

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Letters to Alice Mae Jackson

1920

DB37-4B

#1
**Letters written to Miss Alice Mae Jackson, 1017 Elmwood Ave.,
Wilmette, Illinois by "Dottie"**

EAGLE CAMP

Out-in-the-middle-of-Lake Champlain.

South Hero, VT

June 29, 1920

Dear Kitty

Your letter and your mother's pretty card were waiting here for me.
Merci bien une autre fois

We have arrived safely and had a lot of fun coming up. Marjorie Pierce and Avis Dole came up to wait on table and Erminie came up to stay a week with me.

We had a lovely time in Cuttingsville. We had vanilla ice cream for dinner with wild strawberries on top and my cake was spice cake with lovely white frosting.

I'm writing up in the cottage and mother and Aunt Bessie are sitting on the couch nearby talking most interesting conversation so if this is mixed up you'll know there's a reason.

All of our Perry cousins are here but three of the Fullers and they are coming. Mary Elizabeth is almost three and has darling yellow curls with a bright red ribbon. She talks a lot, too.

I forgot to say in my last letter—the yellow one that I'm sending now—that I wore the white silk sox you sent me my last birthday to our Baccalaureate and Commencement services. They're lovely.

It thundered and lightened beautifully last night and Ermine and I were down on Nichols Row along by the lake with no one on either side of us. We just decided several times that the storm was leaving when we heard a beautiful crash but we survived and arose at six ten and went swimming. I practiced taking cold baths before I left so as to be already for the lake before breakfast and it wasn't nearly as cold as the bathtub.

And I didn't tell you all the lovely things I received for graduation.

Mother- my embroidered slip

Russell- "Seal of the Yukon" by Service.

Pin comme ceci – plus au maizé [shows picture of "gold" crescent moon with flower] - Cousin Mary .

Two pair plain silver lingerie clasps with my initials—Avis

Another pair – Aunt Louise

Black silk sox – Aunt Ellen & Uncle Harry.

Silver spoon from Grandma Russell & 1 from Cousin Frances
Box of candy – blue round enameled (box with hand painted pansies – Cousin Mabel
“Little Book of American Verse” – Cousin Abbe.
Ivory hair retainer – Teddy
Five dollars – Grandma P.
Check \$15 – Uncle George
Gold piece & book – Aunt Mollie
Glove card – Aunt Hattie
Lovely white satin camisole with filet crocheted yoke – Alice & Rosie Fuller
Crocheted tab collar – Mary Fuller
Picture of stone wall & apple orchard in one of those little gold frames – rest of Fullers
Picture photos – Pat and Helen David
Diary-room on one page for same day of four years – Patersons
Ballads of a Caceihaka – Ma plus chere chum
Correspondence cards – Rutland library
Commencement book – Erminie

I guess that's all. The waist does fit beautifully as I have said before et je l'adore. I would like to see you right off quick & will sometime because daddy really is better.

You will have a wonderfully in your new summer residence. It must be as exciting as a hope chest.

Love & Love

@E -Dottie

35 Madison St.
Rutland Vt.
September 22 [1920]

Dearest Kitty Chum,

You must think that an earthquake has swallowed me up or I've got so thin I faded away, but it hasn't and I haven't.

I am now living at Avis' and trying to hold down my position as assistant librarian in the Rutland Free Library. Russ is here attending R.H.S. a dignified senior. Mother and Teddy are in Cuttingsville awaiting the ninth of October when we are to have a furnished flat on Robert's Ave not far from Uncle Harry's. Mr. Pratt in whose house we lived last year moved out his furniture and rented his house unfurnished while we were at camp.

Now that you have the general facts I'll begin on the details.

Of course I wanted to start college this year and we thought for awhile that daddy would be well enough to go home this fall. Mr. Barker went to see the doctor at Waverly in August and he told him that daddy had really and truly gained and he thought he would be well in six months at the most. It was wonderful to hear that as it is the first time any doctor has told us anything more definite than that he would surely recover., but it would take time. But I didn't want to leave mother here until he was allbetter as Teddy used to say. I had hopes of a position in the library this winter as the next best thing to home and college so when I got a letter from Miss Cheney saying that Miss Crowther was to take the entrance examinations for Carnegie Library School and if she passed she would immediately confer with her directors and make me an offer of her place. I was pretty excited. I got the letter about the first of September and Miss Crowther was to take her exams that Wednesday.

