

IN REPLY REFER TO

FILE No. 2



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE

Lagos, Nigeria; February 11, 1943

Dear Folks:

As you know from my telegram, Philinda has arrived and we have been married. I received word Thursday afternoon - one week ago today - that the ship was off the harbor and would soon be coming in. I went immediately to the Barber Line offices and waited there with Captain Roberts, the General Agent, and Mr. Maffey, the beachmaster, until definite word arrived as to where the ship would stop for the night. Then we boarded the Barber Line tug and chugged down the harbor. From some distance I could see a woman standing on the deck, but on closer view this turned out to be Mrs. Collens, the wife of a police officer, who is returning from leave in Trinidad. Finally Philinda made a brief appearance, but quickly disappeared. She said afterwards that her emotions had got the better of her.

After a very warm greeting, we finished up with the Immigration and Security people and boarded the tug to return to Lagos. Philinda decided to stay with Mrs. Vincent, a friend of mine, instead of at Mr. Shantz's, as she thought she would like a little feminine aid and comfort from time to time. The next day was hectic. We ran all over town trying to get Philinda's baggage off the ship and through the customs. It finally arrived on Saturday afternoon, just in time for Philinda to use some of the things for the wedding. The we had to see about getting the ring fitted. The local goldsmith was very kind and helpful, and by Saturday was able to have a selection of three rings ready for choice. One was plain and two had simple designs, and she picked one with a design. It is rather crude work, but it will do at least until we return to civilization.

Dr. Adair, the American missionary, agreed to perform the ceremony, and we had a rehearsal Friday afternoon. To add to our great pleasure, Mac was able to come down from Accra to act as our best man. We used the First Baptist Church, and our dear friends managed to find enough flowers to brighten it up a bit. The service was the old familiar one, stripped of all the Church of England excrescences, which we always use at home. We were married at five o'clock on the afternoon of Saturday, February sixth. There was a missionary lady in town at the time who is a fair organist, and she did much better with the rather wheezy, hand-pumped organ than the native organists usually do. In fact, I think we had better music than was heard at a wedding I recently attended at the Colonial Chapel, although there wasn't as much of it, since at the other wedding they sang several hymns.

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One British custom could not be avoided, however. After the ceremony we had to be into the vestry with the best man and Mrs. Anita Price, matron of honor, to sign the register. This is a legal requirement. Although only two witnesses are required by law, we also asked Mr. Shantz and Mrs. Vincent to sign also; this is usually done. I forgot to say that we had a terrible time inviting people to the wedding, as the time was so short and we had so much to do. We asked about fifty people, and I think most of them showed up. Inevitably, I forgot one or two people whom I wanted to invite, which made me feel very bad afterwards.

After signing the certificate (in triplicate), the organist played the traditional march, and we walked out. Mr. Shantz gave a reception for us, and much to my surprise I remembered the names of all of my friends who came. This is no small feat, considering that almost everyone out here suffers from loss of memory, popularly known as "West Coast mind". They say it isn't bad when you forget other peoples' names; it's when you can't remember your own that it's time to worry. The captain of the boat Philinda came on sent us a cake, which arrived at the last minute due to the necessity of procuring an import permit (!). So, even in this place and these times, we were able to have a good old-fashioned wedding.

After about an hour at the reception, Anita told us that we would have to "slip away", as none of the guests could leave before we did. This was a pure formality, since we had arranged to have dinner at Mr. Shantz'es, but we drove home, changed our clothes (or at least Philinda did), and went back out. Some more guests had arrived in the mean time, and the party was still going on, although of course most of the people had gone. After a late dinner, we came home again.

Mac's chief, Mr. Browne, had kindly consented for him to stay a week, if necessary, so we went out to Tarquah Bay Monday noon and stayed overnight, coming back Tuesday afternoon. It was very cool and pleasant out there, and we had a grand time all by ourselves. We both started to work Wednesday morning, and Mac returned to Accra Thursday. Everything has been going well, and we are very smug and happy to be together after so long and painful a separation.

We have not decided entirely yet what to do about announcements. Of course it is customary for the bride's family to send ~~th~~ them out, but the local unit of the O.W.I. has offered to print them for us, and it would be much easier to send them out from here. In the meantime, and until I have time to write to the rest of the family, I am relying on you to let them know. I haven't heard any mention of Ninnie and Aunt Vonie for ages, and I am almost afraid to write them for fear Aunt Vonie might be dead. Please do let me know so I can write them and send them a picture of us, as soon as we have one. It is going to be a job getting around to everyone, and we don't have any more time for writing now than before, except, thank God, that I no longer have to write letters to Philinda. Philinda's father complains that she is a very poor letter writer and urges me to prod her from time to time.

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Daddy's letter ~~xxx~~ of December 15-16 arrived January 18th; the mail has not been so fast recently. I was most interested in the local news, as usual. I didn't get the letter in time to write to Janie at her Washington address, and I really hope that she will find time to write soon. I don't really see how she could be too busy for that, especially on a special occasion like this. Thanks for the duplicate deposit slips; Carl Ankele had not sent them. I asked him to do so in my last letter. The glasses finally arrived, together with a lot of mail from last August. It took me just about 16 months to get them, which is pretty long even for war time. The Postal Surveyor called me two or three months ago to say that he had received a tracer on the first pair. They were lost at sea. The new ones do very well.

As soon as North Africa is cleared up, and even before, the West Coast is going to lose a lot of its war-time importance. The work will consequently become less interesting, and I imagine that I will be glad to move on in a year or so. I will be due for a transfer in December, but Philinda hates cold weather so that I doubt whether it would be wise to come home before Spring, assuming that both of us keep our health. As soon as Consul Lynch arrives, we are planning to go up to Jos on a trip. Mr. Shantz has had his application for home leave in 1943 approved, and he will probably go back some time this summer. I doubt very much whether he will return, as the importance of the post hardly justifies keeping a man of his standing here. He will probably go to some more important place.

All the usual items of news seem rather insignificant in comparison with the big event, and I find myself at a loss to know what else to say. As it is also past time to close the pouch, I will stop now, sending you all lots of love from Philinda and myself.

As ever,

