

IN REPLY REFER TO

FILE NO. 21



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICAAMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL
Lagos, Nigeria
October 6, 1943L-309
p1/3

Dear Family,

Saturday lunch was had at Bob Mangold's and the Texas Co. in general's mess. A very nice little house in Ikoyi not built along the standardized and regrettable lines that the Public Works Department uses. We played liar dice on the floor and had a palm oil chop. The latter is like a groundnut only with freshly extracted palm oil in addition. We don't like it as much as curry, but it's very nice quand meme. It was a very merry and gay party. Saturday night we went to the movies and came home to bed fairly early again.

Sunday to the beach of course, with Bob Mangold, the other Texas man, and two American merchant marine boys, one of which said two words that day, the other of whom was more talkative but shy as a deer. To a dull movie in the evening. Monday night I found out to my sorrow that there is no part for me in our new play, due to my cursed American accent! Well, no- not cursed, really- anyway, I was turrubly sorry, but managed to keep down the hot salt tears. I made a perfectly lovely welsh rarebit with our new beer for dinner, and we had a lucullan feast. The beer made us so sleepy that we had to go to bed "one time" in order not to fall into our fruit cups afterward. O r last ~~kin~~ can of melt- sble American cheese, alas.

Last night John Houser and his Accra sidekick, Bill Bascom, arrived in time for dinner. Good old John, he's a peach, but he was so sleepy from taking sleeping pills on the plane that he fell sound asleep at the movies. He gets claustrophobia in planes, and takes sleeping pills to forget his fears. Bill Bascom is a nice fellow also- older, glasses, slightly plump, with a high, folksy sort of voice. Bill Bascom was here in Nigeria for quite a while last year, and became slightly persona non grata for buying and removing some Nigerian antiquities call the Ife statues. The govt made him return them, so apparetnly all is forgiven. The two of them are going down to Angola soon. How I wish I could see the rest of Africa! He lived in bush and learned Ibo or Benni, I've forgotten which it was exactly. Speaking of that, I have learned from MacMillian how to say "the airplane is flying in the sky" in Yoruba! Oké ofurufu ofo ojuruon, in case you feel like saying it yourselves someday. Might come in handy, you can't tell. I'd better tell you that the "n" is nasal, and the "o"s with dots over them are pronounced like "aw".

Thursday, Oct. 8, 1943

L-309 p 2/3

News flash of the week! Lt. (j.g.) Frank Barry of the United States Navy is going to marry next week. The lady in question is a certain Vera Young, employed by BOAC. I regret to state that people are unanimous in disapproving of the idea. One, the Navy office is moving away. Two, he is a Catholic and she isn't. Three, I don't like to have to say it, but Vera isn't terribly prepossessing from any standpoint. I had nothing against her other than not being immediately attracted, until she showed me with coy pride a bracelet with links inscribed with the names of all her ex-boyfriends. Something like a scalp belt. It seemed like a rather embarrassing idea, but I said ummmn, how pretty, and let it go at that. They can't get married by the priest because Vera was divorced, and so Doctor Adair of the church we were married in is going to do the job, I believe next Friday or Saturday.

* NO! - Nils tells
ME HE IS ACTUALLY
THE "DOYEN DU
CORPS DIPLOMA
TIQUE A LAGOS"
having been
DANISH CONSULAR
AGENT FOR YEARS!

No! Nils tells
me he is
actually the
"doyen du
Corps
Diplomatique
A Lagos"
having been
Danish
Consular
Agent for
years!

In the words of the famous little girl in Napoleon Ohio long ago, a Surprise party is getting up, this time on Nils Rasmusson- next Friday Evining. We have been having a perfectly dreadful time remembering not to talk about it in his presence- at least gabby Philindahas. As for Pop's remarks about our "morganatic friends" I suppose that's about where they do stand. However, a dreadful incident occurred several weeks ago which I don't believe I mentioned. Mr. Lynch and Lillemor got into a World Situation discussion at one of our parties, and it wound up with Mr. Lynch saying, most unfortunately, that he'd rather be a dead Norwegian than a live Swede. Well! Lillemor reminded him that the United States had been neutral some time, but all that made no difference. Result, he left the party when we went to the club, and told William only that "he didn't like our friends". Bang, he was gone in a shower of sparks, William and I took a rather poor view of it. A couple of days later Mr. Lynch was heartbroken about it, as he usually is a couple of days later, and started madly trying to dream up an appropriate gesture of apology. A few days his opportunity came at a party given by a mutual friend of theirs. He apologized humbly, she said she "forgave him, but didn't imagine they'd be seeing much of each other". The next day she, too was contrite, and wrote him a nice little note saying so. Whereupon he had them up for drinks, and the situation is cleared up. At the Same time he also cleared up another gigantic battle between him and Major Heller., over a sad little trifle. Mr. Lynch had said some unfortunate and rather pointless things, although I will say we all thought the good Major was the start of the whole ridiculous business. The other day the Major got his final marching orders, so a last minute reconciliation was staged over drinks again. Peace and harmony reign once more, but we are waiting for the next blow to fall.

I went around with Lillemor yesterday to see another drss I'm having made. Lovely! Fun! I'm getting back the money I paid out for the redecorating of our apartment, so am feeling dreadfully rich. I was pleased as punch to hear that a skirt or dress was being sent by Pop and Helen, but I couldn't quite make up my mind between Mamma's

- 3 -

L-309
P3/3

and Pop's letter whether or not you ever did contact the Captain. Since the other package of birthday present came from Helen to me in record time, I suppose you might try it that way again if you didn't reach him. I hope my bitter letter to the mail room will result in something definitex, that is about the other packages, that mother sent.

I gave the redoubtable and gallant Major Pop's telephone number, etc., and he said he would try to get time to call him up, but I don't know whether he will or not, because his time will be short and he has a seven months old son he's never seen. Says he scared to see him, however!

We had John Houser and Bill Bascom to chop the night before last, after a hectic day on which we sent more telegrams than we usually send in a week. The next day was even worse. But we had a most enjoyable evening arguing and shouting and generally acting like people. By the way, Doctor Bascome is an anthropologist, and is married to a young woman named Erica who is five foot two and catches rattlers, big game, and rare birds for zoos, etc. Loves dearly a good rattler hunt, but is very sad when her captives die or are hurt. the good Ph.D himself taught at North-western, and is a very nice man.

Saturday, Oct. 9

Last night we decided (or rather we decided a week or so ago, and it came off last night) to have a fairly large cocktail party for what you might call our smaller obligations, and to conciliate some people in the Police and customs. It was a very successful one if I say so myself as shouldn't, and the small chop came in crisp, hot, peanut-buttery, and cheesy, due to heavy work on Tom's part. The party didn't start to break up until a quarter to ten or so, and naturally we were fairly well exhausted by the time the last man left. Not only that, but in the course of the evening we got three "most immediate" cables in and sent out two code telegrams of our own. We must have impressed the guests, with all the running around and cabling and telephoning and coding and decoding. John Houser's deal is a most interesting one.

Love, because the pouch is leaving.