The ninth Teddy & I left Camp for Cuttingsville where I was going to spend the rest of the suspense & have a vacation. We had to stop over in Rutland and Erminie met me at the station to tell me Miss Crowther was accepted & to give me a letter from Miss Cheney offering me the place as assistant librarian at forty dollars a month. I was pretty glad as I do like the library work and I wouldn't feel that my year would be wasted even though I wouldn't be in school. Miss Crowther was going the thirteenth so Miss Cheney wanted me to begin the eleventh. Ted & I went out to grandpa's that eve and Friday afternoon I came back to Rutland.

I was some scared as I was afraid I couldn't do the work & answer the questions folks would ask & lecture the young 'uns for keeping their books over due but it really isn't half as bad as I thought. And it is much more interesting than when I just worked after school & evenings occasionally. Now I work from 8:30 till 1:00 & from 2:30 till five every day but Friday P.M. & Saturday A.M. which I have "off". Now we are open just Tuesday &

Saturday evenings & I work then from seven till nine. Thursdays I come home for dinner at 11:30 & back at 1:00 as that is Miss Gorton's P.M. off.

The first week I was here I lived at Ermine's but she left Monday for Middlebury College so Saturday I came down here till the first Saturday in Oct. when I go to Uncle Frank's for the remainder of my roving life. Variety is the spice of life!

When people want books reserved for them at the lib. We call them up when the books come in. Today I called up & told Mrs. McClintock her book on basketry had come in. Then I heard the boy who answered the phone say "Hurry up mother & talk to the wet wash, they're saying something about baskets. She acted or sounded some surprised when I told her it was the library.

I have lots of fun calling up people every morning & telling them that book so and so is charged on their card and is three days overdue.

By next summer I guess I'll have got all over my antipathy for doing business by phone. How I'd like to call Wilmette 439 some morning.

I expect you have been home some time now from your lovely vacation. From your letters it must have been about perfect. Have you read the "Recreation of Brian Kent?" I'm reading it now - also "Under the Country Sky" by Grace Richmond and "T.R.'s Letters to his Children". But not all at the same minute.

If you answer right away send it to 35 Madison but after the ninth of October we'll be at 18 Roberts'. It's a lovely flat in an almost new house. We have a parlor, 3 bedrooms, dining room, kitchen, 2 bathrooms. The rooms are lovely & sunny & the furnishing nice. We have a piano and victrola. We just happened to discover the place, through Miss Gorton the other lady in the lib. I went up & interviewed the lady the Friday P.M. I came back to Rutland and persuaded her to save it till mother should come down from camp the next day.

I got so lonesome for you the other afternoon coming home from work. It looked like a lovely sunset so I went up on the hill in front of the hospital at where there is a lovely view of the western hills and I did so want you there to help enjoy it. It was a wee bit early for the sunset but the clouds & the hills were lovely. I don't think anyone here likes the same things with me the way we used to although Avis & Ermine are awfully nice.

You all must think we are prevaricators or procrastinators because we're forever saying we're coming back home but we have been living on the thought for over two years & we are coming the minute daddy is well.

With love to you & yours
Dottie.

#3

18 Roberts Ave.

Wednesday eve [October 13, 1920]

Dearest Kitty Chum-

I was so glad to have your lovely newsy letter that although I owe lots of others I'm going to answer it tout suite- I've just this minute finished reading it. I'm so glad you're going to New Trier for drawing. How I wish I were too - though I guess it would be rather a waste of time except for the companionship part. I'll feel pretty proud with a chum studying at the Academy of Fine Arts on Michigan Avenue.

I bet you have fun in drawing - We used to have loads of it - Jinny Agan, Pat, Dorothy Weedon and I sat at the same table.

Your blouses must be darling. I'm trying to decide on a pattern for a brown silk poplin one and also for a white shirtwaist which I want to make myself.

