

**Folder 12: Edna Minker, August–December 1943**

**Edna’s 19 year-old son, Ralph L. Minker, Jr., known as Lee, is at Santa Ana Army Air Force Base in California going through classification and pre-flight training.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Writer</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Place</b>
Monday, August 2 [1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Reports of friends in the service. Looking for a college for Shirley that offers a medical secretary course. The health service field will certainly expand when the war is over. Notes how conditions have changed in the field of education.			

<b>Date</b>	<b>Writer</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Place</b>
Saturday, August 7 [1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna works at keeping her son connected with home by regularly sending clippings of sports events and friends. Report of friend from Cochrane [MA] who is in the service and came to visit.			

<b>Date</b>	<b>Writer</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Place</b>
[Monday] August 9, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Responds to the letter Lee wrote while in the elevator during the air pressure test. She tries to understand this new job of pilot; comments on article describing the nerve-racking pilot’s work. Has sent back Shirley’s application to Boston University. There is a ban on pleasure driving. She has extra work to do for the school’s board meeting. A brief tease ... “don’t fly too high.”			

<b>Date</b>	<b>Writer</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Place</b>
Wednesday morning [August 11, 1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Brief note responding to the letter he sent about his visit to the Hollywood Canteen and dancing with movie star Hedy Lamarr.			

<b>Date</b>	<b>Writer</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Place</b>
Monday, August 16, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Report on the garden, meeting Reed Gerald and his new wife for dinner at the duPont Hotel. Ralph. Sr. thinks the war has unsettled the situation and that Shirley should not go away to college, so Boston is “up in the air.”			

<b>Date</b>	<b>Writer</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Place</b>
Thursday evening [Aug. 19, 1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Handwritten letter from the beach and a weekend vacation. The guestbook at the house shows they were there in 1937, remembers that he got locked in the bathroom. Discusses “One World” (1943 best seller written by Wendell Wilkie) which Lee had read. She is reading other books about world peace, even as her son is training for war.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] August 24, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Report of their delightful trip to Rehoboth Beach. Disappointed – no letter from Lee, reports of home and an early morning air –raid test.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] August 25, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
They received pictures from Lee, Edna struggles with seeing the new maturity in her son. Ever the mother, she is supportive of Lee passing tests for flying, then corrects his spelling.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Saturday] August 28, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Rain is badly needed, farmers will be losing crops. She is at work at the school as everyone else is off on other duties.			

**At the end of August, 1943 Lee Minker moved on to Basic Flight Training in the bi-wing Stearman at Thunderbird Field II outside of Phoenix, AZ.**

