

Folder 11: Edna Minker, March – July 1943

Note: Edna Minker became Ralph Minker, Sr.'s secretary at the Ferris School in June 1943 after his secretary left to join the WAVES. She most often wrote her son from the school office, consequently nearly all of her letters are typed. She wrote her son at least twice a week throughout the two and half years he was away, the collection contains 265 letters from Edna Minker.

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday evening, March 2 [1943] Wednesday [March 3, 1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
The anxiety over their son's absence and time in the military begins as Edna seeks news of his welfare and progress. While she tries not to add to his worries, her motherly concern emerges from time to time in her letters throughout the war. The letter relays a story about civilians in Miami who had complained about the troops and the military commander's response. Lee's first letter arrived Tuesday evening, expressed their delight at hearing his news. Reports of friends who are in the service. Wants to know if air mail is faster.			
Note: '43 date and underlining added by Lee Minker at a later date.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Saturday morning [March 6, 1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Offers encouragement during this first week of adjustment to army life. Wants him to report the swelling in his leg. Sending enough cookies for the 7 boys in the room. Her love for Lee is wrapped up in the closing paragraph.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday morning [March 8, 1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
He sounded blue in the last letter, anxious to hear how he is. Lee had reported a problem with his leg in letter of March 3. Reports of various people in the service and Dickinson College. Grandmother Minker happy to get his letter.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Saturday morning, March 13, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Surprised to find snow after several days of early spring. Extensive report on the Civilian Pilot Training program at Dickinson College. News of the family.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday morning, [March 16 1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Air mail is working, haven't received pictures or laundry bag. Asks about KP duty and church services. Offers encouragement after all the reorganization.			
Names: Kirk Kearns, Allen Cavender [Wilmington boys in the service]			
Note: Letter is dated March 16 as she reports filing his taxes; in 1943 taxes were due in March.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday [March 21 1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Lee has sent the first photos home, Edna finds them a fun connection to her son. Sends addresses he had asked for, reports on activities of each member of the family. She is hoping for theatre tickets to see Ethel Barrymore in a play for their 20 th wedding anniversary later in March.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday morning [March 22, 1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
The impact of rationing: gas tank is empty, no hot water for laundry. Discusses fraternity business [Theta Chi at Dickinson]. Waiting for his laundry.			
Names: Bob Cassel			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday, March 24, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Anxiety over not hearing from Lee and a report from a friend's family that he was ill. [Lee was in the infirmary for over a week with an undiagnosed illness.] Daddy got orchestra seats for <i>The Corn is Green</i> for their anniversary celebration.			
Names: Miss Lamb leaves for China to do Red Cross work.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday, March 26, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Still worrying over not hearing from Lee, asks that he send a wire. Tells him about a good report on Lee from a Prof. Thompson at Dickinson. Expresses concern and support, and how special he is to them.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Saturday afternoon April 3, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Lee called on Friday evening to let them know he was moving out west to Morningside College, Iowa. [In fact, they were sent to U. of Nebraska at Lincoln after a brief stop in Iowa.] Edna is thrilled that they were able to speak with him on the phone. Their family friend, Dr. Elizabeth Miller, believes his mysterious illness was due to an allergic reaction to the shots given by the Army. Reports on letters received and family activities.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday April 8, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Comments on four-day trip he had thinking he was at Morningside [College]. Comments on the staff at the [Ferris] School, especially one person with a drinking problem. Ralph Sr. had to appear in court with some difficult juvenile problems.			
Names: Warren Grier			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday morning [April 9, 1943], on reverse 11:30 Friday night	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
They received the post card to Bernice and a returned letter from Sioux City. Hopes he is settling in to new quarters. Handwritten note on reverse referring to a phone call from Lee that they missed while at the Dickinson dinner.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday, April 14 [1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Pleased with the letter they received from Lincoln. Talks to him about the schedule and his studies. Asks about the food, has sent him a box with items he requested, sent him \$10.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday, April 18, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Made applesauce cookies. Arthur Stille is the first casualty from [Ferris] school, wounded in North Africa.			
Names: Steve Povlik, Arthur Stille			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday, April 22, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna is busy housecleaning. She is nostalgic for last year when there was no war, remembering that they drove him and a friend back to Dickinson [College] after the Easter break. Ralph Sr. is speaking at Hanover church, wonders about his Easter services. With some disgust, reports on the politics of appointments to the OPA. Responds to his question about the garden.			
Names: Philip Todd [Army Air Corps, killed, Jan 24, 1943] Jay Bright [Dickinson College]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday morning [April 26, 1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Letter to Bernice was a nice Easter present; Edna especially misses her son on holidays. Responds to his report of scarlet fever outbreak in Lincoln. Hopes the swimming instructors help him to learn. Tells him not to send flowers for her birthday [May 10] as they are expensive. The entire family shares each letter.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday April 29, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Asks about the Easter package they sent him. Report on the weather and the garden. The war has taken its toll on high school life, with fewer good times for the seniors. Shirley's senior prom will be quite informal. She is concerned because Shirley has no plans. His letter has relieved her anxiety about the scarlet fever outbreak.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday morning [May 5, 1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Bishop Leonard [Methodist Church] killed in a plane crash in Iceland. Report on church conferences. Blackout announced while they were at the movies. Mailed his box of requested items.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Saturday, May 8, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Gardening was a shared interest, a way for Lee and his mother to connect; she reports on the tulips and asks his advice. Celebrating Mother's Day and her birthday [May 10] . Reports on social and work activities and a comment about the war news from Africa.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] May 10, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Thanks him for her birthday gift. Report of family activities and the Blue Rocks.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday, May 14, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna is comforted by the phone call on Tuesday. Daddy taking Governor to Blue Rocks opening game. Went to Elkton MD to assist with aftermath of explosion [at Triumph Co.] which killed more than 20 girls from WVA.			
Names: Governor [Walter W. Bacon]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] May 17, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Bernice is using the typewriter, enjoying his letters. Closing week of school. Chapel service, there are 118 boys they know in the service. Talks about family friends who came to visit. Mailed him a large envelope of clippings, Shirley is graduating from high school. Cousin Margaret has finished nursing training.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday, May 21, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Got his letter and pictures. There is a ban on unnecessary driving so Ralph Sr. is not going to commencement at Dickinson. Howell Wilkins is working at the [Ferris] School. Army engineers are talking about taking over the grounds of the school. Gives him information about her work in the garden.			
Names: Howell Wilkins			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday afternoon [May 23, 1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Pleased that he is making such a good record, supposes he has had the thrill of his first flight. When shopping in Philadelphia Edna and Shirley bumped in Leland Incho, who expects to leave soon for the service. Ongoing report of others going into the service. Received an invitation to a graduation May 31.			
Names: Leland Incho [reported as prisoner of war in early 1945], Ben Tisdale			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday afternoon [May 26, 1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Asks what he would like for his birthday. Friends of his stopped in to see her. Police were stopping all cars last night, drivers had their coupons taken from them because there is no legitimate excuse for driving. Asks how he felt after his first flight. Mentions the death of David Reese [May 24, 1943].			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday, May 30, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Compliments Lee on the letter he sent to Shirley describing his first flight, Ralph Sr. shared it with the governor and others. Love and good luck in your flying.			