It must have been great to see Peggy. It sounds like a story book the way you got acquainted with her and then to have luncheon and go to the movies with her!

I just love my library work. I liked it so much at first I was afraid the novelty would wear off but I've worked a month and two days and still like it. I got my first check today but haven't cashed it or deposited any yet.

There are two high school girls working now and Miss Gorton is going to break in a third soon. One of them, Fran Salisbury is loads of fun. This last week Miss Gorton has been having her vacation so part of the time when Miss Cheney was busy upstairs or when she wasn't there at all I was boss. It was rather fun but I was pretty glad to see Miss Gorton back this morning. I had to call up thirteen or rather eleven people this morning to tell them their books were four days over due and two to tell them the books they wanted reserved were in for them. I'll be quite an accomplished phoneist.

While Miss Gorton was gone Miss Cheney showed me how to sort the catalogue cards and file them in. Miss Cheney is great and I love to have her show me more stunts. She also gave me a pamphlet on library penmanship which accounts for the perfectly superb appearance of this letter. I am supposed to be writing the legiblest hand possible but I guess it will take some practice to make perfect.

Before I had worked quite a while at the library I used to think Miss Gorton was cross and stood somewhat in fear of her but as you can see from the middle one of the three on the library steps in the enclosed (if I don't forget it) snap - my thoughts and fears were ungrounded. However she doesn't always wear that grin. She is awfully dark but has the loveliest blue eyes. She usually is quite dignified but we have lots of fun. One Saturday night someone left some rolls in the library. Miss Gorton wasn't there then, but Monday morning when I explained them to her she thought we had better dispose of them soon so we set Tuesday night after closing as the hour for the deed provided no one claimed them. Once someone left some crackers in the

library and when they had been there unsought for two weeks Miss Gorton & Miss Crowther began disposing of them when they felt in need of nourishment. Then one night in walked the owner and asked Miss Cheney if she had found any crackers. Miss Cheney searched around and then inquired of Miss Crowther their whereabouts. Poor Miss Crowther didn't know what to say & Miss Cheney said, "You didn't eat them did you?" – just in fun.

Well no one claimed the rolls so Miss Gorton provided a steamer as by that time they were rather aged – and some weenies & I brought some lovely mustard & a knife whereby to spread it – Fran Salisbury was working that eve & Russ came down for me so we had quite a party. We started the water for warming the doggies a little before nine on the gas plate in our private back room and had no trouble in making way with the left behinds. No one has inquired for them yet.

Saturday our family came in from Cuttingsville and Saturday afternoon we had supper together and it did seem good. Our house is lovely and cozy with nice furnishings. It isn't much older than our own home in Wilmette. There are lots of nice books and victrola records & quite a lot of piano music so we feel pretty fortunate. I wish you folks could drop in on us sometime. Oh how I wish it.

Teddy and I have just been out visiting the stars. I got a nice astronomy book from the lib. & we inspect the heavens each clear night. We have learned the northern cross which is also cygnu the swan, the lyre & the crown and we know where Hercules & Perseus are but we aren't sure which is head and which heels.

Yesterday was Columbus Day – as I guess you know - & a holiday for lib. & school. Russ, Ted, Avis and Bob Dole & I celebrated by going to McLaughlin Falls, six and a half miles south east of here. We planned to start about seven thirty but when we arose it looked so cloudy we had to wait. About ten it began to look more promising & we departed. How I wished you were with us cause I know you would have loved it. We went "over the Notch" as they call it – on the road that goes up through the woods between East and Bald Mts.

We had a beautiful view of Rutland on the way up & when we had crossed over were right in the heart of the Green Mts. Near Kilington, Piko & Shrewsbury. The woods were gorgeous with red and yellow maples and dark evergreens. The maples are too grand. And the sky was bright clear October blue. Imagine groves like the enclosed leaf. Along part of the woodsy road were lots of lovely green Boston ferns. We dug up some little plants – which I carried home in my tam well lined with big whistlewood leaves and they look quite perky and nice.

