

Sept. 25 [1939]

Dear Parents,

By the time you receive this you will have had all too long a time to contemplate those two cables. I did so wish I could make them warmer and less cruelly abrupt! It was obviously impossible. I hope also that you will have looked up the name Jimmie Jones in my letters referring to the Montparnasse friends, or have remembered the name by chance.

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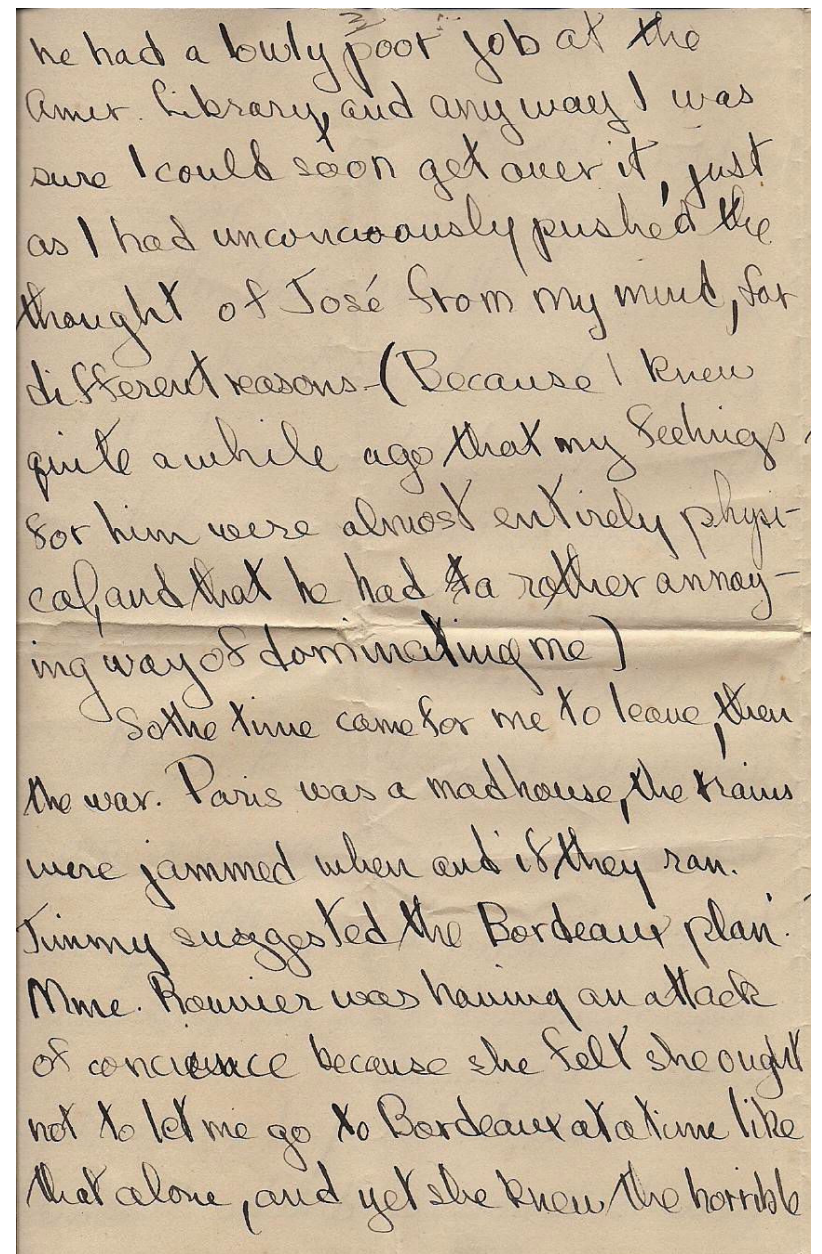
there at Montparnasse. We talked and argued alone and with friends many and many a day, sometimes we disagreed about things but most of the time we didn't. Once or twice we became annoyed with each other, and settled things later amicably [sic]. I kept on going out with anyone I felt like, but toward the end other people bored me a bit at times, when they didn't react to my jokes and arguments like Jimmie did. Meanwhile James said he loved me as well as liking me, but that I wasn't to let that bother me if I didn't feel the same way. Needless to say, I soon did. But

