

DERNIER CONFORT
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PROVENCE 83-91
R.C. SEINE 531.906

HOTEL DE L'OPÉRA
16. RUE DU HELDER

Paris

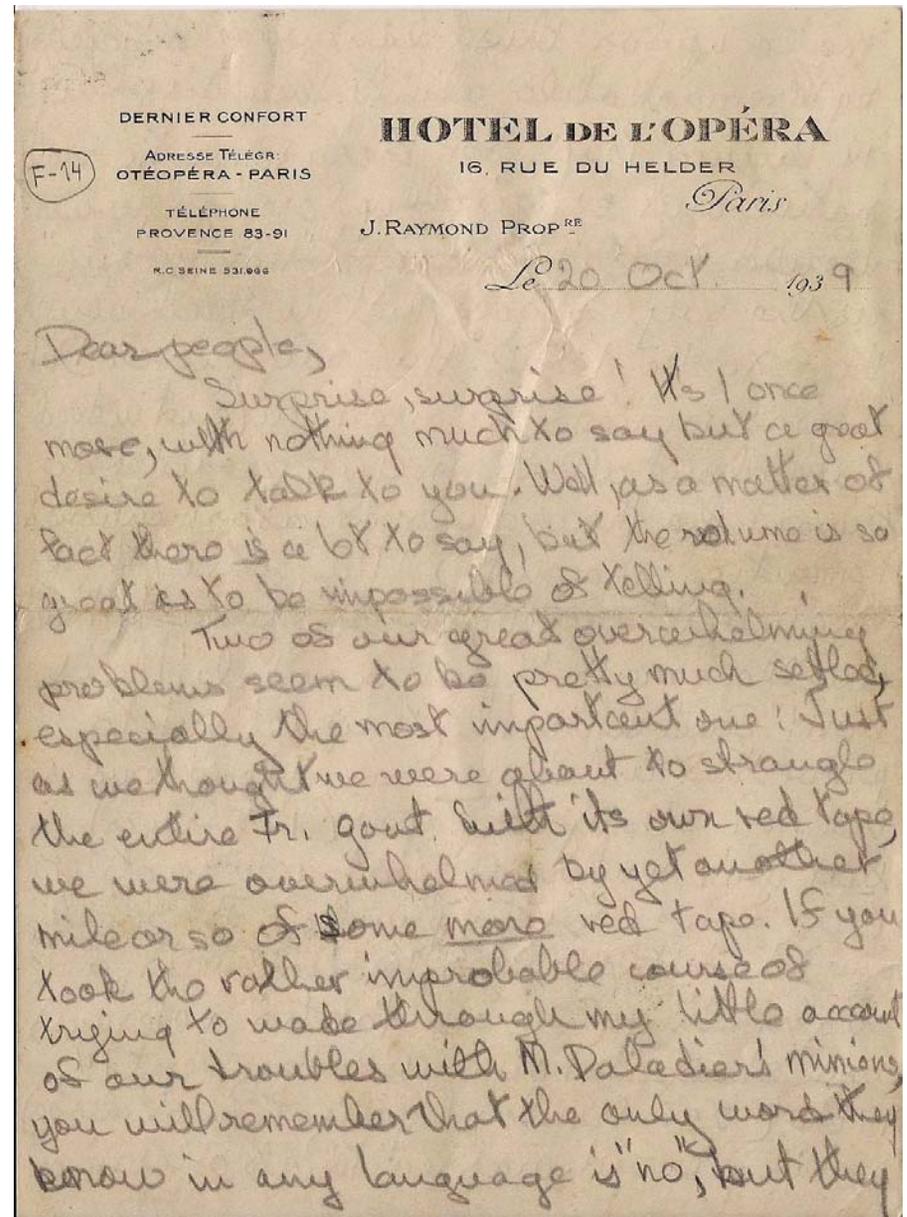
J. RAYMOND PROP^{RE}

Le 20 Oct , 1939

Dear people,

Surprise, surprise! It's I once more, with nothing much to say but a great desire to talk to you. Well, as a matter fact there is a lot to say, but the volume is so great as to be impossible of telling.

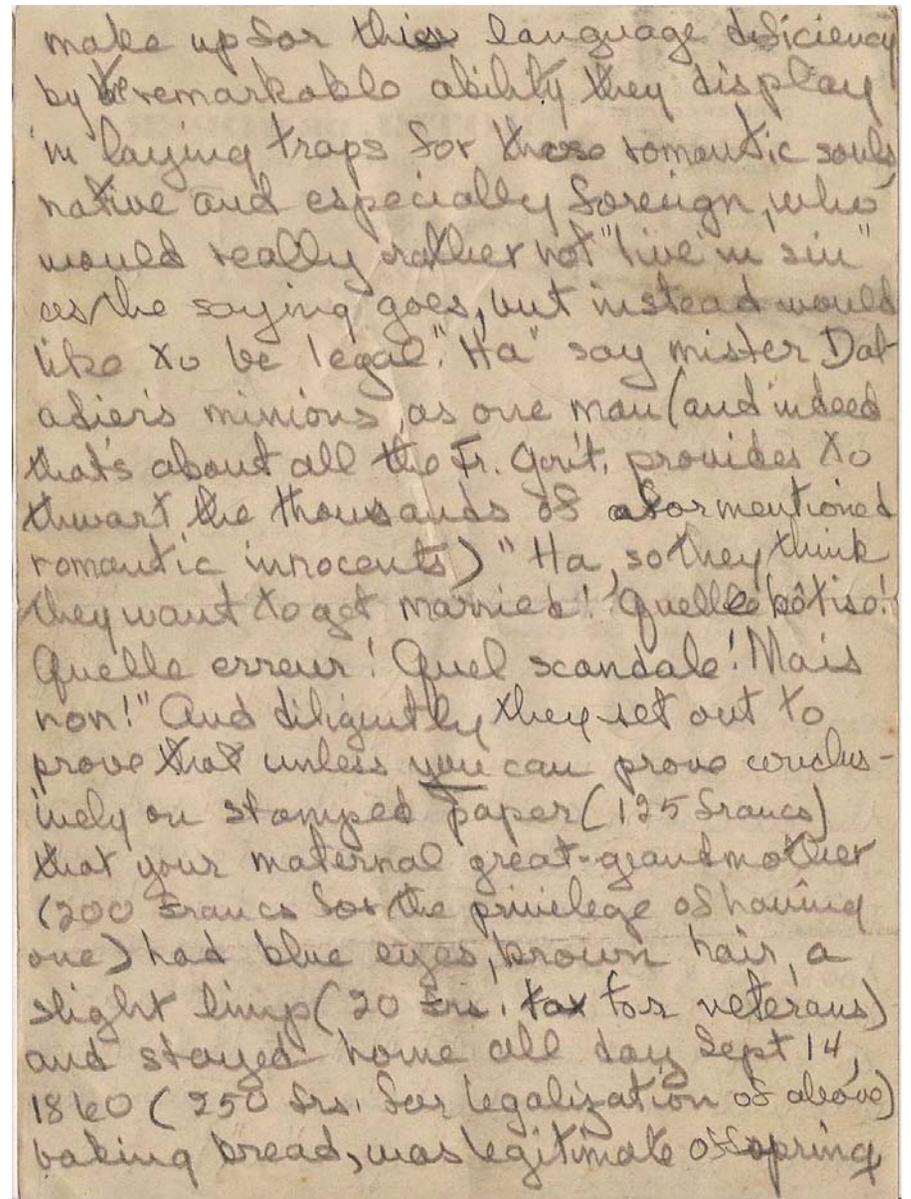
Two of our great overwhelming problems seem to be pretty much settled, especially the most important one: just as we thought we were about to strangle the entire Fr. govt. with its own red tape, we were overwhelmed by yet another mile or so of some more red tape. If you took the rather improbable course of trying to wade through my little account of our troubles with M. Daladier's minions, you will remember that the only word they know in any language is "no", but they