We arrived at the Falls about one thirty. They are great. There are two falls, about forty feet high in all – Russ says to say more or less but I guess its about right. The upper one is artificial - made of logs and not so pretty but the water has hollowed a basin out of the rock that is lovely. The lower falls just falls right down over the rocks and is all foamy & lovely. We built our fire

near them and cooked wieners & bacon. It was just grand & would have been perfect if you had been there. After going up & down twelve miles of hills yesterday its hard work to go up and down stairs today but it was well worth it.

Can you imagine me teaching school? A man came into the library a while ago and offered me a school off in wilderness near Sherburne. I was stunned but in time recovered enough to compose a letter of refusal.

Ermine is the third one in the library snapshot but it's a horrid picture of her. Her graduation one is lovely. The picture of Teddy I took at Grandpa Russell's about my birthday and the picture of Russ and me was taken just before I received my diploma.

I've had two dandy letters from daddy since I've been in Rutland and we have had several fine reports about him.

Grandpa Perry is going down to Boston the last of the week & Russ is going down to see daddy.

I'll be so glad to you you all when I can.

Love & love to you & your mother.

Dottie

#4

4
Letter # with address on envelope of January 5, 1921

Grandpa Russell's
New Years' Day

Dearest Kitty-Chum

Here's thanking you for that darling little vanity box. It's the handiest one I ever had and has already come into use.

We had a little Christmas tree on the table in the parlor with most of the things on the table. Teddy and I washed the breakfast dishes, mother made the beds & Russ went to the store & then after all finishing our jobs at once we opened our things. Mother gave me a dear little leather belt for my dark brown sweater, some soap, a hairbrush and a diary. I had seven handkerchiefs, two boxes of candy, some perfume from Miss Cheney, this paper from Miss Gorton, three little blue bird pins from Priscilla & Helen, a book from Ted, a book of Alfred Noyes poems from Russ, "The Elfin Artist", a candle stick, a sweater hanger, book plates, a paper knife, "Thanatopsis" & Pat's picture.

The Stetsons were with us for dinner as I wrote they were going to be. The baby - Ruth Clara aged almost seven months is just as sweet as she can be. She has brown eyes - great big ones - and the loveliest cheeks. Mr. Stetson is going to leave Rutland for Springfield and their goods are packed up waiting for good weather & roads as they hope they can be transported by truck instead of by freight so Mrs. Stetson and Ruth have been living with us this week and all I can do when I'm not at the lib. is hug that babe. She has a new trick nearly every day. Now she screws up her mouth as though she were going to whistle. Quite often she wrinkles up her nose & sticks out her lips & looks too cute.

Jan. 2- 1921

I guess this is going to be an installment plan letter.

We are having a January thaw to-day which as far as I'm concerned is a good thing I guess because as long as I can't ski I have no excuse for not writing my Christmas letters of which this is the first.

Russ and Ted came out here Tuesday and mother and I New Year's morning about two thirty. Miss Gorton has kindly consented to let me be two hours late tomorrow morning as that's when the first train I could take tomorrow arrives at Rutland so I don't have to go back today.

It was just lovely when we arrived. Uncle Charles met us with a sleigh and the sleighing was just fine. The sky was so blue and the evergreens so green & the snow so white it was wonderful. I wished all the way up you were with us because I know you would have loved it. The brook was the prettiest thing of all right along the road thru the woods. The stones were white and looked like whipped cream cake and along the open water were fringes of little icicles.

We had dinner about as soon as we arrived & then I dressed up and went out skiing with Ted. I wore my bloomers over my skirt. Daddy's gray sweater over my brown one, my own tam, some of Grampa's wool socks over my shoes and Lyman's fur gloves.

We went right out back of the house on the hill and started down one of their ski tracks. Ted went first and then came I – I went likety split and as soon as I reached the level my legs I guess went every which way and I skied on myself instead of the skis. The next time I gritted my teeth and kept upright down the hill and across the meadow but fell gently when I went down the little bump onto the pond. The next two times I made some grand spills and then tried another hill. It's the most thrilling business I ever tried because when I get going fast it seems as though I just couldn't keep in the track and first I now I'm skiing on my back. We went down about three times on the other hill (two of them I did successfully) and then came in as it was getting sticky and I thought I better repair the hole in my knee that the sharp crust made while there was enough left of my stocking to repair. I'm stiff all over today!