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he had a lowly poor job at the Amer. Library, and anyway I was sure I could soon get over it, just as I had unconsciously pushed the thought of José from my mind, for different reasons. (Because I knew quite a while ago that my feelings for him were almost entirely physical, and that he had a rather annoying way of dominating me)

So the time came for me to leave, then the war<sup>1</sup>. Paris was a madhouse, the trains were jammed when and if they ran. Jimmie suggested the Bordeaux plan. Mme. Rauvier was having an attack of conscience because she felt she ought not to let me go to Bordeaux at a time like that alone, and yet she knew the horrible

<sup>1</sup> On September 1, 1939 (one day before Philinda's 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday), Germany began its invasion of Poland. On September 7<sup>th</sup>, French forces began a "token" retaliatory invasion of Germany, moving into territory near Saarbrücken. It was probably about this date that she and Jimmie went to Bordeaux to get as far as possible from the fighting.



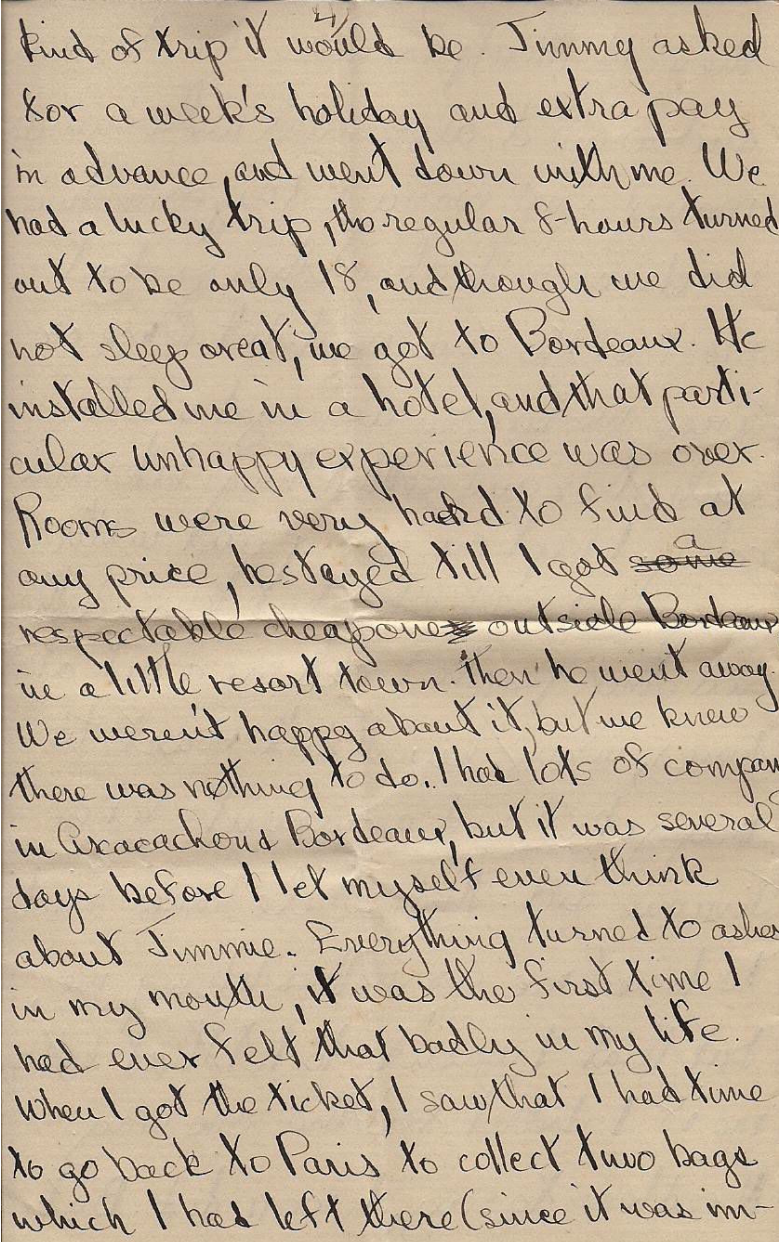
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kind of trip it would be. Jimmie asked for a week's holiday and extra pay in advance, and went down with me. We had a lucky trip, the regular eight hours turned out to be only 18, and though we did not sleep or eat, we got to Bordeaux. He installed me in a hotel, and that particular unhappy experience was over. Rooms were very hard to find at any price, he stayed till I got a respectable cheap one outside Bordeaux in a little resort town. Then he went away. We weren't happy about it, but we knew there was nothing to do. I had lots of company in Arcachon<sup>2</sup> & Bordeaux, but it was several days before I let myself even think about Jimmie. Everything turned to ashes in my mouth, it was the first time I had ever felt that badly in my life. When I got the ticket, I saw that I had time to go back to Paris to collect two bags which I had left there (since it was impossible