make up for their language deficiency by the remarkable ability they display in laying traps for those romantic souls, native and especially foreign, who would really rather not "live in sin" as the saying goes, but instead would like to be legal. "Ha" say mister Daladier's¹ minions, as one man (and indeed that's about all the French government provides to thwart the thousands of aforementioned romantic innocents) "Ha, so they think they want to get married! Quelle bêtise! Quelle erreur! Quel scandale! Mais non!"² And delightedly they set out to prove that unless you can prove conclusively on stamped paper (125 francs) that your maternal great-grandmother (200 francs for the privilege of having one) had blue eyes, brown hair, and a slight limp (20 frs. tax for veterans) and stayed home all day Sept. 14, 1860 (250 frs. for legalization of above) baking bread, was legitimate offspring

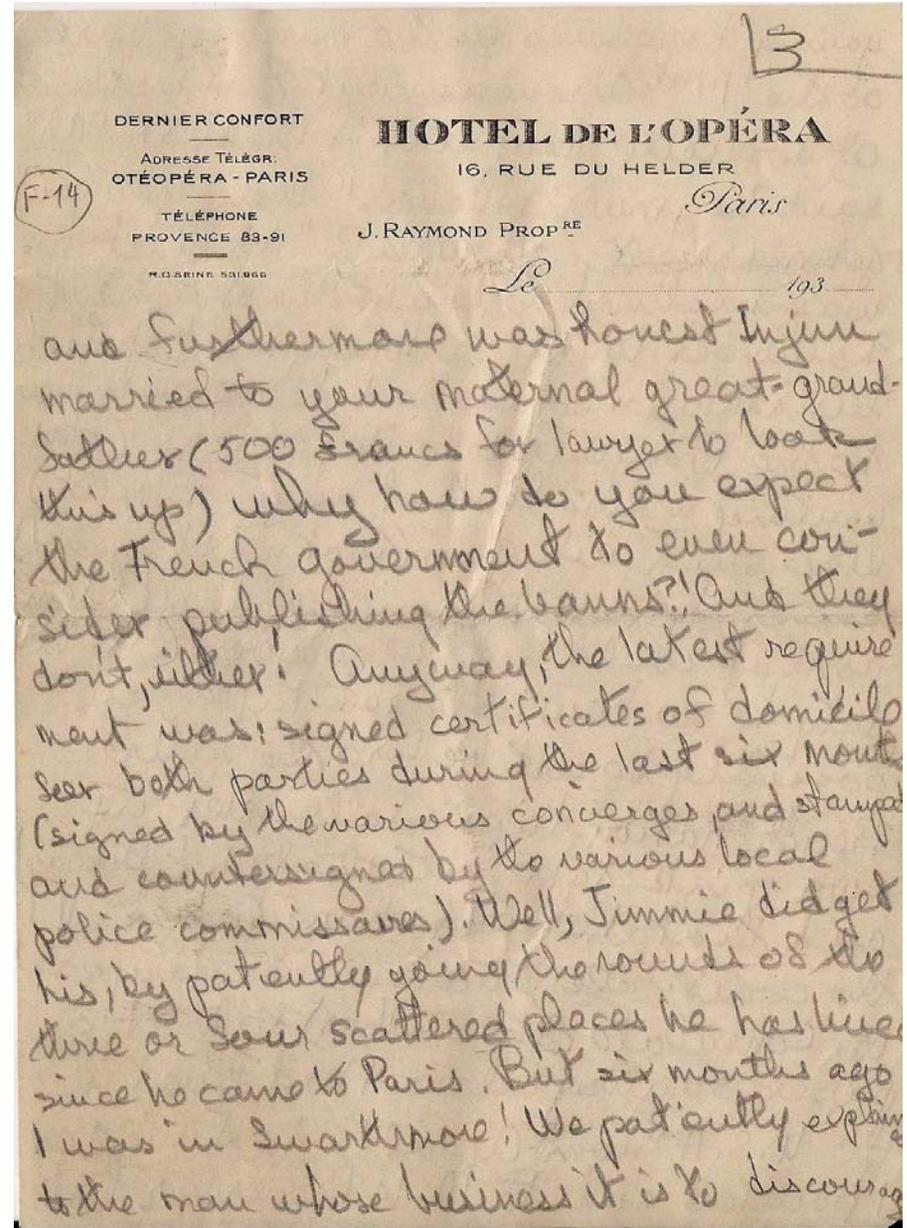
¹ Édouard Daladier (1884-1970). Prime Minister of France three times: 1933, 1934, and 1938-1940. (Wikipedia, "Édouard Daladier" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89douard_Daladier, accessed 2014-06-01)

² "How beastly! What a mistake! Such a scandal! Of course not!"



