

Betty Seward Hulburd
Letter Home
(1935?)

Forward by Ted Hine – January 9, 2003

The following 8 page handwritten letter by Betty Hulburd was written at Finch College in New York City and sent to her family in St. Louis, MO.

About the Date.....

The letter itself is unfortunately not dated. The envelope (included here after the letter) provides some clues as to the date but not definitively. The post office cancellation stamp clearly shows that it was mailed from “New York” on “Nov. 27” but the year is not readable. Handwritten on the envelope in pencil and in Betty’s handwriting is “1936 Finch”. This notation was likely added to the envelope by her years after the letter was written and delivered.

At first I took the year she had inscribed on the envelope at face value. Then I discovered clear evidence that she most likely could not have been in New York City in the fall of 1936. Her large detailed scrapbook covering her Maid Of Honor responsibilities in the lengthy St. Louis Veiled Profit Ball proceedings show conclusively that she was in St. Louis on multiple dates during the fall of 1936. Since it is unlikely that she would have been traveling regularly between college in New York and her significant social duties in St. Louis (travel was slow and expensive in those days), I suspect that she accidentally wrote the wrong year on the envelope when she recovered and saved it.

The letter was found among Betty’s important papers after her death suggesting that it was special enough to her to retrieve at some point from her parents, date the envelope, and save. I therefore suspect that the letter was actually written and sent in November of 1935 which would have been the first semester of her freshman year at Finch. If it was not 1935 the next best guess would be 1937 but by then letters home would have become routine and thus not as valuable.

About the Letter.....

There is nothing particularly noteworthy in the text of the letter. It is interesting primarily because it is a letter home from Betty to her family from far away when she was young. It is also apparently her earliest significant written communication to have survived. If in fact the letter was written in 1935 Betty would have been 18 years old and seriously away from home and on her own for the first time that fall. She talks about everything from friends, to the weather, to school, to travel plans home. I note that on page 4 she mentions Jane Rich, a college mate (and daughter of famous silent film actress Irene Rich). Jane would marry Bill Mueller and they would live as neighbors of the Hine family in North Caldwell, NJ during the 1950’s and early 1960’s. Betty and Jane Mueller stayed close friends their entire lives phoning, writing, and visiting each other regularly long after each moved to different parts of the country.

Tuesday afternoon -
continued at odd times.

Dearest family:

Got your letter just now after lunch to be exact. Received \$35.4 and was very glad to get it. My last \$15 was taken out of my purse this morning (drawer was a mess) sooo I was glad to get it. When you all called last Sunday evening I was in the middle of washing face so went to phone with soap all over face, towel in hand to wipe soap off. Deibel's family called her a few minutes before & I was surprised when Strover (girl who got me) said your mother's at phone. I practically knocked her down getting to phone booth to speak to you all. I was so happy that I started to howl & laugh at same time. Sounded so funny. All I could say was "Oh gee" all evening - we were supposed to be in bed at 9:30 P. M. & I didn't go to sleep for simply hours. ^{kept myself awake saying} Oh gee

Last weekend ~~at~~ snow in N. Y. C. snow shovels on sidewalks, brisk breezes & cold. Monday - slush & ice in N. Y. C. more fun. Galoshes worn by all whenever we went out. Still

coolish but not so cold. Stayed in
 School Friday - just went for short
 walk & caught up on correspondence
 & on some homework. Miss Malory ^(nurse)
 wouldn't let me study Fri into or
 Saturday or Sunday. Eyes strained &
 stye up under right eye lid. Hurt &
 she treated it. I'm putting drops
 in eyes (the ones Doc Meiner gave me
 last spring when my eyes were
 strained.) Stye almost gone now
 & I'm quite happy. Eye looked like I
 had a black eye & was very ^{big &} funny
 looking. Went to see "On Stage" with
 Osgood Perkins & it was very good. Osgood
 Perkins is very good - I can see why
 sister liked him! Mrs. ~~Christy~~ ^{Christy}, Marion
 McCrell, & Virginia Christy just came.
 Hobbs called me up from Dramatic
 rehearsal & I went up & who should be
 there but they. Was I surprised.
 The person showing Mrs. Christy around
 knew her life's history before the trip
 through school was over. Saw them
 for about 20 minutes & then ran cause
 had to report back to class. Hobbs ex -

deused me for that time. I looked
a wreck from rehearsing & they were
wonderfully dressed especially Merrill
& Virginia. All thro talked about was
what they were going to do this weekend
& if they couldn't do something for
me. I handed them a line about
going out, taking weekends etc.
She told me how busy you all
were etc. Enough of this. Mac
Collins told me I could stay with
them tomorrow night if I wanted
to late date. You see she has a date
with George & we might double.
This weekend is certainly going to be
fun. Haven't heard from Harvey
yet about this weekend but I'm
sure I shall get a letter this afternoon
or tomorrow morning. We're having
trouble getting hotel reservations in
Philadelphia & we may have to return
that night. Hope not. I wish I knew
what you many souls at home
wanted for Christmas. Is there
anyone you want to have me get a
little gift for? If so just write & maybe

