bill was born, their father, William F. Hanchett, Sr., initially trained in banking, became president of the Hanchett Bond Company which traded in municipal bonds. William Sr. became president of the company upon the retirement of the company president, his father-in-law Lucius A. Trowbridge.

Alice Trowbridge Hanchett raised their six children and lived with her widowed mother-in-law, Olivia until her death in 1940. Alice, my grandmother, kept a record of family events from her marriage in March 1910 through 1951, and a diary covering 1953 through 1956. The three older sisters, Jane, Josephine and Frances attended the exclusive Roycemore School. Beginning in 1926, the family spent summers at White Lake, Michigan in a home called Ye Olde Maple which still stands and is currently another family's residence. Films made by Will showed active summer activities, swimming, boating, dancing, games, and picnics with extended family and friends. In a journal of important family events, Alice noted that the Hanchett Bond Company "went under" during the winter of 1931-1932 and the family began, as the writer Louis "Studs" Terkel called, "Hard Times."

In high school Bill was an average student, but his Evanston Township High School (ETHS) teachers noted his leadership, dependability, willingness to admit mistakes, and his popularity throughout high school. It was noted that his popularity sometimes interfered with his studies. Though responsible and well-liked, Bill also showed a stubborn persistence and a temper.

The summer of 1939, between his junior and senior year at ETHS, the last peaceful summer before the war in Europe, Bill spent traveling. He drove his mother's friend, Marion "Anne" Kappes to Quebec. Always an observer with an opinion, he thought that Quebec was "too

commercial.” Afterwards Bill hitch-hiked throughout New England visiting relatives. In Westfield, Massachusetts, he visited the house where his father grew up, and in New York City, he visited the World’s Fair.

In one undated letter, he tells his father that he hopes that mother “had a nice birthday yesterday.” This letter was probably written July 8, 1939, because Alice’s birthday was July 7th. He also observed that the Chicago Cubs had not been doing well but he hoped that players Hank Leiber and Gene Lillard would help to improve prospects for the team.

Bill was elected senior class president for the 1939-1940 school year at ETHS. The school newspaper published a profile of the new class president. According to the article, in addition to this new position, he was treasurer of the Spanish Club and a baseball fan. The article noted that, “often he can be found arguing about baseball with Mr. Magill.” Mr. [David T.] Magill was one of the high school coaches. Also, the article noted he was [and remained], a collector of good books. One of his favorites was *Mutiny on the Bounty*. Other interests included saving old coins, playing golf and sailing. Bill also told the student reporter that he did not like “sophisticated girls, bright fingernail polish and fast dance music.” In addition to describing his hitchhiking trip to New England, the article also disclosed his plan to work his way to Honolulu on a freighter.¹

Bill’s friend, Jean, had developed an affinity for languages starting with French at ETHS. Remarkably, fifty odd years later, she was still able to translate a book from French to English. In addition to excelling in languages, Jean was on the staff of the school newspaper. Bill and Jean both graduated from high school in the early summer of 1940 as the Nazis were over-running Belgium and France. Jean was academically advanced and so she graduated at the same time as Bill at the top of their class of 1940. Shortly thereafter, she enrolled at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, graduating in 1943.

Following high school graduation, and longing for another hitchhiking adventure, Bill travelled south to Cuba, planning to sign on as a crewman on a tramp steamer and sail to Mexico. As Bill described it, the adventure did not go as he had hoped. Though he thought the countryside was beautiful, Cuba was not the romantic Caribbean island he imagined, he was broke, and he could not get a job on a steamer because there was a long waiting list for jobs. Furthermore, in order to get a job, he needed to be in the union and have experience. Bill had neither experience nor union membership. He commented that “All Cubans are dirty and don’t care how they look.” At this point in his life, Bill did not consider that the Cubans he came into contact with, did not have the privileges that he had grown up with in Evanston. In a letter to his father only, Bill revealed his stubborn streak that would assist in pushing him through future flying school and many years of academic education, writing “...I promised myself that I would be gone for 2 months so I cannot come home until Aug. 22. I will hitchhike to Lakeland, Baltimore, New York, Syracuse, Cleveland and White Lake, spending some time in all those places-and that should take at least 1 month.”

In mid-July he spent several days in New York City with his Aunt Agnes and cousin Delmer F. “Bill” Hubbell, Jr. In available correspondence, Bill Hubbell refers to himself as Bill Hanchett’s “big brother.” Bill and his mother, Agnes showed him a good time, taking Bill to the movies at Radio City Music Hall and a baseball game. Later, Hubbell served as a Staff Sergeant in the Army Air Forces in England during World War II. He was an assistant ground crew chief in the 359th Fighter Group.

After he returned to Evanston, Bill busied himself with a variety of odd jobs, “office boy,” painting, washing cars and windows and doing yard work. The next summer, 1941 Bill took a trip to Syracuse, New York to visit his Aunt Leila Hanchett. Leila was an experienced nurse who

had served with the American Expeditionary Force in France during World War I, whom he described as “very funny.”

Later that summer Bill participated in the “Grose Expedition,” which was “led” by his younger cousin and lifelong friend, Troby Grose. Bill’s younger sister, Wese, joined the “expedition.” When he wrote about this trip, Bill’s imagination was in high gear. “Dr. Grose,” was Lucius Trowbridge (Troby) Grose and Miss Louise was of course his younger sister, who kept a more realistic account of the trip in her diary. In reality, the “expedition” was a one-week visit (June 30-July 7th) to assist his older sister, AA and her husband, Bob Babcock, who were building a cabin on Rainy Lake in Ontario, Canada just over the border from Minnesota. Wese’s friend, Ann, also accompanied the “expedition” to the lake to help AA and Bob with construction – “to bring civilization to the Babcocks,” as the story of the “expedition” described. Bill’s humorous letter describing the “expedition,” is transcribed exactly as he typed it and is included at the end of this section.

Bob Babcock taught political science at Black Mountain College (BMC), an experimental liberal arts college near Asheville, North Carolina. In addition to his teaching duties, Bob was also involved in college construction and work on the college farm.

With this family connection to BMC, Bill applied for admission and on the application indicated that his interests were English literature, composition and farming. In his college application, he acknowledged that his grades in high school had not been the best, but after working a variety of jobs, including work in an acoustic tile factory, he was now ready to attend college. Bill was admitted and *even* received special permission to bring his pet dog, Rainey, “a toy collie, police dog mix” with him.²

Grose Expedition

June 30, 1941

The following newspaper account was distributed to every paper in the country, through the United Press, the A.P., and the National Tea.

On Thursday, June 26, 1941, the Grose Expedition leaves on its much-discussed trip to the jungles of the north. L.T. Grose, better known to his hundreds of friends and millions of admirers as “luke”, “Mouldy”, or some other such name of endearment and description, plans to make an exhaustive study of the wildlife of the district. He is the author of many books; “Mosquitos, and Why I Love Them”, “Confessions of a Beaver”, “Bright Spots in the Life of a Glow Worm”, to name a few.

On this trip, however, Dr. Grose will devote the greater part of his time to studying and making friends with a wild tribe of savages which inhabit this section of the jungle. These savages, more like beasts than men, are called “Babcocks”. ~~Less is known about these people than any other~~ Everyone has laways [always] avoided the Babcocks whenever possible. ~~people in the world.~~ As a matter of fact, Dr. Grose and his second in command, Dr. Hanchett, are the first withe [white] men to ever purposely meet the savages face to face. Heretofor [Heretofore] a long and tedious detour has been required to pass the land of the Babcocks in order to get to the fertile fields of the Arctic circle. Dr. Grose hopes to open this new road of commerce, calling it Grose’s Pass. This truly will be a boon to mankind. The Grose Expedition hopes to accomplish this by becoming friendly with the Babcocks. “By improving their living conditions” Dr. Grose pointed out, “and by helping them in every possible way, we will erase some of heir [their] hate for civilized people.” ~~and then~~

Dr. Hanchett, one of the foremost authorities on better homes and gardens expects to build houses for the savages. He believes that then the holes in the ground in which they have been living will be used only for bomb shelters.

One correspondent pointed out the fact that no white man has ever returned alive from the land of the Babcocks. Dr. Grose and Dr. Hanchett arose together and said in voices that trembled with excitement and not with fear, “we are not afraid”. ~~These two heroes are risk-~~ Rumor has it that wo [two] young women, Miss Ann Schultz and Miss Louise ~~are~~ Hanchett (no relation to the explorer, according to the explorer) will accompany the men on their perilous journey. Dr. Grose alled the idea “preposterous”. He did say however, that a female dog would go with them and that is the only possible connection with the shocking rumor.

ABOUT BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

Located on the shores of Lake Eden, near Asheville, North Carolina, Black Mountain College (BMC) was founded in 1933 with thirteen faculty and twenty-six students. The college applied the educational principles of John Dewey who believed that students do best when they are allowed to interact with the curriculum and take an active part in their own learning. A number of the faculty were refugees from Germany and eastern Europe, fleeing Nazi Germany. The setting was informal and as Bill was to learn, the students assisted in building the college and maintaining its farm.

Bill, accompanied by his dog Rainey, enrolled in Black Mountain College in the fall 1941 – he was “absolutely thrilled” to be at the college. Rainey’s adventures around the lake and farm were often included in Bill’s correspondence. At Black Mountain he began the precedent of writing letters home on Sunday evenings, a habit he followed throughout the war years.

Black Mountain College opened the world to Bill. The college promoted an informal environment where students and instructors lived on campus, ate meals and socialized together. He appears to have had good relations with his instructors who were down to earth and involved with the students. Mentioned in several letters was Mary “Molly” Gregory, an artist who had majored in sculpture at Bennington College in Massachusetts. In 1941, she was an Apprentice Teacher, supervising the woodworking shop. Under her direction, students constructed tables, desks, chairs, benches, bookshelves and even the sign at the entrance to BMC. Under Gregory’s instruction, Bill wrote that he was becoming a carpenter and was building his own study. Throughout his life my dad built bookshelves - a skill he developed at BMC.

The experience at Black Mountain ignited Bill’s lifelong interest in learning. There he began his serious study of American presidents, history, and world affairs. In his letters, Bill

enjoyed telling his family about BMC faculty and events. Bill was enthusiastic about Roland Boyden's American history class which began with a novel approach to studying history. Early on, Bill was also influenced by Paul Radin, an anthropology professor and an expert on Native Americans. Radin was an interventionist in the war who did not think that England was worth saving, but that "Hitler is worth beating."

That fall Bill wrote a paper on American Civil War Reconstruction and read two biographies of President Grover Cleveland for the history course. He judged one of them by historian Allan Nevins as "fairly good." Bill's judgment was amusing, since Alan Nevins's biography, *Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage* won the 1933 Pulitzer Prize for Biography/Autobiography. Furthermore, Nevins would later write the forward to William Hanchett's biography of Civil War journalist, poet and soldier, Charles G. Halpine; *Irish: Charles G. Halpine in Civil War America*, Syracuse University Press 1970. I think my father may have laughed at his youthful naivete or arrogance if he had remembered that he had described Nevins's Cleveland biography as "fairly good."

Occasionally, Bill included some news items from periodicals in letters to his father. As an example, a story in the *Chicago Tribune* dated October 27, 1941, pondered, "What vital interests of the U.S. can Japan threaten? She cannot attack us. That is a military impossibility. Even our base at Hawaii is beyond the effective striking power of her fleet." The United States soon learned differently on December 7, 1941, and consequently, went to war near the end of Bill's first college semester.

BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE CORRESPONDENCE FALL 1941

Sun. aft.

Dear Dad and Mother, etc.:

Arrived here yesterday morning about noon. The trip was uneventful, but fun, though our time was very bad. We just eased along and stopped often. Ran into the fog during my stretch of driving and had to creep forward through the mountains with my head out the window.

The permanent sleeping and study quarters are either unfinished or unopened so about ten of us are sleeping and [in] a very large room. I am quite well settled. I won't unpack my books until the study hall, which by the way is magnificent is [when] finished which will be a week or so after school starts. One study is finished and we have the material for the others. They are really knockout. One tremendous window which looks out over the lake and on to the mountains. I'll send you a picture when I get mine, though it's just my luck to be assigned to one on the other side, overlooking mountains, but no lake.

The study hall is much better than I had expected it would be. The big building they have now is only one wing, the others to go up, in time. The college really gets under your skin and I am convinced that this is the place for little sister Louie [Louise], despite her violent protestations to the contrary. Yesterday afternoon Rainey and I went for a walk up the mountain alongside a mountain stream. Everything is on a big scale, that is everything must be described in the superlative. Can't wait for school to begin. Then the fun really begins.

Rainey was perfect on the trip. Didn't get restless or anything. Bob admitted that she was a good dog. She is lying on the porch of this building now, waiting for me to come down. I think I'll have to let her sleep outside somewhere, at least until we get our regular rooms.

When you get a chance send me my khaki shirt, white wash pants, two or three folders from the office, my alarm clock, overalls, but very little else. There may be a few things which you may think I'll want but don't send too much right now, as I wouldn't know where to put it.

Think I'll go swimming now so will cut this short. Rainey goes all over the lake. Quite a waterdog.

AA and Bob send love and are located in a nice cottage for three weeks when they will move into the apartment in the new study building. Kids are swell and have made a number of

friends already, though it is a little difficult being the only new student in the place, when everyone else has known each other all year.

Well, I guess you can tell how absolutely thrilled I am with the college. This is the perfect setting and theory for real education.³ Hope you'll write often. Best of luck in the B. business and hope your hay fever improves, Dad and Mom, respectfully.

Lovingly, Bill

AA and Bob have their own house, I forgot to say. Love to all. Will write later. Best luck. If you'd like you can send some more of this type envelope, but not too many because my stationery will arrive soon.

September 1941

To Whom It May Concern:

I am in no particular hurry this Wed. eve, and so sit down at my typewriter with the noble intention of giving a fuller and more satisfying account of myself and of Black Mountain College as of this date, which is the something of other of Sept., I am sure.

To begin with, let me attempt to describe the magnificent scenery, in the midst of which I am living. As you may have learned, the college is situated in a very fertile and deep valley, surrounded by the highest mountains east of the Rockies, and the most beautiful anywhere. To be more accurate, the college is located at the western end of said valley and on a fair-sized hill which at all times of the day, and during those times of the night when the moon is shining, offers the following incredible view. Though I am fully aware that I cannot do this gorgeous panorama the justice it deserves, I here make the attempt.

Looking eastward, then, from the dining hall, we see first Lake Eden. A drake and numerous ducks habitate (sic) this body of water and swim proudly about the shores as if they owned them; proudly, that is, until my dog Rainey, gives them a scare which sends them off protesting violently against the trespasser. Past the lake and a little to the left is the magnificent example of what common laymen can do when they have the desire to do so; the Study Hall. On beyond are corn fields and grain fields and pastures. This narrow valley is given added interest by a series of mountains which slope casually downward from both sides and meet in the middle. These mountains are called the Seven Sisters, because of their number and similarity. Then gradually, the valley rises and rises, until, like the climax of a great symphony, we are startled by

the awful presence of the great Black Mountain. This huge mount outdoes even itself, by adding to its supremacy, two peaks, which, as often as not, are lost in clouds.

AA, Bob, and I are all well and extremely happy. Bob is in charge of the work program. This is a big job and he is doing remarkably well with it. Every morning at 7:15 he posts a list on the bulletin board advising each of us (about 25) what we will be doing during the day. Then he goes about seeing if we do it, and do it RIGHT. There is a tremendous lot to be done, more than you could possibly comprehend. All the buildings, which were designed and have been used for the summer, must now be insulated and a heating unit put in each. Two new buildings are going up, the farm must be worked, quarters prepared for a host of students to arrive, and many other things. We can't even get to work on the Study Hall and that will not be completely finished until the first of Nov. Until that time, we will be studying in our rooms, in the library, dining hall, etc. Believe me, the studys [studies] are worth waiting for!

Tues. and this morning I cut corn, loaded it on the trucks, and put it through the cutting machine which sprays it into the silo, which incidentally lies along the ground. Typical B.M.C. ingenuity and common sense! This aft I was hauling coal from the depot to the various cottages and got as black as the coal itself.

We work a full eight-hour day and needless to say I eat like a horse! Bet I've put on ten pounds already! Sleep? You can imagine! Rainey sleeps on my bed as usual and is even more at home and popular than I had dared hope she would be. She wanders about all day, swimming, believe it or not, and playing with two other dogs, over which she is complete master. After dinner the kids throw the sticks and apples for her to chase and to her great delight. When she gets hot she goes to the lake and gets a drink and swim, to our delight.

When you write, please send me several more Amordrene. I have a touch of the stuff [hay fever] now and then, but the pills always fix me up promptly. I have a fair supply left and so send them down a few at a time in your letters. Also, Boogy [nickname for his mother, Lucie Alice], please send me some cookies. No cake. Make brownies if you feel like it, but please send something. After meals I always feel like a "finisher" and can't afford to continue buying candy bars. The food is excellent, and plentiful.

Hope to receive a package from you before the end of the week.

After work each day I always take a swim. Man, this is the life. Shadows of mountains in the water. Wow!

Kids are swell here and I am one of them now. It's great.

Can't think of much more to say and so will close.

You must know how happy I am to be here and how absolutely grateful I am to each of you that I am here.

Hope things are fine at home and the office and I would like to hear the status of both soon.

Much love!

