

February 12, 1918
Houston, TX
8:30 a.m.
3 cents

Miss Gainor Roberts
210 West Tenth Street
Dallas, Texas

Well, honey, I sure do feel relieved since you got that letter. Answer it if you want to.

I had a letter from Gibbons today, also sure was glad to get it. He was telling me all about Camp Zero. I expect that that is a good name for it alright. However, it is pretty warm down here tonight, but I will tell you a little later about a night that wasn't.

I phoned Ethel the other night and she told me that Boo had been put into class 4. I guess she is tickled. That is about all she wanted to talk about and I can't blame her. However, it won't be that way with me, I don't guess. I haven't written yet. It sorter seems useless to me. My roommate is going to the next camp if he can get in. Seems like I am always getting one who leaves and joins the service. In the three years that I have been long as these dogmatic ideas and creeds remain just so long is the church going to continue to lose prestige, and there is no doubt but that is it.

Well, we have got results from our petition. Practically everything we asked for was granted and tonight sorter seems like old times with the room full of boys studying and not being afraid that some one is going to walk in and nab them. Last Saturday, the Officers (we always seem to be the goats) met the board of trustees, military committee and a faculty committee. Dr. Lovett was also there. I felt real funny sitting in front of such important personages and they read to us the revised rules which they had made and which were to take effect at 12 noon, Saturday.

So we had a meeting of the student body at eleven o'clock, Saturday morning, and the rules were read to them. You should have seen the girls when they were told that they didn't have to wear their uniform all the time, only on those days on which they have their physical exercise. The drill for women being abolished, they came near going wild and I don't blame them at all. They have voluntary red cross work. And then, Gainor, came something that made us all feel pretty bad. Of course, speeches were made but this time mostly from the "uppers" and you know when a man is moved to tears on such an occasion, he must either be awful happy or awful hurt. But one member of the military committee did that and also Dr. Lovett. Gainor, honey, he made the best talk I have ever head. It was short, but to the point. You know he certainly had been criticised (sic) in the papers and especially in that paper that came out here. While he was talking he didn't seem to me to be the president, but a man pleading for someone to treat him as a friend. When he ended, he just put out his hand and ask us to take it and thus close the gulf existing between the students and he. Of course, we are all happy because now we can again go and come when we please so long of course as we are not on the delinquency report.

Well, now I am going to write you a little narrative entitled, "Our Trip down the San Jacinto River". You know I wrote and told you that we had intended going but when I got to lab to find out, they were still in the mood to go, so we went. I took, and thank goodness that I did, 3 blanks with me. We hired a Ford and so six from Biology department left in a drizzling rain and strong norther to have a "good time". Just at that time, it seemed to me that I could have a better time staying behind. Imagine a Ford load with six people all having on overcoats, all having bed clothing, eats for five meals, and then different containers for interesting specimens that we might find, then you will have an ideal picture of what we looked like when we left here. We went to a place 24 miles from Houston on the San Jacinto which would make 20 Trinity's and is also salt water. Everything went along pretty smooth until we got into town and two of the fellows went in to get some pies. Then Dr. Muller who later became christened as "Aunt Muller". Dr. Altenburg later known as "Mother Altenburg". Mr. Frizzel, a fellow in Biology, and myself ran off and ate some ice cream. Of course, when the others came back we were gone, and the search began. Well, they found us and used a little better judgment than we did and got some hot chocolate. When we did get started again four of us were cold on both sides, in and out. When we got to Lynchburg, we had to wait for the ferry to take us across the Buffalo Bayou. Here we like to froze. It was just 3 ½ miles from here that we were to go in a valley kind of sheltered from the wind. When we got there it was still raining and everything was good and wet. We split up into the parties 2 to make a fire, 2 to get H₂O and 2 to find a barn or vacant house where we might spend the night. It looked punk to me. We finally got a fire started because the trees were pretty thick and all covered with moss so some spots were still dry. We had cocoa, chile, and beans, and bread for supper. Oh Honey, how good it did taste. Well, it was out of the question of staying in the woods for the night and a vacant house about ½ mile up the road had been found. Now you know a Ford can get awful stubborn. Well this one got that way and wouldn't start and we couldn't start it. So we had to push that thing for a half mile, then mud and nice puddles of water. The rain was still falling but not so much, but the wind was still blowing. We finally got there an old four room, one walled, dirty spooky farm house, but it looked like a palace. We found an old water bucket and some pieces of wood in the house. So we cut some holes in the bucket and made a fire in the house, putting it on two tin cans. Gee, but it felt good. As we started carrying in the blankets, Aunt Muller wanted to lead the way because he said he had a candle and so he would light things up for us. His candle proved to be a stick of shaving soap. So here we had to stand holding our arms full of things until he went back out and struck match after match until he finally found it. Well, we went in all like drowned rats. The fire was the center of attraction. We sat around and got dry and told tales, and, honey, I did something I have never done before and don't intend to do again. I smoked two cigarettes, but I won't do it anymore. At about 10:30 we went to "bed". It was a hard wood floor and I'm still sore from "sleeping" on it. Frizzel and I slept together. I nearly froze. My feet got so cold I couldn't feel anything in them. When morning finally did come, we all felt just about alike. First, we heated some water and got the Ford started. It wasn't raining anymore, but was still cold and cloudy. Didn't have anything to eat until eleven o'clock. But by then the sun was out and it was nice and warm. Had a big dinner and then went bumming around awhile, took a boat ride up the river in an old row boat and played around on an old wrecked dredge. Later on we gathered in lots of wood and moss. You remember seeing that gray moss on the trees. Well, we sued that for beds and believe me it sure was fine. We made a bed big enough for

six. Frizzell, Dr. Muller and myself fixed us a good sleeping bag out of our blankets and with our feet toward the fire we slept. The others got cold during the night and had to get up to put wood on the fire. That along woke us up. This morning it started raining again, but didn't last for more than 45 minutes. Frizzel and Aunt walked back and at 6:15 tonight were not back yet. I can testify that at this time of the year, the water is very cold for bathing and should not be indulged in. It was so cold it actually burned. I have two mid-terms tomorrow and am rather sleepy for studying but guess it would be a good idea if I did so.

Honey, you know, I don't want you to give up the ghost and I know you wouldn't do it even if I did go. Because sweetheart, I just feel it is coming sooner or later, and though I had rather for it to be later. I'm afraid it can't be.

With lots and lots of love, honey.

Otto