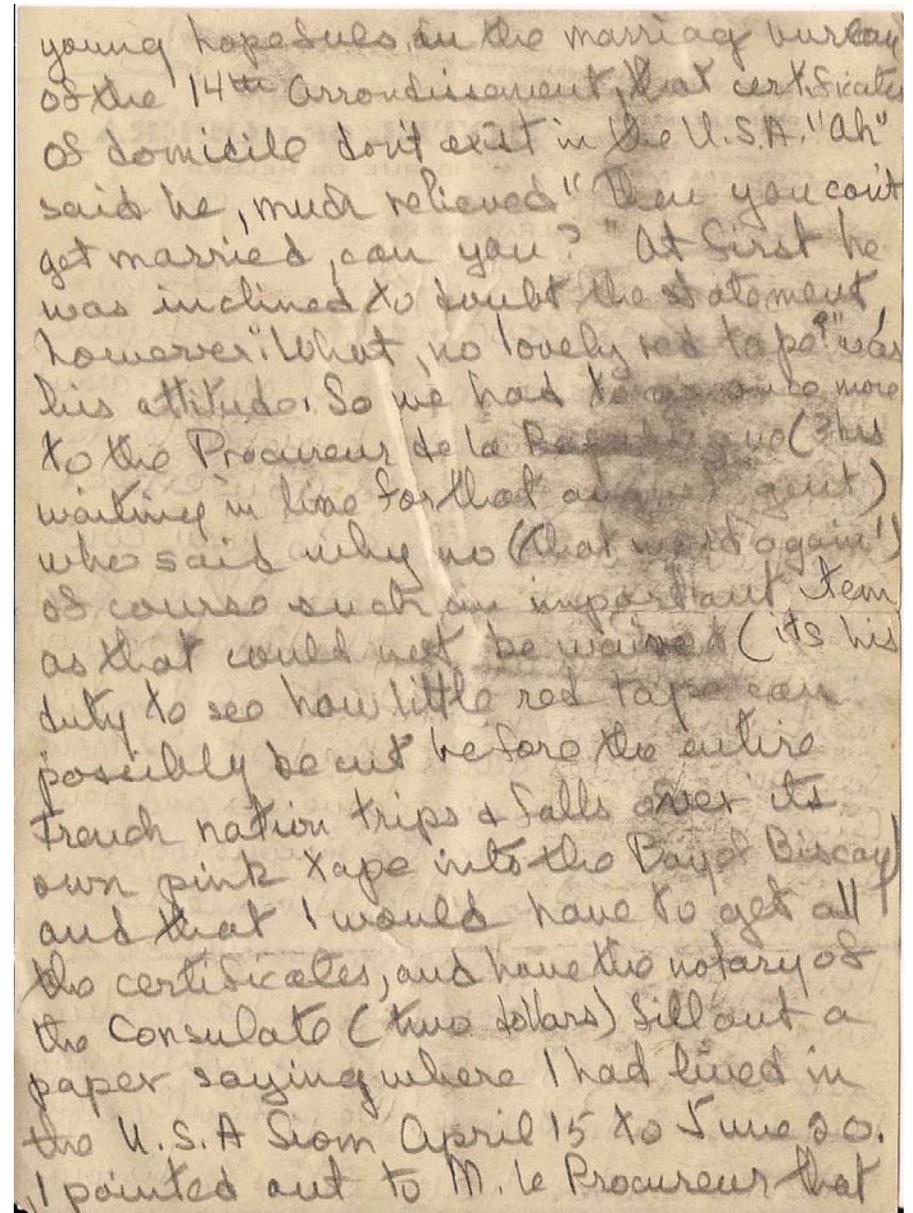
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and furthermore was honest Injun married to your maternal great-grandfather (500 francs for lawyer to look this up) why how do you expect the French government to even consider publishing the banns?! And they don't, either! Anyway, the latest requirement was: signed certificates of domicile for both parties during the last 6 months (signed by the various concierges, and stamped and countersigned by the various local police commissaires). Well, Jimmie did get his, by patiently going the rounds of the three or four scattered places he has lived since he came to Paris. But six months ago I was in Swarthmore! We patiently explained to the man whose business it is to discourage