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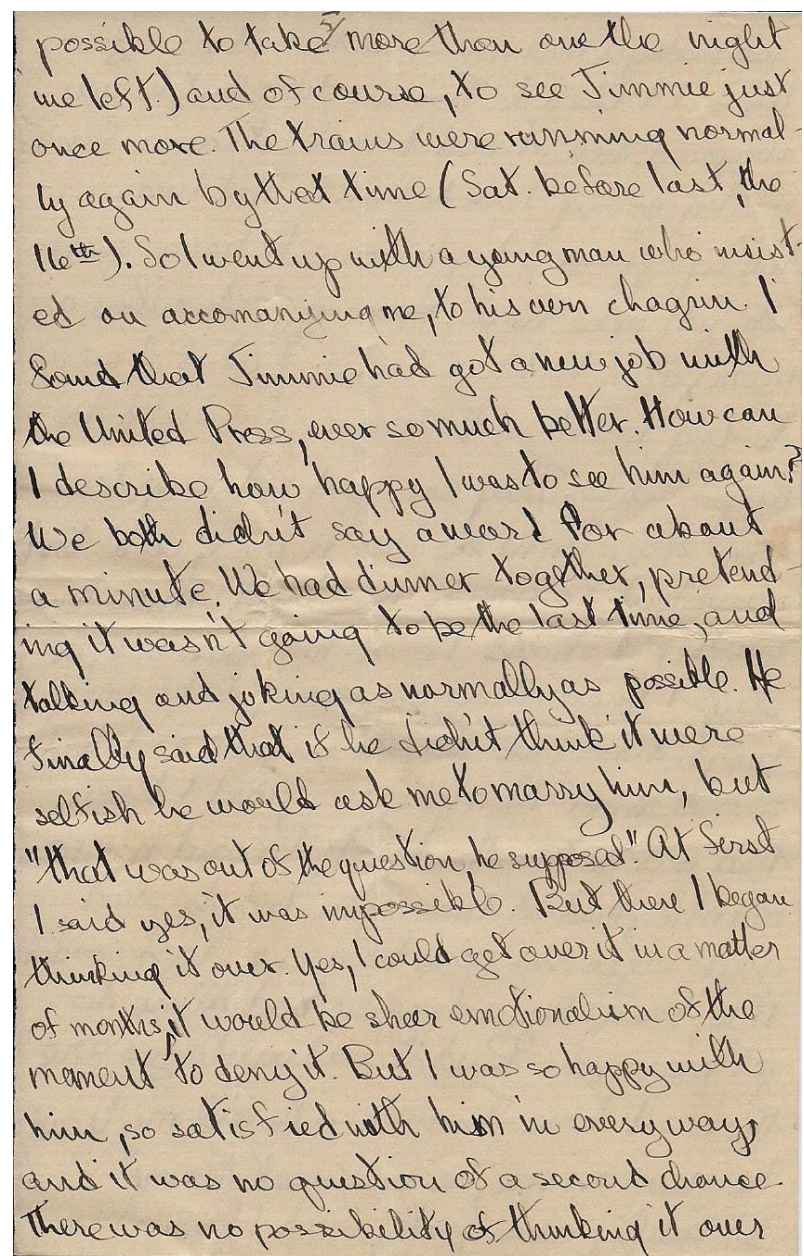
<sup>2</sup> Arcachon is a town on the Bay of Biscay, about five miles west of Bordeaux. Philinda actually wrote Arcacachon.