Sincerely, Lovingly, Bill

(P.S. my pen hasn't any ink)

Jane and Wese: Hope your jobs are coming along as well as when I saw you last. Admire you both tremendously!

Wednesday eve

Dear Dad & Mother, etc.:

Received your letter today, Mother, and also the package, which was very welcome, though apparently delayed en route. Thanks a lot for the cookies, candy, folders, etc. Everything was appreciated and will be put to use immediately.

I have finally gotten settled. Rainey and I occupy the lower bed in a double berth, fifteen of which Charles [Lindsley, Physics professor] and I constructed. The SPRINGS are in corners, so that three corners can be fastened to the wall, the fourth corner is hung by a cable from the ceiling. This makes a very attractive and sensible solution to the "bedding" problem. The lower beds can be moved about of course, and put at a perpendicular angle to the suspended spring. Very nice. When you feel like it you can send down anything else you want or think that I might need. When school begins I will probably need the dark pair of corduroys we have spoken of, though I won't need them until it gets cold.

The college doesn't have enough furniture this year and so is selling dressers to any who want to buy them, excluding faculty members. They are charging about \$7.00 and up. I protested about this at a general meeting and said that I thought we would rather use orange crates instead. So, I found an old ice box, have remodeled it, painted it, put shelves in it, and it now looks very classy, though more on the bookcase variety. Will probably hang a curtain over front.

The evenings are rather cold and I'll be wanting some more blankets before long. No immediate rush.

How is everyone? Your letters are enjoyed immensely and I wish there could be more of them, though I realize everyone is busy as the very devil and can't find any more time to write than I can. We start work at 7:30 and work until noon. Then 1:30 till 5:00. All personal work (dresser etc.) must be done in the evenings, which are all too short. Nevertheless, this work program is fun. I am in charge of fixing the leaky dam. Several difficulties. Sort of startling every once in a while, to be lifting a heavy block or something and to look up and see the reflection of mountains in the water.

Sat. night Ted Frey [husband of Bill's cousin Caroline, nicknamed "Cayo"] came down to see us. He stayed in AA's cabin and we all had a fine time. Picnic lunch by a waterfall Sun. [Sunday] Gorgeous. Couldn't, can't is a better word, resist thinking about how much Dad and Wese particularly, would love this country. A thousand times better than Turkey Run Louie [sister], and like that ALL OVER. Could just picture Dad, lying on his back, hands behind head and sighing "Oh, this is the life." I did just that Sun., lying on a rock, feet dangling in rushing water. THE LIFE.

As soon as school begins. I will take some pictures, as I am very anxious for you all to see what I see.

How do you like the stationary. Pretty classy!

Glad hay fever is better Mom. How is G.F.S. Dad?

Mother, will you please ask Alabam [unidentified] for his address. He gave it to me but I lost it. Somewhere on Granville. Don't forget, por favor.

Won't be long until school starts and then only three afternoons a week for work. Hope to spend a great deal of time on the farm, and probably will be able to.

This typewriter is wonderful. Just imagine me writing and you reading a letter of this length written in ink.

Would like suitcoat, blankets, at your convenience.

Have made many friends here. The boys in my room, ten altogether, but gobs of room, are all swell. There is one particularly marvelous boy here. He is a Spaniard whose father was one of the few noble men to side with the Loyalists [reference to the recent Spanish Civil War]. At fourteen he was flying an air plane in the war! At the end he escaped and made his way to Morocco. Incredible experiences. And he is quite quiet and very modest and unusually handsome. Some guy.

Jane has seen a lot of White Lake this summer hasn't she. Lucky. How is job?

Will go to bed. Miss you all. Write soon.

As ever, Lovingly Bill

How do you like *Arundel*, Wese?⁴

Estimated Date: September 1941 [Thursday morning]

Dear All:

Horribly sorry not to have written you sooner, but as you can't possibly imagine, I have been busy as the very devil. Classes have begun and what classes! This week we had classes only in the morning. Work in the aft., but next week it will go to the schedule of 3 afts. [afternoons] per week. As it looks now, I will be taking the following courses:

MUSIC 1: This is taught by John Evarts who is a genius at the piano and has studied for years in Europe. We are taking a general history of music, examples of it, biography of famous composers, meaning of terms used, etc. We listen to a lot of records and it is a fascinating course as you can well guess. About 15, including AA, in the class.

Spanish this is taught by a Dutch lady, Miss de Graaf, [Frances de Graaf] very attractive. She speaks S. [Spanish] with a D. [Dutch] accent but certainly has a way of bringing out points and making them easy to learn. 4 in this class. Just as it should be.

TYPES OF LIT. Kurtz [Kenneth Kurtz] is the teacher of this and you probably know what it is about from the title.

AMER. HIST. A new man, Boyden, [Roland Boyden] from Harvard teaches this. We start with today, AND WORK BACKWARDS, studying effect more than cause. His theory is that the former is always neglected and is of more lasting importance.

These are my courses, and don't think they aren't stiff. Kurtz wants us to read a book a week, assigned of course, so that we will all have read the same thing and can discuss it intelligently. Also, we will take up poetry and essays, perhaps before the novel.

The only thing progressive I can see is that the classes are smaller and consequently more informal, but there is certainly, no "read it if you feel like it" attitude among the faculty.

Incidentally, one of the world's greatest authorities on Anthropology is teaching here now. His latest book says, in the fly leaf, DR. PAUL RADIN, BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE.

Excellent man would love to take his course but can't. Bob advises me not to take any more this

semester, at least. Think I'll choose Kurtz for my advisor, but for the first month I have been assigned to Dr. Straus, who I can't understand very well. German.

If I ever get a chance I will write you about my roommates, but I don't have time right now. Finish later. This is Thurs. morning.

On second thought I'll finish now. Will send letter to office because I can catch the afternoon mail and it might be delivered in Chic. St. [Chicago Street] aft.

Thanks, Wese for your letter. I am writing to you separately. Also thank Troby. Your letters are gobbled up so write often if you can.

How is everything. Sat. nights we have dances and WHAT DANCES! John Evarts plays waltzes and polkas and well, it sure is wonderful. Dancing to *Vienna Woods* and all on a tremendous dance floor. Evarts is really remarkable. Also, we do folk dances and the Virginia Reel which is an awful lot of fun. This is the dance you always see in the movies of colonial days.

Thank you all for your letters. Miss you like the dickens AND I WON'T REST IN PEACE UNTIL SISTER LOUIES [sic] COMES DOWN HERE. IT IS THE ONLY PLACE FOR HER. I KNOW IT. SHE'D JUST EAT IT UP. Does she realize that it isn't "new unitish?" [not defined].

Visited the Creative Writing class, which I'm not going to take because I like English composition better than dumb creative writing, which I think is much like modern art, and Wunsch read us a short story, I criticized it pretty strongly, too strongly, because I was promptly ordered to rewrite the thing, which I have done. Will I ever learn?

Well, lots of love. Will send you some pictures when I can. OH! It's so marvelous here.

Will have to spend most of my remaining money for books I'm sorry to say. I'm buying 2nd hand ones but even that is high. Also I had to purchase a mattress from the school.

As you probably realized the school has carpenters working all day and so things can get done after we are in school. They do the fine work, we the hard work. Anyway, not to belittle the work we do, the payroll, for college employees including cooks, is \$1,100 a month!

And don't think that men like Radin and Jalowetz [Heinrich Jalowetz, musician] are starving either. Where do they get the money. It must be awfully expensive to run this place.

Well, much love and best luck to you all.

How is Stanley[unidentified] Dad, remember him to me. Thank Lil [unidentified] for her letter. Good luck and all of that.

Glad hay fever is gone and you're having a good time with dinny, Calamity [nickname for oldest sister, Jane, after the old West character]. In a horrible rush to get to a class so this probably doesn't make much sense.

Write. Miss you, etc.

Lovingly, Bill

We dance to classical music and all the kids play it so that we can always hear a beautiful symphony across the campus. Mountains are still here.

Sun. night

Dear Reader:

I am writing tonight because I'm sure I won't have time to next week and I think I'll start a precedent of writing on Sundays anyway.

As you probably know, the classes this week have been really just trial classes. Sat. we registered, the complete schedule has been made out, and will be in effect until after Christmas. Since writing you Wed. I added another course to my list. Creative writing. Maybe you didn't understand my comments about this subject. It is a course in which we are taught to create, atmospheres etc. I'm not exactly in favor of this sort of thing. While creative writing is to event [invent] new words and leaving out verbs and subjects when necessary, English composition conforms entirely to rules of English etc... I will get some good experience out of the course I am sure.

Mon.	9:20 Types of Lit	11:30 Music		
Tues.	8:15 American Hist	11:30 Spanish		
Wed.	9:20 Writing	11:30 Music		
Thurs.	8:15 History	9:20 Lit.	11:40 Spanish	8:30pm Writing
Fri.	10:25 History	11:30 Music		
Sat.	10:25 Lit.	11:30 Spanish		

This isn't as easy as it sounds. As a matter of fact, it is quite hard. On the mornings when I don't have early classes I have to get up anyway in order to get some breakfast. I will work three afts [afternoons] per week, from 1:30 to 5:30. I have a total of 15 hours of classes. This is

not comparable to the same number of hours at N.U. [Northwestern University in Evanston, IL] or other schools, I am told.

You can't imagine how anxious I am to "get working." I don't have a very good study, but I will have in a few weeks. I have built, using boards and bricks, a bookcase which holds all my books. So I will sit on my bed and study on this typing table. The bookcase is right next to me on my right.

The kids are marvelous and [I] have made a lot of good friends. The dance Sat. night was wonderful again! I sure am Joe College aren't I? Can really do the Virginia Reel. Have you ever done it and do you know what it is? Awful lot of fun. Also, the waltzes with big steps, circles, etc.

There is so much to tell you. Thank you for your letter, Pop. The clippings are always welcome and I will show the one about studying foreign languages to Frances (Miss de Graaf). Did I will you that Fernando Leon [unidentified] is going to give us conversation once a week?

Today I wanted to get some reading done so Rainey and I climbed a mountain. This is on college property. As a matter of interest, we own 800 acres, containing a great deal of mountain land. The view on top was tremendous and I kept thinking in my "poetic way" what a crime it was that nature should give such a magnificent sight to the eye, and deny it to the pen. I could see for a good 25 miles: mountains, mountains, mountains. Waves of them. And the valley looked just exactly like the pictures taken from an airplane do. Took me at least 2 hours to go up. Very straight, steep, and in other ways, difficult climb. Mouldy's [another nickname for cousin Trowbridge Grose] rockies [Rocky Mountains] haven't a thing on my smokies [Smokey Mountains]. Leaves are just beginning to turn. Looking forward to the package tomorrow. Hope it has more cookies and candy. Don't you feel badly if it doesn't though. We go about with just shirts on. Very comfortable except at night and in the early morning when it is rather cold.

Rainey is awfully popular and I'm awfully glad she's here. Just the right company on such a trip as today's. She goes to all classes and waits for me in front.

I will close now and will write you again next Sun. and tell [you] about the classes. I should say I am looking forward to the Music and Hist. [History] courses most of all.

Love to you all. Would like to hear from Jo and Jane and Fran. Don't dare right [write] one for offending the others, but would be glad to answer any letter sent to me. Hope Wese will write again.

Mother I'm awfully glad about your hay fever. It sure seems as though the Mafoliata is good stuff. See a lot of AA and Bob. Both are extremely well liked, as you could guess. Think I will choose Charles Lindsley, Physics, for my advisor. It is a good idea to have someone who isn't teaching you at the same time. He is a Princeton man and quite brilliant. He is the one with whom I hung the 25 beds. Can you picture them?

Love to all. Hope all the kids are well and not too unhappy without their only uncle.

Best Luck/.

-POSTCARD-

Thurs. night [Postmarked 9/19/1941]

Dear Mother:

A few additions to next lot of stuff to be sent down here when you feel like it: two belts, steel glasses case, large size, (Barkers, Church St. bldg. will gladly give it to you free. We got glasses there. Sorry to trouble you) and, if possible, clip for belt from which knife hangs, --like the one Wese lost. Ask her. One is on dresser, or in it. Don't spend too much time, but would be appreciated. Am permanently settled so would like anything else which you think I could use. Will have study in about 3 weeks, probably. Think of you often. Am reading *Berlin Diary*. How does Dad like *You Can't Do Business with Hitler*?⁵

Love to all. Will write, and hope you will too, soon. Much love. Rainey is fine and right here.
Bill

October 14, 1941

Dear Dad:

Well, Mother has come and gone. She came, she saw (everything), she conquered (everyone). All day people have been coming up and telling me what a lovely mother I had and how nice and friendly she was. Believe me AA and I were certainly proud!

Mother visited two of my classes and I think she was pleased with them both. Also, we walked all over the campus seeing the faculty cottages, classrooms, my room, AA's apartment, the lake and dam and every other place where she could go. Incidentally, my study has been assigned and I am directly across the hall from AA and Bob and overlooking the lake and mountains. Gorgeous view and Mother will tell you all about it I'm sure.

Sunday Mother took us all to dinner at the G. Vanderbilt Hotel in Asheville and we drove about the city and its suburbs.

This will be a short letter for the time being, as I have lots of work to be done.

Glad to hear things are beginning to look better for you. You know my feelings and sentiments on that score, so enough said.

We really had a wonderful time. The three left this morning, but we said good-bye last night. We were just getting used to seeing mother around, then BANG, she's gone.

Your editorial to me received. Distressed to see that you are still reading the *Trib* [*Chicago Tribune*]. You are still pretty sick. I think you had better come down here. The climate and our guidance will fix you up in no time. Is there any possibility of you coming down? What about Utah? Going with Dr. S.? [Dr. Sherwood]

Mother spent lots of time with us and I'm only sorry that we couldn't be with her all the time. However, it was quite a treat to have her at all.

We feel sure that mother is pleased with the school, but we have all the more reason to be pleased with her.

Well, much good luck and love.

Lovingly, Bill

[HANDWRITTEN AFTER SALUTATION]

Mother has an enormous list of things to be sent to me. I can only offer my apologies and my thanks.

Regards to Lucky [unidentified] and all at home. Jane's good letter received and will be answered.

Oct. 17

Dear Boogy:

I imagine that you are reading this on Mon. and I assume that we will hear from you soon telling us about the last half of your trip.

This must be a short letter and, in the nature, or spirit of a "thank you" note.

Thank you for coming down and making such a sensational "hit."

Thank you for all the things you bought me, and brought me. Thank you for all the time you spent walking all over with me when you should have been resting. Thank you for being who, and what, you are. Thanks for a million little things and memories. I think of you sitting on

my bed and going to my classes and taking us all to dinner and being interested in my particular study. These, and many others.

Funny, that though I kept telling myself to “appreciate this moment,” I never really did. Come back again and let me try all over.

Your card received and appreciated. The picture of Washington in the uniform of a Col. is fine. I happen to be reading about him as such right now.

Classes are fine and I’m in the midst of another Hist. report which I will try to make a little deeper. The Washington [report] is still my “first love,” though, and I spend all my spare time on it.

We have to write a poem for Lit. and I think I could make one about him, at least I’m aware of the fact that somebody could.

For that “incident” I wrote about my experience in N.Y. with Bill H. [Hubbell] and will let you know what Bob says about it.

We are having a wonderful concert tomorrow night. If you enjoyed the one last Sat. you’d go crazy over the program this week. Dr. Jalowetz and Maud Dabbs [unidentified] are playing Beethoven piano duets. Also, each will play “solo.”

Much work to do tonight so will close. Hope that the trip didn’t tire you and that you’ll read between the lines in this.

Lovingly, Bill

[TYPED AFTER SALUTATION]

Tell Dad that I’ve been laying flooring in the new building. That’s some job, as the boards must fit perfectly and nailed without being marred. [handwritten at end] nails go in sides of boards.

Monday night

Dear Dad:

The Chicago Tribune, March 2, 1941: There has been no menace in word or act by any of the enemies our alarmists see on the horizon.

The Chicago Tribune, March 16, 1941: Japan already has her hands full against China.

The Chicago Tribune, October 27, 1941: What vital interest of the U.S. can Japan threaten. She cannot attack us. That is a military impossibility. Even our base at Hawaii is beyond effective striking power of her fleet.

For a very enlightening article on the “mad Colonel,” see the current issue of *Time*.

I have been expecting to hear from you for several days, but I won’t be able to put this letter off any longer. The situation here is this:

1. The balance of my tuition, \$250 was due the first week of February, but, as you know, we make arrangements whereby \$120 of that could be paid sometime before the end of the month. The end of the month is Saturday.
2. AA and I have talked the problem out thoroughly and come to the definite conclusion that I cannot ask for another time extension; it isn’t likely that I could get it, if I did.
3. As \$130 has been paid on this term’s tuition, and no refund would be given, it seems too bad to come home now.
4. We both have confidence in the Utah deal.
5. We do not want you to borrow any more money to pay my tuition, because we realize that to do so is a strain, as the money can be put to more immediate use.
6. We understand that you want me to stay here, we also feel that you don’t quite understand the situation, that is if you think I could ask for an extension.

We have arrived at the following solution to this unpleasant problem. It is this: if there seems to be a strong likelihood that the deal will close in the next two or three weeks, I should go to a beautiful little town about 20 miles east of Black Mountain, Marion, N.C., and take a room in a tourist home. This could be done for about \$4. a week, food might average \$1.50 a day, unless I took it at the T. home, in which case it would undoubtedly be a good bit less.