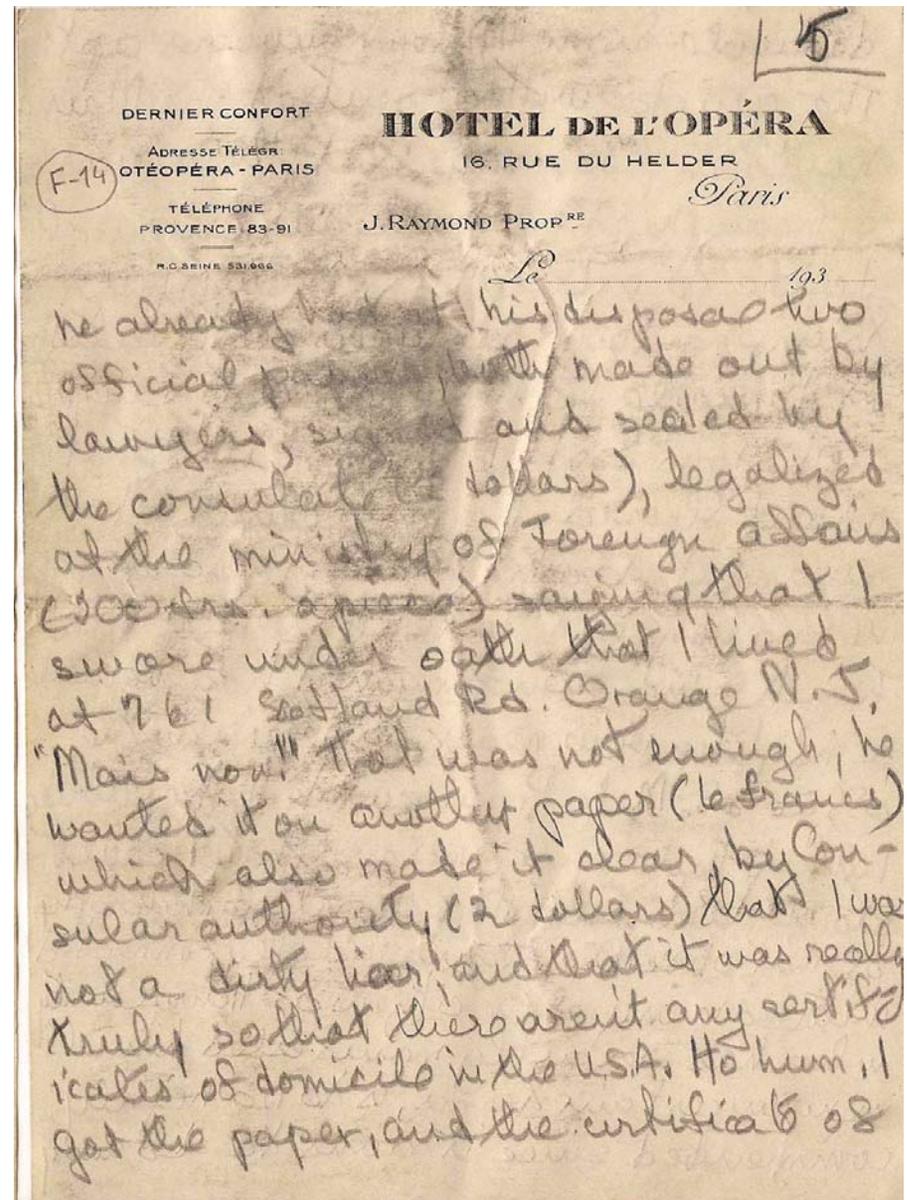
young hopefuls in the marriage burlay of the 14th Arrondissement that certificates of domicile don't exist in the U.S.A. "Ah" said he, much relieved "then you can't get married, can you?" At first he was inclined to doubt the statement, however. "What, no lovely red tape?" was his attitude. So we had to go once more to the Procureur de la République³ (3 hours waiting in line for that august gent) who said why no (that word again!) of course such an important item as that could not be waived (it's his duty to see how little red tape can possibly be cut before the entire French nation trips and falls over its own pink tape into the Bay of Biscay) and that I would have to get all the certificates, and have the notary of the consulate (2 dollars) fill out a paper saying where I had lived in the U.S.A. from April 15 to June 20. I pointed out to M. Le Procureur that

³ "The Procurer [sic] de la République is a Deputy Attorney-General who is attached to every court of first resort. (*The French Law of Marriage and the Conflict of Laws that Arises Therefrom*, Edmond Kelly p. [107])" – JulieH. Court of first resort: "This is the court that renders the first (original) decision in a case..." – bh7. From "Thread: [Procureur de la République](http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=77352)" (<http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=77352>, accessed 2014-06-01)



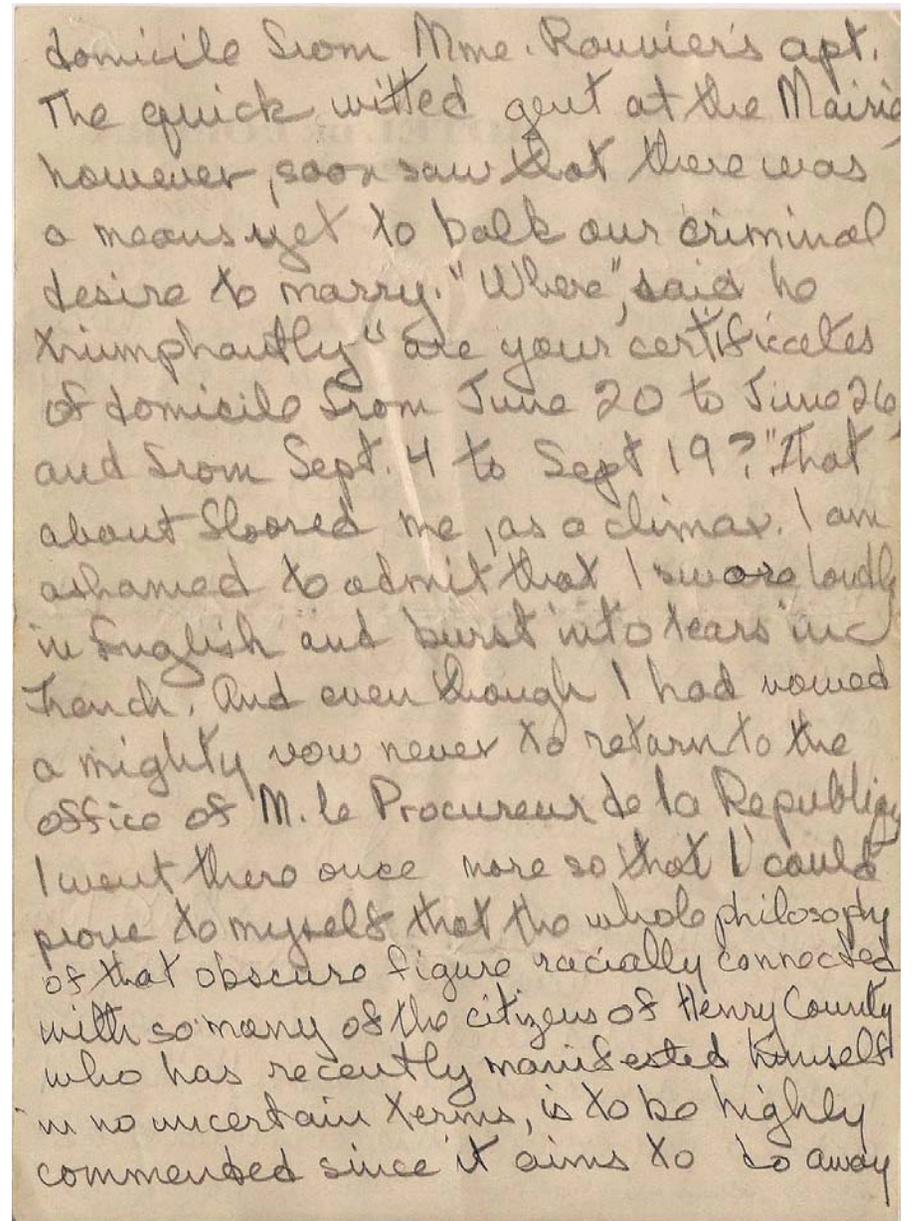
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he already had at his disposal two official papers, both made out by lawyers, signed and sealed by the consulate (2 dollars), legalized at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (200 frs. apiece) saying that I swore under oath that I lived at 761 Scotland Rd, Orange N. J. "Mais non!" That was not enough, he wanted it on another paper (6 francs) which also made it clear, by Consular authority (2 dollars) that I was not a dirty liar, and that it was really truly so that there aren't any certificates of domicile in the U.S.A. Ho-hum. I got the paper and the certificate of



