

IN REPLY REFER TO

FILE NO.

AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AMERICAN CONSULATE
Milan, Italy
May 2, 1940

Dear Folks:

Once again I have letters from each of you on hand. Sarah's letter of the 10th (of April) came on the 23rd, and Daddy's letter of April 16th arrived yesterday from the Manhattan. I am very pleased that these letters have made such good time; please continue sending them in the same way. As in the case of my letter of the 17th, I am writing this to be carried by a courier to the ship and mailed in New York.

I suppose you know all about Betty Lou by this time. The first thing I knew was that I got a special delivery air mail letter from her saying that she had received a telegram from Curt telling her that reservations would be made either on the Manhattan for May 4th or the Washington for the 18th. She asked me to wire and say that she would come on the Washington, as cable abroad, even to Italy, are not being taken in Germany any more. She seems to be rather reluctant to leave, but says that her common sense tells her it's about time. She asked if I didn't think it would be all right to stay longer, so I sent an air mail letter saying that she should stick to the date set, and that under present circumstances no one could tell what might happen next. So by the time you get this, she should be on her way home.

Betty said Aunt Gertrude is going to bring her clear to Genoa. I will meet them here and have already asked permission to go with them to the boat. Unless something unusual happens, I expect to be able to go. This will give me a long-awaited opportunity to visit on board ship and perhaps buy a few cigarettes, etc. I shall recommend Betty to my friend the doctor, so she will have some personal attention during the trip. I also offered to send money to Zurich for them in case they are short of funds outside Germany.

Outside of that, nothing much of importance has happened here. I still spend almost every night at home, reading or studying Italian. I did take a night off recently to go to a revue in which an American girl, Matthea Merryfield, had a prominent part. I met Merryfield in Stuttgart when she was dancing there, so we looked her up between the acts. She was pleasant, and so I had her out for cocktails a couple of days later. Considering the difficult life she leads, she is remarkably unspoiled by it all, although perhaps her ideas on different subjects would hardly be in accord with those

prevailing at the Presbyterian Sunday School. She insisted on my staying to have dinner with her at her hotel, the swankiest in town, and at her expense, too. She always has a lot of wealthy fellows running after her; in Stuttgart it was the local beer baron, who is supposed to be as rich as Croesus.

Our spell of good weather seems to have passed, and the last several days have been chilly, cloudy and rainy. It seems a shame, since it had just got to the place where I could read at home in the evening without having a blanket over my legs. Two days ago I had sharp pains in my back and through my chest, which I imagine was a touch of flu. Fortunately, it appears to have passed off without any real trouble. Outside of that, I am fine.

Adding to what I wrote in my last letter about living expenses, I have totaled up my expenditures for April and find that during the whole month, I spent less than \$200, including everything. "Everything" includes \$50 income tax, and about \$45 for purchasing groceries from Laukhuff. This gave me a good supply of coffee, tea, sugar, canned beef and canned boned chicken. This last was terribly expensive, but I had to take it to get the rest. Food for me and the maid cost about \$17.50 for the month, figured at the actual rate of exchange. If I have to go back to the official rate, it would be \$35, but even that isn't bad. I spent more than that for food in Washington. Unless some extraordinary expenses develop I should be able to save about \$1000 a year.

I believe I forgot to mention in previous correspondence that I was promoted, along with the rest of my class, effective March 1st. My basic salary is now \$2750 instead of \$2500. The post allowance is \$240 a year, and the rent should be about \$750 a year. As long as I don't buy a car or get married, I should have no financial worries at all.

I hope Sarah's statement that I am outside the conflict area will remain true. There seems to be no reason to think otherwise, but nevertheless everyone here is very nervous and worried about the situation. British shipping has just been ordered to stay out of the Mediterranean, and we assume that the British must have some reason for taking such an important step. It seems also to be true, however, that things never happen when they are expected, but at some other time and place. The only solution appears to be for everyone to be on guard all the time, and this applies to the United States too.

I do indeed hope that the Baltimore specialist was able to hold out some hope for Betty, although I myself am not at all optimistic on this score. I fear it is too long now, too late to do anything. I hope Aunt Mary's ankle is all right; last letter you said it was her leg. Love to all,

William

From Ancestry.com:

Mathea Merryfield 1911-1947

Coperow

Posted: 25 Mar 2001 12:00PM GMT

Classification: Biography

Edited: 7 Sep 2003 5:24AM GMT

Surnames: Merryfield, Wilson, Heller

From CABI:

WILSON MATHEA D 06/26/1911 FEMALE HELLER SAN BENITO

Mathea (Wilson) Merryfield internationally known exotic dancer of the mid to late 1930s. Grew up in Stockton, CA, attended Stockton High School -- class of 1928, studied dancing, moved on to the stages of New York and Europe. Knew Winchell, Sobol, Sullivan, featured in many newspapers, imprisoned by Gestapo, etc. Contracted tuberculosis overseas before WW2, recuperated in actors' home Saranac, NY, didn't recover, and sent home to California to die.

MERRYFIELD MATHEA 06/11/1913 HELLER WILSON F CALIFORNIA SAN JOAQUIN 01/28/1947 33 yrs

Accessed 2012-06-11 at:

<http://boards.ancestry.com/localities.northam.usa.states.california.counties.sanjoaquin/477.483/mb.ashx>



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THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Milan, Italy
WK

Mr. & Mrs. L. M. Krieg
197 Hudson Ave.
Newark, OHIO



*Recd 5/14/1940
A.M.*

NEW YORK
WORLD'S FAIR
1940