This plan has its distinct advantages:

1. I am being swamped with extra-curricular activities, news writing, farm program, etc.. Consequently, I have not been able to spend as much time as I want to on my Spanish and history. I would be able to take a bag full of books along and so get a tremendous lot of work done, as there would be a little else to do, and because that would be one reason for me going in the first place.
2. This reason, number two, is only of secondary importance. I am tired as the very devil and could catch up on sleep, and be able to read, on the side, many books I haven’t had a chance to; these in connection with my Washington report.
3. When the deal closes, I write AA a postcard, and in an hour, I am back in school.

All in all, the proposition appeals to me a great deal. We thought it better to go to Marion because it is nearby and taking a room in either Black Mountain, or Asheville, would cause need for a lot of explanation, and I want to avoid this if possible. Kids here go on trips all the time and my leaving would cause no notice or excitement. I will say I am visiting, or doing an errand, or, it really doesn't make any difference what.

Now Dad, I didn't have my way a few weeks ago and it might have been better if I had, so PLEASE LET ME DO WHAT I THINK BEST NOW. I don't want you to go out and get the money, we've gone into that and I think you must realize that I mean what I'm talking about.

The deal is red hot and it must close soon, so instead of doing anything difficult at home, or asking me to do anything hard here, please give me this little vacation. You must see its good points. I've never been bored by myself yet, always like to take trips alone, you know.

I am sending this Airmail, you ought to get it Wed. Write me Airmail the same day you receive this and tell me the status quo and enclose a \$10 check, to cover expenses for a week.

Ronnie B. [Roland Boyden] is leaving for Wash. on Friday or Sat. I could drive with him, pretending that I had an errand to do at Marion.

I feel awfully helpless 800 miles away. My last letters didn't seem to make you realize how much I didn't want you to get the money, banking on an early closing of the deal. I can only pray that I will have more success now. Please don't make things difficult for me by making them difficult for yourself.

Lovingly, Bill

[TYPED AFTER SALUTATION]

Expect to hear from you Thursday. This arrangement would be satisfactory to all here, in fact it is the only one I could make. You know how satisfactory it would be for me. My room rent in Marion would be very cheap and I know it isn't a strain to scrape up a few dollars a week, especially since we believe that it would be for such a short time.

Please write me Airmail, the same day you receive this.

[HANDWRITTEN ON BACK SIDE]

Another advantage to be considered is that my little visit to Marion can be kept secret from the general public in Evanston as well as here.

Oh! Dad, please let me do this. It's so much simpler than anything else, and it certainly is different than going home to a grocery store as I planned a few weeks ago. This will be a very definite and valuable part of my education.

Thurs. afternoon

Dear Dad and Mother:

Letters from you both received and, as ever, very welcome. Terribly distressed about Uncle Clyde and we three [referring to himself, AA and Bob] would like the dope. Be sure to tell him to "get well quick" for all of us.

Glad your trip continued to be a pleasant one, Mother. I'm anxious to hear the family's, and families' reactions to your report. You will be glad to know that the heating units are complete and are awaiting use. It hasn't been close to cold since you left. Thank you for the material re: early American History. I want all of that sort of thing I can get my hands on.

As to the articles of current American History, Dad, I am equally well pleased. I have found them, however, neither especially informative nor any different than the usual *Tribune* editorial. I have to laugh at the notice saying that at last the army had adopted the type of gun recommended by the *Tribune*. Congratulations to the "world's greatest newspaper!" At last it has made a valuable contribution to the world it so severely criticizes! Interesting if true.

Re: the other articles. In history, for the past three weeks, and more particularly the last two, we have been making an exhaustive study of the United States since the world war. We have seen how closely our welfare is related to Europe. We have seen how that one of the reasons for the farm problem, which had no little effect about bringing on the depression, resulted directly from the fact that after the World War European countries began using scientific methods of farming, that our farm exports were thereby cut down tremendously. The need for trade with Europe has gained new significance. We have seen that unless we can continue to sell our industrial and agricultural products to Europe, -- as well as other countries, of course, -- our factories cannot run nor our farms produce at full capacity. We have seen how this affects the unemployment situation, which, by very direct ways, effects each one of us. We have also been convinced that the present system of Capitalism is far from satisfactory. Today, with our factories running full blast with defense orders, there is a tremendous army of unemployed. What

kind of a system is it that can't take care of its laborers even in times of the utmost industrial activity? Even in 1929, at the height of our "prosperity," there were 3,000,000 out of work.

Hitler is a smart man. He has even been called a genius. Who can doubt but that, in the event of a victory over England, he will do his best to weaken the U.S. financially? In addition to developing, as he is already doing, the agrarian aspects of European countries, which will not only supply him with much food but will also tend to keep the conquered countries under his thumb, much more so than if their manpower was devoted to industry, he will, of course boycott 100%, the United States. Again, let me repeat that over and over again in our history our times of greatest prosperity have been when we have been able to carry on extensive trade with European nations. We will, you say, turn to South America. Of course we will! So will Hitler! While Germany, with all the accumulated power and strength and prestige from victory over England, will continue to give easy terms to S.A. [South American] merchants for German goods and pay cash for the goods it buys, we will probably continue our practice of demanding cash "on the spot" for our goods, and offering to trade goods for S.A. products.

General Wood has said that he wants the president to put the question of going to war before the Congress.⁶ He says that if Congress votes to enter the war, he, and all other loyal Americans will cooperate and do their part. What a noble statement! It was made to gain sympathy and support among the masses of Americans who nod their heads and say "that's fair enough," and follow the question no further. Supposing Roosevelt did ask Congress to vote. What if they said yes? That would mean a war we are admittedly not prepared for and would mean virtual stoppage of war contraband to England. If they said no, no doubt you're sure they would, then the president's hands are tied. His power is shifted to Congress, his warnings to [about] German submarine warfare would be useless (in the event Congress voted down the war issue, Hitler, feeling more secure, would institute submarine attacks on our shipping and on our goods going to Great Britain. No one can doubt this.) It is an extremely valuable diplomatic weapon to keep an enemy in line by holding over his head the threat that we might declare war on him. Take this threat away and we lose a tremendous lot of strength and the president loses prestige. Roosevelt is proceeding along what I consider the best line of strategy. He is giving all-out aid to England and at the same time arming the U.S. If the British seem capable of defeating Hitler by themselves, don't think for a moment that F.D.R. will put us in the war. Meantime, the fact that we are a potential ally with Great Britain is a strong weapon against Hitler. Remove the

possibility of our entrance into the war and think how cock-sure Germany will be. General Wood is absolutely safe in making that statement of his. It puts the administration in an uncomfortable position, as above, and no doubt it has gained many followers for the America First Committee.

One editorial says there was no Communistic or Fascist peril inside the U.S. until the Roosevelt Administration introduced it. This of course is a lot of nonsense. What about the Communistic scare of 1915 [1919] and, oh! nuts. This is so absurd.

Other remarks on the editorials themselves. Thank you very much for them.

[HANDWRITTEN AFTER LAST PARAGRAPH]

Dr. Radin, an interventionist, gave a marvelous talk on “what Price England.” He is of the opinion that England isn’t worth saving, but very definitely, that Hitler is worth beating! A speech you would have liked.

He comes out and says, “England isn’t worth saving,” and then proves his point, or at least puts it across.

All conversations these days, the *Tribune* editorials, and this letter are primarily concerned with the question “shall we, or shall we not, go to war?” You may remember that I used to say that I was in favor of going to war if necessary, to assure an English victory. You will be glad to know that I have changed my mind. I AM IN FAVOR OF GOING TO WAR IF NECESSARY TO DEFEAT HITLER.

Things are certainly going to be messed up over there, aren’t they? I feel that there will not be any fair or permanent peace under England [Germany?]. There must be, and there will be, something entirely new.

I don’t doubt but that these arguments are not satisfactory. I would like to hear your opinions and will be looking forward to some new points!

For history I have been assigned to read two biographies of Grover Cleveland and make a report. I love to do this sort of thing and it is very broadening, I think.

For writing we were supposed to write about an unforgettable experience, which I changed from Bill H. to the sugar plantation in Cuba. Much better.

Spanish is coming along very well and I look forward to all of my classes as much as used to look forward to their end (E.T.H.S. I mean).

Give my regards to Lucky. How does she like her Evanston home? Mother says she thinks she likes it very much and I hope this is the case.

I am writing a letter to Calamity and would like, sometime, to hear from the other girls as well. What is Wese doing about her job? You might give her my opinion, which is; i.e.: don't go to Neilson's! See Mrs. Tooz and other bookstores, talk to someone at high school who might be in "the know" about some job. She'll never be happy in that factory, no matter how nice it would be to be so close to home. It's a dump and I don't like the caliber of the people working there. Tell her not to rush into anything. If she can't find a good job, tell her not to work for a few weeks. She could call up old personal service clients and go out on jobs herself. That's not half bad money and she'd have spare time in which to help Mother and do some studying, -- which I hope she is doing, this, until something turned up. I know she'll appreciate me running her affairs.

Well, must beat it, old boy. Send down any especially provocative article, if such can ever be found in the *Trib.*, in which, I have noticed, most articles are "provoking."

As ever, Lovingly Bill

[HANDWRITTEN AFTER SALUTATION]

Yesterday AA and I and Rainey went for a long walk. Trees are gorgeous now.

Estimated date: early November 1941

Dear All:

Sunday morning, an incredibly bright, cool one, and I have just finished changing my bed, dusting beneath it, and generally cleaning up around my room.

The curtains you sent me are wonderful and I have hung them so that I am completely shut off from the others in a "room" of my own. Several other boys have followed my example. Thanks so much for that package. Very estutely [astutely] put up Dad. Candy, cookies (shared with AA), shirts, magazines, etc. very much appreciated. It sure is nice to have you go to all that trouble! The candy is perfect and I have "budgeted" it off, so much an evening, so that it'll last.

Last night I had a real treat. Marvelous time! Margery and I borrowed the Babcock's car and after dinner went into Asheville to the movies and then to Danzigers, that Viennese place. Quite a change from what we are used to and I don't think I've ever had a better time.

Read mother's letter to AA and you can imagine how badly we feel about Uncle Clyde's condition. Hope that he continues to improve, and best love to Tar.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you, Dad, and to examining your new arguments. I'm afraid that I'm going to have some trouble with Rainey when she is in heat and I'll await your advices thereto. The situation is this; it obviously would be inconsiderate and inconvenient to keep her in the lodge for 17 days, what with messes, etc. Also, it would be out of the question to let her run lose [loose]. Of course, I must keep her someplace. The farm is a possibility, but if I could keep her in an old shed the heating [dog in heat] would offer a problem, though not a great one I admit, and also her barking would disturb the farmer. This is probably the only sensible course because a kennel would be out of the question because of high "rent," but I don't relish the thought of chaining poor Rainey in some dark corner when she is so used to running all over. She has lost her collar someplace and so I am making a harness for her.

The days of work, about which I wrote Jane, are over. At a general meeting last night (we missed it) they decided to go back to classes. I am very sorry because we were making amazing progress and I wanted to see it continue for a bit longer. I am becoming a carpenter! No less! Have been working with Molly Gregory, apprentice sculpturer, and she has taught me a lot.⁷ I suspect that after a few more days of work with her I'll be competent enough to finish my own study, though perhaps not. I am going to build it out of ply-wood stained deep brown and a dark ceiling. The room is a south exposure overlooking the lake and Blue Ridge Mountains and as Mother probably told you, the top half is all window, so that I have, if anything, too much light.

Regretably [Regrettably] I haven't been able to spend any time on Washington lately, my time being filled, -- and more, - by Grover Cleveland. I am reading a fairly good biography of him by Nevins, and then a general history to keep me posted on all events of his time. Lately, and I'm sure I'll always feel this way, I have been sorry I haven't a United States history [book]. I've borrowed two, but I would like to make notes in the margins, etc., and have always on hand for reference. The choice of a History is a delicate one, as many books are good for different things. For general "dictionary" purposes, Bassett's *A SHORT HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES* is good.⁸ This is in one volume and costs \$4.00. Keep this in mind for Christmas, por favor. Sisters Jane, Jo, Fran, Wese, please take note. In regards to AA's birthday I don't know what to tell you. Thinking you might want to know of something useful to send her, I asked her what she needed or wanted. She didn't know anything she needed and I can only suggest some personal things and something for her room. Mother knows about these.

Dad, did you get a chance to read the article about Canada's war effort in the *Geographic* you sent me? I hope you did because it shows that they are just half-heartedly supporting Britain, a fact which I think you have been inclined to doubt.

In rereading this I note that I have mentioned sisters Jo and Fran. I do have two sisters by that name don't I? Of course I understand how busy they are with their little brats. Love to them.

Wese's swell letter received. Awfully glad she's working at Chandler's [Evanston department store] and I feel sure she'll like it. She asked what I thought about her reading *Oliver Wiswell*.⁹ I'm for it, of course, but she must keep in mind that it is not history and only fairly good literature. Historians whom I have talked to agree that *Arundel* and one other, can't think of the name, are the only historically accurate books Roberts has written, these two being among his first and before his success went to his head, or better, hand. Glad she liked *Arundel* so much. She has come in contact with many new books, hasn't she?! That is plenty good. Tell her that I received a letter from Marty R. [unidentified] a couple of weeks ago, and that I am perplexed.

Will close now, as I have two lavatories full of my laundry and think I'll take a walk to the farm and look over possible "dog houses."

Much Love, and remember I always like to hear from you all.

Lovingly, Bill

Tues [No date]

Dear Dad:

Hope the enclosed pictures will help you to visualize us better, also that Mother will enjoy seeing them. [Unfortunately, these photo have not been found] The key is as follows:

1. Boy's lodge
2. Girl's lodge
3. old bath house made very nicely into Chem. and Physics lab.
4. Dining Hall
5. Lake Eden (surprise)
6. Tennis courts
7. Kocher cottage
8. (bottom picture, looks like smudge) Library
9. Music round house.
10. Straus cottage
11. Site of Mother's dramatic fall in the darkness [refers to his mother's trip in October 1941]
12. so called "gate house," will be college post office.

The rest of the picture is self-explanatory. How do you like the college campus?

For writing a few days ago we were supposed to write descriptions of ten different rooms. I took a chance, was commended for it, incidentally, and handed [in] the following, which probably are of interest:

- 140) Mother's room has a silver hand mirror and two neatly made beds.
- 140) Jane's room is a maroon rug and a picture of Dante over a bookcase.
- 1914) Jo's room is pink wallpaper and pictures stuck in the dresser mirror.
- 1914) Fran's room has a book on an easy chair and things in piles.
- 1431) Alice-Anne's room is always full of fresh air.
- 140) Louise's room is a blue bedspread and Venetian blinds.

The others wrote much longer descriptions and I am very proud to brag that Bob W. [Wunsch] thought these were the best of all, that the rooms were even more clearly seen. Of course, to be in one exercise, they are too similar, but they were written for individual descriptions of individual rooms. Mother's room, and Jo's, were liked the best.

I have been in bed for the last few days with a slight case of bronchitis, but feel much better now. A grand letter from Fran, tell her I'll answer it soon.

Thank you for that Spanish magazine. We are reading the article by J. Mortimer Adler (sister Jane's friend) in class. Frances [Frances deGraaf, Spanish instructor] liked it a lot.

This written just before supper and will be finished tomorrow after receipt of your many letters (heh, heh).

-POSTCARD-

Thursday [Postmarked 12/5/1941]

Dear Dad:

So broke that this has to be a card. My excuses -- a \$1.00 debt when last check arrived, haircut, Red Cross contribution, A CAN DOG FOOD A DAY, which over a few weeks mounts up. So terribly sorry but would like \$2.50 NADA MAS! Spent last today for Rainey and hate to borrow from AA. Can imagine you're glad they are coming home. So am I! Rainey and I are charged \$5 payable at any time in Evanston. Wese's letter received. Very glad. Mother's card welcome. Your letter was most pleasing of all of course! Keep my fingers crossed for you and hope the interim isn't too difficult. Three articles published, one a full-length column. Much fun, also time. Best regards to Lucky and Fred B. Letter from Jane was a grand one. Will answer. Seems very happy! Good. This sounds like telegram. Oh, best luck Dad! Think of you often and

delirious about seeing you. Al says work at Nat. Sats. Plan to send many circulars for you. Sorry request. B.

December 12, evening [1941]

Dear Dad:

So sorry that this letter must contain another plea for money. However, I am sure I'm justified in this one, if not in the others.

AA has written a letter to Mother today and it will be delivered at the same time as this one of course. I'm sorry that I have to be the one to tell you the bad news, but must, as this letter has to get to you on Monday and I can't wait any longer to write it. Anyway, the Babcocks will not be able to come home. Call up Mother and get the good news.

This is the situation as far as I'm concerned: I have a little over \$3.50, but will have to buy another Spanish book, \$1.00. I have been using Bobbie Dreier's (Mrs. D.). She has entered the class now, so I will have to get another one. This brings my funds to.... \$2.50.

Of course, I am anxious to come home and in order to do so I would like another \$5.00. This would bring my amount to... \$7.50.