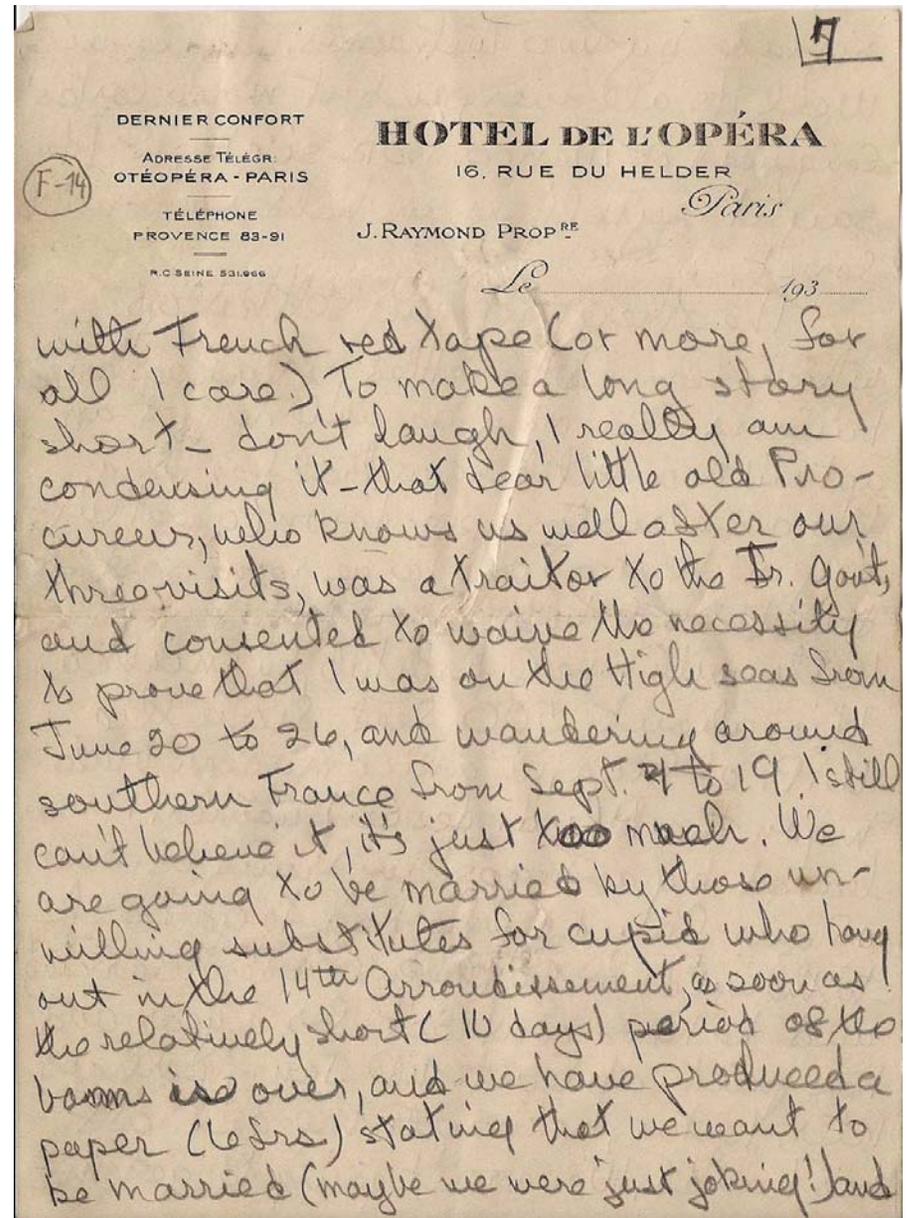
domicile from Mme. Rouvier's apt. The quick witted gent at the Mairie, however, soon saw that there was a means yet to balk our criminal desire to marry. "Where" quote, said he triumphantly "are your certificates of domicile from June 20 to June 26, and from Sept. 4 to Sept. 19?" That about floored me, as a climax. I am ashamed to admit that I swore loudly in English and burst into tears in French. And even though I had vowed a mighty vow never to return to the office of M. Le Procureur de la République, I went there once more so that I could prove to myself that the whole philosophy of that obscure figure racially connected with so many of the citizens of Henry County⁴ who has recently manifested himself in no uncertain terms, is to be highly commended since it aims to do away

⁴ Napoleon, Henry County, Ohio, where Philinda's mother and father grew up.

A photograph of a handwritten manuscript on aged, yellowed paper. The handwriting is in cursive and matches the text on the left. The paper shows some creases and discoloration, particularly a vertical crease down the middle. The text is written in dark ink and covers most of the page area.

