

Folder 13: Edna Minker, January-July 1944

Lee Minker is in Advanced Flight School in Pecos, Texas from Jan 4 , 1944 to March 12, 1944

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] January 4, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
The letter is a report on post-holiday activities: Shirley returning to college, everyone liked the pictures he sent, Bernice is now a cheerleader at A.I. [du Pont High School], did their Christmas boxes arrive?			
Names: Uncle Marion [Minker], Drs. Edgar and Elizabeth Miller, Doris Maxwell's parents, the [George] Herings.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] January 5, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna is happy to no longer be the head of the Wilmington Women's Society, but we soon take over leadership in the WSCS at the state level. Bernice is a sub on the basketball team and singing the lead in <i>Pirates of Penzance</i> . Legislative committee visited the school. Discusses how long the mail is taking. Anxious to hear about his Christmas.			
Names: Mason Robertson [sailor]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] January 7, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Received his letters with plans about graduation and uniform. Asks if he can get a longer furlough than ten days. Shirley was hurt in gym class. Against her wishes she is the president of [women's society] again as she doesn't have time. Pleased he is in the final days of training, asks questions about his letter.			
Names: Tony Bright [a Ferris School boy now in the army]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Saturday] January 8, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Describes bad weather. Edna comments on the president's state of the nation message requesting more troops and the political discussion over compulsory peacetime service. They are frantic for help at the school, reports on staff problems. Working on a report for the governor.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] January 12, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Reminds Lee to write thank you notes for Christmas gifts. Relaxed by going to a concert with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Bernice critiqued the singer. Reports the serious car accident by A.I. [du Pont High School] students had after a sports event.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] January 17, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna describes a winter storm, Bernice is sledding as she draws of picture for Lee of life at home. Air raid test was called so Ralph Sr. [a civil defense warden] dashed to the control center. Shortage of doctors, their friends Dr. Wagner and Dr. Edgar are busy. Julia wrote to thank her for doing Lee's Christmas shopping for her. Asks if he gets additional time for traveling when he is on leave. Shirley has an active social life.			
Names: Julia [Taylor] Dr. Edgar [Miller], Dr. Wagner			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Thursday] January 20, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Went to see <i>Madame Curie</i> , daddy got tickets for a new show. Shirley and Bernice's activities. Admiral Halsey spoke at the 4 th War Loan Drive. Trying to figure his uniform request for "pink" pants, talked to some flyers.			
Names: Admiral Halsey			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] January 24, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Daddy broadcasts the Daily Devotions Hour. Saw a play <i>Decisions</i> about race prejudice in America. Reports sports scores and Ferris School activities.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday, January 28, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
New army plan to curtail training. Discusses issues of who is to serve. Days are crowded, would like more programming for the boys [at Ferris School]. Asks about advanced flying training.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] January 31, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Plans for graduating and coming home. Problems with the staff at the school.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] February 4, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Problems getting phone calls through and getting film. Report of meeting General Irwin who had been at Bataan and Corregidor. Reports on Shirley and Bernice. Teases Lee about being best man in a friend's wedding. Edna is pushing for Lee to get more time for the furlough. She heard about a boy getting transition time for travel which extended his leave, asks Lee to look into it.			
Names: General Irwin, [George] Hering			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] February 8, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Bernice was able to find film. Shirley is tired from studying and dating on weekends. The excitement over the furlough grows: Another reminder of the need to have travel time and plans for being at home.			
Names: Ross Pillsbury, Jim Broad			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday, February 9 [1944]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Brief note on trains and planes as a way of getting home.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] February 11, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna's love shines through this letter as she thanks him for sending her a valentine. Snowy weather, Bernice has another cold. She is getting more excited each day looking forward to the furlough.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday, February 14, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Winter weather, more travel ideas, Shirley's social life. Musical events and news of friends. Grandmother Minker and lemon meringue pie bring notes of Lee's childhood.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] February 15, 1944	Edna Minker & Ralph Minker, Sr.	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Note from dad about finding a plane to travel home. His letter was late so she didn't send roses to Julia. Lee will be able to get summer uniforms in Wilmington. News that married men are now being called up including those with children. Ben [Johns] will be home when he is on leave.			
Names: Ben Johns			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday, February 17, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Got Julia [Taylor] chocolates as a belated Valentine gift. The family eagerness over his coming time at home is reflected in the continual suggestions about travel. Question about a boy who "washed" out of training.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] February 21, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Family is going to New York for a voice coach to hear Bernice. Shirley calls home, she is homesick. Report that fraternity houses at Dickinson [College] are a wreck. Saw her first Bombers game [basketball team]. News of various people who are away in the service. Bernice is to lead a discussion at a conference on post-war planning.			
Names: Howell Wilkins			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday, February 23 [1943]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Detailed report of the trip to NYC. Ralph Sr. is on a committee to oversee inductees at Fort Dix [New Jersey]. Edna is concerned that the draft is now taking married men with children. Hopes he does not have too much flying crammed into his last days.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] February 29, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Lee had called home on Friday, discussion of difficulties with travel arrangements. They are going to hear a speaker on keeping Palestine for the Jews, she is eager to hear him. Another engagement is announced. Edna is anticipating when he will be home.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday, March 3, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna is counting the days to her son's return to Wilmington. She responds to his concerns about possibly not graduating. News of friends in the service.			
Name: Creighty Miller [football star]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] March 6, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Another letter where Edna is counting the days to Lee's return. Bernice had surgery to cut a cord on her tongue which would impact her singing. She is trying to manage daddy's schedule. Encloses a check, admonishing him to watch his money traveling home. Will be thinking of him on Sunday when he graduates.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] March 8, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
A wonderfully supportive letter responding to his comments about the jitters, acknowledges how much alike they are. Plans for activities when he is home. Shirley called, a boyfriend, Fred is due to leave for the service. They are not allowed to send a telegram of congratulations but will be thinking about him on Sunday.			