Now the complications. Rainey of course, will have to stay here. That means I'll have to have someone take care of her. Logically the Babcocks, but she will probably be in heat and I don't want to cause them trouble or any mess. I probably can get some boy who is staying here to feed her, but, since she will cause trouble I'll have to pay him something. She'll have to be tied up, etc...A dollar or two might suffice for this. Then it will be necessary for me to buy three weeks supply of dog food. These two expenses total \$3.00 (maximum) and bring my funds to... \$4.50.

This is fine, but you see that I do need the extra money if I'm to come home. I trust I am. I will hitch-hike deluxe. With all that money I'll be able to take my time and get a good room for the one night on the road, also good food and perhaps a movie at night. This will be fun and I'm honestly looking forward to it.

This is what I want you to do. Send me my knapsack so that I'll get it on Friday at the LATEST. This means that you should wrap it tonight (mon.) and send it Tues. In the meantime I will pack my suitcase with all the things I'll want, suits, overcoat, etc. and send it to you C.O.D. at 140 Custer Avenue, so you won't have to carry it home (or express office if that's the case).

I will leave here on either Sat. noon (classes in morning) or Sunday morning. In the former case I'll arrive early in the afternoon Monday, probably for dinner, in the latter I'll arrive sometime late Monday or early Tues. As my plans materialize I'll write so you'll know. I plan to dress very warmly, wearing that Hudson Bay coat and corduroys, etc. Under no circumstances would I think of taking the bus.

Please oblige by getting the knapsack to me by Thurs. or Fri. If I leave Sat. (likely) I'll want to pack Fri. night. Golly Dad, am I getting excited! I know that I'll be "bursting" when I get close to Chicago. I will make a sign to carry (CHICAGO) and my knapsack and khaki-colored clothes will be beneficial I'm sure. We'll have to have long talks about this war, won't we? Looks like I'll take a course in Trig. [Trigonometry] next semester, so I could get in the Air Force, if drafted. Of that, more later.

I am sending along a copy of my autobiography which I wrote for writing class.

As you know, I'm going to work at the National so will be able to repay these funds. This new five is what you'd have to pay Bob anyway. Incidentally, I don't need anymore than five, and would rather not carry anymore.

Don't feel too badly about AA until you call Mother. Both are very pleased, though it is still a secret from everyone else. We would not want her to take any chances, of course. She and Bob will really be very happy here. Their good friends the Steinaus, and Frenchs will be here and they'll have a lot of fun. Also, both will do much reading, resting, etc.

I hope things have materialized with George. By the way, you might check up on your supplies, because I want to get out a lot of circulars for you! Don't forget this.

We haven't heard from Mother for a long time, but we realize she is very busy. We trust everything is O.K.

A nice letter from Aunt Leila.

Well, old boy, I can't wait to see you. Just two weeks from tonight I will have been there for 4 days, heh, heh. Gosh it is awfully close isn't it, but not close enough.

Best regards to all.

Don't forget about the knapsack and don't think of the bus. If you don't send the knapsack, as an inducement to make me take the bus, I'll hitchhike home without it, so please oblige.

Lovingly, Bill

P.S. Feeling rather proud because I was asked to write an article for the *Times* (Asheville) about this Christmas fund-raising campaign. Hope there'll be no delay on package. I'd rather not have to wait until Mon.

As ever, Bill

December 15, 1941

SURPRISE:

I knew how terribly disappointed you were that AA and Bob couldn't come home, so, to make you feel better, I am bringing a friend! Yep, the old story of "brother bringing his roommate home from college." This boy, who incidentally is a peach, is Danny Deaver. Mother, you met him, by the way.

The plan is this: put the mattress from Jane's twin bed on the floor in my room. He says that would be fine, and of course it would. Danny lives in California and hasn't been able to leave the college campus to go home, or anywhere else, for TWO YEARS. That is, of course, because he couldn't afford to leave. I know that if I were in this predicament you [would] want someone to give me such a swell invitation, so I did.

We both will leave on Sunday. I'll leave a bit earlier and because I've had more experience, I ought to get there before he does. This will be late Monday or early Tuesday. By the way, don't wait up for me Mon, because the breaks might go against me and I might decide to wait until Tues. and I don't want to have to feel obligated to make it Mon. night, etc. I will try to, but don't want to feel that I must. He will arrive Tues. probably. He has never been north or east before, and so the trip will be a new experience for him. His grandfather will send him money, I will try to get him a job at the National [National Tea food store], and I am sure that he will be quite independent. Also, and I am positive about this, he will be very considerate of us and we'll have lots of time to be together alone. Danny is a swell guy and don't think I'm not proud to being him home to meet my family.

I know that all of you will act nicely towards him and try to make him feel at home, so I'm not worrying at all about that score. Most of his meals will be with us, of course, but he doesn't eat much and "one extra" wouldn't make much difference would it? I think he'll enjoy my friends and I'll take him out to the Holloways for their party.

Both of us want to do some studying (a lot of it) and so most of our evenings will be spent at home reading and playing cards with you. I KNOW YOU'LL LIKE DAN. Don't have a

moments uneasiness about that. He is about 5'11" and very good looking. Also he is a very good student. Blond, curly hair.

Now I hope I haven't stepped "out-of-bounds" in giving this invitation first and telling you about it second. But I can imagine how pleased you'd be if someone did this for me. The chances are that he'll be in the army before long and anything we can do to help give him a good time is what we ought to do. I know you feel this way too.

He would have to work full days to stay here and what kind of a Christmas vacation is that, especially since he'll be about the only student here. Our Christmas's are marvelous, and in keeping with the spirit of the day, it is good that we have the opportunity to share it with one who has forgotten what it's like to live in a home. (melodrama)

This is all very silly. I've spent all this time trying to justify the invitation and I know that it doesn't need justification. You know that I have done right and are glad that I did.

By the way, a boy who is passing through Chicago on the train has agreed to take my suitcase with him and leave it at the depot, so there'll be no expense on that angle. (I will pick [up] when I arrive as I have check.)

Danny will spend a lot of time by himself in Chicago. 140 Custer Avenue will be "headquarters" for him. I'd rather not use Wese's room. First, because it would inconvenience her. Second, because I want to be in my own room. Third, because a mattress on the floor is fine for D.D. Troby and Danny and Wese and I will have fun skiing and golly I can't wait to show you all off.

Well, it won't be long now!

Thank you so much for being the type of people to do this sort of thing. I know that Danny will be very much at home, and will like you all TREMENDOUSLY.

Seems futile and needless to say that I'm anxious as the very devil to see you, and glad that I can share you with someone else. I imagine there are boys who would be ashamed to give an invitation like this. How lucky I am!

Will drop you a card later in the week. In the meantime, realize how much I want to see you and be with you, -- and let someone else profit by knowing you. "You" is plural in this case. It means all of you.

Best love, and THANKS SO MUCH.

Lovingly, Bill

"John" facilities are excellent of course! Thanks a million!

Wed Night [December 17, 1941]

Dear All:

Just a note to tell you that my plans are the same and that I expect to see you Monday night and am looking forward to it like the very devil.

Went into Asheville today with Bob W. [Wunsch] and a couple of kids, stocked up on dog food for the Babcocks, who are going to take care of Rainey, bought some stuff for AA, and now I'm all set.

Danny is very happy about his Christmas and I don't think I've ever had as much pleasure in giving anyone anything as giving him this invitation; of course, you are the ones who should feel happy and I imagine that you do.

I will go through Knoxville, Nashville, Evansville. This is a longer route, but because of more traffic, I suspect it will be the shortest one.

A swell party at the Kurtz's last night. Guess I'll save all the news to tell you.

Have my ski boots turned up? I hope that Wese has had time to inquire about them at least.

Expecting the knapsack Friday.

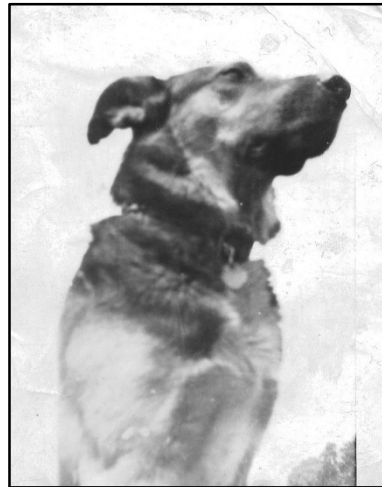
Ed Kaye [unidentified], who is taking my package and leaving it at the depot in Chicago, is leaving Friday, so I will pack my good clothes and several books I want to read tomorrow. I think I have a good 5000 pages to read.

See soon. Lovingly Bill

ILLUSTRATIONS



Bill practices hitchhiking, August 1939.



Mac, Bill's pet dog, Summer 1937.



*Jean Forster, lower right,
Evanston Township HS 1940 newspaper staff.*

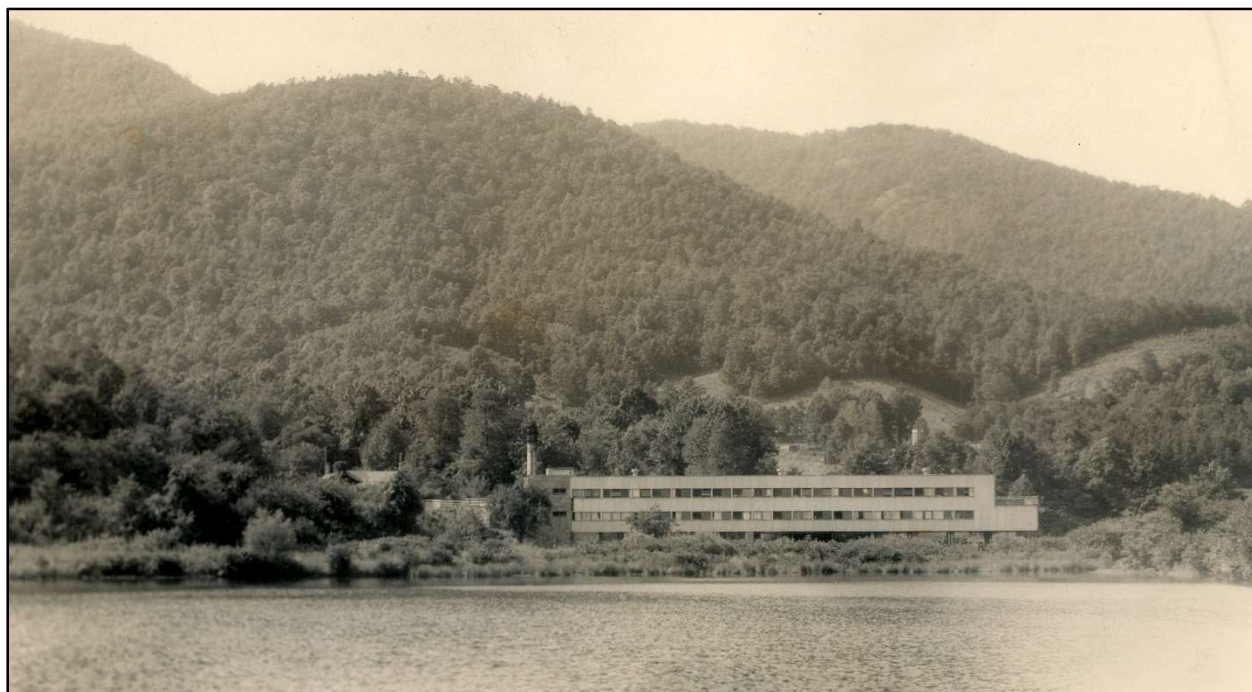


*Bill, seated left, Evanston Township HS Class
of 1940 home room officers.*

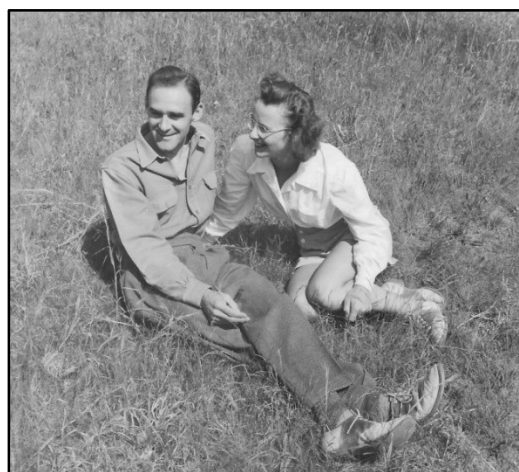


*Hanchett family celebrate AA and Bob
Babcock's wedding, August 20, 1940.
Back L to R: Will Sr., AA and Alice
Front L to R: Jane, Jo, Bill, Fran and Louise*

ILLUSTRATIONS



*Ike Nakata, The Studies Building, Black Mountain College, 1940s.
Courtesy of Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center.*



Bob and AA (née Hanchett) Babcock.



BMC faculty members Bob Babcock (far right) and John Evarts (far left) with student group, AA seated center. Courtesy of Western Regional Archives, State Archives of North Carolina.



Student Leslie Paul at work. Courtesy of Western Regional Archives, State Archives of North Carolina.



Bill's dog Rainey.

INTRODUCTION TO SPRING 1942 BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE CORRESPONDENCE

After the holidays, Bill was anxious to return to his studies and farmwork. In January 1942, accompanied by English and Drama instructor Robert Wunsch, Bill, and three others, served as student delegates representing Black Mountain College at a conference on the postwar world at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. There were delegates from thirty-two colleges at the conference titled “Youth’s Stake in War Aims and Peace Plans.” First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was one of the featured speakers along with Arthur Sweetser, a member of the American Peace Commission after the First World War and a strong supporter of the League of Nations. Mrs. Roosevelt, always a strong supporter of youth and education, attended conference sessions and spoke at Memorial Hall on the second day of the conference, January 31st.

As described in several letters, Bill almost met Mrs. Roosevelt, but she turned away from him as he stood in line to see her. Later, he “confessed” that as he approached Mrs. Roosevelt, he had stepped on the toe of Mrs. Addie Worth Bagley Daniels. Mrs. Daniels was accompanied by her husband, a North Carolina publisher, Josephus Daniels. During World War 1 Daniels had been President Woodrow Wilson’s Secretary of the Navy and Franklin Roosevelt’s boss when Roosevelt was Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

Think of the extraordinary timing of this conference – it was held in January 1942, a month after the attack on Pearl Harbor, when the Axis powers still held the initiative around the globe, but Americans were focused on war objectives and plans for peace. There was an undefeatable American spirit present.

College work continued. Bill’s letters often drew his family into his studies and sometimes solicited suggestions from them. For example, the budding historian indicated that reading about

George Washington was easy, but he was having difficulty writing about him and how his character was brought out by the American revolution. He asked for suggestions for a title for the paper.

In multiple undated letters, activities and outings with Rainey were described. Like his dog Mac, she would also wait outside his classrooms. By early spring, Bill was in charge of the new poultry division of the college farm after he acquired the first group of chicks. He noted his canine companion's reaction to all the chickens. Bill's correspondence about the college farm revealed his interest in farming and making money from raising chickens.

As reflected in the letters, throughout Bill's time at BMC finances were always a problem. As previously noted, the Depression had hit the family hard, but BMC made arrangements to accommodate the family's financial situation. Bill wanted to stay in school and promised his parents that he would hit the books even harder. (February 8, 1942, letter).

While Bill was in North Carolina, he remained intimately connected to family affairs. For example, in several letters Bill inquired about the health of his Uncle Clyde, his aunt Tarry's husband and a history professor at Northwestern University in Evanston. In this same period, sisters Fran and Wese came for a visit.

Later that month, shortly before Bill's twentieth birthday at the end of the term, American history instructor Roland Boyden sent a letter to Will Hanchett evaluating Bill's college work. Boyden was sorry that Bill would not be returning to Black Mountain the next school year. No doubt Bill was also sorry. Boyden's letter is included at the end of this section.

Throughout his college experience the war dominated the news and impacted everyday life. Before Bill left in May, his brother-in-law Bob Babcock left BMC, went to work in the Treasury Department and in 1944 was commissioned an officer in the U.S. Navy and went through

Supply Corps training at Wellesley, the same college his mother-in-law had attended. Many of Bill's friends, including music instructor, John Evarts joined the U.S. Army, serving primarily as a German language interpreter. Boyden would become a naval intelligence officer. In addition to leaving behind his interests in academics and farming, because of an unstable housing situation in Evanston, Bill had to leave behind his faithful dog, Rainey. It must have been a sad scene. The war and family finances had intervened and Bill returned home at the end of May.

The letter written by BMC faculty member Roland Boyden summarizing Bill's academic progress for the year is on the next page.

Mr William F Hanchett
140 Custer Avenue
Evanston, Illinois

May 22, 1942

Dear Mr Hanchett:

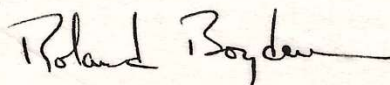
As Bill's adviser I am writing to give you an estimate of his year's work at Black Mountain College. I judge from what he tells me that he has done more intensive work in my course in American History than in any other; and, I may add, with great success. He started out doing work that was quite satisfactory and by intelligently directed effort raised it to the honors level by the end of the year. Further, the course was conducted at quite an advanced level as I realized during the course of the year from the work of some of the other students. I am told that he has had a similar although not quite so marked success in his literature course. His work in Music and Spanish has been satisfactory but not distinguished.

It has been a great pleasure to work and live with Bill during the past year, and in this I express not only my own opinion but also that of my colleagues. I am sure that I do not need to explain to you who are his father those many qualities which make him such a good companion, and need only indicate that his associates here have become thoroughly aware of both his charm and his responsibility as a member of this college community.