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] September 3, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
The formal picture of Lee in his uniform arrived, she is thrilled and keeps it on her desk. Shirley is going for an interview for Williamsport-Dickinson Jr. College for the medical secretarial course. Shirley was accepted at Boston University. One of the staff at the [Ferris] School was called into the service, leaving them short-handed again. Reports of the grandmothers, movies. Word this morning about the invasion of Italy, Edna struggles to understand why Italy continues to align with Germany.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] September 7, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Full report on the garden and summer heat. Cannot find gym shoes that he asked for. The box arrived with the letters and film. Responds to question about the family lab, Ginger. Both Shirley and Bernice have spotted boys off the grounds of the Ferris School.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] September 10, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Shirley sang beautifully at a district women’s meeting. Rally for the third war loan drive and parade. Asks Lee what news he hears, Italy has surrendered. Shirley is using his room to get ready for college.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday, September 14, [1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Feels she has neglected Lee by being busy all day. Reports on the death of Richard du Pont in a glider plane. Recognizes they were "too jubilant" last week as the Germans continue the fight in Italy. Asks for a time that he might put a call through before Shirley leaves.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Thursday] September 16, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
The film <i>Thunderbirds</i> is going to be shown at the school, it will give them some idea of what he is doing. Bill Hyde washed out because of eye trouble. Almost finished with Shirley's preparation for college. Bernice will be lonely and is unhappy with A.I. duPont high school.			
Name: Bill Hyde [Dickinson]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] September 22, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Lee was able to get a phone call through much to their joy, daddy and Shirley were disappointed. Ralph Sr. is on the Delaware Council of State Executives which is planning problems of state institutions and post-war programs. Praying for him as he made his solo yesterday.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] September 24, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Had to get rid of the Packard, describes the gas rationing, the school had a new Studebaker which they will use as there are no new cars until after the war.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Saturday morning [September 25, 1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Compliments Lee on his letter to Ralph Sr., enclosing clippings on the Blue Rocks. Again, lines of support as he reports being tense about flying. They looked at a plane which was on display at Wanamaker's, wonders how he will be able to handle it.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] September 28, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Congratulations to Lee on his successful first solo flight. Description of the trip to take Shirley to college in Williamsport. Saw many new air cadets on campus. Bernice is going to take voice lessons. She made a double dose of applesauce cakes and shipped them.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Thursday] September 30, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
First letter from Shirley, there was an air raid siren drill at school. Air-raid signal came in Wilmington as unidentified planes had been spotted, sky full of searchlights. [As a civil defense warden, Ralph Minker Sr. received the signal.]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Saturday] October 2, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Report of life at the school, his interesting letter and a letter from Shirley. Encourages him to write his sister during the first few weeks of adjusting to college. People in town asking for him.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday, October 5 [1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Waiting for Lee's box of cactus to arrive, checks on the box of cookies she sent. Reports from college from Shirley. Reports on weather and friends.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] October 8, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna has sent him accounts of the World Series. Bernice has started voice lessons. Talks about his flying training and hope he won't be too tired to do his best. Received a war bond in the mail.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday, October 11, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Tries to understand the receipts he sent, as soldiers were charged for food. Shirley called home and is positive about school. Sending him clippings, reports of people from home.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] October 13, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Final clippings from the World Series. A musical at church. Reports from several boys from Ferris School who are in the service.			
Names: Julia [Taylor]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday, October 15, Sat. October 16 1943, Monday morning [Oct. 18], [1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Letter was written over a four day period. The cactus Lee sent from Arizona finally arrived. Shirley wrote and enclosed his last letter to her. Enjoyed his letter with the drawings. [See Lee's letter of October 3, 1943.] News of his sisters and the World Series. Surprised Shirley at college, daddy splurged on lobster tail dinner. Came home, went to the concert at church [Grace Methodist, Wilmington, DE].			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday, October 19 [1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna encourages her son as his last letter found him down in the dumps. She reminds him that there are times when you want to quit, you "have to keep going." Reports of other boys in the service. Will give grandmother Minker one of the cactus he sent.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] October 26, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Ration books will be issued today, good for two years. She sees rationing as a way to support the war and bringing it to an end. Sent a box of cookies and caramels. A Chinese soldier was in church yesterday along with other servicemen. Asks him questions about the movie <i>Thunderbirds</i> . Julia [Taylor] leaving for Oberlin.			
Names: Julia [Taylor] Ross Pillsbury, Ed Laird, Tom Wills			