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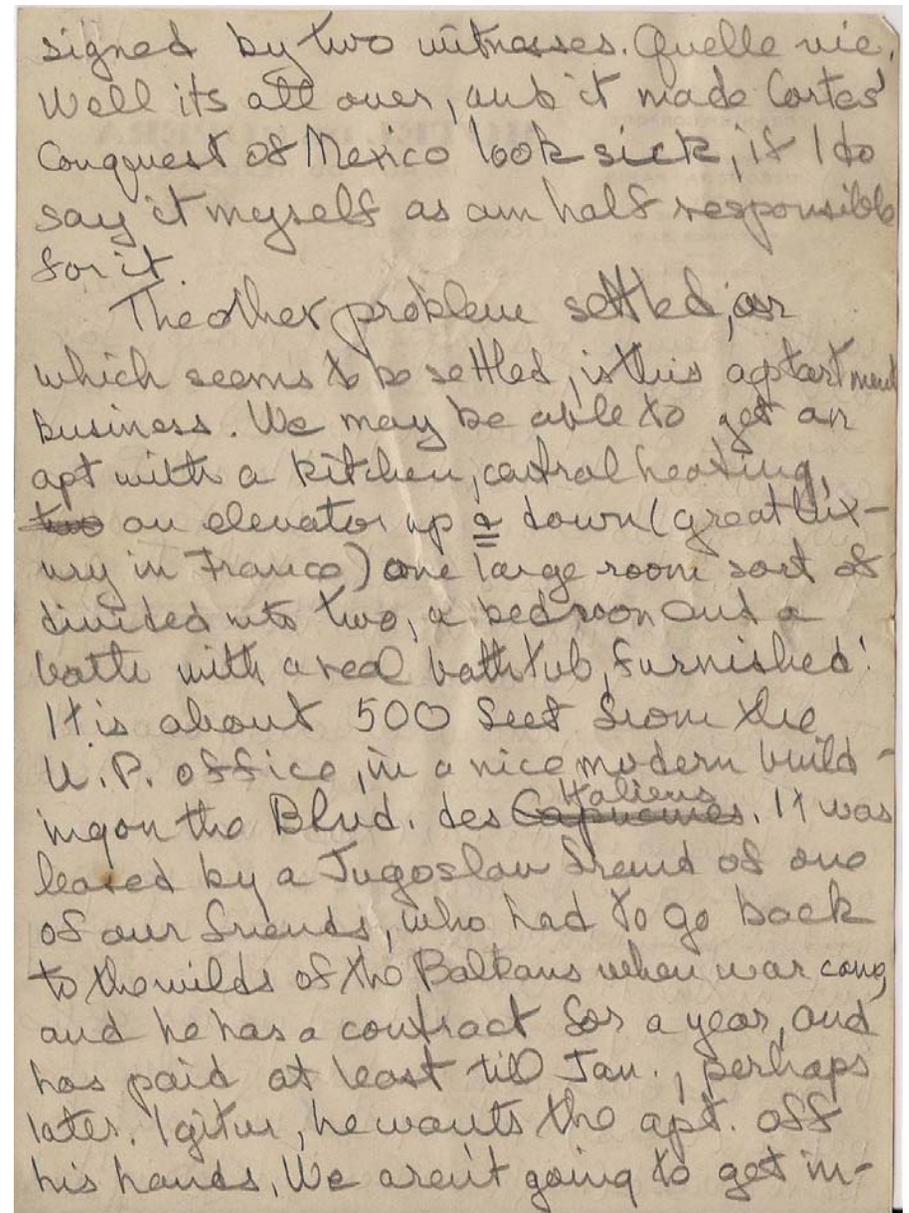
with French red tape (or more, for all I care). To make a long story short – don't laugh, I really am considering it – that dear little old Procureur, who knows us well after our 3 visits, was a traitor to the Fr. Gov't, and consented to waive the necessity to prove that I was on the High seas from June 20 to 26, and wandering around southern France from Sept. 4 to 19. I still can't believe it, it's just too much. We are going to be married by those unwilling substitutes for cupid who hang out in the 14th Arrondissement, as soon as the relatively short (10 days) period of the banns is over, and we have produced a paper (6 frs.) stating that we want to be married (maybe we were just joking!) and



signed by two witnesses. Quelle vie. Well it's all over, and it made Cortes' Conquest of Mexico look sick, if I do say it myself as am half responsible for it.

The other problem settled, or which seems to be settled, is this apartment business. We may be able to get an apt. with a kitchen, central heating, an elevator up & down (great luxury in France) one large room sort of divided into two, a bedroom and a bath with a real bathtub, furnished! It is about 500 feet from the U.P.⁵ office, and a nice modern building on the Blvd. des Italiens. It was leased by a Yugoslav friend of one of our friends, who had to go back to the wilds of the Balkans when war came, and he has a contract for a year, and has paid at least till Jan., perhaps later. Igitur, he wants the apartment off his hands. We aren't going to get in-

⁵ United Press, where Jimmie worked at the time.