Difficulties always arise in expressing one's judgment of general accomplishment and personal development of an individual in any given year. My own impression is that Bill has gained vastly during the year both in the ability to think logically and to express his thoughts clearly. Moreover he seems to have acquired a more objective view of himself which in many ways is the best promise of future progress. Much to my surprise, the other day he indicated some disappointment that his actual accomplishments had not been greater. Actually as a student and as an individual his accomplishments have been quite remarkable for he has learned and learned well.

This does not mean, however, that he hasn't more to learn. All of us here are disappointed that he is not planning to return next year; both because we shall miss him and, more important, because we feel that in view of his progress of the past year he should continue his college work as long as is possible under present world conditions. I close on this note in full awareness that such a decision must rest with him and with his family.

Yours sincerely,



Roland Boyden

BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE CORRESPONDENCE SPRING 1942

Monday evening

Dear All:

Well, back in harness! Do I love it!

Arrived at Asheville about ½ hour late. There we found a message telling us to take the bus to the junction of the highway and the road that leads to the college, which we did. Morton Steinau met us there with his big car to take all four of and our baggage, except that we didn't have any baggage. We got ahead of our bags and they didn't come in until today, but have them now and again completely settled here.

My books look fine and I wore my new pants to night at dinner.

AA and Bob are fine and I really think that they enjoyed the vacation, not as much as I did, though. AA was pleased to get the Xmas present from K.O. [cousin Cayo] and the formals from Fran. She wanted to know about each of you so we went straight down the list and I reported (very favorably too) on all.

The money raising campaign was somewhat of a failure, because of the war, etc., but they apparently did quite well in Boston.

Rainey was very glad to see me, which was gratifying. She did cause trouble apparently, but I don't think Bob was underpaid. The crazy guy took her out without a leash one night, thinking he could control her. Of course, this can't be done to a dog in heat, and I was a little provoked at it. The puppies are due sometime in March. I hope they won't interfere with the holidays. Anyway, I can't have a lot of pups on my hands. After this little adventure is over, I definitely am going to have Rainey spayed.

Incidentally, when I left for Evanston, I had dozens of handkerchiefs, also underwear. Now there is a distinct shortage in both departments. I suspect some amateur bungling on the part of the Edgewater Laundry. How about investigating?

Calamity, I have felt sorry that I didn't get up to say good-bye to you. However, I was still half asleep and things didn't register. Perdona me, senorita!

Best regards to all. It was grand seeing you and I'm looking forward to a return engagement next March. In the meantime, I hope to be swamped with letters from you.

Lovingly, Bill

-LETTER WRITTEN BY DANNY DEAVER-

Jan 13, 1941 [1942]

Dear Mrs. Hanchett:

Well, we are back and all intact with no serious or exciting events on the trip. The only incident mildly interesting (but more perturbing) was that of a truck which had slid off into the ditch, corking up the road for us and making the bus a half hour late into Asheville. The trip in general was quite pleasant though a little chilly at times. It was surprising to see so few places where it hadn't snowed. I believe that there is more snow here than there was in Evanston when we left. The ice on the lake has been thick enough to skate on for the past few days, though it began cracking ominously this afternoon. I tried my luck yesterday which, except for about ten minutes on an artificial rink in San Diego was my first experience on ice. I guess I was pretty much of a flop.

Everyone seems glad to see everyone else, glad to be back and recuperate from their vacation. It is surprising what three weeks can do for the freshness and aliveness of one. Bill and I are not alone in having neglected studies and being sorry for it now. Practically everyone I have talked to speaks of the work he might have done had he had the time or the necessary energy.

Has the heat wave come to Evanston yet? I mean has it gotten up to 32°? The "wave" missed BMC entirely at least since we got here. We had the coldest night in four years here last night.

Whichever end of the thermometer the mercury is, I think Evanston is swell, and as long as it has people like the Hanchetts, it will be an O.K. place. I am deeply grateful to all of you for being such kind hosts and making my first vacation in a long time, a very happy one.

Sincerely, Danny Deaver

P.S. (for Mr. Hanchett)

The word is getting around that Bill is going to petition for BMC to get the *Sun* – do you think that is wise?

-POSTCARD-

Monday night [Postmarked Tuesday, 1/20/1942]

Dear Pop:

Your letter and enclosure received today. Sorry to have to ask for it, but D.D. [Danny Deaver] owes me some money which I expect he will pay me in due time. The package came today too. Golly what a lot of stuff. AA and I have split up as you suggested, except that she put up an awful holler when I wanted to keep the licorice. Guess she likes it too. The shorts are fine and I can certainly use the rest too. You would be surprised to see me chop trees. I'm really quite a woodsman now. I hope Uncle Clyde is better. We haven't heard so we trust he is. Did Wese go skiing last Sun.? Glad to hear that the deal is coming along. I know it will sooner or later. The "hanging on" is tough though, isn't it? Well, best regards. Say hello to Lucky for me. Like your new name for F.D.R. – "The Great Bungler," though it is misapplied. Love, Bill

Wed. after lunch

Dear Dad:

Your letter and Mother's letter and enclosures received this morning. I am sending this to you Airmail, first to tell you that I don't need the money for Rainey, (more later) and mostly to urge you to Airmail a letter to me as soon as the remittance from Washington arrives. I think you can imagine how anxious I am for your sake and so PLEASE let me know the minute things materialize, also I would like to know the particulars of the deal. As an old member of the firm aren't I entitled to these? I hope so. Will you be going to Utah? Please advise promptly and by Airmail.

Sat. afternoon I took Rainey into Asheville to see a vet. about getting her spayed. He would charge \$10 and a week's hospitalization (\$17 in Evanston) and I almost left her there, but at the last minute decided I wouldn't take the chance of her getting all fat and hard like Happy and most other "neuters." So she is here, and still not in heat. One reason I took her to the Doctors was so that I wouldn't have to put her in a kennel, which seemed extravagant seeing that it might happen twice a year, and because I didn't want to put her in a cage on the mountains, for obvious reasons. My plan is to keep her on the 2nd floor porch during the daytime, where she will be able to run about and have plenty of fresh air, and to tie her to my bed at night. This seems so simple that I wonder that I didn't think of it before, though I didn't want to cause any mess or bother for the other boys, but now I think it can be avoided without too much difficulty. However, though Rainey doesn't need any money, I could use \$2.00. I don't need any more and it is hard to see how I need even that. I can't imagine where the \$10.00 that you sent me has

gone. But when you figure that Rainey needs a can of dog food a day in addition to various and petty expenses of my own, such as class books which are still arriving, (sorry to say) and an occasional candy bar and trip to Asheville or Black Mountain it is not quite such a mystery. I am glad to say that none of the money goes for tobacco or alcoholic beverages so don't consider those items. \$2.00 would suffice very nicely and there isn't any hurry at all for this, as I still have a few cans left and also half of the box of biscuits you sent me. The situation in the kitchen is strange. The cook is a very efficient colored man but his authority over the others in the kitchen seems to have gone to his head and he doesn't like any fooling around, which means that "you stay out of here till the work's done," – which means, no scraps. Perhaps it's a good thing because it would really be a mad house if all the pet owners demanded things from him. Hence the additional expense. Gosh what a paragraph!

Glad Uncle Clyde is better. Love to all the Grosses and also to Aunt Jess. Wrote Mrs. B. [Clara Burckhardt, Leila's friend] and Leila a week or so ago. Must close now as I have some sewing to do. I darn my own socks, put on buttons, mend rips etc.! It's fun really. How I would have complained if I had had to wash out a handkerchief at home!

I'll be expecting to hear from you soon and hope that everything goes well. AA and Bob are fine as usual and their bedroom is getting the shelves in it, which will be the last item. The study is a beaut!

Regards to Lucky. Does she still like living in Evanston? Will write her soon.

Good Luck, Dad.

Lovingly, Bill

Sunday night

Dear All:

I have just finished my report for history on the period of reconstruction; this is the one I should have done at home, but it doesn't make any difference because it's done now and I think I did a good job.

Read three and one half books in one week, for it! I have just taken it up to Bob B., who said he would like to look it over. He will give it to me tomorrow and I'll make the changes he recommends and give it Tuesday morning. Why the details?

Would you like a copy?

Dad, if you can do it without any expense and too much bother, will you send me another copy of the Spanish Rotary magazine? I am going to concentrate especially hard on el Español this year. Might be interested in a diplomatic career, who knows?

My watch received. Many thanks. That sure was quick work. Apparently too quick. It doesn't work. Shall I send it back, or take it to a jeweler here and find out what's wrong? It worked for about two hours, nada mas.

Tomorrow I call up about Rainey. I'm sure she is O.K., or I would have heard about it. Wed. she comes home.

We've had spring weather. How about Chicago. 60 degrees all day here. Sweater weather.

When I was home, Calamity suggested that I make literature my hobby. I am taking her up on the subject, and for about a half an hour a day I am reading *Of Human Bondage*.¹⁰ I can't spend any more time than that, because I'm reading other books for Types of Lit., but even a little is valuable and I have already read about 200 pages. This sure is the best kind of "busy."

John Evarts is still in New York working for money. The campaign was not so much of a flop after all. One person gave \$3000 and the Boston group got close to \$1000 by itself. – Rich relatives.

No music until John gets back.

Bob has just finished making himself a peach of a desk. AA will probably tell you all about it. He has offered to let me use his desk and of course, I have accepted.

"And that's the news for today."

Lovingly, Bill

[No date, estimated January 25, 1942]

Dear All:

Sunday morning and Rainey and I have just come back from a long walk. The temperature is down to 60 again, the day is blue, but not too bright, and we both feel "exhilarated."

Rainey's operation must have been quite serious, because I was not able to pick her up until yesterday. She has the hair shaved off of her stomach and an "appendix-like" scar, but is as lively as ever now.

I am feeling very pleased. I have been asked to go to a convention of the Political Union and the International Student Service organizations at Chapel Hill. Among the speakers are, Mrs. Roosevelt and Arthur Sweetser, who did a lot of work with and for the League of Nations. I also feel somewhat honored, because the three others going are fourth-year students. This is just the sort of thing I want to get into and think it a grand opportunity.¹¹

We four and Bob Wunsch will leave here Friday morning and come back Saturday night, or possibly, Sunday morning. I'm not sure what the convention will take up. It may concern "swapping" students with other countries, or the forming of some sort of an agreement with all students for just what we are striving for after the war, or both, and probably many other things.

A number of colleges, including B.M.C., are considering offering special "Latin American" courses. Students will be taught Spanish, history of S.A. [South America], geography, customs, etc., a regular four-year plan. At least one semester of this will be spent in either Cuba or Mexico and all graduates would be in a position to step in anywhere. Sounds good, no?!

Best regards, Lovingly Bill

[TYPED AFTER SALUTATION]

Calamity: I am almost done with *Of Human Bondage*. Very good isn't it?

Wese: Have been doing a little reading in Secret Hist. [unidentified book] Boyden and Babcock want to read it. Evidently it is considered very highly.

P.S. AA says that my handwriting is just like my hair. [Messy?]

Feb. 2, 1942

Dear All:

Thursday afternoon I was sitting in my study reading and Leslie Paul, a girl, dashed in and said "What, aren't you ready?"

That very dramatic little incident explains why I kept you hanging around the telephone Thursday night.

The trip to Chapel Hill and the conference itself, was wonderful. The conference had several general speakers, Mrs. Roosevelt, Sec. [Secretary] of the C.I.O. [Congress of Industrial Organizations], Arthur Sweetser of the League of Nations, etc. and was divided into four different sections for discussion. These groups were; Political objectives, social objectives,

economic objectives, and educational plans. I went to the meetings of the political group and will send you my report on the several meetings as soon as it is finished. After her lecture I stood right next to Mrs. R. and was just about to meet her when she turned the other way. Of course, she didn't know who I was. The two girls did meet her before her speech and she has heard a lot about the college and said she was very anxious to visit it. Bob W. [Wunsch] had met her before and sent her several invitations which she couldn't accept.

We got back here Sunday afternoon. So, it was a three-night trip. Unfortunately, the expenses were greater than was expected, as is to be expected. Only two of our meals were paid for and we spent one night in a tourist's home. As your letter did not arrive until Friday, the day I thought we were leaving, I had to borrow from AA and one of the boys. Sorry, but the five [dollars] doesn't quite cover it. The two girls, Sue Noble, who is graduating this year in Psychology, and Leslie Paul, recently elected student moderator, are swell. Leslie has gone to school in Switz. [Switzerland] and France and is a very remarkable girl. Jim Raymond is a history major and all four of us got along very well. Peach of a trip.

While in Chapel Hill I called up Bob Giddess [unidentified]. Duke [University] is only 12 miles away and I hoped we'd be able to get together. However, I had meetings scheduled for every minute and we couldn't do any more than telephone. He has just finished his exams. Said he hadn't done any work all year and so had to study hard to pass. He added to that that he was going to take a vacation for a couple of weeks, maybe this is between semesters. He said he will come to B.M.C. and I urged him to. He could sleep above me. Everyone knows about B.M.C. down here and it is a relief not to have to explain about it. I think Bob will come, because he seemed very interested. He will write me beforehand. First thing he asked me - "How're the girls?"

Your letters I finally got yesterday and I'm terribly sorry about the telephone call.

LATER:

You can't imagine how good it was to hear your voices again. Those three-minute conversations are inadequate, though aren't they? Awfully glad to talk to all of you.

Regarding the arrangements made here: you understood everything I think. Saturday is the deadline. Golly Dad, I'm so pleased for you that after so many years things are really breaking. I guess it isn't necessary to say more—I don't think I could if it were.

An explanation is due, I think, for my telegram to you. Don't think that I considered myself such a businessman that I could just whip up to Washington and close the deal. The point is that I was so close that I hated not to go up, if you wanted me to. My idea was that a simple personal contact with our end of the deal might "remind" George [unidentified], in case he was doing any "forgetting."

Still later:

Have just had a talk with Bob W. [Wunsch] and learned that I have been given a credit for my newspaper work last semester and that I will receive another for this semester. I am starting to keep one of each of my articles. They will cost a nickel a piece—which will mount up, I hope—but Bob says it is worth it because if I ever wanted a job on a newspaper it would be a lot easier to get it by flashing a bundle of clippings in the editor's face. This might be a good meal ticket sometime, or even mean a job with a newspaper in South America. This semester I will put my greatest efforts on history, news writing, and Spanish. I have also signed up for a First Aid course which will meet for 2 hrs. a week.

I am starting to write feature articles now. Have twelve assignments in front of me. Gotta get to work. Really, it's like learning to write a whole new language, but man! What fun!

Best regards. Hope I'll hear from you soon. Best luck, Dad.

Wese, if you see a good second-hand copy of *Revolution, 1776*, by Preston, or Prescott, charge it to the old boy's account, will you?¹² Am reading your secret history and getting good background for my Washington report. By the way this report has become specialized. It is now, George Washington in the American Revolution, or George W. as a general, or something.

Calamity, you can imagine that I've eaten up *Inside Latin America*.¹³ Right up my alley! Hope you will write, as you said you would.

Best regards to Tar, Mother. Feel terrible about Uncle Clyde. Keep us informed, will you?

Lovingly, Bill

[WRITTEN ON BOTTOM OF PAGE]

Pronto if possible, and if at all [referring to his request for a copy of *Revolution, 1776*].

[HANDWRITTEN ON THE BACK]

Mrs. Roosevelt, after her speech Sat. night somebody in the audience asked her if her husband was going to run for a fourth term. She laughed and said "I haven't the remotest idea, but I certainly hope not." Who said anything about a Roosevelt dynasty?

Please look in the *Messages and Papers of the Presidents* set and see if they have Washington's writings during the Rev. [Revolution] If it is just as Pres. [President] skip it. If there is correspondence during the Rev. [Revolution], I'd appreciate it if you'd send it down to me. Thanks much.

Sunday, February 8, 1942

Dear Dad, Mother, etc.:

It is absolutely impossible for me to tell you how glad I am to be writing you!

Yesterday, sure that I was going home and convinced that it was both necessary and right, I had packed my clothes and gotten assignments from my teachers. The kids of course, found out that I was leaving, and that was how matters stood until 9:25 last night.

Being Saturday, and in the evening, we were all in the dining hall dancing, after having listened to a concert by Ruthabeth and Trudi Straus, violin sonatas. Someone came in and told me I had a long-distance phone call, so I dashed out of the room leaving Dora Harrison standing in the middle of the floor. Then my talk with you.

When I came back into the dining hall, the telephone is just outside the door by the mailboxes, I was beaming all over and everyone guessed what had happened. They all rushed over and shook my hand; never seen or felt anything like it. It's quite a satisfaction to know that you're wanted.

Then I rushed up to the new bldg. to see AA, who was giving a party. Ted D. [Dreier] and Morton S. [Steinau] were there. Of all the good things that have happened to me, I don't think I have ever felt better over their reactions. I can't tell you how wonderful they have been to me. I had long talks with both of them, told them possibilities, etc., and they had given me just as much "rope" as possible. The college is in a very bad way financially and they told me point blank that they couldn't do for many, what they had done for me, referring to last semester, I presume. When you send the rest, Dad, thank them for being so accommodating. They wanted to let me stay, but felt that it was a matter of policy to observe the deadline we had set.