Lee Minker graduated from Flight School on March 12, 1944. He arrived home on leave on approximately March 14, leaving again a week later for Transitional Flight Training in the B-17 in Roswell, NM.

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday, March 22, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
The moving opening of this letter conveys all the emotions of mothers with a child in the service. The week went by so quickly, they are proud of him and miss him. [Lee had taken the train to Chicago.] News of friends in the service. She hopes he will be able to come back again soon.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Sunday] March 26, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna is wistful about last Sunday when Lee and Shirley were with her in church and the large family dinner. Daddy went to the Bombers [basketball] game. More reports on Wilmington boys in the service. Discussion of paper work for a savings account. Mentions damage to the car. Again writes of their love and support.			
Names: Emily Sanders			

Lee Minker arrived in Roswell, New Mexico for training in the B-17 bomber on March 23.

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Thursday] March 30, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Relieved to received his letter from Roswell. News of a friend who is a POW who had been a gunner on a bomber. Responds to his description of physical training and flying. She wishes they were closer as he does cross-country training. Shirley will arrive home next week. No chocolates available in the store. Wonders about the impact of the B-17 training on him.			
Names: Ramon Harding – a prisoner of war.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Undated cablegram [circa April 1, 1944]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Asks for measurements for clothes.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] April 4, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Impact of rationing as Edna tries to find the kind of chocolates he likes to send for Easter. They have a guest at home and Edna is running the office, always in the effort to make life easier for Ralph Minker, Sr. Reports on his sisters, concert, weather, baseball. Prays for the war to be over and her son to be safely beside her in church.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] April 5, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Snow just before the Easter holiday. The store lost his measurements, thus the wire. Will send clothes and other items in a few days. Mr. Hamm [Ferris School staff] is trying to get five of the boys into the navy. Reports on the accidental bombing of a town in Switzerland. [April 1, 1944 Schaffhausen] News that Wendell Wilkie will not campaign for the presidential nomination, Dewey will run and Roosevelt will be re-elected.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday, April 10, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna especially misses her son on holidays. She wore a new coat with gardenias he sent and a pair of his wings. Her poignant thanks for the flowers communicates a great deal about their relationship. Description of the Easter service and the music which included his sisters. [Lee evidently had an accident with the car while on leave.] Discussion of his savings, the car accident, and investing for the future. Saw <i>Song of Bernadette</i> . Acknowledges the strain Lee feels in flying a fortress[the Boeing B-17]. Concerned he is not going to gain weight.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday, April 12 [1944]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
A newsy letter of the school's former secretary, Miss Horner, church meetings, events at Ferris School. Sending him subscription to the newspaper.			
Names: Miss Horner			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Saturday] April 15, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Received his letter in 4 days. Report of family, the garden and activities at the [Ferris] school.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday, April 20 [1944]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Apologies for not writing as days are busy with conference of social workers. Daddy is out every night of the week on business and civilian defense. News of Shirley and Bernice. Asks about his flying.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday, April 21, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Lee's report of the grueling work of flying the B-17 has Edna wondering at the pace and hoping he will be home again before the next change of bases. Acknowledges how much help Grandmother Jones [her mother] is at home while she is working. Describes Shirley's desire for more voice training but wants her to have secretarial training. Motherly advice to Lee about getting rest.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] April 25, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Talk about D-Day has everyone anxious. The documentary on the Memphis Belle by the war department is being shown this week; friends saw it. Sent a box of cookies, celebrated grandmother [Jones] birthday. Edna then wonders about her future at age 73 with Lee's children playing around her knee. Her despair about the war continuing on connects with how much she is thinking of him.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Thursday] April 27, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Presume he is busy getting flying hours in as they have not heard from him. Edna's interest in the future after the war is shown as they attended a talk on "The Six Pillars of Peace." News from the Ferris School and his sisters.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Saturday, April 29	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Opened the letter he wrote to Bernice. Boys from the Ferris School went to the Marine Terminal to work unloading due to the shortage of help. Wishing Wilmington was on his cross-country training. More reports of general shortage of help. The clothing store is not able to get the shoes he needs.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] May 2, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
A 4-engine plane flew over the school, causing Edna to wish it were Lee coming home. Edna describes the activities of the school and family, painting a picture that brings home to her son.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] May 5, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Responds to his letter of April 30 about getting a crew and asks if he will get another leave. Sending his [identification] bracelet which had to have links taken out. Bernice has gone on her first train trip traveling by herself, to visit Shirley in Williamsport. Their mutual love of gardening is shared when Edna describes the plants in bloom [at Ferris School].			
Name: Bill Hyde			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] May 8, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna and Ralph Sr. stopped in Carlisle [location of Dickinson College] on their way to pick up Bernice. Edna is thinking about Lee who is training for combat rather than on the college campus. News of her birthday and family visits. She is busy as the staff at the [Ferris] School are out of the office.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] May 10, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
The governor will be at the dinner for the school's spring festival. She describes her birthday gifts and family news. Disappointed they did not get to see the documentary film, <i>Memphis Belle</i> . Wishing he could be with her in church on Mother's Day as Bernice is singing.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] May 16, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
An early morning phone call from Lee, mixed message from Edna who is longing for a visit but says not to worry if he can't get home. Reports on Ralph Sr.'s speaking schedule and comments on the local politics and lack of cooperation. Provides a financial report of his savings. A new ruling on ministerial training will limit the Protestants in training for the church.			
Names: Frank Horner, Howell Wilkins			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] May 23, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Reports of family acquaintances. Grandmother Minker is going to have surgery. Change in ruling about ministerial training. Report on the state of the garden and the new rose bushes which are not showing signs of growth. A line of support for Lee as he completes the demanding training in the B-17.			
Names: Howell Wilkins			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday, May 25 [1944]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Grandmother Minker is fine after the operation. Both black and white boys from Ferris School Glee Club have been invited to a concert. Her work in the office is piling up.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Memorial Day [Tuesday, May 30, 1944]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Bernice marched in the Memorial Day Parade with the AWVS [American Women's Voluntary Services] There were 7 runaways from the school Saturday night. Went to Williamsport to pick Shirley up from college. Proud of Shirley who received several prizes. She has conflicted feelings about being elected to the Council of Girl Scouts.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] June 2, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna is feeling frustrated, she can't get everything done. Bernice is taking exams, Edna is concerned that she "does not work overtime." Frustration continues with the "madhouse" of proms, commencements, grandmother Minker at home with them. Bounces back with statement of good health and "I can take it" similar to the encouragement she has given Lee.			
Names: Ben Johns, Howell Wilkins			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday, June 5 [1944]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Friend of Shirley's is staying with them, describes the social activities. Shirley and Bernice are going to apply for work at All American Aviation. Both Shirley and Bernice were accepted for the Brandywiners, will be doing weekly rehearsals. Asks how much he is flying.			
Names: Gladys Meyers, Emily Sanders			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday, June 8 [1944]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
The reports of D-day landing have her feeling apprehensive and she wonders what information they get. Attended a bond rally, the board is at the school today. Cheers Lee by describing what is blooming in the garden. Sending him a box of food to remember his birthday, does not want to load him down as he is going overseas. Wonders if he could spend the day at home. Hopeful the war will not continue much longer.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] June 9, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Short note that the box of goodies for his birthday was mailed. Hard for Edna to be apart from her son on his birthday, [June 16].			