I was awfully pleased to get the Partygirl" from your mother and as soon as I finish it I shall tell her so personally. I've almost taken it home from the library several times but it was still a seven dayer and I was so busy before Christmas I didn't have any time to read. Now, I've resolved to read a book a week at least so as to know what I'm talking about in my business. Of course you can read book notes & then I hear Miss Cheney recommended lots of the books & know they are all right but it's lots nicer to have read them yourself.

The library hasn't become tiresome yet, so I guess the novelty hasn't worn off and isn't going to.

Some of the people who come in are awfully funny and some of them are lovely. There is a Mr. Dana, an attorney who asks for a good "blood and thunder story." One day he got to telling Miss Cheney about one of his cases and I thought he would never stop but he did finally.

Most of the men ask for western or detective stories but there is one old man who doesn't like that kind. He said the other day "the young folks see to[o] much of that in the movies and then go out and do the same things."

We have our annual meeting the first of February which is a very solemn occasion, especially the house cleaning that proceeds it. I'm a little bit scared of the occasion but Miss Gorton says it isn't very bad and ever since Mrs. Ross, president of the library association whom I was scared to death to meet

said that we were related (she being Uncle James Ross' sister-in-law – quite a close relation you see – I've breathed easier. I know several of the directors now and they are human so I guess it won't be very bad. One of them was a great friend of mother's when they were in school and another one wishes us nice Thanksgiving & Merry Christmas when she comes in so I guess I'll live. If I expire about the first of Feb., however, you'll know why!

I wonder if our Community Club had begun when I wrote you last? It meets every Wednesday night. First we have cafeteria supper, then entertainment furnished by different groups of the girls., then classes, basketry, millinery, modeling, china painting etc. and then dancing but quite often we get so interested that we stay in class all the rest of the evening. I joined the basketry class and have made one with a long handle for Grandma's Christmas present and am making a fern basket now. We have lots of fun in class.

The ninth of December we had our first annual banquet. The business men served us and we had scalloped oysters, cabbage salad, rolls, ice-cream, cup cakes, and coffee. The service was very good! Then after supper we had beers and singing (we had the banquet in the Community House gym where we always have supper and entertainment.

Then Miss Lena Phillips, executive secretary of the American Federation of Business Women spoke to us. She was lovely and her speech was very entertaining. She spoke about the foolishness of spending our time evenings making wonderful Christmas presents. Then she said when our friends received them they said "how lovely" – and their mothers say – "Yes, but what are they for"! I thought you could appreciate that!

Mr. Hindley, editor of the Rutland Herald, leads us in singing frequently and after Miss Phillips' speech he taught us a cute little song to the tune of Brown's body which the Rotarians sang – as follows –

Little Lena Phillips, she got up and made a speech (four times)
And she made a -----fine speech.

Instead of bursting into profanity on the blank we all clapped It was lots of fun.

Then we had a sleight of hand performance by local performers, and then dancing. Russ came up and we had a very nice evening.

Thanksgiving time we went to Chester. We had dinner at Grandpa's again and had a wonderful noisy time there being twenty-three to partake.

Thanksgiving eve I arrived in Chester with Ted and we were met by Uncle Charlie who took us right over to the town hall where he & family were witnessing a Pilgrim entertainment including the operetta we had in eighth grade when Mildred Affleck was Priscilla. The characters in this were older and it was much more elaborate then when we gave it.

I discovered a new way to make place cards that is lots of fun. I was rather desperate Thanksgiving time having place cards to make for 23 and about

decided I would have to get turkey stickers but when I went into Woolworth's they didn't have any at all. But they had some cute cards so I got some of them and then cut out the pictures and pasted on a strip of plain white from the card for the name. It was lots of fun and didn't take so very long.

Russ and I have just been way up on the hill where it was lovely and we had a dandy view. Russ wanted to fix up a ski track that he has there a great long one starting in one field and going clear thru another, across the road and down into the pasture.

I guess I'll have to stop now as there are about eleven other letters I must write.

I hope as hard as I can that the New Year brings you just what you're hoping for.

With lots of love and thanks for your nice gift.