A photograph of a handwritten manuscript snippet on aged, yellowed paper. The text is written in a cursive script and matches the typed text on the left. There are some corrections and a small number '4' above the word 'kind'.

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to take more than one the night I left) and of course, to see Jimmie just once more. The trains were running normally again by that time (Sat. before last, the 16<sup>th</sup>)<sup>3</sup>. So I went up with a young man who insisted on accompanying me, to his own chagrin. I found that Jimmie had got a new job with the United Press, ever so much better. How can I describe how happy I was to see him again? We both didn't say a word for about a minute. We had dinner together, pretended it wasn't going to be the last time, and talking and joking as normally as possible. He finally said that if he didn't think it were selfish he would ask me to marry him, but "that was out of the question, he supposed". At first I said yes, it was impossible. But then I began thinking it over. Yes, I could get over it in a matter of months, it would be sheer emotionalism of the moment to deny it. But I was so happy with him, so satisfied with him in every way, and it was no question of the second chance. There was no possibility of thinking it over

<sup>3</sup> French forces then withdrew from German territory on the 16<sup>th</sup>, the day Philinda returned from Bordeaux to Paris. The U.S.S. President Roosevelt must have been scheduled to sail from Le Havre on Sunday, September 17, 1939.

A photograph of a handwritten manuscript page on aged, yellowed paper. The handwriting is in cursive and matches the typed text on the left. The text is written in a single column, filling most of the page. There are some ink blots and variations in line spacing, characteristic of a handwritten document. The paper shows signs of age, including some staining and uneven coloration.

