

A.P.O. 606-A, Miami, Florida.
September 3, 1943

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Dearest Ninnie and Aunt Vonie:

How amusing to write you a letter from Miami to Miami! Your very grand letter arrived this morning, and I am taking my typewriter under finger at once to answer the questions you asked as well as I can; that is, I will go as far as I can with the subject, for the question of what life is like would take more paper than I have to answer properly.

In the first place, I might say that we did get our trip up north, and it turned out to be very pleasant. The climate is definitely temperate, at least at this season, and we found it rather uncomfortably cold for our thin blood. It was quite rainy, although they don't have the continued downpours which mark the rainy season here. The people with whom we stayed - friends of a previous consul - were delightful and most hospitable. They live in a small but very attractively furnished house, surrounded by one of the most lovely gardens I have ever seen. They had all kinds of flowers, both tropical and temperate, and their own orange and grapefruit trees. There is quite a lot of meat in that area, so we had plenty of good food, and our hostess had a carefully preserved stock of delicacies which were broken out from time to time.

While up there, I got to visit some tin mines. They are not shaft mines, but great open workings, about fifty feet below the surface of the ground. In some of the larger workings, the machinery used is fairly extensive, with giant cranes, scoop buckets taking up large chunks of ore-bearing dirt, and large sluice-ways for washing the dirt; others are very primitive, and only assistance given to man power being a powerful jet of water directed against the strata THEY WANT TO GET OUT. The dirt and water are then sucked up to the ground level and put through a sluice. Now that the tin of the East is no longer available, there is a big demand for Nigerian tin, and they are all working hard.

A trip on the Nigerian Railway is something, considerably less pleasant than traveling on an air-conditioned Pullman. The cars are not uncomfortable, although the seats are hard and there are no mattresses put on at night - they just put a sheet over the leather seat cover and here you are! The worst aspect of the trip is its slowness. When the train is on time, it takes two days and two nights to travel 750 miles. Going up, our train suffered from a wash-out and locomotive failure both, and we arrived 30 hours late. The trip had taken from Monday at noon until 3:30 Thursday afternoon - and all this to cover a distance which could

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be covered overnight in the States. However, it was interesting and I had plenty of opportunity to see Nigeria.

We have now been home for over a month, and are well back in the swing of things. We have been fairly busy at the office, and are about to lose our other Vice Consul, at least temporarily. The weather this time of year is nice and cool, as you will notice in the attached letter home about the Ikoyi Club. It is nothing like as hot here as it is in Miami in the summer, Philinda says, and she tells me how the boys coming back from Africa used to complain when they arrived that it was the hottest place they had ever seen. The weather is quite pleasant until November, when it begins to heat up, and it gets progressively hotter and stickier until the rains begin in April or May. There is nothing unbearable about the climate here, but on the other hand it is generally believed, even by doctors, that it does have a definitely debilitating effect/ over a period of time.

You asked about the rationing. We are generally pretty well off here. There is no milk in the country that can be drunk without being boiled, so nearly everyone uses Klin, which is quite satisfactory, even to drink. All canned milk is rationed, and so are butter and bacon. It isn't necessary to ration canned goods, because as a rule there aren't any, so it is very simple. We grow carrots and string beans in the country, with some cabbage and a few other things. If I ever see carrots again after I leave Nigeria, I think I will scream; we have carrots and beans, beans and carrots, separate and mixed, day after day. It is very monotonous. We have a fair amount of low-quality meat. There are no nice chops like you used to get at home, and few roasts that you would have looked at before the war. Once in a while, though, we do manage to get some very nice small steaks which are both juicy and tender. On the whole, though, the meat and poultry is tough and tasteless. However, you don't have to worry about my getting enough to eat; my being thin is due to the climate, not primarily to the food. We hope to get some supplies in the the U.S. before we leave; they have been a long time getting here, but when they do come, we will be much better off.

I was most interested to hear about Bud Francis' getting married; the last I heard he was trying to get overseas again, the work in the U.S. apparently not being sufficiently exciting. I remember Maxine Shaw vaguely as a pretty little girl who used to come to the swimming pool when I worked there. I am indeed sorry not to be seeing Bud any more, although I really didn't see him very often as he rarely stopped here for more than $\frac{1}{2}$ hour.

I was sorry but not surprised to hear about Billy Davis and Lassie breaking up. Their marriage was a strange one from the start, and as long ago as when I was last home I heard that they were both going out with other people. I'm afraid Billy is a trifle cracked, like so many of his mother's family, and Lassie, while a good soul, is painfully dumb. If the question of the paternity of the last child comes to court, it should be quite a sensation ~~Most News~~ now. All our love to both of you.