Dottie

#5

[Envelope dated October 14, 1920, apparently wrong envelope as the letter seems to have been done in Jan. or Feb. of 1921]

Rutland Vt.
Sunday eve.

Dearest Kitty,

Many, many happy returns of the day! How does it feel to be nineteen? I'm writing this a little early for a birthday letter but I don't know as I'll have another long enough chance to before it would really need to go.

Haven't we had a lot of nice times on various nineteenth's of February? I remember our party when Kathryn Gardiner shocked everyone by looking cross eyed. And the last one we were together I stayed all night, the day mother and daddy & Teddy went to Florida. I'm glad I didn't know then that I'd have to skip three birthdays without seeing you.

I was so glad to get your letter – *comme je vous ai dit dans votre valentine*. It came in the morning when I was at work and mother called me right up to tell me about it. I came right home, you bet, at one. I just wish I could see you tonight too. But daddy is ever so much better of course I've written that lots of times before – but he really is. We had a dandy letter from him a week ago Monday Uncle Oscar has been to see him recently and he says that he is very much improved. And Mr. Berker who lives in Waltham and goes out to see him frequently wrote at Christmas time that he thought he would be with us early in the year (1921). I hope I shall be able to live thru the joy of seeing you and home again. But I guess not very many people have died of over joy. I just love to think of going home. The other night I had a lovely dream (but of course a crazy one). I thought I was at New Trier and there was a sort of a World's Fair going on on the athletic field. Then you appeared and after a grand rush into each other's arms we began seeing the Fair – It was the Fair part that was crazy, of course.

I'm glad you like the nightie. When I saw the picture in the Woman's Home C. I thought it looked sort of like you. I have on right now the waist you sent me my birthday. I love it. It fits perfectly and does up beautifully. That's about enough raving for one night, but I really mean it.

I expect to get your package off Tuesday. It's all done now but a coat of shellac – Perhaps I better not call it by name for fear that it might not have arrived by the time this letter does. I'll just say that I made it at home instead of at club – it's the first one I've made alone – and I had lots of fun doing it. I hope it arrives safely.

Do you remember the story "Cinderella's Grand-daughter" that came in the St. Nicholas? I don't believe that I've told you that the author, Beth Gilchrist,

lives in Rutland and and comes into the library quite often. She is rather pretty, slim and dark, and usually wears lavender or purple.

I made a startling discovery Wednesday evening. I had had the pleasure & honor of waiting on the author of the Betty Wales books. I don't know whether their popularity has reached Wilmette or not but they are a series of college stories – about seven- I guess and written by Margaret Warde Just when someone asked for Miss Gilchrist's books or Miss Dunton's I decided it must be the Rutland Miss Dunton, and I had heard that she wrote & I was some surprised on looking up under Dunton to find the Betty Wales books & that Margaret Warde was just a pen name and I always thot Miss Dunton a rather mild old maid – she certainly wouldn't remind you of Betty Wales.

Our annual meeting comes off this approaching Wednesday – I mean Thursday & is to be in the Woman's Club rooms so we won't have to kill ourselves cleaning house. There will be the annual business meeting & then a literary program. And it comes on my afternoon off! But I think it will be rather interesting.

Ermine was home last week-end and we celebrated by going to the movies & then getting a hot fudge all in the pouring rain. We are having the funniest winter – But at last we have some snow.

Teddy is getting to be the funniest kid you ever saw. He began taking dancing lessons a week ago Friday but to his great disappointment the class has stopped for Lent.

He still uses funny phrases – usually getting them much out of place and calls himself little The – o – dore with an undescribable expression. Course it's silly but we can't help laughing.

My legs haven't quite gotten over gym Thursday eve. Our gym teacher was in the army and gives us some thrilling new exercises such as hopping round in gym with one foot in your hand and then running around with your hands touching the floor. Then we play basketball or indoor. Last time we had a most thrilling game of B.B as first our side and then the other made a basket keeping the score pretty even. I played forward and made two baskets – but missing lots more.

If I'm going to get up and do shell-accing before breakfast I must close.
I hope you have a perfectly lovely birthday& can go places again soon.

Your superloving Chum

Dottie
*E.