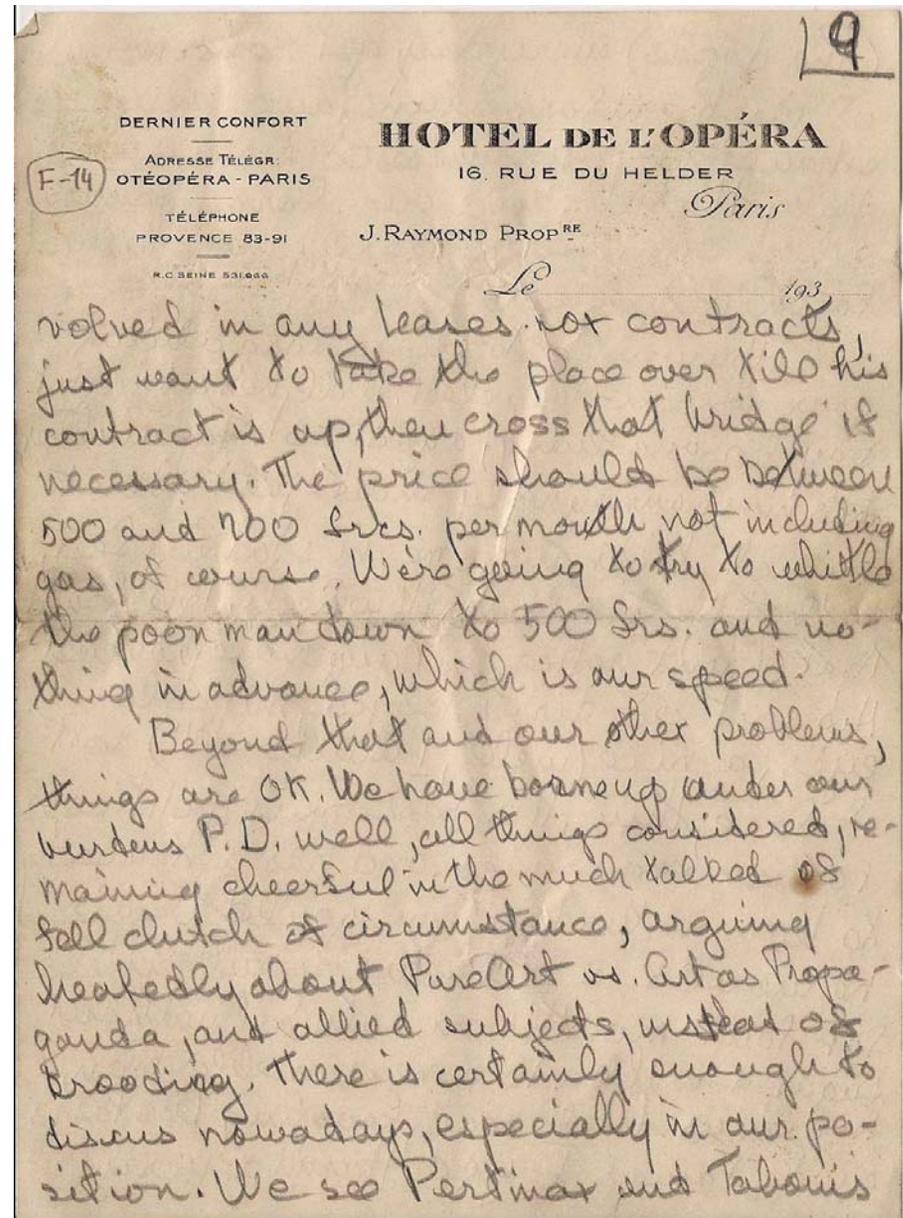
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volved in any leases nor contracts, just want to take the place over till his contract is up, then cross that bridge if necessary. The price should be between 500 and 700 frcs. per month, not including gas, of course. We're going to try to whittle the poor man down to 500 frs. and nothing in advance, which is our speed.

Beyond that and our other problems, things are OK. We have borne up under our burdens P.D. well, all things considered, remaining cheerful in the much talked of fell clutch of circumstances, arguing heatedly about Pure Art vs. Art as Propaganda, and allied subjects, instead of brooding. There is certainly enough to discuss nowadays, especially in our position. We see Pertimar and Tabouis⁶

⁶ This reference is obscure. Pertimar is not referenced online. Geneviève Tabouis (1892 - 1985) was a French historian and journalist. In 1939, she was Foreign Editor of *L'œuvre* and wrote for London's *Sunday Referee*. (Wikipedia, "Geneviève Tabouis" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genevi%C3%A8ve_Tabouis, accessed 2014-06-01)



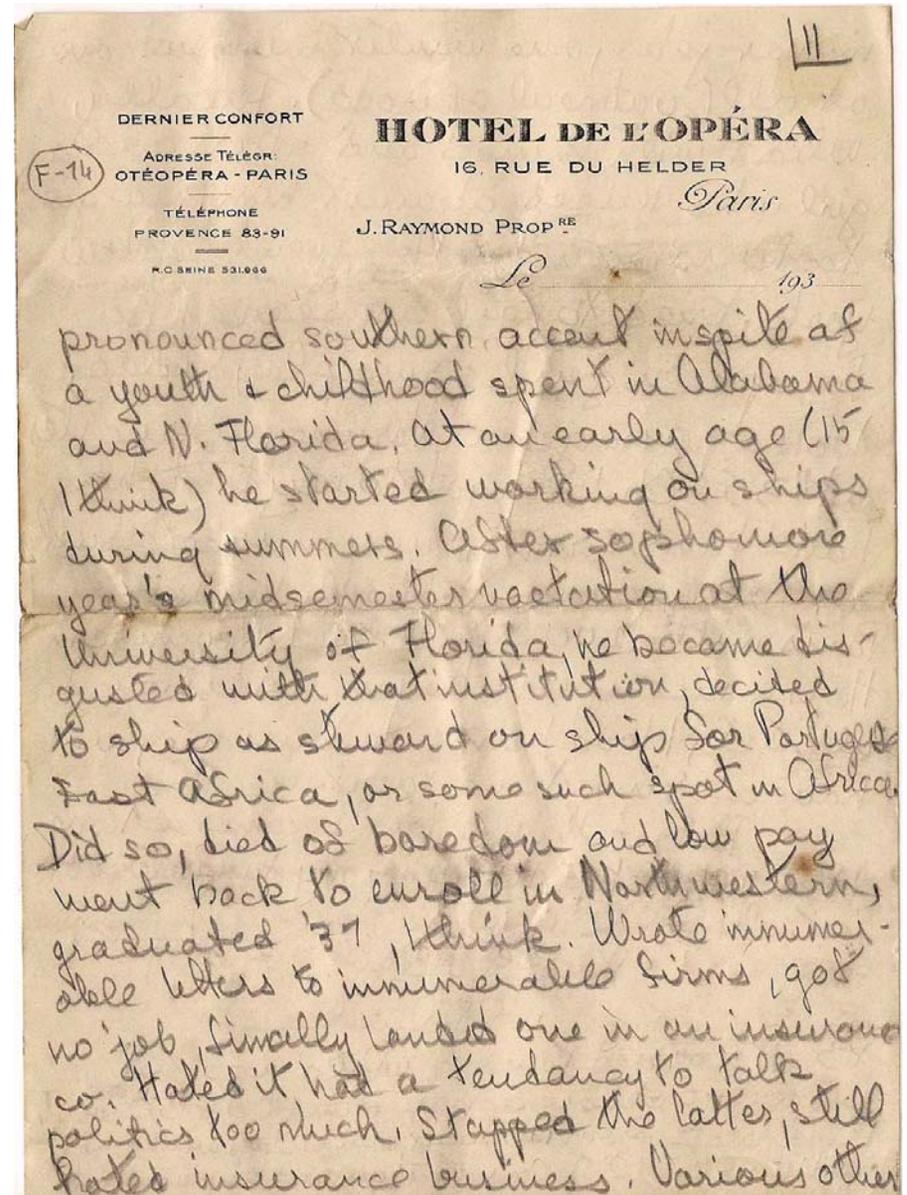
(the dopes) every day, get some measure of inside information, and always exhaust the possibilities of discussion daily. It's fun, and one forms opinions which one would dearly love to shout forth if that were possible.