Lt. Lee Minker apparently had a short leave in mid-June on his way to Tampa, Florida, there is no record of it other than Edna's June 28 letter and one on May 30, 1945 that he dropped in on them for his birthday [June 16].

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] June 28, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Family went to Blue Rocks game, Edna stayed home to relax. She is delighted that Lee was home and then warns him about getting too much Florida sun.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday, July 3, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Responding to Lee's first letter from Tampa where he is living in a tent. Description of their day-to-day life at home: movies, the garden, grandmother. She is now district chairman for the next War Fund drive.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] July 7, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Lee is on his way to Gulfport, MS. Edna will give a pair of his wings to Julia [Taylor] for her birthday. Report of boys home from the service. Waiting for the family dog, Ginger, to give birth. Surprised that ants got into the last box of food she sent. Waiting eagerly for the next letter with news about the crew.			
Note: 2 nd paragraph of original is blurred.			
Names: Julia Taylor , Billy Baird, Harry Connelly			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday, July 17, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Sent his box of clothing, report of a family wedding and a family member who is now a 2 nd Lt in the Army Nurses Corps. Going to a concert, describes Negro soloists. Wishes he could go with them. Later she reports on the concert, misses his being there with the family. Asks that he write to a friend who lost her husband.			
Names: Todd Duncan, Ann Brown			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Saturday, July 22 [1944]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna congratulates him on the solo flight with the crew. The news of Germany [the attempted assassination of Hitler] leads her to be hopeful the war will be over by Christmas. She is reluctant to be too optimistic. Report on Ginger's puppies, she does not want to keep one of them as she is busy in the office. Advises him to keep the moth flakes in the pocket of his clothes.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] July 24, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
She is working in the office, made blackberry jelly, and is helping Bernice make a dress. Report on their cold summer supper. Went to the Officer's Club at Ft. du Pont, 2000 German prisoners are there, some serving as waiters.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] July 31, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
His sisters are singing with the Brandywiners. Reacts to his news of flying training. Delaware reached its war bond quota. Report on the puppies.			