### Lee Minker is now in Preliminary Flight Training in Pecos, Texas

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] November 1, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Slight anxiety, they haven't heard from him, wondering if he has moved to another base or working hard on 50 hour army check. Shirley had a good report card, will not be home for Thanksgiving. Only 80 boys left at Dickinson, most are pre-med or ministerial. Reports that there is not enough food at several colleges. Halloween parties at Ferris School.			
Names: Howell Wilkins [Dickinson]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] November 10, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Received a large card {missing from collection} that he was in Pecos, TX. She misses Lee terribly and worries when she does not hear from him. A box with letters and class book from Thunderbird [in the collection] arrived. Concerned about Shirley traveling alone on the train. Asks what he needs for Christmas. As always, expresses her love.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] November 15, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Comments on Lee's busy schedule. Had a talk with Mr. Yingst. Government is urging colleges to plan a month's Christmas vacation to reduce number of students traveling around Christmas and New Year's Day. Asks he write daddy for his Nov. 22 birthday. She will take care of his Christmas shopping. Hopes to find ingredients to make fruit cake.			
Names: Mr. Yingst [A.I. du Pont high school football coach]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday, November 18 [1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Mailed a box to him for Thanksgiving. Mentions movies, watching <i>Bataan</i> took a lot out of her. Report of plans for the family holiday, weddings, and a friend killed in action. Prays they will be together next Thanksgiving.			
Names: Roy Wilson, Ruth Collins, Clyde Taggart, Senator Bridges			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] November 23 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
On stationery from the Hotel Pennsylvania as the family went along with Ralph Sr. who attended a meeting in New York City. Gives Lee the details of the trip to the city. Had a combination family-Thanksgiving dinner with members of the Minker family. Shirley called, getting high marks in chemistry. Reacts to Lee's report that his wisdom teeth are being pulled. Reports on other events that connect him to everything familiar: his girlfriend Julia, the Theta Chi fraternity, and the [Ferris] School.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday, November 26, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Thanksgiving was not much of a celebration with both Lee and Shirley away. Keeps sending him notices of weddings from his crowd, is concerned about the future for these young families when they are thrown back into civilian life. Short letter as she has a lot of work piled up in the office.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday, November 30, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Received his letter of Nov. 26. Report that the mail sent overseas for Christmas has been distributed, will be a letdown then for the troops. She baked 3 fruitcakes. Very pleased with how well Shirley is doing in school. Have not had a blackout all month, one a month is scheduled. Hopeful at the news that he will be home in March. Received his army insurance policy for \$10,000.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Undated	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Sending Lee information about a ministerial contact in El Paso. Still has mimeographing to do for the [Ferris] school newspaper.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Thursday] December 2, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Christmas trees will cost twice what that did last year. Trying to get equipment for basketball for the [Ferris] School, impossible to find basketballs and gym shoes. Enclosing clippings about the Blue Rocks and Phillies.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] December 7, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Shirley's birthday, Pearl Harbor Day, Delaware Day! Recalls Shirley's birth. Sending him a box for Christmas, tells him not to open it early so that he can have something for Christmas Day. Describes plans for Christmas and activities at the [Ferris] School.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] December 10, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Sending his Christmas box, present from his sisters is not ready yet. Received the money he sent to buy Christmas gifts. Played bridge with friends. Showing a movie at the school. Teases with news about football star Creighty Miller.			
Names: Julia [Taylor], Creighty Miller [Wilmington boy who was a Notre Dame football star in 1943]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] December 13, 1943 and Tuesday	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Sent the words to the poem "High Flight" by John Magee. Reminder Christmas box says "Do not open." Daddy has been sick with the cold, running the office, getting ready for Christmas has kept her busy. Making an evening dress for Bernice for a dance on Dec. 23. Sending a copy of <i>The Dickinsonian</i> .			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday, December 17, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Visit from a young black man who used to work at the house, now in the air force. Will miss the <i>Messiah</i> , daddy is still sick. Asks about his flying. Selected a present for Julia [Taylor]. Trying to figure out a time for him to place a call. Her concern for his health shows in several comments. A friend from their early days in Mass. sent Lee \$10. Feels honored to be asked to speak at the meeting of the Woman's Society for black women. Does not want to serve again as president of the Wilmington district as she is working in the office. Reminds him of their love.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday, December 29, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
[Lee was able to call at 1 a.m. on Dec. 28.] Happy just to hear his voice on the phone. Report of a happy day in New York; effort to go to Radio City failed, saw Sonja Henie show and had dinner at fancy Swedish restaurant. Describes their Christmas activities, not the same without him at home.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] December 31, 1943	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Opening is full of yearning for her son. Pleased with the pictures he sent and that he is looking well. Details of family life. A family member died, one of the sons was wounded on the Solomon Islands. Prays that New Year's next year the world will be celebrating peace.			
Names: Gus Minker			