You wanted to know more about your son-in-law elect. Well he's a bright boy for one thing, aged 26. For another, he's almost annoyingly short - just about an inch taller than me in stocking feet, so that I am forced into low heels. I've found that I don't notice that anymore, however. He's sort of dirty blonde, my color eyes, a nice (well, I think so!!) sort of face, thin. His passion is politics, or rather economics, and has a tendency to lean in the direction you'd think he would after having subsisted for four months on oatmeal without sugar & milk. IS a reasonable man, however. Well read, favoring Dos Pasos and James Joyce. Hasn't a very

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pronounced southern accent in spite of youth & childhood spent in Alabama and N. Florida. At an early age (15 I think) he started working on ships during summers. After sophomore year's midsemester vacation at the University of Florida, he became disgusted with that institution, decided to ship as steward on ship for Portuguese East Africa, or some such spot in Africa. Did so, died of boredom and low pay, went back to enroll in Northwestern, graduated '37, I think. Wrote innumerable letters to innumerable firms, got no job, finally landed one in an insurance co. Hated it, had a tendency to talk politics too much. Stopped the latter, still hated insurance business. Various other



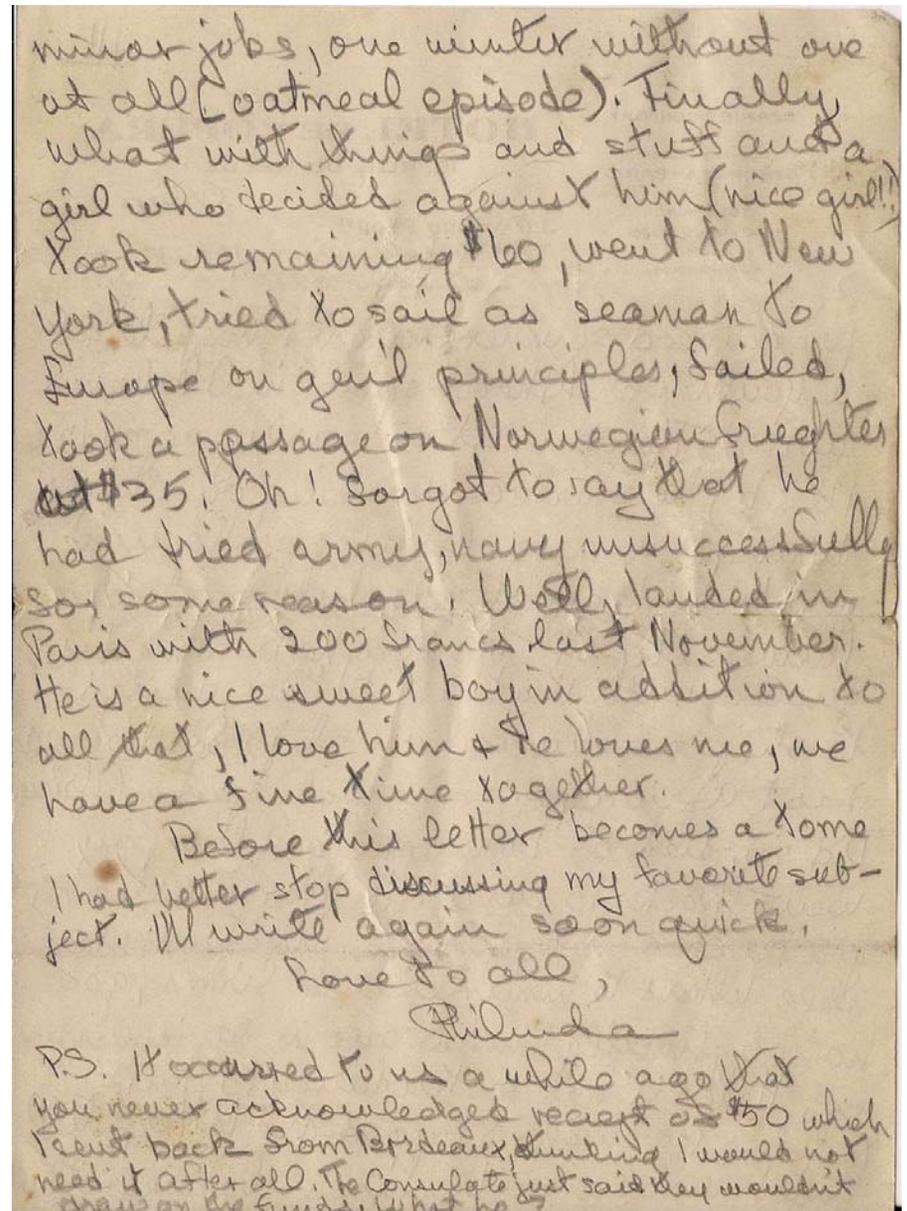
minor jobs, one winter without one at all (oatmeal episode). Finally, what with things and stuff and a girl who decided against him (nice girl!!) took remaining \$60, went to New York, tried to sail as seaman to Europe on gen'l principles, failed, took a passage on Norwegian freighter at \$35. Oh! Forgot to say that he had tried army, navy unsuccessfully for some reason. Well, landed in Paris with 200 francs last November. He is a nice sweet boy in addition to all that, I love him & he loves me, we have a fine time together.

Before this letter becomes a tome I had better stop discussing my favorite subject. I'll write again soon quick.

Love to all,

Philinda

P.S. It occurred to us a while ago that you never acknowledged receipt of \$50 which I sent back from Bordeaux, thinking I would not need it after all. The Consulate just said they wouldn't draw on the funds. What ho?



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