Now, you can imagine how happy I feel; I'll hit the books even harder. But if for some reason the deal is delayed until the end of the week—I won't feel so good. Please write me all the details about it. My plan, as you know, was to come home, stay until the deal closed, and come back again. In some ways I wish we had done it that way. But you seemed rather positive

over the telephone and so I will keep my fingers crossed and expect to hear, either by telephone, telegraph, or airmail, the minute things start popping.

I hope you received my watch. The spring came undone. The matter was that that little bridge holding the spring was not screwed down tightly, so the spindle fell off. Did Wese get my message about the books?

I have enlisted in a course Dr. Straus is giving. It is a twenty-hour course in First Aid, after taking which I will receive a certificate or something. Quite valuable, no?

AA is very excited, of course. I know she feels better in leaving, knowing that I don't have to go home. She has been wonderful to me, helping me get "unsettled," running errands, taking me into the village, etc... In about 30 minutes I am going to drive her into Asheville to take the bus. Her address in Hollywood, is: Box #2314, c/o Mrs. G.L. Osgood, Hollywood, Florida.

This trip will be fine for her. Swell that she can go isn't it?

Few nights ago there was a meeting in the faculty room, (Mother, this is the one with the chestnut paneling. It also has a new kind of blackboard. Instead of being black, and instead of being a board, it is a piece of specially prepared plate glass, tinted cream color, which extends the whole width of the room. You write on it with black chalk, or blue, green, etc... There are lights behind it, so at night a speaker can illustrate his talk with a luminous chalk board. Very good looking!) Anyway, there was a meeting there, of all those who were interested in hearing about the conference. There were about 12 teachers and 12 or 15 students. We four delegates spoke. I didn't write out my speech, but spoke from an outline, so can't send a report to you.

Fran and I had a swell talk about the peace following the war when I was home. She would have liked this conference. I hope you are thoroughly convinced Dad, that after the war we must seek something more than a return to "normalcy." Jonathan Daniels, editor of the *Raleigh News and Observer* remarked: "We were sitting around watching the returns of the Harding-Cox election [1920], and when the results were published thought that it was only the Democrats who had lost." How do you like that!

Lots of pamphlets and booklets were passed out to us in Chapel Hill. The best of many good ones, is a book of some 50 pages containing excerpts from official communiques of some 21 countries, over the past 3 years. This is a good thing to have. Bob W. [Wunsch] left for

Virginia yesterday afternoon and doesn't expect to see me when he gets back. He is a swell guy, in fact EVERYONE is swell.

Calamity, AA and I were talking the other day and remarked about how much you would love this school. Liberal Arts courses, the sort of faculty you might meet on a magic mountain, life outdoors, etc... wish you could come spend a spring vacation here. You'd absolutely love it!

What is the dope on Uncle Clyde? I didn't understand all this talk about plasms [plasma], etc., but you can safely tell him I don't like it.

Well, Dad, be sure you don't keep me "in suspense" any longer than you are kept there yourself. I am pleased no end, as you can imagine. If it is all right for me to be here, then I think God that I am.

Best regards, and hope I hear from you all when you get some spare time.

Lovingly, Bill

Wese: 3rd or 4th hand copy of *Political and Social Growth of the U.S. 1492 to 1852* would cost how much? This would complete my set Jo gave me the second book you know. The first is by a man named [Homer C.] Hockett. Investigate, if you ever have the opportunity. Thanks a lot.

If a package is coming down here sometime, how would you like to include several stamped envelopes?

[HANDWRITTEN AT END]

By the way, for the past 3 weeks I have been in this new bldg.! I am quartered with another boy until mine is completed, but it sure feels fine to have a study.

AA sends much love and will write. We are leaving now. We had a minor gale yesterday, but today is sunny and brisk.

March 1, 1942

Dear All:

This letter, the third in four days, will outlaw any complaints about letter-writing negligence in the future.

Today I went skiing with Sophie and Jack French. We climbed to the pasture way above Blue Ridge. Took us an hour to get up and the grade is darn steep. It would be hard at any time, but it was especially difficult today because the snow was melting, which made the path slippery, and we had to carry skis and poles. Up on the pasture, which is very high, the snow was in fairly

good condition. I had prepared for typical Wilmot skiing weather and wore several shirts, sweaters, my ski jacket and heavy coat. Underneath the sun it was so hot that I had the novel experience of skiing STRIPPED TO THE WAIST! I borrowed a pair of skis from a Danish boy here. They were much better than mine, but I didn't do very well. Had a wonderful time and got a good sunburn. Tired as the deuce now.

Bob B. [Babcock] is having a meeting tonight at 10:30 of a group of students to criticize some publicity that is going to be sent out. We have done this before and the college evidently feels that we make some good points. Bob and AA just left their room and called "good-bye." They are leaving for Asheville for the weekly radio program. It sure is fun being with them.

The dictionary you sent me, Wese, is super! Just the right size to carry in your coat pocket and it has the most commonly used words; exactly what I wanted.

Dad, your telegram received. I am a bit uncertain about the news it contained, though I hope to have it straightened out tomorrow. Talk about not writing letters! I haven't heard from you since the beginning of Feb.

Mother's card to AA and me received. We're awfully glad to get all the news and look forward to the cards and letters. Will you please send me a current issue of the *Sun*? I want to see if it is still Chicago's best. What are your views on the situation today, Dad? I hope you're not one of the "hemisphere defense" boys.

Enclosed is a bill from Rainey's doctor. You may remember, or did I tell you, that she had to stay several extra days, which brought the expense up \$2. I only paid \$8, hence the bill for four. Sorry to ask you to take care of the bill, Dad, but I thought you might be able to send the bird a check. Incidentally, I'm broke. I know you know that I don't spend except when necessary, so I won't go into the "whys" and "wheretos." Have had to have my soles replaced, dog food, old debts, etc. Sorry.

I am trying to find time to read Henry Esmond which Ronnie [Boyden] calls the world's best historical novel.¹⁴ Too tired to study hard now. No news of importance in this, but they say gossip is good for the liver, so to continue.

Have gotten all my notes together and am beginning to write the Washington report. (I know this will be a relief to you, when it is finished, I mean.) I am finding that it is easy to read about the guy, but hard to write about him. The paper is about the character of Wash., as brought

out by the revolution, or Wash. in the revolution. Has anyone a suggestion for a title? I am getting desperate. All contributions gratefully accepted and greatly expected.

I don't believe I have told you about our new Saturday work system. The college community members are divided equally into two groups, A and B. All "A" members work one Sat., all "B" members the next. So, every other Saturday is a free day for us, giving two complete days to spend as we wish, Sat., and Sun. No classes or meetings are held on Sat., by general agreement. Yesterday I was free and spent the whole day working on Wash., and so feel somewhat justified in neglecting it tonight. I'm taking the whole day off. When I'm done with this I am going into the Babcock's room and listen to the radio until time for the meeting. Sound like fun? It is.

Thought about you, Mother and Dad, an awful lot today. Golly how I'd love to see you. This spring can't you take the bus or train down and spend a few days? The bus is cheap and quite comfortable and I advise it, rather than the train, because the southern railway is terrible. The car, of course is out. I hope you're not driving it any more than is absolutely necessary. This would be a fine vacation for you both, and I hope that it will be possible. How 'bout it?

Can just picture Calamity beaming around the house. If she has to stall time, how about stalling it down here? Awfully pleased about the whole thing.

Give my best regards to all, especially Troby. Has he been doing much skiing? How about that girl you mentioned? How is leg? Please keep me posted on Uncle C's condition and give my love to Tar, etc.

When does Jess leave? etc., etc. [Aunt Jessie Pope moved to Baltimore, Maryland].

Hope to hear from you when you get a few minutes. I know that all of you are busy.

Lovingly, Bill

Can you send some stamped envelopes with the marmalade?

March 4, 1942

Dead Dad:

Sunday night it snowed. All day Monday and Monday night, it snowed. It snowed over two feet. Then the wind began to blow. It blew the snow in great drifts. The drifts gathered on the road and completely blocked it. For the past 2 ½ days we have been cut off from the outside world.

This afternoon a crew dug [out] the tractor and truck, which had gotten stuck last night, they worked until three A.M. on them—bright moon, which made everything very beautiful, and finally one of the boys skied to the highway and hitchhiked into town from there. The trucks and tractor had to be brought back, as they could not have possibly gone forward.

Consequently, your letter, Mother's letter, and Jane's letter did not arrive until today. Incidentally, the food situation was beginning to cause a little trouble. Of course there was no milk or bread, and so since Monday we have lived primarily on baked beans and water. Things were not as bad as that really; we had a good supply of Birds-Eye vegetables and could get pork from the farm.

I am returning this insurance blank, as you requested. Sorry it is a day late. What is the status quo of my policy or policies? You of course, realize how glad I am to receive your check. I have given it to Morton, with your message.

I am tremendously pleased about the things that are brewing in Washington. What sort of an "arrangement" was it that you made?

Incidentally, will you please send me the letter, or a copy of it, that Dr. Straus sent you? You haven't mentioned receiving it and because I am sure the letters have been sent, I am wondering if it isn't exactly complimentary, or something. If it isn't satisfactory, I am frankly, perplexed. However, I really should see it, if that's the case. That is all part of my education. If you have just forgotten to speak of it, I would like to know. If you haven't received it, I would also like to know. If you have it, please send it on, complimentary or not. You may know that Ronnie [History instructor Roland Boyden] is my advisor this term, though he may be drafted in May.

Will you pardon a little self-patting on the back? We have been writing papers for Ken Kurtz on religion, death, and other such profound subjects. I handed in a paper saying that I didn't feel myself equal to such topics and that I didn't want to bluff my way out and get any false feeling of achievement, etc. He wrote back on my paper some very "easy-to-read" remarks. He said that I was the only one my age he had met who didn't think he had the answer to all of life's questions and that at last he felt he had found an honest man. Nice, no?

Well, Fat [Bill and his father sometimes called each other "fat" for fun], I will have to close now. I hope you'll write me again soon and that things will work out soon in Washington, as I feel they must and will. Regards to Lucky and to all at home.

Later:

Apparently our Airmail letters to Calamity didn't reach her until Mon. We sent c/o you because of the afternoon delivery Sat. It isn't necessary to say how pleased we are, again. Keep us posted.

By the way, will you ask Mother to send down my rubbers, post haste? Have been handicapped in this snow for lack of boots, and the rubbers will come in handy for the "great thaw" and for the rainy spring weather. When it is wet here, it is wet. There is some fear of a flood, because of the unusual amount of snow and the possibility of a rainy spring. The rubbers are probably the correct size, and I would appreciate them. (shoe size 9 ½ D, I think.)

AA and Bob have received a letter from Trob, which I just read. Went across and had Bob witness the paper. If there is a possibility of Troby coming down over his spring vacation, and he says there is, by all means have him do so, AND YOU AND MOTHER COME WITH HIM. Chances are he couldn't be away more than three or four days, which would be ideal for you. We have a short vacation, recently announced. This will be from April 2-5 (Sun). I don't know when his vacation is, but don't come over those days, because you couldn't see classes, and many of the teachers whom I want you to know, may be away for the long weekend. Speak to Mother about this and advise me what you decide.

Rainey has a wonderful time playing in the snow. I threw a stick down the bank of the road and, as always, she dove over; landed buried in a big drift and had a hard time getting out.

Golly Fat, it has been wonderful being snow-bound. There have been big fires in the lodge fireplaces and in the dining hall and everyone goes around in ski clothes and all. I kept thinking how something like this would appeal to Louie [sister Louise]. Wouldn't she have eaten it up? The snow has been beautiful, actually beyond description; even Troby would be at a loss for adjectives. Every look and glance is a "Christmas card" one. Pine trees heavy with snow, mountains painted with it, little foot bridges across the mountain stream, and snow falling slowly and continuously. Magnificent! (2 feet deep all over, 10 in places)

Any chances for some of Mother's stuffed dates? Forget it, I know she can't spend the time, what with so darn many other things to do. What about a little vacation, 3 or 4 days for you two? In some ways the 2-5 would be a good time, because we could talk privately to the teachers, not many will leave, and could be together all of the time. We can walk down the road a ways and I'll show you the little farm I'd like to buy. It's perfect. With Troby's car it would be

easy for you to commute to and from the village and T. could sleep in the bed above me. I'm dying to show you and Mother off.

I will answer Mother's swell letter, and Jane's, soon. Thank the latter for the stamp, and give them both my love.

As ever, old boy, Lovingly, Bill

Wrist watch?

Sending this Airmail to get it to you about the time you expected it. Is this necessary, and shall I continue to do it?

-POSTCARD-

Thursday [Postmarked March 12, 1942]

[WRITTEN AT TOP]

Will write Mother soon. Thank her for card and all.

Dear Dad:

The package sent to AA and my wristwatch received. The watch works perfectly and has kept excellent time. The food was fine and we have split it as usual, though this time I got the raw deal; AA always keeps the best for herself, -- so we kid each other. Thanks very much for the Natl. Geo. [National Geographic] which is especially good and for my shirt. By the way, old boy, I am entirely broke and would like some money by the first of the week, if possible. Jane's letter received, she seems very happy and we are awfully glad. New apartment sounds practical, and wise. Hope you'll get one on 1st floor. Give my regards to Lucky, Mother and the others.

Love

March 16, 1942

Dear Mother and Dad, and whomever is still home to read this:

Jane's letter received, Mother's a few days ago, and Dad's today. We are very anxious to hear about Jane's trip, plans made, and all the rest of the family news. I think a move to a smaller apartment is very wise, and I'm glad it is on the first floor. The sleeping arrangement suits me fine.

The last package, like all the others, was fine. Thanks so much Mother, for going to all the trouble of making the stuffed dates. As usual, they're delicious, and going fast. One of the pairs of rubbers fits, after a fashion, and I'm sure I'll be able to put it to good use. I've given the

other one away to a boy who was very glad to get them. I don't think I'll have an opportunity to use the galoshes, but it might be a good thing to have them on hand.

Sunday we moved around and cleaned up the attic. All of our clothes are down from hanging on the rafters, the curtains are also down, and so the room is very large and airy now. This is the way we want it for spring. My bed is moved to directly beneath the windows, (at the far end of the room as you come in the door, Mother) and so, for a change, I get plenty of light and fresh air. We have a big rug and some easy chairs in the room and it is really quite good looking.

Congratulations are in order! Your farmer correspondent is the proud guardian of 85, day old chicks! I think I've told you that I am in charge of the poultry division of our rapidly growing farm.¹⁵ Well, today I drove into Asheville and got the little birds. Cute as the dickens. I have ordered 100 more, which will be delivered at the end of the month. Then, during the middle of April, we will get 100 more, making nearly 300 in all. Correction. 250 counting deaths. I built a large brooder, complete with heating equipment (light bulbs, but they sound so common). They are in the basement of South Lodge, so that they'll be easy to get at, to feed, clean, etc. This, if you don't mind my saying so, and even if you do, is a big responsibility.

The chicks will stay in the brooder until they are 3 or 4 weeks old. The brooder is large enough to accommodate all. Then, in shifts, they will be moved to a temporary shelter on the farm. During the summer a hen house will be built and things will be well in hand.

How about a few figures? 280 chicks @ 10¢...\$28. At three months the 250 chickens will lay 200 eggs a day. Eggs are selling here at 45¢ a doz. We will get 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ doz. a day, or \$8.54 worth a day, 365 days a year, or \$3,117.10 a year, AT A DOWN PAYMENT OF \$28! Dad, you and Charley [brother-in-law Charles Weed] get out and look for a few acres west of Barrington! [a rural area near Evanston, Illinois.]

Excuse me, an error. Approximately one fourth (not $\frac{1}{2}$) of the 280 will be cocks, so the figures are reduced. Fabulous, aren't they? And of course, you eat the cocks, so there you are.

Thanks for the enclosure in your letter, Mother, and Dad, for yours. I will take care of the bill and expect to be taken care of by the balance, indefinitely. [sic] I have to buy a new pair of overalls. Can get them cheaply here and I don't think it worthwhile to ask you to get them and send them on.

AA has probably written you about the interlude and her trip. That Sat. night I was looking forward to four full, free days, and for a little relaxation, I picked up *The Count of Monte Cristo*. I couldn't put the darn thing down, so that instead of spending all my time studying, I spent a great deal of it reading. It is a good book and I'm glad I read it. Wese, you would like it immensely, and though it is long, it is very fast moving.

I thought the last chapter in the book was especially good, because part of it struck very close to home. After all his experiences, travel, study, and observations, the Count of Monte Cristo said that the whole of the world's wisdom was contained in the two words, "wait" and "hope."

AA and I received a fine letter, written in Feb. by the way, from Fran. She enclosed a picture of Jim Currie and Muriel, - you know, Muriel Martin. — used to know her in high school, brunette, outdoor girl type.

Because the chickens and the general farm work will take so much of my time, I have had to drop my newspaper writing. I talked it over with Bob W. [Wunsch] and we decided that was the thing to do. No value in doing two jobs only half-well. I think that is one of the most important things I have learned this year.

Farming is my all-dominating interest and I am going to be able to do a great deal of it this spring. I have been told that I could have a job on the college farm this summer. I prefer this to summer school, but I would like to be nearer home, so I'm thinking it over. The ISS [International Student Service] is organizing "land armies" for the summer. You are put on farms, paid a little, and get what I'm most anxious for, experience. I have written for more information about this, and consider it a definite possibility. It might be that I could get on a farm in Illinois, or Wisconsin. Tough?