In Mid-June, Lee Minker left Lincoln, NE for the classification center at Santa Ana, CA. He turned 19 on June 16. There is a gap in letters when Lee transitions to a new base.

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday, June 14, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna tells Lee that his mother is now a "working lady" as daddy's secretary left to join the WAVES, so she is going to fill in even though his sisters don't like it. Connects him to home by describing the weather, all the goings-on at church and with his sisters. Sent him a box of cookies for his birthday. Hope next year he can celebrate at home. [Lee was at home briefly for his 20 th birthday in 1944, shortly before departing for combat.]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday, June 21, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
All of the family waited for a phone call from him, received snapshots of him with the plane. Thinks she will like working as his dad's secretary. Report from Howell Wilkins that the fraternity houses [Dickinson College] are nearly all vacant. Writes to assure him about the worries he expressed over classification school knowing that his heart is set on being a pilot.			
Names: Irving Bodycott, Howell Wilkins [Dickinson College]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday morning, June 28, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Had been hoping to get a call until his letters came. Wilmington had a blackout and an air raid test; Ralph Sr. is the civil defense warden so had to participate. Edna's conflict over his training, learning to fly – and to kill --and the war surfaces. She prays for him every day. Saw Julia[Taylor] in church. The Blue Rocks are slipping in the standings.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday, June 30, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Ralph Sr. left for NY, staff is off so she is responsible for the school. Describes family activities. Discouraged because Shirley isn't showing interest in anything, so they are uncertain about her future. His suitcase has arrived. Three African American boys got away so things are hectic.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday, July 6, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Shirley is going to work at the airport. Family activities, saw Julia [Taylor], said good-bye to a friend leaving for the service. Has to do monthly report for the board.			
Names: Francis McEnery			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday, July 8, [1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Anxious to hear about the 2 weeks of tests. Shirley happy with her job and the money she is earning. Report on several friends and activities at [Grace] church.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday, July 9, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Happy with the news that Lee was classified as a pilot because he wanted it so much. Teases him about the early schedule as he was difficult to get up in time for school. Both his sisters are now working.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday, July 12, [1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Haven't heard from him. Tried to get him a scrapbook, but none to be had. The church is dedicating a plaque to the boys and girls in service. Knows he may be too busy to write.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] July 14, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Note included with an envelope of clippings. Shirley would like to take a course as a medical secretary so they will look for a school.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] July 16, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Wonders about the climate in California. Report of social activities, no longer has time to bake. Anxiously awaiting his pictures, asks questions about pay and insurance policy.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday morning [July 20? 1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Ralph Sr. gave blood at the Red Cross. Difficult to get the rationing coupons they need for oil at the [Ferris] school. They can't get anyone to direct sports at the school so he is playing ball with the boys. Asks about California.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday morning [July 21?, 1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Glad to receive his letter. Thieves stole gas coupons from the Wilmington Ration Board office.			
Names: Bill Virgin [Dickinson]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday, July 26 [1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Responds to the news from his letter at Santa Ana. Expresses hope that they will soon be celebrating the downfall of Hitler with news from Italy and a possible separate peace. Planted poppy seeds in his section of the garden which are coming up. Thinking of him as he completes tests, especially handling a machine gun.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday afternoon [July 28, 1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Very busy at Ferris School. News of Reed Gerald's. Death of Mr. Porter, painter at Ferris. Saw <i>Stage Door Canteen</i> with grandmother and Shirley. Tonight is final program at Vacation Bible School, Bernice is teaching.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday morning [July 30? 1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
The Blue Rocks are having an up and down season. Now that people know she is working at the [Ferris] school, she gets calls at home. Bernice finished up vacation Bible school. They are sending pictures of family and the dog, Ginger.			