I'll find time. I shall go visit Carolyn. When I don't know, I may take it over next weekend & come home on time that is if she so desires it. I'll let you know, of course I shall write to Mrs. Merrells thanking her for the dinner, I answered Mrs. Burns last week, so that's settled. Bobby still is at home. Haven't even heard from her & I sent her flowers & a note & some clothes she asked for. I'm very girt - no one here knows how she is. Not even Mrs. Hunt. Going to see Mother, Fiskel etc, Monday. They are coming to school to see us. Hope they don't forget. Everyone in this country is coming here Thanksgiving. George Barnett, Harrison I hope -, Mitch etc so many but I hope they call me. Is John Dryden coming? That is the question. Jane Rich has had two blind dates dragging along & she gets letters from both every day. She is so happy cause she made such a hit with them. One was lieutenant in 1st class.

Don't miss big
good times
Thank you

Haven't quite made all plans for
 weekend yet so shall have to write
 about that next weekend. In fact
 I can think of little to write about
 at this point. Keep rest well
 under cover!!! Promise or don't
 read it. When Deibel's family ^{called her} ~~wrote~~
 Billie told her she was announcing
 her engagement in three weeks just
 after Helen gets home. Big secret!!!!!!
 Be sure not to mention it but I
 know it won't. Sure I'll have as
 many people as you want to the
 Maureen's club tea but can't I decide
 who, when I get home. It seems so
 far distant that I can't think of
 such things. Of course I can make
 out a list ^{of girls} & send it home to you.
 That I shall do!!!! What is the "received
 from Dad \$35.00 for. I've never
 seen such going on. Am I supposed
 to return it to prove I received the
 money or just keep it. I shall return
 it & then you can send it back
 next week if you want me to keep it.
 Please explain Daddy. Thanks, oodles

Now I'm having definite trouble
 getting out Wednesday night - tomorrow
 night - with Cliko. The first date
 I've had & I'm having trouble.
 I'm so mad I could cry!!!!!!! &
 disappointed too, Hears hoping M.U.
 beat St. Louis U. on Thanksgiving.
 I'm writing this letter a day early
 because I know that I won't have
 time tomorrow since I am having
 my hair washed after school &
 have classes all tomorrow morning &
 practice all tomorrow afternoon.
 Daddy you should not stay at the
 office until 10:10 P.M. up here in
 this city of bright lights we have to
 go to bed at 10:00 - 9:00 St. Louis time.
 Cliko just called long distance
 from New Haven & I've a date
 with him Friday night instead
 of Wednesday & we are going to
 double with Bill D'Arcy & date.
 Wouldn't that be fine? Maybe Hunt will
 let me late date so I can make an
 evening of it. Who knows. Let you
 know how everything comes out next

7

went in letter. That breakfast for
 lei must have been some stuff.
 Never heard of eating breakfast
 from 11:00 until 8 P.M. but I guess
 you & the Tilghman's had it either.
 Ha! ha! did you all get fooled. Got
 a big sundries bill this month
 but it shall be duly paid. What
 are my grades by the way. I know
 I got B+ in Spanish & B- in Drama-
 tic lit but would like to know real
 if you have card; Will wait to see
 eye doc when I get home as eyes
 are getting better slowly but surely.
 Will use ticket now have to return
 home with & will check trunk
 clear to 78 Van. Pl. Don't know yet
 when I'll return. Will buy lower
 berth & will probably use money.
 Let you know how much later.
 Got letter from Abden & she said
 she saw you all at "Meat on Poverty".
 Must see it when I get home -
 missed it here unfortunately,
 Nice of her to pay for Club Dance

B

ticket. What is the date do you know. If on 26th I can't go 'cause that is night of Triangle & Janet's party. (Rather go to a but Janet invited me first.) (Continued med more.) - - - - -

sent you some candy for Thanksgiving. Just sent it this evening cause I just got my allowance yesterday & I wasn't out of house till just now. ^{Hope you like it.} Just got a very good looking hairies & a dollar from Maury for Thanksgiving & I shall write her this evening. ~~Will~~ Of course I won't bring home comforter & stuff. What do you take me for? Beside if I did I wouldn't be able to get all my U. S. clothes in ???!!! - - - ***!!! - - -

Got to close this now, more next week. Two weeks from Sat. I'll be home. 1:10 P. M. to be exact. Of course that is if I don't visit Carolyn then I visit her Dec. 6. instead.

Much love to all,

(your daughter) → Betty. S. Hulburd
remember? 61277 Street

AIR MAIL

NEW YORK
NOV 27
12 M
ST. L.



1936 *Twice*

Mr. and Mrs. Earl Hulburd
78 Vandeventer Place
St. Louis, Mo.