If Troby would be interested in this, tell him to write the International Student Service, 8 West 40th St., New York City. This is the organization which held the conference at Chapel Hill, and of which I am a member. Ask him to inquire about "land armies."

Keep us posted on Uncle Clyde, [Aunt] Jess, Cayo, and give my love to Tar.¹⁶ Speaking of Cayo, one of the cows is two weeks overdue and Penley, the farmer, is very worried. It seems that calves sometimes turn around and thus complicate things.

We are building a super barn. All my work program time is spent on the farm.

I hope you'll write me when you get a chance. It's so good to hear about each of you. Have had summer weather for a week. 80 degrees most of the time.

Best regards to all. I think of you constantly and am looking forward to seeing you at the end of May.

Lovingly, Bill

March 27, 1942

Dear All, whoever you may be: (whom correct?)

Martha [Babcock, Bob's mother] has just left, this afternoon, that is, after a long and enjoyable, I'm sure, visit. She will tell you all about [it], I suppose, so I will not. She took AA and me to a movie one night when Bob had a class and we showed her around the farm, my chickens, etc. Also she visited my Types of Lit. class, Mother. Remember? We are reading *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky, now by the way.

We were very pleased to receive your letter, and Jane's, yesterday. She certainly must have had a super time and we are looking forward to hearing more about it and other developments. I think it's fine about Priscilla Frey [new cousin]. I imagine Jess is very happy and hope that K.O. [cousin Cayo] is doing nicely, etc.

Speaking of babies, mine are very well. Out of 85 I have lost only 1, in 11 days, and as the worst time is over, I have good reason to hope that I can better the ratio of deaths in young chicks, which, I understand is about 6% or even more. 100 more are coming Monday and 100 more April 16. Am raising Rhode Island Reds and New Hampshires. I think we had leghorns at White Lake, didn't we? This farming business is great! I have been spending a lot of my spare time on the farm and am beginning to feel quite "at home" there. As you know, or will know when M. [Martha Babcock] arrives, we are building a super barn. It is quite big as it is, and three stories high, and two wings will be added. It must be big enough to house about 20 beef cattle, (we have 13 at present) and about 11 milk cows. In order to use the milk itself, the college has to put in a regular bottle and sanitation machine. It will be a regular dairy, which will "sell" milk and cream to the college.

The chickens, I am going to try to get 200 good laying hens, will be a big savings too. The best part about this business is that I am entirely my own boss. No one but me has ordered these chicks, and if I want 300 hens, all I have to do is say so. Of course, I am cautious about my orders, because an unnecessarily rash one would ruin everything. Nevertheless, it is the real

thing. I am in sole charge of the feeding, breeding, etc., and have picked out a fine site for the permanent hen-yard and houses.

I think I told you that I had the chance of working on the farm this summer. Well, with your approval, permissions, sanction, etc., I will do so. I have gotten such a good start with these chicks, that I'd love to see them through. In addition to them, of course I would have regular farm work, plowing, etc., to do. I have spoken to Ross Penley, the college farmer, and he said he'd make a farmer out of me, "sure nuf." We have a good amount of land here, and have rented a considerable amount in the valley, and the farm at Blue Ridge, and so there will be lots to do. Ross's oldest son will work too. What do you think of this?

From what I have been led to believe, I will probably be drafted in the fall or early winter. This is the way I look at it: unless there is a definite need for my earning power, and if there is, I certainly want to make use of it, such as it is, there seems little sense in simply getting a job and earning \$20 a week for nothing. If I'm going to be a farmer, and I am, incidentally, I will need experience, and right here, and right now, is the place and time to get it.

As you know, or ought to, I want very much to come home after school is out. Accordingly, I asked if it would be alright to take a vacation of a couple of weeks. It was, and so that's how matters stand. What, por favor, is the reaction?

Don't think for one second that I am neglecting or losing interest in the academic part of college and life. I most definitely am not. It's just that I think I have found my particular "niche" and am doing all I can first to prove that I'm right in my choice, and then to do the job well.

Believe it or not, I have been doing a good bit of horseback riding lately. Ross mentioned that he wished someone would exercise the horse before the spring plowing, and so I told him that I was his man. We have a saddle and so Rainey and I have been going all over the valley; she running alongside, of course. The horse is very big and is much fun. Consequently, I have been thinking some about the cavalry division (is there much of one?) in the army. Will try to get more practice riding and something might develop, who knows.¹⁷

Today I bought myself a \$4 pair of work shoes. My others, certainly never intended for rough work, were continually splitting apart at the seams and wearing out in the soles, and it was becoming as much an expense as a bother to keep running into the village for repairs, minor and major. The shoes are good for everyday wear, and from now on, that is what they will be used for. These work shoes, ski boot style, and almost as heavy, are a really fine pair and I know they

will wear longer and be more satisfactory in every way. A week or so ago, I spent \$2, price has gone up, for a pair of overalls, which also were very much needed.

Weighed myself the other day and discovered that hard work and late hours had worn me down to a mere shadow of 167 pounds.

Upon rereading this letter, I see how egotistical it sounds, excuse me, but it's all news I wanted you to hear.

Today the last work was done on my study, the doorknob was put on. The work, highly skillful, has been done by the carpenters on rainy days. They spend most of their time working on the barn.

I am enclosing reprints of an article about the college which I thought you might be interested in. Notice the model of the new building in the upper left-hand corner. Use a magnifying glass. Do you recognize the completed wing?

Thank Wese for her letter and be sure to remember me to everyone at the National [Tea Company], especially Frank, Clarence, Harold, Buchal—oh, all of them.

Hope to hear from you soon. Lovingly, Bill
How much do you weigh, Fat?

April 5, 1942
(Elmer Albritton's birthday) [High School friend]

Dear Mother and Dad:

Thanks so much for your recent letters. My plans for the summer will be dealt with in a following letter, and to your complete satisfaction.

The Easter package was wonderful! The candy, crackers, etc. have been divided, only, again I have been gypped. After this please send all packages to me, as Bob and AA reason: "There are two of us, therefore we should have two-thirds of the contents;" and now it is "there are 3 of us, so we should have three-fourths." I put up stiff battles for my rights, and by bringing in Rainey, and partially discounting Robert Jr., I have gotten a good settlement, enough anyway, to you-know, etc.

I have been thinking of you today and have visualized all of you in church. You will be glad to hear that I attended the services at the Baptist church in Black Mountain. Quite different than what I'm used to. Brother Thompson led us in prayer, then Harold Watt got up and drowned

out everyone in *Fling Wide the Gates*. J.N. Watson, a perfect moon of a man, gave a very long and passionate sermon. He felt a good deal more than he could express, though he tried desperately by shouting. Directly behind the pulpit was hung a great thermometer, labeled “Building Fund.” You will be pleased to hear that the “mercury” has risen to \$493.50, and is getting redder as it rises. The seats, purchased when a local theater went out of business, are even more luxurious than those at the corner of Chicago and Lake.

Brother Watson opened the service with “our Scripture lesson” and closed that part of the ceremony by saying, “I have just read you all seventeen verses, I mean eighteen, from the Gospul of Paal.” [sic]

Sister Jenny played a Chopin prelude, the one Mother plays so well, too, as we came in and went out. She was very proud of her accomplishment, and rightly too, for I’m sure that it was the piano’s fault.

After church I met Bass (Brother) Allen, who is the Postmaster at Blue Ridge and has been doing some work for the college this winter. He is a peach of a man, and after introducing me to the whole congregation, 182, invited me to his house for dinner. As you know, we make sandwiches for lunch on Sunday, and I was forced to sacrifice them for roast chicken, dressing, green beans, corn bread, mashed potatoes, tomato salad, and apricot shortcake. I don’t consider the raw carrots, milk, coffee, and sweet rolls worthy of mention. It was a real Easter dinner!

I’m very glad I went to the church and I will go again soon if I can get a ride in. The service itself was hardly inspiring, but the atmosphere was.

This has been our spring vacation, you know. Thursday, I puttered around with a chicken coop and drove myself nutty trying to organize some notes for my Washington report, which is due the 15th, by the way. Friday, Ross Penley, the farmer, and I went to Leicester, N.C. to look for another horse. And incidentally, Mother, the horse we have and the one I mentioned riding, is not old. It is a beautiful five-year old, and is not slow, and will even gallop, and will leave Rainey behind. It is really a very good animal and we have been offered some high amounts for her. She is considered one of the best mares in this part of N.C. Martha saw it, and also, her colt, - - the horses. We may buy her sister, a three-year old, and equally good. The trouble is that the owners know how much we would like her, to make a perfect pair, and so are asking a fancy price. Two thorough-bred mares, same build, color, etc., would really make a team wouldn’t they?

Ross and I visited a stock auction west of Asheville. The auctioneer talks exactly like the one over Lucky Strike programs. It was very interesting. We also called on a number of farmers, looking at their cows and horses, and I saw a couple nice hen houses.

The chix are fine. I have exactly 175, also 8 ducks which Mr. Albers bought. They have been outside all day and it is so warm that I will keep them out all night. They are in a large pen, a movable one, with window screen on the sides and chicken wire on top. Surprising what you can do with the right tools. Only the oldest chix are out, the others are still in the brooder.

Everyone around here calls me "4H."

Think it is wise to stay where we are, at 140. Understand that rents are going to be frozen, so no rise to be worried about.

Will write the letter I owe Wese soon, and hope to hear the dope about Jane, the dope. (couldn't resist it.)

Will close a very foolish letter, for which you have my sincere apologies, by saying

Lovingly, Bill

April 17, 1942

Dear Dad, Mother, Jane, & Wese:

Hello.

Hope this will make up for long neglect to write you, actually it hasn't been neglect, but impossibility, but enough.

First of all, Calamity: Thanks a lot Jane, for sending me the issue of the *Sun*. I enjoyed seeing it a lot, and am convinced that it is the world's greatest newspaper, as are all Chicagoans, I'm sure. What is the circulation, by the way? Mother writes that you have spent some time with Mrs. Crosby and Hildegard. How do you like them? How is Lawt, and is there any news? What kind of a ship is it that he is stationed on, and when does he next put out to sea, and for how long? What are your post war plans? The navy? Farming? Que es, señorita?

Secondly, Wese: Your package of Pocket books to the three of us received. Thanks a lot. We'll enjoy reading them. That history of the world is a good thing to have. Who the dickens is "Herbie." Don't tell me you're pulling a surprise too! Appreciated, even more than your recent letter to me, and the package to all of us, was your letter to AA of today! By golly kid, I can't begin to tell you how tickled I am that you're coming. That week will be the fullest you've ever spent, you can count on it! You'll visit classes, go riding with me on the swell new horse,

walking in the mountains, reading and fooling around with everyone in the evening. AA has made reservations for you in the guest room of the girl's lodge, where you will be absolutely by yourself. Incidentally, if you'd rather live in one of the hanging beds in the attics, you're certainly welcome to do so; only let us know right away. Meanwhile, you have the guest room. The barn is completed and you'll be very pleased with it, as well as the studies bldg., I'm sure. My study is all completed, except that I haven't gotten around to waxing the walls, which I will wait to do until you're here to help me. Heh, heh. There is only one little flaw, and that is that John Evarts leaves for the army May 1, and so you won't have a chance to dance the waltzes the way we always had wanted to.¹⁸ But that is nothing. In case you're at all interested I will mention that if you should happen to drop into Roland Boyden's study at 11:30 a.m. May 5, you would hear your humble correspondent lecture on the times of Thomas Jefferson. Well, no more of this. You can see how very happy I am about this. You understand that there will be no charge to you, I presume, (that you understand, that is) because you are a faculty member's guest! We keep saying "Can't you just see Wese out rowing in the lake!?" And "I can hear Wese when she sees the view from the mountain pasture." Etc., etc. Hurry up.

Mother and Dad: [continued in same letter]

Haven't had a chance to acknowledge properly, the receipt of the swell maps you sent me, Dad. I am sorry to say that I have fallen somewhat behind in the news, and these give me the impetus to get caught up again. I will mount them on cloth when I get a chance, because they are darn good maps and fine to keep. Last Tues. night Bob Babcock gave a talk to the Current Affairs class about India, and used the Indian map you sent me as an illustration. Have I ever mentioned this class? It is very good, meets every Tues. night, when a faculty member gives an hour talk about some pertinent subject, then there is a period of general discussion. Bob's talk was especially good, one of the best I've heard.

Your letter received yesterday, Mother. Yes, Rainey is fine and sleeps on my bed every night. She is extremely perplexed by the chickens, who are now outside in a pen. I haven't told you about the eight ducks I have. Mr. Albers bought them and I have brought them up. Just turned them into the lake. Cute as the devil. The first lot of chickens, 85, are doing nicely and I had a very good mortality rate. However, the second lot of 100, which we got April first, have been quite sick and I am sorry to say, have lost close to 40 of them. I have asked several farmers around here, why. They say that it's just one of those things. They have received the same heat,

food, amount of fresh water, attention, and yet every morning, or nearly, there are one or two dead ones. Too bad. I'm glad to say that the "plague" seems to be dying out now. I have received a large anatomical chart of the chicken and several pamphlets about chickens, their sicknesses, etc.

As you can imagine, taking care of 140 chickens is no little task. In order to do it without making my studying suffer, I have been taken off the work program list, and so have no work duties except the care of my "babies," as everyone calls them. 100 more are coming Monday and so Wese will really be able to see a lot of chickens. You seemed especially interested in Rainey. Martha evidentially told you how she chases sticks all over the place. She is really very good at it, and will bring them closer to you, if she hasn't already dropped it on your feet, by simply hearing the command "closer." We have had summer weather for the last week and so she has done a lot of swimming. She will swim as far out into that lake as you can throw a stick or ball, and as long as you will. Mac never liked the water, probably because Wese and I used to shove him in all the time, and it is a real pleasure to see Rainey out in the middle of the lake, and under her own power. She is lying under my desk now, and I am sure, if she were able to do so, would send you her kindest regards. It will be hard to part with her this summer, but of course it is the only decent thing to do. It would be cruel to bring her back to a third floor back porch, wouldn't it. Ross Penley has agreed to take her. He has five sons, all of whom like Rainey very much and are tickled to death to get her. She will be used as a "cow dog" and already has learned to "go get 'em," at that command.

She has had a very interesting and unusual life. Jane should write it up. First her tragic experience on the railroad car in Canada, then her short stay with G.C.B. Smith, then her trip with four honeymooners and her sickness. After a long and detailed account, about the dog who began her life in Canada and ended up in North Carolina herding cattle, Calamity is bound to have a best seller.

Yesterday AA and I played nine holes of golf, she shooting a 58, and I playing my usual superb game. The course here is surprisingly good. It winds about in a valley between two ridges of mountains. Very beautiful. Afterwards she went to a party, about which I will let her tell you.

We are reading *The Brothers Karamazov* in literature. A magnificent book. Ken Kurtz says that in his opinion Shakespeare and Dostoevsky are the greatest writers in history. After this book we will read *The Magic Mountain*.¹⁹ My Washington paper is finished and has been handed

in. If you like I will send you a copy. It is rather short, only 15 pages, but I have given two extra class reports, oral, on the military aspects of the revolution and the character of Washington, and the paper itself, deals only with certain aspects of the social feeling at the time, and Washington's relation to it. The title is "Washington, and the Spirit of '76." I gave up my ambitions for a historical novelette, concerning Washington's life at Mount Vernon, because Ronnie thought it of doubtful value, and suggested that I leave such writing to Kenneth Roberts.

I think, now, that the report I did make is infinitely more valuable than the other would have been, don't you? I have done quite a bit of reading about Washington and have had him so much on the brain, that I walked into history class today, and entirely unconsciously said to Ronnie, "Hello Washington," whereupon I, and the others in the class, became hysterical for the rest of the class. Sort of dumb, no?

I have been waiting for this report to get over so that I could do some reading on my own. I want to read *David Copperfield*, because I never have.

Mentioned in my card to Dad, that I would be home for the summer. Bob advises me that it is likely that I'll be drafted in the winter and so I certainly want to be home for the summer and fall. Am going to make a point of beating Dad in a lot of backgammon and doing a lot of reading, in the evenings. Am really looking forward to it! What do you advise me to do, Dad, and how about helping you in Luckner's absence? You know there is nothing I'd rather do. Let me know about this as soon as you can.

How are the tires on the car? I know they must be pretty bad and I hope that you're not using the car any more than is ABSOLUTELY necessary. Once gone, the tires are gone, I'm afraid. I just happened to think that Wese's trip down here on the bus will be a big savings to us. I can send a lot of my books and winter clothes home on her ticket. I had been thinking of shipping some of them. Speaking of coming home, only five weeks incidentally, school is out on the 22nd, Sat. to pack etc. I leave Sunday, and arrive home on the 25th.

Received a letter from Muriel this week. Apparently, she is going to take a semi-fatal step this summer. However, I don't think it anything more than talk, so I wouldn't mention it.