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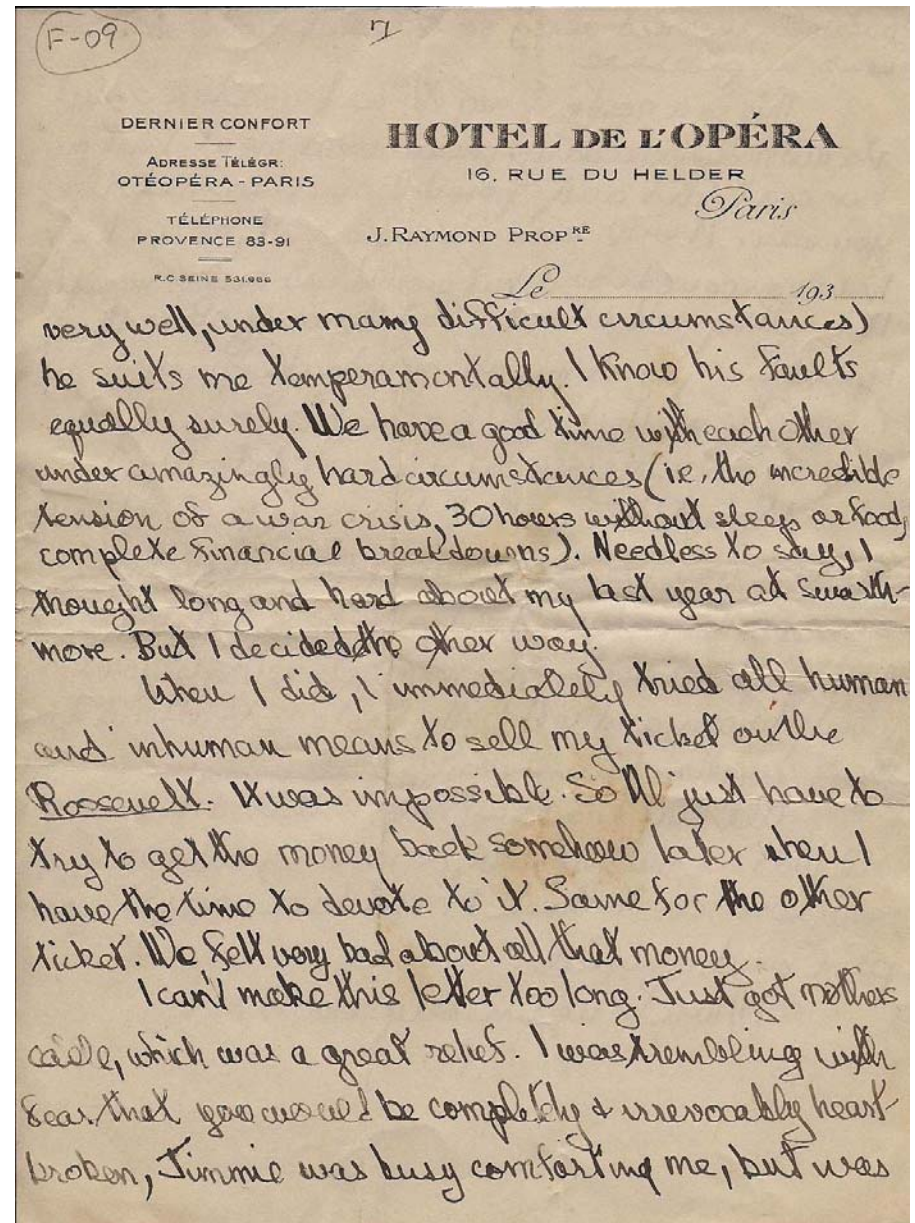
and perhaps marrying at the end of the year. When I talked to Jimmie like that, he was annoyed, and offered to make it easier for me by going back to the U.S. That I was entirely opposed to, because he has a goodish job here now, opportunities are many, and he likes Paris. But if I were to try to return to France, it would be impossible. They are just not going to issue visas until the war is over, voilà tout. So I had to decide in about three hours whether I should leave him forever, or stay. I knew they were going to be very rough times, we might often be poor as I had seen them in Montparnasse, and I knew that was not in the least pleasant or romantic, that at times you had to shut your eyes and nose because it got sordid. It is frankly a dizzily bad time to get married. But the advantages are these: I love Jimmie with all my heart, he grows on me, he is sweet to me steadily and gently (and I know him

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very well, under many different circumstances) he suits me temperamentally. I know his faults equally surely. We have a good time with each other under amazingly hard circumstances (i.e. the incredible tension of a war crisis, 30 hours without sleep or food, complete financial breakdowns). Needless to say I thought long and hard about my last year at Swarthmore. But I decided the other way.

When I did, I immediately tried all human and inhuman means to sell my ticket on the Roosevelt. It was impossible. So I'll just have to try to get the money back somehow later when I have the time to devote to it. Same for the other ticket. We felt very bad about all that money.

I can't make this letter too long. Just got mothers cable, which was a great relief. I was trembling with fear that you would be completely & irrevocably heartbroken, Jimmie was very busy comforting me, but was