Tomorrow, being Sat. I will work all day, (I do work every other Sat.) This is a clean up day, so everything should be in good shape when Wese gets here. I am working up in the mountain pasture repairing the fence. We have a swell herd of beef cattle and Ted D. [Dreier] has just bought 7 Black Angus cows, and two bulls. They should be here next week. Oh, by the

way, last Sat. we had a terrible forest fire. As you know we have been clearing land. A few were burning brush piles in the afternoon. It was windy, a bad day to burn in every way, and the fire got away from them. The fire alarms were sounded and the whole college tore up the mountain and started digging trenches. The fire was the biggest I've ever seen. Giant flames being whipped by the wind. A large area was burned over, but fortunately, not much more than was going to be cleared anyway. However, it could have been, and was very serious. I was on the shift that patrolled the grounds till 9:00 that night. After we had gotten it under control, the country fire service men came with their chemicals. There were still smoldering stumps the next morning!

This is a very long letter and I hope it will occasion many long replies. Much love to you all. You can't imagine how glad I'll be to see you next month and Wese, in just a couple of weeks.

Lovingly, Bill

Hope this hasn't taken too much of your office time, Dad.

[HANDWRITTEN ON BACK]

Mother, old gal,

Next time you do an errand at Hoo's [Evanston drugstore] would you buy your only son a pair of polaroid sunglasses. They cost about a dollar, but are much better for your eyes than the cheaper kind.

If this is O.K. you could send them down with Wese.

Have you had any back trouble, or hay fever? I certainly hope not. This year I have really "out-grown" my hay fever! Haven't sneezed once all spring.

Hope you're well, and all that. It sure will be good to see you. You and Dad and I will have to make up for lost time won't we? You bet!

Lovingly. Bill

Friday aft. [Estimated date: May 15, 1942]

Dear Mother and Dad:

Four letters from home yesterday! Glad to hear from you all. I am having exams now, one in Spanish and one in history. Hope you'll be interested in seeing the history questions. Open book examination.

1. Give as complete a picture as you can of the U.S. in any single year between 1830 and 1880. – am doing 1876
2. Write a brief history of any one of the political parties. I'm doing Rep. [Republicans]

3. Write a critical review of one of the books you have read in connection with this course.
4. Analyze the issues involved in the American Civil War.
5. Write a brief essay on the evolution of American Foreign Policy from 1778-1942.
6. Trace changes in the organization of American Business, or Labor, or Agriculture from 1830 to 1929.

This is pretty tough, in my opinion. We are given 6 hours to do it.

Regarding money to get me home. Under ordinary conditions I would hitch hike, but there will undoubtedly be less traffic which would make it very difficult. Also, I will have a great deal of baggage which I can take with me free on the bus, but which would cost a good bit if shipped home. I spoke to Morton Steinau today and learned that at a request from you Dad, \$15 of my contingency fee can be refunded to me next week. If this is agreeable to you, and it would completely cover my expenses and so ought to be, drop him a letter post haste and the matter is taken care of. There will be a few more dollars in the summer, after the breakage expenses are pro-rated, but he will give me this \$15 now. Be sure you thank him, and let me know when you write him. (have \$9.80 I think)

Mother, about my birthday. We always say that we don't want much done for our birthdays and we always mean it. Please don't do anything much for me, of all people. But, as I can look at the matter realistically as well as emotionally, I know you will get me something. Here are my needs and preferences:

1 pair of suspenders. Mine have broken in two, and are now suspended (on a nail.)

A couple of pairs of sox

A pair of everyday shoes. My old ones are now beyond repair and so I have nothing but work boots and good shoes. Sorry.

AND

Great American Fortunes, (History of) by Myers, Modern Library

The Rise of the City 1878-1898 by Arthur Schlesinger, Sr.²⁰

The books are by far the most important, as I am planning to make an exhaustive study this summer, of the years between 1876 and the Sp-Am War [Spanish-American War]. These are books I must read, and want to own. Ronnie is going to help me, via the mail.

This is a funny looking margin, because the typewriter is a little cock-eyed on the right side, also I'm in a hurry.

Glad you're keeping your eyes open for a job. Would like to get in some business with a future and would like office work. However, I'm not choosy.

Tuesday night I'm giving a party. I'm inviting Morton and Barbara S. [Steinau], Bobby and Ted Dreier, and Molly Gregory to have dinner with me on top of the knoll, - where Franny got the laurel. I am buying two of my chickens and we'll have a real feast. These are my special friends, would like to have Ronnie, etc., but of course can't. I will serve cokes and potato chips and Barbara has offered to help me cook, fry, the chickens. Lots of fun, no. There is a swell outdoor grate up there. Wish that you two could be there. Wonder if I'll get sentimental about the chicks?

Tell Wese that I'm putting the finishing touches on the new hen yard, 1600 square yards, 2/3 an acre, tomorrow. Will move chickens up at the end of the week.

Good news about my dentist bill. I visited him Sat. and he put in a temporary filling, Tues. and he took out a tooth, Thurs. and he checked over, and the whole bill amounts to an exorbitant \$2. (TWO) I have asked him to send you the bill Dad. Isn't that swell! You two have a good excuse to come down now!

Excuse the impertinence, if I say I'm very anxious for the two above books. We haven't gone very far into the bibliography, but these are two "musts." I have read part of Myer's book. Dad, you'll love it. Tells all about Rockefeller's dirty deals, Vanderbilt scandals, and just how the great American fortunes were made. Mostly concerns this period, how do you like this project? The "golden period" of American history, as often called, or the "classical period," etc. Plan to study it from all angles, political, social, frontier, diplomatic, business, agriculture, etc.

Never looked forward to a birthday as much as I do this one. Only 10 more days.
GOLLY, BUT I'LL BE GLAD TO SEE YOU! We'll have a fine summer!

Don't forget, Dad, to write Mort post haste, and advise me. - nice to have transportation taken care of, isn't it?

See you all soon!

Lovingly, Bill

[HANDWRITTEN ON SIDE]

Excuse a messy letter written in haste. Congratulate Wese! I'm terribly pleased. Love to all.

[HANDWRITTEN ON BACK]

Your card received at dinner Mother. Thank you. You should see how happy Dr. Jalowetz is over having Rainey.²¹ He keeps saying, "Now Beal, you must tell me all about her." Swell guy. Haven't heard from AA.

How is she? Have ordered 3 good pictures of Bob, taken by a visiting photographer. Thought you, also Oliver and Martha [the Babcocks], and Fran, might like one.

Don't forget to write Mort [Steinau], Dad. Can't get money unless you give "sanction."

As ever, Bill

Monday night

May 18, 1942

Dear Dad:

I suppose that by the time this reaches you, you will have written Morton about my contingency fee. Sorry that I must make some revisions in regard to the amount of money I need.

I went into B.M. [Black Mountain] today, gas is rationed, by the way, 21 gallons until July 1, making it increasingly difficult to get in, and found out that my bus fare is \$10.45 and that I will not be able to ship my books to you C.O.D. at the special book rate of 1 ½ cents a pound. I'm afraid that my books will cost me at least \$3 to \$4, leaving me nothing to take care of incidental expenses and meals on the way home. I don't expect to have to ship anything at all to you, except los libros, and so a check for five would cover everything nicely, and leave a great deal of room for any unforeseen expense, with the books, or anything else. I hope that you have written Morton, and that if you haven't that you'll write me by Airmail, stating specifically to tell M.S. to give me the money. Naturally I want to have the money as soon as possible, if not sooner, so that I can take my stuff into the village any time someone is going in. Isn't it a break about the refund? It's really too bad that I brought all the books down with Bob, but they're here, and we've got to get them home.

Well, tonight, I'm a free man. Exams are all over. My history exam returned with a grade "very good," but I know I can do much better. I spent so much time on the first question that I couldn't do complete jobs on the others, and even left out the last two. Nevertheless, it wasn't a too bad paper.

This morning I killed my first chicken! As you know, Tuesday night I'm having a party. Incidentally, the chickens, four of them cost me \$1.50, but I wouldn't be surprised if the college wouldn't accept the money, and I killed and dressed, or undressed, whatever, two of the birds. Roy, the colored handy man did the first two and then I got nerve. What a sissy. I bought some potato chips and Jack is giving me some soup. We'll have a real dinner and I'm awfully glad to be able to do something for these particular people.

I plan to leave Asheville Sunday morning at 8:15, arriving at Chicago the same time the girls did, 10:45(?) Monday morning. In other words, Fat, I'll be home a week from tonight!

I'm very anxious to see the new apartment and my room.

By the way, if I can get \$7 for my victrola, I will sell it. Have gotten a lot of pleasure out of it, but records are a terrific expense and an even greater temptation. Will have to make the most of Jane's radio. I really don't expect to be able to get that price for it, so probably will bring it home after all.

Am sending this Airmail, so that you'll receive it Wed. and I could get your answer Thurs. or Friday. Sat. would be, might be, too late, as there is only one delivery now on weekdays, and I leave of course on Sunday. Lots of times your recent letters mailed to me on Monday night, don't get to me until Thurs. A word to the wise is sufficient.

Regards to Mother, etc., and love to all of you.

Lovingly, Bill

Did AA or Bob ever get to Washington?²²

EPILOGUE

So ended Bill Hanchett's freshman year at Black Mountain College. Fifty plus years later, in his oral history interview with historian Mary Emma Harris, Bill's fondness for BMC was clearly on display. In the interview he discussed the professors who influenced him and emphasized the importance of his brother-in-law Bob Babcock in his personal development and ultimately, his academic career path. That November 1942, he enlisted in the Army Air Forces and began the rigorous pilot training program which led to receiving pilot's wings in early February 1944. As detailed in my book, *Disgracefully Easy: A B-24 Pilot's Letter Home*, Bill's correspondence takes us through flying school, becoming a BT-13 Valiant single engine trainer instructor-pilot, and then in late 1944, transitioning to the four-engine B-24 Liberator bomber with the responsibility of training a crew for combat overseas. The surrender of Japan led to his discharge from the Army Air Forces. In September 1945, shortly before his discharge, Bill and Jean Forster were married at the base chapel at Mountain Home Field in Idaho. After the war, he attempted to re-enroll in Black Mountain College, but that did not work out so he enrolled in Roosevelt College in Chicago and after a year and a half, he and my mother, Jean moved to Dallas, Texas, where he enrolled and graduated from Southern Methodist University with a degree in history. Subsequently, with Jean's assistance and support he received graduate degrees in history from U.C. Berkeley. Bill initially taught in Colorado, and in 1956 began teaching History at San Diego State University, where he remained for over thirty years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document describing my father's year at Black Mountain College would not have been possible without the assistance of Mary Emma Harris, Alice Sebrell and Heather South, who shared their wealth of knowledge about this unique college.

My thanks to Mary Emma Harris for her work gathering historical records, conducting interviews, and maintaining the history of Black Mountain College. Following her retirement, the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center has continued to preserve the history and memories of Black Mountain College.

Alice Sebrell, Director of Preservation at the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center supported this project and provided the photo of the Black Mountain College Studies Building.

Heather South, Lead Archivist, Western Regional Archives, State Archives of North Carolina provided information on Black Mountain College and records for my father, William Hanchett, my uncle, Robert S. Babcock, and photos of Bob Babcock and student Leslie Paul at BMC.

END NOTES

1. No author noted, "Introducing Bill," *The Evanstonian* (ETHS Newspaper), unknown vol./no. (October 27, 1939): page unknown. Regarding Marion "Anne" Kappes, Lucie Alice Trowbridge Hanchett, *Personal Records of 1910-1950 Family Events*, unpublished and described hereinafter as LATH records and appropriate year, 1939. Jane left for Europe in early July 1939, returning just before the war. In the summer of 1939 Bill drove his mother's friend from college Marion "Anne" Kappes to Quebec. For many years, Marion Kappes taught children with visual disabilities. After dropping off Anne in Quebec, Bill hitch-hiked through Vermont and Massachusetts, visiting family and friends along the way. He saw the house where his father grew up in Westfield, Massachusetts. In later correspondence discussing this trip, Bill reminded his father that he visited the 1939 New York World's Fair which ran from April 30, 1939-October 27, 1940.
2. Black Mountain College records of William F. Hanchett, Jr., 1941-1942, records held by the State of North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. This archive includes documentation concerning Evanston Township High School. Courtesy of Ms. Heather South, Lead Archivist, Western Regional Archives, State of North Carolina Department of Archives and History, received on August 16, 2019.
3. For Black Mountain College (BMC) history and background, accessed August 20, 2026, see Black Mountain College Museum and Arts Center, <https://blackmountaincollege.org/>.
4. Kenneth Roberts, *Arundel A Chronicle of The Province of Maine and of the Secret Expedition Against Quebec*, (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1938), Editor's copy.
5. William L. Shirer, *Berlin Diary: The Journal of A Foreign Correspondent 1934-1941* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1941). Douglas P. Miller, *You Can't Do Business with Hitler* (New York: Pocket Books, 1942).
6. General Robert Elkington Wood, of the isolationist group, America First Committee was putting President Roosevelt in a difficult position regarding the war in Europe. One of the most prominent America First Committee members was Charles A. Lindbergh, the first to fly solo across the Atlantic, who did not see Hitler or Nazism as a threat. In a speech Lindbergh described the America First point of view, "These wars in Europe are not wars in which our civilization is defending itself against some Asiatic intruder. There is no Genghis Khan or Xerxes marching against our western nations. This is simply one more of those age-old struggles within our own family of nations. If we enter fighting for democracy abroad, we may end up by losing it at home." See "Robert E. Wood," Britannica, accessed September 7, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-E-Wood>. Charles A. Lindbergh quote from Edward R. Murrow and Fred W. Friendly, *I Can Hear It Now 1933-1945*, Volume 1 Columbia Records.
7. For information on "Molly" Gregory see "Mary Gregory Biography," Black Mountain College Project, accessed August 20, 2026, <https://bmcyearbook.org/bio/mary-gregory>. Also

use this website to access information about others, such as Kenneth Kurtz and Paul Radin mentioned in the correspondence.

8. *A Short History of the United States* was written by historian John S. Bassett.
9. Kenneth Roberts, *Oliver Wiswell* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1940), a historical novel about an American loyalist to England during the American Revolution.
10. W. Somerset Maugham, *Of Human Bondage* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1915).
11. The conference subject was “Youth’s Stake in War Aims and Peace Plans” and there were delegates from thirty-two colleges gathered at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. From “A View to Hugh,” UNC University Libraries, accessed July 28, 2018, <https://blogs.lib.unc.edu/morton/index.php/2012/01/eleanor-roosevelt-visits-chapel-hill/>. During the First World War Franklin D. Roosevelt served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy under Josephus Daniels, a North Carolina newspaper publisher, and Secretary of the Navy for President Woodrow Wilson. His wife, Addie Daniels, who accompanied him, was referred to as a “southern wit.” See Jean Edward Smith, *FDR* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2008), 117. In a subsequent letter, two years later, on December 18, 1944, (Chapter 9), Bill said that he met former Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels at this conference, but had stepped on Mrs. Daniels’ toe and missed meeting Mrs. Roosevelt.
12. John Hyde Preston, *Revolution 1776, A Short History of the American Revolution* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1934).
13. John Gunther, *Inside Latin America* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941) was one of a series of “Inside...” books Gunther wrote covering his world travels.
14. Bill was referring to William Makepeace Thackeray, *The History of Henry Esmond* (publisher unknown, originally published 1852), a historical novel set during the time of the restoration of King Charles II in late seventeenth century England.
15. Theodore Dreier, one of the founders of the college, noted that, “with the encouragement of a “poultry-mad” student, five or six hundred chicks were bought.” Dreier’s comment is quoted in Martin Duberman, *Black Mountain, An Exploration in Community* (Garden City: Anchor Press/Doubleday 1973), p 165. My father wrote a bracket by this quote in his copy of the book because he knew Dreier was referring to him! During an interview with BMC historian Mary Emma Harris in 1998, my dad denied that he was a “poultry-mad” student.
16. After a long illness, Dr. Grose passed away in early May. Clyde L. Grose’s death is recorded in LATH records, 1942.
17. Bill, the enthusiastic farmer, speculating about joining the army as a cavalryman, rode horseback around the farm with Rainey running alongside. Since he liked riding horses around the BMC farm Bill speculated about joining the cavalry. There were in fact two cavalry divisions in the U.S. Army at this time. In addition to being fun and utilitarian on the Black Mountain farm, Bill’s horseback riding may have served him well in the coming years

as he became a pilot. Even after his first solo flights, when he was feeling more confident in the air, Bill told his mother that he preferred the more personal touch when riding an animal. Describing pilot training in the Army Air Force, John Steinbeck describes an instructor explaining to his cadet student some similarities between riding a horse and flying an airplane in *Bombs Away: The Story of a Bomber Team* (New York: The Viking Press, First Published, 1942. New York: Penguin Classics, Second Edition, 2009), 94.

18. For information about the departures of Babcock, Boyden, and Evarts, see Duberman, *Black Mountain*, 167.
19. Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927; originally published in German as *Der Zauberberg* in 1924).
20. Gustavus Myers, *History of the Great American Fortunes* (New York: The Modern Library, 1936; originally published in 1910). Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., *The Rise of the City, Urban Life and Urban Landscape 1878-1898* (publisher unknown, originally published 1933).
21. The LATH records in the late 1930s and early 1940s show that the Hanchetts had numerous residential changes, therefore there must have been no suitable place for a pet dog.
22. Records concerning Bob Babcock's civil service appointment in the Treasury Department are in his BMC file: Babcock, Robert BMC File in Western Regional Archives, State of North Carolina Department of Archives and History. Babcock's naval training at Wellesley College is noted in the LATH records, 1944.