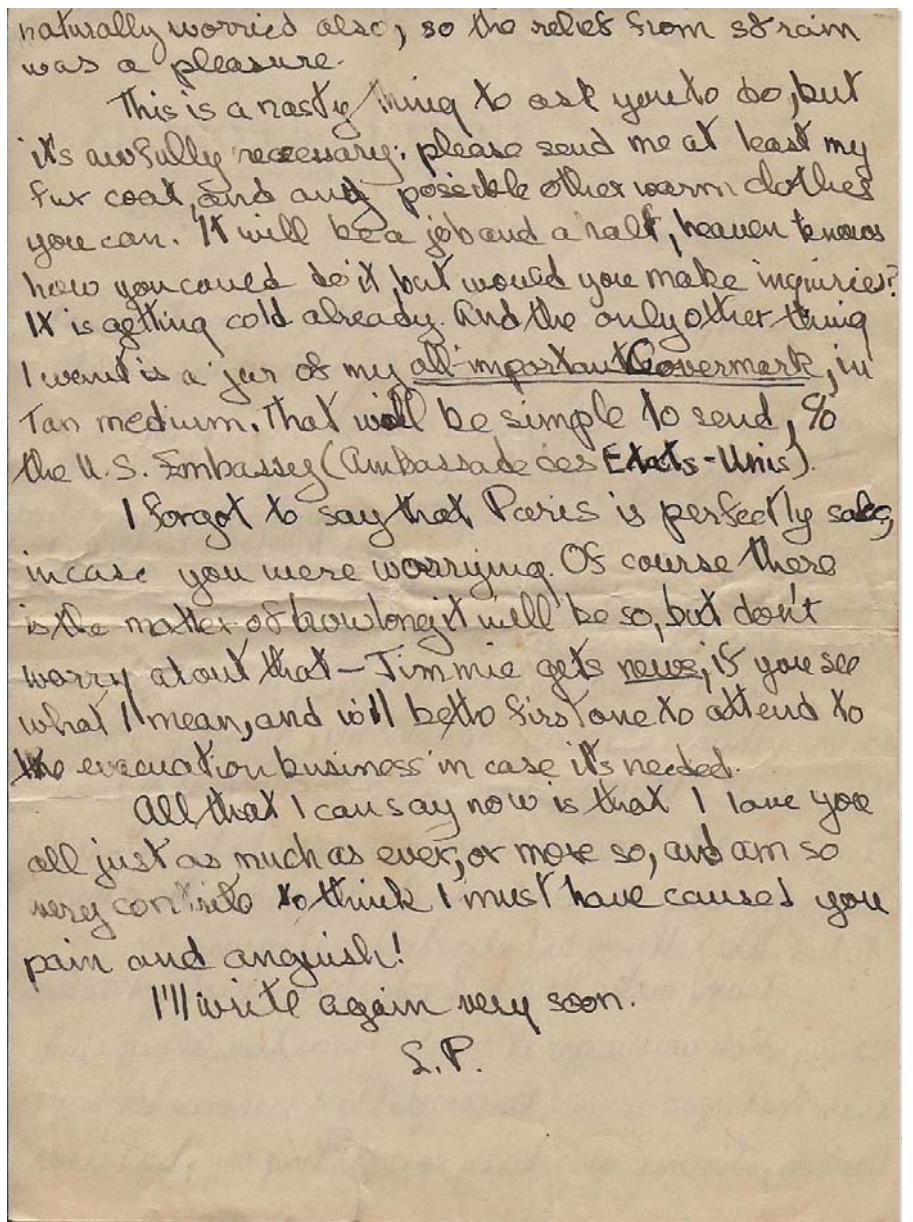
naturally worried also, so the relief from strain was a pleasure.

This is a nasty thing to ask you to do, but it's awfully necessary: please send me at least my fur coat, and any possible other warm clothes you can. It will be a job and a half, heaven knows how you could do it, but would you make inquiries? It is getting cold already. And the only other thing I want is a jar of my all-important Covermark, in tan medium. That will be simple to send, care of the US Embassy (Ambassade des Etats-Unis).

I forgot to say that Paris is perfectly safe, in case you were worrying.<sup>4</sup> Of course there is the matter of how long it will be so, but don't worry about that - Jimmie gets news, if you see what I mean, and will be the first one to attend to the evacuation business in case it's needed. All that I can say now is that I love you all just as much as ever, or more so, and am so very contrite to think I must have caused you pain and anguish!

I'll write again very soon.

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<sup>4</sup> Paris remained under French control until June, 1940.